

Family Foundations Institute

General Information and Guide to Family Camp

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1. Family Camp Mission Statement & Welcome

At family camp, we strive to create an atmosphere of outdoor rest and recreation for Catholic families, who join together for a shared vacation time. Simple accommodation and well-balanced meals are provided so families can spend their time being with each other. Camp is a place where children can play with physical and moral safety, and parents can learn from each other in their great project of raising their children and growing continually closer to God. Daily Mass, opportunity for Confession and rosary around the campfire facilitate this mission, and family members grow closer to each other through restful time spent together and shared outdoor experiences.

Welcome to Family Camp! All of us are here on a vacation, lived together. Cooperation and collaboration in making it a success becomes everyone’s shared responsibility in an atmosphere of friendship and charity. Activities are optional, but we encourage you as much as possible to be involved. Everyone can thereby be enriched by each other. Parents are responsible for their children at all times.

2. General Information about John Paul II Family Centre (Port Burwell)



- We have the entire campsite to ourselves for our week together. You should feel completely safe and secure.
- **Cabins:** Each family is assigned a cabin upon arrival. Three cabins combine to make a triplex - each family lives within a single cabin. Each cabin has bunk beds to sleep either 6 or 10 people, each bunk with a nylon-plastic covered camp mattress.



- Bathrooms (ie. Toilets and sinks) are available right outside all of the cabins. Camp will provide toilet paper. Please bring your own towels.
- **All cabins have electricity.**
 - **Bathing:** there are modern shower facilities (3 showers for each) available in the men's and women's washrooms in the community center. In addition to the bathrooms near the cabins, there are a few toilets near the showers.
 - **The Kitchen** is off limits to all children, but there will be a labeled place in the walk-in fridge for each family to store snacks and drinks. There will also be a pantry location for each family in the dining areas. There may be some campers with peanut allergies, so we ask that you bring only peanut-free snacks. As well, if you have any extra garden produce please bring it and our cook will work it into our meals.
 - Some families may wish to provide their own wine or beer for meal time...this is acceptable as long as age limits and moderation are followed.
 - Kitchen clean-up schedule, daily and week-long schedules, and all our camp info are posted in the dining hall and in the community center. Families contribute to general clean-up after meals in a scheduled fashion.
 - The drinking water is safe everywhere in the camp.
 - There is a first aid kit in the kitchen of the community center and beside the pool.
 - **Mass:** There is no chapel at the camp, so we will be setting up a temporary chapel to have Mass each day in the community center. We ask for everyone's cooperation to make our Masses as reverent as possible, even though the setting may make it a bit more challenging. (Reverent does NOT mean no children crying or talking, btw!) As well, we encourage everyone to remain for 5 minutes after Mass in silence to pray and thank God. We ask that conversations be taken outside right after Mass to allow others to have silence.
 - **Confessions:** We try to arrange that a priest be available for Confessions each day as listed on a schedule provided when you arrive at camp. You may also approach him for another suitable time.



Campsite Facilities

- Pool – There is a fenced-in in-ground pool (depth from 3 to 6 ft) at the campsite. There are no pool toys or life jackets/puddle jumpers so you will need to bring your own if required.
- Pool has a swimmer load of 35 people at a time in the pool and on the pool deck.
- ***There is no lifeguard, so all children must be supervised by parents.**
- We keep the pool area off limits for the morning (for the parent discussion time and Mass) and at mealtime. Pool is to be locked from 9pm to 7 am per rental agreement.

- Beach Volleyball - There is a covered beach volleyball court right beside the swimming pool that is available for our use. This also serves as a huge sandbox for younger campers. Some sand toys are available but it would be helpful to bring some along with you.
- There are two large grass playing fields which can be used for soccer, baseball, ultimate Frisbee, and a variety of other games – there will some sports equipment available for our use but we would encourage you to bring your own just in case there is not enough.
- Area for toddlers/babies – there is a large carpeted area in the community centre with some toys for little ones. Again, it’s a good idea to bring some favorite toys to share throughout the week (eg. Duplo)
- Gaga ball pit and a Frisbee golf course!

Notes

- We take up a collection as a tip for the kitchen staff and a donation for Father, so bring some cash if you would like to contribute.
- Nearby the camp: there is a NoFrills, Valumart, Home Hardware, Canadian Tire, and a Dollar Discount Store in Aylmer (20 mins away) if you need to pick anything up.

