

# FINAL INSTRUCTIONS 2017

*Below is important information that will be helpful in preparing to send your daughter to camp. Please take the time to read it thoroughly. If you have any questions, feel free to contact us!*

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<b>FIRST TERM</b>	<b>SECOND TERM</b>	<b>THIRD TERM</b>
<b>Open: Friday June 2<sup>nd</sup></b> Gates Open: 9am to 12pm	<b>Open: Wednesday, July 5<sup>th</sup></b> Gates Open: 9am to 12pm	<b>Open: Sunday, August 6<sup>th</sup></b> Gates Open: 9am to 12pm
<b>Close: Saturday, July 1<sup>st</sup></b> Gates Open: 8:05 am Advanced War Canoe Race: 9:15am Registration/Brunch: 9:30 -11am Awards Ceremony: 11am -12 Noon	<b>Close: Thursday, Aug 3<sup>rd</sup></b> Gates Open: 8:05 am Advanced War Canoe Race: 9:15am Registration/Brunch: 9:30 -11am Awards Ceremony: 11am -12 Noon	<b>Close: Friday, August 18<sup>th</sup></b> Gates Open: 9am Registration/Brunch: 9 -10:30am Awards Ceremony: 10:30-11:30am

## ONLINE COMMUNICATION & FORMS

Our online communication enables us to provide a wealth of information to you instantly!

Login to your secure online account and have access to the following:

- View Daily Camp Photos and News
- Submit or print all your daughter’s required camper forms
- Send your daughter emails
- Create guest accounts for other family and friends so they may view photos and send emails
- Update your family contact information and camper’s information
- Make a payment or review financial information and your daughter’s commissary account
- Re-Register your daughter for next summer

To access your online account, go to [campmystic.com](http://campmystic.com) then click “[News, Photos & Forms](#).” Please login or set your password by using the email we have on file for you. If you are unsure which email is on file, please contact us.

Note: In order to send emails to your daughter during the term, you will need to pre-purchase email credits called “CampStamps” through your online account. Only parents and their invited “guest accounts” may send emails. Emails received after 11:00 AM will be delivered the next day.

We do filter emails for G-rated language and content. Those deemed inappropriate will not be delivered.

## PACKAGE POLICY

Our greatest joy is providing a valuable camp experience for your daughter. We want to focus on daily activities, our camp program, and the basics of life at Mystic. We also want to reduce excessive cabin clutter, do our part to limit the amount of trash we dispose of at camp, and be mindful of those whose feelings might get hurt because they are not receiving multiple packages. In an effort to maintain these high standards, please respect the following package policy guidelines:

- **ONLY 2 FLAT LARGE SHIPPING ENVELOPES (no larger than 10x16)** may be mailed to your daughter during the term. **\*\*NEW FOR 2017\*\*** Before camp, you will be sent 2 pre-printed labels that need to be placed on each shipping envelope you mail. Packages without these labels will be returned or held in a secure location at camp until the end of the term.
- **NO BOXES** of any size may be mailed to your daughter. Boxes sent to camp through the Postal Service will be returned to the shipper. Boxes delivered by UPS or FED-EX will be held in a secure location at camp until the end of the term. Campers will be able to get these packages on the last day of camp.
- **NECESSITIES/IMPORTANT ITEMS:** We understand a camper may have forgotten something at home or need an important item sent to them (ie. Riding boots, bed pillows, etc.). We will be happy to make an exception and accommodate these packages. Please mail the package directly to Camp Mystic, c/o Janice McCutcheon (our store manager) and include a note inside the package with your daughter's name and cabin. It will be opened to ensure it is an approved item and then will be delivered to the camper properly.
- **DO NOT SEND CANDY, FOOD, OR MAGAZINES** as it is against tribe training regulations and can cause health problems in the cabins. (Food will be taken up and given to charity.) Instead, some suggestions of items to send may include: books, playing cards, stickers, hair ribbons, head bands, inexpensive jewelry making kits, embroidery thread (to make bracelets), fun sunscreen and lip balm, lotions, etc.
- **COMMISSARY GIFT BAGS** are available to send to your daughter from our store for your convenience, but this is completely optional. Please **LIMIT 1 GIFT BAG** per term. For more information about sending gift bags visit [campmystic.com/giftbags](http://campmystic.com/giftbags)
- **LETTERS, LETTERS, LETTERS!** This is the greatest gift you can send your daughter at camp. We encourage tons of letters from family and friends. It's a wonderful way to keep in touch and learn more about your daughter's experience at camp!

