

Mountain T.O.P.

Contact Person Resource Guide

Youth Summer Ministry 2024



Mountain T.O.P.
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Table of Contents

Contact Person Resources: *all the need-to-knows about your trip preparations, including participant forms*

Letter from Jacey	3
Preparation Timeline	4
FAQs	5
Team Training Materials	6
Vehicle Requirements	7
Tool Requirements & Process: Service Project	9
Tool Requirements & Process: Day Camp	12
Packing List	13
The Role of the Homeowner	14
Medical Information Form	15
Statement of Activities & Release Form	16

Creating Safe Communities: *a packet for all people over 18 to read & understand before coming to camp*

Letter from Julie	19
Expectations for Participation	20
The Role of the Adult	25
Adult Self-Screening Form	27

Greetings, Contact Person!

Welcome to the guide with (nearly) all the resources you'll need to prepare a successful trip to Mountain T.O.P.! It is certainly no small task to organize a mission trip for a group of youth and adults, so it is with abounding gratitude that I extend my appreciation for the work you will be investing into this trip and, ultimately, the kingdom of God that exists in our midst.

If you have not already, I highly suggest reviewing the 2024 YSM Registration Packet. The registration packet introduces a few very important changes to our summer programs. This particular resource guide has two parts. The first includes a preparation timeline, vehicle and tool information, packing list, and participant medical forms. The second half of this guide focuses on Mountain T.O.P.'s desires and efforts to **create safe communities** and how adults can help do just that. This section needs to be read and understood by **ALL** adults (18+), especially because we are now following our Safe Sanctuary guidelines during all camp weeks. In an effort to create safe communities within our camps and in our service area, we are asking all adults to spend more time intentionally preparing themselves to be trustworthy and mature role models for our youth.

Furthermore, there are a few very important updates that are worth pointing out to you:

- In the hope of creating a safer and more welcoming environment, we now operate with Safe Sanctuary guidelines during all camp weeks. If you have concerns about meeting Safe Sanctuary adult requirements, please contact me.
- In 2019, we lowered the minimum age for participation in Service Project to rising 7th graders. However, to serve with Day Camp, participants must be rising 9th graders or older. We made this change to create a wider age gap between the local children participants and our YSM participants.

Communication will make this process so much smoother. If you have any questions, please contact me. Please email me to set up a time for a phone call or Zoom conversation!

One thing I want to leave you with: in the midst of payments and paperwork, I ask that you **surround this process with prayer**. I encourage you to pray for the hearts of your team members to be transformed by the grace and goodness of Jesus, that you will arrive with teachable hearts and open minds, and that the families of the Cumberland Plateau and Sequatchie Valley will be positively impacted by their interactions with Mountain T.O.P.

Thankful to serve with you,
Jacey Brady
Logistics Coordinator
jacey@mountain-top.org | 931-692-3999

Preparation Timeline

We know there is a lot that must go into planning such a trip as this. **Let us help you** by guiding you through the preparation process. Preparation—of logistics and of heart—is vital.

December – Mid March

- Make plans to meet the payment requirements. See the Registration Guide for reference. Remember, first payments are due and group number commitments are locked in January 15. (If you register after Jan. 15, review the payment schedule in the registration packet.)
- Read this guide and disperse the Creating Safe Communities portion (pg.17-24) to all adults in your group. An adult includes anyone who is 18 years old and older.
- Start securing the proper number of vehicles. Reserve rental vehicles as needed.
- Confirm you have the correct youth:adult ratio (2 adults: 5 youth). For adults to count in this ratio they must be 3 years older than the oldest youth.
- Schedule fundraisers.

March & April

- Second payments are due March 1 (See Registration Guide for fee Schedules), along with your Day Camp/Service Project split.
- Plan session(s) or retreat for your training. Use the Team Training materials to introduce or refresh your team on the basics of Mountain T.O.P., an overview of the camp week, and what their service experience will look like. Our team training has been updated so please make sure to review before planning.
- Consider lodging arrangements for travel to and from camp.
- Start collecting van bucket tools.
 - NOTE: A good way to involve your congregation is to ask them to lend tools/materials!

