

## **Everything You Need to Know about Camp Crestridge The Greatest Place on Earth!!!!!!**

Hey friends!!

First, I am so, so glad you are working at Crestridge this summer! I cannot even explain to you how excited I am for you! It really will be one of the best summers of your life!

I'm going to share with you lots of silly things and lots of helpful things and lots of "well duhh" things but some ideas or suggestions that might be good to know before the summer. I've gotten lots of questions on what to pack/what it's like/general stuff so I'll try to hit on those things but of course, if I miss something or a question comes to mind.. let me know!! Not everything on this list is completely necessary, some of you will bring the bare necessities, and that is great too!

Here is the packing list I created last year and some explanations in case things sound weird:

Note: Yes, it's a lot. Yes, I felt a little awkward during move in and move out with how much stuff I had. But you'll look like someone who's been coming to camp their whole lives and know the ins-and- outs of what to bring! It's crazy, but I totally used all of this and most of it. I've actually been bringing most of this since I was a camper! Also, another side note, camp cannot be held liable for any items you bring.

- Pics
  - Campers love to see you and your friends or family! And it creates some conversations about you and what you like to do and their world as well. So put some pics up around your bed or something. Bring little thumb tacs to hang your pics! Pic of mine below.
- Verses (printed or written out)
  - You'll want a bit of some decoration! Makes the cabin feel homie.
- Guitar & song book (don't worry about this if you don't play ;))
- Toothbrush/toothpaste/floss
- 2 Bathing suits
  - ONE PIECES! Oh yeahhhh.
  - If you just have one... totally fine! But having two was nice!
- Clock & ipod (NOT IPHONE!) (Get appropriate music- Christian/classic Disney only)
  - This was AWESOME! You are not allowed to have your phone outside of the staff lounge, so some other source of playing music is so helpful to have!
- Green shorts
  - Council of Progress is a special night that happens twice a session, or once a week, at camp. It's one of the favorite camp traditions. Everyone wears green shorts (the shade of green does not matter) and a white shirt or t-shirt. Some people jazz it up a little more and wear green jeans or skirts and a cute but casual white shirt. Whatever you are feeling on that day. But it's fun cause you shower and pretend to look normal and take pics even though you still lookin' rough.

- Several cute shorts/shirts & a pair of cute sandals
  - You'll want a couple options for days off and session breaks when you go into the real world! Also, oftentimes depending on your trip day, you'll wear "normal" clothes.
- 2 pairs of tennis shoes
  - For me that looked like one pair of nice running shoes if you plan on doing that & one pair of every day-- if I have to throw them away that's ok, type of tennis shoes.
- Slippers- the floors can get pretty dirty
- Shower shoes- the shower floors can get pretty dirty!
- Crocs & Chocs
  - These are great shoes that can get wet and dirty and not take forever to dry out like a pair of sneakers. But, "There is nothing wrong with the fact that you don't like or don't own or even have never wanted Chacos. You do you!"-Maddie Michaud (Anti Chaco survivor)
- 3 bath towels/2 lake towels
- Turbie twist
- Velcro robe/towel
- Shower caddy
- Headphones
- Computer- we have a locked staff lounge that only staffers are allowed in where you will keep your computer and phone if you bring them to camp.
- Stationary & stamps
- Bible & journal
- Books- ones that you could read with Jesus looking over your shoulder ☺
  - Quiet time material is helpful!
- 3 dresses
  - For church on Sunday, the middle of the session, girls typically wear dresses or a cute shirt and skirt, although you don't have to! (Sometimes it's actually nice to dress up a little though) and depending on your age group, your girls like to get cuteish pics with you for that Insta on your bday down the road! Also, at the end of the summer you will have a staff banquet and you'll wear a dress!
- Disco ball
  - Sounds weird but no regrets. I hosted some pretty sick Choctaw/ Choctaw 21 only dance parties (jus sayin).
- Christmas lights
  - So fun to have on during devos and night time. Made it feel homie.. not needed to go out and buy but if you have some.. bring them! I ended up going out and buying some but figured I'd use them again and I have! So not a bad investment and campers think you're the coolest for it.
- Toiletries: plenty of tampons, shampoo/conditioner/soap, makeup
- Band-Aids:
  - Band-Aids are a MUST! Keep some or your kit in your backpack wherever you go. Proved very useful.
  - We also have an infirmary in the middle of camp, so if you would like to visit

