



# PARENT HANDBOOK

## Summer Camp Programs



**CEDARKIRK** *a place apart to build up,  
the body of Christ in love*  
**CAMP & CONFERENCE CENTER**



# WELCOME TO CEDARKIRK

**Welcome to Cedarkirk Summer Camps.** We are excited you are including Cedarkirk in your summer plans! We have a fantastic program planned that will provide your camper with an unforgettable camp experience.

This handbook is designed to orient you to Cedarkirk's summer programs, to address questions you may have, and to present some of the things your child will experience at Cedarkirk this summer.

Many people come together each year to make our programs happen. From year-round staff to volunteers, each of us loves outdoor ministry and brings a variety of experiences and expertise to make camp a special, safe, and meaningful place for every camper. Many more people uphold our ministry throughout the year with gifts of time, money, and prayer and help ensure that your child's time at camp is truly memorable!

If you have any questions about Cedarkirk or its residential camp programs after reading this handbook, please contact us. Additionally, if you would like to help serve with us this summer as a volunteer nurse or worship leader, we would love to speak with you.

We look forward to meeting you this summer and getting to know your camper!

Blessings and peace,

**MANDY GOFF**  
PROGRAM DIRECTOR

**MARK ORENDORF**  
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

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# WHO'S WHO AT CEDARKIRK?

## LEADERSHIP STAFF

### BOOKKEEPER/BUSINESS MANAGER:

Debbie Campos

### FOOD SERVICE DIRECTOR:

Jackie Butler

### FACILITIES DIRECTOR:

Kevin Taylor

### PROGRAM DIRECTOR:

Mandy Goff

### ASSISTANT DIRECTOR:

Mark Orendorf

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

Matt Shick

## SUMMER STAFF

We hire a team of energetic and dedicated young adults who are selected because they are committed to caring for your camper and shaping and upholding the values of Christian community that define a Cedarkirk summer program.

All counselors go through an extensive hiring process which includes personal interviews, a variety of background checks (including a state and national fingerprint screening), and twelve days of intensive staff training.

Our staff are equipped with the skills necessary to create a physically and emotionally safe environment in which all campers can thrive, grow, and have fun.

**Each week** a few volunteers (pastors, youth directors, christian educators, nurses, paramedics) give of their time to live and laugh alongside our campers and staff to lead worship based on the summer's theme and to nurture the health of our summer camp community.



# BEFORE YOU ARRIVE

**SUBMIT ALL FORMS:** In addition to the forms completed during registration, a copy of the camper's health insurance card is required for attendance at Cedarkirk. These must be submitted at least 14 days prior to the start of your child's program. Camp balances must be paid by June 1.

**HELP YOUR CHILD PACK:** Work with your child to select and pack the clothing and items on the packing list. Your child will be aware of what they have brought for the week and you can talk with them about what they can expect at camp and discuss any fears or concerns they may have about being away from home.

## SUMMER CAMP PACKING LIST

### CLOTHING

Shorts  
Shirts  
Swimsuit (*one is fine, two is better!*)  
Socks & undergarments  
Sleepwear  
Rain coat/poncho  
Sneakers/comfortable athletic shoes  
River shoes/aqua socks (*need heel straps*)

### PERSONAL ITEMS

2 Towels (*one for shower/one for pool*)  
Toiletries (*soap, shampoo, deodorant, etc.*)  
Sunscreen  
Insect repellent

### BEDDING

Pillow & pillow case  
Sleeping bag **OR** sheets & blanket

### GENERAL ITEMS

Bible  
Notebook & pen/pencil  
Water bottle  
Bag for dirty clothes

### OPTIONAL ITEMS

Medications (*prescription only*)  
Flashlight  
Disposable camera  
Hat and/or Sunglasses  
Stamps & paper for writing letters

### DO NOT BRING

Cell phones  
Portable electronics (*iPads, computers, etc.*)  
Large knives or weapons  
Alcohol, drugs, or tobacco products  
Food/gum/snacks/drinks  
Money, jewelry or other valuables

\*You will be emailed a specific what-to-bring list after you register for camp.



