



**THE GREAT ESCAPE MIDWEST
COUNSELOR HANDBOOK
2026**

WELCOME, COUNSELORS!

Thank you for embarking on this grand adventure with us this summer as we learn we are WANTED at The Great Escape (TGE). Whether you are brand new to TGE or you have attended for 20+ years, we hope this Counselor Handbook will provide you with everything you need to know to prep and have a wonderful experience at camp.

The goal of TGE Midwest is simple: We want middle schoolers to know God better. We fully believe God has called us to create this crazy fun atmosphere, bring in wonderful speakers who teach the Word of God, and provide for every need we can imagine so that you—their counselor and/or youth leader—can do what you do best: build relationships that last. Mentor and give counsel. Continue the relationship when you get home. God will use YOU to impact these kids. We are blessed to provide the place where this will happen.

We are different from a traditional summer camp. At TGE, we want to free as much of your time as possible for you to simply BE with the kids. You won't be planning recreation or running to WalMart to buy craft supplies. You won't be helping in the kitchen or prepping for speaking from the stage. We provide almost* everything so that you can focus on your campers. *Later in this handbook we will outline a few things we don't provide so that you can prep ahead of time.

It is such an honor to partner with you in reaching your students with the Good News of Jesus Christ. Consider yourself officially part of the family! We can't wait to get to know you. Don't hesitate to let us know if there is anything we can do to serve you. Your counselor care liaison is a great resource, but we are ALL here for you!

Can't wait!

Dave & Kira
Great Escape Midwest Directors

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Important forms (all need to be completed)

[**YCM Media Consent Form 2026**](#)

[**YCM Medical Release Form 2026**](#)

[**YCM Sexual Misconduct Policy 2026**](#)

2026 THEME: WANTED

“I have called you back from the ends of the earth, saying, ‘You are my servant.’

For I have chosen you and will not throw you away.

Don’t be afraid, for I am with you. Don’t be discouraged, for I am your God.

I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.”

- Isaiah 41: 9-10

Our theme this year explores what it means to be wanted by God. The prophet Isaiah tells us that God chooses us, is with us and will never leave us. Those truths are a big deal to young people in an age where they have what they think is everything they could ever want at the tips of their fingers but are left with a feeling of loneliness. Through quiet time, small groups, sessions, and relationships, students will hear how they are wanted by God not because of what they have done or can do, but because of who they are and who God is. God is a place where they can find their strength and their help and know that they are WANTED.

At TGE Midwest, we really enjoy connecting the theme in all areas of camp. Games, crafts, small group curriculum, and content from the stage will all revolve around our western theme. We highly encourage you to join us in this! Costumes and props are a great way to do so. Just make sure they are appropriate and safe. This will start on day one, when you will see the Work Crew decked out in cowboy hats and boots, ready to blaze new trails in the wild west. You and your kids are welcome to join the horseplay, and you are also JUST as welcome to come in everyday clothing. Whatever feels most comfortable to you is fine by us!

MEDICAL & HOUSING INFO

Medical Information

Every group is responsible for all camper injuries. YCM (Youth Conference Ministries) does not provide nurses or doctors on site, but will distribute simple first aid items during recreation. In the event of an injury requiring professional medical attention, group leaders should inform the Green Lake Conference Center (GLCC) front desk and then either call for an ambulance or drive the camper to the nearest Emergency facility. Any injured camper MUST be accompanied by a counselor to the Emergency facility. If groups

do not have a car and an ambulance is not required, the Counselor Care team can drop off and pick up the injured parties at the Emergency facility, but we cannot accompany the injured camper at the facility. Call your Counselor Care representative if this situation arises.

Group leaders are also responsible for administering prescriptions to any campers who require them.

Each group will need to bring a small first aid kit: including Band-Aids, tweezers, a thermometer, Tylenol, Pepto-Bismol, Antacids, antiseptic, antibiotic ointment, ace bandages, and small ice packs or baggies.

Housing Information

- Room assignments will be given to you upon your arrival.
- We cannot pre-house your group. The housing is not completed until the registration numbers are final, only a few days before the start of camp. We appreciate your patience as we work through the massive puzzle that is housing!
- You will need to establish a contact person and phone number for your parents in case they need to reach their child.

LEADER PREPARATION

TIPS ON LEADING STUDENTS

1. Establish an atmosphere of trustworthiness. Most teenagers are afraid to express their opinions because they are afraid of being ridiculed, laughed at, or considered dumb by their peers. They need to feel secure before they share their true feelings and beliefs. It may be helpful to set some ground rules for confidentiality, as appropriate, when beginning small groups.
2. Affirm all legitimate expressions of opinions from your group members. Make certain everyone knows his or her comments and contributions are appreciated and important.
3. Discourage the students from thinking of you as the “authority” on the subject. Encourage them to open their Bibles to seek out answers there and to collaborate as a group on hard questions. If something comes up that feels too big for this context, write down the question and bring it to a pastor or youth director.

