



13485 Green Valley Rd.
Sebastopol, CA 95472
www.mtgilead.org
707-823-4508

PARENT GUIDE

WELCOME TO CAMP!

We are honored that you chose to join us for summer camp! Our hope is that this guide will provide you with an overview of our camp, answer frequently asked questions, and provide valuable information to assist you and your child in preparing for a week at Mt. Gilead. Our top priority is keeping both campers and staff safe and healthy.

Mt. Gilead is one of the best places for your child to spend time this summer! We are passionate about providing outstanding learning experiences that teach independence, decision-making skills and teamwork; all in a Christ-centered environment. Camp is a place where character is developed, friendships are formed and fun memories are made that last a lifetime.

We look forward to serving you!



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

HOW DO I PAY MY CAMPER'S BALANCE?

ONLINE: Go to the online camper dashboard where you registered for camp. You can navigate to the dashboard by clicking "register" on the top menu of the Mt. Gilead website www.mtgilead.org

BY PHONE: Call our office (707) 823-4508 and we are happy to process your payment.

WHAT ABOUT MEDICATIONS?

All medications (including vitamins, over the counter medications etc.) **MUST** be presented to the camp nurse **IN THE ORIGINAL CONTAINERS**. Our nurses will be unable to give your child's medications, vitamins or supplements without the original container. This is mandated by the Sonoma County Public Health Department.

HOW DO I SEND MY CAMPER MAIL?

Please address mail as follows: **Camper's Name, Camp Child is Attending**
13485 Green Valley Rd., Sebastopol, CA 95472

Mail is passed out at meals Monday–Thursday. Please plan ahead and make sure to give a couple of extra days for mail to get here so your campers do not miss it.

HOW DOES MY CAMPER PURCHASE ITEMS FROM THE GIFT STORE OR SNACK SHACK?

Campers may purchase items using **GIFT CARDS BOUGHT AT CHECK-IN ON SUNDAY**. Of course, your camper can make purchases at both locations with cash, debit or credit cards as well. Parents will be able to check their camper's gift card balance throughout the week by taking a picture of the gift card on Sunday and using the QR code whenever they would like to check their current balance. Gift Cards are reloadable so long as the parent has a picture of the back of the gift card, containing the card number. You may add money to your camper's card by calling the main office.

WHEN IS CAMPER DROP OFF AND PICK UP?

DROP OFF: In order to help alleviate long lines for Sunday check-in, please make an effort to arrive during the time that coordinates with the first letter of your camper's last name. This is not a requirement. Feel free to arrive during a different time slot if it is necessary for your family's schedule or carpooling plans. **Drop off time** for your camper's program will be verified via email prior to camp. **A-I:** 4:00PM **J-R:** 4:30PM **S-Z:** 5:00PM

PICK UP: Friday closing chapel starts at 10:45am.

WHAT'S YOUR VISITOR POLICY?

For the safety of our campers and staff, Mt. Gilead has a **NO VISITOR POLICY**. If there is a specific need (e.g. to drop off forgotten items), contact Mt. Gilead office during business hours.

WHERE DO CAMPERS SLEEP?

Campers sleep in separate cabins (boys and girls). Each cabin has five bunk beds with restrooms and showers nearby. Camp counselors sleep in the same cabin as their cabin group. For more information about cabins see page 7.



WHAT TO EXPECT FROM CAMP

Mt. Gilead Summer Camp Mission

For campers to know and be transformed by Jesus Christ through authentic relationships, meaningful experiences and impactful environments.

Intentional Programs

Our camps are focused on the camper experience. We love our staff, but camp is all about campers learning about Jesus and having fun. We want to see campers become committed followers of Jesus Christ. Everything we do is to help campers understand who Jesus is and learn how to have a growing relationship with Him. This is why we do camp! Everything from meaningful chapel lessons to crazy camp games support this vision.

Biblical Truth

We believe the Bible is the authoritative truth, divinely inspired by God. The teaching of God's Word is central to our programming, and we look for creative ways to tie biblical principles to all aspects of our camps.

