



60 Denton Lake Road  
Holmes, New York  
12531-5344  
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[www.HolmesCamp.org](http://www.HolmesCamp.org)

Thank you for registering your camper for the 2016 Summer Camp program at Holmes Presbyterian Camp and Conference Center. We look forward to having your camper with us this summer!

**Please read all following information carefully**, as it will help you and your camper prepare for their time at Holmes.

### **Before arriving at Holmes for Check-In**

**Complete and return the Camper Health History, including the Physician Pages.** In order to provide the best possible care to our campers and staff, we partner with CampDoc.com to consolidate and integrate camper health information in a centralized and secure location. You will receive a "Welcome E-mail" from CampDoc.com with information on how to complete your camper's health information. There is information which can be completed by parents or guardians and information which **must be completed by the camper's physician**. Immunization records are required (including month, day and year completed). These forms should be scanned and uploaded into CampDoc.com, or returned to the Camp Office **two weeks before your camper's session at Holmes**. This will allow our Health Center Director to prepare for your camper.

- Carefully review the What to Bring List**, taking note of any special items for your camper's specific program.
- Depending on the program your camper is attending, you may find additional forms to be completed – An Adult Health History, A Meningitis Immunization form or Activity Permission Forms.
- All forms should be returned to the Camp Office two weeks before your camper's session at Holmes.**

### **On Check-In Day**

**Before leaving home, be sure:**

- You have labeled your child's clothes and they are packed securely.
- You have completed and returned, or have with you, the Camper Health History, including the Physician Pages.
- You have uploaded to CampDoc.com or photocopied both sides your Health Insurance Card.
- All medications are in the original labeled containers and readily accessible to turn in once you arrive.

If you are arriving by train, please call at least 48 hours before Check-In so we can arrange pick-up service from the train station. Train service to Holmes is out of Grand Central Station through the Harlem Line of the Metro North to the Southeast Station (last stop). **No camper should be sent unescorted to and from camp, and we will not send any camper home unescorted.** Parents should expect to come to Holmes with their camper to Check-In and Check-Out. There is a \$20 charge for round trip van service from Southeast Station; taxi service is also available from the Southeast Station.

**Check-In is at 3:00 pm on the first day of the session for Residential Camps.**

**Check-In is at 8:45 am on the first day of the session for Day Camps.**

**Check-In is Friday, July 1 at 1:00 pm at Agape for Family Camp.**

**Once you arrive at Holmes:**

- Follow the signs and staff direction to the Lodge parking lot.
- Leave your luggage in the Luggage Drop-Off Area. We will deliver luggage to your cabin or tent for you!
- Enter the Lodge to Check-In for your program. There you'll learn who your counselors are, and where you will stay.
- At Check-In, you will review your Health History form with our Health Center Director and turn in any medications.
- You can also visit the Canteen, where you have the option to deposit money into your camper's account – campers should carry money with them. At the canteen, you will find t-shirts, postcards, plastic lace, drawstring bags, basic toiletries and other keepsakes. **Money remaining in accounts after camp will be contributed to the Holmes Campership Fund.**
- Meet your camper's counselors outside the Lodge. Inform the counselors of any additional helpful information.
- Give your camper a hug, say "Goodbye!" and have safe trip home!

## When Camp Ends

**Check-Out is at 5:00 pm everyday for Day Camps.**

**Check-Out is at 10:00 am on Saturday for Residential Camps.**

**Check-Out is at 3:00 pm on the last day of the session for Family Camp, You and Me Camp and Discoverers (Sunday-Tuesday).**

☐ **Day Camp:** Please arrive at 5:00 pm every day to pick up your camper. All Day Camp families are invited to join us for our Closing Program Saturday morning at 10:00 am.

☐ **Residential Camps ending on Saturday:** Closing Program begins promptly at 10:00. This is a time for campers to share songs and skits from their time at Holmes.

☐ Have identification with you to verify that you are one of the approved persons who has permission to pick up the camper.

☐ Sign your camper out with their counselors.

☐ Retrieve any medications from the Health Center Director.

☐ Check Lost and Found for any misplaced items.

☐ Retrieve your camper's luggage from the Luggage Drop-Off Area. Make sure you have everything!