4. Actively listen to each person. It can be helpful to show them you understand their point by restating or paraphrasing it before moving on. Paraphrasing and reflecting the meaning of what has been shared in other words is also a helpful way to foster discussion without feeling like you need to ask question after question.
5. Do not force anyone to talk. Invite them, but do not insist they comment. Each member should have the right to pass.
6. Do not take sides during discussion. You will possibly have differing opinions in the group. This is very stimulating to a discussion, but do not make the mistake of immediately agreeing with one side or the other. Instead, encourage both sides to think through their positions and to defend their points of view.
7. Do not allow one person—including yourself—to monopolize the discussion. Try to encourage equal participation from all students. Remember that it is the kids' turn to talk.
8. Arrange seating to encourage discussion. It is best to sit in a circle with everyone at the same eye level.
9. Sometimes a warm up question or icebreaker is helpful. Ask something simple that is easy to answer, like "If you could be any animal, which animal would you be?" Once a student has answered a question like this, they are more likely to answer others.
10. Don't be intimidated by silence. Let the students think about the question and resist the urge to move on too quickly when the silence feels uncomfortable.
11. Try to stay on topic as much as you can. We will provide questions to help steer your discussion. It is common for a discussion to go off on tangents. If the tangent is fairly close to what you're talking about, see it through for a little bit. Otherwise, tell the group that you can talk about that topic later, but for now you need to finish your discussion.
12. Ask open-ended questions. When asking questions of students, ask questions that require more than a one-word response. Ask for their opinion or how they feel about something. Ask questions about how or why things are the way they are.
13. Go from general to specific. Kids will be more willing to talk about topics in general at first and then talk about how the topic affects them personally.
14. Remember it is not a good group if you do all the talking.

DETAILED PACKING LIST

Please note that a shareable version of this packing list for campers is also provided at the end of the handbook.

Bring:

- Bible, pen, journal, or notebook
- Modest clothing that can get dirty
 - Pack for extreme temps. Wisconsin can be really hot and chilly on the same day!
 - Make sure clothes for Morning Rec can get dirty/possibly stained
- Bathing Suits
 - For those who typically wear 2 piece bathing suit, wear a t-shirt over it or a 1 piece
 - For those who typically wear no shirt, wear a t-shirt
- Hat, sunscreen, sunglasses, water bottle, bug spray
- Tennis shoes that you can run in, but that you don't mind maybe getting dirty (everyone needs to bring at least one pair of closed-toe shoes!)
- Recommended: Sturdy sandals like Tevas or Chacos (rubber flip flops may be used as shower shoes, but not recommended for outdoors)
- Laundry bag and a couple of trash bags for dirty clothes
- Jacket or raincoat
- Hand sanitizer
- Western costumes
- Flashlight
- Old beach towel okay with getting dirty/stained
 - Bath towels will be provided
- Spending money (t-shirts for tie dye (\$10/each), banana boat rides (\$10/each), snacks, band merch, etc.)
- At least one can of shaving cream (per kid)—no gel or menthol
 - Cans should be given to a leader before the ride to camp!

Counselor Packing Suggestions:

- Coffee mug for morning Counselor coffee to help us cut down on waste
- Blue painters tape - for "keeping" students in rooms at night
- If you wish to rent a fire pit - lighter, s'mores supplies, bug spray, etc.
- Family Time supplies
- First Aid Kit
- Plastic tote for shaving cream - labeled with church name
- Saturday morning Breakfast supplies

Do NOT Bring

- Any form of mind-altering substances
- Tobacco products
- Weapons of any kind
- Firecrackers/fireworks
- Electronic devices
 - This is technically up to you, but we strongly discourage campers bringing cell phones with them to camp. It's just one week, and we find that the lack of phones really facilitates better fellowship, friendship, and conversations. Laptops/iPads/other devices are not permitted for campers.
- Laser pointers
- Skateboards, bicycles, scooters, or rollerblades
- Bedding, including sleeping bags (all bedding is provided)

IMPORTANT RANDOM STUFF

- Room assignments will be given at registration. Contact your counselor care liaison if your group has special needs or requests. Our practice is to room campers with campers and leaders with leaders, so please let us know if there is any reason this wouldn't work for your group and we will work with you on a solution.
- Upon arrival, please report broken or damaged furniture in your dorm room to your counselor care representative right away to avoid charges for damage.
- Skateboards and rollerblades (or anything on wheels other than your buses/vans!) are not allowed.
- TGE and Green Lake Conference Center will not be held responsible for stolen items, so be sure to lock up. We haven't had a theft issue, but we'd rather be safe than sorry with so many people around.
- We highly encourage you to help your campers go "screen free" during the week of Great Escape. It allows your kids to fully enjoy the experience while they are at camp. They are useful for a long car trip to and from camp, but while at camp they can be a liability and distracting.
- Swimming is allowed only at designated times. We ask that if your student/leader typically wears a two piece bathing suit, for them to wear a one piece or a t-shirt, and if they typically wear no shirt, for them to wear a t-shirt.

