

## Dear Parents, ✓

We realize that your children are treasures. As a parent of three myself I understand and feel the enormity of the responsibilities you entrust us with every week of the summer. Our goal each week is to protect the spiritual, emotional, and physical well being of our campers. We desire Bethel to be a place where faith can flourish in all who attend.

Understanding this great responsibility, we train our counselors and staff to serve the campers with love and to foster an environment of growth and trust. The word 'Bethel' is Hebrew for 'House of God'. We teach our staff and campers that scary stories, sarcasm, put downs, racism, vulgar language, violent behavior, and similar things have no place here at Bethel. We strive to create an environment where campers can let down their concerns regarding self esteem and be loved for who they are. We love to see children who may have a hard time at school due to bullies enjoy a week of fun with children of their own age without the pain that being picked on can bring. Bethel is about your children coming to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and continuing to grow in their walk with Him. Because of this we strive to continuously show Christ's love to our campers.

We train our staff every summer prior to the camper's arrival on how to recognize and prevent camp related risks, and we also spend a considerable amount of time covering various situations they may encounter with campers during the summer. However, when it comes to helping your child have the best experience possible at Bethel, you as parents are vital to that success, and also our number one resource. You have the best insight into your child so we are asking for help from you.

Please review all of the information provided in this packet. We have compiled frequently asked questions, and helpful information that you as a parent should know as you prepare to send your child to Bethel.

In addition, please complete and return the Camper Health Form. It can be found on our website <http://www.bethelchristiancamp.org/forms.htm> The Camper Health Form is kept confidential and is used by Bethel Healthcare Staff or professional medical personnel in the case of an emergency. Campers are not singled out, made to feel embarrassed or treated differently because of information gathered from the Camper Health Form. Rather, the more we know ahead of time, the easier it is to help your child have a successful experience at camp.

We have also provided a form called the Bethel Camper Covenant to provide you an opportunity to discuss some of the camp policies with your child. The addendum to the Bethel Camper Covenant gives you an opportunity to provide some extra information directly to your child's counselor.

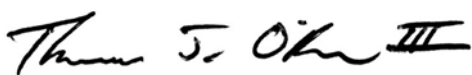
Please be assured that should any situation with your child arise, be it severe homesickness, a behavioral issue, or a health concern, you will be contacted by us. We may even call you to seek your advice or insight into a particular situation. Our desire is to involve you in the process of your child having a successful and enjoyable week at camp.

I would like to encourage you to give us your thoughts and input about our summer camping programs. Your feedback is welcome. We want to hear from you about what we are doing right and the areas where we need improvement. If you ever have any questions or concerns about any aspect of our summer program please email me and I will be happy to get back with you.

Thank you again for blessing us by allowing us to spend a week with your child, showing Christ's love and our love as well.

Sincerely,

Mr. Tom



Tom O'Brien  
Program Director  
Bethel Christian Camp  
[tom@bethelchristiancamp.org](mailto:tom@bethelchristiancamp.org)



# Before Your Camp Week Starts

- Complete, Sign, and Return the Bethel Health Form
- Post the Dates and Times of Registration and Pick-up somewhere to help you remember

## On Check-In Day (Registration)

### Before You leave home, make sure:

- Your child's clothes are labeled and packed securely.
- If you haven't already mailed your child's Health Form to camp, bring it with you.
- Medications are in the original labeled containers and ready to turn in.
- Wear comfortable shoes. There is a significant walk to the cabin area if you desire you help your child move in.

### When You Arrive At Camp:

Residential Camp Registration is from 6pm-6:15pm on Sunday evening.

- Please feed your campers prior to arrival as there will be no dinner served on Sunday evening.
- New This Summer!!!** Park in the field at the **Activity Lodge**.
- Head to the Registration table in the Activity Lodge to Check-In and pay your remaining balance.
- Go to the Cabin table to get your cabin assignment and luggage tags.
- Go to the Medical table to review the Health Form and turn in any medications (ALL campers must have a completed Health Form on file. If we have not received a Health Form you will be required to fill one out at this time).
- Separate your camper's swimsuit and towel from their luggage in order for them to change for the Swim Test. It would be a great idea to have your child show up for registration with their swimsuit on under their clothing.
- Go back to the cabin area and meet your camper's counselor. Please inform them of any additional helpful information.
- Say goodbye and have a safe ride home... see you on Saturday!