☐ Listen with interest and ask lots of questions on the way home and afterwards about your camper's experience at Holmes!

Be on the lookout for new talents, attitudes or behaviors and a new awareness of their identity as a child of God. You have a wonderful opportunity to nurture the "seeds" that have been planted!

## Communication with Your Camper While at Camp

### Telephone Calls and Cell Phones

We work hard to build a sense of community among campers. We design the programs, activities and experiences so that they can get away from the distractions and "busy-ness" of the everyday world, and to be in a place where they can grow their faith in God's creation. Camp is a time and place of self-discovery and testing out one's independence. Experience has shown us that allowing campers to have telephone contact with friends or family in the "real world" distracts from their experience at camp, is counterproductive to our mission goals and disrupts our ability to build community at camp. For these reasons, we do not permit campers to carry cell phones, make or receive phone calls (unless accompanied by a staff member after consultation with the Summer Camp and Youth Programs Director).

Know that if a situation with your camper arises that warrants parental involvement, be it severe homesickness, a behavior issue or a healthcare concern, we will contact you as soon as possible. If you have an emergency and need to contact your child, please call the camp office at (845) 878-6383.

### Care Packages

Care packages that do not contain food or candy are great! Campers are served delicious and nutritious meals and snacks throughout the day while at camp. Including food or candy in care packages only encourages insects and animals to find their way into cabins and platform tents where they do not belong. Care packages containing food or candy also create challenging situations that upset the sense of community which counselors work hard to build among their group of campers. If you do choose to send a care package with food or candy, those items will be held until the end of the camp session when your camper leaves.

### Sending Mail

Campers love receiving letters from home! Parents are encouraged to write their camper regularly while they are at camp. We find that the best messages are ones where you tell your camper how proud of them you are and how you are looking forward to hearing about their time at camp. Refrain from telling your camper how much you miss them, or other phrases that might make them homesick. It's always good to close with "See you on Saturday" (or whatever day of the week your camper's session ends). Mail is distributed each afternoon. To mail your camper a letter, use the following address:

Holmes Presbyterian Camp  
Camper Name, Camp Name and Dates  
60 Denton Lake Road  
Holmes, NY 12531

For Example: Holmes Presbyterian Camp  
Rocky, Pathfinders, 7/24-7/30  
60 Denton Lake Road  
Holmes, NY 12531

### Email

You are also able to send email to your camper, which will be printed out and delivered with the mail each afternoon. Remember, campers do not have access to computers and will not respond to your email, unless they write a letter home. When sending an email, include your camper's name and camp name in the subject line. Email can be sent to:

[campers@holmescamp.org](mailto:campers@holmescamp.org)

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**There's no place like Holmes!®**



## Things to know about Your Time at Holmes

### Bible Study and Worship

We enthusiastically welcome children of all faith backgrounds, as well as those with no previous experience in a faith-based setting. As a ministry of the Presbyteries of Hudson River, New York City and Long Island, Holmes Presbyterian Camp and Conference Center is affiliated with the Presbyterian Church (USA). We value this relationship and it shapes many aspects of our program. Our goal is to create a safe place where children and youth can think about, explore and talk about faith-related issues. One way we do this is daily Bible study. Our Bible study curriculum is carefully selected to ensure that the material is theologically sound and age-appropriate. Often, particular lessons are adapted to fit the unique program and facility resources found here at Holmes.

The curriculum selected for this summer was originally written by an ecumenical group of clergy, Christian educators and summer camp professionals. This summer's Bible studies revolve around the theme "Fearless Faith" and will allow campers to explore how they are a part of the community of God's children and what that means about how we relate to one another and the world through Scripture, stories, songs, discussions and activities. Please be sure to ask your camper about these discussions and activities when they return home and share what you learn with us!

### Living in an Outdoor Setting

One of our program goals is that campers will "form an interest in exploring and enjoying the natural environment." Whether it's a nature hike, helping to care for our pigs and chickens, or cooking their own meal over a fire, there are numerous opportunities to accomplish this goal. The camp lifestyle becomes one where exploration, self-expression, discussion and celebration are encouraged! Realizing that spending a lot of time in the outdoors is easier for some than others, we work hard to help campers with this transition. Ensuring your camper is prepared to spend the great majority of time outside, rain or shine, can help us with this goal. Using the "What to Bring to Camp" list, you can set your camper up for success by making sure they have appropriate clothing for whatever the weather brings.

