



Dear Parents:

We're so glad you've signed up your child for an exciting week at True North. You'll notice that things at True North are...well, a little different from what you might be used to. Elementary kids will be in mixed-age groups with other children who have finished kindergarten through grade 5. These small groups, called Crews, are led by adults or teenagers who love children and love the Lord. Crews are an important part of our program! Here's why.

Kids develop new friendships. While it's true that your child might not get to be with his or her very best friend, your child *will* have wonderful opportunities to make new friends and interact with a new group of children. Most of us assume that age-graded classes are the best way to go, simply because that has been our only experience. However, studies show that children learn as much—or more—when they're linked with kids of different ages. And studies indicate that children often choose to play with children of other ages. Encourage your child to try something different—he or she might be surprised!

Older kids shine! Parents are continually surprised that after a few days, their older children *love* this newfound role! Suddenly, they're the “cool” big kids with younger children looking up to them. And while your child is helping younger kids with simple tasks like reading and writing, he or she is having the chance to serve and demonstrate Christ's love! It's a meaningful way to discover—and practice—the joy of service.

Younger kids are cared for. True North is carefully designed for multi-age groups of children. That means games are team-building activities (brilliantly disguised as wildly fun games) in which your child's abilities will shine. It's likely that your younger child will be loved, affirmed, and doted upon by his or her older Crew mates.

Scripture lessons are more memorable. Since True North doesn't rely on more traditional teaching methods (like fill-in-the-blank puzzles or word searches), kids *experience* Gospel stories in powerful, life-changing ways. And that's something kids of *all* ages will enjoy...and remember. Then Crew Leaders gather with kids for small-group discussions including questions that apply to every child but may touch each child at a different level.

Millions of children have experienced success with this multi-age “family” approach at OSV's VBS. However, the most important factor in making this program a success is your attitude. If your child has doubts, reassure him or her that this is a wonderful opportunity to try something new. Your support will speak volumes to the children we're serving.

True North Director

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