- them before campers come and make a little handy “Baggy of Safety”, that is totally cool!
- You are not allowed to keep any medicines/vitamins, etc on you or in your cabin. The nurses will keep your medications and have Ibuprofen, Tylenol, Midol, etc when you need it!
  - Funny costumes/crazy clothes
    - I brought so much weird stuff and used just about all of it! Also campers love to borrow. Common themes:
      - I brought lots of USA stuff ‘cause you’ll be there for 4<sup>th</sup> of July.
      - Bring a tacky Christmas sweater because they’ll do “Christmas in July”.
      - Bring some western wear—always a theme! Cowboy boots, hat if you have one, bandana, \*\*overalls
      - Camo stuff or black tshirt/shorts or something—always a need to look intense for a game.
      - Bandanas! I brought enough for all of them to have one so that was handy! Also good for surprising them ☺
      - Hawaiian leis and shirts if you have!
      - Rave clothes... neon!!
      - Animal T-shirts
      - Any other funny crazy stuff you might have! (One year I brought a sumo wrestling suit... camp is just straight weird!)
  - Head lamp & flashlight
    - For a night called Tapouts, you’ll need both of these for sure, and, I used my headlamp all the time just in general! Even flashlight to look under bed to find stuff.
  - Snacks
    - Don’t bring too much or you’ll put on some pounds! Snickers were great because they’re like an ultimate granola bar, PB crackers or granola bars (stuff you can take on the go for a quick energy boost if you need it). Hot chocolate mix for camper talks, trail mix was great, stuff like that! I bought s’mores stuff for my cabin to do once a session, etc. You’ll keep in a little container they provide in the staff lounge! No food in the cabin...lots of critters around that would appreciate your rule breaking. Gum is also great to have!
  - Containers
    - This is what I packed in. So nice! It kept the underneath of my bed super organized and gave me lots of useful space and storage. I highly recommend!
  - Gallon Ziploc bags
  - Eno
    - Great way to hang out with your campers and have some heart to hearts!
  - Water bottle- Hydro Flasks are great because they keep your water cool all day!
  - Travel mug- camp serves really good, local coffee
  - Matches
  - Clothespins
  - 2 sets of sheets, comforter, pillow
  - Comforter/blankets
    - Gets pretty darn cold at night some nights! Some nights you’re burning up and

need the fan in your face the whole night, other nights, you have 3 blankets on you and still chilly! Be prepared for both!