The outdoor setting and goals of our program are also why we ask your child to leave electronics like cell phones and e-readers at home. We know that adjusting to life without these devices can be challenging for many campers. However, besides the reality that electronics tend to not fare well in a camp setting, our experience is that not having them around helps the community form, and ensures that campers interact on a deeper level with each other. Please help us with this policy by making sure your camper leaves electronics at home.

The reality of being on 550 acres of forests, streams and lakes means that we are likely to encounter some animal life. Campers may find themselves helping with our pigs and chickens, watching beavers at Westminster Lake in the evening, or finding red-spotted newts on the trails. After dark, it's not uncommon to hear owls hoot in the treetops, see raccoons scamper through the fields or watch bats fly in the night sky. As stewards of God's natural world, we strive to be good neighbors with all of these creatures. We are also aware that we share this land with some less popular creatures, like mosquitos, spiders, snakes, ticks, skunks and mice. Please know that we train our staff on how to avoid unpleasant encounters with these animals, and just as importantly, what to do when they happen despite our best efforts. You can help your camper prepare by packing bug spray and encouraging them to respect all of God's creation. You can help us keep animals out of cabins, tents and other buildings where they don't belong by making sure your child leaves any food, candy or snacks at home and not sending any in care packages.

### Day Camp

Day Campers have access to cubbies in the Lodge at Westminster Lake, where they may leave a change of clothes during the week; make sure to label all of your camper's things, particularly anything you choose to leave during the week!

Check-In and Check-Out times are set up for the benefit and safety of your camper and the camper group. If for some reason there is a need to adjust these times for an appointment or emergency, please provide this information in writing upon registration on Monday or contact the Camp Office. If you are dropping off your camper late or picking up your camper early, please stop at the office so we can connect your camper with their family group or escort your camper to you.

Early arrival is available as early as 7:30 am and includes breakfast; late pick up until 7:00 pm and including dinner is also available. Each is \$7 a day, or \$14 a day for both. If you have registered for either of these options, you will be told the location when during Check-In at the beginning of your session.

Day Campers are invited to spend Friday night here at camp, joining our Residential campers for our Closing Campfire Friday evening and our Closing Program Saturday morning. All Day Camp families are invited to join us for our Closing Program Saturday morning at 10:00 am.



## Small Group Camping at Holmes

At Holmes, we focus on building community and the give and take that goes along with it. To that end, the small group is at the core of our program. Campers and counselors join together to create family groups, which are typically comprised of 6 or 7 girls and 6 or 7 boys, with one male counselor and one female counselor. With this group, campers participate in activities together, eat meals together and live near each other. We find this model allows campers to form meaningful friendships and for the counselors to really get to know their campers, creating a genuine sense of a close-knit community. Within the group, each person has the opportunity to find their role and to contribute to the well-being of the whole group. Campers learn to recognize and appreciate the uniqueness and inherent value of each individual in the group!

Within their family groups, campers themselves play a large role in determining their schedule for the week, all under the guidance of their counselors. Counselors share what opportunities are available for their age group, then the campers help decide what their week will look like. We believe including children and youth in this process helps build competence and confidence. It's important to remember that every group's activities schedule will be different as a result of this unique planning process. Below are some sample schedules to give you a sense of what a day might look like.

An element of this small group model that is sometimes frustrating for campers is that each camper will not get to "have their way" all the time. For example, a camper may not want to go to archery when the group as a whole has decided to do so. With the guidance of their counselors, campers learn to consider the needs, desires and perspectives of all members of the group. Through nightly group check-ins and teambuilding activities, counselors and campers learn to work together towards compromise, reaching agreement and creating win-win solutions to the situations they encounter where differing opinions and personal priorities are in play.

Campers are encouraged to participate enthusiastically and to the best of their ability in all aspect of camp life, even if the activity or decision made by the group is not their favorite. Ultimately, while we do require campers to remain with their family group at all times, no camper will be forced to participate in activity they don't want to, or are not comfortable with. We call this "Challenge by Choice."

### Sample Daily Schedules

**This summer, all meals will be held in Agape!** This change will allow us to better accommodate all our campers and staff, but does require some changes to our daily schedule, and a bit more time on our trails. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions!

