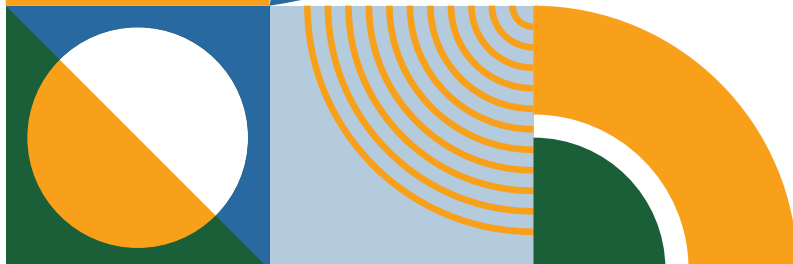




SUGAR CREEK CAMP & RETREAT CENTER

Day Camp Handbook

*"Where all generations encounter
Christ, experience God's grace, and
are empowered by the Holy Spirit to
go forth in faith"*



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Index

- At a Glance - Pg. 3
- Sample Schedule Pg. 4
- What is Day Camp? - Pg. 5
- Expectations - Pg. 7
- Afternoon Activities - Pg. 10
- Health & Food - Pg. 11
- Marketing - Pg. 13
- Recap - Pg. 14
- Planning Checklist - Pg. 15

AT A GLANCE

PROGRAM TIMES

Most Day Camps run
Monday - Thursday
9:00 am - 3:00 pm,
Friday 9:00 am - Noon.

But there is flexibility!
Want to run an evening
intergeneration day
camp? Or a 3 day camp
plus a day onsite at Sugar
Creek? Sugar Creek staff
will work with you!

WHO CAN COME?

Sugar Creek day camps
cater to rising
Kindergartners to 5th
graders. Some camps
may include a daycare or
preschool area staffed by
volunteers. Sugar Creek
encourages incorporating
Middle and High
Schoolers as volunteers
to engage the entire
congregation.

COST?

Sugar Creek sends at
minimum 3 counselors
for \$1200 + Mileage

This covers 30 capers

More staff can be sent
for an additional
\$400/staff person.

Sugar Creek also
provides supplies for
Bible studies, games,
and arts and crafts.

SUGAR CREEK PROVIDES

- **Trained Staff:** Experienced Sugar Creek summer counselors bring energy and leadership.
- **Curriculum & Program:** Includes Bible studies, songs, games, crafts, and themed activities.
- **Worship Leadership:** Daily worship, music, skits, and faith-sharing by staff.
- **Supplies:** Materials for crafts, Bible studies, and games/outdoor activities.

CONGREGATION RESPONSIBILITIES

- Camper sign-ups and registration
- Meals and snacks during the week
- Housing for Sugar Creek staff
- Afternoon activities or field trips

NEXT STEPS

- Pick your Day Camp date
- Register with Sugar Creek starting November 1
- Recruit volunteers
- Plan meals, housing, and activities

SAMPLE SCHEDULE

Time	Activity
8:30 am (or earlier)	Sugar Creek Staff & Volunteers Arrive, opening activities as campers arrive
9:00 am	Opening Worship
9:30 am	Bible Study
10:15 am	Snack
10:30 am	Craft & Games Rotation
11:15 am	Craft & Games Rotation
12:00 pm	Lunch
12:30 pm	Quiet Time
1:00 pm	Afternoon Activity (ideas on pg. 10)
2:30 pm	Closing Worship
3:00 pm	Campers Depart. Wrap up meeting with staff & volunteers.

What is Offsite Day Camp?

A Collaborative Ministry Opportunity

What is Sugar Creek Day Camp?

Day Camp is an extension of Sugar Creek's ministry, brought directly to your congregation. Our enthusiastic summer staff partners with local church leaders to create a week filled with fun, faith, and friendship. Together, we serve as role models, guides, and companions on the journey of faith.

What Happens at Day Camp?

Day Camp combines the excitement of camp with the heart of church ministry. Each day, campers experience:

- Bible study & worship
- Indoor & outdoor games
- Music & crafts
- Field trips & recreation
- Skits, songs, and creative fun

2026 Theme: Wear Love, Colossians 3:12–14

This summer, campers will explore what it means to “put on” love as part of their identity as God’s children. Through Bible stories, worship, and activities, they’ll practice Christ-like virtues—Kindness, Humbleness, Calmness, Steadfastness, and Forgiveness—discovering how love sustains us, weaves us together, and shapes our witness in the world.

A typical Day Camp runs Monday–Thursday, 9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m., and Friday, 9:00 a.m.–noon. (Schedules can be adjusted to meet your congregation’s needs.)

