



DAY CAMP COORDINATOR HANDBOOK

CREATED

TO

BE



Worship | Bible Study | Team Building  
| Indoor Games | Outdoor Games | Water Day  
And a Whole Lot More...

[MTCROSS.ORG/DAYCAMP](http://MTCROSS.ORG/DAYCAMP)

## What is Day Camp?

Mt. Cross Day Camp is a unique partnership designed to provide congregations with a vibrant and faith formative program that nurtures relationships between the adults and children within the church, and provides an outreach opportunity in the local community. The Day Camp program is a relational and high-energy program similar to a VBS program. Each Day Camp is tailored to the unique context of the hosting congregation. Volunteers and staff from the host congregation work with staff from Mt. Cross throughout the planning and implementation of the program. Mt. Cross leads energetic worship, games, singing, and also leads or provides guidance in leading Bible study and arts & crafts. Volunteers from the church work with Mt. Cross staff in all of these areas and have the opportunity to participate and play alongside the kids. This dynamic and flexible partnership allows for learning and relationships in the congregation to continue even after Mt. Cross staff have departed.

## Day Camp is....

**Relational** - Camp staff, along with required congregational volunteers provide a staff to camper ratio of 1 adult to 10 youth. This helps ensure that campers get lots of individual attention and provides a great opportunity for intergenerational ministry.

**Renewal** - The experience is renewing for the adult volunteers, as well as for day campers. Day Camp can also revitalize a Bible School or Sunday School program with fresh energy and new ideas.

**Outreach** - The enthusiasm and excitement of Day Camp can reach out and minister to the local community, as well as members of the congregation. Day Camp can be an ecumenical experience by inviting other local churches to participate.

## Why Day Camp?

The purpose of Day Camp is to provide the local church with an energetic and faith formative experience for youth in the local community. We hope that Mt. Cross staff can help get kids in the congregation excited about their faith and the ministry that is happening in their church.

The strength of Day Camp is the camp staff. They are caring, committed young adults who are trained to lead Bible studies, worship, singing, recreation, crafts and the intangible experience we call “dynamic Christian community.”

The uniqueness of Day Camp is the flexibility. Camp staff will work with each church to create a program to meet the specific needs of your church. Both two and four person teams are available to serve the needs of your congregation. Larger teams can also be arranged if needed.

## PROGRAM ESSENTIALS FOR DAY CAMP

The Day Camp components listed below should be included daily. The components listed on the following page may be included, at the choice of the church.

## **Alpha/Omega (Worship)**

Each day begins and ends with an interactive time to teach the daily theme through use of scripture, song, and drama. This experience is a great place for Pastors or church staff to participate in fun and meaningful ways.

## **Bible Study**

The Bible Study and week's theme will unfold in small groups (led by Mt. Cross staff and/or adult volunteer teachers). Bible stories and experiential learning activities are implemented.

## **Music**

Music is an integral part of the Day Camp program. Mt. Cross encourages you to incorporate music into worship as well as provides it as one of the daily activity sessions.

## **Recreation**

Fun, non-competitive, outdoor games appropriate to each age group.

## **Arts and Crafts**

The campers make something each day that ties in with the daily theme and provides them an opportunity to bring Day Camp home to their family. Arts and crafts are generally "from scratch," not pre-fab workbook material. Ideas for projects are provided by Mt. Cross with the Bible Study. Materials for individual projects are provided by the congregation.

## **Devotions/Rest**

This is a quiet time to review what was learned during the day. Counselors may use picture drawing, journal writing, or stories to help in this time for reflection.

## **Lunch**

Each day children bring a sack lunch for the noon meal. The church is responsible for a drink and for other desired snacks. The congregation will also provide lunches for the camp staff.

## **Closing**

This is a wrap up of the day filled with more singing and fun. It's a great way to review the theme of the day and send kids home excited about what they've learned.