Sample Day Camp Schedule		Sample Elementary or Junior Schedule		Sample Junior High or Senior High Schedule		Sample Night Owl Schedule	
9:00 am	Check-In and Stewardship	7:45 am	Breakfast and Stewardship	8:30 am	Breakfast and Stewardship	12:45 pm	First Meal
9:45 am	Bakery at Don's Diner	8:45 am	Nature Hike to the Gazebo	9:45 am	Teambuilding and Low Ropes	1:30 pm	Music
10:45 am	Water Slide	9:45 am	Swim Lessons	11:45 am	Bible Study	2:30 pm	All Camp Swim!
12:00 pm	Lunch!	10:45 am	Bible Study	12:45 pm	Lunch!	3:50 pm	Bible Study
12:45 pm	F.O.B. (rest)	12:00 pm	Lunch!	1:30 pm	F.O.B. (rest)	5:00 pm	Fishing
1:30 pm	Bible Study	12:45 pm	F.O.B (rest)	2:30 pm	All Camp Swim!	6:15 pm	Second Meal
2:30 pm	All Camp Swim!	1:30 pm	Arts and Crafts	3:50 pm	Archery	7:00 pm	All Camp Activity
3:50 pm	Team Building	2:30 pm	All Camp Swim!	5:00 pm	Boating	8:30 pm	F.O.B. (rest)
5:00 pm	Check-Out	3:50 pm	Visit to the Farm	6:15 pm	Dinner	9:15 pm	Stewardship
During the week, campers and staff work together during Stewardship time to keep Holmes clean and inviting.		5:30 pm	Dinner	7:00 pm	All Camp Activity	9:45 pm	Star Gazing
		6:15 pm	Vespers	8:30 pm	Snack	10:45 pm	Cookout dinner
		7:00 pm	All Camp Activity and Snack	8:45 pm	Vespers	12:45 am	Night Games
		9:00 pm	Bedtime Prep & Cabin Devotions	9:30 pm	Bedtime Prep & Cabin Devotions	2:00 am	Vespers
		9:45 pm	Lights Out!	10:30 pm	Lights Out!	2:30 am	Bedtime Prep & Cabin Devotions
						3:30 am	Lights Out!



## Helpful Tips for Parents

### **Homesickness is something that can occur with any age camper, at any time!**

Homesickness is the distress caused by actual or anticipated separation from home or beloved objects or people. During their time at camp, nearly all campers will experience some kind of feelings related to his separation. Even our counselors and staff experience these feelings sometimes! The good news is that most campers overcome this distress and have a wonderful time at summer camp and Holmes counselors and staff are well-trained to respond to homesick campers.

There are a number of ways parents/guardians can help prevent homesickness:

- Talk honestly about your expectations for your camper and of camp before camp starts. Help your camper set realistic goals for things that they want to learn or ways that they want to grow while at camp.
- Help your camper think about all the fun to be had. Talk about meeting new people and how much is learned from making new friends. Help your camper to remember how they have made new friends in similar situations in the past.
- Talk about the length of their stay at camp in perspective to other positive overnight experiences they have had (for example, spending a few night with family, a vacation far from home, etc.).
- Visit the Holmes website and look at pictures and videos. Share information from this Welcome Packet, particularly regarding what to expect while at Holmes. Talk through probable changes to bedtime and morning routines; most of us don't share a room and bathroom with 5 – 8 other people! If they have questions that you can't find an answer for, call us at Holmes!
- Suggest keeping a journal while they are at Holmes; keeping track of all they have done can help campers focus on their experiences at Holmes and not focusing on what they might be missing back home.
- Consider packing a personal item from home, such as a stuffed animal. Remember that things often get dirty and sometimes lost at camp, so be careful when sending your camper with some valuable, even if only sentimentally valuable.
- Share with them that you are interested in all that they will learn and experience while at Holmes, and look forward to hear about everything when you pick them up at the end of their session.

If a camper does get homesick, our staff will work in a caring manner with them to help them get through it. Assure your camper that if they feel homesick, they need to talk to their counselor about how they are feeling. Please do not promise or tell your child they can call home whenever they wish, as campers do not have access to the phone. If homesickness persists for more than 24 hours, we will call you (the parent/guardian) and discuss the situation. Together, we may decide that talking with a parent is the best course of action. If either you or the camp decides that it is best for your camper to leave camp early, we will affirm the camper for what they have already accomplished.