Who Can Attend?

Day Camp is designed for children who have completed Kindergarten through 5th grade. Perfect for younger children (K–1st) who may not be ready for overnight camp. Ideally, Day Camps are open to all children in your community, too!

Why Host Day Camp?

Day Camp offers your congregation a powerful way to connect with youth and families—both within the church and in the neighborhood. Many congregations find that half the children who attend are not already members. Benefits include:

- Fresh energy for youth ministry (new songs, skits, games, and worship ideas).
- Building meaningful relationships between kids, volunteers, and staff.
- Sharing God’s love in a welcoming, joyful way.
- Strengthening your congregation’s outreach and hospitality.

👉 Hosting a Day Camp is more than a week of fun, it’s a chance to clothe your community in God’s love and invite children to discover their place in God’s story.

Who Makes Day Camp Work?

It's a team effort!

- Sugar Creek staff — Young adults trained in youth ministry lead Bible studies, worship, music, skits, games, and activities.
- Campers — Bring their energy, curiosity, and excitement to the week.
- Church volunteers — Share time, leadership, and local knowledge to help the program run smoothly.
- Parents — Support the ministry by registering children and encouraging participation.

Together, we create an unforgettable Day Camp experience rooted in God's love!

What Does Day Camp Cost?

Day Camp is designed to be a shared investment in faith and community.

Base Fee: \$450 per counselor, with a minimum of \$1,350 per week (3 counselors for 30 campers).

Travel Costs: Mileage is covered by the hosting congregation

What's Included

- A trained Sugar Creek staff team (about a 10:1 camper-to-staff ratio)
- Round-trip staff transportation to and from camp
- All program materials: Bible studies, music, craft supplies, recreation equipment, and more
- Administrative support to help plan your customized program

Extras

Additional staff (beyond the standard ratio): \$450 per person, based on availability

Snacks, meals, special activity supplies, and fees for field trips (covered by the hosting congregation)

Registration Details

All Summer Camp Registration opens November 1. Registration for congregations is online at www.SugarCreekBibleCamp.org/Summer-Camp. Alternatively, you can contact the Sugar Creek office to register. Sugar Creek staff will send you a contract if a traveling day camp team is available. A non-refundable deposit is required within three weeks of receiving your contract to hold your Day Camp spot. The deposit is applied toward your total cost. If you cancel, the deposit is forfeited.

Sugar Creek Bible Camp is accredited by the American Camp Association (ACA), which ensures we follow national safety and quality standards—including appropriate camper-to-staff ratios. For the best staffing match, please keep your registration numbers as accurate as possible.

Needs & Expectations

Day Camp is a collaboration between your church and Sugar Creek Bible Camp. Together, we bring a fun, faith-filled experience right to your community—helping kids grow in their relationship with Christ while having a blast! We're not just visitors—we're teammates, working alongside you to create a meaningful and joy-filled week for your campers.

The Role of Your Church

Each congregation appoints a Day Camp Coordinator, the go-to person for planning and communication. This person partners closely with the Sugar Creek team before and during the week to help everything run smoothly. Coordinator responsibilities include:

- Serving as the main contact between your church and Sugar Creek.
- Coordinating transportation for outings (like a park, pool, or service project).
- Arranging meals & snacks—providing lunch for staff and daily snacks for campers.
- Arranging housing & meals for Sugar Creek staff (*more below*)
- Recruiting & organizing volunteers to assist with activities.
- Working with Sugar Creek staff to ensure safety and emergency plans are in place.
- Planning any optional afternoon activities to connect kids with your local community (see page 10 for ideas!).

Volunteers Make the Difference!

Each church provides adult and high school volunteers (about 1 per 10 campers) to support the week. Volunteers help with:

- Registration and check-in.
- Camper supervision & small group support.
- Lunch & snack breaks.
- Craft setup & cleanup (we'll bring supplies, but extra scissors and glue sticks are always appreciated!).
- Being an extra set of hands wherever needed!

Meet & Greet Before Camp

Sugar Creek staff will attend worship on Sunday. Please share in advance any desire to have them incorporated into worship leaders. We recommend hosting a short gathering on Sunday evening before Day Camp begins. This gives your volunteers and our staff a chance to meet, review the schedule, and get ready for an awesome week together.

Housing & Meals for Staff

If your church is more than 25 miles from Sugar Creek, our counselors will need a place to stay. Options include a church lounge, a basement, or a member's home. Beds are wonderful but not required, our staff bring sleeping bags and cots. A location near the church is best since counselors often share one vehicle. The host family does not need to provide all breakfasts and dinners for the staff; invite other members to host the staff, too!