## **Full Day - Typical Schedule**

- 8:30 a.m. - Staff & Volunteers Planning Meeting
- 9:00 a.m. - Alpha (Opening Worship)
- 9:30 a.m. - Rotation - Bible Study
- 10:15 a.m. - Snacks
- 10:30 a.m. - Rotation 2 - Recreational Activity/Games
- 11:15 a.m. - Rotation 3 - Arts and Crafts
- 12:00 p.m. - Lunch
- 12:30 p.m. - Rest/Devotions
- 1:00 p.m. - Afternoon Adventure Time (Field Trip)
- 2:30 p.m. - Omega (Closing Worship)
- 3:00 p.m. - Staff & Volunteer Debriefing Meeting

## **Afternoon Adventure Time (Field Trip/Service Project)**

Campers will go on an afternoon adventure each day at camp from 1:00-2:30pm. Mt. Cross staff will lead 3 of the afternoon sessions, and we ask the congregation to help plan the other 2 afternoon activity times. We suggest the following structure:

Monday: All Camp Game + Team Building led by Mt. Cross staff  
Tuesday: Archery led by Mt. Cross staff  
Wednesday: Hike Day led by church volunteers (visit local park or hiking trail)  
Thursday: Water Day led by Mt. Cross staff and volunteers  
Friday: Interactive Day led by church volunteers (visit local museum or attraction)

## Weekly Schedule Outline

Sunday Afternoon Camp staff arrive and move into congregational homes  
Staff, volunteers, and church committee - Sunday Planning Meeting  
Evening Mt. Cross Staff prep time

Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. Staff and Adult Volunteers Devotions/Prayer  
9:00 - 3:00 Day Camp  
3:00 p.m. Staff and Volunteers De-Briefing Meeting

Thursday 7:30 p.m. Program Night: Closing Program for parents and campers.  
Can also include a potluck, ice cream social, BBQ, etc.

## CUSTOM FIT YOUR DAY CAMP

The "Model Day Camp" serves youth entering grades K to 5 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Monday - Friday with a 1:10 adult to camper ratio. This model works well in most situations and is a recommended format for churches to follow.

We realize each congregation is different and has special needs. We are happy to meet with you well in advance to work out specifics to better serve you. If you feel major changes are needed to the model Day Camp please contact Mt. Cross's Director of Day Camp Ministry to discuss how these changes might be best implemented.

Modifications that have worked at other day camps:

**\*Shortening the number of days and/or the length of days.** Some congregations have found that a four-day format works best for their situation. Also, using a 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. day works extremely well, especially if your day camp is composed of mainly younger campers. If you have campers involved in summer or year round school, alternative hours - afternoon to evening, with dinner included could be a solution.

**\*Involve more age groups.** A few congregations have shortened their Day Camp day to 9 am to noon and held a "Night Camp" from 6:00-9:00 for the middle school and high school youth of their congregation. Counselors then have prep-time mid-day and are ready to lead group building activities, Bible Studies, games, and music for your youth in the evenings. This format can alleviate the problems associated with too many youth volunteer helpers.

**\*Multiple congregations may sponsor a single Day Camp.** Some congregations have found it easier financially to sponsor a Day Camp with another Lutheran church or with congregations of other denominations in the same neighborhood. The cost as well as the workload can be distributed among more people. Keep in mind the maximum number of campers for a single team is 120.

**\*You may include Pre-School campers.** Congregations wishing to include pre-k campers in their Day Camp must provide all of their own teachers. Mt. Cross staff is *not* trained to teach this age group. Bible studies and crafts ideas will be provided specific to pre-school age. We highly suggest a half-day schedule with this age group.

**\*Use your own material.** You might prefer to use your own materials and use our staff as leaders for music,

recreation, worship, etc. This would allow you to shape your program exactly the way you want it. The cost per camper would remain the same under this arrangement.

**\*Extended hours for working parents is sometimes needed.** Some congregations have gotten a adult congregational volunteers or a few mature high school students to watch campers from 7:00 - 9:00 a.m. and/or from 3:00 - 6:00 p.m. Camp Staff are not available for camper supervision before 9:00 a.m. or after 3:00 p.m.