Church Partnership

We love the church, and our heart is to come alongside and support churches. Our desire is never to replace the work that churches are doing but to help them minister to their campers and students.

Memorable Experiences

Camp is a place where significant memories happen! Our programs are put together with that in mind. We know that campers may not remember everything that is taught in chapel or shared by their counselor, but they will remember how God worked in their lives and the highlights of their experience at camp for a lifetime.

FACILITIES

Mt. Gilead is a Christian camp & conference center in the Sonoma County redwoods located just outside Sebastopol, CA on 238 acres of land. Since our founding in 1963, we have hosted over half a million students and guests at summer camps, weekend conferences, outdoor education programs and church retreats.

Main Office

This is where you can interact with our staff during the week. You might visit if you need to drop off forgotten items, sign your camper out early, or clear up any financial questions at the end of the week. This is also where you will check in your camper if they need to arrive after the designated Sunday evening registration (please arrange with the office staff ahead of time). Our office staff are available in person Monday-Friday, 9AM-5PM



Main Chapel

This amphitheater-style building gets a theme makeover each summer. Our chapel is one of the most utilized buildings at camp. We have morning and evening chapel sessions, explain rules for games, and show our creative theme elements in this building.



Dining Hall and Dining Deck

Campers enter the Dining Hall with their cabin group, go through our food buffets, and then exit onto our dining hall deck to eat with their cabins and counselors. The Dining Hall is surrounded by redwood trees and has picnic tables for each cabin. All meals for all campers are served here (Various snacks may be served in other locations).



Playing Fields

We have a large field that we use for many of the awesome camp games that are a part of our morning recreation and evening programming. The field is also the location of our Giant Goliath Swing.



Recreation Canyon

Recreation Canyon has many of our camp activities such as: the zipline, climbing wall, pickleball court, craft cabin and our newly added human foosball.

Activity Centers see page 9

Housing Facilities see page 7

GETTING TO CAMP

PACKING LIST

BRING!

- Closed-toe shoes
- Flip-flops or sandals
- Bible
- Notebook
- Pen / pencil
- Clothes for a week including:
 - clothes for messy game
 - warm clothing/ jacket
 - swim suit (please see dress code)
- Towel
- Toiletries
- Sunscreen
- Bug spray
- Sleeping bag
- Pillow
- Flashlight
- Insulated water bottles

Please see our dress code guidelines for notes on camp-appropriate clothing.

Do NOT Bring

- Cell phones
- Tablets/mp3 players
- Other electronic items
- Knives and weapons
- Alcohol
- Controlled and recreational substances
- Matches/lighters
- Fireworks

Optional:

- Camera
- Cabin Decorations
- Snacks

ARRIVAL DAY: Check-in process

1. CHECK-IN TIMES

We have staggered check-in times. This is a time-slot for arrival based on your camper's last name. Information on your time-slot will be sent out via email about a week prior to registration day.

2. PARK

This year, we will no longer be parking on our ballfield. Our staff will direct you to the best available parking spot. Once you park, please ensure you bring your luggage and proceed to the marked check-in tents in our central camp.

3. CHECK-IN NEAR CHAPEL

Staff will assist with checking in your camper. Please ensure that all forms are filled out and signed online and that your balance is paid in full before arriving at registration. Your camper will receive a wristband and their cabin assignment at this time.

4. GIFT CARDS

Staff members will be assisting in the purchase of gift cards at a registration station and in our Gift Store which will be open for the duration of drop-off. Gift cards are the main way your camper will be able to purchase any items at our Gift Store and Snack Shack, but we are also accepting cash, debit and credit cards.

5. HEALTH SCREEN & MEDICATION CHECK-IN

Throughout the registration process, our Health Supervisor and First Aid team will be actively involved in health-screening all campers. This includes a short questionnaire, visual evaluation and a lice check. At the First Aid Station, our Health Supervisor and First Aid team will collect medications your camper will need throughout the week. **All medications must be presented in their original containers.** First Aid staff will allow campers to keep insulin, epi-pens and inhalers after they are checked-in. Once your camper has been health screened, they will receive a sticker to put on their wristband.