DAY CAMP STAFF POLICIES (What we expect from our staff)

Throughout the week, our staff will:

- Lead programming – Bible studies, worship, music, games, crafts, and skits.
- Model Christian living – showing Christ's love through words, actions, and relationships.
- Partner with volunteers – working side-by-side to support and encourage campers.
- Ensure safety and well-being – following camp guidelines for supervision, health, and emergency procedures.
- Bring energy and enthusiasm – helping campers feel welcomed, included, and valued.
- Adapt to your setting – being flexible and responsive to local needs and schedules.

Leisure Time and General Expectations

The Day Camp schedule often includes free time in the afternoons, evenings, or early mornings, depending on the week. Sugar Creek team members use part of this time for evaluation, study, and preparation. We ask that each congregation provide about 30 minutes of quiet time daily so staff can recharge. Outside of program hours, most free time should be spent engaging with the congregation and community.

Being a Guest

Team members are guests of the congregation and are expected to respect the housing and meal arrangements provided. While they may have personal preferences or local connections, it's important to honor the plans set by the host church.

Suggested Weekly Free Time Rhythm

- Sunday Night: Team organizes and prepares for Monday. Extra time may be spent with host families.
- Monday Night: Team-building—examples include a group meal, faith discussion, bowling, or a movie.
- Tuesday Night: Community Night—attend a local, family-friendly event (tee-ball, swimming, etc.).
- Wednesday Night: Time with host families—sharing in everyday family activities.
- Thursday Night: Often a closing program or potluck. If scheduled for another night, use Thursday to clean and organize the church and Day Camp supplies. Always leave the space cleaner than you found it.
- Flexible Night: Adapt to opportunities to connect with youth or congregation activities.

Expectations for Day Camp Team Members

- Show respect and gratitude for host families.
- Return by 10:30 PM at the latest (or earlier if the family requests).
- Keep host families informed of evening plans, especially if leaving for activities.

Remember, Day Camp Team...

- ✓ You reflect Christ in the congregation and community.
- ✓ Your purpose is to serve the church and local community.
- ✓ Camper safety and well-being are always your top priority.
- ✓ You shape the experience—make it fun, welcoming, and meaningful.
- ✓ Rest matters—take time to recharge so you can give your best each day.
- ✓ Communicate openly and work through challenges together.
- ✓ Your words and actions share the Gospel with campers, adults, and one another.

Volunteer Roles

Volunteers from your congregation play a key role in making Day Camp a fun, safe, and faith-filled experience. Your support allows campers to grow, explore, and connect while Sugar Creek staff lead the programming.

Ways Volunteers Can Help

Welcoming & Registration

- Greet campers and families each morning.
- Assist with check-in, distributing name tags, and guiding campers to their groups.
- Bible Studies & Small Groups
- Support the Sugar Creek team by helping keep campers engaged.
- Encourage participation by joining in discussions, activities, and prayers.

Meals & Snacks

- Help prep and serve snacks or sack lunches.
- Assist with cleanup after meals.

Games & Activities

- Help run indoor and outdoor games, tag, and all-camp activities.
- Offer support during low-energy or high-energy activities depending on your comfort and interest.

Craft Projects

- Assist with setup, supervision, and cleanup for crafts.
- Provide extra supplies like scissors or glue sticks if available.

Worship & Special Programs

- Sit with campers during worship, skits, or songs.
- Encourage participation by joining in with enthusiasm.

Safety & First Aid

- Be prepared to help in case of emergencies.
- Follow staff guidance and safety protocols at all times.

Behind-the-Scenes Support

- Help organize supplies, props, or equipment.
- Take photos or document activities (with parental permission).
- Assist with transportation for off-site activities if needed.

Mentoring & Encouragement

- Be a positive role model for campers and younger volunteers.
- Offer encouragement, praise, and support throughout the week.

Afternoon Activities

Afternoon activities are a great way to build connections within your church and community while adding extra fun to the week! Get creative and use local resources—your congregation and town might have hidden talents or special opportunities to enhance the Day Camp experience.

Note: Any costs for extra activities (like pool fees) are the congregation's responsibility.

