



Summer 2018 Parent Manual

The countdown to summer 2018 has begun!

Welcome to the URJ Camp Newman community! For friendships, adventure and the joy of Judaism, there is no better place than Camp Newman! At camp, your child will get to choose from many enriching activities, have an unforgettable Shabbat experience and make Jewish friends that could very well last a lifetime. Since 1947, the URJ Camp Newman community has impacted the lives of over 100,000 children, teens, and adults. Year after year, our campers return to renew the strong bonds of friendship they build here. We can't wait to provide your child with a meaningful and memorable experience at camp this summer!

For our F.A.Q.s and First-Time Parent & Camper Guide, please visit
CampNewman.org/summer-camp/first-time-guide

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Summer Camp Office: 200 Maritime Academy Drive, Vallejo, CA 94590

Year-Round Office: 711 Grand Avenue, Suite 280, San Rafael, CA 94901



CREATING A PARTNERSHIP

Dear Camper Families,

We're counting the days until our 2018 summer season at URJ Camp Newman begins! We're excitedly making final preparations to welcome your children into our enriching Jewish community. As we do so, we ask our staff to carry this thought with them, 24 hours a day: ***Imagine that every child's parents are watching over your shoulder as you care for, nurture, and inspire their most precious gift in life.***

The most important covenant we possess at camp is with you, the parents. ***This manual is designed to help you foster a partnership with our Camp so that together, we can create a healthy, secure, successful, and enjoyable experience for your child.***

Preparing for Camp

Prepare for camp in partnership with your children. Pack together. Discuss anxieties together. Chat about expectations and hopes. Watch the [Camp Video](#) again. The more your child knows what to expect, the better they'll adjust to camp life. Express how proud you are of your child embarking on their camp journey. *Just don't tell your child that they can "come home" or "call home" if they're having a hard time – this will only make it more difficult for them to adjust.* Instead, reassure them that they'll be surrounded by amazing counselors and camper care professionals who they can call on for support – any time they need it.

Coping with Homesickness at Camp

The only "cure" for homesickness is time, coupled with our counselors' support. Our counselors are there to comfort your child; they're sensitive, well-trained and, in most cases, were former campers themselves and can draw on their experiences. They also know where to turn for help. Each session, we have Rabbis, cantors, Jewish educators, counselors and mental health professionals (our Nefesh team), as well as senior staff who are readily available to help guide campers to success. When campers have challenging situations (like homesickness and social issues), we also help them foster their own independence by encouraging them to reach out to the resources at hand: their counselors, their fellow campers, and our camper care professionals.

When Your Child Is at Camp

Feel free to call camp any time to speak with your child's *rosh eidah* (unit head), to check on your child, hear what activities they're in, and voice any concerns. We also recommend sending your child many positive letters ("we are so proud of you" and "can't wait to hear about camp!"), instead of "we miss you terribly" or "here's what you're missing at home". Have letters waiting for them when they arrive. If they're not letter writers themselves, send them easy to fill out ("your favorite activity at camp is:___," "your new friend's name is:___", etc) self-addressed stamped letters to send you a report. ***And don't forget, it often takes a couple of days for younger campers to adjust to camp life; in our experience, a homesick kid on day two is often a lifetime camper by day three!***

L'shalom,
The Camp Newman Family

A LETTER FROM OUR DIRECTOR

Dear Camper Families,

When we ask our campers and staff why they love Camp, one of the prevailing sentiments is that **“camp is home.”** It is a home they create with their peer community, their first *chavura*. They return summer after summer – and all through the year – because they are “coming home again.” The idea of home transcends the physical space. The idea of home is how it makes one feel inside: warmth, love, *ruach* (spirit), joy, unconditional acceptance, embracing of each individual for whom they are, and being able to be themselves.

This is what has always stood out to me about this Camp community. We truly have the opportunity to create our home by living our values through a philosophy of CARE:

C – Community. We create a holy community, a *kehilla kedosha*, through...

A – Acceptance. We accept each person for who they are, living the value of *v’ahavta l’reyacha kamocho*, loving your neighbor as yourself.

R – Role Modeling. Staff and campers alike role model for each other what it means to live these values, and we encourage each person to “Make for yourself a teacher, and find yourself a friend.” (*Pirkei Avot*)

E – Each and Every One. We care about each and every person in our community, and strive to get to know the uniqueness in each one of our campers. We recognize that each person is made *betzelem Elohim*, in the image of God.

Sharing Stories

Imagine sitting in the middle of camp and just listening. The sounds of laughter, music and singing abound. If you listen more carefully, especially during informal moments – at meals, in the cabin, bedtime, walking to and fro, and friends sitting under a tree – one can hear myriad stories. Children open up at camp and tell their stories. All kinds of stories are created and passed along – about growth, conflict, joy, redemption, happiness, sadness, dreams, successes, shortcomings, yearnings, and aspirations. So much of camp’s richness comes from children being able to tell, listen, and embrace their stories and their friends’ stories.

Sharing Tradition

At Camp, the notion of *L’dor V’dor*, from generation to generation, is ubiquitous. Young children grow up at camp and pass along traditions to younger campers. Eventually, they become staff and have the opportunity to lead the next generation. Many return as faculty, with their own families, perpetuating the chain.



Talmud teaches that “by the breath of children God sustains the world.” Camp allows for the child in each of us to blossom, grow, and flourish. Our campers share magical moments, the joy of being Jewish, and the comfort of being in a loving, accepting community. Thank you for sharing your family with us. We cannot wait for this amazing summer with you!

Rabbi Erin Mason
Camp Director, URJ Camp Newman