

# Ondessonk Program Planning Packet

*For Teachers, Principals, and Group Coordinators*

*"Teaching what matters most."*



*Updated  
January 2021*



# Ondessonk Program Planning Packet

\*Updated January 2020

This guide is intended to assist teachers and group coordinators who are either considering or planning an Outdoor Education or Retreat experience at Camp Ondessonk. Its purpose is to explain the activities and program components which have been successful for the many schools attending Camp Ondessonk over the years.

Camp Ondessonk continuously seeks staff with a strong background in outdoor education, and our instructors are trained and experienced in every aspect of our program. Our staff take **pride in remaining available and willing to make a school's stay at Camp an educational, productive, and rewarding experience.**

This guide is divided into the following sections:

- Introduction to Ondessonk Outdoor Education, page 4
- Program Planning Resources, page 7
- Ondessonk Curriculum Guide, page 14
- Ondessonk Retreat Program, page 18
- Teacher/Parent Resources, page 25

*You are welcome to copy any part of this guide and distribute to students, parents, administrators, or other stakeholders for purposes of program preparation for your visit. This packet is also designed to be printed in booklet format.*

This booklet is intended to be a comprehensive guide to Outdoor Education and Retreats at Camp Ondessonk. If you have any questions or would like to discuss creating an experience for your students or group, please feel free to contact us.



Camp Ondessonk  
3760 Ondessonk Rd.  
Ozark, IL 62972  
(618) 695-2489

[www.ondessonk.com/year-round.com](http://www.ondessonk.com/year-round.com)



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# Section I

## Introduction to Ondessonk Outdoor Education



## Ondessonk Outdoor Education

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Our Mission and Vision: The Mission of Camp Ondessonk is to provide exceptional outdoor and spiritual adventures empowering kids of all ages. Our Vision, inspired by our Catholic tradition and commitment to the growth of people and faith, is to operate a world-class camp in a spectacular natural environment, inspire leadership, self-confidence and lifelong learning, and **promote stewardship and appreciation of God's gifts.**

Our Camp: Camp Ondessonk was founded in 1959 as a summer camp for the children of the Catholic Diocese of Belleville, Illinois. Over the years, it has grown to 983 acres of forest, streams, canyons, bluffs, waterfalls, pastures, and hills. Since 1988, Camp Ondessonk has provided interdisciplinary Outdoor Education programs for Catholic and non-Catholic schools from Illinois, Missouri, Indiana, and Kentucky. Of our almost 1000 acres, only about 20-25% would be considered "developed". The rest is just woods. Our site is adjacent to an over 4,000-acre tract of the Shawnee National Forest. We have a big backyard. One could hike away from Camp for many miles without crossing a road or seeing another person. The facilities in the developed area of Camp consist of two dining halls, a lodge and office, maintenance building, parking lot, Health Center, Chapel, Staff Lounge, many activity and program areas including a swimming lake, many full-time and seasonal staff houses, several showerhouses for guests, a large barn and 100 acres of pastures for our 70 horses, and over a dozen cabin units spread out along the Camp Road surrounding our large boating lake. Our signature treehouse cabins are open-air, three-sided cabins suspended in the trees and are intentionally designed to maximize one's experience in nature.



What We Do: Camp Ondessonk works closely with educators and group leaders to create a dynamic experiential curriculum providing students with hands-on learning. An Ondessonk Outdoor Education experience promotes group building, communication skills, and leadership development as well as creates a sense of stewardship towards the **natural world. Our programs focus on the principles of interdependence, in particular one's relationship to the natural world, as well as a relationship with the people around them.** A school program at Ondessonk **also promotes a student's personal growth in the areas of self-esteem, trust, and teamwork.**

Our curriculum includes programs in outdoor/environmental education, adventure education, equestrian education programs, teambuilding, spiritual retreat programs, and evening activities. All programs are facilitated under the assumption that participants learn best through direct experience with opportunities for thoughtful guided reflection to follow. Our activities also maximize the use of the natural environment, taking advantage of the unique outdoor opportunities that Camp Ondessonk's location provides.





## What is Outdoor Education?

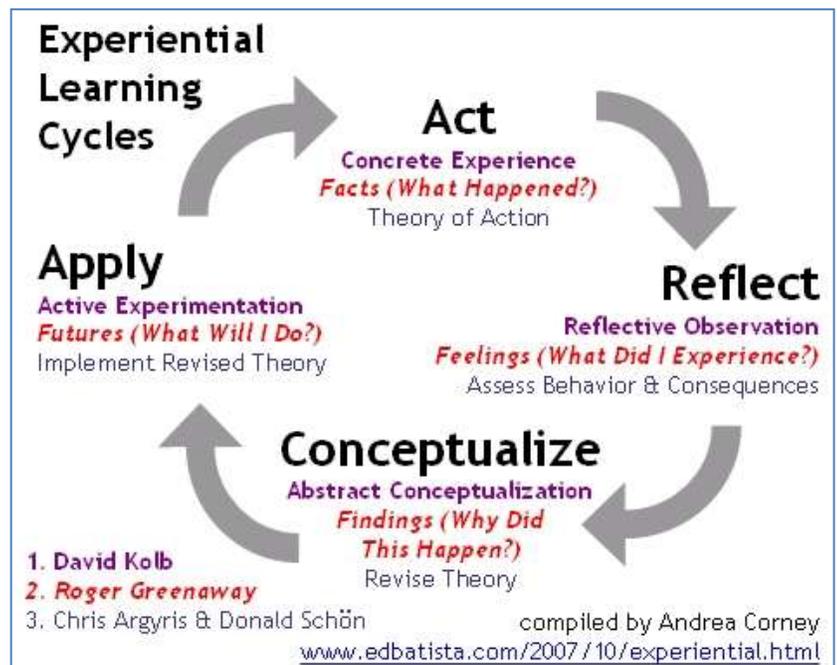
- The process uses a variety of teaching styles and resources to take learning into the out-of-doors. Our methods utilize experience-based learning through direct contact with the nature.
- Outdoor Ed is multi-disciplinary and provides curriculum enrichment to many subject areas.
- It must involve active exploration; drawing on the senses to make connections.
- Focuses on the interdependence between human beings and the natural environment.
- Creates a positive learning environment and the development of life skills in four areas:
  - Cognitive skills: Critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making.
  - Affective skills: Identify personal feelings, the needs of others, self-efficacy, and empathy.
  - Behavioral skills: Accountability, effects of choices and decisions on others, and goal setting.
  - Interpersonal skills: Group interaction, cooperative learning, conflict resolution, cooperation.

## Why Ondessonk Outdoor Education?

Camp Ondessonk uses the Experiential Education model, that is the “**process through which the learner constructs knowledge, skill, and value from direct experiences**” (Association for Experiential Education). **More simply put: “learning by doing”**. This approach provides experiences then intentionally reflects on that experience to foster growth. We properly frame and frontload activities beforehand and then debrief and process the experience afterward. Our instructors utilize physical activity, fun, humor, and sound communication to enhance the learning experience.

## What can Ondessonk Outdoor Education do for my students?

Ondessonk Outdoor Education programs create a learning environment for individuals and groups to develop effective communication, problem-solving, and cooperation to achieve a common goal. As a component of our programming, our challenge courses are a series of experiential adventures offering groups and individuals opportunities to participate in perceived mental, physical, and emotional risk taking. Our High Challenge Course is a series of ropes, cables, clips, and platforms designed to engage the entire group, not just the climber. The Low Challenge Course incorporates a series of challenging obstacles that groups must overcome using creative problem-solving and strong intra-group communication. Each element provides for a variety of sessions planned around the obstacle in order to examine and share common reactions, insights, and emotions such as joy, fear, fatigue, compassion, laughter, and a sense of community. Safety and cooperation, as well as individual commitment, are essential to these programs. Trained instructors guide groups through each course emphasizing these qualities.



## Section II

# Program Planning Resources



## RESERVATION PROCESS

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It is advised to contact Camp first for availability and to make reservations several months in advance, especially larger groups. Reservations are not confirmed until the Reservation Form and 25% non-refundable deposit are received.

STEP 1: Fill out the Reservation Form completely and send to Camp with non-refundable 25% deposit:

Mail: 3760 Ondessonk Rd. Ozark, IL 62972

Fax: (618) 695-3593

Email: [registration@ondessonk.com](mailto:registration@ondessonk.com)

STEP 2: Invoicing. Your invoice will be emailed to you upon receiving your form and deposit for your review and to make any adjustments. It will also show your balance due upon arrival.

STEP 3: Program Scheduling. The Program Coordinator will draft a program schedule for your school and email it to you for your approval. Changes can be made at any time during this phase of the process. Please do not distribute any copy of a schedule sent to you electronically, as last-minute changes often need to be made. You and your chaperones will be handed hard copies of the schedule upon arrival at Camp.

STEP 4: Balance should be paid during your stay in the Camp Office. Schools should send teachers to Camp with payment method, either check or card. *Your invoice can be adjusted at this point based on actual attendance but no-show fees will apply.* Arrangements can be made for payment upon returning to school, but final payment should be made no later than 7 days after your visit to Camp.





