



# Advance Camp Program Overview

## Mission

Advance Camp is a communally oriented Rite of Passage program which exists to develop disciples who are:

- **Resilient:** Able to persevere through challenges, trusting in God's strength as promised in James 1:2-4: "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."
- **Equipped:** For the journey ahead, drawing on the Truth of Ephesians 4:12: "to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up," and 2 Timothy 3:17: "so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."
- **Grounded:** In their God-given identity, standing firm as in Colossians 2:6-7: "So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness."
- **Eager:** to live out their faith, echoing the spirit of Romans 12:11: "Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord."

## Spiritual Theme

- For morning watch, your campers have spent time reading through the Gospel of John and a selected Psalm each day and thinking through purposeful questions in a Morning Watch guide. Feel free to ask your camper about their Morning Watch Guide!
- Advance Camp's theme program verse is "The Love of Christ Compels Us", from 2 Corinthians 5:14-21. For Solid Rock, campers are invited to memorize it.
- Cabin Impacts were based around three big questions: Cabins journeyed through scripture focusing on the questions and truths of "Who is God?", "Who am I?", and "How do I live in light of that?" in order to build our lives on the only firm foundation, the love of God in Jesus! Each session ends with looking ahead to High School and how the camper wants to build their life on the Truth that they have experienced and lived into.

## Programmatic Highlights

**Vespers:** A time of worship and testimony on Sunday nights focused on the themes of Advance Camp.

**Fireside Fellowship:** A time for campers to ask questions and explore together what it means to be a follower of Christ as they enter High School.

**Commissioning Service:** A celebration marking the end of camp in which the counselor names each of their campers in front of their peers. The name given is rooted in scripture and incorporates strengths they have seen in the camper and how they want to encourage them to grow in the Lord. Ask your camper about their name and what it means to them, and how it might shape their journey ahead! This commissioning is more than a ceremony; it is a sending, a reminder that each camper leaves camp not just with memories, but with a new sense of who they are and their purpose in Jesus as they experience a deeper relationship with Him.



## **The Wilderness Trip: Their Story of Discovery**

Imagine your child, boots laced and backpack loaded, stepping beyond the familiar HoneyRock grounds and into the beauty of the Nicolet National Forest. The air is fresh with pine, and possibility! For many, this is their first time journeying away from the comfort of camp and familiar campsites, venturing onto the winding trails of the Hidden Lakes Trail System, a place where cell signals fade, ancient hemlocks tower overhead, and friendships and faith deepen.

Each day on the trail is a new adventure! Campers learn to read a map and lead a hike, purify water from a clear-running stream, and cook meals over a crackling fire or camp stove. Laughter echoes through the trees as cabins work together to pitch tents and share their stories under the stars. In these moments, leadership isn't just taught—it's practiced, as campers encourage one another up steep hills and through unexpected challenges.

Evening brings a quiet awe as the group gathers by one of the many namesake hidden lakes, reflecting on the day's journey and God's presence in creation. Here, surrounded by the wild outdoors of northern Wisconsin, campers discover not only the strength of their cabin community, but also a deeper sense of God's nearness, and their own resilience.

Session 1 embarks on a five-day, four-night adventure; Session 2 on a three-day, two-night journey. Both are unforgettable rites of passage, where the wilderness becomes a different kind of classroom, and every mile walked is a step toward lasting faith, Christian friendship, and a new realization: "I can do it!"

## **Spiritual Growth at Home & Transition to High School**

As your camper returns from Advance Camp, you have a unique opportunity and core role to help them process and integrate their experience. Meaningful conversations can deepen what God has begun this summer! Consider asking:

- "What was your favorite part of trip? Why?"
- "How did you see God at work in your cabin?"
- "What did you learn about yourself and about God?"
- "How do you want to live differently as you enter high school?"

To continue the journey, consider reading 2 Corinthians 5:14-21 together, reflecting on what it means to be "a new creation" in Jesus! You might also revisit a favorite Psalm or chapter of John's gospel from Morning Watch, using it as a simple family prayer or blessing for the week ahead.

As your child prepares for high school, there are all sorts of ways you can help! You could walk alongside them by encouraging open dialogue, praying together, reading the scriptures together, or you could bless your child with affirming words about their God-given identity and the strengths you see in them.