- **Churches are responsible for providing first aid to your campers.** TGE will have a limited supply of bandaids and basic necessities on hand. Be sure your church brings a first aid kit and has a plan for caring for your campers if there is an illness or injury. We are happy to assist if you need help locating a doctor's office or hospital.
- If a parent or guardian needs to leave a message for their children and cannot get a hold of you, they can call the Green Lake Conference Center at 920-294-3323.
- We will provide lanyards for all members of your group that can be filled in with names and also hold room keys.
- Parents can send mail to:

Your child's name - The Great Escape
Church Name
Green Lake Conference Center
W2511 State Road 23
Green Lake, WI 54941

- If parents want to send mail, encourage them to do so early! Include a return address in case it arrives too late. Mail will be distributed at counselor meetings. Campers will be fed well throughout the week; there is no need to send care packages of candy and food!

DETAILED SCHEDULE

New to the Great Escape? Have no fear! The next several pages will describe these events in detail and outline anything you may need to do to prepare. Below is a detailed look at our daily schedule for counselors— you'll find an abbreviated version that can be easily shared with campers and parents at the end of this document.

Monday

- 3:00 PM Arrival and Registration – Pillsbury Hall AKA Auditorium
(Head to the lake for some waterfront games as soon as your bags are dropped off in your building's lobby. You will have time before dinner to move bags into rooms. Please do not arrive any earlier than 3:00 PM, as we will not be able to check you in.)
- 4:30 PM Official Welcome and Kick Off – by the lake
- 6:00 PM Dinner – Kraft Hall AKA Dining hall
- 7:00 PM MANDATORY Counselor Meeting – side room in Dining Hall near the doors you enter through, AKA Counselor Room
(Campers – Free time outside with Work Crew supervising)
- 8:00 PM Evening Session – Auditorium
- 9:45 PM Family Time – Your pre-assigned Family Time room (will receive upon check-in)

Tuesday – Friday

- 7:30 AM “On the Point” – patio/green space behind Roger Williams
(Optional morning acoustic worship and devotional message. Coffee provided for counselors; bring your own mug to help us cut down on waste!)
- 8:00 AM Breakfast – Dining hall
- 9:00 AM Brief counselor Meeting – Counselor Room
(Only need to send one counselor per church, usually head counselor)
- 9:00 AM Quiet Time – Amphitheater near Bauer Lodge

- 9:45 AM Recreation – Lake, Field X, or Field Field
(Groups will rotate through the different fields each day. Work Crew will lead you to each field, so no worries if you don't know where they are yet)
- 12:00 PM Lunch – Dining hall
- 1:15 PM Afternoon Session – Auditorium
- 2:30 PM Small Groups – Anywhere
(Spread out throughout campus, each group free to choose their own spot at a respectful distance from other groups)
- 3:30 PM Tournaments/Crafts/Afternoon Adventures/Free Time – Lake, playground, beach, craft room, etc.
(We will announce the afternoon adventures and their locations in the daily newsletter and during afternoon session)
- 5:30 PM Dinner – Dining hall
- 6:30 PM Counselor Evening Meeting – Counselor Room
(All counselors should attend for a time of restoration and rejuvenation. Campers have free time outside with Work Crew monitoring)
- 7:30 PM Evening Session – Auditorium
- 9:15 PM Family Time – Your pre-assigned Family Time room

Saturday

Camp is over :(There are no meals provided, and there are no activities. Wake up, clean up, pack up, and hit the road. We'll see you next year!

- 7:00 AM Lost & Found open in front of Auditorium along with coffee available for Counselors
***Be sure to plan for breakfast for your group.** Many groups bring granola bars, poptarts, and juice boxes for the ride home.

ARRIVAL AND REGISTRATION

Very important: Groups should NOT arrive any sooner than 3pm on Monday, July 13.

