



Handbook for Catholic Schools Science and Nature Camp



Visit us at: www.StTeresitaYCC.org

Santa Teresita Youth Conference Center

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Dear Parents, Teachers and Principals:

Located on twenty-five acres at the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains near Sequoia National Park, Santa Teresita Youth Conference Center has created an exceptional Science and Nature Camp (SNC) for 6th grade students. The SNC is designed to engage students in direct observation and experience of the natural world, and help students integrate a deepening knowledge of the natural sciences with a growing understanding of our Christian faith. Our SNC team includes local experts in the natural sciences, knowledgeable trail guides, and the retreat experienced St Anthony Retreat and STYCC staff.

Our Science and Nature Camp team has developed a site-specific curriculum for Salt Creek Canyon that aligns with the California state educational standards for 6th grade students. Over the course of our 4 day / 3 night camp, students will actively participate in interactive and thought provoking studies and activities. Our various curricula include such themes as wildlife and the food web, river detective, and Oak Woodland study, night hike and astronomy, weather, insects, and birds. The students will also be able to develop interpersonal skills by living, working and learning with peers. We promise it will be a lot of fun!

In order to maximize the SNC experience for the students, we ask parents to dutifully complete the Youth Health and Permission form, and adequately pack the necessary clothing and supply items listed on the *What to Bring* list. Without a completed and signed *Youth Health and Permission* form, students cannot participate in the SNC. Please visit our website to check out our facilities. We ask parents and teachers to go over the *rules* prior to arrival in order to ensure a safe and fun-filled experience.

We eagerly look forward to accompanying all students on their journey to experience the natural world and grow in their understanding of a benevolent universe where nature is God's first self-revelation.

Visit us at: www.StTeresitaYCC.org

Please read over the information in this handbook, as we feel it will help us work together in making your retreat faith-filled and meaningful. We eagerly look forward to your time at STYCC.

Sincerely in Christ,

Cristal Juarez

Ministry Director

Quick-Look and Preparation for Parents

Youth Health and Permission Form & Photo Release Form

The entire form must be completed including the signature of a parent/legal guardian. Please write down all allergies and health issues including chronic health issues and susceptibility to anaphylactic responses. The phone numbers parents provide on the *STYCC Youth Health and Permission Form* will be used in case of emergency. Parents must make sure that we know how to reach them at all times of the day.

Photo/Video Release grants permission for your child's photograph or video image to be used on STYCC produced documents (i.e. website, publication, and video production). We use this tool to show kids having a fun time.

Medication

Each attending school will provide an adult who will be responsible for dispensing prescribed medication to that school's students. All prescription medication must be in the original container and labeled, and placed in a zip lock baggie with the student's name written in large print on the baggie. Medication must come with specific written dispensing instructions from a physician. Parent's must request in writing and provide permission for their child to self-manage their medication: ONLY for chronic health concerns (i.e. asthma, allergies, diabetes).

Scope of Health Services

The scope of health services provided by your school's first aid representative is limited to care of routine non-emergency illness and injury. We do not have a physician in residence. Students will be referred to the local medical community and parents will be notified in these instances. Generally we do not contact parents if their child has a routine problem (e.g. skinned knee, sore throat, headache, upset stomach). If parents would like STYCC to do something different, they must attach a letter to their child's *STYCC Youth Health and Permission Form* explaining the alternative plan.

Home Sickness

Homesickness can occur at anytime. Students who have rarely been away from home may feel sick, become behavior problems, refuse to eat, cry, or seem antisocial. Please talk to your child or student and give them the opportunity to ask questions. Assure your child or student that they will eat great food, will be well taken care of, and will have a lot of fun with their friends. Also let them know that if they feel sick or uncomfortable, to please tell an adult as soon as possible.

What to Pack

Please carefully review the *What to Bring List and What Not to Bring List*. Parents, please make sure to label all of your child's items. Since this is an outdoor education program, please make sure your child is prepared for the season related weather.

Illness, Behavior, Head Lice, Etc.