Activity Ideas

- ◆ Service Projects – Help others as Christ helps us! Clean up a park, paint fun designs on garbage bins while learning about recycling, or assist a local food pantry.
- ◆ Special Guests – Invite church or community members with unique skills: musicians, storytellers, woodworkers, artists, magicians, or even someone with an interesting job. Have them share how their faith connects to their talents!
- ◆ Visit a Nursing Home – Sing camp songs, perform a skit, play games, or bring a homemade treat to share.
- ◆ Church Carnival – Set up game booths with activities like face painting, ball toss, ring toss, jump contests, and more!
- ◆ Field Trips – Explore a local park, farm, zoo, bowling alley, or swimming pool.
- ◆ Nature Exploration – Take a walk to a nearby lake, pond, or forest and talk about the plants and animals you find.
- ◆ Scavenger Hunt – Create a themed list and send teams to find items around the church or park.
- ◆ Christmas or Easter in July (or June... or August!) – Celebrate with caroling, baking, crafts, tree decorating, egg hunts, or Easter crafts.
- ◆ Church Tour – Have the pastor or a leader walk kids through the church, explaining the meaning behind stained glass windows, candles, symbols, and artwork.
- ◆ Ice Cream Social – Because who doesn't love ice cream?
- ◆ Campfire/Bonfire – Gather for songs, stories, and even S'mores—Sugar Creek style!
- ◆ Visit Sugar Creek – Plan a day at camp! Hike the trails, play parachute games, go swimming, or take a hayride to meet the farm animals. (Contact Sugar Creek in advance to arrange this.)
- ◆ Olympics – Create wacky events like paper plate discus, straw javelin, water balloon shot put, and silly relay races.
- ◆ Museum Trip – Visit a local museum or cultural center.
- ◆ Progressive Stations – Set up different activities in various rooms or outdoor spots and rotate groups through each one.
- ◆ Treasure Hunt – Hide fun items around the church or community and send teams on a search!
- ◆ Water Carnival – Have kids bring swimsuits for an afternoon of splashy fun—water balloon tosses, relay races, and more!

Have another idea? Go for it! The goal is fun, fellowship, and faith-building—whatever fits your community best.

Health & Food Information

Health Information Forms

Parents or guardians must complete and sign a Health Information Form as part of registration. This form ensures that staff can provide safe and appropriate care for each camper. Forms should be collected by the Day Camp Coordinator before the first day of camp. A physical exam is not required, but any relevant health concerns, allergies, or special needs should be noted. Sugar Creek can provide a standard Health Information Form if your congregation does not have one.

The Day Camp Coordinator keeps forms accessible throughout the week and administers medications as directed by parents. *Note: Insurance companies recommend keeping health forms on file at the church for seven years.*

Insurance Information

Primary coverage: Camper's family insurance. Secondary coverage: Congregation's insurance.

Background Checks

Sugar Creek staff are required to have completed background checks before serving at Day Camp. We recommend that any volunteers age 18 or older from the congregation also complete a background check for the safety and well-being of campers.

Camper & Volunteer List

On Sunday night, please provide our team leader with a list of: Campers' names, genders, and grades (to assist with group planning) & Adult and youth volunteers helping during the week. This helps Sugar Creek staff organize groups, plan activities, and ensure proper supervision.

Field Trips & Costs

If your congregation plans to take campers on field trips (parks, pools, service projects, etc.):
The church is responsible for transportation and any associated costs.
Please arrange and confirm reservations in advance to ensure a smooth experience.
Sugar Creek staff will support supervision but cannot provide transportation.

Meals & Snacks

Daily Meals: Each camper should bring a sack lunch unless the church provides meals for everyone. If meals are provided by the church, the American Camp Association (ACA) requires perishable foods be refrigerated below 45°F.

Church-provided refreshments:

- Morning drink
- Noon drink
- Daily snack for campers

Hydration:

- Water should be accessible at all times to ensure campers and staff stay hydrated throughout the day.

Providing healthy meals, snacks, and easy access to water keeps campers energized and ready to fully participate in all activities.

Safety & Emergency Measures

- The team will always have a camp First Aid Kit on hand.
- The Congregational Day Camp Coordinator will keep camper health forms, which must be completed and turned in before the first session on Monday. These forms stay on file at the church for seven years.
- Team members should know where the nearest hospital, clinic, and emergency phone are located.
- A vehicle must be available at the Day Camp site, with a designated congregation member ready to transport an injured camper if needed.
- All games and activities should be carefully supervised to keep campers safe.
- When walking as a group to an activity, there should be:
 - One team member or volunteer leading the group
 - One team member at the back
 - Others spread out in the middle
 - If possible, someone should watch intersections for safety.
- If an injury or accident happens, the Day Camp Team Leader must document the incident and report it to the Sugar Creek Program Director and Health Officer after returning to camp. Serious incidents should be reported to Sugar Creek immediately by phone.
- Weather and other serious emergencies should be covered in the Sunday meeting with staff and volunteers. Please show Sugar Creek staff your storm shelters and other emergency equipment like fire extinguishers.