## Program Planning: *Setting Goals and Desired Outcomes*

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What would you like your students to come away with from their experience at Camp Ondessonk? Planning a successful experience begins with articulating the goals and outcomes you desire for your students. These goals can be as unique as your class or group, and may even vary from year to year, based on the dynamic of your current class. Identifying real and attainable goals for your trip is important for a number of reasons:

- Communicating the value of the trip for school administrators, parents, and other teachers who will invest their time, money, and efforts and who may be unfamiliar with this educational approach.
- **Answering the “why?” for students who may be apprehensive about attending.**
- Confirming the importance of getting students out of the classroom and out of doors.
- Validating this field as a profession and those who work in it as professional outdoor educators.
- Our instructors will be better able to provide an exceptional outdoor program if their efforts are based on the goals and outcomes you identify for your students.

Examples of Goals:

The following are some common goals many educators have for their students when they come to Ondessonk to serve a guide **when compiling the goals you would like to set for your students’ experience:**

During their Ondessonk Outdoor Education Experience, I want my students to...

- ... grow in awareness, understanding and appreciation of the natural environment.
- ... develop their stewardship, connection, and understanding of the natural environment.
- ... expand their ability to work as a team, communicate together, and trust each other.
- ... reflect upon and express their personal values and ideas and to develop a respect for others' values.
- ... draw connections to their classroom subjects such as science, history, math, and PE.
- ... step out of their comfort zones and experience new things they do not have the opportunity at home.
- ... improve their interactions, critical thinking, and problem solving skills as a class.
- ... discover trust, caring, empathy, corporation, and risk taking through structured experiences.
- ... become more aware of their senses, physical abilities, and learn how to develop both.
- ... develop leadership skills to prepare them for academic and professional lessons later in life.
- ... strengthen their self-esteem, feel a sense of accomplishment, and become aware of their personal strengths.
- ... engage in active exploration, drawing on the senses rather than words and pictures in textbooks.
- ... explore God’s natural creation to have a truly spiritual and/or religious experience.

Take a few reflective moments to let us know the goals and outcomes you would like for your students in this space:



## Program Planning: *Design your experience...*

Once you have set the goals for your group's experience, you can begin designing your program. Ondessonk Outdoor Education experiences are divided up into program sessions. One program session lasts 90 minutes. Two program sessions make up one 3-hour program block. Some classes are offered as 90-minute sessions, while other classes are designed to be a 3-hour program block. Choose the appropriate number of sessions based on the number of nights you wish to stay and your desired arrival and departure times. One evening program is provided for each night you wish to stay. There are four program frameworks to choose from. ***The number of meals and program sessions depends on the time available for your group's visit and arrival and departure times.*** These options including pricing will be on the School Reservation Form available on the Ondessonk Outdoor Education website: <http://ondessonk.com/year-round/outdoor-education/>

<u>DAY TRIP OPTION</u>	<u>1-NIGHT OPTION</u>	<u>2-NIGHT OPTION</u>	<u>3-NIGHT OPTION</u>	<u>4-NIGHT OPTION</u>
Optional BYO Lunch	3-4 meals	5-6 meals	8-9 meals	11-12 meals
2-4 program sessions	5-8 program sessions	6-13 program sessions	11-14 program sessions	16-23 program sessions

Knowing the number of days you have available for your visit will allow you to choose the best program options that fit. Once you have decided on the option that **best fits into your school's availability, you can** contact the Camp Ondessonk office to check for open dates. *Below is an example of a 1-night experience.* Please use this example to schedule your school's Ondessonk Outdoor Education experience. Once your School Reservation Form is received by Camp, the Program Director will confirm your requested dates on our calendar and send you a Program Options Form to choose your activities.

DAY 1							
AM Program Session 1 9:00-10:30	AM Program Session 2 10:45-12:15	12:30	PM Program Session 1 1:30-3:00	PM Program Session 1 3:15-4:45	Down Time 4:45-6:00	6:00	Evening Program Session 7:30-9:00
Arrival/ Move-In	GBIs/ Icebreaker Games	Lunch	Low Challenge Course		Showers/ Rest/Mass	Dinner	Night Hike

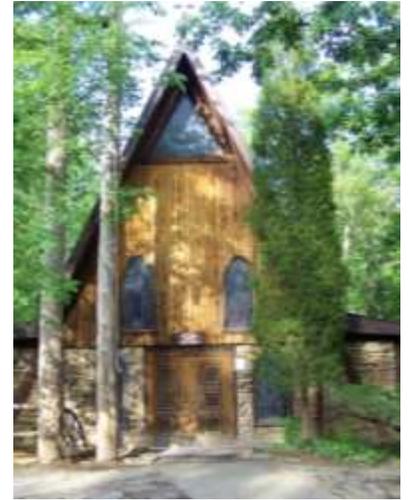
DAY 2						
8:00	AM Program Session 1 9:00-10:30	AM Program Session 2 10:45-12:15	12:30	PM Program Session 1 1:30-3:00	PM Program Session 2 3:15-4:45	Down Time 4:45-6:00
Breakfast	Horseback Riding	Canoe/ Kayaking	Lunch	High Challenge Course		Departure

*See the Curriculum Guide on page 14 for a detailed list of program options and descriptions.*

## Other Program Considerations...

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**SPIRITUAL PROGRAMMING:** Any group is welcome to have mass or prayer service in the Chapel of North American Martyrs. This rustic, A-frame chapel is one of Camp's original structures and a wonderful place for quiet reflection. You may invite your own priest or Camp can contact our Chaplain to say mass for you. Many groups incorporate a combination of outdoor education and spiritual programs into their experience, either facilitated themselves or by our instructors. See the Retreat Program Guide on page 18 for information on our spiritual and religious retreat programs.



**MEALS:** Camp Ondessonk's Food Service Program is always one of our guests' favorite part of their visit to Camp. We serve up balanced, nutritious meals in our spacious, climate-controlled Dining Hall, and no one ever goes home hungry. Our signature foil dinner over the campfire or a picnic lunch are great ways to combine your meal with the outdoors. We do our best to accommodate dietary needs or food allergies for anyone in your group. Our Dining Hall serves breakfast at 8am, lunch at 12:30pm, and dinner at 6pm. Outdoor meal times like picnic lunches or foil dinners are flexible. Let Camp know ahead of time about any allergies or dietary concerns for anyone in your group.



**TRADING POST:** Our Trading Post and Camp Store can be opened for your group if you would like to give them an opportunity to purchase Camp Ondessonk merchandise, snacks and soda, or any incidental items you may have forgotten such as batteries or toiletries.



## Lodging Option Descriptions:

### **Camp Ondessonk's Signature Rustic Cabins:**

One of the highlights of an Ondessonk visit, our 3-sided treehouse cabin units take full advantage of their natural surroundings. They are intentionally designed and located to maximize **the student's experience of tranquility and inspiration of Nature**. Some are on the ground for ease of access, one is built under a shelter bluff with its own waterfall, and others are walled in for a bit more security. Whichever unit you choose, your students will be introduced to the natural world in a unique setting. See the Reservation Form for pricing and call Camp for availability. [Click here](#) for photos of all units. All cabin units have fire pits, benches, picnic table, water spigot, outhouse, and are close to a showerhouse.



<u>UNIT</u>	<u>CAPACITY</u>
Lalande (6 treehouses)	48
Goupil (6 treehouses)	48
Lalemant (6 treehouses)	48
Garnier (6 treehouses)	48
Amantacha (5 treehouses)	40
Raganeau (5 treehouses)	40
Daniel (6 treehouses)	48
Brebeuf (6 cabins)	48
Lakeside (3 cabins)	40
Tekakwitha (3 A-Frames)	45
Chabanel (cave unit)	40
Fournie Village: (6 total cabins)	
Chiwatenhwa (3 cabins)	44
Aonetta (3 cabins)	44



**Bachelor Officer's Quarters (B.O.Q.)**: Bunk-house style lodge, four walls, screened-in windows, large covered deck, fire pit, benches, picnic table, electricity but no heat, no spigot but short walk to toilets and shower house. 26 guests.