6. DROP OFF LUGGAGE

Place your luggage in the luggage trailer compartment that corresponds to your camper's cabin number.

7. MEET THE COUNSELORS

The last step is to meet your camper's counselor! Our counseling staff will be gathered in either our Event Tent or our Forest Chapel areas, behind the Main Chapel building. Our counseling staff will be on-hand, ready to respond to any particular questions you may have for them personally and welcome your camper to Mt. Gilead.

GETTING TO CAMP

ARRIVAL DAY: After Parents Leave (HS/JH/JR)

DINNER

After check-in, campers meet at the dining hall for dinner.

CAMP PHOTO

The full-camp photo is taken around 7pm on Sunday. Only campers present at that time will be included in the photo. These full-camp photos will be available for pre-order. Information regarding this pre-order will be shared by email, or can be clarified by calling our main office. A photo of your camper with only their cabin group and counselor will be taken later during the week. You will receive one complimentary copy of this photo for your camper at the end of the week.

MOVE INTO CABINS

Campers will now have a chance to unpack and get settled into their cabins. We transport the campers' luggage from the drop-off at registration to the respective cabin areas while they are enjoying dinner and getting to know their cabin group.

CHAPEL AND EVENING PROGRAM

We have an exciting opening program planned! Our first chapel includes an especially energetic live or video production element. This is an entertaining time that helps set the energy for the entire week.

This schedule reflects a common first day format. Order of events and times may vary.

SHOPPING AT CAMP

- Our Snack Shack and Gift Store are usually open during daily free time.
- Campers may purchase items using GIFT CARDS bought at check-in on Sunday. Of course, your camper can make purchases at both locations with cash, debit or credit cards as well. Parents will be able to check their camper's gift card balance throughout the week by taking a picture of the gift card on Sunday and using the QR code whenever they would like to check their current balance. Gift Cards are reloadable so long as the parent has a picture of the back of the gift card, containing the card number. You may add money to your camper's card by calling the main office.
- Please be advised that Mt. Gilead and its staff ARE NOT responsible for lost or stolen gift cards. We will provide lanyards when gift cards are purchased for campers to wear around their neck that can hold their gift card.
- To provide additional shopping money for your camper, simply call our office during work hours. It is important to note that we will not be refunding the balance left on your camper's gift card, however, our cards will not expire and can be used at future events or summer camps when the Gift Store is open.
- Our Gift Store is usually open on registration day and at the end of the week immediately following the closing service and check-out.

ENJOYING CAMP

DAILY SCHEDULE SAMPLE

8:30 Breakfast
9:15 Chapel
10:15 Group Discussion
10:45 Game
12:30 Lunch
1:30 Cabin Time
2:00 Organized Recreation
3:00 Free Time
5:30 Dinner
6:30 Game
8:00 Chapel
9:00 Group Discussion
10:00 Lights Out

** Times will vary depending on the age group*

KIDS CAMP DAILY SAMPLE SCHEDULE

8:00 Breakfast
9:00 Chapel
10:00 Cabin Discussion
10:30 Game
12:00 Lunch
1:00 Rotation #1
2:00 Rotation #2
3:00 Rotation #3
3:15 Chapel
4:00 Cabin Discussion
4:30 Dinner
6:00 Movie Night
8:00 Lights Out

Kids Camp rotations may include: crafts, hiking, pool time, basketball court games, field games, drama/music class and other recreational activities.



Cabin exterior



Cabin interior



Lodge interior

HOUSING

ROOMMATE ASSIGNMENTS

During registration, you can request up to two cabin mates per camper. A significant number of campers place cabin mate requests every week. We try our best to accommodate as many of these requests as possible, but they are not guaranteed. Space is limited in each cabin. Our hope is that your camper will have the opportunity to enjoy their current friendships while making new ones, regardless of their cabin assignment.