**\*Enrolling campers with special needs is encouraged!** Day camp is a wonderful experience for all youth and can be beneficial for both the person with special needs and for all campers as we live out our faith in a Christian community. Youth who have special needs might be developmentally disabled, have behavioral problems, or come from a group home or foster care. One additional volunteer from the congregation is needed for each child who has special needs. Christian love and concern will go a long way, but careful discretion will need to be made by the Local Coordinator in deciding whether Day Camp will be beneficial for the child and the camp as a whole. If you have questions about the appropriateness of a camper attending Day Camp, please talk with Mt. Cross Director of Day Camp Ministry and your Pastor.

## AFTERNOON EVENTS

Special Events for Day Camp are always flexible and limited only by undiscovered resources. They are often the key to the success of your week. Some ideas that have worked well in other locations are listed below.

### SERVICE PROJECTS

A Christian lifestyle involves serving others. Campers can clean up a park, sing at a nursing home or make craft projects to give away, paint garbage cans, help with a local food shelter, visit shut-ins, do yard-work for elderly members of the congregation, etc.

### FIELD TRIPS

For extra opportunities to learn: trips to parks, hikes, training facilities, museums, or nearby nature centers. Tried and true trips include libraries, children's museums, fire and police stations, etc.

### RECREATION

Swimming at a nearby pool (a certified Lifeguard must be present), bowling, and skating are all popular Day Camp events.

### SPECIAL GUESTS

Bringing in local resource people is a "trip" in itself. Perhaps a naturalist could talk or bring in an animal. The Forest Service has environmental education specialists to work with children. A special craft program, history program, or musical event works well too. Storytellers, clowns, magicians, and fire trucks keep kids' attention while they learn too. Members of your church can be a great resource here.

### SPECIAL EVENTS

Allow local talent to share special music, nature interests, crafts, historical interests, or storytellers with the children. Singing at a nursing home, visiting shut-ins and places of special interest all work well. You'll be amazed at the talent and creativity that is in your congregation!

**Transportation to and from any special event is the responsibility of the church. The**

church also needs to provide insurance for any transportation. Any trip away from the Day Camp site must be specifically mentioned in the permission slips or separate permission slips must be provided. Many parents are willing to transport a carload of campers for such an event. Mt. Cross Staff provide their own transportation, but are not permitted to transport campers.

## THE ROLE OF MT. CROSS MINISTRIES

### STAFF

Every Mt. Cross staff team includes a trained “Day Camp Director” as well as caring, committed, and trained counselors. Our standard team is four Mt. Cross staff. Please let us know at any point if you would like to contract for additional staff and we will revise your contract contingent upon staff availability.

### CURRICULUM

The curriculum is based on the summer Bible study theme used at our main site. It has been rewritten for the Day Camp audience taking into consideration the setting, camper ages, and the many people who will be leading it. The curriculum package includes: Bible study for pre-school and day camp ages, and suggested projects for arts and crafts. **Actual arts and crafts materials are the responsibility of each church.**

### INSURANCE

The parent’s policy is the primary insurance for accidents occurring at your Day Camp. Please check with a church administrator to see what coverage your church’s insurance offers.

## CHURCH ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### The Site

The church facility may be used for the Day Camp if it has adequate space for recreation and meets the ACA Standards. We encourage being outdoors. Immediate access to shelter, telephone, restrooms, and running water are required according to American Camp Association standards. It is also good to have a shelter out of the sun. A nearby park with such facilities works well.

### Food & Housing for Camp Staff

Staff should be housed in homes of your congregational members. It works best if all staff are housed together, close to the church or Day Camp site and to the other Mt. Cross staff. We understand this is not always possible, in that case please house the two staff of each gender together. The host family is asked to provide breakfast. Different families can host the staff for dinner and sack lunches during the week. This is a great opportunity to get to know our staff on a personal basis. Travel meals to and from the Day Camp are covered by Mt. Cross.

