



Conversations to Have Before Camp

Camp is a very new and different experience for many kids, and while this may be an exciting adventure for some, other kids may have difficulty adjusting to the change in schedule, environment, and people. A great way to help kids prepare in advance for the transition is by having intentional conversations to help them imagine what camp is like and process how to respond to different situations that may come up.

We recommend having several conversations with your child leading up to camp with the goal of covering a 1-3 of topics at a time, depending on how confident your child feels about each topic. This guide includes sample paragraphs of what you could say to your child as well as follow up questions to help your child process and prepare. If you or your child have additional questions, please let us know! You can talk to your campus kids pastor or email suzanne.martel@oneandall.church.

Sleeping Away From Home: Kids camp is a multi-day, overnight experience. This means you will be away from home for 4 days in a row and sleeping 3 nights in a new place. There will be a few adult leaders and several kids their age sharing the same cabin, so there may be some new smells, sounds, and sights to get used to when trying to fall asleep and wake up in the morning. Sharing space with new people can be challenging, but you can do it!

- Have you ever spent the night away from home before? What about away from your parents? How did that feel?
- What can you do if you have trouble falling asleep at night?

- What are some ways you can communicate with the people around you if something is bothering you?
- What can you do to be a good cabin-mate to the people around you?

Meeting New People and Feeling Safe: The adult leaders and other kids may not be people you know right now, but they are there to take care of you and become your friends!

- What are some ways that you can get to know the people you will meet?
- What are some activities you are excited to do with the friends you make at camp?
- Is there anyone you already know that will also be going to camp?
- What can you do if you start feeling homesick or missing family and friends?
- If someone is in your personal space or is doing something that you don't like, how do you respond?
- If you feel unsafe or uncomfortable, what should you do?

Taking Care of Yourself, By Yourself: Review their bathroom, getting ready, and morning/night routines so they are ready to do them by themselves or with minimal assistance from an adult leader.

Keeping Track of Your Belongings: Review what is being packed so that the kids are familiar with what they are bringing with them. Also take time to review any strategies for keeping track of their own belongings, where to put clean/dirty clothes, and any labeling strategies that you've used to identify their belongings. We recommend that kids DO NOT bring any items that are valuable, expensive, or cannot be replaced (favorite toys, electronics, expensive sunglasses, etc.).

New Foods and Mealtimes: The meals they serve may not be what you are used to, and it will be up to you to make sure you are eating enough food to give you energy for the day.

- Do you have any food allergies, or foods that you should not eat?
- What can you do if you are given something to eat that you've never eaten before, or something you do not like?

The Great Outdoors: The camp is located in a forested mountain area, so there are bugs and animals that you may encounter, but the church leaders and camp staff are there to keep you safe and help if you do get bug bites or see any wildlife.

- Is there anything that makes you nervous about being at camp?

Swim Test and Water Activities: There is a pool and a man-made lake with activities like a giant water slide, water obstacle course, kayaks, diving board, and more. The pool and lake are both staffed with multiple trained lifeguards to keep you safe, but they do require every kid to take a swim test before entering the water. During the swim test, you will swim in the lake from the shore, out to a lifeguard, and back. If you are not able to complete the swim test, you can still participate, but you will have to wear a life vest while in the water.

- How confident are you at swimming?
- Do you want to practice for the swim test before you go to camp?
- How will you feel if you have to wear a life vest?

Prayer and Emotional Health: Prayer is a great way to remember that God is always with us, and that He loves us. There may be times when you feel scared, nervous, or homesick. There will also be times when you feel joyful, excited, or energized! No matter what, we can always talk to God and ask Him to help us have a great day and a great time at camp.

- Camp is a fun time, but also a time to get to know God more. How does that make you feel?
- What are some strategies you can use to calm down if you are feeling strong emotions?
- Let's practice praying. (Both the parent and the kid(s) should take turns praying).