

Valley Retreat Center Group Leader All Location Files

Table of Contents

Youth Planning and Preparation Documents

Camp Planning Meeting	2
PASSPORT Youth Glossary	3
Chaperone Handout	5
Six Fundraising Ideas	6

Location-Specific Detail Documents

Parent Essentials Guide	7
Campus Map	10

Check-In Forms

Special Attention Form	11
Chaperone Screening Certificate	12
Valley Retreat Center Liability Release	13

CAMP PLANNING MEETING

We recommend holding a camp-planning meeting at least two weeks before your departure date.

Invitations

Announce your meeting. Invite the following individuals:

- Campers and their Parents/Guardians
- Adult Chaperones

Medical Release Forms

Use this meeting to have parents fill out the Medical Release Form, or you can send out your Medical Release Form link ahead of time for parents to fill out before this meeting. Regardless, remind parents (and chaperones) to fill one out. A pdf copy of all completed forms for your group will be emailed to you.

Meeting Time

Generally, a Camp Planning Meeting will last 30-60 minutes, depending on group size.

Checklist

- Welcome/Introduction** Thank everyone for attending and share your excitement about this summer's camp. Be sure to introduce the adult chaperones, encouraging campers and parents/guardians to thank them.
- Camper Digital Sabbath** Go over the Digital Sabbath Policy, in detail. Assure parents you are available if they need to get in touch with their student.
- Distribute Handouts** Give the **Parent Essentials** to each family and **Chaperone Handout** to adult chaperones. Go over the basic information on the page, offer tips from your own experience, discuss Variety Show opportunities, Mission Offering emphasis, etc. Also, let parents know about dance costumes needed and clothes that can get messy for Rec Party. Suggest that parents make three cash envelopes for their campers: mission offering, store, and travel meals.
- Go over Campus Info** Review the following information:
 - Campus Mailing Address
 - Emergency Phone #s (including your own)
 - Sheet sizes (although we encourage sleeping bags)Encourage parents/guardians to write notes for their campers and send them a day or two before your departure.
- Camp Rules, including Dress Code** Detail the camp rules emphasizing the dress code. Campers and adults should dress appropriately—as defined by the camper's parent/guardian and Church Group Leader—the entire week of camp.
- Show the Passport Theme Video** Consider showing the Passport theme video, available at our website, www.passportcamps.org/camp-promo. The video will build excitement among your campers!
- Q & A** Refer to your Group Leader Packet—you may find many answers here. If you cannot find something, feel free to contact us during the next workday. Be sure to give instructions about your departure and return.
- Collect Forms** Collect all forms at this time, along with any balance of the camp fee from each family.
- Pray**

Adult Devotion- Following Adult Meeting and a coffee break, Group Leaders and chaperones are invited to do a short devotion. These devotions can be completed individually, with your church's group of chaperones, or in a larger group facilitated in the auditorium by the Camp Director with time to interact and get to know adults from other churches.

Adult Meeting- a time of brief daily announcements following Morning Celebration. It is essential that at least one adult from each church is present to hear the daily camp announcements.

Camper Bible Study- led by Passport staff, allowing campers to build community, have fresh encounters with scripture, and learn more about the daily theme.

Camp Check-in- Upon arriving at camp, follow signs to meet with staffers to submit forms and receive T-shirts, Passport booklets, rooming assignments, and keys for housing.

Camp Store – open during free time each day; the camp store offers PASSPORT apparel and accessories for purchase.

Chaperone- Adults who attend camp to assist the Group Leader. Chaperones set an example for campers and are responsible for their supervision and safety whenever they are not under scheduled staff supervision. The camper to chaperone ratio is 6 to 1 to ensure camper safety and adequate supervision.

Church Group Devotions- At the end of the day, Group Leaders facilitate a response and reflection time. Passport will provide group leaders with a guide in the late Spring to lead campers in this conversation.

Dance- a themed costume dance on Night 2 of camp. This year groups are encouraged to dress up like tacky tourists attending a beach party. The Dance party includes dancing and other activities like cornhole and board games.

Free Time- unstructured time where campers can rest, hang out with their church group or participate in Passport provided activities (making bracelets, kickball, visiting the camp store, etc.).

