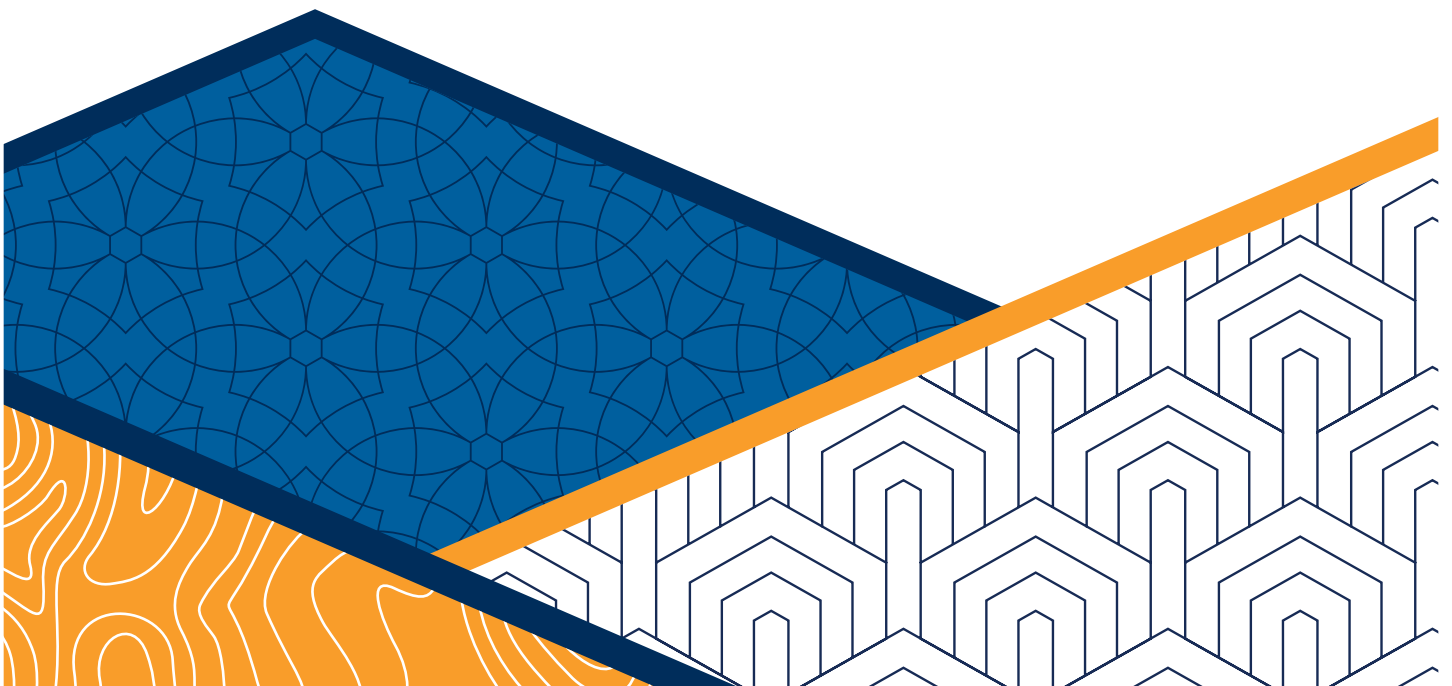




# MAKING THE MOST OF ARRIVAL DAY

Being intentional with how we use our brief time with parents on arrival day can help set the stage for the impact of camp to extend beyond the camper to the family unit.





As camp leaders, we spend 40 weeks a year planning every minute of a camper's week. How much time do we spend thinking about programming for parents? Campers may be our audience, but parents are the 'buyers' of the experience and, more importantly, they are the ones who care for, support, and disciple their children the rest of the year.

Here are a few tips for making the most of arrival day:

**ENGAGE:** If possible, avoid the "drop and go" style for residential overnight camp. Instead, set an expectation that families will spend some time dropping their children off. You may have some parents that need to leave quickly, but many parents will relish the transition time with their children. As parents unload, have people available to welcome each family and orient them to the arrival day process. Consider providing a tour of camp or a coffee and snack bar with camp leaders present.

**RESOURCE:** Are there resources you can give the parents that aid them in their parenting or build the parents faith while their camper is at camp? Have resources available that parents can take home with them. Consider providing copies of the week's lessons, scripture verses, prayer cards for each day, staff bio cards, and/or a physical memento, such as a bracelet, a pen, or even a sticker for the car.

**INVOLVE:** Design a short transitional experience that invites parents to spend a few minutes talking and praying with their camper about camp. For example:

- A preparation walk, similar to a prayer walk, could be set up with a few prompts along the way for conversation or prayer.
- Set up a "prayer journaling" station where parents can write down their prayers and hopes for their child's experience. You can share them with the camper, use them as prayer prompts during staff prayer meetings, and return them to the parents when they come to pick up their camper and hear about the experience.
- Host a parent meeting after campers have been settled in their groups where you talk with parents about the schedule for the week, the goals of camp, and give tips on how they can support their camper before, during, and after the experience.
- Create your own! The key idea is to involve parents in the experience, even if just for an hour.

Arrival day is more than just a logistical checkpoint; it is a critical, yet often underutilized, opportunity for ministry to the entire family. By intentionally dedicating time to Engage, Resource, and Involve parents in the camp's mission, we set a powerful precedent.

This focused effort ensures that parents feel valued, equipped, and connected to the experience, transforming their role from mere "buyers" into active partners in their child's spiritual and personal growth. Ultimately, by ministering to the parents on day one, camp leaders secure a greater chance for the transformational impact of the camp week to continue flourishing at home for the rest of the year.



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