## THINGS TO DO NOW

- Please mail us your camp tuition fee balance by April 15th for 1st term, May 15th for 2nd term, or June 15<sup>th</sup> for 3rd Term. On your invoice, there is also an incidentals charge and commissary deposit. The incidentals charge covers laundry expenses, commissary snacks, tribe dues and the medical fee (covering up to the first \$500 of medical costs). The commissary deposit should be adequate for toiletries, activity supplies, tribe clothes, and other miscellaneous expenses (cabin pictures, dance t-shirts, etc.). The unused portion of this deposit will be kept on your daughter's account and rolled over to next year. Last year campers will be given a cash refund.
- Complete your daughter's required camper forms as soon as possible. This includes following: Travel Form, Participation Agreement, Health History, and Physician's Examination. Go to [campmystic.com](http://campmystic.com) then "[News, Photos & Forms](#)" to access the forms online. Requested deadline for submission is 4 weeks before the first day of the term she will be attending.
- Make a bus reservation (if applicable). [See Transportation – pg. 6](#) for more information.
- If your daughter is flying to the San Antonio airport and will need a ride to camp, please call our office as soon as you have made flight arrangements to confirm her travel itinerary.
- To make your daughter's camp experience successful, it is important that you notify us now about anything specific the camp office or counselors need to be made aware of concerning your daughter: medically, physically or emotionally, including any family issues. Please call our office to inform Tweety (Director), Betsy (Assistant Director), Mary Liz (Head Nurse/Assistant Director), or Catherine Kelm (Office Manager).
- Make hotel reservations today for camp closing: [campmystic.com/local-information](http://campmystic.com/local-information)

## OPENING DAY

The first day of camp is full of excitement and fun! Our enthusiastic counselors will greet you upon arrival and assist you with getting your daughter checked in. Please read the instructions below for details on what to do Opening Day:

- Gates open at 9:00am for check in.
- Drive up to the office. Our energetic counselor staff will welcome you. One of them will run up to your vehicle and ask for your daughter's cabin. At this time, one of your daughter's cabin counselors will greet her and help check her in at the office.
- Next, go to the infirmary. **ALL CAMPERS MUST CHECK IN AT THE INFIRMARY BEFORE PROCEEDING TO THE CABIN.** If your camper has medications, please turn them into the nurses. All meds must be given to the infirmary. We will have the Lice Clinic of America present on opening day to perform a thorough check of your camper's head. In the event that they should find nits or lice, there will be a fee of \$250.00 for them to perform treatment and comb through with their superior products.
- Now it's time to go to the cabin! You may drive your car to the cabin. Your daughter's counselor will assist in taking you there and then help your daughter draw for her bed assignment. Exchanging of beds will be allowed only after all campers have arrived. This ensures a fair bed selection for everyone. Once you've unloaded your daughter's belongings, you may visit with her counselors. We then encourage you to say "good-byes" as quickly as possible ([see Homesickness](#)). The counselors will help your daughter unpack, make her bed, and get settled in!

## INFIRMARY

Better known as "Heaven Can Wait," the Infirmary is home to our Registered Nurses. A local pediatrician is also on call and makes a visit to the Infirmary once a week.

**IMPORTANT: PLEASE SUBMIT HEALTH HISTORY & PHYSICIAN'S EXAMINATION FORM ON TIME** (4 weeks before camp). It is a huge help for our nurses to have your daughter's health information on file before she arrives at camp. Her Health History and Physician's Authorization can be submitted online. To access these forms go to: [campmystic.com](http://campmystic.com) then "[News, Photos & Forms](#)".

**\*\*\*WE MUST HAVE YOUR DAUGHTER'S HEALTH HISTORY FORM IN ORDER TO TREAT HER\*\*\***

NOTE: The Physician's Examination must be signed by your daughter's doctor. When your daughter arrives on Opening Day, please drop off the Physician's Examination form at the infirmary. We realize that much of your daughter's health history may not change from year to year, however we ask that she have a physician's exam annually.

