

Homesickness at Camp Eagle

At Camp Eagle, it is our goal to minister to every camper in a loving and caring way. Some children are ready for a week at summer camp and some are not. Here are some details on homesickness, how we handle it, and how you can prepare your child for camp if you suspect that your child may struggle with homesickness.

I. Understanding “Homesickness”

- a. **What is homesickness?** “Homesickness” – *“longing for one’s home – it is usually self-induced – and can be controlled by that person”*
- b. **What are the symptoms of homesickness?** Usually the camper talks a lot about home and his/her family. Sometimes in more severe cases there is some crying and some nervous feelings.
- c. **Is homesickness normal?** YES! We hope that every camper would miss being at home with his/her family in some way.
- d. **When does it seem to be most severe?** Homesickness seems to elevate during slow activity times during the camp day such as canteen, but most often is elevated at nighttime. Also, calling home and/or seeing parents usually increase homesickness. Sometimes homesickness can also be a discipline problem. In other words, when a camper has to be corrected or he/she is not “getting their way”; the camper may all of the sudden get homesick.
- e. **Is homesickness “contagious”?** Yes homesick campers can feed off of one another and make a whole cabin group miserable. They can also negatively affect the camp experience of other campers.
- f. **Is it life threatening?** No
- g. **Is homesickness controllable?** Yes

II. Camp Eagle’s Ministry to Homesick Campers – What does Camp Eagle do to help campers when they experience homesickness?

- a. Compassionately love them and comfort them
- b. Share Bible verses of comfort to them
- c. Encourage them
- d. Introduce them to new friends
- e. Talk about the fun he/she has had and will have
- f. Ask questions about their family – This is used only to calm the camper and used to eventually change the subject to something else.
- g. Reassure the camper of the parent’s desire for them to be at camp
- h. Usually we will not call home unless the camper is uncontrollable
- i. If we determine that a camper is not ready for a week of camp, we will call you and arrange for pick up.

III. The Parents Part – How can parents help Camp Eagle with homesickness?

- a. Encourage your camper and reassure them of your desire for him/her to be at Camp Eagle
- b. Don’t foster homesickness with statements such as “I know you will be homesick...” “I don’t think you can make it...” “Call me when you miss me...” “Mommy will be waiting for your soon return and I don’t think I can make it through the week without you...”
- c. Get to know your camper’s counselor and talk highly of the counselor in front of your camper at drop off time
- d. Don’t become the problem – Many times the parent is more “homesick” for the camper than the camper is for them.
- e. If we have to call you – reassure your camper and tell them you want them to stay.
- f. Remember you are the parent – You have the authority over them not vice-versa.