

There is no doubt that today’s teenagers face more challenges than probably any generation before them.

They are influenced by the internet, television, the media, their peers, so many sources of negativity. So then how do parents best combat these negative influences? Where can they go for good direction and guidance? Who will come alongside them and encourage them to rise above, to stand out, to be more than the low standard the world convinces them is acceptable?

They can find this encouragement at Camp Freedom, which according to its facebook page, “. . . is a summer camp for youth ages 10-18 desiring a closer walk with Jesus. The camp will be from July 2-6 at Lincoln State Park (34 miles east of Evansville) with lots of fun, food, fellowship, swimming, hiking, music, and WORSHIP!”

Camp Freedom is the response of a group from Pfrimmer’s Chapel to the tremendous difficulties that kids do face today.

Years of research conducted by the Pfrimmer’s Chapel UMC youth ministry staff has shown that kids 12 years ago started falling away from church and their pursuit of God at the age of 14 but in today’s world, that age has become a mere 10 years old, hence the age group invited to Camp Freedom.

Camp Freedom is designed to let kids know that the emphasis is on a relationship with Christ, not being boring or ritualistic and for the purpose of having a wide age group of kids who can see that both younger and older are on fire for the Lord and it’s still “cool”.

This is the third year for Camp Freedom.

The first year they hosted 40 kids at O’Bannon Woods. The second year they welcomed 80 kids to Lincoln State Park. And this year they are on track to have over 120 campers at Lincoln State Park. If all of this sounds familiar, you may have already seen a flyer that was sent home with your child from their school.

While you might expect to pay \$200-\$300 for a week long camp that includes meals, adventure, activities, and more, Camp Freedom is about ministering to as many kids as possible so the cost has been kept at an affordable rate of \$60 per camper.

The theme for this year’s Camp Freedom is “The Battle” based on Isaiah 54:17 which says “no weapon forged against you will prevail”.

Each morning will begin with breakfast, morning devotion and worship, a hike led by Pastor Tim Johnson, Senior Pastor at Pfrimmer’s Chapel UMC followed by some crafts, lunch, swimming, breakout groups also led by Pastor Tim Johnson, dinner, and campfire time.

Breakout sessions will include where the battle began, getting geared up for the battle, and other topics relevant to today’s teens and preteens. And while there is a wide range of ages that attend the camp, all curriculum is age appropriate. Those in charge of the planning are very sensitive to the fact that the message an 18 year old might need to hear will not be the same as a message for a 10 year old. So break out sessions will be conducted accordingly as will strenuous activities such as longer hikes which may not be suitable for the younger campers.

Camp Freedom is an adventure filled and exciting time. So much planning goes into the week long event to include things like a Registered Nurse being available 24-7 to all campers and volunteers, lifeguards, designated volunteers to act as “shower guards” because safety is a priority in every area, all volunteers will go through a child protection series as well as have a

background check conducted, they even recycle the tons of water bottles that are used to keep everyone well hydrated throughout the week! If transportation is an issue being that the camp starts on a Monday morning, there will be a bus available at Pfrimmer’s Chapel to provide that service as well. And though the response from parents has been overwhelmingly positive and without hesitation, a week long camp is sometimes not a fit for every child if they are not used to being away from home so Angie Wagner, Youth Minister at Pfrimmer’s Chapel UMC said that if that is the case the parent will be notified and arrangements made.

So as you can see, much preparation has gone into caring for each and every camper.

Wagner said that her favorite thing about Camp Freedom is “seeing the long term commitment kids have made for Christ.”

In only its third year, Camp Freedom is already starting to see real life change take place. One camper has already expressed a desire to be baptized among their friends while at Camp Freedom this year (as passed to the Camp Freedom staff by a grateful parent).

Camp Freedom is an opportunity for youth to build lasting relationships with peers as well as volunteers who will be there as a source of ongoing encouragement. Campers are not forgotten when they leave the grounds. There are even Camp Freedom reunions held as a follow up about four to six months after they leave the campground which gives kids the chance to again share in each others lives. And the staff at Pfrimmer’s Chapel UMC makes themselves available year round for any child at any time.

Another thing Wagner has noticed each year is the excitement mixed with a little anxiety of campers going into the experience as they don’t know what to expect. She said she feels that “God works best that way” (when we don’t know what to expect but we step out anyway). But she said by the end of the powerful week, it’s tough to get the campers to want to leave. She said it is amazing to see “how burdened these young kids are when they come in and how released of those they become by week’s end.”

To register for Camp Freedom 2012, you may pick up a form at Pfrimmer’s Chapel United Methodist Church (Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.), located at 505 Pfrimmer’s Chapel Road NE, Corydon, IN or you can call the church office at (812) 738-2757 to have a form mailed to you.

For more information you can visit the Camp Freedom facebook page or go to [www.pfrimmerschapel.org](http://www.pfrimmerschapel.org) and click on Camp Freedom under the more... tab.

Volunteers are welcome to apply by calling or stopping by the church office. Monetary donations as well as cases of bottled water are also much appreciated as again it is through generous donations from the community and church that the camp is able to be offered at such an affordable rate.

Camp Freedom is an excellent way to give your youth an advantage in “The Battle” that they face each and every day in this world. Give your kids an adventure packed week filled with Biblical and relevant teachings that they will never forget. From the Pfrimmer’s Chapel UMC website, “We believe Camp Freedom is one of the best places to send your youth this summer! Come and join us!” Wagner said.