

# Home and Congregation



Dear Mom & Dad,

Thanks for making time to learn more about Camp Hope. We know you may have a bunch of logistical questions about Camp Hope but first we want to make sure you know about our commitment to you and your family. Camp Hope is a partnership between the ministry of the home and the congregation.

As our friend, Dr. David Anderson, with Vibrant Faith Ministries, has taught us, “Faith is formed through personal trusted relationships, often in the home.”<sup>1</sup> Camp Hope is a faith-injection from the congregation into the home each day as campers are sent leave camp singing camp songs, meal time grace, and ready to share Bible stories. Parents that prioritize on unpacking the camp day with their camper become strong partners in developing consequential faith in Jesus—that means faith is more than just a nice thing, where we practice morals and have fun. Camp Hope is a part of the larger journey of a life of following Jesus.

One of the most common comments from parents after a few days of Camp Hope has to do with campers insisting the family sing meal-time grace before AND after each meal. This faith-forming ritual may be the first time a family has prayed together and the call to prayer comes from the child! Using Camp Hope CD’s and Family Connection resources are other ways families are encouraged in their faith life at home. Each day there are take-home resources for Caring Conversations, Rituals and Traditions, Service and Devotions, Dr. David Anderson’s 4-keys for faith formation.<sup>1</sup>

Faith talk at home may be a very new experience for many families. Camp Hope makes this easy with children leading the way. Everyone leaves camp each day knowing the Bible story. Related crafts, snacks, games and music reinforce an interactive, multi-intelligence learning for all ages. High school and young adult staff who have the responsibility of preparing and teaching the Bible story each day are introduced to the story and taught techniques for preparing their lesson at the training event. Language further reinforces camp as a place to practice Christian culture.

While all of this is great—what happens at home is more important! Research is clear that parents are the key to faith formation. We encourage you to use the resources available from camp each week to help you ask conversation-producing questions, listen deeply to your children, as well as to serve, learn, pray and worship together as a family.

Together in Christ,

The Camp Hope Staff

1. *From the Great Omission to Vibrant Faith* by David W. Anderson, <http://vibrantfaith.org/>

**Dr. Roland Martinson, in his research at Luther Seminary has identified primary Faith Factors. Notice how these faith factors are part of the DNA of Camp Hope Ministries, inc.**

**The Faith Factors:** *(Thanks Dr. Roland Martinson)*

**-Faith integrated into family identity and practice**

Daily resources help families clarify their identity and practice their faith.

**-Three or more adult mentors of vital faith**

Campers are assigned to small groups with one small group leader and a support staff person. Staff are mentored by adults. Some campers take this a step farther and encourage the elders in the congregation to adopt a small group, joining them each day for lunch as Camp Hope Grandparents.

**-Three or more months of service in the Name of Jesus Christ**

Ministry Team leaders and staff serve together over the course of six to nine months each year to execute Camp Hope Day Camp Ministries.

**-Apprenticed early into leadership in their church for purposeful ministry**

Fifth and sixth graders are part of Disciple Camp where they learn to serve in the Camp Hope community. Seventh and eighth graders are invited into leadership as support staff. High school and young adult leaders are in the drivers seat with full responsibility for executing Camp Hope Day Camp, supported by adult mentors. Once people have experienced leadership through Camp Hope, they are prepared to take on year-long servant leadership opportunities in the life of the congregation, at school, work, and home.

**-Engaging, meaningful church experience in which youth are valued**

Camp Hope staff are trained and experience real responsibility with the daily care of children. They are not adjunct to Camp Hope, rather they ARE the leaders.

**-Excellent senior high/young adult ministry**

Many congregations have started Senior High or young adult ministry because their Camp Hope Staff don't want to stop meeting after camp ends. These trained leaders have a deep connection with one another, the congregation and the neighborhood, making peer ministry normal for their lives.

**-Encouraged by strong Christian friends**

Surrounded by a cross-generational group of friends, many Camp Hope Staff and campers experience Christian community for the first time. Over the journey of three weeks, friendships grow deep. Each summer a congregation hosts Camp Hope, the community re-connects and relationships mature.

**-Support within an engaging Christian community during a personal crisis**

Day camp is about daily life. Families experiencing crisis, including divorce, death, abuse, addiction, and illness are woven into the fabric of Camp Hope's prayer life and supported by the Christian community. Children bring the joys and pains of their home life into their small group where high school and young adult staff practice peer ministry skills. Each summer there are campers who are victims of abuse and violence who feel safe enough at Camp Hope to ask for help. The congregation has the opportunity to surround that family with love and healing. Families with special needs children often find the Camp Hope community to be an oasis during the summer when other support systems are not available.