## When Camp Ends

Please arrive in time for our 'Bethel Review' which begins Saturday morning at 9:15am. The program concludes and the campers will be ready for departure at 10am.

### When You Arrive At Camp:

- Park in front of the Dining Hall
- Walk down to the Amphitheater for the Bethel Review
- At the conclusion of the Bethel Review, sign out your camper with their Counselor
- Pick up any medication turned in during check-in
- Check Lost and Found on the Dining Hall porch for any misplaced items
- Retrieve your child's luggage from the Dining Hall Porch
- Please double check to make sure that you take everything you brought
- Enjoy all of the tales and stories from your child's week at camp. Please feel free to contact us and let us know how your child's week at camp has affected their spiritual growth. We love to hear from parents! Thanks for sending your child to Bethel for a week.

# Common Questions

## **What time is Check-in? When does camp end?**

Residential Camp begins Sunday at 6pm. We ask that parents arrive no later than 6:15pm in order to streamline the registration process. Residential camp ends on Saturday with our Bethel Review (a program where campers and staff review their special week) at 9:15am. Campers will be ready for departure at 10am.

All Summer Day-Timer programs begin at 7:30am and end at 6pm (Monday – Friday)

Day Camp Week (if campers are not riding the bus): Drop-off at 9am and Pick-up at 4pm

## **Can I check-in early? Can I pick up my child earlier or later than the scheduled times?**

Prior to check-in time staff members are busy preparing for your child's week at camp. We ask that all campers arrive only during the scheduled times. If for any reason you will be arriving late the day that camp begins, please let us know in advance. There is no one in our office during registration however we do check the messages before giving away 'waiting list' slots. Failure to contact us could result in the loss of child's space at camp.

Because early departures can be disruptive to your child and their Cabin group, understand that we can only accommodate alternative pick-up times in unusual or emergency situations.

Regarding late pick-ups, please understand that our staff have other responsibilities and duties related to the operation of Bethel which commence after the closing program. As such, we cannot provide care for campers after the scheduled pick-up time.

If you have arranged for someone else to pick up your child, please tell your child this and inform us at Check-in. Please inform us immediately if a situation arises unexpectedly which would prevent you from getting to the camp at the scheduled pick-up time.

## **Where will my child be staying? Do the cabins have bathrooms?**

Everyone learns their cabin assignment at Check-in. Campers will be placed in cabins with other campers of the same gender and age group. Our cabins have bunk beds, electricity, and air-conditioning. Both the Boy's and Girl's cabin areas have their own bathhouse with toilets and showers.

## **Can my child and a friend be together in the same cabin?**

Yes. To be in the same cabin group as a friend, provide us with their name before coming to camp. This can be done on the registration form. You may only request to be with one friend, and that friend must also request you. Both campers must be in the same age group. While we cannot guarantee that every request will be filled, we will make every effort to do so. Unless you request otherwise, we typically place siblings in separate cabin groups.

## **Will you make exceptions to the listed age groups for camps?**

Experience has shown us that most kids are happier with others at their own peer level. For this reason we break the cabins groups up by age and host several different weeks of camp to accommodate all ages. While we may be flexible (after a conversation with a parent) on a camper who is on the young side moving to an older program or cabin group, we will not accommodate requests for older campers to attend programs or be in cabin groups below their age groups.

## **Who will my child's counselor be?**

Everyone finds out who their Counselors will be at Check-in. The Christian men and women who make up our staff are often former campers, while others are recruited from local churches and colleges. All of our staff have gone through extensive training regarding their responsibilities and camp policies and procedures. If you would like to get a glimpse of the hiring process you can download a Staff Application from our JOBS page on the Bethel website.

## **Where is Bethel?**

Driving directions are available on our website. <http://www.bethelchristiancamp.org/directions.htm>

Bethel Christian Camp 750 Boy Scout Rd, Gaston, SC 29053 (803) 926-5511 [www.bethelchristiancamp.org](http://www.bethelchristiancamp.org)

## **Is my child insured while at camp?**

Your medical insurance will be considered primary in case of accident or injury. All children attending camp must have some form of Medical Insurance or be covered by Medicaid.

## **What's the camper to staff ratio?**

Our cabin groups typically consist of 8 – 10 campers who are overseen by a Senior Counselor and Junior Counselor. The total staff ratio including program and non-program staff is approximately 30 staff (not including the Directors) for 60 (max) campers.