Group Leader- The adult in charge of your group at camp. This adult is responsible for your group's account, check-in forms, and has authority to enforce rules and guidelines for your group.

Mission Site- Off campus work typically at a local non-profit organization. Sites vary by location but often include food banks, yard work, gardening, painting, etc.

Morning Celebration- a 30-minute jump start to the camp day of silly songs, laughter, announcements, awards, and a brief challenge from the pastor before campers head off to Bible study.

Morning Devotion- scheduled time right after breakfast each day, there are prompts in the campers' passport booklet and the Group Leader will supervise campers as they work on their devotions independently

Opening Celebration- a fun and informative introduction to camp. Learn the camp theme, meet the staff and get energized for the week ahead. Wear your camp T-shirt (received at check-in).

Passport Booklet- a resource for every camper and adult. Includes: camp schedule, camp rules, and pages for activities to do in morning devotions, worship, bible study, and other camp events. Campers should always have these and can take them home to help remember and reflect on what they have learned.

Rec Party- a series of large group games where Bible study groups compete against each other. Campers may wish to wear a t-shirt that corresponds to their Bible Study group color (blue, purple, green, or red).

Variety Show - event on the last night of camp to celebrate camper talents and interests where campers can perform acts on stage.

Variety Show Screenings- Acts should be no longer than two minutes and must be performed (in costume, if applicable) for screening during free time at camp. Group or individual acts are welcome.

Worship Prep- a scheduled time before worship in which campers who are participating in an element of worship – scripture reading, prayer, processional, etc. - can make final preparations and pray with staff.

PASSPORT Chaperones

What is a chaperone?

A chaperone is a responsible, supportive adult who helps the Group Leader manage and encourage students during their week of camp. Chaperones assist the Group Leader and participate fully in camp activities. Chaperones should also come ready to sign-up to help the summer team with various logistics through the session as needed.

Volunteer Opportunities (Youth Camps)

- Rec Party- assist a Passport staffer with a game
- Missions- drive students, help load and unload supplies, provide supervision on the work site and ensure safety of campers
- Choices- upon receiving instructions from a Passport staffer, aid in the facilitation of the activities

Things to Keep in Mind

- Be a Mentor- listen, encourage, praise, direct and empower
- Help enforce the Digital sabbath
- Attend Adult Meeting each day to receive important daily announcements and sign up for volunteer opportunities
- Remind campers to bring Bible and pens to worship and Bible Study
- Help limit movement and talking during worship
- Keep an eye on students' health as it relates to extreme heat
- Supervise campers during Free Time
- Enforce students' thoughtfulness of others in dorms (noise, curfew, etc.)
- Make sure students are getting enough sleep.
- Enjoy quality time with your group!
- Take advantage of opportunities to learn and grow yourself! You'll be glad you did.

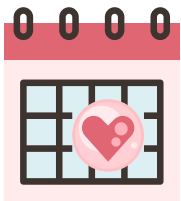
Thank you for spending this week investing in lives of your youth campers!

Six Fundraising Ideas



Money tree

Set up a small, artificial tree or utilize a bulletin board and make your own in a visible space at the church. Provide and place envelopes on the tree branches, and inform people that they are encouraged to place money in the envelopes as they are led and attach it back to the tree branch. You may also pre-determine amounts for each envelope if you have a certain goal in mind.



Parents Night Out

Plan a night where parents can bring their children for several hours to have a night off. Youth will plan and lead age appropriate activities for the kids. Determine a price to charge for services and advertise the sign-ups to parents.



Dessert Auction

Have members of the congregation donate desserts of all kinds- cookies, cakes, pies, etc. The church then comes together for a simple meal during which a silent auction is held for all but a few of the desserts. For example, if you have 40 desserts donated, pull out 10 at the beginning for a live auction to be held toward the end of the evening.



Dinner and Entertainment

Choose a weekend evening and involve youth in planning the menu, preparing the space and entertainment. During the entertainment portion, inform church members about camp and why it is important. You may even consider asking youth or children to perform acts for the talent show as entertainment! This model could also work as a Trivia Night and a meal.