1. Pull into the lovely Green Lake Conference Center (glcc.org). You will drive through a golf course (be cautious when you come to the one-lane bridge!) and follow stunning Lawson Drive through the forest until you get to the lake.
2. Veer right and keep following Lawson Drive along the lake until you reach Pillsbury Hall (you won't be able to miss it! We will be outside ready for you!)
3. Prepare for a line. Sometimes you will zip right through registration, but sometimes several large groups arrive at the same time. Please be patient and prepared for this. We will have Work Crew checking on you as you wait.
4. When it is your turn, you will be directed to take a group photo with your church, and then you will send one adult representative (usually the youth pastor or head counselor) into the lower level of Pillsbury Hall to check in (takes about 10 minutes). The rest of your group will be able to move to their assigned building(s) while that head counselor is inside.

What to have handy:

- Drop off your shaving cream cans at registration
 - Ensure all online forms have been filled out prior to arrival (see links)
 - [YCM Media Consent Form 2026](#)
 - [YCM Medical Release Form 2026](#)
 - [YCM Sexual Misconduct Policy 2026](#)
5. **VERY IMPORTANT: Please do not abandon your vehicle without a driver!**

If you are the only adult able to drive your vehicle and you are the one to check in:

Please follow the Work Crew as they direct you to your housing building(s). Once your kids have put their luggage in your building's lobby, you will be encouraged to go straight to the lake. It is at that time that you should meet with your Counselor Care representative in the lower level of Pillsbury Hall.

6. Everyone should be at the lake front by **4:30pm** for the Official Welcome and Camp Kick-Off! Here all campers will be divided into their recreation teams* and meet their Team Leaders. (*Make sure all students know their team numbers prior to arriving at camp).
7. Following Team meet and greets, we will direct all campers to gather back together as a church. It is at this time we will release churches in an orderly fashion to receive their room keys and move luggage into their rooms. Head counselors will stop by a table outside Pillsbury Hall (the Auditorium) to pick up their room keys - which will be divided by Boy rooms, Girl rooms, and a Master Set of Keys. There will be enough time to quickly settle in before first dinner begins at 6pm.

MEALS

Each person in your group will receive a wristband that should be worn all week. These bracelets are your “tickets” into meals, and the color is significant. There are limited extras available, so please stress to your campers that they should not lose it. The conscientious GLCC dining hall staff will not permit entry without a wristband.

Meal times are typically broken up into early and late entry based on the color of your wristband, and this rotates each day. Every member of your group will be assigned the same wristband color so that everyone can eat together. Work Crew will supervise the doors to meals to make sure that campers are entering only at their designated times to keep lines at a minimum and ensure there are seats available.

The Dining hall is a buffet with healthy and hearty items available. You'll find both savory and sweet, and there is typically a salad bar available at both lunch and dinner (more popular with the adults; campers tend to like the ice cream bar more). Be sure you are encouraging campers to drink water (not just soda) on hot days! Soda machines will be turned off at breakfast.

If anyone in your group has an allergy, they should fill out [this form](#) from GLCC as soon as possible. The GLCC staff is great about accommodating food allergies when they can plan in advance.

ON THE POINT

This is an optional devotional each morning at 7:30 AM on Lone Tree Point, behind Roger Williams/off the patio. There will be acoustic music and a short message. Additionally, our Counselor Care team provides coffee for all counselors who brave this early hour with their students. Please bring your own mug and help us reduce our waste!

If you are new to Great Escape, please know that this early morning time is very popular, even if that seems crazy for middle schoolers. We encourage you to have your campers attend at least one morning, likely Tuesday morning when they are least sleep-deprived. Some students will love the toned-down and peaceful start to the day and will continue to come each morning. It is 100% fine if some campers attend and some stay in bed.

Be prepared to go straight to breakfast, quiet time, and then to recreation after On the Point. There won't be much time to go back to your room, so you should be dressed to go right to recreation (e.g., swimsuit under clothing with beach towel, etc.).

QUIET TIME

This is one of the most important parts of the day! As you know as adults, quiet time is a vital part in training these teens in what it looks like to follow Jesus, which happens in large part through spending individual time in His Word and in prayer. Please be sure your campers get to the amphitheater by 9 AM so they don't miss this important time.

A member of our team will be there to greet you and give a few instructions. Then, campers and counselors will spread out and find their own space to complete the devotions in the Quiet Time Booklets (handed out at registration). We recommend campers write their name and church name in their booklets so we can easily return them when they inevitably get lost.

Please do not use this time for a small group. This can be distracting for others, as we want this to be a time for individual reflection, learning, and growth. We have built-in small group time in the afternoon. We keep quiet time at an age-appropriate time length. If your campers are struggling with the length, challenge them and encourage them that they can do it! You might suggest they read through a short book of the Bible throughout the week, or bring along another devotional from home just in case they have extra time. The more they put in, the more they will get out of it, just like practicing piano or lifting weights.

Everyone will need their quiet time booklets, Bibles, and pens. Rec team leaders will have baskets available to store these belongings during recreation. You won't have time to go back to your rooms, so everyone should be dressed for recreation (see next page).