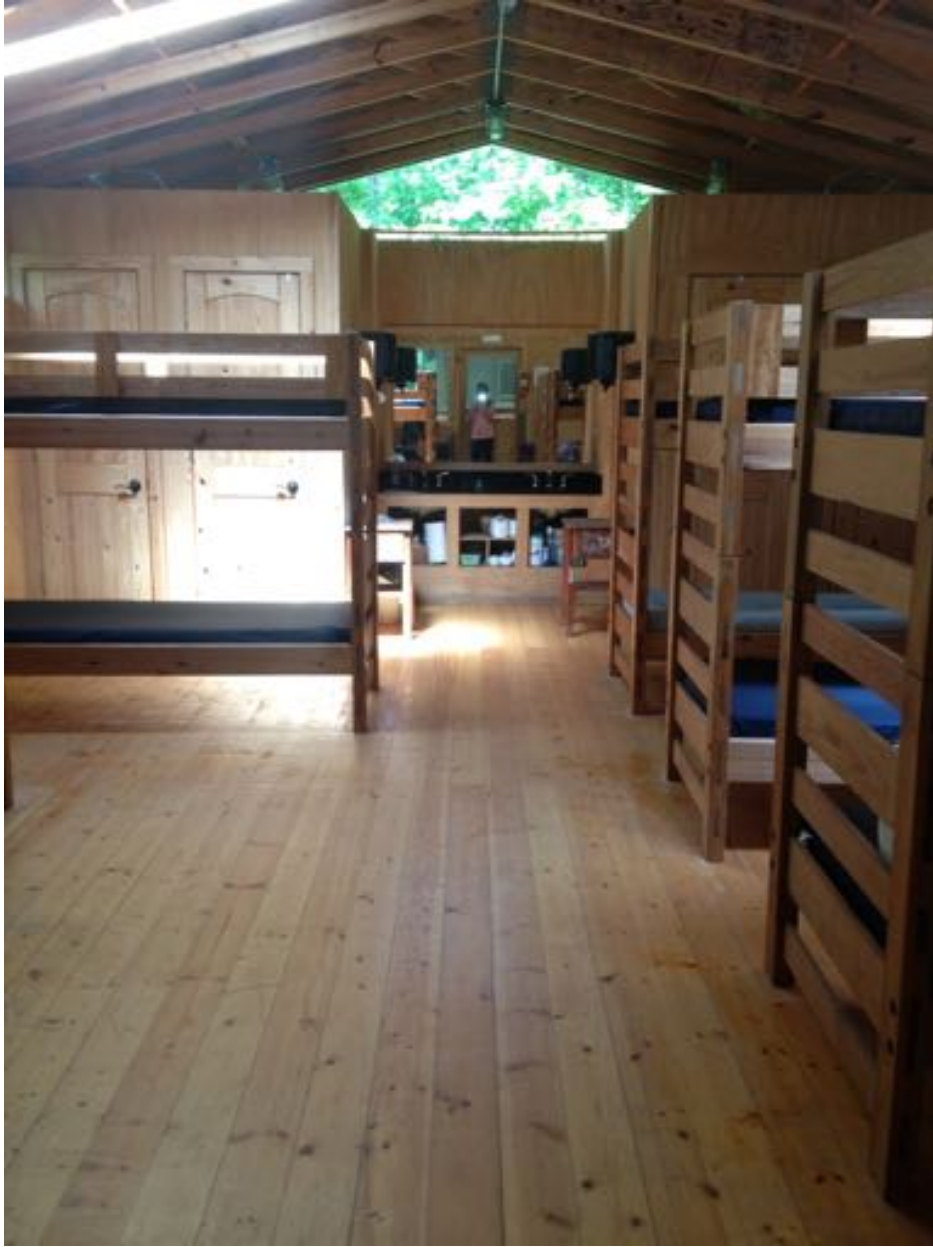
- Rugs
  - Looks cute and you can wipe off yo nasty feet before you put in your bed. I've brought mine since I was a camper and it's great
- Fan
  - Ideally lap sized and one that has the capability to run on batteries or electric as well. Many cabins have bigger fans for the cabin's use but all the seasoned campers will have their personal fans.
- Jeans
- T-shirts & shorts- lots of colors of both!
- Underwear/bras (sports bras like every day!)
- Laundry bag
  - Laundry girls will do your laundry about once a week. You'll bring it down in like a mesh laundry bag when they do your campers' laundry. If you need to do it at another time you can during weekends or late at night (whenever the laundry staff open it for staffers)! And emergency laundry is accepted at any time (I had one girl who needed her sheets cleaned for emergency reasons but I sneakily got it done while the girls were at skills).
- Lots of pairs of socks
- Sports watch\*\*\* waterproof is ideal.
- Sweatshirts
- Some sweatpants or leggings for cold mornings
- A bag of sock war tube socks
  - Sock War is something special to camp. For this game, you'll need the long tube socks and campers always forget them so it's good to just buy the bag and have a couple pairs! You will likely participate in Sock War 2-4 times during the summer depending on your off day (It happens every session).
- Glow in the dark balloons & glow sticks
  - Too cool. LED Glow Balloons can be found at Wal-Mart
- My old journals of talks/devos given to other groups
- Throw pillow
  - Super cheap one...nice to have since you won't have anything else but sleeping pillow—cute, extra back support, and perfect to stuff in a pack for overnights as your pillow.
- Sleeping bag
  - More preferably, a legitimate one for camping and stuff and not just a sleepover bag lol.
- 2 blankets
  - The store always has really cute ones if you want to buy there!
- Mattress pad
  - Bring your college one. You'll for sure want.
- Sunglasses
- Hats
- Febreze air spray and wall plug-ins.

- Keep some spray in the toilets fa sho and then the plug-ins we kept at both ends of the cabin to keep it smelling good!
- Desk Lamp to clip on your bed.
- Camera
  - I was glad I had a waterproof, practically indestructible, digital camera for the summer. The photographer can only be in so many places at one time so that was great to capture the fun memories that the photographer couldn't be there for! I would recommend these waterproof digital cameras, but really any camera works!! I have brought nicer, very much destructible cameras to camp in my lifetime and been completely fine. Plus your campers will love these pics because they can't have their phones and neither can you to take pictures!
- Bug spray
- Rain jacket
- Thumb tacks
  - Sooo handy to hang everything!! Christmas lights, pics, notes, anything!
- Scissors & tape (probably duct and masking!)
- A few sharpies and plenty of pens! Your campers will be using often!
- Notebook paper- campers always needed this!
- A small mirror
  - Good if you have older girls and they're all using the mirror by the sink!
- Wireless speakers if you have them with aux cord for ipod!
  - Good for outside devotions if you want background worship music or when you're just hanging out outside cooking dinner for campfire or something!
- Power strips, not cheap extension cords. You're not supposed to have the cheapo extension cords!
- This packet (or pages from it) to explain some things or remind you of stuff in case you need it!

## Helpful Pics & Some Explanations...



Example of throw pillow, personal fan, décor & pics, desk lamp, etc.



A picture of the cabins before the craziness! 2 toilet bathrooms, 2 showers, 2 sinks in middle!



A look at what is provided for you to store (the dresser and nightstand on the left) and then the beds are lofted about a foot for the containers to stack and go underneath. Also note the small rug in the corner.