CABINS

Each cabin has five bunk beds with mattresses. Bathroom facilities are close by (at Fir Lodge) and additional portable restrooms are located throughout the cabin areas. The two cabin areas are divided by our main road, with a fence bordering the girls cabin area. Most of our cabins are open-air, tent-style, and have canvas coverings that roll up and latch down. There are typically 7-9 campers with 1 counselor per cabin. Campers may be housed with their counselor in Fir Lodge in case of cabin renovations

BATHROOM FACILITIES

Our Fir Lodge restrooms have individual shower stalls with doors to ensure your child's privacy and safety, with an additional shower trailer located behind Fir Lodge with private stalls. Additionally, there are restrooms available near our pool and in the central part of camp.

ENJOYING CAMP



MEALS

Campers and their cabin mates go through the buffet line in the Dining Hall and enjoy their meal outside with their counselors on the dining hall deck. We are also ready and able to adapt our meal service plan, if necessary, according to county guidelines at the time of serving your camper.

Special Dietary Needs

We work closely with parents and campers to accommodate food allergies and dietary needs. Please be sure to note any dietary restrictions in your camper's Campwise account under the Camper Medical Information Form so we can plan accordingly and have adequate quantities of specialty food items on hand for your child. While gluten-free, vegetarian, and vegan options are available at every meal and clearly labeled, we are **unable to fully accommodate campers with Celiac disease**. Our kitchen handles gluten-containing ingredients, and we cannot guarantee the absence of cross-contamination. However, we do provide a dedicated fridge in the dining hall specifically for Celiac campers who need to bring their own food.

SAMPLE MENU

BREAKFAST

- Pancakes
 - Scrambled Eggs
 - Bacon
 - Oatmeal
 - Fresh Fruit
- OR
- French Toast
 - Scrambled Eggs
 - Sausage
 - Granola & Yogurt
 - Fresh Fruit

LUNCH

- Hamburger Bar
 - Hot Dogs
 - Fruit
 - Chips
- OR
- Taco/Burrito Bar
 - Assorted toppings
 - Fresh Fruit

DINNER

- Spaghetti
 - Steamed Broccoli
 - Breadsticks
 - Salad Bar
- OR
- Grilled Chicken
 - Rice
 - Steamed Veggies
 - Salad Bar

EVENING SNACKS

- Fresh Baked Cookies
- Fruit Snacks/Goldfish and Fresh Fruit

Subject to change, only certain items will be available each day.

LAST DAY SCHEDULE SAMPLE*

7:30-9:00
Clean up and move out

9:00-10:00
Breakfast

10:00
Final Cabin Discussion: Time for our campers and their cabin group to reflect on what they have learned.

10:50
Closing Chapel and Parent Program: Typically consists of worship and camp songs, a final message from our speaker, parent announcements and a highlight video of the week.

11:30
Camper Pickup: Check your camper out with their counselor. Gift store will be open.

We will no longer be parking on our ballfield. Our staff will direct you to the best available parking spot. Once you park, please proceed to our normal check-out location in our central camp.

** This schedule format typically applies to our older student overnight programs, not our Kids Camp programs.*

ACTIVITIES

**JUNIOR HIGH &
HIGH SCHOOL ONLY**

Giant Swing

Our biggest recreational element, the swing seats 4 campers 60-feet above the ground.



Gel Blasters

The perfect mix of excitement and competition! Campers have the chance to battle it out against friends.

**JUNIOR CAMP,
JUNIOR HIGH &
HIGH SCHOOL ONLY**

Zip Line

Zip down with your friend on our 400-foot duel zip line.



Climbing Wall

Reach new heights! Climb our 32-foot climbing wall.



Archery

Our archery range can accommodate up to 6 archers at a time.

ALL CAMPS

Swimming Pool

150-person capacity swimming pool with diving board.



Gaga Ball

Dodgeball with a twist

Availability of activities may vary.