“Invest in our Youth”

Sell pieces of “stock” for \$10 each. (Unlimited number so people can “invest” as much as they wish. When you return from camp, have a special “stockholder” meeting where those who participated can interact with teens and hear them talk about their trip.



Partner with a local restaurant

Several national restaurant chains will partner with you for fundraisers. Most Chick-fil-A stores will let you do a “Spirit Night” where you get a percentage of the sales that mention your church. Applebee’s will do a pancake fundraiser. They handle all the food and cleanup. You just promote it to get people there and you get a share of the proceeds. It’s worth an ask at some of your local restaurants. Many already have programs or will be willing to work with you.

We'd love to know what your ideas!
Feel free to share them with us at info@passportcamps.org

PASSPORT*missions*sm

PARENT ESSENTIALS • Valley Retreat Center

Thank you for choosing to send your student to PASSPORT*missions*. We spend our year planning a fun, safe, and life-changing week of interactive Bible Studies, Games, Worship, and Parties just for them. We take the job of shaping the faith of young people seriously, and the trust you have placed in PASSPORT is never taken for granted.

CAMP SCHEDULE

Opening Day

- 2:00 pm Check-In
- 5:00 pm Dinner
- 7:00 pm Opening Celebration
- 8:00 pm Youth Bible Study & Adult Meeting
- 9:00 pm Vespers & Church Group Devotions
- 11:00 pm Lights Out

Day 1

- 8:00 am Breakfast & Morning Devotions
- 9:30 am Morning Celebration
- 10:15 am Youth Bible Study & Adult Meeting
- 11:30 am Lunch
- 12:15 pm Mission Projects
- 3:00 pm Free Time Activities
- 5:00 pm Dinner
- 6:30 pm Rec Party
- 8:30 pm Worship & Church Group Devotions
- 11:00 pm Lights Out

Day 2

- 8:00 am Breakfast & Morning Devotions
- 9:30 am Morning Celebration
- 10:15 am Youth Bible Study & Adult Meeting
- 11:30 am Lunch
- 12:15 pm Mission Projects
- 3:00 pm Free Time Activities
- 5:00 pm Dinner
- 7:00 pm Worship
- 8:30 pm Dance Party
- 9:30 pm Church Group Devotions
- 11:00 pm Lights Out

Day 3

- 8:00 am Breakfast & Morning Devotions
- 9:30 am Morning Celebration
- 10:15 am Youth Bible Study & Adult Meeting
- 11:30 am Lunch
- 12:15 pm Mission Projects
- 3:00 pm Free Time Activities
- 5:00 pm Dinner
- 7:00 pm Worship
- 8:00 pm Church Group Devotions
- 9:30 pm Variety Show
- 11:00 pm Lights Out

Closing Day

- 8:00 am Breakfast
- Checkout & Load Vehicles
- Morning Devotions
- 9:15 am Youth Bible Study & Adult Meeting
- 10:15 am Closing Celebration
- 11:00 am Farewell

IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW

Food Allergies

Please ensure your group leader alerts us to special dietary needs in the Special Attention box on our registration website or by calling the national office at least two weeks before your session.

Housing

Valley Retreat & Conference Center has large, air-conditioned bunk rooms, where adult and minor females will most likely share space with females from other church groups, and adult and minor males will most likely share space with males from other church groups. Please note that few, if any, special housing requests may be accommodated due to the retreat center's room configurations and limited alternatives. Similarly, common, gendered bathrooms will have sinks, showers, and toilet stalls. Bring your own pillow, towels, and bed linens (twin XL sheets or sleeping bags).

Cell Phones

Taking up the Biblical idea of rest, we invite our campers to join us for a week of Digital Sabbath. Campers will not be permitted to have cell phones or electronic devices during camp. Your group leader can plan the best platform for daily updates about your church group at camp.

Camp Office Info

The Camp office opens May 29, and the phone number is (205) 588-6948. Please use the Camp Office number for emergencies only! All other communication with your group should be done through your church group leader. Thanks.

Camp Mail

Please mail early and include a return address. Mail that comes late will be marked "Return to Sender," but ONLY with a visible return address.

Camper Name, Church/Group Name
PASSPORT *missions* at Valley Baptist
Retreat & Conference Center
1600 E. Business Hwy 83
Mission, TX 78572

Mission Offering

Campers learn about global needs and are given the opportunity to support Christian ministries working to meet those needs. The camp offering is collected on the final night of Worship.