Frontier Dorms: Two bunk-house style dormitories, screened-in windows, covered decks, electricity, and heat; no spigot but next door to showerhouse. Upper Dorms: 22 guests; Lower dorms: 26 guests

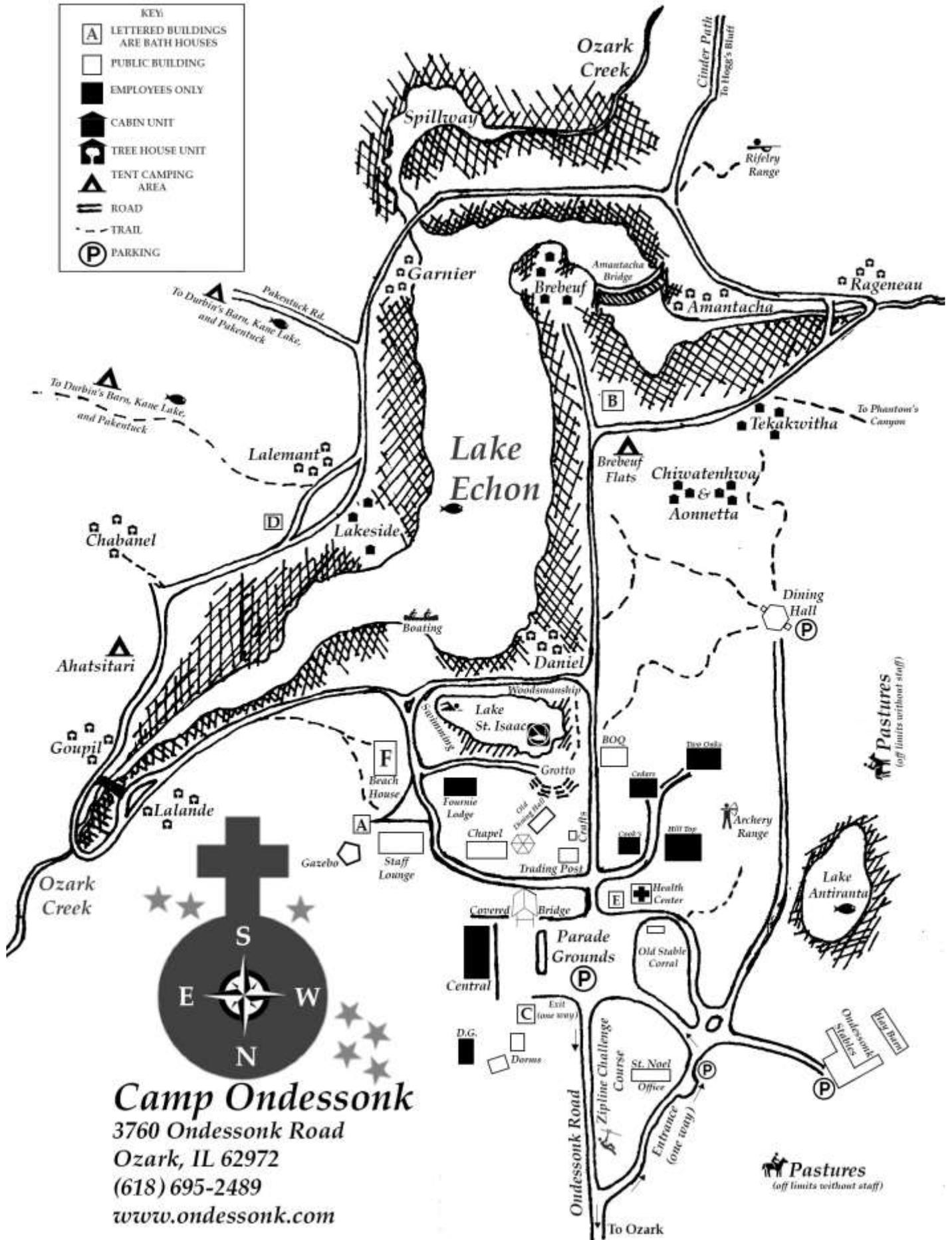
The St. Noel Retreat and Conference Center:

For our guests who enjoy active days spent in the great outdoors and evenings spent in the convenience of **climate controlled rooms**, St. Noel's bunk-house style rooms accommodate 8 to 10 people with a private bath and boast either a view of our pastures, a small balcony for taking in the sunrise, or a cozy fire place. Amenities include a reading lounge, dining area, large multi-purpose meeting and dining area, and wireless internet access. Guests are responsible for bringing their own bedding, linens, and towels.

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KEY

<b>A</b>	LETTERED BUILDINGS ARE BATH HOUSES
	PUBLIC BUILDING
	EMPLOYEES ONLY
	CABIN UNIT
	TREE HOUSE UNIT
	TENT CAMPING AREA
	ROAD
	TRAIL
	PARKING



# Section III

## Ondessonk Curriculum Guide





## Curriculum Descriptions

Camp Ondessonk is dedicated to providing hands-on classes and facilitating students in programming that supports many school curriculum areas. Our small group activities are designed to foster group cooperation and communication, while developing environmental ethics concepts employing Experiential Education methodology. A successful Ondessonk Outdoor Education experience will have components from multiple curriculum categories: Outdoor/Environmental Education, Adventure Education, Teambuilding, Equestrian Programs, Spiritual Retreat Programs, and Evening Activities. See page 26 for Next Generation Science Standards.

### OUTDOOR AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION:

**Guided Nature Explorations:** Being adjacent to thousands of acres of Shawnee National Forest, we have a big backyard. No Ondessonk experience is complete without venturing out into woods, beyond the Main Area of Camp to places like Phantom's Canyon, Hogg's Bluff, or Pakentuck. Choose the environmental education topics you wish our instructors to focus on. Your hike can 90-minutes, 3-hours, or all day in length.

#### *Environmental Education On-Trail Topics:*

- **Forest Ecology:** Flora and fauna, geology, principles of forest succession and ecology, and cultural history. The relationships between living and non-living things.
- **Environmental Impact:** Our interaction with, and impact upon, the natural world; ecological decision-making; our place and role in the natural environment.
- **Outdoor Living Skills:** Learn the tools and gadgets that help feed, clothe, and keep you dry in the backcountry. Students will learn outdoor cooking, the 10-essentials, and trip planning.
- **Tree/Plant Identification:** The Shawnee National Forest boasts over 2,000 plant species. Students will examine native and non-native trees as well as their medicinal, edible, or industrial properties.
- **Leave-No-Trace (LNT) Outdoor Ethics:** Students will examine the Seven LNT Backcountry Principles, ways to follow them, and how they apply to what we do at Camp Ondessonk.
- **Nature Journaling:** An outdoor experience may be a lot to take in for some. One way to document their experience is by journaling. Guides can facilitate sessions along the trail.
- **Web-of-Life:** An exploration of where energy comes from, where it goes through the Web, as well as our role and the responsibilities that lie therein.
- **Southern Illinois Rocks! A Geologic Journey:** Camp Ondessonk is a hub of many geologic features not found elsewhere in the state. Explore the unique landscape and learn how it has evolved over millions of years.

**Canoe/Kayaking:** (90-minute session) \*Additional lifeguard fee applies. An introduction to the parts of the boat and paddle, basic paddle strokes, and general boating safety, followed a leisurely paddle along the shores of Lake Echon.  
*\*Advanced 3-hour sessions also available*

**Orienteering:** (90-minute session) Students will learn the lost art of basic map and compass skills and then go through **Ondessonk's own Orienteering Course**. **Main focus will be on shooting bearings** and counting steps.

**Aquatic Adventure:** (90-minute session) We trace our **local water's source from** a rain drop to run-off and test our lake water quality by discovering what macroinvertebrates are currently living there.

**Archery:** (90-minute session): This unique experience gives students a chance to try something completely new. Learn parts of the bow, safety, and shooting skills at Ondessonk own archery range.

**Woodsmanship** (90-minute session): This activity teaches a variety of outdoor survival skills. Learn how to build and light a one-match fire. Practice knots and lashing to build shelters. Maybe do some outdoor cooking.

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## ADVENTURE EDUCATION:

Climbing Tower (90-minute session): Our Climbing and Rappelling Tower is an exciting and challenging program component that allows students to stretch their comfort zone and push their perceived limits in a safe and controlled environment. This program is ideal to be paired up with a 90-minute horseback ride or archery session.

High Challenge Experience (3-hour block): The High Challenge experience engages your entire group while focusing on each **student's personal development**. **Some** elements are designed as "team belays" in which all participants have an active role in facilitating the course and all are challenged physically, mentally, and socially. All facilitators undergo a thorough professional training process, and participant safety is our primary objective at all times. The High Challenge Course Experience begins with ground-school and proper framing of the activity when participants are asked to set their personal goals. The experience is processed and debriefed afterwards.

Intro to Rock Climbing or Rappelling (3-hours each): Southern Illinois is **one of the Midwest's premiere** rock climbing destinations. Ondessonk is lucky to have plenty of on-site rock for participants to challenge themselves on one of our several climbing routes and rappelling spots at Pakentuck and Phantom's Canyon. No experience necessary.

Rock Climbing and Beyond (All day session): Spend all day in the harness with this combination rock climbing and rappelling program. Includes a trail lunch.

Advanced Rock Climbing (All day session): This all-day program option will take participants from basic knots and safety systems to developing their climbing technique, all the while enjoying the several top-rope routes set at our very own Pakentuck area. Includes a trail lunch.

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## EQUESTRIAN PROGRAMMING:

Horse Sense (90-minute session): This class is an introduction to horses, general horse care, feeding, grooming, and saddling. Students will receive basic information on horse breeds, colors, social patterns, behaviors, horse adaptations, and survival techniques.

Introduction to Horseback Riding (90-minute session): After an introduction that covers safety and riding basics, students will practice their skills in our riding arena before heading out for ride through our rolling pastures and oak-hickory forests. Students must bring long pants and closed toe shoes.

