

Welcome to *Tending the Garden of Our Heart's* Vacation Church Camp! This year's theme is *Rooted in Prayer*, and we'll explore a different aspect of prayer every day, for each of five days.

Each day we offer multiple craft and snack suggestions. We have included a variety in order to give you options. Only you know what your children will enjoy and what is feasible for your family. Look over each day's PDF packet in advance, and choose which crafts and snacks work best for your family, so that you can plan accordingly. Each packet opens with a list of the various materials and ingredients you'll want to gather for that camp day. We recommend that you stock up on the materials you'll need before camp begins.

Contents of the Camp Kit:

For every day, you will find a PDF packet to print. This includes multiple ideas for activities, crafts and games, as well as recipes for a fitting daily snack. We have included a variety of ideas in order to give you options, but there is no need to do all of these! Select those crafts, activities and recipes that your children will enjoy and which are feasible for your family. Choose ahead of time which crafts and snacks work best for your family, so that you can plan accordingly.

In addition, you'll find 5 videos which you can watch on Vimeo or download:

- Opening Prayer
- Lesson
- Today's Saint
- Music Class with CeCe
- Closing Prayer

For each day, you'll want to print the day's PDF and make sure you can access all five of the day's videos.

Note that the day's PDF finishes with several printables. If you have more than one child, you'll want to print more than one copy of these final pages.

Every day there is a 3-minute "Stillness Challenge" during the daily lesson video. If you would like to continue doing Stillness Challenges after camp is over, we have also



included a short video that is just the Stillness Challenge itself. You'll find it here in the Introduction section.

How to Run Vacation Church Camp:

Rooted in Prayer is designed so that each family can do the camp at home, on their own timeframe, or a group of families can do it simultaneously on Zoom.

The intended order is as follows:

1. Opening Prayer Video
2. Lesson Video
3. Activities (including both craft projects and printables, as desired) from the PDF
4. Cooking Together & Snack Time (recipes in the PDF)
5. Saint of the Day Video
6. Music Class Video
7. Game (in the PDF)
8. Closing Prayer

The camp would follow the same order on Zoom, but the videos would be watched together over “shared screen” over Zoom. Before camp begins, you'll want to email around this PDF and the PDFs for each day of camp, so that parents can assemble the materials needed and prepare. (Parents are in charge of parts 3 and 4, even when the whole group is doing camp together on Zoom.)

Attention spans on Zoom are limited, so the basic structure is divided into two parts:

- a first meeting on Zoom with more information-based, thought-provoking content (prayer, lesson, chat) followed by a substantial break away from Zoom to let the kids run around, do hands on activities, eat, etc. with their parents.
- Later, the group assembles again on Zoom for lighter, more active content (a shorter more story-like lesson and an active music class with dancing and hand motions, etc., and a game.) .

You might decide to do these two portions in the morning and afternoon (setting up two Zoom times at 9am and 1pm, perhaps), or you could do a more traditional 9-12 VCC structure.



Here is a sample schedule of how you might run the VCC on Zoom or a similar platform:

9:00 -- Zoom meeting opens; everyone comes online and greets each other.

9:15 -- Opening prayer (live on Zoom shared screen)

Lesson video watched together, via shared screen.

9:40 -- Leader (priest or camp director) uses our Discussion Prompts to lead a conversation on Zoom about today's lesson. (This includes an ice breaker question everyone should answer, as well as questions on the lesson itself, and discussion questions to encourage deeper thought on the subject.)

10:00 -- Parents use PDFs to run activities, cooking class snack time, and printables with their children. This portion is self-paced and Zoom can be open or closed, depending on your preference.

11:00 -- The group assembles for a second time on Zoom.

11:05 -- Watch video on today's Saint and music class video together, via shared screen on Zoom

11:30 -- Play Zoom-based game together

11:55 -- Closing prayer, finished by noon

Music Classes:

We are delighted to present Cece Yentzen's original music for Orthodox children. As you and your children watch the music videos, you'll be learning some old standbys as well as CeCe's original compositions. CeCe is a wonderful singer and songwriter from Austin, Texas, and the songs featured in our vacation church camp are available for download on her website:

ceceyentzen.com/rootedinprayer

We encourage you to purchase these songs, so that your family can continue to enjoy them long after VCC has ended.

We also recommend that you "follow" her on the website, as there is more to come in the future (and we've heard it, and it's good.)



Companion Book:

Every family should have a children's prayer book, so that as they grow, children have access to a prayer book. We love Ancient Faith Publishing's *A Child's Guide to Prayer*, which is a beautifully illustrated and clearly translated children's prayer book with simple, friendly supplemental information.

Most of the prayers used during camp are printed in the book:

- Camp's Opening Prayers are found on pp. 15-18
- The prayer opening the Stillness Challenge is by St. Dimitri of Rostov, p. 68
- Parts of the Closing Prayers are found on p.29

Other portions of the book support the lessons we're learning at camp.

- Day One: "What is Prayer?" on pp. 9-11
- Day Two: "Prayers for Family & Friends" on pp. 51-61
and "Prayers to the Saints" on pp. 74-77
- Day Three: "The Lord's Prayer" on p. 17
- Day Four: "Psalms to Pray" on pp. 78-95
- Day Five: "Ways to Pray" on pp. 106-113

The camp does not require the prayer book, but we do recommend that families have children's prayer books on hand (or at the least, prayer books that are intelligible to children).