As Quiet Time is wrapping up, teams will gather together and there is often time for team-building and to practice and perform cheers, Bible memory verses, and special talents.

RECREATION

Make sure your entire group is at Welcome Rec by the lake on Monday for our camp kick off at 4:30! This year, your church will find out their recreation team, led by a Work Crew Team Leader, at the end of the kick off before heading into dinner! Some smaller churches will be combined to form one team, while larger churches may be divided into multiple teams; this is to create equitable team sizes for the most fun game play possible! Our Rec Team will provide more directions at registration. It is always so exciting for everyone to find out their team name and Work Crew Team Leader!

You will spend one morning (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday) on each of three different fields. In the daily counselor newsletter, there will be a chart with team names and field locations for each day. Be sure to keep tabs on which field you are going to so that your campers (and you!) are prepared with appropriate clothing and gear. In the case of inclement weather, we will make adjustments to our schedule and provide indoor options, but we almost never have to do this.

Lake Rec: Located along the lake, visible from the auditorium. Lots of water games! Wear bathing suits with shirt/shorts over them. Bring beach towels. Wear shoes or sturdy sandals, and be prepared to take them on and off as you play different games. Soggy socks and tennis shoes are a bummer, so think about your shoe choice. Chacos or Texas or water shoes are particularly helpful here.

Field Rec: Located a bit up the road (Work Crew will lead you there), there will be crazy games galore! Closed-toe shoes are a must. There will be water on the field, but you will also want to bring water bottles.

Field X: Located even further up the road (again, you will be guided there by Work Crew), this is our wildest field. Wear clothing that can be completely ruined! You will get MESSY. ***At the end, do NOT go back to your dorms until you have cleaned off completely in the lake.***

Friday: SHAVING CREAM WAR!

The highlight of the week for many campers is the giant shaving cream war on Friday morning. Your church should bring 1 can of shaving cream for each camper and turn it in at registration. We suggest collecting it before the bus ride so there are no shaving cream incidents on the drive. We also recommend bringing all of your shaving cream cans in a tub labeled with your church name, which you can later use to collect and store tie-dye shirts.

We recommend wearing a swimsuit for this day, since everyone will be asked to clean off in the lake before going back to the rooms. It's also helpful to wear two shirts—you can use the one underneath that stays clean to wipe your eyes, mouth, and ears. We ask campers not to attack faces, but there are always some mishaps. We will have eye wash stations outside the boundary of the war zone.

We have a strict “no shaving cream outside of the fence” policy. We also do not allow campers to have whole cans of shaving cream. Members of Work Crew will squirt the shaving cream into their hands. Please help us enforce these rules. Thanks!

Counselor Expectations on the Rec Fields

We love all the fun that comes with morning Rec and know that competitiveness is part of the game. However, we would like to pass a gentle reminder that good sportsmanship is our top priority. As counselors and leaders, you set the example for your students. A positive and encouraging attitude whether your team wins or loses, is crucial to ensuring *everyone* has a great Rec experience. Please show respect to our staff, including the Work Crew Team Leaders, Game Leaders, and Field Leaders. They are doing all they can to ensure your students have fun and stay safe on the Rec Fields.

We like to encourage Counselors to participate with your team in morning Rec. It's a great way to bond with your students. Yet, we also ask that you use your best judgement on how much to participate. You are (obviously) much larger than a middle school student. Please do not dominate the games and get too competitive. Once again, good sportsmanship is our top priority, and wanting ALL campers to have a positive Rec experience. There may be times our crew gives specific instructions on how counselors should participate in a game. Please listen to their directions and feedback.

Thank you for being incredible role models to the campers and for ensuring everyone has a fun, safe, and positive experience on the Rec Fields.

SESSIONS

Afternoon and Evening sessions take place in the auditorium. There will be a live worship band, skits/drama, videos, interactive games, engaging main speakers, and more. This is where a good chunk of our worship and teaching happens, and we try to keep each of those sections at age-appropriate lengths as well.

Our afternoon session will connect with your campers through high school and college aged students sharing with them where they have seen God show up in their lives, providing your students with a healthy model of what it looks like for young people to live out their faith.

Our evening speaker this year is Dr. Duffy Robbins, Professor of Christian Ministry at Grove City College, Grove City, Pennsylvania. He is a respected youth ministry veteran with over forty years of experience in the field. He speaks around the world to teenagers and people who care about teenagers. Duffy also serves as a Teaching Pastor at Faithbridge Church, Spring, Texas, and a faculty member in the Doctor of Ministry program at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary where he co-leads the doctoral cohorts for Ministry to Emerging Generations.

