



Camper Parent Packet 2017

Camp Office

1663 Tutwiler Ave; Memphis, TN 38107

901-274-4119

Email: CampStThekla@gmail.com

Website: www.CampStThekla.org

Camp Site

Asbury Hills Camp & Retreat Center

150 Asbury Drive

Cleveland, SC 29635

864-836-3711

Greetings in the Name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

Congratulations on your child's acceptance to Camp St. Thekla 2017. This summer will be our 14th summer and I am sure will be filled with the excitement of meeting new people and experiencing first hand what it means to live an Orthodox Christian life in this world.

Camp is an exciting time for the entire family and something that affects everyone in the home. Please peruse this parent packet and begin to prepare your camper for the schedule of camp and what types of activities they will be participating in. This will bring a sense of familiarity when they arrive at camp, especially if they have not been away from home before.

Once you have familiarized yourself with the parent packet, if you have any further questions or concerns please feel free to contact me. Please keep the camp in your prayers as we continue to prepare for this coming summer.

In Christ,

Fr. Alex Mackoul, Director
Camp St. Thekla
campstthekla@gmail.com

Camp St. Thekla Mission Statement

The mission of the Camp St. Thekla is to present to young people a living experience of the Holy Orthodox Faith, in their relationship with God and other campers in an uncluttered, natural environment. To accomplish this we will seek to bring young people to:

- ❖ Awareness of self and fellow man
- ❖ A broadening of their Orthodox life
- ❖ A greater awareness of their religion
- ❖ Good sportsmanship
- ❖ Growth in personal relationships and personal responsibility
- ❖ An appreciation of nature and a concern for the environment.

Driving Directions to Asbury Hills Camp & Retreat Center

Asbury Hills is located off Highway 276 in northern Greenville County of South Carolina. Easiest access to Highway 276 is through Greenville, SC.

If you are traveling from **Columbia, SC or south of Columbia**, take Interstate 26 west to Interstate 385 north into Greenville.

From **Atlanta**, take Interstate 85 north to Interstate 385 north into Greenville.

From **Charlotte**, take Interstate 85 south to Interstate 385 north into Greenville.

When traveling north on Interstate 385 toward Greenville, do not exit onto Highway 276 until you get into Greenville on I-385. Once I-385 takes you into Greenville, exit onto Highway 276 west, exit number 42, also called Stone Avenue. Turn right at the bottom of the exit ramp. Go to the sixth traffic light and turn right, following Highway 276 which will then be called Rutherford Road. Stay on Highway 276 for the next 25 miles as it takes you out of Greenville, past Furman University, through Traveler's Rest, Marietta, and Cleveland. Highway 276 will turn right as it heads up the mountain to Caesar's Head State Park. Approximately 1.5 miles past this turn to the right you'll see the sign for Asbury Hills on your left. Turn left onto Lakemont Drive and immediately right onto Asbury Drive. The office will be .1 mile on your right. The dining hall is at the end of Asbury Drive.

If traveling from **Asheville**, take Interstate 26 east to Highway 25 south toward Greenville. After crossing into South Carolina, take Highway 11 south into Cleveland where you'll turn right onto Highway 276. Stay on Highway 276. The camp will be approximately 1.5 miles on your left.

From **Brevard** take Highway 276 east into South Carolina. The camp will be approximately 4 miles past Caesar's Head State Park on your right.

Travel to Camp St. Thekla is also available by **flying into Greenville, SC**. See the page on Arrival and Departure for more information.

Camp St. Thekla Camper Rules

1. All Campers will respect each other with Christian respect at all times, therefore fighting, put-downs or other behavior harmful to others is not allowed at camp.
2. Campers are to stay with their assigned counselors at all times and remain at their scheduled events.
3. No food of any kind is permitted in the cabins. All food brought or received while at camp will be distributed at meals and shared with others in the cabin.
4. There are to be no girls in boys' cabins or boys in girls' cabins.
5. All property must be respected: no graffiti and no destructive raiding.
6. Campers will not tamper with heating, water, or electrical controls or remove pillows, blankets, mattresses, cleaning supplies, etc. from the cabins.
7. No "horse-play" in the cabins (e.g., jumping on or from bed to bed).
8. The waterfront area will be opened at specified times only. No one is allowed near the waterfront except during those specified hours.
9. No chewing gum is allowed on camp.
10. The following are forbidden from camp grounds, possession of which can result in immediate dismissal: alcohol, drugs, tobacco, animals, firearms or other weapons, and any flammable substances including aerosol spray cans.

