The Use of Social Media at Camp

If you are a parent of campers, like me, it is not enough to wait until the end of the week to hear about your child's adventures at summer camp … and how often do we get to see pictures??

We live in the digital age, an instant news age, and the age of Social Media.

Can we utilize Social Media at camp? Let's take a look…

- Facebook &/or Instagram seem the most popular Social Media choices. A simple photo-blog page is another option (like free Blogger.com)

- Updating & maintaining a Social Media site is time consuming

- Commit to posting every day, or don't do it

- Set up your Social Media page/s prior to camp

- Name your page by site/event, like 2016-CP2

- You may not be able to get your own personal URL on a new page (like facebook.com/2016CP2) so when you have your site set up, make a tinyurl (like tinyurl.com/2016CP2)

- FB Banner picture could be camp name or theme "Fun, Faith & Friends"

- FB Profile picture could be event site# 2016 CP2

- Page permissions:
  - At least 2-3 admins
  - If you can, I suggest removing ability to comment, but keep tag/share feature
- You can pre-schedule posts on community/non-profit pages on FB, and on blogs, so do as much as you can prior to your arrival at camp
- Post each day's schedule, events, theme, Bible verse, menu?!, and of course photo highlights!!
- Post only the BEST of the BEST PHOTOS – all smiles, fun & engaged!
- Open page/group versus closed/private group? We have permission to use photos/video for promoting camp (including Social Media), so a public page is OK and is viewable by non-members. A closed/private group (like FB) requires participants/viewers to have an account for that Social Media site.
- Set up a Google Docs folder (not Google Pics album) for your full-resolution, best camp pictures and invite camp staff and campers to add their best pictures to it. It will be easy to send your camp photos to the Camping Office too!
- Photo permissions are covered in camper registration, but be aware that some parents do not give consent for photos of their kids to be published. You/camp photographer need to know who those kids are! They can appear in at-camp-only presentations, but not beyond that. Or think of creative ways to include them, like an over-the-shoulder shot that doesn't show their face.

- Try and post a photo of every camper throughout the event (they can be part of a group photo, or individual, but identifiable.) That means you need to keep track! Don't over-publish one or two campers.
- Do not name campers, nor allow their nametags to show in photos. You may need to edit pictures prior to posting
- Communicate the purpose and web addresses of your Social Media pages to parents via pre-camp letter and at registration – hand out business card/paper with web address printed on it.
- These pages are not a way for parents to communicate with staff or campers!
- Don't let the kids see you working on it … remember they had to leave their electronic toys at home
- This project should *not* be an interest group for your campers!! Camp leaders only!
- Campers are your top priority. If you think this will be too much extra work that will eat into your time with campers and/or sleep, then don't do it.
- Did I mention this will be time consuming?!

Questions or comments??

Contact Sandii Peiffer, SUSUMC Communications Associate,

at speiffer@susumc.org or call 800-874-8474 x3612.