



# **CAMP TALAHI**

*Retreat & Nature Center*

CTRNC  
c/o St. Paul UCC  
26550 Cherry Hill Rd  
Dearborn Heights, MI 48127  
Camptalahi.org~ info@camptalahi.org

## **Hello future deans!**

Thank you for your interest in leading a summer camp program at Camp Talahi! The Camp Talahi Retreat and Nature Center is excited to develop a prosperous relationship between Deans, Counselors, Site Staff, Chaplains, and CTRNC Board members. Together, we can make this summer truly memorable for our campers.

## **What's in this kit and why do I need it?**

This kit will guide you through the first steps of becoming a dean at Camp Talahi. You will learn about the expectations of a dean, the traditions and culture at Camp Talahi, and how to plan the schedule and budget for your camp.

Following the advice given here, deans will create a cohesive feel across all programs at Camp Talahi. While each camp will be different, deans are expected to produce a program which reflects the shared beliefs and ideals of the Camp Talahi community. Communication with your fellow deans is highly encouraged as the spread of good ideas will make camp more enjoyable for everyone.

Deans will work under the supervision of the Camp Executive and the Summer Program Director. The Camp Executive will approve all camp schedules and activities no later than June 1 and the Summer Program Director will be on site to ensure a safe and successful camp session.



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## Summer Theme

The curriculum at Camp Talahi rotates through a three year cycle of thematic focuses: relationship with God; relationship with community; and relationship with the world. The CTRNC selects a yearly theme as a context for that year's curriculum.

Most of our camps cover a three year age range, so each time a camper "graduates" to a new camp, they will experience the same cycle. (e.g. a camper who begins Junior Camp during a "relationship with God" year will also begin Adventure Camp during a "relationship with God" year.)

## Summer Theme 2017: Listen to the Earth

2017 is a "you and your relationship with the world" year. We will be focusing on the importance of preservation and conservation in regard to our beautiful planet and all the nature and wildlife it contains.

"Listen to the Earth" Job 12: 7-10

<sup>7</sup> "But ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds in the sky, and they will tell you; <sup>8</sup> or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish in the sea inform you.

<sup>9</sup> Which of all these does not know that the hand of the LORD has done this? <sup>10</sup> In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind."

The religious services (morning watch/Vespers) should reflect these themes, and each fruit should be touched on during the week. The scriptures are examples of readings relevant to particular fruits, and are certainly not a restriction. Feel free to use your imagination and/or Google.



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## Sample Schedule

This schedule shows a typical day at Camp Talahi. This schedule can be adjusted or completely reinvented to fit your plans for your camp, but there are a few things you are expected to include: 3 meals per day (at reasonable times), FOB (Flat On Bunk – quiet/resting time during the day), Vespers, and the closing campfire on Thursday night (after the evening activity).

Although it's not technically required, there might just be a riot if you forget swim time!

8:30 am Breakfast/Morning Announcements  
9:30 am Cabin Clean Up/ Dress for Morning Rotations  
10:00 am Morning Watch  
10:30 am Morning Rotation 1 (leave at 11:20)  
11:30 am Morning Rotation 2 (leave at 12:20)  
12:30 pm Lunch  
1:30 pm FOB  
2:30 pm Waterfront  
3:30 pm Camp Store/Change for Campers Choice  
4:00 pm Camper Choice  
6:00 pm Dinner  
7:00 pm Vespers  
7:30 pm Evening Activity  
8:15 pm Snack  
8:30 pm to the Dorms!

Please keep in mind older children will go to the dorms later (10pm)

When planning activities, consider the talented people you already know. Perhaps you have a friend that is skilled in karate who could teach a session, or you know a gifted artist, or a yoga instructor...

### Morning Watch

Morning watch is a short religious service lead by the chaplain. It often introduces religious aspects (scripture, idea, theme, etc.) that the vespers service will focus on later that day.

### Morning Rotations

Morning rotations typically include activities like arts and crafts, canoeing, hiking, or vespers planning, and are done in cabin groups (8-10 campers) or family groups (16-20 campers) depending on the total number of campers.



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## **Camper's Choice**

Camper's choice gives campers a chance to customize their camp experience, and the programs offered are a bit more focused/advanced. For example a drama program in the morning might consist largely of improv games, but the afternoon session might consist of learning script or making a skit/play. Activities might include bible study, arts and crafts, canoeing, capture the flag, and many more. Be sure to offer varied activity options: you don't want offer 3 sporty options on the same day and have no options for kids interested in art. Aim to offer at least one high energy activity (e.g. capture the flag), a middle energy (e.g. canoeing), and a lower energy activity (e.g. creative writing) each day.

## **Evening Activity**

Evening activities are generally camp-wide. These activities may include dances, carnivals, talent shows, camp fires, and more. This is part of planning a camp where you get to be your most creative! We encourage you to think beyond the suggestions given in this document.