We will do our best to anticipate and minimize mishaps and accidents. Unfortunately, we may have need for a parent to pick up his/her child due to illness, behavior, or head lice. The parent will be responsible for making travel arrangements if this occurs.

Rules for Retreatants, STUDENENTS , and GUESTS

In order to ensure that everyone has a safe and positive experience, everyone must adhere to the following rules. Any infraction of these rules may result in dismissal from STYCC.

1. All adults must follow the *Diocese of Fresno Safe Environment* policy. (Read: *Rules for Adult Chaperones* and *Safe Environment* policy)
2. Treat each person with kindness and respect.
3. No inappropriate behavior is allowed such as fighting, activities that may cause injury, hazing, pranks, foul language, inappropriate intimacy, theft, or bullying.
4. Alcohol, weapons, firearms, knives, smoking, and illegal drugs are prohibited.
5. Treat the facilities as a home for those on a spiritual journey. Do not misuse or damage anything related to the buildings, equipment, dining facilities, and grounds. You are responsible for any damages.
6. Care for the natural environment by properly disposing of all trash and treating the living surroundings with respect.
7. All exits and passageways must be kept clear of any obstructions such as chairs and tables.
8. We recommend you dress for comfort and dress modestly and appropriately at all times. Any symbols or writing on clothing must be wholesome and clean. No provocative attire is allowed. Shorts must have an appropriate length and tops must have appropriate coverage.
9. Swimming pool attire: Boys must wear appropriate length trunks and girls must wear a one-piece bathing suit. You must follow all rules and regulations related to the pool. (Read: *STYCC Pool Policy*)
10. Boys are not allowed in the girls' dorm, and girls are not allowed in the boys' dorm.
11. No food or drink other than water is allowed in the dorms for health and safety reasons.
12. Minors are not allowed off the premises unless accompanied by a chaperone or parent.
13. No unauthorized person is allowed in the kitchen at any time. Only certified STYCC personnel are allowed to prepare and serve food.
14. No one is allowed to hike alone or without an adult. (Read: *Trail Rules*) Please wear appropriate shoes and stay on the designated trail. Stay clear of poison oak.
15. Do not handle any wildlife and stay clear of any creature that may be considered dangerous. Please notify STYCC staff if you see any dangerous creatures.
16. Upon departure all retreatants are required to clean the facilities to an acceptable level.

Rules, Roles and Expectations For Adult Leaders, Chaperones, Volunteers and Teachers

Each youth group attending a STYCC sponsored retreat must provide the required number of adult chaperones to accompany their youth. A minimum of one adult chaperone per every 10 minors is required. Diocese of Fresno policy states that adult chaperones should be over 25 years of age. No one under the age of 21 can be an adult chaperone. More adult chaperones are sometimes needed so that each gender has adequate adult chaperone supervision. All adult chaperones must be **Safe Environment** certified, as per our Safe Environment policy in the STYCC Handbook.

We ask each parish to designate a **health services representative**. This person will be responsible for dispensing necessary medication to the parish youth.

STYCC trusts that each parish will choose adult chaperones that will be positive and fully able to follow and promote the rules and safety procedures stipulated in the STYCC Handbook. Adult chaperones may also serve as **team leaders**, primarily serving as small group leaders.

All STYCC retreats are made up of several components. Some of these components include the following; large group presentations, small group presentation, night activities, outdoor trail activities, adoration, mass, reconciliation service (if time permits).

Active participation of chaperones is required at all times; Instructions will be given during orientation with facilitators.

For One Day Confirmation retreats do not have a reconciliation service. Please have students attend prior to retreat.

