



Parent Handbook

At the Camp MoVal in Union, MO
July 27–August 1, 2025

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****This Handbook is a working document, which is always being updated to reflect updated information. If you see something that needs to be added or edited, please contact Rev. Erin Pickersgill at epickersgill@diocesemo.org.**

About Camp Firebird 2025

Camp Firebird is the official summer camp of The Episcopal Diocese of Missouri. We welcome all students between the ages of 8 and 18 to attend — you do not have to be a member of an Episcopal Church to have a great time with us!

Our next camp experience will take place July 27 – August 1, 2025. For detailed information on pricing, registration, and counselor information, please visit our [website](#)!

Our camp takes place a few miles southwest of Union, MO at Camp MoVal featuring more than 150 acres of beautiful forests, native prairie, natural streams, and a lake. It's a beautiful site for youth to experience the outdoors and take part in transformative programs, including hiking, swimming, ropes courses, campfires, and daily worship. All our programs are designed to bring campers into contact with God and into closer community with each other.

[The Rev. Erin Pickersgill](#), Ministry Developer for Children and Youth in the Diocese of Missouri, oversees Camp Firebird. Camp counselors are required to participate in training, agree to background checks, and must participate in our [Safe Church, Safe Communities](#) training program.

Camping has a long history in the Episcopal Diocese of Missouri, stretching back more than a century. Along the way, church camp has taken on many different expressions, and we are excited to introduce you and your family to the most recent iteration of camp in this Diocese – Camp Firebird! Camp Firebird was named by campers during camp in 2024, the last year that it was called Camp Phoenix. We continue the work of past generations of caring individuals who made camp possible for the youth of our Diocese. We also recognize and are grateful for the flexibility needed to create a camp for this generation.

Camp Firebird Glossary

Below are some key terms and information that we hope you will find helpful as you plan for Camp Firebird this summer!

Camper Rules / Covenant - You are responsible for reviewing the Camper Covenant (coming soon!) with your camper(s). You and your camper(s) are required to sign the document agreeing they understand the norms & behavior expected while at camp.

Contacting Camp - If you have questions prior to camp or need to contact someone during Camp Firebird in case of an emergency, our Camp Director is the Rev. Erin Pickersgill. Please call 314-750-7486 or email epickersgill@diocesemo.org.

Drop-off and Pick-up- We encourage all families to comply with the identified times for arrival and departure to prevent disruption during the process. Prior to camp opening, approval from the camp director is required if a camper is unable to meet the scheduled time(s).

- DROP-OFF/CHECK-IN
 - Sunday, July 27, 2025, 3–4 p.m.
 - Camp MoVal: 2659 Camp Mo-Val Rd, Union, MO 63084
- PICK-UP/CHECK-OUT:
 - Friday, August 1, 2025 11–11:30 am
 - Please arrive at Camp MoVal on Friday morning no later than 11:30 am to pick up your camper(s). Follow directions from Camp Firebird staff. If you are unable to pick up your camper(s) on Friday during the designated times, please notify the Camp Firebird Director by Wednesday, July 30, 2025.
- NOTE: PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN NOT AVAILABLE
 - If you are not able to drop-off or pick-up their camper(s), you must notify the Camp Firebird Director prior to the start of camp with the name of the individual(s) who will be taking your place.

Mail- This is a short camp week, so we suggest you bring some already written mail for your camper and it will be distributed throughout the week. You may send one package per session, and we recommend you bring this during check-in. Please do not send food in your care packages, as we must accommodate various allergies during camp. If food is sent, it will be confiscated and returned to the camper on the final day of camp. We hope you understand the importance of dietary restrictions and help keep Camp Firebird a space for all campers.

- RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CORRESPONDENCE
 - Do not write anything that may cause them to worry or stress such as, "I am so sad you are gone" or "I just miss you so much and worry about you."
 - Take a moment to teach your child how to address an envelope or postcard properly. For young campers it is recommended to pre-address and stamp stationery.
 - Post cards work best as envelopes tend to seal due to the humidity

- Good examples of care items are: puzzles, small trinkets/toys, books, etc.

Medical - You are responsible for your camper's health at the time of check-in. It is important that you check the overall health of your child before dropping them off at camp (fever, lice, diarrhea, cold, etc). A camper that is not feeling well will not be allowed to attend camp. There will be a registered nurse on site for the entirety of camp.

- FORMS

- All medical forms are accessible through [online registration](#).
- These are to be completed before registration & reviewed and updated at registration. All medical records will be on file with the nurse.

- PACKING MEDICATIONS

- Do not pack medications in the camper's suitcase. Medications, including daily over-the-counter medications, should be kept in their original containers and placed inside a plastic zip lock bag with the campers name on the outside of the bag.
- We ask that you also do not pack as-needed over-the-counter medications such as Tylenol. The nurse will have these medications on hand. Over-the-counter medications should only be packed if they are taken daily by your camper.
- All medications will be collected by the nurse during registration. The nurse is the only authorized person to dispense the medications. EpiPens, inhalers, and diabetes medication will be carried by the campers at all times.

- VACCINATIONS

- All campers must be up-to-date on their vaccinations, which you will note on the online registration form.
- We will only honor medical exemptions for vaccinations.