Horsemanship 101 (3-hour block): This class is a combination of the Horse Sense class and Riding class for a full program block of equestrian programming. Spend an entire morning or afternoon learning equestrian skills and getting to know your horse.

Other Equestrian Programs: Contact the Program Director or Equestrian Director to customize your own equestrian experience. Programs can be designed as an all-day or even an overnight riding experience. Fees vary, call for details.

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TEAMBUILDING:

Ground-Based Initiative Activities (90-minute session or 3-hour block): A unique approach to team building and **strengthening a group's communication and cooperation skills, this experience will challenge students with a series of properly sequenced, physical and mental puzzles to be solved.** As the group grows together, they develop problem solving skills, connect as peers, and form deeper bonds.

Low Challenge **Team's Course** (3-hour block): Ondessonk's has built a new Low Challenge Course in the woods near the Dining Hall overlooking Phantom's Canyon. Its primary focus is on group development. Small groups of students will be introduced to a series of challenges which they must negotiate as a unit using creativity, communication, **problem-solving, and peer support.** **Each element is facilitated with every participant's physical and emotional safety in mind,** and followed up with a guided reflection and debriefing to examine **the group's growth throughout the challenge.**

Crate Stacking (90-minute session): Participants challenge themselves to stack as many milk crates as they can while standing on top of them. They are safely on belay at our high challenge course and must employ the assistance of their fellow teammates to stack higher and higher.

Raft Lashing and Fort Building (90-minute session): Gather materials from the forest, learn knots and lashing, and work as a team to construct a sea-worthy raft or sound fort that supports everyone.

Leadership Development Workshop (All day session): Students will advance through a series of ice-breaker and ground-based initiative activities in the morning and then sequenced into a whole afternoon session on the Ondessonk Low Challenge Teams Course. This program option is ideal for students who are just entering middle school or high school, as well as youth groups or classes just coming together for the first time.

EVENING ACTIVITIES: (All 90-minute sessions)

Night Hike: Students will get a chance to discover and experience the nocturnal world with the comfort and encouragement of a trained guide. We introduce topics such as nocturnal animals and their adaptations, types of local nocturnal birds and mammals, night vision, and basic astronomy.

Astronomy: Southern Illinois has some of the clearest skies in the Midwest with very little light pollution. Learn stars and constellations, see the Milky Way, and hear the stories behind the stars.

Wilderness Fort!: Students will be introduced to the cultural history of our region through this large-group role-playing game that mimics the struggles of living in the the wilderness. Students compete to gather the most resources by the end of the game in this this fun mix of flashlight-tag, hide-and-go-seek, and capture the flag.

Campfire Program: We will share some of our traditional Camp stories, sing camp songs, and encourage students to join in with a story or song of their own. This activity can easily be combined with astronomy or one of the spiritual reflection programs. Camp with work with you to cater your campfire program to be lively and boisterous, or calm and reflective.

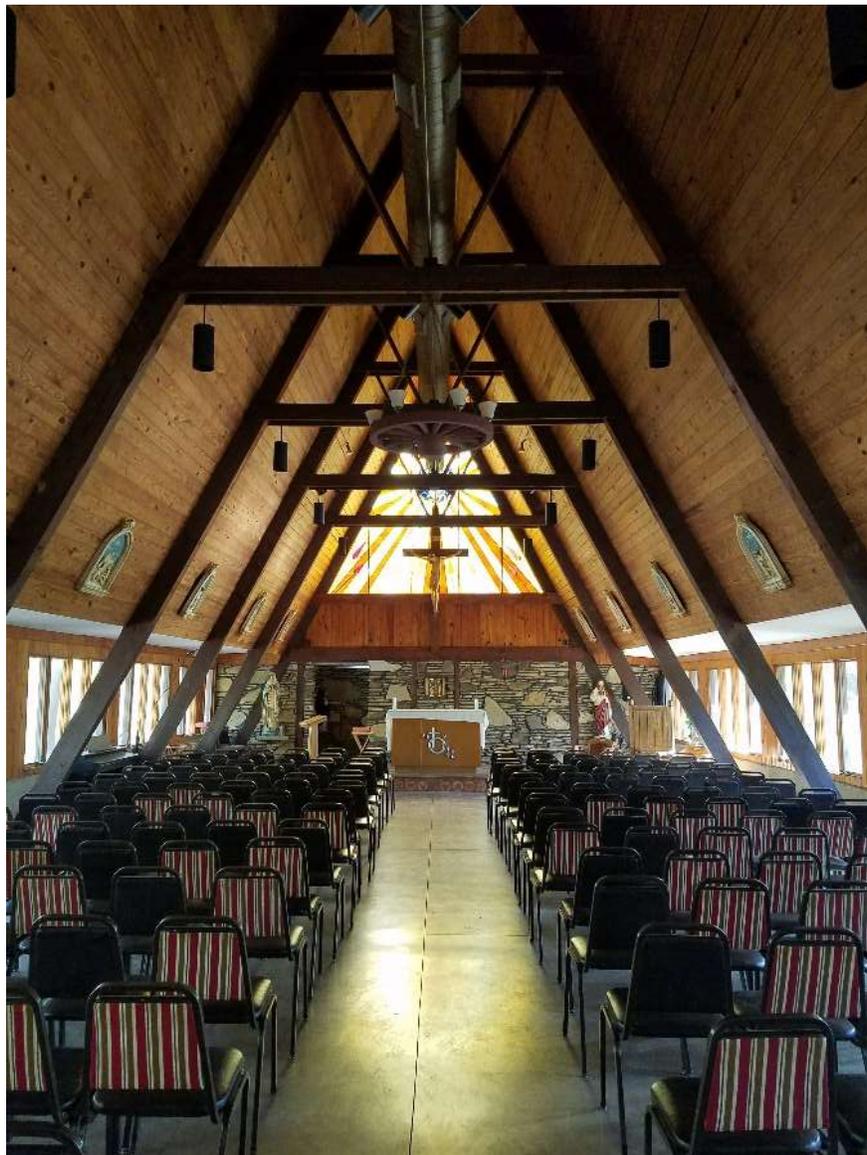
Owl Pellet Dissection: Learn about the nocturnal world's most effective predator, their adaptations, and behaviors. Dissect a real owl pellet and see the bones, fur, and feathers of the animals owls eat. This class meets many science standards and can also be chosen as a daytime activity.

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# Section IV

## Ondessonk Retreat Program



## What is an Ondessonk Retreat?

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- A time to step out from the everyday hustle and bustle of school or work, to develop **one's own beliefs while** growing in fellowship with classmates or participants of similar background
- Multi-disciplinary in nature. Our programming options provide curriculum that span across hands-on activities to group talks and discussions.
- Active exploration, drawing on a variety of faith based research and personal experiences.
- A strong focus on group fellowship, open dialogue, and self-reflection.
- The development of skills, attitudes, and beliefs to help participants to grow in their faith and continue to develop into the future.

## What can Ondessonk Retreat do for my group?

Ondessonk Retreat programs create a learning environment for individuals and groups to develop fellowship, leadership, and beliefs. As a component of our programming, our group challenges offer groups and individuals opportunities to learn new skills with each other and have friendly competition. Our faith based activities and talks allow for participants to have open dialogue with each other about their beliefs and also learn how to communicate our thoughts and actions. Adventure sessions are set up to allow participants to learn about struggling, while having faith in each other. Each activity is set up to allow participants to step outside of their comfort zone in safe space and provide tools and lessons to take home at the end of their stay. Trained instructors guide groups through each activity emphasizing these qualities.

- Develop personal leadership:
  - *Character development*
  - *Personal responsibility*
  - *Values clarification*
- Develop interpersonal relationships:
  - *Exploring communication styles*
  - *Conflict management*
  - *Trust building*
  - *Empathic listening skills*
  - *Meaningful inquiring*
- Strengthen relationships:
  - *Appreciating differences*
  - *Seeing group members in a new context*
  - *Learning about the strengths of others*
  - ***Examining God's role in life***
  - *Developing a sense of empathy*





## Retreat Planning: *Design your experience...*

Once you have set the goals for your group's experience, you can begin designing your program. Ondessonk Retreat experiences are divided up into program sessions. One program session lasts 90 minutes. Two program sessions make up one 3-hour program block. Some classes are offered as 90-minute sessions, while other classes are designed to be a 3-hour program block. Choose the appropriate number of sessions based on the number of nights you wish to stay and your desired arrival and departure times. One evening program is provided for each night you wish to stay. There are four program frameworks to choose from. *The number of meals and program sessions depends on the time available for your group's visit and arrival and departure times.* These options including pricing will be on the Retreat Reservation Form available on the Ondessonk Retreat website: <http://ondessonk.com/year-round/retreats/>

<u>DAY TRIP OPTION</u>	<u>1-NIGHT OPTION</u>	<u>2-NIGHT OPTION</u>	<u>3-NIGHT OPTION</u>
Optional BYO Lunch	3-4 meals	5-6 meals	8-9 meals
2-4 program sessions	5-8 program sessions	6-13 program sessions	11-14 program sessions

Knowing the number of days you have available for your visit will allow you to choose the best program options that fit. Once you have **decided on the option that best fits into your school's availability, you** can contact the Camp Ondessonk office to check for open dates. *Below is an example of a 1-night experience.* Please use this example to schedule your group's Ondessonk Retreat experience. Once your Retreat Reservation Form is received by Camp, the Program Director will confirm your requested dates on our calendar and send you a Program Options Form to choose your activities.