Things to know

- Seating is by wristband color. Be sure to pay attention to signage at the auditorium, as your seating location will change each session so that groups take turns sitting at the front.
- We are always working on the perfect decibel level that is both fun and safe, but it sometimes gets a bit loud! If you have campers or counselors sensitive to noise, we suggest they bring some ear plugs along. You may want to bring a whole box to share with your group. We will have a small number of ear plugs to give out.
- If one of your campers has sensory needs, there will be a sensory room provided on the lower level below the auditorium during the louder parts of the session. This is still a worshipful space and is intended for quiet reflection. Work Crew will be present to facilitate this time, but please only send campers with actual sensory sensitivities to prevent this space from becoming overwhelming as well. If you haven't filled out this survey letting us know which of your students could benefit from this space, you can do it [HERE!](#)

SMALL GROUPS

After each afternoon session and before the start of free time, there will be approximately one hour for small groups. As the head counselor or youth leader from your church, please divide your group among your counselors. Do this however is best for your church and your kids, whether you want to separate by gender, age, mix them all up... Whatever is most natural for you and your group!

They may not be sitting together in the afternoon session, so you should pick a spot for everyone to meet, or each small group should discuss this at the beginning of camp when you've gotten a feel for the campus. Spread out all over camp. Find a great spot with some privacy. Enjoy the shade, the beach, a hotel lobby, wherever!

Please note on the schedule that afternoon free time does not begin until 3:30 PM. Our crew is participating in our own small group time during the same hour. We encourage you to use the full hour to share and bond as a small group. However, if your group ends early, you may return to your rooms to rest and relax before free time begins. Please be quiet and respectful of other groups. Do not release your campers around campus for free time until 3:30, as this can be distracting for other groups who are still continuing their small group time.

AFTERNOON ADVENTURES/TOURNAMENTS

There are many options during afternoon free time! This is one of the most traditional "summer camp" aspects of TGE. Here are the basics:

Tournaments

There will be multiple tournaments each day that cater to all types of campers, including (*subject to change): soccer, basketball, volleyball, 9-square, gaga ball, carpetball, pickleball, Uno, chess, spelling bee, chalk art, and sand castle building. First-, second-, and third-place winners are announced at the evening session each night.

Banana boating

A camp favorite, banana boating costs **\$10/person**. Rides last 20-30 minutes and 6 people may ride at a time. Stay tuned for more details on this year's sign up process. We will share more via email in the weeks leading up to camp.

Crafts

We have a TON of craft supplies available every day in the craft building. Draw, paint, make friendship bracelets, and more! And of course, there is the annual TIE DYE DAY!! This is a

camp favorite. Bring your own item to tie dye or purchase a white TGE shirt for **\$10**.

Free time & swimming

If none of that is enticing to your campers, they can use the afternoon for more general free time. Unless there is a tournament running, the gaga ball pit, 9-square, and volleyball courts will be open. We encourage you to set some ground rules for your group, such as “always stay in groups of at least 3” and “no swimming without an adult present.” (*There is no lifeguard on duty. All swimming at Green Lake is at your own risk*) We also highly recommend a “no hanging out in the dorm rooms during free time” rule so that campers can enjoy this great part of camp!

WEDNESDAY – REFLECTION NIGHT

We think the traditional last night of camp opportunity to hear the gospel presented is a beautiful thing, but we take a slightly different approach in our schedule. We want to share what Jesus has done in the middle of the week (and really, every day of the week), giving campers the opportunity to talk with counselors for two more days after hearing this good news. We hope this is better preparation for returning home with changed hearts and outlooks.

With that being said, we also work hard to not manufacture a spiritually fake evening or put any type of pressure on your students to feel a certain way. There will be a time during Wednesday's evening worship for your campers to exit the building and have some alone time to ponder the truths of the gospel. Campus will be fully staffed with a boundary for your students to stay within. Stay tuned for more instructions during counselor meetings.

Keep your eyes and ears open for what your students are sharing on that night and beyond as well. Some of them will be hearing and responding to the gospel for the first time. We will have a system set up to make keeping an eye on those students a little easier for you on that night, which will be explained in our counselor meeting.

FAMILY TIME

After lots of feedback, we have decided to dedicate more of the evening to extra Family Time. ****Instead of heading into an “aftermath” following the evening session, you will be released directly to your church’s Family Time space.**** This is where you will have time to debrief and unpack the day with your church, and hopefully have a little fun! We will assign you to a space that is the appropriate size for your group, and you will get that

assignment at registration. The rooms will be marked by a sign with your church's name. Family Time is yours to plan. Many groups use this as a time to debrief and reflect on the day. Use this time to give announcements for the next day, tell students how much you love them, point out times when they were awesome today. If you have a large group, you can break up into smaller groups or stay all together, whatever works best for your group! Some sample questions to ask your campers:

- What was the best and worst part of your day? (You can call this thorns and roses, highs and lows, happies and crappies, etc.)
- Where did you see God today?
- What did you learn about yourself today?
- What did you learn about God today?