PREPARING FOR CAMP

CAMP LIFE

Just about everything about life at camp is different than life at home. Preparing your camper with as much information as possible will be helpful to their adjustment. While giving them a positive preview of their coming experience, let them know that life will be different, and that you want them to go to gain many new experiences.

Some of the areas to prepare them for would include the following:

- **Living Arrangements**: Campers live in a dorm style cabin with other cabins in the same building as them. Each cabin will consist of approximately 8 to 10 campers. One of the best aspects of the camp experience is learning to adjust to group living and getting along as part of a team.
- **Meals**: Breakfast, lunch, and dinner are eaten together as a community in our Dining Hall. Some items served will be things your child may never have tried before, while other items may be things they dislike. Rest assured, our dietician-reviewed menu is both nutritious and attempts to meet the variety of tastes of the kids. Because of our need to feed many people in a relatively short period of time, we are not able to handle special requests for meals. Help your camper by relaying your expectation is that they will try new things and eat what is served.
- **Independence**: Last but not least, one of the major adjustments campers experience is that being independent from parents, with typically no contact during the camping session. This can be one of the most positive experiences they can have at camp and one which can be invaluable in the process of growing up. Be aware that you as a parent may need to prepare for this as much-if not more-than your camper!

CAMP ACTIVITIES

Life at camp takes full advantage of our outdoor setting. Activities include field sports, swimming, canoeing, nature hikes, etc. If your child has any restrictions precluding any of these activities, please note those on the Health Form. Rainy days are a somewhat frequent occurrence and we try to continue programs as much as possible despite light rain, so rain gear (poncho or water proof jacket) is a must.

HEALTH CARE

The Healthy History and Medical Examination form is available on the website and must be filled out in its entirety by you, and postmarked to our office no later than **June 1** or your camper's spot may be forfeited. Any special medical conditions or allergies must be noted on the form. Please do not allow embarrassment to prevent us from providing adequate care for your child in your absence. The form is confidential and the information is only available to the Camp Director, the Health Staff, your camper's counselor and only those program staff members who would need to know any information pertinent to participants in their program. A Registered Nurse is in residence during the camp session to take care of any health care needs, including the dispensing of all medication. All medication (prescription and over the counter) will be collected upon arrival at camp, so please pack them in an accessible location. Prescription medication must be brought in the original prescription container.

INSURANCE

All campers should be covered by their family policy; while Camp St. Thekla will act as guarantor, any costs incurred by the Camp in providing required treatment for doctor's appointments, prescriptions, etc, will be billed to the camper's parents.

PACKING FOR CAMP

DRESS CODE

While camping is of its nature informal, Christian modesty should be your guiding principle when packing for your child's stay. Clothing should not be excessively revealing and inappropriate clothing will not be permitted to be worn. Inappropriate clothing includes, but is not limited to: open back tops, low-cut fronts, skin tight clothing, half shirts, two-piece bathing suits, tank tops with less than two finger-width straps, shorts cut shorter than a few inches above the knee, and low-cut waistslines. No more than two pairs of earrings are permitted for girls, none for guys. Excess earrings must be removed upon arrival. Tattoos must be completely covered at all times. Only God-given hair colors are permitted.

Because of our outdoor setting with uneven terrain, tree roots, etc, backless shoes (flip-flops, etc) open-toe shoes, and high heels are not safe and should not be packed and worn at camp. Athletic shoes must be worn during Afternoon Program. Rain is a frequent occurrence so proper rain gear is required. Hiking is a regular part of camp life and proper hydration is important. Please provide a water bottle for your campers. A simple backpack to carry a water bottle, rain gear and other items should be provided. Any camper coming to camp without the proper clothing will be provided with appropriate wear at the parent's expense.

Dress for daily church services is casual but long pants and covered shoulders are required. For Divine Liturgy on Friday morning, boys are expected to wear a collared shirt, and girls should wear a dress or skirt and blouse, with the skirt length at least knee-length or lower.