ACTIVITIES

ALL CAMPS

Human Foosball

Enjoy our newest recreation element with your friends!



ALL CAMPS

Craft Cabin

Campers have access to classic crafts including lanyards, friendship-bracelets.

Tetherball

Three Tetherball poles, are located near the basketball courts.



Nine Square

A twist on the classic games of volleyball and four square.

Basketball

Two full covered courts



Snack Shack

Candy, smoothies, shakes and snacks are available for purchase during free time.

Pickleball

A fun sport combining elements of tennis, badminton and ping pong



Carpetball

Knock other player's billiard balls off the table by rolling a cue ball. It's like bowling with billiard balls.

Horseshoes

Old-fashioned fun for young and old alike!



Volleyball

Play with a team or just a few friends.

CAMPER CARE



Homesickness

Homesickness can be an unfortunate reality of overnight camping, but it can also provide a unique opportunity for campers to develop a sense of independence.

Our counseling staff go through an extensive training before the summer begins, which includes strategies for helping with a homesick camper. If a camper becomes homesick, our counselors will do their best to comfort them. If the feeling persists, the program leader or manager will coordinate with the camper, their counselor and parents in order to find the best strategies and solutions to help that camper through the week.

We have campers every session who will wrestle with some level of homesickness, but it is rare that a camper will need to be sent home. Campers who can 'stick it out' can often gain an additional level of pride and self-confidence. Many, after the success of the first night, experience no more problems the rest of the week.

Here are some of the ways we approach this expected challenge:

1. **REDIRECTION:** Distraction can be a helpful tool in redirecting our campers' focus. Our schedule is intentionally designed to keep the campers having fun, while also allowing for breaks and meaningful discussion. Reminding a camper of the next exciting activity is often a great motivator.
2. **GOALS:** Helping a camper set personal goals can help them feel in control of their emotions. When they do experience homesickness, we encourage them to set a reasonable goal such as spending one night at camp without asking to call home. Most campers can do one night!
3. **COMMUNITY:** Homesickness often arises when campers realize they are without the loving family unit they know and trust. Understanding that they have a similar loving community here at camp can make all the difference!

If a camper continues to have an exceptionally difficult time, one of our program managers will call the parent and come up with a plan of action. You know your child best, and we want your insight as to what will work best for them!

CAMPER CARE

How can parents help their child prevent homesickness before coming to camp?

- Talk about it before coming to camp. It is good for campers to know that missing home is normal! Let them know that you can miss home and still have a great week at Mt. Gilead.
- Be mindful of how you (and other family members) express your feelings to your child. You certainly love and will miss them, but you know they will have an awesome time and can't wait to hear about it! Handling their own feelings of homesickness can be enough of a challenge for young campers without also feeling responsible for the feelings of others. Some examples of observations to avoid:
 - "I don't know if I can spend a week without you!"
 - "Your little sister will have to get ready for bed all by herself!"
- Avoid reassuring your child by telling them that you will pick them up if they feel homesick. You may certainly arrange to pick up your child whenever you feel best! However, students often cling to this knowledge as a quick "out", for not talking through their emotions. They lose the motivation to work through the challenge of missing home.
- Set goals with your camper! Encourage them to make new friends, try new things and learn new things! Let them know what specific parts of camp that you'd like to hear about.

Healthcare

Mt. Gilead always has medical professionals available to campers. We generally have two nurses at camp each week who are currently licensed in the state of California. We have standing orders for care that have been signed by a doctor and approved by the Sonoma County Health Department. Additionally, our weekly team works under our summer Health Supervisor. The Health Supervisor is a licensed RN, MD or NP who manages our nurse staff and ensures we comply with all requirements of our standing orders. Most importantly, they ensure that we provide exemplary care to meet the individual needs of both campers and camp staff.

