



# Some tips for you and your first time camper!

First-time campers face a variety of new experiences, new faces and for some, homesickness. If your child has never been to a sleep-away camp before, here are some ideas to help you (and them) make the most of their camp experience.

## Preparation

- They take their cue from you. If you are overly concerned about them becoming homesick while at camp, they most likely get homesick.
  - Keep positive: If they are coming with a friend, talk about the fun they are going to have together; create interest and excitement about the different activities they'll get to participate in (swimming, crafts, food, boats, fishing... ); and talk about why they are coming (and wanted to come) to Camp.
  - Don't get them thinking they won't like it and will want to leave by reassuring them with "If you don't like it, we'll come get you." Assume that your child will give Camp a try this year and will make it through the session. This prevents setting the child up for an unhappy and early departure from Camp.
- Staff is prepared to help your child overcome their case of the "lonelies" and make the most of their Camp experience. Phone calls home by campers are, in most cases, restricted to emergencies. Typically, if severe homesickness occurs, parents are contacted by Camp staff to discuss the situation.
- If your child is coming with a friend, plan some "mock camp" overnights prior to Camp. And also, when possible, arrange for the kids to travel together to Camp so they will be able to settle in with a familiar face.
- Send along stationary and self-addressed, stamped envelopes for them to write home. Or even send along a notebook for them to journal what they did each day.
- Send a letter or package on the Friday or Saturday prior to the camp event to ensure that they have something at Monday's mail call. You can also drop off letters and care packages on Registration Day. Make sure it is marked clearly with your child's name and the session they are attending.

## While They Are With Us

- Keep in touch with them via mail. This will let them know they aren't forgotten and keep them in tune to what is going on at home.
  - Each cabin holds a maximum of 12 people, so if you are sending something for them to "share" plan accordingly. Ideas for "sharing" include: wrapped candy, stickers, etc. We ask that you refrain from sending unwrapped food, gum, squirt guns, or valuables.
- If possible, plan to attend the closing rally at 10:00 the last morning (3:00 for Adventurers 1). It means a lot to the kids and will give you a brief snapshot of the things they have learned and experienced during their time at camp.