### Church Leadership

The church needs to secure a Local Coordinator, adult volunteer teachers, and volunteer helpers. Required adult volunteer teachers must be mature adults out of high school. Local volunteer teachers are important in ensuring a successful Day Camp. Adult volunteer teachers may lead small groups in Bible Study, and will bring their own special gifts to enrich the experience. They also provide an important connection to the local church and continuity for the youth when the Day Camp is over. The Bible study curriculum will be provided by Mt. Cross and will be available online early enough to allow adequate preparation time. Volunteer helpers are needed to assist with snacks, setting up Arts & Crafts supplies, etc.

## Insurance

The church needs to ensure they have insurance to cover any use of their facilities and to cover potential liability involved in their co-sponsorship of the Day Camp. Please check with you insurance agent about your coverage for an event like Day Camp.

## Cost

The church agrees to provide funds to meet the contracted fee. The final payment is due on the last day of Day Camp.

## Snacks

Campers and adult volunteers are asked to bring a sack lunch. Church volunteers are asked to provide drinks and a mid-morning snack for everyone. We suggest non-sugared and healthy snacks. Food allergies are becoming very prominent, we recommend avoiding nuts and checking with individual campers about allergies.

## Publicity

It is the responsibility of the Local Coordinator or appointed committee to publicize the Day Camp. Sample promotional aids will be provided.

## Registration

It is the responsibility of the Local Coordinator or appointed committee to register the youth before the program begins, collect the fees, and ensure each youth brings a completed health history and Mt. Cross Registration Form to the Day Camp. Mt. Cross needs to have a copy of each campers individual Registration Form. *You may add additional information to this but please do not remove any from it.*

# THE UNIQUE ROLES OF THE CAMP AND CONGREGATION

## Mt. Cross Camp Staff Shall:

1. Work closely with the Local Coordinator to ensure that day-to-day planning and decision-making responsibilities are covered. One of the Mt. Cross staff members has been designated and trained as the Mt. Cross Day Camp Director.
2. Be present at all planning and Day Camp events during the week and stay for their entirety.
3. Be open to all ideas and suggestions to change the program to best serve the local church.
4. Insure that safety is of primary importance and be familiar with emergency procedures. 5. Follow all policies and procedures in their Camp Staff Manual and the Day Camp policies.

## The Congregation Shall:

1. Design the program and a daily schedule so that it best fits the needs and resources of the local church and community. Introduce this schedule to the Mt. Cross team, so they may help implement it.
2. Select and secure Day Camp site as outlined by the ACA standards.
3. Establish emergency procedures as outlined by the ACA standards.
4. Determine a Local Coordinator and recruit both the adult volunteer teachers and adult helpers required, based on the number of campers.
5. Set up housing for the Mt. Cross Camp Staff (in parish homes).

6. Promote the Day Camp to youth in the church and community.
7. Handle all registration of the youth, health forms, fees, etc.
8. Arrange all afternoon activities and their logistics, field trips, guest speakers, transportation.
9. Provide dinner and lunch for Mt. Cross camp staff.

### **The Day Camp Coordinator Shall:**

1. Serve as the liaison between Mt. Cross Ministries and the local church prior to the Day Camp and throughout the week. This person needs to be present at Day Camp each day, all day, and not be responsible for leading a Bible Study class.
2. Train and fully verse all volunteers in the policies and philosophies of Day Camp and lay out expectations of all volunteers.
3. Ensure that the local congregation meets its responsibilities as outlined above.
4. Be sure campers are checked in and out daily, calling homes of absent campers.
5. Return an evaluation at the conclusion of Day Camp to Mt. Cross.

### **Youth Volunteer Helpers:**

1. Should be carefully selected for their gifts of working with children, faith, maturity, patience, and helpfulness. Do not make a blanket invitation to youth groups to “come and help”.
2. Shall be trained and fully versed in the policies and philosophies of Day Camp, as well as what is expected of them.
3. May only work with age groups that are at least 4 grades younger than themselves.
4. May **NOT** be counted as part of the 1:8 adult to camper ratio, regardless of your perception of their maturity.