Please read the following details regarding medications:

- The nurses are able to provide Tylenol, Advil, Dimetapp, Benadryl, and other over-the-counter medications to campers as needed.
- Post-swimming eardrops are provided, as well as prescription eardrops for ear infections.
- Please **DO NOT** send any over-the-counter medications to camp, unless it's a medication that your daughter needs to take daily.
- **SEND ONLY PRESCRIPTION MEDS OR MEDS SPECIFIC TO YOUR DAUGHTER'S NEEDS. Meds must be in their original packaging, which identifies the name of the patient, prescribing physician (if prescription drug), the name of the medication, the dosage, and the frequency of administration.**
- Prescription Refills: If your child will need a prescription refill during camp, please mail it to Camp Mystic, c/o Heaven Can Wait in a timely manner. Our nurses check in ALL medications on Opening Day. Don't forget to stop by the infirmary **before** going to your daughter's cabin.
- If you have specific questions regarding medication or concerns that our nurses need to be made aware of before camp, please call our office to visit with Mary Liz (Head of Infirmary).

General hygiene and good health habits are encouraged during camp. We encourage you to discuss with your daughter the importance of taking showers, changing clothes regularly, and changing bed linens once a week. (Laundry is washed once a week and returned to campers) Other helpful conversations include drinking a lot of water, using sunscreen, resting during rest period and **not** sharing hairbrushes, hats or water bottles.

# PACKING LIST

Uniforms are not required, except we ask campers to wear white outfits on Sundays. Trunks are allowed in cabins. Do not bring wardrobe trunks, nightstands, or plastic drawers. Mystic furnishes wooden nightstands for each camper. Mark trunks with camper's full name and cabin. If your daughter rides the bus to camp, she may bring one trunk, one duffel bag and a fan. If you prefer shipping, luggage should be shipped by UPS or FedEx to Camp Mystic. Bed measurements are: 76x30x14.5.

**\*\*\*ALL CLOTHING AND BELONGINGS MUST BE MARKED WITH THE CAMPER'S FULL NAME\*\*\***  
**\*THE LIST BELOW IS ONLY A SUGGESTION\***

6 pairs of shorts (any color)  
6 shirts (any color)  
6 white shirts  
2 pairs of white shorts  
2 pairs of tribe-colored shorts (red or blue)  
(New campers pack both colors)  
2 white outfits for Sundays  
2 pairs of pajamas  
3 bathing suits  
10 pairs of socks  
10 pairs of underwear  
1 bathrobe  
1 pair of slippers  
Sweatshirt or light jacket  
1 casual dress or skirt – 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> term only  
(for dance with boys' camp)  
Rain jacket or poncho  
2 pairs of athletic/running shoes  
1 pair of shoes to wear to waterfront  
2 beach towels  
2 bath towels  
2 washcloths  
1 pillow  
2 sets of twin sheets  
2 pillowcases  
1 twin bedspread or quilt

1 light throw blanket  
2 laundry bags, large size  
1 fan  
1 flashlight  
1 water bottle  
1 extension cord  
Sunscreen  
Toiletries  
Stationary and stamps  
Past tribe letters

### **Riding campers:**

2 pairs of jeans or riding pants  
1 riding helmet (no bike helmets allowed)  
1 pair of riding boots

### **Optional Items:**

Camera (no Go Pros, video cameras or phones allowed)  
Bible for Bible study/devotionals  
Books (no magazines)  
Musical instrument  
Guitar\*  
Tennis racket\*  
Golf clubs\*

\*Mystic provides these items for activity classes, but campers are welcome to bring their own

### **ADDITIONAL PACKING NOTES:**

- New campers should bring 2 pairs of red shorts and 2 pairs of blue shorts so they have tribe colors, regardless of which tribe they draw.
- Red or blue shorts and plain white t-shirts are worn for tribe activities.
- Tribe clothes are available to purchase at the Commissary.
- Campers are encouraged to bring funny costumes to be worn at stunts and other fun evening activities during the term.
- White outfits are worn on Sundays. Campers are welcome to wear white shirts, shorts, skirts or dresses. We do not require anything specific. Please pack what your daughter is most comfortable wearing.
- Laundry bags, sweatshirts, stamps, flashlights, as well as additional clothing and toiletry items are also available to purchase at the commissary.

