



Camper Parent Packet 2010

Camp Office

Archangel Gabriel Orthodox Church
1237 Eraste Landry Road

Lafayette, LA 70506

Phone: 337-232-9808

Email: CampStThekla@gmail.com

Website: www.CampStThekla.org

Camp Site - Diakonia Center

455 Quail Ridge Road, Salem, SC 29676

Phone: 864.944.6788 Mobile: 704.906.9077

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Web Site: www.diakoniacenter.org

Greetings in the Name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

Congratulations on your child's acceptance to Camp St. Thekla 2010. This summer will be our 7th summer and I am sure will be filled with the excitement of meeting new people and experiencing first hand what it means to live an Orthodox Christian life in this world.

Our theme for this year's camp session is focused on good and proper stewardship of all of the things that God has given us. Throughout the lessons, we will explain what is meant by the word stewardship, focused on giving of our time, talent, and treasure. Deeper than this however, we hope to instill in the campers the desire to use their personal, unique gifts to the glory of God and for His kingdom. We truly feel that this is a very important facet of our spiritual life and our walk with Christ our Lord. With participation in the life of the Church, all people are able to discern their calling and ministry by God. As you prepare your child for camp, please keep in mind this theme and participate in the life of the Church as a family.

Camp is an exciting time for the entire family and something that affects everyone in the home. Please peruse this parent packet and begin to prepare your camper for the schedule of camp and what types of activities they will be participating in. This will bring a sense of familiarity when they arrive at camp, especially if they have not been away from home before.

Once you have familiarized yourself with the parent packet, if you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to meeting you this summer! May God continue to bless your Lenten season and please remember us in your prayers as we prepare for this summer's exciting program.

Your servant in Christ,

Fr. Philip Rogers, Camp Director
Camp St. Thekla
337-232-9808
CampStThekla@gmail.com

Camp St. Thekla Mission Statement

The mission of the Camp St. Thekla is to present to young people a living experience of the Holy Orthodox Faith, in their relationship with God and other campers in an uncluttered, natural environment. To accomplish this we will seek to bring young people to:

- ❖ Awareness of self and fellow man
- ❖ A broadening of their Orthodox life
- ❖ A greater awareness of their religion
- ❖ Good sportsmanship
- ❖ Growth in personal relationships and personal responsibility
- ❖ An appreciation of nature and a concern for the environment.

DIAKONIA "RETREAT" CENTER INFORMATION

The Diakonia Center is located in Upstate South Carolina in Oconee County near the towns of Salem, Seneca & Wahalla. It is north of Interstate 85 in extreme northwest South Carolina, located a little over 2 hours from downtown Atlanta, Georgia.

From Atlanta and Points West and South:

- Take I-85 North toward South Carolina
- Take SC exit 1 going north east on the Cherokee Foothills Scenic Highway 11; STAY ON HWY. 11 UNTIL YOU ARE ALMOST AT THE CENTER.
- You will pass through Westminster and then cross Highway 28 near Wahalla; go about 15 more miles past Hwy. 28.
- Watch for the CITGO station on your left; if you cross Highway 130, you have gone too far. Turn left at the CITGO station on to North Little River Road; go @ 2 miles.
- Watch for a brown Piedmont Forestry Resources sign; turn left at the sign onto Easy Street
- Go a little over 1/2 mile, and watch for the green DIAKONIA CENTER sign on your left. It is easy to miss; use your odometer. There is a corral and shelter for horses across the street from the entrance.
- Turn left into the Center and then left into the Parking lot. We will bring your luggage from the parking area with a golf cart. Just go down the gravel path to the dining hall and check-in.

From Charlotte and Points Northeast:

- Take I-85 South towards Gastonia
- Take SC Exit 92 West- Highway 11 (Cherokee Foothills Scenic Highway); STAY ON HIGHWAY 11 UNTIL YOU ARE ONLY 3 MILES FROM THE CENTER.
- Take Highway 11 West, passing through Chesnee and various crossroads towns; watch the signs carefully; there are a couple of right-hand turns at T-intersection; ALWAYS TAKE HWY. 11.
- There is one place near TABLE ROCK where you bear off to the LEFT STAYING ON Hwy. 11 (Hwy. 276 bears off to the RIGHT; DO NOT TAKE HWY. 276)
- You will pass Table Rock State park. Shortly after you cross the bridge over Lake Keowee, you will cross Hwy. 130. Continue @ 1 mile past Hwy. 130.
- Watch for the CITGO station on your right.
- Turn right at the CITGO station onto North Little River Road; go @ 2 miles
- Watch for a brown Piedmont Forestry Resources sign; turn left at the sign onto Easy Street
- Go a little over 1/2 mile, and watch for the green DIAKONIA CENTER sign on your left. It is easy to miss; use your odometer. There is a corral and shelter for horses across the street from the entrance.
- Turn left into the Center and then left into the Parking lot. We will bring your luggage from the parking area with a golf cart. Just go down the gravel path to the dining hall for check-in.
- The trip is approx. 160 miles from Charlotte and takes about three hours in normal traffic.

PREPARING FOR CAMP

The camp experience is like other important experiences in life: the better one is prepared, the more one gets out of the experience. This section covers all of the key areas that require attention before your camper leaves home.

CAMP LIFE

Just about everything about life at camp is different than life at home. Preparing your camper with as much information as possible will be helpful to their adjustment. While giving them a positive preview of their coming experience, let them know that life will be different, and that you want them to go to gain many new experiences.

Some of the areas to prepare them for would include the following:

- **Living Arrangements:** Campers live in a dorm style cabin with other cabins in the same building as them. Each cabin will consist of approximately 8 to 10 campers. One of the best aspects of the camp experience is learning to adjust to group living and getting along as part of a team.
- **Meals:** Breakfast, lunch, and dinner are eaten together as a campunity (camp+community) in our Dining Hall. Some items served will be things your child may never have tried before, while other items may be things they dislike. Rest assured, our dietician-reviewed menu is both nutritious and attempts to meet the variety of tastes of the kids. Because of our need to feed many people in a relatively short period of time, we are not able to handle special requests for meals. Help your camper by relaying your expectation is that they will try new things and eat what is served.
- **Independence:** Last but not least, one of the major adjustments campers experience is that being independent from parents, with typically no contact during the camping session. This can be one of the most positive experiences they can have at camp and one which can be invaluable in the process of growing up. Be aware that you as a parent may need to prepare for this as much-if not more-than your camper!

CAMP ACTIVITIES

Life at camp takes full advantage of our outdoor setting. Activities include field sports, swimming, canoeing, nature hikes, etc. If your child has any restrictions precluding any of these activities, please note those on the Health Form. Rainy days are a frequent occurrence and we try to continue programs as much as possible despite light rain, so rain gear (poncho or water proof jacket) is a must.

HEALTH CARE

The Healthy History and Medical Examination form is being sent with the Parent Packet and must be filled out in its entirety by you and the camper's doctor, and postmarked to our office no later than **June 1, 2010** or your camper's spot may be forfeited. Any special medical conditions or allergies must be noted on the form. Please do not allow embarrassment to prevent us from providing adequate care for your child in your absence. The form is confidential and the information is only available to the Camp Director, the Health Staff, your camper's counselor and only those program staff members who would need to know any information pertinent to participants in their program. A Registered Nurse is in residence during the camp session to take care of any health care needs, including the dispensing of all medication. All medication (prescription and over the counter) will be collected upon arrival at camp, so please pack them in an accessible location. Prescription medication must be brought in the original prescription container.

INSURANCE

All campers should be covered by their family policy; while Camp St. Thekla will act as guarantor, any costs incurred by the Camp in providing required treatment for doctor's appointments, prescriptions, etc, will be billed to the camper's parents.

PACKING FOR CAMP

DRESS CODE

While camping is of its nature informal, Christian modesty should be your guiding principle when packing for your child's stay. Clothing should not be excessively revealing as in appropriate clothing will not be permitted to be worn. Inappropriate clothing includes, but is not limited to: open back tops, low-cut fronts, skin tight clothing, half shirts, two-piece bathing suits, tank tops with less than two finger-width straps, shorts cut shorter than a few inches above the knee, and low-cut waistslines. No more than two pairs of earrings are permitted for girls, none for guys. Excess earrings must be removed upon arrival. Tattoos must be completely covered at all times. Only God-given hair colors are permitted.