The primary duties of an adult chaperones, leader and volunteers:

1. To ensure the safety and wellbeing of young people. Always treat young people with respect and value. Be supportive, assuring, and positive.
2. Immediately report any suspicion of child abuse or inappropriate behavior by an adult or other youth to STYCC management and your group representative. (Read: *Safe Environment Policy*)
3. To encourage positive behavior and participation, especially during talks, presentations, and purposeful activities. If distracting, unkind, or unsafe behavior is exhibited, the adult chaperon will work with the young person(s) to redirect his/her behavior or problem-solve. Chaperones must **not** independently discipline the youth. Chaperons may not discipline other parish's students. Please refer to *Catholic Diocese of Fresno Safe Environment* policy and *STYCC Rules for Retreatants, Students and Guests*. Please make STYCC staff aware of disciplinary problems.
4. To help guide and participate, in order to supervise youth. This includes supervision during large and small group presentations, outdoor trail activities, night activities, adoration, mass, reconciliation service, free-time, meal times, and night time.

(Continue)

5. To guide dorm clean up, outdoor clean up, dining table clean up, and meeting space clean up.
6. To monitor the night making sure no young people leave the dorm building, unless medical or emergency attention is needed.
7. Immediately report anything dangerous or hazardous related to the facilities, wildlife, food, etc. to STYCC management and your group representative.
8. As issues arise, especially in case of emergency, ***communication is extremely important***. Make sure to quickly share information that requires immediate attention by seeking out STYCC staff.
9. In case of an emergency, dial 9-1-1 and notify STYCC management and your group representative. Phones are located in the dorms, pool area, break room, and administration offices. In the event of a fire or emergency, ALL PERSONS will evacuate to the STYCC paved parking area and wait for further evacuation instructions. You are responsible for making sure all persons are accounted for.
10. All adults must follow the *STYCC Rules for Retreatants, Students and Guests*, which involves proper dress attire, appropriate behavior, and prohibitions.
11. No unauthorized adult is permitted on STYCC property.



Safe Environment Policy

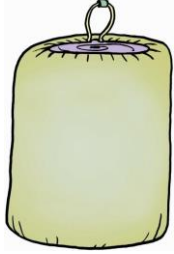
STYCC maintains compliance with the CA Penal Code Article 2.5 –the Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act (Section 11164-11174.3). STYCC Management and staff are mandated reporters, as outlined by Section 11165.7a-6, and reserve the right to report suspected abuse to the proper authorities.

STYCC fully supports and is in full compliance with the *Catholic Diocese of Fresno Safe Environment* policy. The goal of Safe Environment is to protect and ensure the safety of young people by training and screening (background checks) adults who interact with minors. STYCC policies and rules related to Safe Environment are as follows:

- 1) All adults representing STYCC, including staff and volunteers, are required to complete the *Diocesan Safe Environment* training and successfully pass a background check.
- 2) All adults accompanying Catholic organizations must be in compliance with the *Catholic Diocese of Fresno Safe Environment* policy, including training and screening. The pastor, principal or chief executive of the renting Catholic organization must sign Section 12 of the renter's agreement verifying that all accompanying adults have completed either the *Catholic Diocese of Fresno Safe Environment* requirements or a similar process provided by other Catholic dioceses. Non-Diocese of Fresno Catholic organizations must sign the form: *Safe Environment Child Protection Verification*.
- 3) In addition to adherence to *Diocesan Safe Environment* regulations, all Non-Catholic renting organizations must provide a certificate of insurance naming the Catholic Diocese of Fresno as additionally insured. The official representative must complete and sign the form: *Child and Youth Protection Verification for Non-Catholic Groups*.
- 4) Diocese of Fresno policy states that chaperones should be over 25 years of age. No one under the age of 21 can be a chaperone. Generally, one chaperone should be provided for every 5-7 minors depending upon the activity and age of the participants. A minimum of one chaperone per every 10 minors is required. More chaperones are often needed so that each gender has adequate chaperone supervision. STYCC requires that groups provide a minimum of two chaperones (per gender if spending the night), even if there are fewer than 10 youth.
- 5) All adults accompanying Catholic and Non-Catholic organizations must read and understand the *STYCC Rules for Adult Chaperones and Leaders*. The official representative of the renting organization must require all attending adults to have read and understand this document by the time of arrival.
- 6) When minors occupy STYCC facilities, no unauthorized adults are allowed on the premises.