# WHEN YOU ARRIVE

## CHECK-IN TIMES - ALL CAMPERS CHECK IN AT THE PAVILION

- **SHL campers:** check in from 3:00p-3:30p.
- **Elementary School campers:** check in from 4:00p-4:30p.
- **Middle & High School campers:** check in from 4:30p-5:00p.

*If you are dropping off campers in multiple age groups you may drop off your campers any time between 4:00p and 5:00p.*

**SIGNS AND STAFF WILL BE POSTED** to direct you to parking spaces.

## CHECK-IN WALKTHROUGH:

### STEP 1: ARRIVE & PARK

Staff will direct you to a location to park. You and your camper(s) will proceed to the Pavilion to be greeted and begin check-in. Please leave luggage in your vehicle.

### STEP 2: VERIFY INFORMATION

At your first stop we'll verify that your contact and emergency information is correct, and confirm who is authorized to pick your camper up from camp. We will also ask your camper a few brief health screening questions.

### STEP 3: MEDICATION DROP

If your camper has brought medications with them, they will be turned in and recorded next. We log all medications (even OTC meds) and store them securely in our first aid center. If you have any

information you'd like to share with our health officer, you may do so at this time.

### STEP 4: GROUP ASSIGNMENT

You and your camper will find out who their counselors will be for the week and where they'll be sleeping. Feel free to stop by the camp store and then you'll be ready to get your camper to their group.

### STEP 5: JOIN THE GROUP!

At this point you may head to your car to gather luggage and meet your child's counselors and group at their space under the Pavilion. (Staff will help move your camper's belongings to their living space after all campers in their group have arrived.) Give hugs and wish your camper well, then say goodbye!

# DEPARTURE DETAILS

## CAMPER PICKUP & CLOSING PROGRAM

**All camp programs end at 2:30p.** We will have a brief closing program to recap the week, introduce some staff, sing a song or two, and thank your campers for the joy, energy, and love they filled camp with! If you are able, please be present to support your camper during this important time of closure.

## PICK-UP PROCESS

Immediately following the Closing Program you will be able to sign your camper out from their counselors. Remember that **we require you to present a photo ID** in order to sign a camper out. After signing your camper out you may pick up their luggage from their group's luggage area, grab a famous Cedarkirk cookie, and head out!

## LOST & FOUND

Please make sure you have collected all of your camper's duffels, suitcases, pillows, dirty clothes bags, etc. Any lost and found items will be held for two weeks in our lost and found closet and then disposed of or donated to a local charity. If you get home and find you're missing something, please call or email us (813.685.4224 x4; [camps@cedarkirk.org](mailto:camps@cedarkirk.org)).

## ON THE WAY HOME...

Listen to all of the stories your camper has to tell you about the new friends they made, the challenges they overcame, and the things they learned in worship and Bible study!





# A DAY IN THE LIFE... (OF A CEDARKIRK CAMPER)

## TYPICAL DAILY SCHEDULE

[FOR A MIDDLE OR HIGH SCHOOL CAMPER]

- 8:00** Wake up!
- 8:30** Breakfast
- 9:00** Morning Watch
- 9:30** Bible Study
- 10:10** Cabin Clean up & Capers
- 11:00** Activity Block 1\*
- 12:30** Lunch
- 1:00** Song Time
- 1:30** Rest Time
- 2:30** Activity Block 2\*
- 4:00** Activity Block 3\*
- 5:30** Dinner
- 6:00** Song Time
- 6:30** Evening Activity
- 7:30** Free Time / Village Recreation
- 8:20** Worship
- 8:50** Snack
- 9:00** Activity Block 4\*
- 10:30** Shower / Get ready for bed

### \*GROUP ACTIVITY BLOCKS MAY INCLUDE:

archery, canoeing, shark's teeth hunting, arts & crafts, water games, climbing wall, zip lines, high ropes challenge course (campers 12 and older), low ropes initiatives course, kayaking, pool, and field games.

**FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE SCHEDULE AND FAITH DEVELOPMENT AT CAMP ON THE "PARENTS' PAGE" OF OUR WEBSITE.**



## TYPICAL DAILY SCHEDULE

[FOR A JUNIOR CAMPER]

- 8:00** Wake up!
- 8:30** Breakfast
- 9:00** Morning Watch
- 9:30** Bible Study
- 10:10** Cabin Clean up & Capers
- 11:00** Activity Block 1\*
- 12:30** Lunch
- 1:00** Song Time
- 1:30** Rest Time
- 2:30** Activity Block 2\*
- 4:00** Activity Block 3\*
- 5:30** Dinner
- 6:00** Song Time
- 6:30** Evening Activity
- 7:30** Free Time / Village Recreation
- 8:20** Worship
- 8:50** Snack
- 9:15** Shower / Get ready for bed

# HELPFUL INFO & FAQs

## WHAT CAN MY CHILD EXPECT DURING HIS OR HER EXPERIENCE?

While at Cedarkirk, your child will be part of a "family group", typically comprised of a group of boys, with a male counselor, and a group of girls, with a female counselor. It is with this small group that your camper will experience Cedarkirk's activities (i.e. canoeing, Bible study, climbing the rock wall, swimming, etc.). In the evenings, these groups come together for worship, snacks, and an all-camp activity (such as a campfire, dusk swim, or line dancing). Within this small-group model your child can expect to: make new friends, try a new skill, work within a group to address challenges, grow physically, spiritually, and emotionally, serve others and the camp, actively participate in decision-making, and have an unbelievable amount of fun.

## WHAT ARE SOME WAYS I CAN PREPARE MY CHILD FOR CAMP THIS SUMMER?

- Help your child pack for camp (see page 5 for a more detailed description).
- Share anxieties you may have had as a child when spending time away from home. Respect your child's anxiety, but highlight the positive things that came from your experience.
- Discuss things your child may miss from home, but emphasize the new friendships and experiences they will gain at camp.
- Talk about the length of their stay at camp in perspective to other positive overnight experiences.
- Pray with and for your child and let them know you will be praying for them each day they're at camp.

## HOW DO YOU HANDLE HOMESICKNESS?

Homesickness is a natural feeling that many campers experience. Generally, the feeling passes quickly and the camper has a great week at camp! Staff and other campers are supportive and instrumental in helping a homesick camper feel better about being away from home. We invite parents and friends to write supportive letters and emails encouraging the camper to enjoy their time at camp. If your camper experiences serious homesickness a staff member will contact you to see how we might better care for them. If you receive a homesick letter from your camper, please realize that the feelings your camper had when writing the letter have likely already passed.

## WHAT IS YOUR DISCIPLINE POLICY?

We work hard to maintain an environment of safety, inclusion, and fun. We want every camper to feel at home with us – like camp is a place where they can be their most genuine self. When a camper's behavior threatens the environment we have created, staff work with the camper to evaluate their decisions and coach them toward better decisions in the future. Our goal is to resolve each issue or conflict in a healthy, positive way. Violent behavior is never tolerated at Cedarkirk: campers who act or threaten violence towards themselves or others or who threaten others are removed from their group immediately and sent home.

**FIND OUT MORE ABOUT HOMESICKNESS, DISCIPLINE, ETC. ON THE "PARENTS' PAGE" OF OUR WEBSITE.**



# HELPFUL INFO & FAQs (CONT.)

## WHY CAN'T ALL MY CHILD'S FRIENDS BE IN THE SAME GROUP?

One of the greatest values of the camp experience is the community and camaraderie that develops within a group as the week progresses. We recognize that a week of camp could further strengthen the bonds of friendship and trust your child already has with his or her friends. However, when many campers in a group already know each other, the group-building process is hindered and the campers that aren't associated with that group of friends often feel marginalized. To ensure that all campers have the best possible experience, we spread out groups of friends across several camp groups when possible.