## **Can you accommodate campers with special dietary needs?**

We can accommodate certain common dietary needs (lactose intolerance, minor food allergies, etc), However, please have a discussion with us in advance by calling us regarding any special dietary needs. In addition, please note any special dietary needs on the Health Form. We do not recommend enrolling campers with severe peanut allergies due to the fact that we cannot guarantee that all foods served during the week will be peanut free. Please also understand that we do not offer a vegetarian option at our meals. We strive to serve our campers healthy and delicious food; in addition consumption of healthy and well balanced portions are required for all our campers.

## **How do you handle Bedwetting?**

Our Staff are trained to handle bedwetting incidents with discretion and sensitivity. Our goal is for your child to have a positive experience during their week at camp without being singled out or made to feel embarrassed. We will discretely launder any soiled bed linens or sleeping bags during the day while the campers are going about their daily routines. To help us help your child please make your child's counselor aware of a history of bedwetting and give them any recommendations you may have. In addition, please tell your child to inform their counselor or junior counselor first thing in the morning regarding any incident that may occur. Please also consider sending your child to camp with pull-ups (they are now common and available at most supermarkets for all size children). Pull-ups can be worn discretely and without the knowledge of other campers. If you do send your child to camp with pull-ups please inform your child's counselor so that they can insure that the pull-ups are properly disposed of when necessary.

## **Should I send my special needs child to summer camp?**

Our counselors generally do not have the special skills needed to work with mentally handicapped, or other special needs children. In rare instances, exceptions can be made after we consult with the parents. It may also require a Doctor's Note clearing them for a full week of camp and the activities they will be involved in while here. Our desire is to see every child that comes to Bethel have the best experience possible. Please do not send a special needs child to camp without first consulting with us.

## **Does my child need to bring any money?**

No, there is nothing to buy while at camp. Extra money will only be a possible loss. Please leave all money at home.

# **Communication With Your Child At Camp**

## **Should I write my child at Camp?**

Absolutely! Campers are always very excited to receive a letter from home. We encourage parents to write their children while they are at camp. It is even a great idea to put a letter in the mail a few days before camp starts so that your child receives mail early in their time away from home. Mail is distributed every day at lunch. To send your child a letter or package please use the following address:

**Bethel Christian Camp**  
**Camper Name**  
**750 Boy Scout Rd**  
**Gaston, SC 29053**

## **Can I send email to my child?**

Yes. You can email your camper through our Camper Mail function on our website.

<http://www.bethelchristiancamp.org/campermail.htm>

Please include **camper name** in the subject line after the heading 'Camper Mail -'. Mail is delivered during lunch. Any emails that come in after 11am will not be delivered until the following day. Please only send mail during the week the camper is physically at camp. Please understand that email will not be held in advance.

Campers do not have access to computers while at camp and will not be able to view HTML greeting cards nor will they be able to email responses to your messages.

## **Can I send my child a care package?**

Care packages that do not contain candy or food are a great idea! We ask that you please do not have your child bring food or candy to camp or mail them food or candy while they are here. Food and candy only encourages Fire Ants to find their way into the cabins and other places where we do not want them. Campers are fed healthy and delicious meals every day and in addition they are given canteen (snack and drink) every evening. Please help us to keep our cabins free of Fire Ants by not sending your child food or candy.

## **What are your policies regarding Telephone calls and Cell Phones?**

During a week of camp we strive to build a sense of community within the camp and the cabin groups. One of the wonderful things about being at camp is that campers are able to get away from the distractions of the everyday world. It is our prayer that Bethel will be a place where children can connect to God through His word, relationships, nature, and activities. Camp is also a great time of self-discovery and testing out one's independence. Experience has shown us that allowing campers to have telephone contact with friends or family outside of camp detracts from the camp experience, is counterproductive to our mission and goals, disrupts our ability to build community at camp, and often breeds homesickness both in the camper and their cabin mates. A mildly homesick child usually becomes a very homesick child after a phone conversation, and children who have no homesickness often suddenly develop it when they become aware that their cabin mate has a hidden cell phone or has been allowed to make or receive a phone call. For these reasons we do not permit campers to make or receive phone calls or have cell phones.

Please know that if a situation involving your child arises that warrants parental involvement, be it severe homesickness, a behavioral issue, or a healthcare concern, we will contact you. If you have an emergency and you need to contact your child, please call our office at (803) 926-5511. If your emergency occurs overnight or after regular office hours, please call our Program Director's cell phone at (803) 546-8180.