SPENDING MONEY

The camper fee covers all regular camping expenses. Shopping in our camp store does not require spending money during the camping session (except during check in and check out). If you would like your camper to be able to purchase items from the camp store during the camping session please send money with them to be collected upon registration and any remaining balance given back upon departure. No money should be kept with the camper in the cabins, as Camp St. Thekla is not responsible for any lost money. Please do not send cash to your child in the mail while he/she is at camp. Average amounts brought by campers range between \$10 and \$50. Here is a brief list of some items that may be available in the camp store:

- Camp St. Thekla T-Shirts
- Camp St. Thekla Sweatshirts
- Prayer Ropes
- Icons (of Jesus, St. Thekla, etc)
- Lives of the Saints Books
- Prayer Books
- Waterbottles
- Flashlights & Batteries
- Disposable Cameras

SNACKS AND CARE PACKAGES

No snacks need be sent with the campers. Snacks will be provided at various times to the campers. Here at camp packages with food or candy are simply invitations for rodents and ants to come to a scrumptious dinner. Treats from home also often lead to stomachaches and improper nutrition, and complicate relationships between campers with treats and those without. Any food received by mail will be shared

immediately with your camper's cabinmates and any leftovers will be discarded. Please do not send any food containing or processed in a facility with tree nuts. We are a nut free facility due to severe food allergies of several of our campers.

CAMPER PACKING LIST

We do not recommend bringing expensive or name-brand clothing or other expensive items to camp. Cabin storage space is limited, so each camper should bring no more than two pieces of luggage: one suitcase/duffle bag and one carryon size small bag or backpack. That said, campers typically need more than 1 outfit per day due to our active lifestyle while at camp.

- 2 towels, 1 washcloth
- Modest Swimsuit
 - Ladies: no two-piece or stomach-revealing suits permitted
 - Guys: Short Style Trunks, no Speedos
- Toiletries, including: Comb/brush, toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, shampoo, deodorant (non-aerosol)
- Sleeping Bag, sheet, and pillow with a pillow case
- Enough clothes for six days of camp
- Long pants (jeans or casual slacks) for services each day
- One nice outfit for Divine Liturgy (knee-length skirt/dress for girls, slacks and a collared-shirt for boys)
- Sweater, sweatshirt, or lightweight jacket
- A water bottle
- A Flashlight (make sure they have good batteries)
- Sturdy tennis/athletic shoes
- Waterproof raincoat or poncho
- Simple Backpack
- Insect Repellent (non-aerosol, 10% max DEET content for children under 12, 30% max for 13 and up)
- Optional but suggested: Bible, camera (marked with name), journal, travel games, cards

Please leave these items at home...

- Alcohol
- All tobacco products
- Dangerous implements, i.e. knives, axes, fireworks, etc.
- Any illegal substances
- MP3/CD/Music Players, pagers, cell phones, electronic games, etc.
- Personal sports equipment
- Food, i.e. no daily snacks for campers
- Nuts of any kind, i.e. products produced or containing peanuts, almonds, walnuts and all other tree nuts etc.
- Immodest apparel
- Pets or any animals
- Any aerosol products (hairspray, deodorant, insect repellent, etc)
- Vehicles (if a camper has to drive to camp, the car must be left outside of the gate during the camp session and will not be accessed during the session.)

Upon arriving at camp, any of the above prohibited items will be confiscated and stored by Camp Staff. At the end of the session, these items will be returned to campers. Camp St. Thekla is not responsible for lost or stolen items that are not revealed and given over to the staff before the session begins.

DURING THE CAMPING SESSION

RELAX!

While your child is at camp, take advantage and enjoy the (temporary) quiet! If you miss your kids, write a letter or two, campers love getting mail! Relax, knowing your children are in good hands.

VISITS TO CAMP

Please feel free to meet our staff and tour the camp facilities on check-in day. However, due to problems in the past with campers becoming homesick when they see a parent or family member, we ask that there be no other visitors to camp during the regular camping session. The campers have a very busy schedule and only a short time at camp.

CONTACT WITH YOUR CHILD

The active camp schedule prevents regular contact from the camper. If your child is sent to camp via plane, bus, or train, your child will be required to call home immediately after checking in, in order to confirm his or her safe arrival. Thereafter, outgoing calls may be allowed only at the discretion of the Camp Director, and only for urgent matters. Receiving or placing phone calls during the session disrupts the program and often makes homesickness worse, so we do not allow them except for emergency circumstances. You therefore will probably not hear from the camp and "no news is good news!" If your camper suffers serious injury or illness, you will be promptly notified. These would include any issue requiring off-camp health services or an illness in which a fever lasts for more than 24 hours.

