



# Oak Hill Christian Service Camp

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## Dean's Survival Guide

**Congratulations.** You are a dean at Oak Hill Christian Service Camp. In a few short months you will be responsible for orchestration of 120 hours of planned, supervised activities for forty to eighty youth. Your job starts now. This document is a guide, a "survival tips" document designed to aid you in making this week a success, both spiritually and economically.

### Timeline:

#### 9 to 6 months before your week:

- Staff: Start asking folks for their commitment. E-mail is great tool because it's easy to track who responded. Consider sending an "interest" e-mail to try stir up excitement and interest in working your week! An [Excel template](#) to track contact information and columns to indicate adult vs. teen staff, and part time vs. full time is available for your use.
- Theme: Choose your theme. You don't want this to be a last minute, rushed decision. Your theme should incorporate a theme verse and perhaps even daily themes/verses to support the main weekly theme.
- **PRAY!**

#### 5 to 3 months before your week:

- Staff: Firm up those commitments. Be sure your staff has requested time off from work, etc. Avoid surprises!
- Junior Staff: Any new Junior Staff who have never worked at Oak Hill before will need to complete [Teens-N-Training](#) (held in April of each year). All Junior Staff must to provide a [Medical Form](#).
- Ensure you have the dates for the [deans' meetings](#) on your calendar. These are MANDATORY meetings for the deans. Please coordinate any needed exceptions with the board.
- E-mail the [Pam Strong, the Camp Web Master](#), with the theme for your week of camp. The sooner you get excitement going for the week, the more momentum you will have when the week arrives! Pam can post your theme's logo and a special message to your prospective campers on the camp's Web site to generate interest and registration for your week. (See [Junior 2 Week](#) for an example.)
- Draft a template for your daily schedule. An [Excel template](#) to outline your weekly schedule and activities is available for your use.
- If you are using any additional resources for the week (inflatables, offsite activities, etc) ensure these are scheduled.
- **PRAY!**

### **2 to 1 month before your week:**

- Staff: Consider having a staff meeting either at camp, your home, your church, etc. Getting to know your staff, sharing the expectations for the week, and letting them see that you've got the week organized can be very helpful!
- Staff: Ensure your adult staff have completed the [background check](#). This is a liability to the camp, NO EXCEPTIONS WILL BE MADE. This is part of the camp's insurance policy, therefore, an integrity issue for the Board. We can not allow exceptions.
- Junior Staff: Any new Junior Staff who have never worked at Oak Hill before will need to [Teens-N-Training](#) (held in April of each year). All Junior Staff must provide a [Medical Form](#).
- E-mail the [Pam Strong Camp Registrar](#) with the number of cabins you are able to staff, how many bunks are reserved for staff, and ANY special accommodations needed for cabin assignments. Registration is hectic. Do your part to make this a little smoother for the staff, campers, parents, and registrar.
- **PRAY!**

### **3 to 2 weeks before your week:**

- Consider mailing your campers a letter. Generate EXCITEMENT and ENERGY. Remember, part of your job is to promote the camp. Your passion and attitude will be very obvious to the campers and staff. It makes a HUGE impact on the week. If you e-mail [Pam Strong, the Camp Registrar](#), she can provide you with a list of mailing addresses for those who have registered thus far.
- E-mail [Pam Strong, the Camp Web Master](#), to update your week's web page if you need the campers to bring any special supplies OR if you just want to send a new message (keep building that momentum!).
- Your weekly schedule should be firm. Coordinate the printing of your camp program (a lot of these end up discarded, particularly with younger weeks so go economic with just black and white copies).
- Ensure that you have planned extra activities, games, lessons in the event of inclement weather.
- Consider dividing the campers into teams. Having this step organized before the week is a huge time saver for larger weeks. The [Pam Strong, the Camp Registrar](#) can inform you of campers who requested to be in the same cabin if you want to try to pair up friends, etc.
- **PRAY!**

### **The Day before:**

- Ensure you are organized and ready to go. Nothing is more hectic than the first day. Have your gear ready to move.
- Print name tags for the staff....every question that a staff member can answer is one you don't have too.
- Update the team lists for any last minute camper changes (if you decided to organize teams before camp)
- **PRAY!**

### The DAY of:

- **PRAY!**
- Post Sunday's schedule in each cabin.
- Post Friday's schedule (and if you've having a closing program) in each cabin and the main building.
- Have extra copies of the program for the cook and parents who need to coordinate taking their child off campus, etc.
- **Require a staff member to be in the cabin during registration.** Parents like to have someone to talk to when dropping off their child for the week and will be more comfortable leaving their camper if a staff member is on-site in the cabin.
- Ensure the pool is adequately supervised if you are opening the pool during registration.
- Ensure staff members are wearing name tags!
- **BECOME AN EXTRAVERT.** You need to meet and mingle with the parents. You are the face of the camp today.
- Review the rules for the week with the campers.
- Consider using dinner time to divide into teams. Everyone is seated and it's fairly calm. This is a great chance to call out names and divide into groups. For larger weeks, it's a great idea to have already printed out team assignments and give a list to each adult team leader. Expect there to be a few changes for "walk ins" and "I need to be with my friend!!" but having the list makes it a lot easier for the Team Leaders. You can also opt to have name tags printed for the campers to help the teams get to know each other.

### The WEEK of:

- **Keep praying!**
- Praise time: Contemporary praise tailored to the age of your campers is preferred. The goal is to have the campers truly involved in worship.
- Free time: MINIMIZE unstructured free time for younger weeks. The more free time, the more arguments and homesickness.
- Daily schedules: While the schedule can be adjusted for daily needs, meal time is coordinated with the cooks so if changes are needed, please involve the cooks! Also note that many parents visit camp for dinner in the evenings so it's recommended to keep dinner time consistent even if other evening activity times are more "flexible".
- ENERGY: Keep the momentum going with activities, lessons, and praise. Your energy and attitude can't be overemphasized!