Medications

All camper medications must be given to the nursing staff in their original containers upon check-in. Campers will be allowed to keep certain medications at the discretion of our nursing staff (e.g. insulin, epi pens, and inhalers). Medications are dispensed to campers during the week per their guardian's instructions. Please pick up your camper's medications when you check them out, prior to leaving camp. If medications are left behind, it is your responsibility to pick them up. Medications left with Mt. Gilead will be kept for two weeks and then properly disposed of.

Illness and Injuries

Illnesses and injuries happen! While we do not call home every time a camper visits the nurse, we will ensure parents are informed of their camper's well-being when a significant injury or illness occurs. Allowing sick campers to remain at camp, even in isolation, is not permitted according to the Health Department. Campers who have a fever accompanied by nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea must go home until symptoms have been resolved for at least 24 hours, at which time they can return to camp. If a child or staff member reports symptoms of COVID-19, our Health Supervisor will follow the current recommended procedures and policies set forth by the county health officials.

SAFETY



Water Safety

Mt. Gilead employs lifeguards who have professional certification through the American Red Cross. The swimming pool area remains locked when there are no lifeguards on duty. All swimming happens in a chlorinated swimming pool that is maintained and balanced daily.

Camp Staff

We recognize that our staff are a huge part of the campers' experience. The majority of our summer team are returning staff members, past campers or close friends with full-time or trusted summer staff members. We prefer to hire staff that are recommended by people who we know and trust.

Hiring Staff

The search for summer staff is a year-round process that we take very seriously. Our strongest resource for hiring new team members is staff alumni. We have an extensive application process, including questions regarding beliefs, work history, education, faith walk and personality. Candidates must submit references to reflect both spiritual and professional capacity. Applicants interview with our program managers or alternate appropriate supervisors. We desire to get to know their background, experiences, qualifications and motivation for being

on staff. Once the application and interview process are complete, managers spend time praying and processing through our potential applicants.

Background Checks and Live Scan

All staff and volunteers, prior to being hired, are required to authorize Mt. Gilead to run a background check and they must be fingerprinted through the DOJ's Live Scan program. The background checks are completed by our HR department and are processed by Protect My Ministry. We also check references on all staff and volunteers.

Camper Supervision

Camper supervision is very important. We have a staff-to-camper ratio of 1:5 for our biggest camps. This includes counselors, activity staff and support staff. Most cabins will have 1 counselor with 8 or 9 campers. Kids Camps will generally have an even lower counselor-camper ratio. During daily free time, our cabins are locked and campers are encouraged to participate in our activities. We have staff that are assigned to monitor different areas throughout camp. Our staff always have an alert presence on the grounds while campers are under our care.

STAFF TRAINING



Training

We spend two weeks prior to camper arrival providing our summer staff with in-depth training. Some of our sessions cover the following topics:

Emergency Plans

Mt. Gilead has established plans for a variety of medical emergencies as well as natural disasters. We practice these plans with all staff. In the unlikely event that Mt. Gilead has to be evacuated, our evacuation plan involves transporting campers to the Graton Fire Department. If this becomes necessary, we will communicate via social media, email and by making phone calls. Should we need to execute one of our emergency plans, an 'emergency director' will oversee the plan. This position will typically be filled by Dave Gould, Mt. Gilead's Executive Director. Alternatively, it may be filled by a program manager, or another on-site manager.

First Aid Certifications

All staff who directly and regularly engage with campers are Red Cross First Aid certified prior to the start of camp. This includes CPR, First Aid, and AED training. Mt. Gilead has an on-site AED for use during cardiac emergencies.

Camper Protection

The protection of our campers is an integral part of our staff training. This includes bullying policies, mandatory reporting for child abuse, staff code of conduct and safety awareness trainings.

Hard Skills and Soft Skills

We work hard to make sure staff are well prepared both in terms of hard skills and soft skills. Examples of each covered during training:

Hard Skills

- Activity Training
- Challenge Course Training
- Group Dynamics
- Decision Making

Soft Skills

- Cabin Management
- Spiritual Formation
- Debriefing Learning Experiences
- Leading Bible Studies