

A Day in the Life of a Camp Echo Counselor

Updated May 21, 2003

Your day starts with a ringing of the bell at 8 am. You have 15 minutes to get a group of 11 or 12 boys or girls to the KYBO (bath building), dressed, and ready for the day. At 8:15 a second bell rings letting you know that your group needs to proceed to the flag pole. Flag raising is a very fun time of day. Every cabin group gathers around the flag pole, in a huge triangle, and tries to come up with a funny or interesting response when the Main Camp Director says, "good morning" to your cabin. Once the flag is raised it is time to send your two waiters to set the table in the dinning hall and the rest of the group heads over to chapel. Chapel is a short, ten-minute time when a non-denominational inspirational message is conveyed. This could be through a story told by a staff member or a skit performed by an entire cabin group. The emphasis is on friendship, character development, or care for the environment. Then it is time for breakfast.

Following breakfast is a time called cabin clean-up/service task. This is a time when the campers are assigned to help clean up an area of camp or their cabin. It is designed to help everyone learn to be responsible for keeping camp clean. Some staff are assigned to supervise the different areas that the campers will be cleaning. If you are not given an area you will be responsible for the group of your campers assigned to clean the cabin. On most days the cabins are inspected during the day and points are awarded to the cleanest cabins of the day.

The cabin clean-up/service task is followed by three one-hour class periods called "Camptivities". The campers choose (rank) eight activities (and are assigned to three) on the 1st (and 6th, for two-week campers) day of the session. They receive instruction in many different program areas including Archery, Arts & Crafts, Sports, Canoeing and Kayaking, Sailing, Water Skiing, Music, Nature, Dance, Drama, Fishing and Horseback Riding. The counselors teach classes in their area of expertise. Staff schedules change weekly depending on enrollment in the activities. This is a fun time to pass on knowledge that you have to a group of campers. This is followed by waiters call and lunch.

Once lunch is over there is a time we call Saska; this is a Native American word for rest hour. This is probably the best hour of a staff member's day. It is a chance to have some down time. Everyone must be in their cabins and campers are allowed to play quiet games, listen to music, read or take a nap. Most counselors choose to nap, but the time is sometimes used to plan activities – for your group, or for the whole camp.

After Saska is over it is time for Cabin Group activity. This is a time where your cabin group does an activity together. It might be time on the team elements course, a game of water polo, softball, soccer, or volleyball against another cabin, time in one of the regular activity areas, time to prepare for your overnight, just about anything. This is a great time to get to know and play with your campers. It can also be a time where they get to bond as a group.

The time right before dinner is called Fun Swim and the time right after dinner is called Twilight Fun. These are free times for the campers. Some of the areas will be open during each time and they may choose what they do. Counselors are assigned to work only one of these times – the other is your free time for the day. Popular activities include showering, checking email, spending time with a camper that needs individual attention, or chilling with other staff members in the Slounge.

After Twilight Fun is flag lowering followed by evening program. This is a large group activity time. A General's Game is one the most popular programs so we run that every session. Other favorites are campfires, talent shows, and various forms of station games. Counselor are encouraged to work together to come up with fun and creative programs of their own.

At the conclusion of the evening program everyone returns to their cabins to get ready for bed. A trip to the KYBO for teeth brushing, face washing and maybe a quick night shower is a necessity. Before the campers go to bed the counselors lead a Taps Talk. This talk is an amazing time of the day. The counselors pose a question or statement for the campers to comment on. It is a great time to bond with your campers and learn about their likes, dislikes, fears, and more.

Once you have put the campers to bed you are free until midnight. One counselor must remain in the cabin at all times. The other counselor goes to the "staff meeting" (more about this once you become an Echo staff member).

The Echo counselor's day is very full but very fun. You learn a great deal about yourself and get to pass on a great experience to your campers. It is a fun and rewarding job.

*Oh, we are from Camp Echo; Oh, we are from Camp Echo
Oh we have the pep and fun; we play 'til day is done
We are the kids of Camp Echo!*

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