

CATHOLIC YOUTH SUMMER CAMP TESTIMONIES

“Camp was an awesome experience! You meet so many great people there who are living a genuine catholic life! You not only have a great time doing all the activities, you get to encounter God and grow in your faith with people your own age. The camp staff is an amazing example of how you should live your life, as well. I can't wait to go back next year!”

- **Anonymous, 8th grade** -

“CYSC is really such a great place, and what happens there isn't supposed to stay there, it's supposed to be shared with everyone else that isn't familiar with the camp, which is why I'm writing this. But, being honest, so much happens there that each camper could write an entire book about their own experience. I guess that means I just have to keep it to the most important things, which is hard because everything that happened there is important to me. So even though I might write a lot, it won't be anywhere near the whole story.

I don't quite remember everything that happened at camp, but I certainly remember the energy that was there. The energy that everybody had there was amazing, and it might have been one of my favorite parts. Everybody could see it and feel it, and it was everywhere, in the campers, the counselors, the staff, just about everyone you can think of. One of the speakers on the first day summed it up pretty perfectly. They described it as being “All in for Christ.” Everybody's focus and energy was devoted to Him, nobody was afraid of anything when they decided to give their whole selves to Jesus, and I know that's a fact. The reason it is this way is because God loves us so much, and he shows it in many ways. Once we feel his love moving and come to recognize it as what it is, we can't help but love him back. When you love someone, you're willing to do anything for them.

That's why being all in for Jesus is amazing, because everything that you do is for him, and that makes everything worth the time and effort and sacrifices that it takes. When you are all in for Christ, you don't care about embarrassing yourself or giving things up for him, and that's because you realize that Jesus is so much better than all of those things. When you are all in for Christ, you don't care if others hurt you, physically or emotionally, and that's because you realize that Jesus is still there for you and will always love you. When you're all in for Christ, you realize that there is nothing else that you would rather have than Him by your side through all the highs and lows of life, and you also realize that he is the only thing that can possibly satisfy you and truly make you happy.

All things fade away, but the love of Christ does not. This is why CYSC is so amazing, because people are willing to give Jesus a chance to love them in a way that they never would have let Him before. This is why being all in for Christ is so amazing.

Like I said before, that is only a snippet of what I experienced at camp. There is so much more I want to write about, the encounters I've had, the miracles I've seen, the things that I've learned, but I've come to realize that when you listen to God and let the Holy Spirit guide you, you tend to end up in the right place. Even when I mess up and don't hear Him, I remember that it is something that needs to be practiced before it can be perfected. I tried my best to let Jesus guide my words while writing this, and I am confident that what I've written is what He wanted me to write about. And if that's what He wants, then that's what I want too.”

- **Anonymous, 10th grade** -

“This summer I went to CYSC and it was truly life changing. I walked into camp nervous, far from God, and not as happy as I wished I was. I walked out of camp closer to God than what I ever thought was possible, sad to leave, and extremely happy. CYSC taught me not only how to grow closer to God, but also how to hear God speak to you. While at camp, many amazing things took place. I had a headache and my counselor prayed over me and asked God to take the pain away. As crazy as it may sound, the pain was gone. I also learned that God will work through people to help someone else. When we were praying over each other and it was one girl's turn, I had a picture of a Christmas tree come to my head. I told her about it and she knew exactly what it meant. As I was telling her, we were hugging, crying, and best of all, growing closer to God through each other's words. If you are debating whether or not to go to CYSC, I would 100% recommend doing it!”

- **Anonymous, 9th grade** -

“I had a lot of fun at CYSC this summer. You do a lot of fun stuff, such as paintball, swimming, arts and crafts, and a lot more! Before CYSC, I didn't have the strongest bond with God, but now I love to talk to Him and learn more about Him. It was such a good experience!”