If you feel that your child is not yet ready to spend a week at camp without the ability to contact you by phone please consider sending them to our Daycamp program as an alternative.

## **Can I visit my child at camp?**

For many of the same reasons outlined above related to our policy on telephone calls, we strongly discourage visitors to camp during our short camp sessions. Parents stopping by to check on their children can be a very disruptive influence on not only their child's time at camp, but also on the cabin as a whole. Simply put, children who are not homesick often become so when their parents visit them at camp and homesickness can be contagious. We ask parents who need to drop something off for their child that they may have forgotten to schedule that drop off time with our office. Parents and visitors are welcome and encouraged to tour Bethel on Sunday during Registration and on Saturday after picking your child up at the end of camp.

## **What do you do with Homesick kids?**

Most children at camp are excited to be part of what is happening and are often very sad to see their week end. However, we do occasionally have a camper who is Homesick. The best cure for homesickness is activity! The simple enjoyment found in our daily schedule is usually enough to turn around a homesick camper. If however a camper remains homesick we will contact you and apprise you of the situation. Just that phone call often cures a homesick camper. When I say to a homesick child "This morning I spoke with your parents and told them about how you want to go home. They wanted me to tell you that they are very proud of you and they love you, but they want you to stick it out." that usually fixes it right there. Should the homesickness continue we will continue to keep you apprised of the situation and will make arrangements for you to pick your child up should you deem that necessary. We would strongly like to discourage parents from relaying this information to their children prior to their week here. When a child feels that going home early is a possibility that child is far more likely to get homesick than the child who believes that they must stick with it to the end.

# Tips for Parents

## 5 Ways To Avoid Setting Your Child Up For Failure

### **Avoid making deals or using bribes**

For example, avoid saying “If you don't like it, we will come and pick you up” or “If you stay at camp for a whole week we'll get you a Playstation when you come home.”

### **Avoid statements or actions that conflict with camp policies**

For example, giving your children a cell phone and telling them to keep it hidden when Bethel has a policy that does not permit campers to call home or have cell phones.

### **Avoid sending your child to camp during a disruptive home situation**

For example, in situations where a Grandparent died last week. Give your child time to adjust. Check with us to see if it is possible to switch to a session later in the summer.

### **Avoid keeping helpful information from camp staff about your child.**

For example, not letting staff know your child is prone to bedwetting is counterproductive. By providing our staff with as much information as possible you can help us help your child. Having information ahead of time allows us to be proactive in serving your child.

### **Avoid taking your child off of prescription medications for their week at camp**

Camp is a less structured environment than your child may be used to at school. Children are more active and stay up later at camp. If your child requires medication while at home under normal circumstances, it is beneficial to them to remain on those medications and continue a routine the body's metabolism is familiar with.

## 5 Things You Can Do to Help Your Child Succeed At Camp, Especially If It Is Their First Time Away From Home

### **Talk with your child about their concerns and what they are looking forward to.**

Acknowledge your child's concerns positively, and then acknowledge that you will miss them and that you are confident that they will be able to complete a week of camp.

### **Discuss the camp's policies with your child beforehand**

Make sure that your child understands what Bethel's policies are and that they have to honor them. You can download a 'Camper Covenant' on our Forms page. [www.bethelchristiancamp.org/forms.htm](http://www.bethelchristiancamp.org/forms.htm)

### **Pack together with your child**

Pack things your child will be comfortable wearing. Pack a flashlight with extra batteries. Pack a favorite stuffed animal. Please use the Packing list included in this packet.

### **Let your child know that the camp staff is there to help them.**

Make sure they understand that if they have any problems or concerns they should let their counselor know.