### **TRUNKS, CLOTHING LABELS AND HELMETS**

- **For trunks**, we recommend: C&N FOOTLOCKERS, 800-535-2057 or [www.campfootlocker.com](http://www.campfootlocker.com) ("Undergrad" model size suggested). Other places to shop are Academy or The Container Store. Please remember these trunks double as benches so get a durable one. Use trunks that are no wider than 32 inches.
- **For clothing labels**, we recommend these companies: [Oliver's Labels](http://Oliver's Labels) (found on your camp-in-touch account), [www.campstamp.com](http://www.campstamp.com), [www.bestnametape.com](http://www.bestnametape.com), and [www.stuckonyou.biz](http://www.stuckonyou.biz). (a "Rub-A-Dub" pen works well, too!)
- **For riding helmets**, we recommend: Dover Saddlery ([www.doversaddlery.com](http://www.doversaddlery.com)) or State Line Tack ([www.statelinetack.com](http://www.statelinetack.com)) All campers taking horseback riding are required to wear a riding helmet. Bike helmets are NOT allowed.

## SPECIAL REQUESTS

*Below is a list of special requests, important camp policies, and additional reminders to be aware of before sending your daughter to camp. Please review this information carefully, as it is helpful in assisting us with providing an atmosphere of wholesomeness for your daughter.*

1. **Please DO NOT bring the following items to camp:**

**NO Plastic Drawers and Dressers.** Each camper will be provided with a wooden dresser to store clothing and personal items. Please bring all items in a trunk and a duffle bag.

**NO Folding Chairs/Stadium Chairs.** Chairs will be provided for campers and counselors throughout the term for events.

2. We sincerely discourage campers from bringing expensive jewelry, clothing, music playing devices, etc. In the past they have created many problems related to borrowing, breaking, and losing of equipment. Devices that play music ONLY are allowed. All videos, games, and apps must be removed before camp, otherwise the device will be mailed home. **The following ARE NOT ALLOWED: Go-Pro cameras, video cameras, cell phones, iPhones, iPod touches, iPads, Kindle Fires, Nook HDs, etc.** We want to get back to the basics of life! Items left after camp will be donated to local charity.
3. Campers may not have tattoos or wear body piercings (besides pierced ears) to camp.
4. Hammocks (eg., Enos) may not be brought to camp.
5. Make sure the music and books your daughter brings to camp do not contain profanity or adult subjects. Inappropriate material will be taken up.
6. We discourage campers from bringing money to camp. The commissary deposit is adequate for your camper's needs. Aides are able to draw from their account for Aides Day Off.
7. If your daughter will be flying home, notify us in advance and also bring any necessary paperwork to the office on opening day for safekeeping.
8. If parent reports need to be sent to anyone other than parents or additional addresses, please let us know.
9. Campers do not leave the campgrounds with parents or friends during the camp term. The camp program runs most effectively when all campers stay at camp the entire term. Other than emergencies, any special situations requiring a camper to leave camp during the term must be approved by the directors prior to the start of camp. Your daughter's involvement in particular activities could be affected by her absence (eg., war canoe). NOTE: In the event a camper does need to leave, pick up times that work best are between 9am-12pm, 3:30-5:30pm, and 7:30-8:30pm (please refrain from picking your camper up during meals or rest period).
10. We have a "NO VISITOR" policy during camp. Parents, grandparents, other family members, friends and boyfriends are not allowed to visit during the term. Boyfriends will not be allowed at camp closing unless escorted by the camper's parents.
11. Mystic has a "NO GIFT EXCHANGE" policy. Please do not purchase gifts for your daughter to exchange with campers or counselors. This policy has been made at the request of the parents. We encourage big and little sis's to make cards or write special notes to each other during the term rather than exchange gifts.
12. Pre- approved cabin t-shirts are only for Rough House and Hangover (The two oldest cabins). It is something for the campers to look forward to. Please do not buy screen-printed or monogramed shirts for your daughter's cabin. Birthday shirts are not allowed for any cabins.
13. Laundry will be sent out every week. Every camper must send her laundry (including bed linens) each time. Please visit with your daughter before camp about the importance of changing her clothes regularly. Because we use an institutional laundry service, we recommend that campers NOT bring expensive clothes to camp. **REMINDER: Label all clothes and belongings with your daughter's full name.**
14. We urge all campers who wear prescription glasses or contacts to bring an extra pair with them to camp. Please turn in an extra pair to the nurses on Opening Day, where they will keep it in a safe place.
15. Campers who wear retainers are urged to bring an extra one to camp. Please give the extra retainer to the nurses on Opening Day, where they will keep it in a safe place.