### **Packing Tips**

Packing with your child is a great opportunity to build excitement about camp! It also allows you to talk about anxieties or concerns your camper may have about their camp experience. Plus, you can make sure they pack everything that they need to bring and leave at home the stuff that should stay at home.

Pack everything in something that you can carry a short distance, from the parking lot to the Luggage Drop-Off Area. We will transport all luggage to the cabins or tents for you. Storage space in cabins and tents is limited. Soft-sided luggage, like a duffel bag or back-pack that can easily be stuffed under beds or in small spaces is ideal.

Be sure to label your camper's luggage, as well as everything that they bring with them. If your camper loses something, it may turn up in Lost and Found. Make sure to check Lost and Found when you pick up your camper! Unclaimed items are disposed of or donated to charity on October 1<sup>st</sup>.

Pack clothing that is comfortable in hot summer weather, suitable for active outdoor play and has the potential to get dirty or wet. Old, well-worn clothes and shoes are optimal. Campers should not pack suggestive or revealing outfits nor articles of clothing that promote alcohol, tobacco, drug use, sexual behavior or contains inappropriate language. We prefer that female campers wear one-piece swimsuits and male campers wear swim trunks or board shorts while at camp – campers are active at the waterfront, and worrying about swimsuits hinders the fun and games! Campers may also wear T-shirts over their swimsuits if they would feel more comfortable doing so.

## Things You Can Do To Help Your Camper Succeed At Camp

**Discuss the camp's policies with your camper beforehand.** Make sure they both understand and are able to honor them.

**Talk with your camper about their concerns and what they are looking forward to.** Acknowledge their concerns positively. Let them know that you understand that they are anxious, unsure or nervous and that it is okay to feel that way! Resist the temptation to "rescue" your camper from homesickness. Acknowledge in a positive way that you will miss your camper and you are confident that they will be able to complete the camp session.

**Share your own positive experiences at summer camp and what you hope they will get to experience while at Holmes.** Don't be afraid to talk about anxieties you may have had from a similar experience when you were their age, but make sure to highlight all the positive things that came from your experience.

**Let your camper know that the camp staff are here to help them.** Make sure they understand that if they have a problem, they should let their counselor know.

**Prepare your camper for spending time away from home at camp.** Visit the camp website with your child and look at pictures. Encourage your camper to ask questions about camp. Practice being away from home overnight by having a sleepout in the backyard or at a friend's house. Talk about the length of their stay at camp in perspective to other positive overnight experiences they have had (for example, spending a few night with family or a vacation far from home).

**Pray with – and for – your camper in the days and weeks leading up to their time at camp!** Guide them as they talk to God about the fun they will have at Holmes and ask to be open to the spiritual, social and physical growth they will experience.

## Avoid These Things That Set Your Camper Up For Failure

**Avoid making deals or using bribes.** For example, avoid saying "If you don't like it, Mommy will come pick you up" or "If you stay at camp, Daddy will get you a new bike when you come home."

**Avoid statements or actions that conflict with camp policies.** Avoid saying things like "If you get homesick, you can call me," when camp has a policy that does not permit campers to call home, or allowing your camper to pack a digital music player, e-reader or cell phone when the packing list says to leave it at home.

**Avoid sending your child to camp during a disruptive home situation.** For example, in situations where a grandparent died last week or parents just got a divorce, it's best to give your child time to adjust. Contact us to see if it's possible to switch to a later session in the summer.

**Avoid keeping helpful information from camp staff about your child.** For example, not letting staff know that your camper is prone to bedwetting is counterproductive. By providing our staff with as much information as possible, you help us help your camper! Having information ahead of time saves us from having to "troubleshoot" a puzzling situation in search of a solution; instead we can be proactive.

**Avoid taking your child off of prescription medications for their week of camp.** Camp is a less structured environment than your child may be used to at school. Children are more active and stay up later at camp. If your child requires medication while at home under normal circumstances, it is beneficial for them to remain on those medications and continue a routine the body's metabolism is familiar with.