Because of our outdoor setting with uneven terrain, tree roots, etc, backless shoes (flip-flops, etc) open-toe shoes, and high heels are not safe and should not be packed and worn at camp. Athletic shoes must be worn during Afternoon Program. Rain is a frequent occurrence so proper rain gear is required. Any camper coming to camp without the proper clothing will be provided with appropriate wear at the parent's expense

Dress for daily church services is casual but long pants and covered shoulders are required. For Divine Liturgy on Friday morning, boys are expected to wear a collared shirt, and girls should wear a dress or skirt and blouse, with the skirt length at least knee-length or lower.

SPENDING MONEY

The camper fee covers all regular camping expenses. Shopping in our camp store does not require spending money during the camping session (except during check in and check out). If you would like your camper to be able to purchase items from the camp store during the camping session please send money with them to be collected upon registration and any remaining balance given back upon departure. No money should be kept with the camper in the cabins, as Camp St. Thekla is not responsible for any lost money. Please do not send cash to your child in the mail while he/she is at camp. Average amounts brought by campers range between \$10 and \$50. Here is a brief list of some items that may be available in the camp store:

- Camp St. Thekla T-Shirts
- Prayer Ropes
- Icons (of Jesus, St. Thekla, etc)
- Lives of the Saints Books
- Prayer Books
- Toothbrush
- Flashlights & Batteries
- Disposable Cameras

SNACKS AND CARE PACKAGES

No snacks need be sent with the campers. Snacks will be provided at various times to the campers. Here at camp packages with food or candy are simply invitations for rodents and ants to come to a scrumptious dinner. Treats from home also often lead to stomach aches and improper nutrition, and complicate relationships between campers with treats and those without. Any food received will be shared immediately with your camper's cabin mates and any leftovers will be discarded.

CAMPER PACKING LIST

We do not recommend bringing expensive or name-brand clothing or other expensive items to camp. Cabin storage space is limited, so each camper should bring no more than two pieces of luggage: one suitcase/duffle bag and one carryon size small bag or backpack.

- 2 towels, 1 washcloth
- Modest Swimsuit
 - Ladies: no two-piece suits permitted
 - Guys: Short Style Trunks, no Speedos
- Toiletries, including: Comb/brush, toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, shampoo, deodorant (non-aerosol)
- Sleeping Bag, sheet, and pillow with a pillow case
- Enough clothes for six days of camp
- Long pants (jeans or sweats) for services each day
- One nice outfit for Divine Liturgy on Friday morning
- Sweater, sweatshirt, or lightweight jacket
- A Flashlight (make sure they have good batteries)
- Sturdy tennis/athletic shoes
- Waterproof raincoat or poncho
- Insect Repellant (non-aerosol, 10% max DEET content for children under 12, 30% max for 13 and up)
- Optional but suggested: Bible, camera (marked with name), journal, water bottle, travel games, cards

Please leave these items at home...

- Alcohol
- All tobacco products
- Dangerous implements, i.e. knives, axes, fireworks, etc.
- Any illegal substances
- MP3/CD/Music Players, pagers, cell phones, electronic games, etc.
- Food
- Immodest apparel
- Pets or any animals
- Any aerosol products (hairspray, deodorant, insect repellant, etc)

DURING THE CAMPING SESSION

RELAX!

While your child is at camp, take advantage and enjoy the (temporary) quiet! If you miss your kids, write a letter or two-campers love getting mail! Relax, knowing your children are in good hands.

VISITS TO CAMP

Please feel free to meet our staff and tour the camp facilities on check-in day. However, due to problems in the past with campers becoming homesick when they see a parent or family member, we ask that there be no other visitors to camp during the regular camping session. The campers have a very busy schedule and only a short time at camp.

CONTACT WITH YOUR CHILD

The active camp schedule prevents regular contact from the camper. If your child is sent to camp via plane, bus, or train, your child will be required to call home immediately after checking in, in order to confirm his or her safe arrival. Thereafter, outgoing calls may be allowed only at the discretion of the Camp Director, and only for urgent matters. Receiving or placing phone calls during the session disrupts the program and often makes homesickness worse, so we do not allow them except for emergency circumstances. You therefore will probably not hear from the camp and "no news is good news!" If your camper suffers serious injury or illness, you will be promptly notified. These would include any issue requiring off-camp health services or an illness in which a fever lasts for more than 24 hours.

