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## Participant Information Letter for the Chestnut Ridge Camp & Retreat Center Challenge Course

Dear Challenge Course Participant,

Congratulations on your enrollment in the Challenge Course experience! We are looking forward to getting to know you! In preparing for the course, here are some things to consider:

### What to Expect

The Challenge Course is an experiential adventure program which offers groups and individuals the opportunity to participate in a series of activities involving mental, physical, and emotional risk taking. Safety and cooperation, as well as individual achievement, are essential to this program.

### Low Challenge Course

The Low Challenge Course consists of approximately 12 constructed elements made from telephone poles, wood, rope, and cables. Each group will have a Chestnut Ridge facilitator who will present a different challenge at each element. Following each challenge, our facilitator will lead a “debrief” which is a time for the group members to share with one another about the experience, point out ways to improve, highlight gifts and skills seen in one another, and generally discuss the experience on each element. Our experienced facilitators can work with you to tailor your group's Low Challenge Course experience to highlight growth areas such as: leadership, servanthood, humility, grace, honesty, communication, encouragement, and others. Five of the low challenge course elements have been specifically designed to be accessible to all persons, regardless of physical ability. Optimally, group sizes on the Low Challenge Course are kept small in order to allow for maximum interaction of each participant. We frequently suggest that larger groups break into smaller sub-groups of approximately 10-15 persons during their experience on the Low Challenge Course. These sub-groups will have both similar and different experiences that are worth discussing once the group recombinates.



Your participants should come expecting fun, challenge, and growth. Remember: we can only challenge persons who willingly engage in the process, so come ready to plug-in!

### High Challenge Course

The High Challenge Course consists of elements constructed in the trees approximately 40 feet off the ground. Participants will wear harnesses and helmets and be “on belay” to ensure safety while participating in the High Challenge Course.

*Our mission is to make visible the love of Christ through hospitality,  
responsible care for the earth, and fellowship that strengthens the community.*



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**Dynamic High Challenge Course** – The Dynamic Course consists of three separate elements, the Criss-Cross, Multi-Vine, and Heebie Jeebie. For each element, the participant will ascend the tree on the staple climb, traverse the element, and then be lowered down by the facilitator.

**Static High Challenge Course** – The Static Course is a series of six elements that can be done alone or with a partner. Once the participant ascends the tree on the staple climb, they can traverse through multiple elements before being lowered back to the ground. Participants have the option to be lowered down the tree as usual, or they can end their Static Course Session with a shot of adrenaline as they do the Pamper Jump, jumping off a platform 40 feet in the air as they attempt to grab a trapeze bar dangling above.



## **Zipline**

Our 530 foot Zipline extends across Lake Fellowship and makes for a grand finale to any High Challenge Course experience. Participants are “on belay” in harnesses the entire time.

## **Attire**

There is a good possibility that you could get dirty during the day. Please wear clothing and shoes that you will not mind “scuffing” up a bit. During rainy or wet days we generally continue and use rain ponchos (you supply) when required. We take shelter during severe weather, such as thunderstorms.

Clothing should be:

- Loose
- Comfortable
- Casual
- Durable
- Long pants or sweats are preferred during the cooler seasons
- In very hot weather, shorts with shoes and socks may be preferred
- Layered (layers suitable to the season will allow you to be comfortable all day)

Shoes should be:

- Closed toed (no flip-flops or open sandals)
- Secured to the foot
- Low heeled
- Comfortable, such as running shoes or sneakers
- Suitable for the weather conditions (consider mud, rain, cold, etc.)

Jewelry, watches and non-prescription sunglasses:

- Are best left at home or in your car in a safe place. Please remove them before coming to the Challenge Course

Glasses and contact lens wearers:

- Take any precautions that you would normally take when participating in outdoor activities to protect your eyes and your eyewear

Tobacco products, gum and candy:

- Are not allowed on the Challenge Course for safety reasons

### **Who May Participate?**

Anyone of “normal” physical condition, age 8 and above may participate in the Low Challenge Course, Dynamic High Challenge Course, or Zipline. Participants must be 12 years old to participate in the Static High Challenge Course. If you have any physical conditions out of the ordinary, please inform us so that we may assist you in performing activities safely. Our rule on the course is “Honor Your Body.” The activities are designed to be enjoyed by those of varying level of physical fitness, and our qualified staff will assist you in taking the next step in learning and growth.

### **Other Items to Bring**

- Positive attitude
- Completed “Permission and Release Form” for each participant
- Water bottle
- Desire to learn more about yourself and those in your group
- Tick/chigger repellent

### **Other Items Not to Bring**

- Watch or other timepiece (your group’s facilitator will keep track of it)
- Cell Phone

### **For the Best Possible Experience**

- Share with your group what to expect
- Discuss some group goals for the experience. What would the group like to accomplish?
- Discuss personal goals. How would you like to be challenged?
- Share your group and personal goals with our staff as early as possible
- Plan a time after your visit to discuss this experience with your participants in an unhurried manner
- Bring personal journals or note cards and pencils to record reactions, thoughts, and experiences. Use these cards when your group discusses their Challenge Course experience in the future.
- Take lots of photos and/or video

We are looking forward to sharing time with you on the Challenge Course!

