

RAINBOW TRAIL LUTHERAN CAMP

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

- Purpose:** To provide a Christian educational and inspirational experience for young people and families in the context of camp living. We strive to truly be an extension of the local parish, seeking to strengthen and empower the individuals who make up each parish.
- Focus:** We believe the study of the Christian scriptures to be the most important element in our teaching ministry. This is the basic tool in teaching.
- Campers:** We primarily, but not exclusively, serve the camping needs of the congregations in the Rocky Mountain Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church In America (ELCA). We emphasize special experiences for Senior High youth through backpacking and for families through family camping.
- Leadership:** We believe camping is primarily people; therefore, we put a great deal of emphasis on adequate Christian leadership. An administrative Director serves as the primary staff person. We employ a staff of adequately selected and trained permanent summer counselors. We also have cooking and administrative staff as well as a full-time maintenance person.
- Small Group:** We believe that people relate best in small groups; therefore, we gear our housing to serve 8 campers and 1 counselor per unit. We operate using a semi-decentralized approach, dividing the total group of campers into 5 villages.
- Facilities:** Buildings and additions are designed to harmonize with our rugged mountain setting.
- Outdoor living:** We make every effort to spend as much time as possible out-of-doors. We try to eat out-of-doors at least once daily.
- The Created Order:** We believe the created order to be a marvelous revelation of God; therefore, we instruct our staff how to use these resources. We provide classes to stimulate interest and increase understanding and knowledge. We use specialists as resource leaders.
- Conservation:** Because we are stewards of God's creation, we encourage every camper and group towards preservation and conservation of our natural resources. We have creative conservation projects for each group. We teach the sacredness of our trust.
- Staff Training:** Because staff training is of great importance, we will provide a correspondence training course for all staff and spend at least ten days of pre-camp staff training.
- Involvement:** We believe involvement to be the key to successful learning. We therefore make every effort to involve campers in the daily program,

planning, evaluation, etc. Camper representatives meet with the staff every day and there are many other opportunities for campers to assume leadership roles throughout the week.

Relationships:

We believe our camp develops excellent Christian relationships. We strive to ensure that campers relate to their local Pastor, to outstanding Christian staff members and to one another.

Recreation:

Recreation is considered part of the totality of the daily experience. It is an activity which re-creates mind, body and spirit. Relaxation is very important; therefore, our daily schedule encourages a relaxed atmosphere.

Food:

Excellent food is an absolute necessity. Attractive menus are planned before the camping season and cooks are trained to prepare these foods in the most flavorful and attractive manner.

Service:

Service is an integral part of all Rainbow Trail programs. Our goal is to introduce joyful servanthood whether during KP, cleaning the showerhouse, or leading worship.

Health & Safety:

Health and safety are the highest priority concerns for the whole camp. We require campers to have pre-camp health exams and will provide forms accordingly. Our resident nurse works closely with local hospital and medical facilities. We train our full-time and summer staff in Red Cross First Aid and CPR, and to be safety conscious.

Village System Approach

Major objectives of each village each week:

1. A major service to fellow campers in Christian program
2. Make a major contribution to the fun part of the week
3. A service to the campsite (camp conservation)
4. Learn something from and about the area of the camp.

Major objectives of each individual camper each week:

1. Be part of the leadership of their village during the week
2. To identify one new gift or talent about themselves that they did not know before the week.
3. To have the opportunity to be part of a worship leadership team during the week
4. Have a better understanding of the gifts that they have to offer the world
5. Begin to understand what it means to live in Christian community
6. Have a new understanding of forgiveness in relationships

Underlying purpose of our approach:

1. Get to know individuals
2. Accomplish a certain major Bible Study objective each week
3. Provide an atmosphere for Christian group dynamics and witness within the camp family
4. One major and one minor opportunity to hear the preached word of God each day
5. Involvement in daily planning and leadership opportunities
6. Involvement in the work life of the camp
7. Learning to make decisions and evaluating those decisions.

Static Activities Each Day (rest of day planned by each individual village):

1. **Morning Watch** - personal devotion time
2. **Breakfast**
3. **"Today at Rainbow Trail"** - A morning program which includes worship, sharing Village plans, introduction to the Bible Study, etc.
4. **Bible Study** (time and location planned by each Village).
5. **Lunch**
6. **Supper**
7. **Round Up** - opportunity for campers to share what they learned in their Bible Study in some creative way (skit, poem, rap, poster, etc.). The witness of the camp community to one another.
8. **All Camp Activity** - a game or event for everyone (staff, congregational leaders, and campers) that encourages interaction between the village groups.
9. **The Evening Worship/Campfire** - a more formal worship experience for the whole camp

(Many of the other activities: campfires, recreational events, etc., are sponsored by various Villages).

Revised: 4/1/08