### **Prepare your child for spending time away from home at camp.**

Visit the camp website and look at pictures and videos. Encourage your child to ask questions about camp. Practice being away from home overnight. Have a sleep-out in the backyard or at a friend's house

# Packing List For A Week at Bethel Christian Camp

Be Sure To Pack The Following:



## Clothing

- Raincoat/Poncho
- Sleepwear/Pajamas
- Underwear and Socks for a Week
- Several Short Sleeve Shirts
- Several Pairs of Shorts
- One Pair of long pants/jeans
- One lightweight long sleeve shirt or sweatshirt
- A nice outfit for the Friday Night Banquet
- Swimsuit (one piece)
- Two pairs of shoes (one will get wet during our Creek Walk)
- Sandals or Flip flops for the bathhouse

## Toiletries

- Toothbrush and Toothpaste
- Shampoo and Conditioner
- Soap in a container
- Toiletries Bag (for trips to the bathhouse)
- Bath Towl & Washcloth
- Beach Towl for the lake

## Other Items

- Bible
- Bedding – Sleeping Bag or sheets and blanket
- Pillow and Pillowcase
- Laundry Bag for Dirty Clothes
- Flashlight w/extra Batteries
- Sunscreen
- Insect Repellent
- Any Medications Need to be turned in during registration

## Optional Items

- Hat & Sunglasses
- Camera
- Water Bottle
- Favorite Stuffed Animal
- Paper, pen, pencil, stamps, pre-addressed envelopes

## Things To Leave AT Home

- Food, snacks or candy (food and snacks are not permitted in the cabin due to Fire Ants)
- Cell Phones, Electronic Items, Video games, iPods, MP3 or CD players
- Money (there is nothing to spend money on at Bethel)
- Weapons, Knives, Ninja Gear, etc.
- Anything which would result in tremendous unhappiness if it were lost, broken, or dirty.

# Helpful Packing Tips

## **Pack With Your Child**

Packing with your child is a great way to build excitement about camp and also a great way to talk through any worries or anxieties your child may have about their time away at camp. In addition, it give you the opportunity to make sure that they pack everything they need to bring, and leave at home the stuff that should stay at home. It also helps the child to know where in their bag or suitcase all of their items are located.

## **Send A Checklist For Your Child To Help Them On Saturday Morning**

You can use the same checklist that you used when you packed. Pack the checklist in your child's luggage and instruct them to use it when they pack up to come home. This will help your child leave with everything they came with.

## **What To Pack Your Stuff In**

Pack your stuff in something that you can carry a short distance from the Parking Area to the Registration Tables. We will transport luggage from there to the Cabin Area. A duffel bag, suitcase, or footlocker is fine. Please keep in mind that we run our swim-test first thing on Sunday evening. It's a great idea to pack a swimsuit and beach towel in a separate bag or even in your child's pillowcase so that they can change for the swim-test before all of the luggage has been transported to the cabin area. Pillows, bedding, and sleeping bags do great in large plastic trash bags (make sure you put a label on the trash bag so that we know who it belongs to).

## **Label Everything You Can**

Put your child's first and last name on everything you can using a permanent marker. Be sure to label you child's luggage. If you child loses something (and they usually do) it will turn up in Lost and Found. Having a name on the items makes it much simpler to return it to your child. On Saturday when you pick your children up there will be the unclaimed Lost and Found items from that week on the Dining Hall Porch railing. Please review all of the items there.

## **Pack Appropriate Attire For Camp**

Pack clothing that is comfortable in hot SC weather, suitable for outdoor games, and can get wet and/or dirty without being ruined. Please pack one 'nice' outfit for our Friday Night Banquet (nothing too nice of course, this IS camp). Campers should not pack clothing that promotes alcohol, tobacco, drug use, sexual behavior, or contains inappropriate language. As a private organization, Bethel expects a high standard of conduct and dress. Please, no spaghetti straps, bare mid-riffs, or improper slogans. Shorts should be modest (not too tight, too high, or too low), and bathing suits should be one piece and modest. We reserve the right to ask campers to change improper clothing.

## **About Swimsuits**

We require that female staff and campers wear modest one-piece suits while at camp, and that male campers wear swim trunks or board shorts. Campers may wear t-shirts in the lake if they desire to do so.

## **Medications**

All medications (prescription, non-prescription and over-the-counter) remain with and are dispensed by Bethel Health Care Staff. Please pack ALL camper medications separately from your luggage so that you will be able to turn them in during Registraion.

