



DEAR PARENTS:

We're so glad you've signed your child up for Camp Out VBS! You'll notice that things at Camp Out are...well, a little different from what you might be used to. Elementary kids will be in mixed-age groups with other children who have finished kindergarten through grade 5. These small groups, called Cabin Crews, are led by adults or teenagers who love children and love the Lord. Crews are an important part of Camp Out! Here's why:

Kids develop new friendships. While it's true that your child might not be with his or her very best friend, your child *will* have wonderful opportunities to make new friends and interact with a new group of children. Most of us assume that age-graded classes are the best way to go, simply because that has been our only experience. However, studies show that children learn as much—or more—when they're linked with kids of different ages. And studies indicate that children choose to play with children of other ages. Encourage your child to try something different—he or she might be surprised!

Older kids rock! Parents are continually surprised that their older children *love* this newfound role! Suddenly, they're the "cool" big kids with younger children looking up to them. And while your child is helping younger kids with simple tasks like reading and writing, he or she is having the chance to serve and demonstrate God's love! It's a meaningful way to discover—and practice—the joy of service.

Younger kids are cared for. Camp Out is carefully designed for multi-age groups of children. That means games are noncompetitive, team-building activities (brilliantly disguised as wildly fun games) in which your child's abilities will shine. It's likely that your younger child will be loved, affirmed, and doted upon by his or her older Crew members.

Bible lessons are more memorable. At Camp Out, kids *experience* Bible stories in powerful, life-changing ways. And that's something kids of *all* ages will enjoy...and remember. Then Crew Leaders gather with kids for small-group discussion. These are questions that apply to every child but may touch each child at a different level. For example, a Crew Leader might ask, "How can you share God's love with others?" A younger child might respond "By being nice to my teacher," while an older child with more experience with life's challenges might say "By praying for a friend who's going through a hard time."

Millions of children have experienced success with this multi-age "family" approach at Group's VBS. However, the most important factor in making this program a success is your attitude. If your child has doubts, reassure him or her that this is a wonderful opportunity to try something new. Your support will speak volumes to the children we're serving.



CAMP OUT DIRECTOR