- **Anonymous, 7th grade** -

“While Keira was talking about and getting ready for her week at CYSC in June, I was bummed that I was going to miss out on all the fun things she was going to do. Luckily, there were still openings the final week of camp, and my sister and I signed up. I really didn't want to miss the first week of soccer practice, but I wanted to go to this camp even more...and I'm so glad that I did! Claire and I were in the Our Lady of Fatima cabin with 33 girls who quickly became our family! We laughed together, prayed together, and conquered our fears together. I spoke to God many times throughout the week, but especially while I was on the giant swings, climbing the 5-story rock wall, and playing paintball! Everyone was looking forward to playing paintball, but when the day came, I was scared that getting hit would hurt, so I sat out the first round. While I sat there, I closed my eyes and I heard God say “*do not be afraid.*” So, I listened to Him and played the second round and had a blast, even though I got hit 3 times! While I enjoyed all the high adventure activities throughout the day, my favorite was attending the high energy Masses and adoration. It was then that I felt God's presence and felt very close to Him. CYSC was an AWESOME experience that helped me strengthen my relationship with God, make new friends, and gave me hope for the future! I highly recommend CYSC!”

- **Anonymous, 7th grade** -

“My week at CYSC was AMAZING!! I must admit, I was really nervous prior to going, but from the minute I arrived at my cabin and met my group & Liz (our leader), I was too busy to be nervous or homesick! Girls who were complete strangers on Sunday, felt like family members on Friday! The high adventure activities (high ropes, paintball, giant swing, zip line) helped me conquer some of my fears and truly know and feel that God is always with me. The days were filled with so many fun activities, but my two favorite things were the Saint Walk and Adoration at the lake. At Adoration, you could feel HIS presence and know that He loved all 700+ campers and staff members. The energy level at camp was extreme and contagious! I cannot wait to go back to camp next year, and I strongly encourage anyone considering it to GO...you won't regret it!”

- **Anonymous, 7th grade** -

“By the last day of camp, I really did not want to leave. On the first day, it was easily in my top five most uncomfortable things that I have experienced. What made my opinion change within a week? The fact that I was surrounded by wonderful people, the Holy Spirit, and God’s love the entire time. This was my first year going to CYSC, and the memories that I had made will definitely last a lifetime. Doing all of the activities every day and going into the lake were major highlights to an amazing week. The music during each mass was lively and energetic. This made everyone want to participate which then helped us understand what actually takes place during the mass. Adoration and having confession were also very much needed during that week. Going to each activity throughout the day was also a lot of fun. The high ropes, paintball, archery, and the rock wall were my favorite, but ziplining over the lake and the big swing were great too. Staying in a cabin with people who I have never met before was definitely weird at first, but now they are some of my closest friends. If you plan on going to summer camp in the future you need to at least participate in the mass and put some of yourself forward to get a good outcome. That week will never be forgotten. #KazooKrew4Life”

- **Anonymous, 9th grade** -

“My experience at CYSC was really amazing. We did a lot of fun activities, but we also learned more about God during camp. We did this thing called a Saint Walk, that is when you walk around camp and people act like Saints and tell their story of how they experienced God in their life and what made them become who they are. We went to Mass every day, and we started Adoration on Wednesday and had it every day after that. We got little medallion Mary necklaces on the first day of Adoration. That necklace is very special to me, and I wear it every day.

We also did a lot of fun and cool activities. Some of the activities were VPP (Vertical Play Pen), High Ropes, Ziplining, The Giant Swing, archery tag, and swimming in the lake. VPP is a course quite like High Ropes. It is an obstacle course but it goes straight up and down. High Ropes is an obstacle course high in the air, and you start on one side and try to get across to the other side. The Giant Swing is an actual giant swing that is really high in the air, and they strap you in and bring you to the top, then you have to pull a little string to drop you and your partner. It was scary at first but then it was really fun.

I really enjoyed every second of camp. My counselor, Kelsey, was the most fun and amazing person God could have given us, and the girls in my group were pretty amazing too. They were really nice and I hope to see them next time. We all had a great time and I cannot wait to go back next year.”

- **Anonymous, 7th grade** -

“CYSC was the best experience of my life. I thought before I was a pretty active Catholic going to mass every weekend, praying before I eat, actions like that. One night at camp we watched a drama about the crucifixion. There was this guy who had sinned so much that the devil was torturing him. The sinner screamed, "I'm sorry!" to Jesus. Jesus came and pushed the sinner away and let the devil torture Him instead. The drama made me realize that Jesus loves us so much that He would take our place in our suffering. He literally died for our sins and took the greatest torture imaginable for us even though He is perfect. It's because He loves us so much. I realized that if Jesus loved us so much that He would die for us, I have to love Jesus and all of His sons and daughters of Christ with that much love too, through all of my actions and my words.”

- **Anonymous, 10th grade** -