This is what you will see people wearing at Council of Progress (CP) night that I mentioned. Each band stands for the age group. So this shows that the two of us have been coming to camp since we were Chickasaws (red honor band on top that you get as a rising 4<sup>th</sup> grader). You will get your own staff honor band, yay! This will be something you might have the rest of your life! I know I'll keep mine! The bars and stars you see (mine are on the other side of me) represent that the camper has completed their "challenge". Each session you will present to your girls a challenge that is different with each age group that might include things like memorizing and reciting theme bible verses, verses of choice, walking loops for physical growth, knowing every first and last name in the age group (potentially 70 people!), writing a letter of appreciation, etc. It's a great thing! Also note the white tshirts and green shorts! Some are fancier (the girls in the back!) or you can wear green running shorts (the ones I'm wearing are for sale in the store!)



Here is a picture of this CP night in the chapel with the whole camp!



Opening Day is basically how I envision the gates of heaven! There is so much joy, screaming, jumping, smiles, hugs, and love! This picture sums it up so well! Parents park nearby and big shuttle busses bring them through the gates of camp for the big arrival! I was a “tour guide” on a



bus last year and it was the best to watch faces like these light up when they get there! You will be assigned to some kind of job like that for opening day.



Then you'll do lots of introductions at the first program- Orientation!



Then you'll go on camp tours with your cabin and take weird pics like these!



A photo taken when I met my girl that I would be flashlight holding for during Tapouts. Info. below!



This is how fun and crazy Singspiration is! Singspiration happens Sunday nights and is just a crazy, fun, ridiculous Christian song sing/dance party. This is a camper favorite (and mine.. obviously!). This happens after dinner and before the camp walks to a nearby ice cream shop—Nibble Nook! Great conversations happen with campers on the walks there and back and at the

shop! You'll be amazed how much you already feel like you know your new campers by then...  
Opening Days are every other Sunday!



Taken at a Village Activity! Every day after rest hour which happens after lunch, you wake up and your campers go to Store to get a snack and then you have a village activity (or sometimes a campwide activity!). They're fun activities planned by your village director, just for your age group. This is me and my co, Rachel, at Choctaw's Miss Ugly Pageant. These are THE BEST.





Singing at dinners... gets crazy!!



Counselor tip: Bring or prepare for girls to write notes to each other! Sweet, sweet time in the cabin before everyone left that morning. It also kills dead time when we wait to be released from cabins for breakfast closing day. We get them up a little earlier to get their cabin clean and then go to breakfast earlier than normal. Also, write your campers letters! It can be hard to have all the time, but it means so much to them! I wrote my girls a little post- Council of Progress talk note that gave them a verse relevant to things they may have shared with me and a little “so thankful to talk with you last night. You rock!” I gave that to the girls during mail time after lunch. Then, I gave the girls longer letters on closing day. Sweet memories!



Make skills different and interesting! This is my little band going around camp playing for staff and other skills. They love something new! Also if you teach skills with different age groups than the ones you have in your cabin, live it up! It's a great way to get to know other kids at camp that you probably don't have much interaction with. I loved having these little ones since I had those sassy freshman girls!



☺ This is the disco ball that I mentioned I brought and it ROCKED. Haha. Bottom line: with or without a disco ball, have dance parties!





The cabin lit up with our lights!



This is what the campfire cookout looks like! Each cabin has their own little pit next to the cabin and every Tuesday night, your cabin cooks your dinner over a fire that your cabin makes! Can be a little stressful to provide for your fam but so fun and bonding! Stay flexible, chill, and make your girls help! These pits are great to use (with your supervision) at other times as well!

Possibly for devos!



The Overlook! You can drive up to the top so you get to be lazy like you probably will want to be during your time off, and you can just hang out, watch the sunset, take cool pics, and I recommend bringing a little picnic! Me and my friend brought pizza and fruit and the small things we missed! Great for days off!



Night of Chaos: one of THE BEST nights of camp! Exactly what it sounds like... chaos!! You get crazy, crazy messy: water, shaving cream, paint, etc. And you basically just run around on the lower green (our field) and have a bunch of activities to do. These are the “SWALTS”—they enforce the rules and mess with you real bad! Happens every other session (twice during the summer).



Carnival: Lots of overalls! Happens at boys’ camp across the interstate and combines the 2 camps! SO fun! There’s blowups and games and cookout food and you’ll work a carnival booth for a period of time or have a role in some sort of activity. It’s great. This happens every other session (twice a summer).





This is what Closing Program looks like which happens every other Friday. It's a sad day but really cute! We sing a bunch of songs for the parents and all the girls get to be together one last time before heading home.

## Good to know and tips:

### Campfire—Tuesday nights:

- Take a bandana that you brought (remember how I said they're super handy!) and get it kinda damp in the sink to use as a way to touch the pot handle of the pot when you need to move/take on/take off when you cook in it on Tuesday nights for Campfire.
- I don't think that you can start fire building too early! It always takes longer than you think it does to start and cook and eat and you don't want to feel rushed before campwide campfire so go ahead and get goin' during free time for sure!
- Brumlebriee teepee, log cabin, the whole shebang. You'll learn this if you have no idea what I'm talking about! ☺
- Salts might be your best friend during this night if you get one! Hehe.