## WHAT DO YOU DO DURING SEVERE WEATHER?

Our counselors are trained in teaching and leading alternate indoor activities during periods of bad weather and, in spite of rainy days, campers have fun playing and laughing inside Cedarkirk's facilities. Counselors are also instructed on seeking the best shelter options present in case their group is located off-site or are unable to travel to a building. During a thunderstorm, campers move to secure, covered buildings like the Pavilion or a lodge to wait out the storm. In the event of a tornado warning, campers gather at Cedar Lodge, the lowest shelter point at camp. If an approaching hurricane threatens the surrounding area, parents of each camper are called and campers are picked up prior to the storm's arrival. We try our best to provide the opportunity for all campers to participate in every activity available for their age group by rescheduling activities as needed.

## HOW DO I COMMUNICATE WITH MY CHILD?

### -BY MAIL:

Receiving mail is one of the highlights of the week for many campers. Mail is distributed each day between lunch and rest time. Please address mail in the following way:

**[Camper Name and Group\*]  
Cedarkirk  
1920 Streetman Drive  
Lithia, FL 33547**

\* Group info is provided at Check-In

### -BY E-MAIL:

You may also email messages to your child during their time at camp. Letters may be emailed to [camper@cedarkirk.org](mailto:camper@cedarkirk.org). Please limit the email to one page in length. We do not print attached files. Include your camper's name and Group in the subject line.

## HEARING FROM YOUR CAMPER:

Parents always like to hear from their camper and are often disappointed if they don't receive a letter. To encourage letter writing, send a few self-addressed and stamped postcards or envelopes to camp with your child so they can tell you about all the fun things they've done.

Your camper can also write or draw messages on an email sheet and we will email those to the address you provide. One of the emails you'll receive prior to your camper's session will have the email sheet attached. Please print a few and send them along with your camper to use during their week with us.

# HELPFUL INFO & FAQs (CONT.)

## CARE PACKAGES:

If you wish to send a care package to your child, consider including puzzles, comic books, stuffed animals, note cards, etc. We ask that you do not send snacks or other food items as they tend to attract bugs and critters into our cabins and lodges.

## PHONE CALLS/OUTSIDE EMERGENCIES:

Campers are not typically allowed to make or receive phone calls. If there is a problem or emergency concerning your child you will be contacted by a staff member immediately. If you have an emergency at home and need to contact us, please call **813.681.1354** to reach an on-duty staff member. We will quickly relay any important messages to your camper.

## CELL PHONES:

In order to maintain a community-focused program and minimize distractions, we do not allow campers to keep cell phones at camp. If your camper brings a cell phone to camp, it will be confiscated, stored securely, and returned at the end of their week.

## DO YOU HAVE MEDICAL STAFF AVAILABLE?

Yes. We have a health care specialist on site each week to assist your child with any medical needs. All of our summer staff are certified in first aid, CPR, and the use of an AED. Emergency response personnel are located minutes from the camp gate and a regional hospital is just over 10 miles away.

## CAMP FOOD:

Meals at camp are nutritionally-balanced and prepared by qualified, experienced staff. Fresh fruit is available to campers throughout the day and a snack is provided each evening. We do accommodate a variety of special diets, including vegetarian and gluten-free, and we are peanut-free in the summer. Please make sure any requests or restrictions are noted during the online registration process. All campers participate in a few cookouts each week and will have a role in preparing those meals for their group.

## VISITORS:

We do not allow visits to camp by parents and friends. Your child is at camp for only a short time and most visits tend to disrupt the dynamics of your child's group and bring on feelings of homesickness. And, for the security of all campers, we do not allow anyone on site who has not been approved by a director. If you would like a tour of the site, please contact our office and we will be happy to arrange one prior to the start of camp.

## MY CHILD HAS SPECIAL NEEDS:

We strive to provide the best possible experience for every camper, but we are not set up as a camp for children with special needs. If you would like to see whether Cedarkirk can accommodate your camper's needs, please contact a director to chat about whether or not we can provide a camp experience for your child. We always want to help our campers feel as comfortable as possible, so please make sure to note any needs your camper may have during the registration process.

**FIND MORE INFO AND FAQ'S ON THE "PARENTS' PAGE" OF OUR WEBSITE.**





# CONTACT INFORMATION

## **CEDARKIRK CAMP & CONFERENCE CENTER**

1920 Streetman Drive  
Lithia, FL 33547



**PHONE**  
**WEB**  
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**INSTAGRAM**

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