## **Hints and Reminders**

- Remember to build time into your schedule for campers to get from one place to another, but not so much time that they are waiting for the next activity to start.
- It is your responsibility to ensure that each activity is ready to go at its appointed time, thus much of your day will be spent preparing and setting up for upcoming activities.
- Remember Mother Nature doesn't always read the camp schedule when she plans her rainstorms - have a back-up plan (indoors) just in case.
- Be flexible - sometimes your best laid plans don't work or they are just not as fun as you thought they would be. Take cues from your campers: if they are clamoring for capture the flag add it to the schedule.

## **Cabin Groups**

Depending on the number of campers at your camp session, you will need to divide the campers into cabin groups of 8 or 10 campers. Each cabin group will be lead by one counselor and one CIT (Counselor in Training).

Campers have the option of requesting one cabin mate, we do our best to honor such requests.

## **Cabin Group Chats**

Each day, 15 to 30 minutes should to be set aside for cabin group chats. This is a time for counselors and CIT's to check in with each of their campers, foster a stronger camper to counselor relationship, stronger camper to camper relationships, make sure that each camper is enjoying their time at camp, learn what the campers are looking forward to, etc. Typical times for these chats are



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right before bed, right before a meal (instead of the traditional singing), during evening snack, or directly after FOB.

## Camp Talahi Traditions

### Mail Call

As a dean, you can choose when you hold mail call, but it should be done daily. Typically mail is called during dinner but if there is a lot of mail, it can slow the evening schedule down. An alternative time is after lunch, so the campers that get thrown in the lake will already be heading up to the dorms for FOB.

- 1 letter in a single day means that the camper must sing a short silly song in front of the camp. To save time this should be done as a group and at least one adult should participate.
- 5 letters or a package in a single day means that the camper will get thrown into the lake by the lifeguards into the appropriate section. If the camper truly does not want to be thrown in, he or she may nominate a CIT or counselor to be thrown in his or her place.
- Campers who receive food in a package will be asked to store it in the kitchen. They can have access during meals, snack, or camp store.
- Deans have the option of making a Talahi Post Office (allowing campers to send letters to one another) or requiring mail to go through the USPS. Beware- a Talahi Post Office might mean such a large amount of mail that everyone will get thrown in the lake!

### Closing Campfire

On the final night of each week long camp session, it is a Talahi tradition to hold a closing campfire in Fire Valley. The basics for the ceremony are outlined below and should be included; however, individual camps should feel free to add elements as they see fit. This can often be an emotional time for campers, and the closing campfire should be a more solemn/sentimental activity.

On the way to the fire, each camper should be asked to find a small stick. In turn, each camper will toss his or her stick into the fire, and address the camp if they wish. After everyone has thrown in their stick, candles will be passed around and the camp will sing Pass It On as the candles are lit. The camp should then travel to the beach where they will plant their candles in the sand and say goodnight to the lake.



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## Camp Talahi Culture

Camp Talahi has a long and proud history of being an open and welcoming place for all campers. We strive to create an environment where campers can leave behind the stresses of home and find a place of where they are accepted and celebrated.

### Challenge by Choice

The CTRNC follows the policy of Challenge by Choice. This means that we do not force children to participate in any activity but rather use positive encouragement to persuade campers to try new activities. There should never be a punishment for a camper choosing not to participate in an activity, and it is the camper's right to sit out and that right should be respected by his or her counselors, CIT's, and fellow campers. If a camper should choose to not participate in a planned activity he or she should be given one of the following options:

- cheering on his or her cabin mates while they participate (e.g. not wanting to get in the lake during water olympics);
- sitting out that activity (e.g. scared of the rope swing on the adventure course);
- joining another group during the activity in question (e.g. not wanting to go horseback riding).

If a camper repeatedly chooses not to participate in activities, it is time to have a larger discussion. In a quiet period, engage the camper, with his or her counselor and the program director, in a meeting to discuss how you can all work together to give the camper the best camp experience. There may be an underlying reason why that camper hasn't felt comfortable enough to participate (previous bad experience, homesick, bullied, etc).

### Ideas!

Throughout the year, the CTRNC programming subcommittee finds camp inspiration everywhere. Below are some ideas that you can incorporate into you camp session. Most ideas are labeled with a suggested camp or age group.

- drumming on paint (basically you put some paint on an upturned bucket and drum and get paint everywhere!) MADD
- React and Act- improv game where everyone submits different situations to react to (meeting a famous person). Each person then draws a situation out of a hat and everyone else guesses what they drew. MADD
- Giant, Wizard, Elves; a rock paper scissors tag like game. divide kids into 2 teams. At the start of each round everyone will line up at the center line and act out one of the characters. Whoever loses each match up runs away from the winner. Winners try to tag losers to bring them back to their side of the game. ANY
- Sing song Ping Pong just like the scene in Pitch Perfect, use only camp songs to level the field. (MADD) Good instructions for an alternative version <http://campleadership.org/sing-down-505>