### Meals

- Stay after and help the hostesses until they're just about done (onto the sweeping stage) after basically like every meal if you can manage it! I always loved that as a camper and a lot of times we have places to be right after meal time and they we're appreciative I was there to help!
- There will be some pretty darn crazy singing and cheering at dinners and it is SO FUN! Each village does their own little cheer that you will learn and then the camp has a million cheers they will sing. You may not know them at first, but don't worry, you'll get them!
- One of my campers' favorite things was that I would let them sit in my chair every once in a while and I would sit in the middle of the table just like them and get completely confused for a camper! But, with older girls, it made them feel like I just wanted to hang with them and be their friend (while still being their cool mom!) It also was a great way to sit and talk to other girls during meals that didn't choose to sit down on my end. I also recommend switching ends with your co every once in a while to get to do this too!
- Establish the first night that it's family style—that food gets passed around, that they don't act like savages, that they take human portions. It seems crazy but it's very needed. Each cabin is different and sometimes I had a cabin who just went savage-like at mealtime! Haha.

### Songs:

- Singing starts with this song and everyone stands on their chairs!  
Ky-yi-kee-i-kuss, nobody like us  
We are the girls from Camp Crestridge  
Always a grinnin', losin' or winnin'  
Always a feeling fine. Ki-yi!"
- Then the villages do their cheers!
- The other songs can be found in our songbook online at [www.girls.ridgecrestcamps.com/information/campers/songbook](http://www.girls.ridgecrestcamps.com/information/campers/songbook)

## SALTS

This stands for Service And Leadership Training. These girls have just finished their junior year of High School and have come to camp to serve for 4 weeks. There will be 12 of them every 4 weeks, and one of them may be assigned to your cabin to help and be like a fun “aunt” for your campers. We will learn a lot more about what exactly these girls do and their important role at camp during staff training.

## Villages:

Camp has 7 age groups called villages. Here are the villages--you'll be placed in one for the whole summer as a counselor and as a central staffer you get to hang out with all of them or adopt one specifically!

- Chippewa: da babes: 7-9 yr. olds! (finishing 1st-3rd grade)
- Chickasaw: 10 yr. olds (finishing 4th grade)
- Creek: 11 yo. (finishing 5th grade)
- Cheyenne: 12 yo. (finishing 6th grade)
- Catawba: 13 yo. (finishing 7th grade)
- Choctaw: 14 yo. (finishing 8th grade)
- Cherokee 15-17 yo. (finishing 9-11th grade)

During Staff Week, you'll be hanging out with these Village Directors—they're awesome—and they'll be getting to know you and talking with you about where you might want to be and you'll be placed right where you're supposed to be!

Sometimes people are surprised or initially taken aback about where they're placed because they didn't think about being there but God has always used them and I'd say just about everyone by the end of the summer couldn't imagine being in any other spot! Be flexible and willing to be out of your comfort zone—the end goal is just to share Jesus with girls no matter how that might look!

## CP Night:

Council of Progress, or “CP” is a cool Crestridge tradition they have been doing forever. Right after dinner they put a “silence ban” on camp where everyone gets real quiet and we line up in our appropriate places by cabin. Then inside the chapel there's a ceremony that looks the same every week. Every year the girls get their honor bands (if it's their first year in the village) and the next week get their bars or stars if they completed their challenge. There's a speaker who talks about one of the areas of growth (social, mental, physical, spiritual) that camp focuses on and then a whole candle ceremony and we sing this Crestridge song that one day will make you cry because it's representative of camp and tradition and the memories of your summer. WOW! Then, you will go back to cabins and sing a few songs and then take your girls on individual heart to hearts (CP Talks) to just get to know them individually better!

- If you have time and energy, write them a post- CP talk little note!
- This is a long, sometimes draining night.. you can't do it but God can!