Family time is also a great place to have fun and bond as a group. Play your favorite youth group game, lay out a snack table, or do an activity. This year, fire pits will be available to rent on select nights through the GLCC front desk. There is a fee to rent and firewood is included. We recommend packing your own lighter, bug spray, and smores supplies if you plan to take advantage of this opportunity. Our team is also happy to provide a testimony from one of our Work Crew, Planning Team, or band members. Reach out to your Counselor Care Liaison to set up a testimony visit.

As you close your Family Time each evening, make sure to help your students slow down and get ready to turn in for the night. Please set a reasonable curfew (keep in mind quiet hours on campus begin at 10pm...ish). They should have enough time for a quick shower and a little bit of hang out time in their room. They will have a long day tomorrow, and sleep is important!

One recommendation to ensure that campers aren't trying to wander out after lights out is for leaders to put a strip of painters tape connecting the door frame and part of the door of each room after bedtime. Campers cannot open the door without breaking the tape, and they will not be able to put the tape back in place. Let them know that you will check every door's tape early in the morning to be sure they are unbroken.

We really hope you find this extra time to gather as a church in the evenings valuable!

WHO'S WHO?

Work Crew

High school and college students who have paid and committed to serving the campers. They arrive early to set up camp during the weekend before campers arrive, and their roles include designing and constructing the stage decorations, leading group games and teams, setting up and tearing down rec fields, running tournaments and crafts, and keeping pre-meal and pre-session times organized. (We would LOVE to have some of your youth join our Work Crew next year! Applications are open to students 10th grade and up and are usually due in mid-April. Your interested high school and college students should keep an eye on ycmhome.org/work-crew to watch for the application to go live, usually in January.)

Adult Volunteers and Planning Team

Made up of caring adults from across the nation who love The Great Escape and volunteer time throughout the year to create this experience.

Counselors

That's you! Counselors are the adults who come with church groups and spend the most relational time with campers. You are the adults in the lives of campers all year long, ministering to them and discipling to them and showing God's love to them. Our goal at camp is to free you up to spend as much time in relational ministry with your campers as possible, helping develop and strengthen those bonds that you'll sustain throughout the year in your weekly ministry.

Counselor Care Crew Members

A small team of Adult Volunteers dedicated to YOU. Below is their contact information, and note that the person who has been in touch with you so far will continue to be the dedicated liaison for your group during camp. Get in touch with any and every question, comment, or concern!

Our contact info:

Carly Wubbena: (815) 262-8068

Katie Straub: (414) 791-3121

Emma Gleed (262) 365- 8296

Morgan Weber (262) 388-5420

CAMP RULES AND REGULATIONS

While at The Great Escape, students are asked to be respectful of people and property, have a good attitude, and abide by The Great Escape and Green Lake Conference Center regulations.

If a student fails to comply with the rules stated here or respond to the discipline of a counselor, he/she may be sent home at the parent's expense, based on the discretion of the student's group leader. A counselor may be sent home at the discretion of the group leader or Great Escape directors.

Please keep in mind that while we make every effort to keep your campers safe at camp, we do not provide security and we are not present in hotels. The ultimate responsibility for the safety and security of campers will fall to counselors.

Below are the rules that we ask you to help us enforce with your students:

Four Ms to Remember

1. Be at all MEALS and be on time
2. Be at all MEETINGS (sessions and activities)
3. No MESSIN' around
 - No guys in the girls' housing and no girls in the guys' housing
 - NOTE: Violations could lead to expulsion from camp
4. Mind your MANNERS and be respectful of others

Camp Rules

1. Your wristband is your meal ticket. Do not remove it! The conscientious GLCC employees at the dining hall will NOT permit entrance without it.
2. Obey the camp curfew set by your lead counselor (camp directors will step in if the curfew is unreasonable)
3. Damage done to the dorm properties and the meeting rooms are the responsibility of the group and/or person involved
4. Firecrackers/fireworks, alcoholic beverages, tobacco products (including e-cigarettes), drugs, and weapons of any kind are forbidden.
5. No food or dishes allowed outside the dining hall.
6. Do not remove or rearrange your furniture.
7. Do not knock out screens, drop articles from, or lean out of windows.
8. Campers are not allowed off-campus without a counselor. Unless going to the Emergency Department or Urgent Care, there should be no reason to leave campus as everything you need is provided here!

9. Boy campers are not allowed in girls' housing and vice versa. Violation of this rule may lead to expulsion from camp.
10. Rooms must remain locked at all times.
11. Room keys must remain with campers at all times (absolutely do NOT place room keys under doors or anywhere in the vicinity of the rooms). Again, we strongly recommend storing them in the lanyards we provide.
12. In-room telephones may be used in emergencies ONLY!