DAY 1							
AM Program Session 1 9:00-10:30	AM Program Session 2 10:45-12:15	12:30	PM Program Session 1 1:30-3:00	PM Program Session 1 3:15-4:45	Down Time 4:45-6:00	6:00	Evening Program Session 7:30-9:00
Arrival/ Move-In/ Expectations	Low Challenge Course	Lunch	Choosing Priorities	Fire Building	Showers/ Rest/Mass	Dinner	Prayer Experience

DAY 2						
8:00	AM Program Session 1 9:00-10:30	AM Program Session 2 10:45-12:15	12:30	PM Program Session 1 1:30-3:00	PM Program Session 2 3:15-4:45	Down Time 4:45-6:00
Breakfast	Orienteering	Solo Hike	Lunch	Group Challenge Race		Departure

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## Retreat Program Descriptions

Camp Ondessonk is dedicated to providing hands-on sessions, facilitating groups in programming that supports spiritual development and fellowship. Our small group activities are designed to foster group cooperation, communication, while developing an individual's faith. **A successful Ondessonk Retreat experience will have components** from multiple curriculum categories: 1) Spiritual and Faith Based Activities, 2) Adventure Education, 3) Talks, Meditations, and Discussions, and 4) Group Challenge. We acknowledge that each group is different, so every session will vary a little in execution based on the goals of the retreat, and desires of the group coordinator.



### Spiritual and Faith Based Activities:



**Faces of Jesus (90 minute session):** During this session, participants will have the opportunity to quietly reflect on what and who Christ is in their lives by contemplatively viewing different pictures of Jesus. The goal of this session is to have the participants reflect on what Christ means in their lives and what role he plays.

**Solo Hike (90 minute session):** This session is a time for quiet reflection while **being out in God's beautiful creation. A trail will be set and laminated cards** with different questions, quotes and pictures will be printed on them. At the end of the hike, there is a debrief session to talk about the experience.

**Catholic or Sacraments Jeopardy (90 minute session):** This session is just what it sounds like. We will have multiple different options for jeopardy games. The session will be a test of knowledge as well as a time to learn about the faith with answers that participants may not know.



**Choosing Priorities (90 minute session):** This session is designed to give students a look at what they feel is important in their lives, and then see what they spend a majority of their time doing and will then compare the two.

**Bible Skits (90 minute session):** Participants will choose a story from scripture and find a way to perform the story. It could be through a skit, a song, a poem or whatever the group creatively decides to do. Participants will reflect and analyze and draw lessons that can be applied to their lives.

**Gifts of the Holy Spirit (90 minute session):** Participants during this session will have the opportunity to explore the Fruits and Gifts of the Holy Spirit in a fun activity where they will unwrap a package that contains a fruit and gift to reflect and learn about the Fruit or the Gift inside. Groups will come together at the end to share what they have learned about what was in their package.

**The Saints (90 minute session):** In this session participants will be able to learn about the saints of the Catholic Church and start to examine which saints might play a role in their lives or who they may want to look to for guidance as they continue on in their spiritual development.

**Affirmation (90 minute session):** This session is based around sharing positive thoughts with each other. Participants will discuss why positive affirmations are important to people and how it strengthens their relationship with God. At the end of the retreat participants will be able to take home their affirmations to reflect back on.

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Rosary (90 minute session): In this session participants will learn about the significance of the Rosary, as well as how to pray the Rosary. By the end of the activity each participant will have made part or all of their own Rosary to take home.

Faith Inventory (90 minute session): Participants will take some time to reflect on where their faith is at this point in time in their lives, and be able to see that they are not alone. By the end participants will look forward to see how and what they wish to strengthen.

Reflection Hike (90 minute session): During this hike, participants will travel together on one of the famous Ondessonk trails, stopping periodically to reflect upon a question or a quote. These reflections will help connect the wilderness they are traveling with their beliefs.

### Talks, Meditations, and Discussions:

History of Confirmation (90 minute session): A staff member will give a talk on the history of confirmation. This talk will help students discover what the sacrament is, what it is not, and the historical reasons for why we do what we do.

Expectations (90 minute session): This is a great introduction session. This talk reminds the participants that they will get out of the retreat what they put in. As well as a part will demonstrate how our soul and spirit is fed by constant engagement in prayer, sacraments and charity.

Table for Two Meditation (90 minute session): This session will be a time for quiet reflection and introspection into what Christ has actually done for us. This is a good session designed to create meaningful dialogue in small groups.

Mass (90 minute session): This talk will focus on teaching the parts of the Mass and allow participants to share moments from the Masses they have attended that left a lasting impression. Participants will also talk about the changes to the Mass over time and why those changes might have happened.



Gifts of the Holy Spirit (90 minute session): This talk will focus on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit and go in depth about what the Church teaches us. It will also be a time for participants to reflect on the gifts they have been given.

Social Justice (90 minute session): This will be a time for participants to talk about the seven themes of social justice taught by the Catholic Church and how people of their age can take an active role in living some of the themes. Groups may also elect to focus on one theme over all seven upon request.

Relationship with God (90 minute session): During this time an Ondessonk Staff member will share about their relationship with God over their life. Participants will then have time to talk in small groups about their own experiences.

Vocation (90 minute session): Participants will have time to learn about a variety of vocations, and hear the story of **one person's vocation discovery. There will then be time for participants to share a little about where they feel called at this point in life, or to have conversation for younger groups about how to start discovering their current vocation.**

Gospel Contemplation (90 minute session): This meditation is a time for the group to put themselves into a scripture passage and reflect on the message from the Bible through visualization and meditation.

Examen (90 minute session): This mediation will allow participants to reflect on the events of the day in order to detect **God's presence and pray on different moments from the day to grow closer to God in their everyday life.**

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**ADVENTURE EDUCATION:** *Adventure Education, mixed retreat programs, allows for moments of awe and a connection to a greater power, and provide groups with a shared experience to reflect on and relate back to larger topics.*

Guided Nature Explorations: Camp Ondessonk has a 983-acre backyard, but we are also adjacent to thousands of acres of Shawnee National Forest. Venture into the wilderness with one of our staff members to learn about the environment and the world around us. Hikes allow participants to be **immersed in God's creation and allow for discovery** of the world and their beliefs through discussions and lessons while on the hike.



Climbing Tower (90-minute session): Our Climbing Tower is an exciting and challenging program component that allows students to stretch their comfort zone and push their perceived limits in a safe and controlled environment.

High Challenge Course Experience (3-hour block): The High Challenge experience engages **your entire group while focusing on each student's personal development. Some elements are** designed as "team belays" in which all participants will have an active role in facilitating the course and all are challenged physically, mentally, and socially. All facilitators undergo a thorough professional training process, and participant safety is our primary objective at all times. The High Challenge Course Experience begins with ground-school and proper framing of the activity when participants are asked to set their personal goals. The experience is processed and debriefed afterwards. *Additional program fee applies.*

Intro to Rock Climbing or Rappelling (3-hours each): Southern Illinois is one of the **Midwest's premiere rock climbing destinations. Ondessonk is lucky to have plenty of** on-site rock for participants to challenge themselves on one of our several climbing routes and rappelling spots at Pakentuck and Phantom's Canyon. No experience necessary. *Additional program fee applies.*



Canoe/Kayaking: (90-minute session) An introduction to the parts of the boat and paddle, basic paddle strokes, and general boating safety, followed a leisurely paddle along the shores of Lake Echon.

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Group Challenges Each session will include instruction of skills and time to compete the challenge.



**Fire Building/Rope Burn (90-minute session):** The team will be given 7 matches, 1 match book or match striker and nothing else. The team must then build a fire that will burn through a piece of bailing twine set one foot above the fire circle. Time will stop once the piece burns through entirely.

**Raft Lash (90-minute session):** Each team will be given 30 ft. of bailing twine and nothing else. The objective is to lash natural materials together to create a raft that will hold at least 100lbs. for ten minutes.

**Fort Building (90-minute session):** Shelter is one of the most necessary things in the wilderness. So, each team will have to build a shelter that will hold the entire team and hold off any precipitation that may come their way.

**Archery (90-minute session):** Being able to hunt is a great skill to have while living in the wild. For this event, each team has to accrue at least 50 points while shooting at a standard round archery target. Participants will shoot one arrow at a time and cycle through the entire team. They will continue until time runs out, or they shoot over 50 points.

**Outdoor Cooking (90-minute session):** The team will collectively make their own food in an outdoor setting, competing to see who can make the best dish in the fastest time. Dish options will change depending on the season.

**Orienteering (90-minute session):** The team will have to work together to use a compass and navigate a course to the end. This can be used in conjunction with many other challenges, such as; finding materials for make butter or stick bread, or finding their way to each station of any of the other activities.