## Time Off

- You get one day off per session and then every other weekend from half of Friday (around 2 pm) until midnight Saturday night. All together that's 4 days off and then 3 half weekends!
- On days off, leave before the girls are awake or while they're at breakfast/chapel and come back after they are asleep. That sounds terrible—I loved my campers so much but this is your day! You need it!
- I recommend bringing your car if you can for these days. It's so fun to hang out with everyone on time off.. and still do! But it's also nice to be alone for just a little bit! Even if it's 30 minutes in the day at a coffee shop... just have a bit of chill, self time! I didn't have a car last summer though so no big deal if you don't have one or can't bring yours! People will take you! But it definitely would have been nice to just go do whatever the heck I wanted to do!
- Some people can give you some recommendations of what to do but my favorite day off was a day starting at breakfast at Louise's, chill time and crafts, a run, tree climbing, and playtime at Lake Tomahawk (in Black Mountain, very pretty and relaxing!) and a Fresh (restaurant) pizza and grocery store run to get stuff to drive up for the sunset at the Overlook!
- If your parents aren't too far a drive (it's about 3.5 hours to camp from my house) a session break is a good time for them to come! It was nice to see my fam since we're gone all summer! And they enjoyed the weekend trip too! Asheville rocks.
- ...Asheville ROCKS. There are some incredible restaurants and fun, interesting shops and very interesting people!
  - When the fam comes to visit: Cúrate→ Spanish tapas. Sooo good!!!
  - Just for fun:
    - Sunny Point Café- real cute and fun. Nice patio on a nice day! Breakfast/lunch
    - Tupelo Honey Café—you'll definitely go here. It's an Asheville classic. All meals are good!
    - Mayfel's—interesting, real cute, and good! Breakfast/lunch
    - Explore!! Asheville food is my FAVORITE!
    - Asheville Chocolate Lounge- pretty awesome!
  - Shopping!
    - Mast General Store- Asheville classic. Ya gotta do it. And counselor discount!
    - Cool “Battery Park Book Exchange” downtown. Great place to chill, explore, read, feel hip, and it has coffee! (actually next to good restaurant—Carmel's )
    - Urban Outfitters across from Tupelo
    - Cool artsy pinterest type of store behind Mast! Really cool! Café, crafting, and cool finds.
  - Zoe's Kitchen was a frequented place because it feels somewhat healthy and you can get FRUIT! Your most craved item! Although you guys will be pros at what that feels like after meal plan!

- DRUM CIRCLE! This is so cool! All the hippies congregate and bring their drums and dance and chant and drum and it's kinda weird but really awesome in the heart of downtown Asheville! You will definitely go!
- Honestly, just go to the grocery store for your off day to get your favorite things. (Mainly fruit and if you're weird like me.. olives!)
- The Barnes & Noble in Asheville is really cool and has pretty views and was one of my fav places to just hang out and chill and talk to my friends and parents and stuff.
- Biltmore Village has good restaurants and shops too! Pretty cute.
- The Biltmore is also just a fun activity ☺
- Black Mountain:
  - Louise's: you will definitely go here, in Black Mtn. Breakfast.
  - Fresh—good sandwiches and pizzas and stuff!
  - DAIRY KING! You'll go here lots.
  - Kilwin's woohoo.
  - THE DRIP (The Dripolator!) cute coffee shop.
  - Black Mountain Bistro
  - My Father's Pizza
  - Some others to explore!!
  - Lots of hiking, cool fun things to do! But be sure to chill too!! Take naps on time off!!!
- Find a house to go chill at!!! Mainly, find ways to not sleep at camp every session break. People have houses: I would hang at the Gaffney's a lot. Or one day off I drove to Charlotte to hang out with my grandparents and be at their house. And on weekends I always found somewhere to chill and something to do! People rent rooms at the conference center for pretty cheap Friday night (you have to sleep at camp Sat. night so it's just one night away).
- Be at camp Sat. night at a reasonable time. You'll have stuff you want to do and clean and stuff so get there earlier than you think you want and go to bed at a decent time! The best night of sleep you'll have!
- Time off during off skill: you can sleep, call your mom, watch Netflix in the staff lounge, go for a run, do a quiet time, prep for devos, set up for a skill, write letters to campers or their parents or your friends, hang out with your friends also on break, whatever you want! Last summer I pretty much did all of these at some point or another but also make good use of this time! Of course some days you just want to watch an episode of something random on Netflix to get a dose of reality, but be sure to not be in a series or anything as it sucked some counselors in, as so many of those Netflix series do! Sometimes it's good to just sit and chill for the hour but it goes by fast so I'd say—make the most of it! It's a needed hour of self care and I often took a longer shower or played my guitar and did worship in my cabin all by my lonesome, or had great quiet times and planned a devo! Spend it wisely!

## Music

- Definitely, definitely, definitely have an iPod and an iHome if you have one! 1. You'll want a clock and 2. You'll want to play music... all the time!