Sexual Misconduct Policy

We live in a time of increased awareness of human rights. It is in that spirit that certain guidelines have been established in order to assure that everyone's rights are protected, as well as the reputation of Youth Conference Ministries (YCM).

1. At no time will counselors be in compromising positions with kids.
2. There should be absolutely no physical contact that can be interpreted as sexual advances made toward any camper or any conference participant.
3. Adult counselors should not walk at night alone with campers
4. Adult counselors should not involve themselves in in-depth counseling with campers of the opposite sex in secluded areas.
5. The basic emphasis of these guidelines is to state clearly that there should be no inappropriate sexual conduct between counselor and campers, counselors and counselors, and campers and campers.
6. When adult counselors are notified of inappropriate conduct by anyone, they must immediately report it to The Great Escape directors. Since the person in question may be a minor, state laws will be followed.

TO DO LIST REMINDERS

Head counselors, please:

- Get in touch with your counselor care liaison if you have any needs or questions about literally anything. Please let us know especially about any housing special needs as soon as you can!
- Start meeting with and training your counselor team now.
- Plan for nightly Family Time (reflection questions, buy some junk food, pack some games, etc.). **Please note we will not have Aftermaths this year and instead will release you to Family Time directly following Evening Session. You will have more Family Time than in years past.
- Plan for Saturday morning breakfast on your way home (not provided).
- Designate a first aid person, pack a first aid kit, and make a plan for caring for the medical needs of your campers.
- Collect one can of shaving cream from each camper. Optional: Bring them in a big plastic tote clearly labeled with your church name, and we will return that tote to you, filled with your campers' tie-dyed shirts!
- Divide your group into small groups, and make sure each counselor knows which campers are in their group.
- Have any counselors or parents of students with food allergies fill out the form in the link below to connect with GLCC kitchen directly.
 - [GLCC Medical Dietary Request Form](#)
- Ensure all payments are completed through YCM registration site. Contact YCM directly with any payment questions.
- Continue to have parents and counselors fill out all forms online. If you need to know which campers have and have not filled out forms, please email office@ycmhome.org to check
 - [YCM Media Consent Form 2026](#)
 - [YCM Medical Release Form 2026](#)
 - [YCM Sexual Misconduct Policy 2026](#)
- Continue to update any additions/subtractions to your group numbers as well as your boy/girl and camper/counselor breakdowns to the YCM registration site.

CAMPER PAGES

Daily schedule

Monday

3:00 PM	Arrival and Registration
4:30 PM	Official Welcome and Kick Off
6:00 PM	Dinner
7:00 PM	Free time
8:00 PM	Evening Session
9:45 PM	Family Time

Tuesday – Friday

7:30 AM	“On the Point”
8:00 AM	Breakfast
9:00 AM	Quiet Time
9:45 AM	Recreation
12:00 PM	Lunch
1:15 PM	Afternoon Session
2:30 PM	Small Groups
3:30 PM	Tournaments/Crafts/Afternoon Adventures/Free Time
5:30 PM	Dinner
6:30 PM	Free Time/Counselor Meeting
7:30 PM	Evening Session
9:15 PM	Family Time

Camper Packing List

Bring:

- Bible, pen, journal
- Modest clothing that can get dirty
 - Pack for extreme temps. Wisconsin can be really hot and chilly on the same day!
 - Make sure clothes for Morning Rec can get dirty/possibly stained
- Bathing Suits
 - If you typically wear a 2 piece bathing suit, wear a t-shirt over it or a 1 piece
 - If you typically wear no shirt, wear a t-shirt
- Hat, sun block, sunglasses, water bottle, bug spray
- Tennis shoes that you can run in, but that you don't mind maybe getting dirty (bring at least one pair of closed-toe shoes!)
- If desired: Sturdy sandals like Tevas or Chacos (leave the rubber flip flops at home or use as shower shoes, but not recommended for outdoors)
- Laundry bag and a couple of trash bags for dirty clothes
- Jacket or raincoat
- Hand sanitizer
- Cowboy western costumes
- Flashlight
- Old beach towel okay with getting dirty/stained
- Spending money (t-shirts for tie dye, banana boat, snacks, etc.)
- At least one can of shaving cream—no gel or menthol (cans should be given to a leader before the ride to camp!)

Do NOT bring:

- Any form of mind-altering substances
- Tobacco products
- Weapons of any kind
- Firecrackers/fireworks
- Electronic devices
- Laser pointers
- Skateboards, bicycles, scooters, or rollerblades
- Bedding, including sleeping bags (all bedding is provided)