Should a serious need to communicate with your child arise, please call the Camp Director, **Fr. Alex Mackoul at 774-364-4247**, or Asbury Hills at **(864) 458-2071**. If it is after hours of the Asbury Hills office, they have a voicemail system with instructions.

We encourage letter writing both to and from camp, with mail being delivered daily. Sending a letter before your child leaves home is a good idea, as the mail will be waiting for your child on their first full day at camp. Ask questions about camp, but avoid telling your child how much you miss them, as this may spark homesickness. Short declarations of love such as, "We're so proud of you," or "We love you," or "See you real soon" are just what your child will want to hear. **Please send all camper mail to the Asbury Hills address listed above.**

CAMPER EMAIL

Unfortunately, due to the limited availability of the internet, we are no longer able to provide e-mails to campers. Regular postal service mail will be delivered daily. Sorry for the inconvenience.

CAMPER CONDUCT

All campers are expected to act in ways appropriate to an Orthodox Christian setting. While disciplinary action will be taken to attempt resolution on site, the Camp Director reserves the right to dismiss campers for gross violations of camp rules. In such a case, parents will be responsible for arranging and covering costs for their child's early departure.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

CHECK-IN DAY

On the first day of each session, Sunday, June 25 or July 2, campers being driven to the camp may be checked in after 2:45 PM. **During the first session, Camp St. Thekla will be sharing Asbury Hills with another group. Interactions with the other group will be limited and campers will never be away from official CST Staff. On check-in day, please be aware that another camp is also receiving campers so please follow all posted instructions when you reach the facility.** *Ultimately, we are at the mercy of Asbury Hills. We are not in control of the gate opening or closing.* Earlier arrivals must be approved in advance by the Camp Director. Chaperones are welcome to stay and visit the camp grounds during registration hours, but must leave after registration time is finished. Please make sure your child has had lunch before he/she checks in.

Registration/Check-in will include being introduced to your camper's counselor, meeting the nurse to discuss any health issues and/or turning over all medications which will be dispensed then from the Infirmary, and collecting all cash to prevent loss during the session. Any funds not spent in the bookstore will be given back at the end of the session.

CHECK-OUT DAY

Check out day is Saturday morning, July 1 or July 8, and all campers must be picked up by 12:00pm (noon). Please pick up your child no later than noon, as our staff has many other responsibilities to take care of. **Any pickups later after 12 pm must be cleared with the camp director and will be subject to a child supervision fee of \$25 per hour.**

FLYING TO GREENVILLE, SC

Camp St. Thekla provides round-trip ground transportation for campers flying into the Greenville, South Carolina Airport (serviced by Southwest!) or arriving by bus or train near the camp. **All travel information, including airline, flight number, arrival and departure times must be received at least two weeks prior to arrival to guarantee that transportation will be provided.** The campers will be met at the gate by uniformed Camp St. Thekla Staff members, as well as escorted to the gate at departure. Flight arrival times must fall between 10:00am and 3:00pm on Sunday, and departures must fall between 9:00am and 12:00pm (noon) on Saturday. Any deviation from these times must be requested in writing and approved by the Camp Director to guarantee that ground transportation will be provided. Should a change in the pick-up or drop-off time of the child at the airport arise, parents should contact **Fr. Alex Mackoul at 774-364-4247** who will then inform the staff members who are making the pick-up for Camp St. Thekla. If there is a change in flight information or any other travel emergencies parents will be notified by authorized camp staff.

Safety Rules for Campers in Transportation

All Camp St. Thekla staff who are transporting campers are required to go through a series of safety checks on the vehicle before leaving. While under the supervision of the staff of Camp St. Thekla, all campers are required to abide by the rules of Camp St. Thekla, found at the beginning of the packet. Before leaving the airport, the staff will go over the procedures of transportation including ensuring that all campers are aware of the quickest way to exit the vehicle in an emergency, the proper wearing of seat belts, the rules regarding disorderly behavior (campers out of seats, hands out of windows, etc.), procedures in case of an accident, and needing to refuel.