3. “KIT LIST” - What to Bring

- Bedding – each cabin has bunks with a foam mattress (covered with plastic so no worries about ruining camp things with bed wetting). If you bring a **sleeping bag** (or **sheets and blankets**) and a **pillow** for each person, you should be all set. You can move the mattresses around so mom and dad could have a bed on the floor with queen sheets (or bring an air mattress). Bring play pens for little ones.
 - Clothes for hot weather, rainy weather, cool weather, sleepwear (eg. 2 shorts, 2 pants, 4 t-shirts, 2 long sleeves, sweater, jacket). Reminder: this is camp, not a fashion show! Keep it as simple as you want. (give stained / ripped clothing one more wear at camp & then throw out). We are happy to have children just come in their camp clothes to Mass, as well - adults can perhaps wear collared shirts / pants / capri pants instead of shorts, etc., to show more reverence at Mass. It can get cool in the evenings, at nighttime and in the morning – be sure to bring enough warm clothing for everyone.
- Sandals, running shoes, hats for the sun, jackets/sweaters
- Modest swim wear (this just means no bikinis) and swimming towels
- Sunscreen, bug spray, flashlight, camera and extra batteries
- Toiletries, bathroom towels, towels for showers (toilet paper is provided!)
- Any items for activities as suggested elsewhere (strollers etc. for little ones, life jackets and pool toys, young children’s toys, cards, books, board games, ...)
- Rosaries
- Ipods, DVD players, electronic games, etc. are **not** encouraged at camp. If you bring a cell phone with you (and we certainly know that many people have work or family commitments that require them to stay reachable), we ask that any accessing of the internet be done in cabins rather than public areas.

4. Host Couple

An experienced camping Host Couple has been assigned to your week of Family Camp. The Host Couple has willingly taken on the role of welcoming families to Family Camp, overseeing the schedule, as well as facilitating the organized activities and parent discussions. They are not supervisors, nor are they responsible for the family camp, but can be your liaison with the cook, etc.

A positive component of Family Camp is meeting other families and getting to know them as friends. Your Host Couple looks forward to welcoming you to Family Camp and getting to know you and your family.

5. Planned Activities

The majority of time at Family Camp is free time time to connect with and enjoy your own family, and get to know others. Co-operation and collaboration in making Family Camp a success becomes everyone's shared interest and responsibility. There is an atmosphere of friendship and charity. Activities are optional, but we encourage each family to be involved as much as possible so as to foster community, and develop deep and lasting friendships. The planned activities are facilitated by your Host Couple.

Parents are entirely responsible for their children at all times.

- **Parent discussions:** the topics will be posted with all the other camp info. The gathering is supposed to be fun, informal and practical, with all of us learning from each other. We try to arrange for enough of our young people to volunteer to supervise the younger kids (doing crafts or outside play) so that all parents who want to can attend. (If there are young ones that are only comfortable staying with mom and dad, they certainly can join us – set things up so that they work best for your family). Of course pool is locked during this time.
- We try to arrange for: Men's Campfire, Ladies afternoon excursion, Teen Gatherings, Family Olympics afternoon.
- Evening rosary and sing along around the campfire.
- Lots of eating good food, visiting with each other, reading, resting, praying, ...!
- Music – bring your instruments if you play!!
- Unplanned activities *may* include: music fun, board games, cards, off site excursions (beach, local tourist attractions), visiting, resting, praying, reading ...etc!

6. Daily Schedule

An example of a “typical” Family Camp Day Subject to change and flexibility!!

7:30 am	Cold breakfast available for the hungry and early risers Optional outdoor activity such as a hike, run, etc
8:30	HOT BREAKFAST - prepared by cook, in rec hall
9:30 - 10:30	Parent Discussion (Rec Hall)
11:30	MASS (unless otherwise rescheduled), Confession available
12:00 noon	LUNCH - prepared by cook, in rec hall
Free Time	Naps, pool, soccer, fishing/canoing, hikes, games, etc
6:00 pm	SUPPER - prepared by cook, in rec hall
8:00 pm	Family Rosary at Campfire, songs (sometimes snacks) to follow
10:00 pm	(or before) Children to bed, 10:30 or reasonable time lights out

7. Important information for families with children under 6

The campsite has been designed for kids, for sure, but not always for *little* kids. Here are a few things to consider that should make our days and nights run more smoothly!

- if you own life jackets for younger ones, it would help to bring them along for the pool (or other flotation items).
- there are no high chairs / booster seats for eating, so please bring your own. We will have wipes in the dining hall for cleanup after meals.
- Sleeping: bring whatever play pens you may need to have in your cabin. If you have an extra one and have room in your vehicle, please bring it too. It would be nice to be able to set one up in the main building for little ones sleeping or playing there.
- a stroller would be very helpful - Note, umbrella strollers could be tough to push in some of the more rustic areas.
- toys - we will set up a baby / toddler area in the rec hall with carpet or mats. Campsite has a few toys like duplo, etc., at the camp that we will bring to this area, but if you can please bring along a few toys (safe for little ones) that we can pool altogether and leave in this area for the week.
- food / snacks - there will be places for each family in the fridge and in a pantry area to keep any snacks / baby food, etc. you may need, and there will be access to this area 24 hours a day.

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