

Reddam House

BCC Campus (Pre 1 – Gr 3)
32 Concorde Road
Bedfordview 2007
Tel/Fax: 27-11-616-2834

Main Campus (Gr 4 – 12)
28 Smith Street Ext
Bedfordview 2007
Tel: 27-11-615-6710
Fax: 27-11-615-6718
e-mail: admin@reddamjhb.co.za
GDE Registration Number: 400096
IEB Registration Number: F269



Grade 6 Camp to Son Valley 2005

As a teacher, who accompanied the group of over 80 children to Son valley, I was impressed with the organisation and efficiency with which the camp was managed and run from the outset.

When we arrived at Son Valley, the learners were immediately made to feel at ease in a number of ways: they were introduced to their counsellors and the rules and regulations were discussed in a firm, yet friendly manner. Learners knew their boundaries before they had even unpacked. A game was then played which broke the ice for newcomers to the school and served to welcome all in a non- threatening manner. The teachers, in the interim, had the opportunity to place their belongings in their allocated rooms and meet the managers of the farm.

All subsequent activities were well planned and managed and teachers knew of these tasks and the preparations in advance. The children were involved in numerous, varied activities which catered to the needs of all. They dyed T shirts and as a craft exercise, made a creature with beads. Both items served as wonderful mementoes with which to remember their experiences on camp. The dyed T shirt became the standard, practical 'uniform' on camp and this served to help do away with fashion rituals and extra washing for mom when learners returned home!

Safety and concern for the wellbeing of the children were in mind throughout the execution of all activities. When the children went swimming, a counsellor acted as lifeguard. The making of the fires and the braaing of marshmallows was supervised by a group leader. Someone was always with the children, explaining the dangers of a certain situation before the activity was embarked upon. A 'no – tolerance' attitude was held for those who had disregarded the safety rules. If a learner needed to be disciplined for misbehaviour, the counsellors liaised, in confidence, with the school teacher first and obtained their input of the misdemeanour and support in the punishment to be metered out. Counsellors worked in unison with the teachers and yet their authority was never questioned among the children themselves. The children in fact, established a wonderful rapport with their group leader. It was a relationship characterised by mutual respect. There were times, as a teacher, when I began to feel redundant!

The highlight of the camp was the day when the archery, slides, rifle shooting and bow and arrow shooting took place. It was a wonderful experience trying things we had never tried before! The laughter and squeals of the children could be heard all day. Throughout these activities, safety was never even a concern. All explanations, given by the guides, were clear and delivered by experts in their fields.

Mealtimes were held in a spacious dining room. The meals were nutritious, simple and very 'homely': cottage pie, lasagne, chicken pie etc. No child had to be forced to eat – they all did! The group leaders on camp joined their children during meal times and chatted.

Although the children did receive some 'free time' (for example, before meals) it was seldom spent alone in a room, – learners would chat continually to the counsellors, teachers and fellow pupils. The central lapa served as a homely atmosphere for those who wanted the constant company of others. For most of the time, children were too busy to ever be bored or homesick.

The camp was fondly remembered by the grade 6 learners – the English essays they wrote bear testimony to this. As a teacher, I had the opportunity to step aside to watch and see the children interact, get to know them better and join in the fun whenever I chose to. Thank you for a wonderful experience.

Regards
Sharon Hendry