Should a serious need to communicate with your child arise, please call the Camp Director, Fr. Philip Rogers at 337-296-3955, or the Diakonia Center at 864.944.6788. If it is after hours of the Diakonia Center office, they have a voicemail system with instructions.

We encourage letter writing both to and from camp, with mail being delivered daily. Sending a letter before your child leaves home is a good idea, as the mail will be waiting for your child on their first full day at camp. Ask questions about camp, but avoid telling your child how much you miss them, as this may spark homesickness. Short declarations of love such as, "We're so proud of you," or "We love you," or "See you real soon" are just what your child will want to hear. **Please send all camper mail to the Diakonia Center address listed above and not to the PO box.**

CAMPER EMAIL

E-mail messages may also be sent to campers, but campers will not have access to write return e-mail. To send an email to a camper, please visit our website and follow the instructions under the Summer Camp section to send emails to your child. Emails will be printed daily, and distributed to the campers each evening. **Due to the cost and time involved in printing camper emails, please limit emails to one per day for each camper.**

CAMPER CONDUCT

All campers are expected to act in ways appropriate to an Orthodox Christian setting. While disciplinary action will be taken to attempt resolution on site, the Camp Director reserves the right to dismiss campers for gross violations of camp rules. Parents will be responsible for arranging and covering costs for their child's early departure.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

CHECK-IN DAY

On the first day of each session, Sunday, June 27 or July 4, campers being driven to the camp may be checked in between 1:00pm and 5:00pm. Arrivals at any other time must be approved in advance by the Camp Director. Chaperones are welcome to stay and visit the camp grounds during these hours only. Please make sure your child has had lunch before he/she checks in.

Registration/Check-in will take place in the Dining Hall. The process will include being introduced to your camper's counselor, meeting the nurse to discuss any health issues and/or turning over all medications which will be dispensed then from the Infirmary, and collecting all cash to prevent loss during the session. Any funds not spent in the bookstore will be given back at the end of the session.

CHECK-OUT DAY

Check out day is Saturday morning, July 3, July 10, and all campers must be picked up by 12:00pm (noon). Please pick up your child no later than noon, as our staff has many other responsibilities to take care of. **Any pickups later after 12 pm must be cleared with the camp director and will be subject to a child supervision fee of \$25 per hour.** There will be a service of Orthros (Matins) starting at 8:00 am on Saturday morning. If you will be arriving between 8:00am and 9:00am, please do not disrupt the service while trying to locate your child. There will be a staff member outside of the chapel area to assist you. Parents and Chaperones are welcome to join us for Orthros.

LODGING ACCOMMODATIONS

Lodging for chaperones accompanying children to camp may be arranged for check-in day or check-out day by calling Fr. Philip Rogers at 337-296-3955 or emailing him at CampStThekla@gmail.com.

FLYING TO ATLANTA, GA

Camp St. Thekla provides round-trip ground transportation for campers flying into the Atlanta International Airport or arriving by bus or train near the camp. **All travel information, including airline, flight number, arrival and departure times must be received at least two weeks prior to arrival to guarantee that transportation will be provided.** The campers will be met at the gate by uniformed Camp St. Thekla Staff members, as well as escorted to the gate at departure. Flight arrival times must fall between 10:00am and 3:00pm on Sunday, and departures must fall between 9:00am and 12:00pm (noon) on Saturday. Any deviation from these times must be requested in writing and approved by the Camp Director to guarantee that ground transportation will be provided. Should a change in the pick-up or drop-off time of the child at the airport arise, parents should contact Fr. Philip Rogers at 337-296-3955 who will then inform the staff members who are making the pick-up for Camp St. Thekla. If there is a change in flight information, parents will be notified.

Safety Rules for Campers in Transportation

All Camp St. Thekla staff who are transporting campers are required to go through a series of safety checks on the vehicle before leaving. While under the supervision of the staff of Camp St. Thekla, all campers are required to abide by the rules of Camp St. Thekla. Before leaving the airport, the staff will go over the procedures of transportation including ensuring that all campers are aware of the quickest way to exit the vehicle in an emergency, the proper wearing of seat belts, and rules regarding disorderly behavior (campers out of seats, hands out of windows, etc.).