- I created a bunch of different playlists before I went that was great go-to music in the cabin.
- Important rule: only counselors touch the iPod! I had to be clear about only camp playlists were allowed! Not that I had bad music, but just that we only play Christian music at camp.
- Used for just hanging around in the cabin, during cabin cleanup, free time, before events when we were all getting ready, dance parties, devotions, before bed and in the morning, basically sooo necessary!
- \*\*\*The best trick I can leave with you:
  - At night when we all got in bed right after devos, I played them a worship song.. you know those deep ones that make you feel some tupa way and last literally like 7 minutes!? Well, I played one of these and they would instantly be quiet so we could fall asleep! After the song was over no one spoke because by that point no one's talked in almost 10 minutes and they're either asleep or headed there. If any girls had flashlights on or anything that was their cue to turn them off and go to sleep. It was ridiculously awesome! And what a great thing to be the last thing the girls hear in a day?! And they freakin' loved it! They're tired, and even the crazy ones who might initially seem like they want to make all the jokes after the lights are off and stay up, really wants and needs to sleep!
  - On the flip side, the music was AWESOME because when you have 14 year old sassy girls that do not love getting up at 7:30 a.m. every morning (while still going to bed pretty late!), then getting up to make it to breakfast on time is no easy task. And what often happened, I do this myself, is they (and I!) would fall back asleep after the wake up bell because breakfast isn't until 8 a.m. So... I would blast some feel good, morning songs that would start the day right and annoy them because it made them have to wake up. But not too crazy because I did it after the "hostess" bell at 7:45 a.m. which signaled that they really have to get goin'.
- Playlists: I just downloaded all these songs off of youtube so I didn't have to pay. Time consuming but it's worth it! I had playlists for cabin clean up (songs about cleaning, working, etc.), dance party playlists, Disney camp playlist, Christian rave playlist, good morning playlist (songs about the morning, being "wide awake", getting up, etc.) and chill cabin background worship music/go to sleep music

## Devos

- Be preparing for them now! I know it sounds crazy but it will free you up in the summer to already have some material! Camp writes a devo guide that goes along with the theme. They'll do some training during Staff Week on how to go through the guide and how to prepare your cabin devos.
  - What you can expect to cover on different nights in devos so that you can be prepping/finding verses/reading:
    - Jesus
    - Our need & sin
    - The cross
    - What's next? Life with him...

- Anything else you have interest in sharing! (Will depend a ton on what age you get placed with!) You may only have 1-2 nights to do something outside the devo guide.
- Be different! Mix things up, make things authentic!
  - Our most memorable devos as a cabin were when we did something in a way they haven't seen or heard of before. The thing is, this requires a lot more time and energy into them. It's more work, but the work you put in might just make things click with a girl who's never heard it before or never thought of it in that way before. At camp, when you put more work into something, there's only greater reward. And not always a "Wow, great devo Anna" from a camper or "You've been an incredible counselor" from a director or V.D., because that doesn't usually happen, being completely honest. But, you can be completely confident that there's a greater eternal reward and the impact you make on them is far more important than compliments from others or winning the best, star, greatest counselor award at staff banquet!
    - These devos were sometimes around a campfire... every session we took our girls down to the big campfire at the lake with a big wooden cross right next to it and who knows why being there does something, but wow, those nights were awesome! We liked to have them write down a sin of theirs on the sin/need devo night and then for the cross devo, I had them tape up these pieces of paper that were their sins with their names on the back side to the cross and it showed how it was their cross. Then I read the story of the crucifixion and I took off each of their names and sins papers and threw them in the fire.
    - Other great devos were ones involving boys or more importantly, talks they requested to hear about.
  - One thing they loved and we loved, is on the first night when you go through the "rules" (just general housekeeping for the start of the session), we had them write down a question or two on pieces of paper and put them in a cup. Then me and my co split them up and spent the session investigating, talking to people, reading the Bible and historians/Bible scholars views on it, etc. Then on the last night as our devo we would answer these questions as best as we could and it was awesome!
  - On the first night during this rules time, I always emphasized that we would promise to put a lot of work into devotions so I asked that they reciprocate those efforts and respect by participating, asking questions, and staying somewhat serious during this time too. It's hard to get girls to sit still for 2 minutes—especially at camp! So I'd recommend some kind of talk like this! Plus it shows them that you do work hard to make the devotions happen! And at least with the older girls, they were really appreciative and even commented often that they loved our devotions.
  - Try to vary your devotions each session if you have girls staying a month. Typically we had two ways of presenting each topic—different verses, stories, and game plans because we had so many girls stay a month each session since they are older! Because the chapel talks typically stay close to the same, they can feel like everything is just repeated so they loved that it was pretty new! We then flip flopped what sessions we did which topic. And usually my co would do that topic every other session to gain completely new insight and

ideas to present it differently as well. Also our free devotion nights where we could talk about whatever, we're new each session (or flip-flopped!).

## Cabin Clean Up

- There's nothing like a clean cabin! Woohee! Don't be a counselor who just doesn't do it...but seriously, those cabins get so gross with 12 people living in them in just one day! Not only is it nice to have a clean living space, but it also helps keep everyone healthy and happy!
- I made it a competitive and fun thing. Every morning after quiet time, I would blow my whistle (bring one if you want to be cool!) and file them in like it was boot camp. Then I would play "Hi Ho" to start the chores and play my cabin clean up playlist! The campers naturally got super into it and it was a blast.
- Cabin Clean Up dance parties rock too. There were days when I was straight up doing the worm on a nicely swept floor at 9:30 in the morning.