16. Catholic Mass is available for Catholic campers once a week at Mystic. If you would like your daughter to attend Mass, please encourage her to do so before she arrives at camp.

## TRANSPORTATION TO MYSTIC

**\*\*\*PLEASE READ THIS INFORMATION CAREFULLY\*\*\***

**1.) Driving your daughter to camp:** Please arrive between 9:00am-12:00pm on Opening Day. After check in, you may unload your daughter's belongings at her cabin. To ease homesickness and the anxiety felt by some campers on Opening Day, we urge you to not stay long after bringing your daughter to camp. This will help us have the campers' full attention. Counselors are ready and eager to help campers make their bed, unpack, and get settled into the routine of camp life. Campers will then begin a day full of fun and scheduled activities.

**2.) Charter Bus Transportation:** Buses are available from Dallas, Houston, and Austin. We highly encourage your daughter to ride the bus if there is a departing location near you. Campers begin their camping experience on the bus. They will get to know girls from their town that they will recognize throughout their camp term. We have found riding the bus encourages new friendships and makes the transition from home to camp much easier. Older campers entertain the new and younger campers by telling funny stories, explaining Mystic traditions and teaching camp songs.

**NOTE:** By request of campers and parents, beds are selected during a random drawing when campers arrive on Opening Day. Exchanging of beds will be allowed after every camper in the cabin has arrived. Campers riding the bus to camp will have an equal chance at all beds. No reserving of beds is allowed! **Please do not send a cell phone with your daughter on the bus.** Bus chaperones will have one if needed. Again, we encourage all campers to ride the bus to camp!

### **CHARTER BUS RESERVATION INFORMATION:**

- 1) Make a bus reservation by mailing a check to the Mystic representative in Houston, Dallas, or Austin whose name is below.
- 2) Write your camper's name and term on the reservation check, along with your email on the memo line.
- 3) Campers need to wear shorts, nametag (mailed to you prior to camp), and bring a sack lunch with a drink. \*Reminder - No cell phones!
- 4) Campers may take one trunk, one laundry or duffel bag, and one fan on the bus. Put your daughter's name and cabin on all luggage. **Please respect what the representatives and bus companies can accommodate on the buses. If you prefer shipping your luggage to Camp Mystic, use FedEx or UPS.**
- 5) The charter buses typically arrive at Camp Mystic by 11:00am from Austin and 1:00pm from Dallas and Houston.