What to BRING List / What NOT to Bring List

For Overnight Retreatants, You Must Bring: *STYCC does not provide bedding for guests, so please bring...*



- Sleeping Bag or Sheets and Blankets (*twin size*)
- Pillow and Pillow Case
- Towel
- Toiletries (*shampoo, soap, toothbrush, toothpaste, etc.*)
- Warm clothes/jackets or sweaters for cool night activities
- Athletic/hiking shoes or walking shoes
- Rain Jacket, Poncho or Umbrellas
- Refillable Water Bottle
- Flashlight
- Open Spirit



Reminder... Santa Teresita YCC does not cancel outdoor activities due to weather. Please bring warm clothes for night activities and dress appropriately.

Do NOT Bring:



- Weapons
- Illegal Drugs
- Alcohol
- Fireworks
- Inappropriate clothing, books or magazines
- Lighters
- Knives
- Gum
- Closed attitude



Since each retreat and activity at STYCC is a unique event designed for a particular purpose, **other restrictions may apply, including the use of cell phones, computers and electronic devices.** Please see the “What to Bring / What Not to Bring” list for the retreat/event you will be attending, or consult your parish, school or organization representative.

Science and Nature Camp Sample Schedule

Monday

11am	Arrival!!!
11am - 12:15am	Orientation Meetings: 1-Students 2-Chaperones & Teachers
12:30pm - 1:15pm	Lunch
1:30pm - 3:30pm	Outdoor Class
3:30pm - 3:45pm	Break
3:45pm - 4:45pm	Recess
4:45pm - 5pm	Break
5pm - 5:45pm	Exploring Faith & Science Class
5:50pm - 6pm	Fire Drill Practice
6pm - 7pm	Dinner
7pm - 7:30pm	Songs & Skits
7:30pm - 8:30pm	Evening Class
8:30pm - 9pm	Night Reflection & Journaling
9pm - 9:30pm	Get ready for Bed
9:30pm	Lights Out

Tuesday and Wednesday

7am - 7:45am	Rise and Shine
7:45am - 8am	Morning Prayer & Reflection
8am - 8:45am	Breakfast
8:45am - 9am	Get ready for Outdoor Class
9am - 11:30am	Outdoor Class
11:30am - Noon	Wash up for Lunch
Noon - 12:45pm	Lunch
12:45pm - 1pm	Get ready for Outdoor Class
1pm - 3:30pm	Outdoor Class
3:30pm - 3:55pm	Break
4pm - 4:45pm	<i>Tuesday: Recess Wednesday: Skit</i>
5pm - 5:45pm	Teacher Time
5:45pm - 6pm	Get ready for Dinner
6pm - 6:45pm	Dinner
6:45pm - 7pm	Get ready for Evening Class
7pm - 7:30pm	Songs & Skits
7:30pm - 8:30pm	Evening Class
8:30pm - 9pm	Night Reflection & Journaling
9pm - 9:30pm	Get ready for bed
9:30pm	Lights Out

Thursday

7am - 8am	Rise and Shine
8am - 8:45am	Breakfast
8:45am - 9am	Finish Packing
9am - 10:30am	Closing Group Outdoor Walk
10am - 10:45am	Group Closing Activity
10:45am - 11am	Preparation for Mass
11am - NOON	Mass
NOON - 12:45pm	Lunch
1pm	Bon Voyage! Thank you attending and making this a memorable week for everyone!

Trail Use and Rules



The clearly marked trails surrounding STYCC are for the use and enjoyment of our retreatants. We ask you to stay on the trails in order to avoid rattlesnakes, poison oak, and hazardous terrain.

- 1) No youth can use the trails without adult supervision.
- 2) We encourage the use of trails in groups consisting of at least two youth and two adults, with a ratio of no more than seven youth to one adult.
- 3) All groups will receive a brief orientation regarding trail rules and safety precautions at the start of each retreat, program and event.
- 4) An adult must take a head count of youth and take all necessary measures to keep track of all youth during the hike.
- 5) STYCC observes the **leave no trace** rule: Respecting nature by not taking anything or leaving anything behind.
- 6) For safety reasons, leaders for night hikes must provide adequate lighting.