**Low Challenge Course (90-minute or 3-hour session):** Small groups of students will be introduced to a series of challenges which they must negotiate as a unit using creativity, communication, problem-solving, and peer support. Each element is **facilitated with every participant's physical and emotional safety** in mind, and **followed up with a guided reflection and debriefing to examine the group's growth and learning processes** throughout the challenge.



**Group Challenge Race (3-hour block):** During this time the group will be split into groups to compete against each other. You will get to pick 3 of the group challenge activities, and participants will race through to see who can complete them the fastest while running around Camp Ondessonk.

# Section V

## Teacher/Parent/Student Resources





## Next Generation Science Standards

Camp Ondessonk is proud to have aligned many of our Environmental Education lessons to the Next Generation Science Standards for middle school students, which the state of Illinois has adopted. Please contact Camp for more information or to see detailed lesson plans. Please let us know if you would like us to align any other lessons in our curriculum with other NGSS's or to the standards adopted by your school's home state. Many of our other lessons may also align with math, history, or physical education standards.

Environmental Education Lesson	Aligned NGSS
<p>Southern Illinois Rocks! A Geologic Journey:</p> <p>Camp Ondessonk is a hub of many geologic features not found elsewhere in the state. Explore the unique landscape and learn how it has evolved over millions of years.</p>	<p>MS-ESS1-4 MS-ESS2-1 MS-ESS2-2 MS-ESS2-3 MS-ESS2-4</p>
<p>Forest Ecology:</p> <p>Flora and fauna, geology, principles of forest succession and ecology, and cultural history. The relationships between living and non-living things.</p>	<p>MS-LS1-5 MS-LS1-6 MS-LS 2-3 MS-LS2-5 MS-ESS2-4 MS-ESS3-3</p>
<p>Aquatic Adventure:</p> <p>We trace our local water's source from a raindrop to run-off and test our lake water quality by discovering what macroinvertebrates are currently living there.</p>	<p>MS-LS1-5 MS-LS2-1 MS-LS2-2 MS-LS2-3 MS-LS2-5 MS-ESS2-4 MS-ESS3-3</p>
<p>Web of Life:</p> <p>An exploration of where energy comes from, where it goes through the Web, as well as our role and the responsibilities that lie therein.</p>	<p>MS-LS1-6 MS-LS2-1 MS-LS2-2 MS-LS2-3 MS-LS2-5</p>



## Expectations and Responsibilities of Chaperones

*One benefit for students coming to Camp is sharing the experience with teachers and other adults whose energy, enthusiasm, and cooperation add to the **students' experience at Ondessonk**. This trip would not be possible without motivated and engaged chaperones, many of whom came to Camp as kids themselves. Another benefit of Camp is the perceived absence of adults; allowing kids to be themselves. The outdoor education process works best when adults are observing from afar, providing limited support only when necessary, and assisting the instructional staff with supervision. The lower cost of attendance for chaperones is based on the assumption that their presence is supervisory, not participatory, and their role is best utilized from the sidelines. We require a chaperone to student ratio of 1:8 when visiting Camp. Schools are welcome to and often do exceed this ratio, but take care to not go too far over that as having too many adults can be a distraction for the students and detract from their experience.*

Supervision: 1) *Program Breaks/Free Time*: Assist getting students to activities on time so students get the full period to complete their activity. Remind students to use the restroom beforehand, to always carry a water bottle, and to dress appropriately for the weather. Students are not to be alone without a teacher or chaperone. At no time should one adult be alone with an unrelated minor when out of sight of others. Stay in auditory/visual range and employ the "Rule of Three" at all times while at Camp. 2) *Shower Time*: An adult should be posted *outside* the showerhouse when students are taking showers. 3) *Overnight Supervision*: Supervise students in cabins. Teachers and chaperones are responsible for the students while in the cabins. Quiet hours are 11pm-7am. Voices carry easily through Camp and there are usually multiple groups on site. Please respect quiet hours and other groups.

Meals: Assist in getting students to meals on time. Please have one adult per table at all meals. Only those students whose turn it is to be a meal hopper should be out of their seats, unless using the bathroom. Watch table manners, portion control, and appropriate noise level. Supervise the table during clean-up after the meal.

Evening Programs: Assist in crowd control and help instructors in setting the proper tone before bedtime.

Medications: Teachers and/or chaperones are responsible for administering student medications per the regulations of their school/diocese/district. All prescription medication must be kept in a locked container in a central location, typically the Dining Hall, and administered at meals. Bedtime doses can be taken to the cabin and administered by an adult. Refrigeration of meds can be arranged. Administration of over-the-counter meds to students may only be done by an adult and only after their parent is called for permission. Adults may carry around as-needed (PRN) meds, such as inhalers, for students throughout the day. Students may carry their Epi-pen but all adults present should know by whom.

Medical Attention: Our instructors are First Aid/CPR/AED certified and carry first aid kits during programming. Chaperones are responsible for first aid care outside of programming and meal times when instructors are not present. Advanced medical services are in Harrisburg or Marion. Transportation to advanced medical care is the responsibility of the schools and their chaperones. *Please arrange for at least one adult to drive to Camp in a personal vehicle.*

Program Observation: Teachers and chaperones should be assigned to follow an activity group during programs. It is **not advised to assign parents to their own child's group**. Please engage yourself in activities but do not become the "leader" of an activity. Staff are in charge of handling discipline during programming. However, we appreciate your assistance with both discipline, program facilitation, and participation when requested.

Cabin Cleaning: Assign students cleaning duties. Cabins must be thoroughly cleaned on departure morning. Please recycle plastic and aluminum and put trash in the trashcans. The cabins will be inspected by staff after departure.

Emergencies at Night: In the event of an emergency when Camp staff are not present, call 9-1-1 and transport victim to the ER yourself. Please notify Camp staff by dialing the on-duty cell phone at 618-759-1780.

Phone Policy: Cell service is available but unreliable. Please refrain from excessive cell phone usage in the presence of students at Camp. We require them to unplug while they are here and they should see the adults mirroring this expectation. Please remove yourself to use your cell phone to contact home or school. Arrangements can be made to use the landline phone in the Camp office in St. Noel. There is also a landline phone in the Lounge for guests to use.



## FAQs for First-Time Schools:

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How do I figure my arrival and departure times? Your arrival at Camp is based on when your transportation arrangements allow you to depart from your school. Many schools depart at the start of the school day; others make arrangements with parents for a **departure earlier than the first bell. It is really whatever each school's teachers, administrators, and parents decide** and when they can secure transportation. *Due to logistical factors, we ask schools to please arrive no earlier than 10:00am.*

Your departure from Camp is also up to each school and their transportation arrangements. Many schools leave Camp in time to make it back to school by the end of the school day. Monday through Thursday, schools may stay at Camp no later than the end of our program day, which ends at 4:45pm, and arrange an evening pick up with parents. *On Fridays, when we are transitioning to weekend events, the last service available to schools is a picnic lunch and then schools must depart.*

Do my arrival and departure time effect the cost of the trip? No. Your package price is based on number nights and whatever meals and programs you can pack in based on your desired arrival and **departure times. It is in the school's best interest to take full advantage of this.** Departing later in the day gets you a lunch and more program time for no additional cost. But arrival and departure times are ultimately up to each school to decide and we will cater your program to accommodate. *Again, on Fridays, when we are transitioning to weekend events, the last service available to schools is a picnic lunch and then schools must depart.*

How do I choose classes based on my arrival and departure times? Regardless of your arrival time, it takes about an hour or so after you arrive to do greeting, introductions, rules and expectations, and moving into cabins. So typically, there may not be time to do a 90-minute session before lunch if you have a morning arrival. Usually the programs chosen by the schools begin in the afternoon block of their arrival day. Most schools stay until at least lunch on their departure day, giving them a 3-hour program block in the morning.

How do I pick the best cabins for my school? Each school has their choice of cabin unit, based on availability. Some schools reserve one unit for the boys and male chaperones and another unit for the females. It does not cost more to reserve more than one unit. Other schools put both genders in the same cabin unit and separate the genders by cabin. Photos of all our cabin units are found [here](#). Capacities of cabin units are on page 12 of this packet.

How are cabins assignments made for the students and adults? It is the policy of the Diocese of Belleville that chaperones and male and female students have separate sleeping facilities (cabins) and that no student sleep in the same cabin with unrelated chaperones. Most of our cabin units have 6 cabins of 8 bunks each. Most schools assign 2 or 3 cabins for each gender of students and put 1 or 2 cabins of adults between them. It is advised that each school do their cabin assignments prior to arriving at Camp.