<p><b><u>HOUSTON AREA BUS:</u></b>  <i>Your check is your reservation.</i>                  Mail \$110 check to:                  Mrs. Christy Heno                  2922 University Blvd                  Houston, TX 77005                  (713-305-7312) or  <a href="mailto:teamheno@msn.com">teamheno@msn.com</a></p> <p><b><u>RESERVATION DEADLINE:</u></b>                  1ST TERM: BEFORE MAY 15TH                  2ND TERM: BEFORE JUNE 15TH                  3RD TERM: BEFORE AUGUST 1ST</p> <p><b>Opening Day Departure Information:</b></p> <p><b>Meet at IKEA at 7810 Katy Fwy (1-10 at Antoine) by 7:00am to check in. Bus leaves promptly at 7:30am. Pack a sack lunch and drink.</b></p> <p>Note: Mothers wishing to chaperone the bus may contact Mrs. Heno. Chaperone's daughter will ride free (*mothers of first-time campers are ineligible to chaperone).</p>	<p><b><u>DALLAS AREA BUS:</u></b>  <i>Your check is your reservation.</i>                  Mail \$110 check to:                  Mrs. Sandi Sands                  5311 Stonegate                  Dallas, TX 75209                  (214-505-4109) or  <a href="mailto:sandisands@sbcglobal.net">sandisands@sbcglobal.net</a></p> <p><b><u>RESERVATION DEADLINE:</u></b>                  1ST TERM: BEFORE MAY 15TH                  2ND TERM: BEFORE JUNE 15TH                  3RD TERM: BEFORE AUGUST 1ST</p> <p><b>Opening Day Departure Information:</b></p> <p><b>Meet at North Park Mall in front of Macy's (northeast corner on Park Lane at Central Expressway) by 6:00am to check in. Bus leaves promptly at 6:30am. Pack a sack lunch and drink.</b></p> <p>Note: Mothers wishing to chaperone the bus may contact Mrs. Sands. Chaperone's daughter will ride free (*mothers of first-time campers are ineligible to chaperone).</p>	<p><b><u>AUSTIN AREA BUS:</u></b>  <i>Your check is your reservation.</i>                  Mail \$50 check to:                  Mrs. Carla Smyrl                  3408 Hillview Road                  Austin TX 78703                  (512-413-6244) or  <a href="mailto:cbsmyrl@gmail.com">cbsmyrl@gmail.com</a></p> <p><b><u>RESERVATION DEADLINE:</u></b>                  1ST TERM: BEFORE MAY 15TH                  2ND TERM: BEFORE JUNE 15TH                  3RD TERM: BEFORE AUGUST 1ST</p> <p><b>Opening Day Departure Information:</b></p> <p><b>Meet at Austin Oaks Church (Formerly named First Evangelical Free Church), 4220 Monterey Oaks Blvd. by 7:15am for check in. Bus leaves promptly at 7:45am. Snacks and beverages will be provided on the bus. No need to pack a sack lunch.</b></p>
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**3.) Flying to Camp - Transportation from San Antonio Airport:** If your daughter will be flying into the San Antonio airport and will need to be picked up, please contact our office at 830-238-4660. Below are important details about airport transportation:

- Book a flight that arrives in San Antonio **AROUND 12:00pm** on Friday, June 2<sup>nd</sup> for 1st term, Wednesday, July 5<sup>th</sup> for 2nd term or Sunday, August 6<sup>th</sup> for 3<sup>rd</sup> Term.
- Submit your daughter's flight information on the online Travel Form at least 4 weeks before camp.
- A Camp Mystic staff member will meet your daughter at the Southwest Airlines Baggage Claim Area. A camp vehicle will transport campers from the airport to Mystic. It will leave promptly at 12:30pm.
- Airport transportation will arrive after the other charter buses have arrived at camp.
- A fee of \$25 will be added to your daughter's commissary account for airport transportation.

## **PARENT REPORTS, PHONE CALLS & LETTERS**

**PARENT REPORTS:** While your daughter is at Mystic, you will receive two reports from her counselors. These letters will update you on your daughter's learning experience and progress at camp. Please notify us immediately of any concerns that you may have about your daughter's stay. If a problem with a cabin mate, counselor, camp activity, etc. has come to your attention through your daughter's letters, we need to know right away. Please call Tweety or Dick (Directors), Betsy (Assistant Director), or Catherine Kelm (Office Manager) and they will be happy to assist you.

**PHONE CALLS:** Our policy requests that campers not receive phone calls during the term. We ask that phone calls be limited to an emergency basis only. Please do not promise your daughter that you will call her at camp. A camper can be doing great, but when she hears the sound of a familiar voice from home, it can cause homesickness. **LETTERS, LETTERS and more LETTERS** are the best form of communication!

**LETTERS:** Whether it is your daughter's first time at camp, or she is a multi-year veteran, she will look forward to the letters she receives from her family. Though you won't be able to call or visit your daughter during her stay, we do encourage writing her lots of **LETTERS!** Yes, it takes time, but the old-fashioned handwritten letter from Mom or Dad can still make all the difference in the world to a camper.