### **Adult Volunteer Teachers Shall:**

1. Be high school graduates. The number of adult volunteer teachers must meet the ratio of 1:8 adult to camper.
2. Be trained and fully versed in the policies and philosophies of Day Camp, as well as what is expected of them.
3. Attend the Sunday Planning Meeting
4. Work with the camp staff in implementing the program and providing camper supervision, ie. supervise Arts & Crafts, lead the Bible Study for a given age group, coordinate field trips, etc.
5. Be present and participate at all times during all hours of the Day Camp. (Substitutes may fill in on occasion or it may be arranged for two teaching volunteers to each work half-days.)

### **Adult Volunteer Helpers:**

1. May be used as part of the 1:8 adult to camper ratio - if they attend and participate at all times during all hours of the Day Camp. You can have as many adult Volunteers Helpers as you deem necessary.
2. Be trained and fully versed in the policies and philosophies of Day Camp, as well as what is expected of them.
3. Shall work with the camp staff in implementing the program and providing camper supervision, ie. assist with Arts & Crafts, help distribute snacks, assist with Bible Study, etc.
4. Participate as much as possible during the entire Day Camp.

### **Part-Time Volunteers Shall:**

1. Be trained and fully versed in the policies and philosophies of Day Camp, as well as what is expected of them.
2. Prepare morning snacks and drink for the noon meal.
3. Serve as drivers or additional helpers for special activities and/or field trips.



## GUIDE TO SELECTING A SITE

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#### American Camping Association Standards Checklist for Day Camps

Mt. Cross Ministries is accredited by the American Camp Association. We adhere to their industry leading standards. Day Camps are the programs of each hosting congregation and are not required to meet these standards. However, we strongly encourage each one to meet ACA standards. This helps ensure a safe and nurturing environment for all participants. Review the following standards and make arrangements for each standard to be met for your Day Camp. If you cannot meet a standard or have questions please feel free to call.

#### \_\_\_ Ratios

Minimum ratios of adults (18 years or older) to campers (according to age group) must be adhered to during all sessions of operation:

##### **Camper's Age # Adult Staff # of Campers**

Pre-School Under 6 years 1 6

6 years to 14 years 1 8

14 years to 18 years 1 10

#### \_\_\_ Important Information

The following information available on site for each camper and staff member:

1. Full name of each individual
2. Age (for all campers and for all persons under age 21)
3. Home address and telephone number
4. School grade (where applicable)
5. Name, address, signature and telephone number of adult responsible for each minor
6. Telephone number(s) or persons to contact in case of an emergency during the individual's stay
7. Name & phone number of individual's physician or health care facility (if available)

#### \_\_\_ Swimming as part of program

It is suggested that you request a letter from the pool that states that they will provide:

1. Lifeguards that hold a current, nationally recognized, lifeguard certification, as well First Aid and CPR certification.
2. Campers with an orientation to the facility
3. Assessment of the weather conditions
4. Limitation of camper access, where appropriate
5. A facility and equipment in good repair
6. Readily available and appropriate rescue equipment

#### \_\_\_ Health History Forms

Health History Forms must be available on-site for each camper and staff member. A master copy is included in the Publicity Packet. Review each camper and staff member's health history form prior to the camper's arrival and collect any medication to be dispensed during Day Camp session. Prescription medicine must be under lock and key during the Day Camp.

#### \_\_\_ Written Agreement with a Physician or RN

Have access by phone to a physician or RN with whom prior arrangements have been made in writing to provide

consultation and other health care support to the church.