Dance Party

Hawaiian shirts, fanny packs, bucket hats! Hit your nearest thrift store and join us at PASSPORT's 2024 Tacky Tourist Beach Party Dance. Costume Ideas may include Hawaiian shirts, sunblock on your nose, bucket hats, inflatables, oversized sunglasses, fanny packs, and more. *NO bathing suits, please.*

Variety Show

Campers who want to participate in the Variety Show should come prepared to perform their act in costume one afternoon during free time at Variety Show screenings. Group acts are encouraged.

Packing List

Clothes

- T-shirts
- Shorts
- Jacket/sweater
- Swimsuit (outdoor pool *should* be open)
- Costume for Dance Party
- Rec Party clothes that can get wet
- Closed-toe shoes (required for Rec Party & Missions; also, shoes may get wet at Rec Party, so we suggest bringing an extra pair)

Toiletries

- Soap (for sink and shower)
- Shampoo/conditioner
- Deodorant
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Other personal hygiene items

Towels and Linens

- Pillow, Twin XL sheets, and blanket (or sleeping bag)
- Towels and washcloths
- Beach towel (indoor pool *might* be open)

Other Items

- Bible (write name & church inside!)
- Pen or pencil
- Sunscreen and hat
- Bug repellent
- Flashlight
- Water bottle (a must!)
- Money for mission offering (optional)
- Money for the camp store (optional)
- Hand sanitizer
- Alarm clock or watch (Group Leaders will take up phones)
- Any sensory care items your camper may require

TIP: If packing something that must not get lost or left behind (like a Bible), please write a first & last name on it somewhere! Adding the city and church name is very helpful too.

Do Not Bring

- Fireworks, extra shaving cream, water balloons, tobacco products, vapes, illegal drugs, alcohol, firearms—all the usual no-nos.
- Students may not bring clothing, hats, flags, posters, or other room decorations that could be seen as divisive, inflammatory, or offensive.
- We ask that all electronics be switched off and put away while at camp to observe our Digital Sabbath rule designed to allow campers to focus on God, camp, relationships, and themselves—not games or music.
- Some Group Leaders will give phones to their campers for a brief parent check-in a couple of times during the week. However, Passport prefers for every group to maintain a full digital sabbath for the week – we trust group leaders to use their discretion for these check-in moments.

Dress Guidelines

Campers and adults should dress appropriately for the entire week of camp, as defined by the camper's parent/guardian and Church Group Leader. Please consider these guidelines, as it is the group leaders who will monitor their group's clothing:

- No clothing with inappropriate language or advertising is allowed.
- Clothing should not make fun of, belittle, or demean another person or culture.
- Shirts with sleeves & closed-toe tennis shoes are required for Rec Party and Mission Sites.
- Bring some clothes that can get dirty at Rec Party and for various games or activities.