# CAMP TALAHU

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- <http://campleadership.org/butt-spelling> we will use heads or elbows.
- Spelling with musical notes- MADD [http://colorinmypiano.com/2012/05/24/spell-a-keyboard-game/?utm\\_source=rss&utm\\_medium=rss&utm\\_campaign=spell-a-keyboard-game](http://colorinmypiano.com/2012/05/24/spell-a-keyboard-game/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=spell-a-keyboard-game)
- Pen Partners- pair kids and have them sit back to back. One kid gets paper and a pen and the other gets a bunch of objects. The one with the objects must describe them to the drawer. (MADD)
- Outdoor bible scavenger hunt <http://rachelwojo.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Bible-Verse-Scavenger-Hunt.pdf>
- Family Feud links to questions: [http://lets-get-together.com/2014/02/22/family-friendly-family-feud/#\\_a5y\\_p=2752037](http://lets-get-together.com/2014/02/22/family-friendly-family-feud/#_a5y_p=2752037)
- Bow and arrow making (it looks time consuming)  
<http://www.ikatbag.com/2012/09/archery-party-bows.html>
- Glow in the dark volleyball (cut open glow sticks and inject the liquid into a cheap plastic ball) could also play soccer and other ball related games SR HIGH maybe GAS
- Amazing Race! a scavenger hunt with challenges along the way. ANY pair with some of these ideas for the challenges  
<http://goforwardwithfaith.blogspot.com/2011/04/around-world-in-80-minutes.html>
- Lifesize pac man (tape board on lodge floor use, have staff be the ghosts) might not be entertaining enough for a large group.
- Jesus mad gab  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B0yHmhViu349UzFGYkY5WG1OVjQ/edit>
- Pop corn olympics to pair with movie night <http://oneshetwoshe.com/2013/03/the-popcorn-olympics-fun-activity-for-kids-she-veronica.html>
- 3 ball GAS, ADVENTURE or SR. HIGH <http://stumingames.com/2013/04/17/3-ball-stumin-teamgames/>
- Freeze frame ANY <http://stumingames.com/2013/01/08/tuesdays-game-of-the-week-freeze-frame-stumin-youthmin-games/>
- Battleship on volleyball court ANY
- Color powder could use for capture the flag, battleship, tag etc. ANY how to: <http://www.millyandtilly.com/2013/03/diy-color-powders.html>
- Scatterball <http://www.ministry2youth.com/youth-group-game-scatterball/>
- GaGa Ball this is super popular at camping conferences, we could make a pit out of tables. <http://www.gagaballpits.com/rules.html>
- Slip and slide bowling (the campers are the ball)
- WOLF a counselor hides and the campers look for him/her. Campers can howl and the wolf must howl back (but not more than once every five minutes). MINI



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## Sample Budget

In planning the program budget you do not need to worry about the costs associated with feeding, housing or supervising campers. This budget is to focus on the fun stuff- like how many pipe cleaners your campers will need to build an exact replica of the Lodge and how much that will cost.

Most of this budget will likely go to your evening activities and craft supplies. Your budget is set at \$100.00 to \$200.00. If you have an amazing idea that doesn't quite fit into that limit, please contact the CTRNC and we will see if there is a way to make your idea work.

## Arts and Crafts

While camp has a limited amount of some basic supplies, it is a good idea to make a complete list of *everything* each craft will need. We will supply the items but will need to know what and how many you will need of each item.

If you want each camper to be able to tie-dye a bandana, your list of needed supplies should look like this:

- Buckets (to hold dye)
- Dye
- Rubber Bands
- Bandana's (60- one for each camper)
- Clothes Line (to dry bandanas)

## Evening Activities

Some activities cost very little (camp fires, dances), while some cost a bit more (once we had inflatable sumo wrestling and a live band). Be creative and don't be scared to ask for a discount or favors.

Examples:

Animal Shows (Howell Nature Center)

Magicians

Improv Groups



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## Writing a Dean's Letter

A Dean's Letter will be sent to campers a few weeks prior to their camp session. This letter is an introduction of you and your camp. The letter doesn't have to be long, but it lets campers and parents know that you have been preparing for their special week. After you write your letter, send it to Hannah at [info@camptalahi.org](mailto:info@camptalahi.org) and she will pass it on with the of basic information we provide to all campers (pick up and drop off times, basic packing list, etc)

A dean's letter should include:

- A brief introduction of who you are and why you are excited for your upcoming camp. (Also introduce your chaplain and counselors if possible)
- Any special items campers should bring (ex. white -shirt for tie-dye, fancy clothes for a formal dinner, old clothes they don't mind staining for super sloppy double dare).



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## Application

Please return your answers to these questions along with a list of references, resume, and a tentative camp schedule to [info@camptalahi.org](mailto:info@camptalahi.org). Applications received by May 1 will be given priority.

What Camp are you interested in deaning and why? (Your choices are Mini Camp, Family Camp, Jr. Camp, Adventure Camp, GAS (Games And Science) Camp; MADD (Music, Art, Dance, Drama) Camp, Senior High Camp, and Young Adult Camp)

Do you have a chaplain in mind? If not, do you have specific expectations from a chaplain that will help us match you with one?

What will you do promote your sessions of camp to potential campers and volunteer counselors?

### Please provide:

- a list of 3 references,
- résumé
- a tentative schedule/activity list.

We understand that you may want to change your schedule, or what crafts you make but by providing this list early on in the process it gives the CTRNC time to gather supplies at greater discounts, buy in bulk, and help troubleshoot any potential pitfalls.