\_\_\_ Policies

The following camp policies must be used:

1. Written parental/guardian permission when a camper is released to someone other than a legal parent or guardian.
2. Verification of all absentees
3. Staff Personnel Policies

\_\_\_ Emergency Plans

The church is responsible to develop a Risk Management plan and emergency procedures for accidents and lost campers. The Risk Management Plan must have written procedures for accident prevention and reduction, and emergency management, that are implemented through the following (Camp staff can help with this as needed and work with you during the pre-planning meeting):

1. Identification of risks and possible emergency situations
2. Provision of protective devices when appropriate
3. Reduction of such risks through camper and staff education
4. Establishment and enforcement of regulations

\_\_\_ Insurance

Day Camps must be covered by accident insurance:

1. The parent's insurance is primary
2. Your church's liability insurance should be secondary
3. Mt. Cross's insurance is tertiary

\_\_\_ Telephone Facilities

A telephone must be available for use.

\_\_\_ Lavatory Facilities

Adequate number of toilets based on the following ratios:

1. One seat for every 30 females
2. One seat for every 50 males
3. Toilets also need to be readily accessible at a community park, playground, or other field trip sites
4. One hand washing basin or equivalent adjacent to toilets for every 30 persons

<b>PLANNING COMMITTEE CHECKLIST</b>
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Completed	Completed by:	Responsibilities to be Completed
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Site

		Decide on an appropriate site for the Day Camp
		Write emergency procedures in accordance with the guidelines provided by Mt. Cross

		Contact local health and emergency services
		Complete the emergency telephone sheet
		Post the emergency telephone sheet

### Volunteers

		Recruit local steering committee members
		Select Local Day Camp Coordinator
		Recruit teachers (1:8 ratio adult to camper)
		Recruit helpers
		Train youth helpers
		Assign volunteers to bring the daily snack and drink
		Contact the Pastor and Church staff to determine their participation
		Set time and place for the Sunday Planning Mtg
		Notify teachers, camp staff, and volunteer helpers of the Sunday Planning Meeting time and place

### Camp Staff

		Introduce Local Coordinator to Mt. Cross's Director of Day Camp Ministry
		Arrange housing for the camp counselors
		Arrange sack lunches for camp counselors
		Arrange evening meals for camp counselors

### Registration

		Update Mt. Cross' Individual Registration Form with local information as needed
		Create Health History Form and Medical Release
		Provide Mt. Cross with a copy of each campers' Registration Form
		Check to see that each camper has a completed Registration Form
		Check to see that each camper has a completed Health History and Medical Release Form
		Make arrangements for lunches if needed

		Send Final Arrangements Sheet to camp 2 weeks prior to the Day Camp
		Decide how and when you will receive money from each camper

### Field Trips

		Choose field trip sites
		Choose guest speakers
		Decide how to transport children
		Name someone to be in charge of safety for each field trip

### Resources

		Collect necessary arts and crafts supplies
		Collect necessary recreation equipment

### Publicity

		Decide on types of publicity for Day Camp
		Assign publicity to a volunteer
		<input type="checkbox"/> Bulletin Insert <input type="checkbox"/> News Release <input type="checkbox"/> Radio Spots <input type="checkbox"/> Public Service Announcements <input type="checkbox"/> Neighboring Churches <input type="checkbox"/> Schools <input type="checkbox"/> Letters to Youth

## DAY CAMP FEE STRUCTURE

- \$2,500 - a day camp team of 2-3 counselors, and up to ~20 campers (\$125 per camper)
- \$3,000 - a day camp team of 3 counselors, and up to ~30 campers (\$100 per camper)
- \$3,500 - a day camp team of 3-4 counselors and up to ~40 campers (\$87.50 per camper)

Mt. Cross Ministries agrees to provide a team of 2-4 trained staff that will help energize your week of vacation bible school! Our staff will lead engaging bible study, music, games, team building activities and crafts. Mt. Cross agrees to provide transportation to/from your church and the camp as well as transportation to/from your church and the host home. As the congregation, you generously agree to provide space for the day camp to be held, and provide lodging and meals for Mt. Cross staff via host

home. If your congregation has more than 30 campers, we require additional volunteers to ensure an adult to camper ratio of 1:10 or less. To fully register your congregation for a day camp, please complete this form and submit the deposit. Thank you for choosing to partner with Mt. Cross Ministries: we look forward to bringing camp to your congregation!