ORANGES FIELD

RECREATION AREA

- HUMAN FOOSBALL
- 9 SQUARE GAME
- HUMAN MAZE
- GAGA PIT GAME
- OBSTACLE COURSE

TURF AREA

DINNING HALL

RESTROOMS

204	203
VBR DORMS	
202	201

103	104
VBR DORMS	
101	102

TURF AREA

8	1
7	2
HOTEL ROOMS	
6	3
5	4
RUBY RED CONFERENCE ROOM	

TABERNACLE STORAGE ROOM

PICNIC AREA

RESTROOMS

OFFICE

PARSONAGE HOUSE

EMMAUS DORMS

FOYER

CHAPEL'S SMALL CONFERENCE ROOM

CHAPEL CONFERENCE ROOM

FRONT PARKING LOT

SIDE ENTRANCE

WALKING ENTRANCE

CAMP CHECK-IN

MAIN ENTRANCE

PRAYER GARDEN

SOCCER FIELD

WALKING TRAIL

SHOP

SEWING ROOM

CHRISTMAS STOCKING ROOM

WAREHOUSE

ORANGE CONFERENCE ROOM

RESTROOMS

BACK PARKING LOT

BASKETBALL COURT

TRAILER CONFERENCE ROOM 1

TRAILER CONFERENCE ROOM 2

STEWART ENTRANCE

RV PARKING LOT

PAVILION #1

BIRD PITS

POOL

PAVILION #2

9 SQUARE GAME

VOLEYBALL AREA

STAFF LAUNDRY

WHITE HOUSE

HOUSE #1

HOUSE #2



Valley Baptist
Retreat & Conference Center
VBMEC

1600 E BUS -83, Mission, TX 78572
Office: 956-585-4393
Camp Cell: 956-659-5254 (after hrs.)

S STEWART RD

E BUSINESS 83

SPECIAL ATTENTION FORM

To help the Passport staff be as prepared as possible for ministry, please list anything you request our team pay special attention to within your group. This may include family crisis situations, physical limitations (mobility, sight, or hearing differences), unusual allergic reactions (food, bee stings), English as a second language, learning or behavioral differences, emotional or spiritual struggles, etc. This information will be handled carefully as a matter of prayer and assistance to our staff during the week and will not go beyond the bounds of the Passport staff. Passport reserves the right to ask that an adult from your group assist your camper during Bible Study if we consider close individual attention in the camper's best interest.

Camper Name: _____

Church Name: _____

Group Leader Name: _____

Notes: _____

Passport Camp Office Use Only. Bible Study Leader assignment: _____

SPECIAL ATTENTION FORM

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Camper Name: _____

Church Name: _____

Group Leader Name: _____

Notes: _____

Passport Camp Office Use Only. Bible Study Leader assignment: _____

CHAPERONE SCREENING CERTIFICATE

Please list the name of each adult who will be coming to camp with your group (including staff, chaperones, and visitors). You will need to conduct a statewide criminal background check (for the state where the adult resides) for each person listed. Any official state background check you have conducted within the past three years is acceptable (**note: within 12 months for chaperones attending camp in Texas**). Please check the appropriate box to indicate that the background check has been conducted for each adult. A ministerial staff member of your church or parish must complete and sign the certification statement at the bottom of this page. Bring the completed form with you to camp Check-In. Thank you for making an effort to protect the well-being of all our campers, as well as your own children and adults!

	Adult's Name	Check if Visiting Camp	Gender	Background Check Completed
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				

I certify that our church/parish, named below, has conducted a statewide criminal background check for each person listed above, and we affirm them as an adult chaperone for our camp group. I further certify that I am a staff member of the church/parish named below and, thereby, an official representative of the church/parish.

Ministerial Staff Member's Signature

Date

Church/Parish Name

Church/Parish Phone Number

Church/Parish Address, City, State, ZIP



Valley Baptist Mission Education Center
Valley Baptist Retreat

1600 E Business 83
Reservations (956)585-4393

Participant Individual Release Form

Please sign below and turn in one form for each participant upon arrival at VBMEC/
Valley Baptist Retreat campus.

I _____, (minors must have parent's name here) speaking for myself or my child, do hereby agree to release and hold harmless Valley Baptist Mission Education Center/Valley Baptist Retreat, its staff, its board, Rio Grande Valley Baptist Association, the Baptist General Convention of Texas and all supporting ministries of **any responsibility for accidental injuries, sicknesses or incidents sustained during our time at VBMEC/ Valley Baptist Retreat.**

We do hereby give the staff of VBMEC/ Valley Baptist Retreat permission to hospitalize, secure treatment as deemed necessary should the leader of the group not be available to make said decisions. I also acknowledge that I have read and agree to the policies and procedures of VBMEC/ Valley Baptist Retreat, and that if I violate any rules of the facility there or otherwise posted, that I can be asked to leave at my own expense without repercussions to VBMEC/ Valley Baptist Retreat . This decision is to be determined by the board or the on duty Director. I hereby understand and consent to the use of any photographs/videos taken at the facility or VBMEC / Valley Baptist Retreat sponsored activities to be used in the use of VBMEC promotional materials.

I _____ (attendee name) have read and agree to abide by the policies set forth by VBMEC/ Valley Baptist Retreat and understand that if I violate these, I can be asked to leave the facility at my own expense.

Attendee Signature

Date

Parent signature if Attendee is under 18

Date

Group Name attending with: _____