



Dear Parent,

Thank you for supporting your teen in their desire to participate in Foundation Camp. It is important to understand that FC is not like any of our other camp sessions. The fact that the primary purpose of FC is to train summer staff to serve at Living Waters means that expectations are much higher, the intensity is much greater, and the pace is intentionally relentless. FC-ers will be pushed to their limits as we stretch them out of their comfort zone to learn new attitudes and skills. All this means that FC students leave with a hard-won sense of accomplishment, great memories, and an opportunity to form friendships with other students who can be a positive influence on each other for the glory of God.

Our goal is not to make them into better people. Our goal is to help them become more like Christ. The key to becoming like Christ is cultivating the humility of Christ (Philippians 2.3-8)—the kind of humility that dies to self in order to put the interests of others ahead of their own. Humility is like a muscle that must be strengthened over time; the main exercises include learning to submit to authority and serving others sacrificially. Not exactly the kind of virtues that plays well in our self-serving society.

During their two weeks at FC, students will:

- Learn to study the Bible, using the best internet-based resources.
- Learn to recognize how God is using relationships and circumstances in their life to conform them to Christ.
- Learn what it means to lead by serving.
- Help prepare meals, clean up, and do their own laundry (we're telling you this because they might keep this a secret when they return home).
- Identify how God has hardwired their personality and spiritual gifts to serve Him in specific ways.
- Be trained to serve at camp in a way that reflects their gifts and abilities.

You should know that we are obligated to set the bar high. We believe that God has entrusted us with three treasures: the reputation of the gospel, the lives of people (mostly children), and the facilities and resources that are needed to carry on this ministry. We have a responsibility to in turn entrust these treasures only to those who demonstrate a high degree of maturity and responsibility. The reason FC lasts two weeks is because it often isn't until the second week that the true character of a student is exposed. The extended duration gives us ample time, not only to train the students, but also to carefully observe them and assess their readiness to serve. At the conclusion of FC, students will be "certified" to serve at a level that is commensurate with the level of readiness they have demonstrated to us during the two weeks of FC.

The evaluation process consists of five steps:

Step 1: On the first day, the goals and expectations of FC are explained, and students are introduced to the evaluation process.

Step 2: Each student is assigned to a team leader who is their primary mentor who serve as our eyes and ears. It is their job to shepherd their students, to confront and encourage as needed.

- Step 3: Midway through FC, each student is given a mid-term evaluation that identifies strengths and weaknesses. The intent is to give them opportunity to improve in specific ways.
- Step 4: At the conclusion of FC, mentors meet with the FC directors to finalize their evaluation for each student, which is then shared with the student. The conversation is intended to be honest yet constructive and encouraging. Students are informed as to what level of service they are ready for at camp, and are given other ideas for service at home, as well as in their local church, and community.
- Step 5: Each student is given a written copy of their evaluation, so they can review it with their parents.

Three final observations:

- First, the younger a student is, the more likely we are to recommend that they return for another year of Foundation Camp. *This does not in any way imply that they "failed" FC.* It simply reflects the fact that younger students generally do not possess the level of maturity needed to serve in more responsible roles. This is normal, and it is ok for your child to be normal. Given the broader benefits of FC, a second year only reinforces the lessons learned. It is not uncommon for students to voluntarily choose to go through FC more than once. For those **recommended** to attend a second year we offer a 40% discount.
- Second, Scripture is very clear that God has given every believer gifts that equip them to perform some critical work (1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 2.10). While humans may value one gift above another, God does not — and neither do we. Not every student is called to serve as a dorm leader. This is God's design, and we do everyone a disservice when we assign them to roles for which they are not suited. Being certified to serve in the kitchen or to maintain the facility is just as honorable as serving in the more "glamorous" roles as cabin leader or program facilitator. As a parent you will encourage your child the most by applauding whatever role they are certified to fill.
- Third, since the purpose of FC is to train students to serve at Living Waters, know that the next phase in their training is to actually complete an On the Job Training (OJT) apprenticeship. Experience shows that it is best to schedule this as soon as possible, ideally to complete the same summer. More details are given to the students during FC.
- Finally, there are some parents who have never sent their child away for two weeks before— one week maybe, but not two. This is a good time to loosen the apron strings, to give them space to spread their wings. Students will be too busy to call. Unless it is a true emergency, we ask that you not call or visit. This part of the training is as much for the parent as it is for the child. This is your chance to learn to entrust your child's wellbeing to God.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your child's participation in Foundation Camp, please let me know. Again, I thank you for encouraging your child to participate. We trust the Lord to do amazing things in these two weeks. We are counting on you to pray for us.

Your fellow servant,



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