**Format for mailing letters:**

Your Daughter's Name  
Your Daughter's Cabin  
Camp Mystic  
2689 Hwy 39  
Hunt, Texas 78024

### **Suggestions to get the most out of your written letters:**

- 1) MAIL YOUR FIRST LETTER BEFORE CAMP STARTS** (or you may take one to our Commissary as you drop your daughter off). Your daughter will receive a letter during her first rest period on the second day of camp, when all mail and gift bags are delivered.
- 2) WRITE FREQUENTLY AND KEEP LETTERS POSITIVE.** A good letter is newsy, upbeat, and encouraging. Your goal is to say a cheerful hello and give a positive report about life at home. You want to instill confidence and support for her growing independence. Ask questions about activities, cabin mates, big or little sister and goals for the term. You can also make a fun comment on a photo you have seen on our site and with any luck she'll answer them in one of her letters home! Please don't be concerned if she doesn't respond. To encourage letter writing to you, pack pre-stamped, pre-addressed envelopes and stationery in your daughter's trunk. (Mystic also promotes camper communication with parents through the traditional "Chicken Letter," your daughter's meal ticket into Sunday lunch).
- 3) AVOID MENTIONING SAD THINGS** that your daughter can't do anything about while she's away at camp. Save bad news until you can talk to her face to face. If there is a major piece of bad news and you need to tell your daughter immediately, it would be appropriate to call and ask for Tweety, Dick, Betsy, Catherine, or Mary Liz. Together, we can decide the best course of action to take in informing your daughter of the news.
- 4) WHAT DO I DO WHEN I GET A TEAR-STAINED LETTER?** Please remember the letter probably took at least two days to reach you, so chances are she is already over her sad situation and having a great time. This is a good time to write back and address the matter. If you would like, you can give us a call so we can visit with your daughter's counselors and get a better idea of how she is doing. Please realize that our call back to you may seem like it takes an eternity, but as soon as we have the pertinent information, we will call you. If your daughter is homesick, we would appreciate any insights you can give us about her, like if she responds well with an extra hug, for after all, who knows your child better than you, her parent. Just like the other upbeat, newsy and encouraging letters, you will want to add empathetic statements - words that show you understand how she feels.

Here is a sample letter:

*Dear Suzie,*

*I got your letter today about how homesick you've been feeling. I could tell, just by reading the letter, how much those homesick feelings bother you. I remember we talked about homesick feelings being normal, but I guess we didn't expect them to be so strong. It took a lot of courage for you to write me about how bad you've been feeling. Thanks for letting me know. I'm hoping that you have talked to your counselor by now and that she has offered you some help. I will look forward to hearing from you again, and just remember that camp is already half over and before you know it, you'll be home. If you are still having some homesick feelings, do some of those things we talked about before camp, like staying busy, writing lots of letters, talking to your counselors and looking on the bright side. Remember, there are so many things that you do at camp that you can't do at home.*

*Fido says "hi" and is anxious for a walk. I will take him out after I finish this letter. Daddy and I miss you and love you. We'll be there at the end of the term, just like we planned. Write again soon!*

*We're so proud of you for being so strong and can't wait to hear all about the wonderful things you have learned when we see you at the end of camp.*

*Love, Mom*

This letter is only an example, but we hope it will give you an idea of where to start. If you receive a heart-wrenching letter, it's important to give your daughter **confidence** and **encouragement**.

## **HOMESICKNESS BEFORE CAMP**

- Consider your daughter's level of interest in overnight camp. What sparked her interest? Has it endured, or have you had to do a lot of convincing? If your daughter goes to camp, will she be going for herself or for you? **Remember, children themselves are the best judges of when they are ready for camp!**
- Consider your daughter's previous experiences away from home. Has she spent at least a few weekends away from home? What were those separations like for her and for you?
- Consider your daughter's attitude toward camp. Is she excited or does she think that camp will be too difficult? Sometimes attitudes become self-fulfilling prophecies, so do your best to create positive expectations.
- Consider your family situation. Have there been recent stressful changes within the family? Have there been losses, unexpected separations or other changes within the family? Have you and your daughter adjusted to those changes? Are both of you ready to be apart? Please make us aware of any recent changes.
- Consider your own approach to camp. Encouragement is important, but make sure you're not being too pushy. It's normal to be nervous, but don't worry out loud.
- Be sure you send a clear message that camp is a good thing and you will both enjoy the time apart. Avoid sending mixed messages, like "I wish you weren't going" or "We'll miss you." Be firm and confident as opening day nears.