Trail Safety Procedure for Adults

All adults accompanying youth on trails must adhere to these guidelines in order to prevent injuries and accidents.

- 1) Watch for and avoid hazards (*i.e. broken overhanging limbs, flooded creeks, lightning, poor footing, poison oak, snakes, etc.*)
- 2) Stay on the designated trail at all times.
- 3) Stay out from under trees during times of high wind.

In case of severe injury or health-related injury, the trail guide should:

- 1) Take necessary first-aid action in order to prevent loss of life (*i.e. CPR, direct pressure to stop severe bleeding, etc.*)
- 2) Dial 9-1-1 in case of emergency.
- 3) Take firm charge of the situation. Reassure the injured person and the trail group.
- 4) Keep the injured person and trail group calm while awaiting assistance.
- 5) In case of fire on the trail, stay away from the fire's path, alert the supervisor and take the safest route back to the retreat site.



Basic Safety Information

First Aid and Fire Safety measures are required to ensure the safety and well-being of each person and the environment.

- 1) In case of an emergency, DIAL 9-1-1 and notify STYCC management and the leader of the renting organization.
- 2) If you see a fire immediately report it to STYCC management and DIAL 9-1-1.
- 3) We require that each renting organization provide a First Aid certified person.
- 4) FIRST-AID KITS are located in the Dorm meetings rooms, Dining Hall break room, Pool Office, Recreation room, and Administrative Office in dining hall.
- 5) No campfires are permitted at STYCC unless approved by the STYCC manager.
- 6) All exits and passageways must be kept clear of chairs, tables, etc.

Warming Fire Rules



Warming Fires are only permitted in designated area. Warming Fires are only permitted if the temperature falls below 51 degrees and only between the dates of December 1st to April 30th. Fires cannot be any larger than 2 feet by 2 feet.

- 1) Only adults are allowed to start and tend to the fire.
- 2) Chaperones must be in the Warming Fire area when minors are present.
- 3) Only use non-treated wood. You may bring newspaper and matches to start fire.
- 4) You cannot use: combustible lighter fluid, charcoal, or any other flammable material.
- 5) The Warming Fire cannot be used to cook food. Only adults are allowed to warm simple dessert items, like Smores.
- 6) No Warming Fires are allowed on windy days or windy nights.
- 7) Warming Fires must be completely extinguished with water by an adult before leaving area and the area must be clean of all food debris.
- 8) STYCC reserves the right to cancel a Warming Fire event at any time.
- 9) Renter is responsible for all damages to buildings, grounds, and equipment caused by Warming Fire.

Proper Use of Facilities and Damage Responsibilities



Providing quality facilities is a high priority for STYCC. In order to maintain a quality, clean atmosphere the following rules apply:

- 1) Groups are not allowed to use any tape that leaves a sticky residue, or use tacks, nails, screws, etc. in any part of the buildings.
- 2) Open-flame candles are NOT PERMITTED at STYCC. Please use flame-less candles, battery operated candles, or LED candles.
- 3) Incense is not allowed in any of the buildings.
- 4) Groups are responsible for all damages to buildings, grounds, and equipment caused by the groups, other than ordinary wear and tear. The cost for repair or replacement may include labor costs.

Cleaning Policy



STYCC requires groups to clean all used facilities to an acceptable level by time of checkout. A site check by STYCC management and the group leader will be conducted prior to group's departure. If not cleaned to a satisfactory level, there may be an added charge for cleaning. Satisfactory level means the following:

- 1) All property of the group must be removed.
- 2) All trash inside the facilities and outside on the premises must be placed in the garbage dumpster.
- 3) All floors swept broom clean.
- 4) All sinks cleaned of debris.
- 5) Furniture returned to its original location.
- 6) All signs and residue must be removed and cleaned off surfaces.
- 7) Damage must be brought to the attention of STYCC management. Costs for damages may apply.