**Bethel Christian Camp**  
750 Boy Scout Rd.  
Gaston, SC 29053  
803-926-5511



**Bethel Sign**



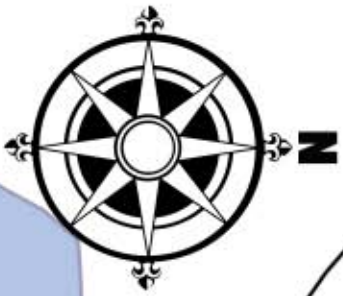
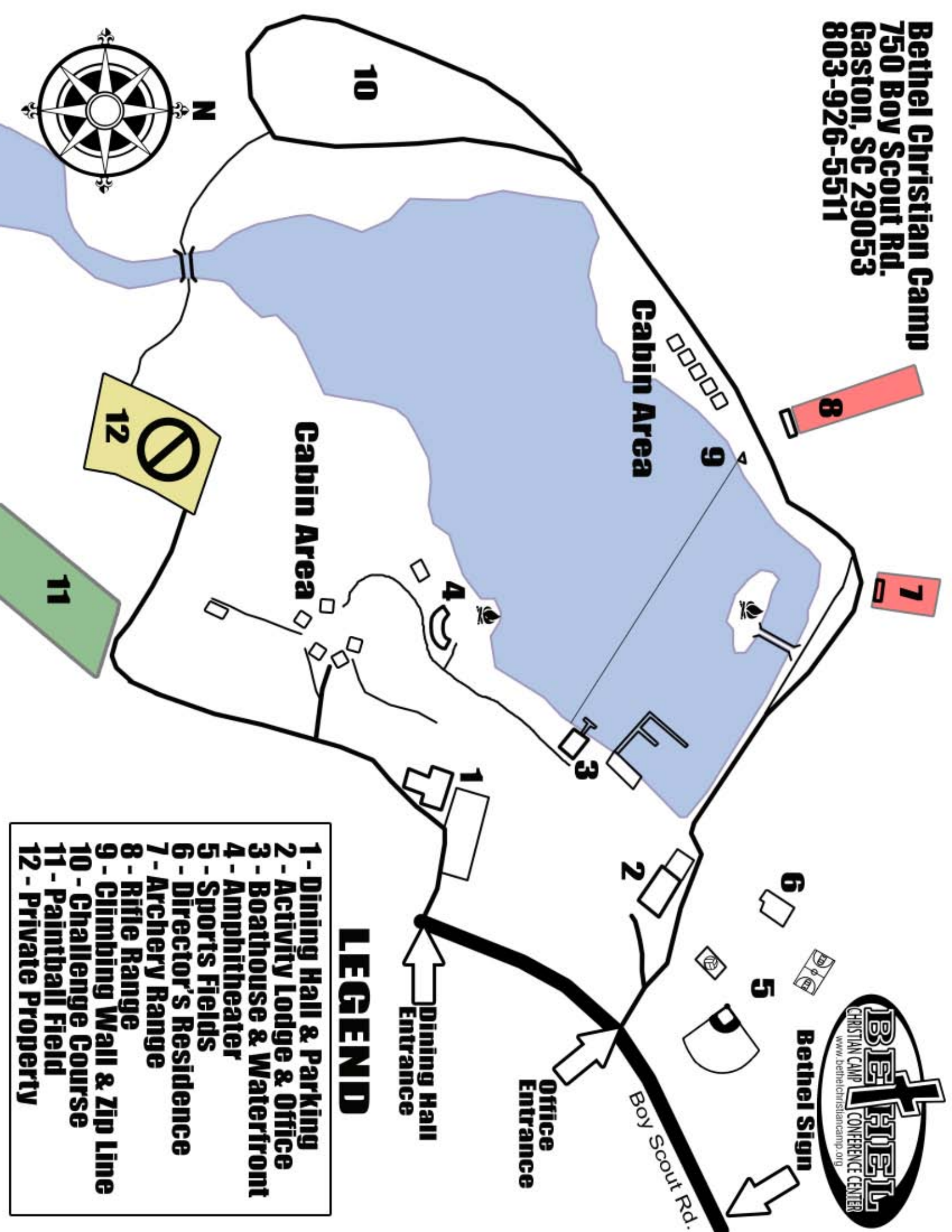
Boy Scout Rd.

**Office Entrance**

**Dining Hall Entrance**

# LEGEND

- 1 - Dining Hall & Parking
- 2 - Activity Lodge & Office
- 3 - Bathroom & Waterfront
- 4 - Amphitheater
- 5 - Sports Fields
- 6 - Director's Residence
- 7 - Archery Range
- 8 - Rifle Range
- 9 - Climbing Wall & Zip Line
- 10 - Challenge Course
- 11 - Paintball Field
- 12 - Private Property



10

Cabin Area

Cabin Area

8

7

9

4

3

1

6

5

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12

11