How will my students be divided into Activity Groups? The number and size of activity groups will be determined by the Program Coordinator based on the number of available staff. Most of our activities work best with activity groups of 10-15 students. Some of our activities allow for more than one activity group join together, others will be individual. This will depend on scheduling and staffing factors. It is up to each school to decide which students are put in each activity group and this should be done prior to arriving at Camp. Most teachers try to split up friend/cliq groups to create a new social dynamic while they are at Camp. Also schools that bring multiple grades are welcome to either keep the grades separate, or mix them up as long they are all of the proper age to do the various activities. *One or two chaperones should be assigned to each Activity Group.*

**What is the difference between a "Retreat" and an "Outdoor Education" experience? Which form do I fill out?** Schools wishing to do a dedicated spiritual or religious retreat with or without any outdoor/adventure ed mixed in should fill out the Retreat Form. Schools who want more outdoor ed with or without spiritual programs mixed in should fill out the School Group Form.

Why the Extra Program Fees? Most of our activities can be facilitated with one instructor such as hikes and Low Challenge. But even a group of only 10-15 students require 3 or 4 staff to do things such as high challenge, rock climbing, and horseback riding. These activities also require expensive safety equipment and specialized gear.

What is the best way to disseminate information to parents? Printing or emailing out this section of the packet to parents, chaperones, and students will help get most information to them. Many schools have parent meetings prior to their trip to answer questions and give information. Camp is happy to send a representative to your school or video chat remotely to attend a parent meeting to help answer questions and address concerns about the trip. Call Camp for more information.



## FAQs for Parents:

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What is Camp like? Camp Ondessonk is like no other camp in America. Most of our facilities are as rustic as they were in 1959, and we are very proud of that. Camp remains dominated by the sights, sounds, smells, and patterns of nature. Earth and sky, water and fire all play parts in our daily lives. There will be lots of walking, lots of moving, and lots of laughing.

How can Ondessonk help with my child's education? Camp Ondessonk provides to students hands-on learning about the environment around them. We work closely with your child's teachers to prepare classes that can complement the instruction they will be receiving in their regular classroom. Ondessonk also has a continued commitment to experiential learning that fits with the proficiencies mandated by the State of Illinois. Unplugging and opening their senses will have benefits they cannot get in books or in the classroom.

Will my child be forced to do something that he or she is uncomfortable with? Although we strongly encourage all students to step out of their comfort zone, Camp Ondessonk adheres to the philosophy of "Challenge by Choice". We provide a challenge, whether it is a challenge course or an Environmental Education Class, and the students decide how much they want to do. No student will be forced to participate if they are not comfortable, but our instructors will do their best to encourage the child to participate.

What is the weather like in Southern Illinois? Extreme Southern Illinois enjoys a climate that is as mild as it can get in the Midwest. At 37 degrees north, Ozark, Illinois is at the same latitude as Richmond, Virginia and in Plant Hardiness Zone 7. Winters can be quite mild, but snow and ice are very common. March and November are quite unpredictable; some days are warm with cool or cold evenings, other days are more winter-like with freezing temperatures at night. Mid-spring and mid-autumn are usually perfect temperatures both during the day and in the evening. Summer temperatures can arrive as early as April and stick around into October with daytime highs in the 80s and cool evenings. May and September can be quite hot during the day and stay mild at night, but without the humidity of summer. Rain can be expected at any time of year, even winter. Please keep an eye on the forecast and pack accordingly for your child.

Who will be watching my child? That depends on the time of day. During the class sessions, a Camp Ondessonk instructor will be with them along with chaperones or school staff who join the class. At meals, in cabins, or free time the teachers and chaperones provided by your school will be with the students. At no time should one adult be alone with an unrelated minor when out of sight of others. We stay in auditory and visual range and employ the "Rule of Threes" at Camp. There should be at least a 1:8 ratio in the cabins at night.

What happens if my child gets hurt? Camp Ondessonk staff are first aid and CPR certified. Many of the staff also have additional training ranging from wilderness first aid to life guard certification. We do not have an on-site nurse, and our Health Center is only used in the summer. School groups are responsible for providing their own emergency transportation. The nearest hospital is only 21 miles away and Camp Ondessonk works closely with local emergency response departments to make sure that help is never far away.

What if my child has special needs? Camp Ondessonk is happy to work with you to provide for special needs to the best of our abilities whether the need is physical, developmental, behavioral, or dietary. Please let us know the nature of the need and we will do what we can to make your child's experience a positive one.



## FAQs for Students and Participants:

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What is Camp Ondessonk like? Camp Ondessonk is like no other camp in America. We are very rustic and dominated by the sights, sounds, smells, and patterns of nature. Earth and sky, water and fire all play parts in our daily lives. Southern Illinois and the Shawnee National Forest are much different from the rest of the state. Instead of flat cornfields, we have hills, creeks, lakes, tall cliffs, deep canyons, waterfalls, and of course, trees, lots and lots of trees. There will be a lot of walking, playing, learning, and laughing.

Why do my teachers believe Ondessonk can help with my education? Camp Ondessonk provides a chance for you to learn from the environment around you, using your senses, and experience nature by surrounding you in it. Your teachers want you to unplug and get outside where you can be yourself and have fun. They want you to gain a better appreciation for the natural world that **may not be possible from looking at pictures in books. Saving the environment begins by knowing it. And you can't** know the environment unless you get out in it.

Where do we sleep? Most of our cabins at Camp Ondessonk are treehouses! They are built on stilts, up among the trees, and connected by catwalks and stairs. Our treehouses also only have 3 walls. The front wall is eliminated to let in the sights and sounds **of nature. Some of our cabins are on the ground and have 4 walls, but the treehouses are most people's favorite. Most of our** cabins have no electricity, but flashlights and lanterns are way more fun. You can see photos of our cabins at this website <https://ondessonk.com/year-round/year-round-spots-stay-camp-ondessonk/>.

Where do I go to the bathroom and shower? There is an outhouse and water spigot at every cabin unit. But there are also heated showerhouses with hot water and flush toilets a short walk away from your cabin. The showerhouse is a lot like the locker room you have at your school. You will get dirty at Camp so showering is important.

Will I have to do something I do not want to do? We strongly encourage everyone to step out of their comfort zone, but we also practice the philosophy of "Challenge by Choice", which means you get to choose your own challenge. We want you to have fun and challenge yourself, but no one has to participate in something they are not comfortable with.

What is the weather like in Southern Illinois? The weather is not much different from where you live. The difference is you are out in the weather a lot more than when you are at home or school. But weather **is part of nature. If it's hot, we can cool off in a swimming hole. If it's cold, we will be moving around a lot or sitting by the campfire to stay warm. If it rains, you might** get wet, but we have lots of indoor space, too. If it storms, we have safe **buildings to play games in until it's over. Bring lots of layers, a warm** sleeping bag, and a rain jacket and you will be fine.

**What is expected of me while I'm at Camp?** Camp is a lot different than school, but we still expect you to show our instructors the same respect and courtesy you show to your teachers, coaches, and parents at home and school. They are trained professionals who work very hard and are outside in the weather just as long as you are. They love their jobs, enjoy working with young people in the outdoors, and are a lot of fun. We also expect you to respect your fellow classmates, teachers, and adult chaperones. Lastly, respect must be shown to both the natural and manmade environments at Camp. That includes the trees, animals, and rocks in the woods, as well as your cabins, showerhouse, and other structures at Camp.

What happens if I get hurt? **Everything we do at Camp is safe, but very rarely, accidents might happen. We don't have major** accidents at Camp, but there is the possibility of some scraped knees, bumps, bruises, and such; nothing serious. All our staff are certified in First Aid, and they carry first aid kits with them. Run, jump, climb, and play hard while you are here.

Can I bring my electronic devices to Camp? We respectfully ask that you leave these things at home. We are very remote, **service usually doesn't work, and there are not many places to charge devices. One of the reasons you are coming to Camp is** to unplug and get away from screens and technology for a few days. Believe it or not, your brain works better when you are not constantly looking at a screen. We want you to see, hear, and feel nature for real. And we want you to actually talk to your classmates and grow as friends while you are here. Flashlights, lanterns, cameras, watches, and alarm clocks are ok to bring.

What is the food like? You will definitely not go hungry while you are at Camp. Breakfast might be biscuits and gravy or French toast sticks, lunch can be chicken strips or corn dogs, and dinner could be pasta, tacos, or pizza. Our meals are good and we promise **you will like them. If you have an allergy or can't eat something for any reason, we will find you something else to eat.**

## Clothing & Equipment List:

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Your days at Camp Ondessonk will be active ones; you will be outside most of the day, rain or shine, hot or cold, and getting wet and dirty is a definite possibility. The following is a list of what to bring and wear while you are here, and what to leave at home. The clothing you bring to Camp will get dirty, so please leave expensive or designer clothes at home. All clothing and other personal items should be labeled with your name. A large duffel bag is best to serve as a suitcase, and a small daypack is best to carry water bottle, extra layer, rain jacket, etc. during activities. Please keep an eye on the forecast and pack accordingly for your child.

### Clothing and Bedding:

Sleeping bag or a 2-blanket roll with sheet, pillow, and extra blanket

Waterproof rain coat or poncho

2 changes of clothes for each day you are here: socks, underwear, t-shirt, shorts/pants, etc.