Besides being a normal developmental phenomenon, homesickness also has a silver lining. Remember, when your daughter misses home, it means she loves her parents!

Below, please find some of the best ways to prevent strong homesickness:

- Include your daughter in camp planning, so she has a sense of control.
- Talk with your daughter about homesickness, so she understands it is normal.
- Use a wall calendar to plan for camp and avoid unpleasant surprises.
- Put her length of stay in perspective, to help your daughter grasp the duration of camp.
- Reframe time to make the camp stay seem relatively short.
- Keep doubts to yourself so you do not make your daughter more anxious.
- Arrange for practice time away from home so you and your daughter get used to being apart.
- If possible, avoid moves and traumatic situations in the weeks before or during camp.
- Be truthful about stressful issues, to instill trust in your daughter.
- Provide your daughter comfort after negative life events so she is less worried at camp.
- Send your daughter a letter at camp before the first day, and write or email a couple of times a week with upbeat news.
- Do not make deals with your daughter, such as picking her up early from camp if she is not happy. Such bargains undermine your daughter's confidence and set her up for failure. Encourage her instead. If you have to make a deal, it is a good indication that your daughter might not be ready for camp. Please call us so we can discuss this situation.



## HOMESICKNESS DURING CAMP

Although not every camper misses home while she is at camp, a little homesickness is common - especially for first-time campers. As a result, you may get some sad letters saying, "Please come get me now! I want to go home!" These letters can be tough on parents. In case your child misses home, or you get the "I'll die if you don't come get me" letter, here are a few insights:

- Homesickness has been around since camp began and we can treat it. We have had to deal with just about every case of homesickness known to a camper. That's part of our job.
- This, too, shall pass. Homesickness can last anywhere from a few hours to up to four or five days, but children do get through it. When they do, they experience tremendous feelings of self-worth and independence.
- Leaving camp is usually the worst answer. If you try to alleviate your daughter's feelings about missing home by picking her up, your child will learn "I can't make it at camp," or "When the going gets tough, Mom and Dad will rescue me." This is not the desired end to the camping experience.
- Stick it out. For the above reason, we ask you to see camp as a commitment both on your part and ours. Together we can provide an incredible opportunity for personal growth for your child.

Much of the above information on homesickness was found in [The Summer Camp Handbook](#), written by Christopher A. Thurber, PhD and Jon C. Malinowski, PhD.

## ACTIVITY REGISTRATION

All campers will register for their activities at camp the afternoon of Opening Day. (including 3<sup>rd</sup> term 2017)

## BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays at Mystic are very special! We will provide a birthday cake for your daughter to celebrate with her cabin mates. This is also the only time a camper may get a phone call from her parents. We suggest parents call our office to wish their daughter a Happy Birthday at 3:45pm. If this time is not convenient for the parent, please call the office in advance to arrange another time.

## FINAL CHECKLIST

### PREPARING FOR CAMP:

- Mail in camp tuition fee balance by:  
April 15<sup>th</sup> - 1st term, May 15<sup>th</sup> - 2nd term,  
or June 15<sup>th</sup> - 3rd Term
- Submit her online Health History, Participation Agreement, & Travel Form
- Have her doctor sign the Physician's Examination and then return to us
- Make a charter bus reservation (if applicable)
- Inform Mystic office if your daughter is flying to camp
- Notify Mystic about any important matters regarding your daughter, if necessary

### PACKING REMINDERS:

- Horseback Riding Helmet (if taking riding)
- Extra pair of prescription glasses or contacts
- Label trunk with camper's name & cabin name
- Label ALL clothes and belongings
- No iPhones, iPads, Kindle Fires, Nook HDs, Go-Pros, video cameras, camera phones, etc.
- No expensive jewelry or clothing
- No money
- No food, candy, magazines etc.
- No Folding Chairs
- No Plastic Drawers

### OPENING DAY:

- Gates open at 9:00am
- Drive to Office to check-in
- Stop by Infirmary/Turn in any medications to nurses (before going to cabin)
- Head to the cabin and unload belongings
- Visit with counselors briefly, then say your goodbyes. Counselors are ready to get your daughter settled in!

**"BE YE KIND, ONE TO ANOTHER"** ~ *Camp Mystic motto*