

Rock Lake United Church Camp CANOE SAFETY TIPS

Before getting into a canoe at Rock Lake Camp (or anywhere for that matter) there are rules you should follow to keep yourselves safe. Canoeing is a lot of fun, but if you don't follow the rules, you could get into trouble on the water or damage your equipment needlessly. Here are some tips that you should follow:

- **TO GET READY FOR YOUR CANOE RIDE**
 - *Put on a proper fitting, CSA approved, life vest & fasten all straps correctly - you never know when you might fall out or tip over without warning.*
 - *Find a partner - it is against our rules to go out in a canoe alone. Each canoe must have two paddlers who have passed our test. You can take a non-paddler as a passenger if they sit in the middle of the canoe.*
 - *Make sure you have a whistle either attached to your life jacket or on your wrist.*
 - *Make sure your canoe has an extra paddle, a bailing pail and a 15 meter buoyant throwing rope with a float attached.*
 - *Make sure you are dressed for the occasion - either long pants & a long sleeved shirt or you should wear plenty of sunscreen. Please wear a hat while on the water.*
- **TO GET INTO YOUR CANOE**
 - *Have the canoe just in the water - if you don't want to get your feet wet - stay out of a canoe.*
 - *Have someone hold the bow to steady the canoe - you don't want to tip the canoe before you have even left shore.*
 - *Enter the canoe one at a time (in order of bow person, centre person, stern person): Crouch low - keep your knees bent and . . .*
 - *. . . Grab the sides of the canoe for balance - as you walk to your seat.*
 - *Always walk along the centre - keeping your feet on the centerline will help to keep the canoe from rocking.*
 - *Once both paddlers are settled, paddle away from shore - do not put your paddles in the sand gondola style to push off.*
- **RULES ON THE WATER**

- *Never take off your life jacket.*
- *The person in the back of the canoe steers and dictates the cadence.*
- *Stay low in your canoe - don't stand up or walk in your canoe while it is away from shore.*
- *Avoid sudden or jerky movements - rocking from side to side could cause the canoe to tip over.*
- *Always sit on the seats or on the centre line of the canoe - sitting on the side of the canoe will cause it to tip over.*
- *Stay away from shore - low hanging trees and deadfall can cause you lots of grief.*
- *Do not bother animals or fish while canoeing*
- *Stay out of the swimming area and keep away from the floating dock that belongs to the campground.*
- *Do not litter - bring back everything that you take with you. If you loose something that can not be easily retrieved, tell an adult leader when you get back.*

- **TO GET OUT OF YOUR CANOE**
 - *Let the canoe coast slowly towards shore*
 - *The lead person gets out of the canoe in shallow water before it reaches shore then holds the bow while the other passengers get out.*
 - *Both paddlers then lift - NOT DRAG - the bow of the canoe on to shore.*

- **IF YOUR CANOE TIPS OVER OR YOU FALL OUT**
 - **DONT PANIC**
 - **BLOW YOUR WHISTLE IF IT IS SAFE TO DO SO**
 - **STAY WITH YOUR CANOE**
 - **PADDLE OR PUSH YOUR CANOE TO SHORE** - once the boat reaches shallow water it can be flipped and the water dumped out. Note: Your canoe will float even if it is full of water or upside down.