POLICIES FOR VEHICLE USE

Camp Vehicles:

- Camp vehicles may NOT be used to transport Day Camp kids.
- Team members cannot use camp vehicles for personal trips.
- Mileage must be recorded daily, from the start to the end of each trip.
- Personal stops (like a Walmart run or entertainment) must be noted so churches aren't billed for those miles.
- All drivers must have a valid driver's license.

Personal Vehicles:

- If a personal vehicle is used to transport Sugar Creek staff to a Day Camp, as agreed with Sugar Creek year round staff, mileage must be recorded.
- Every trip should be logged with miles driven and the reason for the trip (camp or personal).
- Reimbursement is given after Day Camp, but excessive or unnecessary driving won't be covered.

Marketing your Day Camp

To make sure your Day Camp gets the attention it deserves, spread the word as much as possible to parents, kids, the congregation, and the whole community. Let everyone know about the program so they can support it with prayers and participation.

Here are some ideas for getting the word out:

- Add Day Camp Dates to the Church Calendar – The sooner, the better!
- Post Day Camp Flyers – Place posters in high-traffic areas around the church to catch people's attention. Don't forget to include the Day Camp Coordinator's contact info!
- Send Invitations – Send an info letter to parents of kids who've completed grades K-5. Let them know they're welcome to invite friends, too—church membership isn't required! A follow-up phone call can be really helpful.
- Social Media Buzz – Create a Facebook event to get people excited and keep the momentum going.
- Church Bulletin – Include a short paragraph in the bulletin every couple of weeks, and more frequently as the camp dates get closer.
- Newsletter Article – Write an article for the church newsletter to get everyone pumped for Day Camp!
- Temple Talk – Give a brief talk during service to explain what Day Camp is all about and how to register.
- Press Release – Reach out to the local newspaper to get the word out in the community.
- Camp Sunday - Invite Sugar Creek to you! Staff can help lead worship, deliver a temple talk, or offer the sermon.

The more people hear about Day Camp, the more they'll be eager to get involved!

Sugar Creek staff are here to help you! Please contact program@sgrcreek.org for assistance as needed in crafting flyers, social media, and more.

RECAP

COORDINATOR

Your congregation's Day Camp Coordinator is the main contact and planner.

Responsibilities include organizing volunteers, coordinating meals and transportation, keeping camper health forms, and planning optional community activities.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers help make Day Camp safe, fun, and welcoming by:

- Greeting campers and assisting with registration
- Supporting Bible studies and small group activities
- Helping with meals, snacks, crafts, and games
- Participating in worship and special programs
- Assisting with safety, first aid, and behind-the-scenes support

HOUSING & MEALS

If your church is more than 25 miles from Sugar Creek, staff will need a place to stay—beds are nice but not required, as counselors bring sleeping bags.

Your church also provides meals for staff, and may provide lunches, snacks, or dinner for campers depending on the schedule, with water accessible at all times.

REGISTRATION OF CAMPERS

- Families complete registration forms for each camper, including Health Information Forms.
- Day Camp Coordinator collects all forms before the first day of camp.
- Volunteers assist with check-in and welcoming campers each morning.
- Provide a camper and volunteer list to the Sugar Creek team on Sunday night for planning and group assignments.

THURSDAY NIGHT PROGRAM

Thursday night usually features the closing program or a potluck, celebrating the week with campers, volunteers, and the congregation.

PUBLICITY

Promote your Day Camp to boost camper and volunteer participation using church bulletins, newsletters, social media, and word-of-mouth to share dates, registration details, and highlights.

Planning Checklist:

- Set the date for your Day Camp
 - Send times of programming to program@sgrcreek.org
- Send the deposit with the contract to Sugar Creek to reserve your date
- Publicize your event:
 - Put announcements in the bulletin
 - Post signs around the church
- Arrange transportation as needed
- Plan daily drinks and snacks for kids
- Write up a “Severe Weather Plan”
- Choose a “Registrar”
 - Make sure all campers have signed Registration Forms
- Recruit volunteers (around 1 for every 10 campers)
- Prepare a list of campers and volunteers to give to the Sugar Creek Day Camp Team Leader
- Plan with Sugar Creek Staff Afternoon Activities
 - Research field trip spots and make any necessary reservations
 - Estimate costs for field trip visits (if applicable)
 - Remind kids to bring any special gear like swimsuits for activities
- Remind kids to bring a sack lunch (if the church isn’t providing meals)
- Arrange housing, meals, and shower facilities for Sugar Creek Day Camp staff
- Have name tags ready for campers, staff, and volunteers