Long pants required for horseback riding

2 pair shoes; one to keep clean and dry, the other to destroy

Close-toed shoes required for most activities

Cold weather: mittens/gloves, hat that covers ears, wool socks, scarf, long underwear, sweaters, heavy coat

### Other Necessities:

1-Quart/Liter Water Bottle

Toiletries

Extra towels for showers and swimming

Large trash bag for dirty laundry

Sunscreen

Insect repellent

Flashlight or headlamp, extra batteries

### Good-To-Have Items:

Film or digital camera (not a cell phone)

Journal

Compass/GPS

Field guides

Binoculars

Fishing pole

Bug netting

Money for Trading Post (please keep safe while you are here)



### Please Refrain From Bringing:

Knives

Matches or lighters

Fireworks

Electronic devices of any kind: cell phones, video games, tablets, etc.

Food, snacks, candy, etc.

Please leave other valuables at home

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## SCHOOL GROUP AGREEMENT/RULES and REGULATIONS

Thank you for choosing Camp Ondessonk! Please read the following information pertaining to Camp Ondessonk's policies and procedures, emergency procedures, Illinois state laws, and important safety information. These policies and guidelines ensure a safe and enjoyable visit for your group and other guests. Failure to abide by these policies and procedures will result in a \$50 per infraction non-compliance fee charged to your credit card and /or eviction from Camp. An invoice will be sent to you should any of these fees incur.

Check-in / Check-out: Camp Office M-F 8am-5pm; Trading Post Friday 5-9pm and Saturday/Sunday 9am-Noon. Due to weekday guests, Lodging may not be available for check-in until 5pm Friday. St. Noel checkout Sunday 10am.

Emergency Procedures: Notify Office Staff during business hours or call On-Duty Staff (618) 759-1780. Staff are trained in CPR and First Aid, but guests are ultimately responsible for transportation to emergency care. Call 911 immediately. Nearest ambulance in Vienna, IL. Nearest ER in Harrisburg, IL or Marion, IL.

Waiver of Claim: All guests regardless of age must sign a waiver. Parent/guardians must sign for minors.

Stewardship: Destruction, defacement, or removal of any natural or historic feature is strictly prohibited. Leave wildlife alone. Outside firewood and cutting of any live or dead standing trees strictly prohibited. Collect only dead, down, and brown firewood. No glass containers of any kind. Put litter and recycling in its place.

Vehicles: Cars may unload/load upon arrival/departure. One (1) vehicle per unit overnight for emergencies. Return all but one vehicle to parking lot. No riding in truck beds. No ATVs/side-by-sides. Obey one-ways and speed limits.

Lodging Areas: No open flames, candles, tikis, gas stoves/lanterns, grills, etc. in cabins. Campfires only in designated fire pits, always supervised, and drenched before departing. Cabins/outhouses must be left in condition found upon arrival. No unnecessary discharge of fire extinguishers. Report existing damage to lodging upon arrival.

Fishing / Hunting / Biking / Boating / Swimming: Fishing allowed only in Lake Echon, Kane Lake, Pine Lake, and Lake Antironta. No fishing in Lake St. Isaac. Anyone 16+ years old must possess an Illinois fishing license. No hunting allowed. Bicyclists must wear helmets and obey posted speed limits. No boating or swimming without Camp Staff.

Quiet Hours: 11:00pm and 7:00am. Please be considerate of other guests!

Smoking, Alcohol, and Drug Use: No smoking/vaping inside any structure. Alcohol only consumed by those 21+ in your reserved lodging and prohibited in activity areas, common areas, or while supervising children. Possession/consumption of cannabis and illegal drugs strictly prohibited and will result in eviction from Camp. *Fournie Village is tobacco and alcohol-free.*

Legal Concerns: All local, state, and federal laws apply while at Camp Ondessonk; particularly underage drinking, illegal drug use, use of fireworks, removal of Native American artifacts, as well as hunting, fishing, and other conservation laws. Infractions may be referred to the Johnson County Sheriff at Camp's discretion.

Supervision of Minors: All groups must have an adult age 25+. Minors under 16 must be supervised at all times. Adults should never be alone or out of auditory/visual range of others with unrelated minors. Use the "Rule of 3's".

Other Regulations:

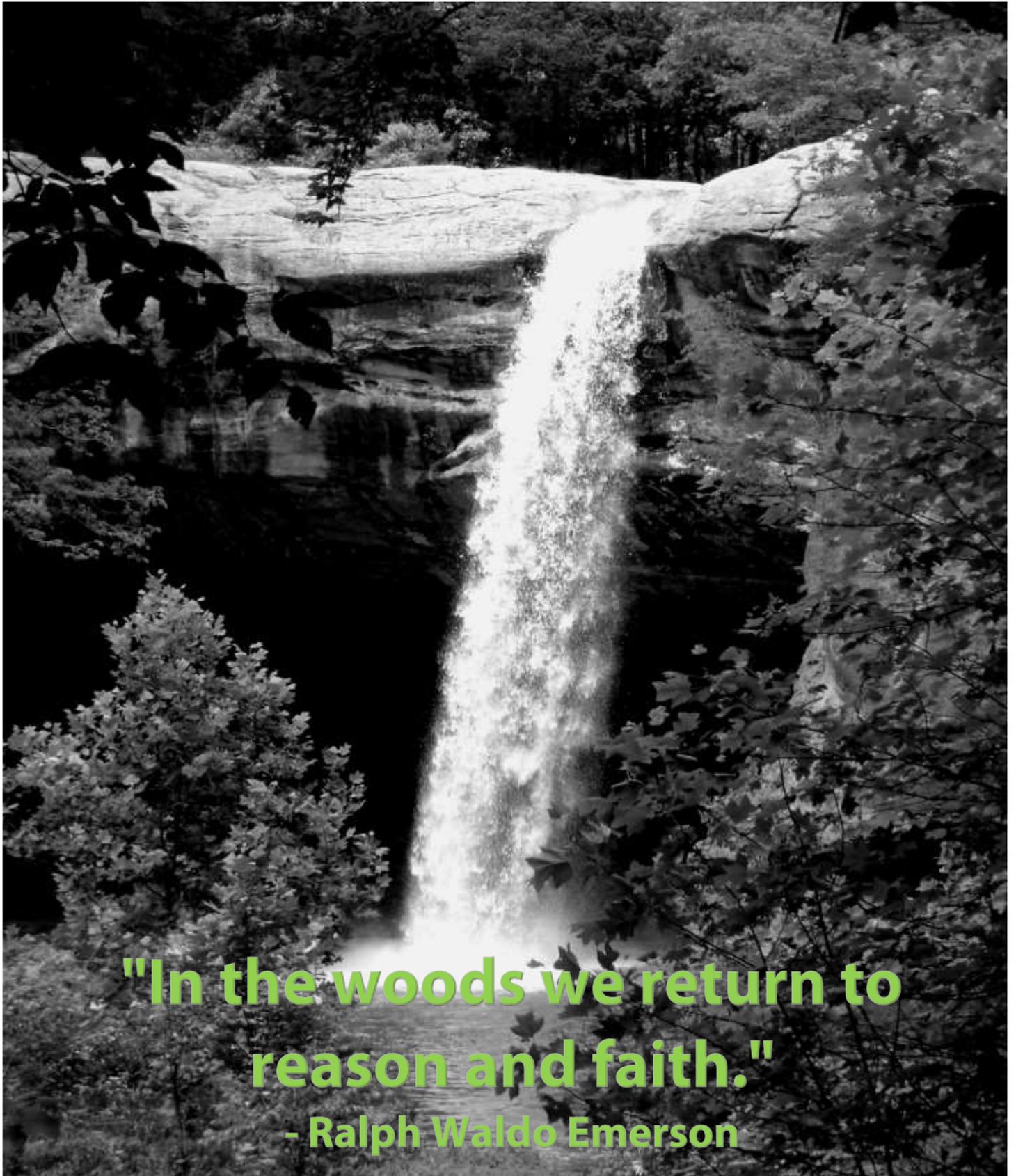
- Firearms, fireworks, and explosives of any kind are strictly prohibited.
- No use of any Camp program areas or equipment without Camp Staff.
- No entry into Kitchen, Maintenance Building, private residences, or other lodging units without invitation.
- Do not pick up any snakes! Do not kill snakes at Camp Ondessonk. If bitten, seek medical care immediately.
- Conduct thorough tick-checks and wash areas exposed to poison ivy daily.
- No pets or personal horses allowed.

Catholic Diocese of Belleville, IL: Observe the values of the Catholic Church. Co-habitation only by married couples.

Equal Participation Opportunity: Participation is granted without regard to race, color, national origin, disability, military status, gender, religion, or creed.

*I agree to abide by the policies and procedures outlined in the Camp Ondessonk User Agreement. I further acknowledge and understand that I am responsible for the enforcement of the policies and procedures outlined in this Agreement for the group I am hosting at Camp Ondessonk. I understand that failure to uphold these policies and procedures will result in a \$50 per infraction non-compliance fee charged to my credit card and /or eviction from Camp.*

*Camp Ondessonk:  
Teaching what matters most.*



**"In the woods we return to  
reason and faith."**

**- Ralph Waldo Emerson**