## Last Nights (Closing Program Eve)

- Make it cool! I only had one year of camp when my counselors did some fun production for us for the last night and it has stuck with me all this time.
- With our cabin, the last night for 2 sessions, I set up a dance party for them in the pavilion and made a fire in the fireplace in the pavilion to do s'mores. We had my speakers and Christian rave playlist to dance to, glow in the dark balloons, glow sticks, streamers, my disco ball, the whole thing! Then for devos we answered the questions from the beginning of the semester and used the pretty xmas lights in the pavilion!
- Another last session we blindfolded the girls and led them into the bouldering room since we lived next door. We had a crazy rave in there (they have cool black lights) with my disco ball and glow supplies and it was awesome! Then, same thing, we answered questions using the Christmas lights in there! Fun night!
- Another last session we just had a dance party in the cabin with all the Choctaw cabins (yes, they all came into 21... about 40 people crammed in one cabin! Ahh) and then just did a devo in our cabin since our girls were a little too crazy to handle a field trip that session!
- Needless to say, make it crazy, fun, sentimental, and put energy into it! It rocks!

## Tapouts

This cool experience we provide for Cherokee campers to experience God in nature for 12 hours during the middle of the night. No talking, no distractions, just God and some challenges that give good reason to rely and trust Him.

## General Suggestions

- Stay "with it" about what your cabin needs—toilet paper, paper towels, soap, etc. Don't watch it run out!
- Go to free swim. It's fun to make this a thing with campers, although that won't be hard if you have the youngsters! It also was me and my co's favorite time to just hang out on the dock and talk and still get to be in the midst of the action and feel present with our campers or other camper friends.

- Find time for you and your co to fill each other in and get to pray together. I know that sounds like duhh, but seriously devote prayer time between you and your co. Wake up with the hostesses and go pray on the porch until hostess bell in the mornings? Meet up every few days during quiet time to have time together? Figure it out! It bonds you two way more than even how bonded you will be by just being parents together ☺
- Take pictures of your camper files. You won't really be able to see it again and it might be helpful to refer back to it since you can't remember everything about it!! Also, this gives you an electronic, unloseable, copy of the contact info of your campers! Then, months later, I was able to write all my old campers a letter because I found their addresses in my photos!
- Use the staff lounge as little as possible. It's great, and so needed at times, but catching up on social media can just be so distracting and draining and frankly, not the best use of your time. Also, that's where you munch. Avoiding staff lounge = avoiding overeating = avoiding reverse fat camp. Also... staff lounge can be a gossip hot spot! Don't talk about campers with other counselors, don't talk about other counselors, and don't be involved when others are! In fact, shut it up! Crestridge staff is amazing, but it happens! It's a whole bunch of girls and that's what girls do! And they're still amazing people regardless.
- Snowballing off of that, make your own decisions about campers. There will be campers that counselors have issues with. They're not in your cabin. You might never have to see that side. You get to just love them without dealing with their annoying sides! Or if a camper gets placed in your cabin that other counselors have opinions about, take in the useful things but disregard any preconceptions of who they are or what they'll be like. I had campers that counselors would say, "Oh good luck" or "She's crazy!" and yes, they were. And yes, it was challenging. But in their own special way, they were some of my favorite campers all summer!
- Snowballing off of that—just have fun with them! Accept that some girls are absolutely crazy and some are reserved and just enjoy that about them! Meet them where they are... if they're crazy, be the crazy counselor. If they're more reserved, spend some more one-on-one time to try to get to know them better. These campers are so fun.
- Make friends with your neighbors. Grace Valentine lived across the street (the cabin across from me lol) and became one of my very best friends. We were there for each other when we needed to step outside of the cabin for some air... mainly because she was outside of the cabin just across the way! I could poke my head in and she could sense that I needed someone to pray with or vice versa. We would meet on the steps between the cabins and in a tough night or tough day, be the calm voice for each other to stop in the midst of venting about how things were going and say, "let's pray". And more importantly, be that friend for your neighbors and counselors in your village! It's so needed!
- Be praying for your campers **NOW!** Ask God to prepare your hearts, prepare you in all areas, for the summer ahead. Pray for the hearts of your girls as well to be prepared for this summer. Pray that God might be moving in them NOW. That you might then play a role in what God is doing in them. Remember, that you won't be doing anything in them! It's not up to you that they decide to follow Christ at camp. And if they do, it's nothing that you did or said! God is cool. I know ya'll already know this but good to hear over and over!

- You can go hard for 2 months! It's JUST 2 months! And it goes by so fast! Keep the pace, keep the energy, lean on Jesus, and GO HARD!