Photography - All campers will have the option to opt in or out of pictures with our Camp Firebird Photo Release which will be available online in the Camper Application Form. Camp Firebird reserves the right to use photographs and/or video of campers taken while at Camp Firebird in publications, news releases, online, and in other communications related to the mission of the camp and the Diocese of Missouri.

Refund Policy - All registrations require a \$50 nonrefundable deposit. All Camp fees should be paid by June 30, 2025. Partial refunds of 50% will be given for cancellations of more than 30

days out, no refunds will be given for cancellations within 30 days of the session start date. Scholarships and fees paid by churches are the exception to this rule and will be applied as they are received.

Safe Church, Safe Communities - All Camp Firebird counselors and staff will have completed the Diocesan requirements for the Safe Church, Safe Communities training program and will have had a background check done by the Diocese. If you have any questions regarding the nature of this training, please visit our [Diocesan Website](#).

Swimming- Camp MoVal has a pool and lake, and swimming opportunities will be available for all campers. The camp pool is staffed by American Red Cross certified lifeguards anytime campers are present. Please note, camp is a place full of active movement : make sure your camper's swimsuit is comfortable and that they can move around freely!

Tech Policy - Camp Firebird is an "unplugged" space. Please help us to create an environment where new friendships can blossom, and each camper has a unique and special outdoor experience. Do not bring portable music players, video games, computers, iPads, tablets, electronics, electronic smart watches (such as Garmin or Apple Watches), or cell phones to camp. If any of the items listed are discovered, the camp staff will collect the items and return them at the end of the session.

Visitation and Communication- At Camp Firebird, campers enjoy the outdoors and develop a greater appreciation for the environment. They also experience the companionship of peers as they acquire skills that improve self-confidence, increase self-reliance, and enhance the ability to cooperate with others. Being away from your child can be hard, and they are sure to miss you. However, visiting can cause many disruptions in their acclimation into the camp environment.

- Camp Firebird does not allow campers to receive calls or make calls to anyone off property.
- We do not allow any outside visitors to visit campers during the camp session. Campers may not come and go throughout the session. If a camper must leave camp for any reason, this must be arranged with the director prior to check-in.

Waitlist- Camper spots are available on a first come, first served basis. This number of spots will be based on Camper-Counselor ratios set out by [Safe Church, Safe Communities](#). A Camp

Firebird staff member will notify you if your camper has been added to the waitlist, and all families will be notified of availability by the *June 30th, 2025.

Packing List

- Small backpack
- Fitted sheet, sleeping bag/blanket, and a pillow
- Towels (2, one for bathing, one for water activities)
- Toiletries (soap, shampoo, comb/brush, toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant, etc.)
- Closed-toed shoes (Tennis shoes are required for many activities - "Crocs" are not allowed for these activities)
- Water shoes, crocs, or flip flops - (There will be a "creek walking" activity. For this we would recommend having waterproof non-slip footwear - or a pair of old tennis shoes!)
- Enough clothes for the week (at least 5 tops and 5 bottoms. It is a good idea to pack an extra set of "going home clothes" in a labeled ziplock bag to ensure they are clean for the ride home!)
 - 7 short sleeve shirts and / or tank tops
 - 1-2 Long sleeve shirt or jacket
 - 1-2 Pair of pants
 - 1-2 Bathing suits (swimsuits that are comfortable and are good for lots of movement and activity)
 - 1 Rain jacket or poncho
- 1 flashlight
- 1 sun protection lotion/spray
- 1 insect repellent
- 2 reusable water bottles with camper name written on them
- 1 hat
- 1 book
- small games such as UNO or a deck of cards
- addressed postcards and stamps, journal and pen
- **trunk, bin, or duffel**
 - It is suggested that your camper brings all their items in a trunk or bin where clothing is better protected and organized. Ideal dimensions for your trunk/bin: 32"L x 18"W x 14"H. Duffel bags are just as functional, but harder to keep organized.

Do Not Pack List

- Electronics/Electronic devices
 - Such as but not limited to: cell phones, smart watches, portable music players, computers, video games, devices that connect to the internet
- Food
 - We will supply all meals and have a variety of snacks available free of additional cost. Many of our campers have **severe and life-threatening allergies** to many different food items. We want to do everything we can to ensure a safe and healthy experience for all of our campers.
- Pets
- Firearms
- Clothing or other items referencing firearms, drugs, profanity, or nudity
- Fireworks
- Knives
- Reading material referencing firearms, drugs, profanity, or nudity
- Tobacco products
- Alcohol
- Illegal drugs
 - All prescription and OTC medications must be turned into the nurse at the beginning of camp.
- Jewelry or valuables
 - Camp Firebird will not be responsible for damaged or stolen jewelry and other valuables.
- Sports equipment
 - Camp will provide all sports and safety equipment; campers should leave theirs at home.

A Day at Camp

Here is an example of what a day at Camp Firebird might look like, so you can start to imagine it.

- **Breakfast**
- **Morning Worship**
- **Formation Time**
- **AM Activity (High Ropes Course, Waterfront Activities, Nature + Creek Walks, Target Sports)**
- **Lunch**
- **Siesta**
- **PM Activity (1) (Swimming or Arts + Crafts)**
- **Snack + Free Time**
- **PM Activity (2) (Swimming or Arts + Crafts)**
- **Cabin Time**
- **Dinner**
- **Whole Camp Activity**
- **Bonfire**