By May 1

- Submit final payment and the following paperwork, due May 1 (See Registration Guide for fee Schedules).
 - Complete electronic Roster and email to Jacey.
 - All adults (18+) must submit a completed Adult Self-Screening form to the MTOP office.
 - Ensure ALL adults have read and understand the Creating Safe Communities portion of this packet.
 - Pre-order theme t-shirts, if desired. Submit the number of sizes wanted and payment.
- Camp assignments will be released.

A few weeks before departure...

- Make sure van buckets are compiled and ready
- Collect, make copies, and organize participation forms by roster order
 - TWO copies of medical forms/statement of release forms should be brought to camp for every participant (pages 14-16).

- Expect a call from Jacey 3 weeks before your camp week to confirm camp week logistics.
- All participants should start screening themselves for COVID-19 symptoms 10 days prior to arrival. It is highly recommended that unvaccinated participants obtain a positive test before departure.
- Expect a call from your camp director on the Wednesday prior to your arrival.

Frequently Asked Questions

When is the last date to change numbers?

- Anytime, though, increasing numbers depends on available spaces. Ideally, in submitting the final payment by May 15, the church would have finalized participant numbers. Please be aware of the [regular refund policy](#) and check with Jacey if you need to clarify availability. Any numbers registered on or after January 15 are committed to coming to Mountain T.O.P. Any cancellation related to COVID-19 or other communicable disease is 100% refundable.

Will we be eating by family style or not?

- Yes, camp communities will be eating by family style.

Who divides Youth Renewal Groups?

- YRGs will be formed by the Summer Staff during your Major Group Meeting on Sunday evening. YRGs are a group process led by your Ministry Coordinator that results in work groups with a diversity of age, experience, geographic location, gender, etc. Please indicate on your participant roster (due in May) of any special circumstances that may affect YRG formation; this includes participants who need to stay apart (family, BFFs, romantic relationships, etc.) and participants who need to stay together (youth who requires adult from same church, etc.).

Team Training Materials

Training your Mountain T.O.P. team is vital to a smooth camp week. There are a lot of things we do here in camp that are unique to our structure, as well as unique aspects of our service area that your youth might not be familiar with. We are working on updating our provided team training materials to better fit the needs of our volunteers.

We had hoped to have our updated training materials done in time for 2024 YSM preparation, but due to time constraints we were unable to provide them. Our team training will remain in the same structure as it has been in the past, with our updates continuing to be worked on.

[Jacey](#) will send you our team training materials upon your registration!

Vehicle Requirements

It is extremely important to keep this ratio in mind when building your participant groups. While this rule is not hard and fast (i.e. as soon as you hit an 8th participant your church must rent another vehicle), as you begin to approach being 3 to 4 participants out of ratio please contact us as we can begin to remedy the situation within your camp community.

Service Project

Churches will be mixing to form their Youth Renewal Groups (YRGs). If participating in Service Project, you must provide **one 7-passenger vehicle per every seven participants**. This allows seven team members, tools/materials and a cooler for lunch to be transported to and from the work site. Each vehicle must have seatbelts for seven people, at a minimum. Vehicles with a roof rack are recommended, but not required.

Day Camp

If participating in Field Trip Day Camp, you must provide **one 12- or 15-passenger vehicle for every seven participants**. This allows for the team of about seven people to pick up 5-7 children from the community every day for camp. Each vehicle must have seatbelts for 12 people at a minimum, but seatbelts for 15 people is preferred.

For Front Yard Day Camp participation, vehicle requirements can vary. While we are still implementing Front Yard Day Camp in some instances, it is not a program option available to choose but rather a solution dependent on our camper participant numbers for the week. If your week needs to be a Front Yard Day Camp structure that will be communicated to you between the second and third payment deadlines.

Tennessee State Law

All vehicles must be equipped with seat belts for each passenger. Campers will not be allowed to ride in vehicles without seat belts or in truck beds.

Coolers

In the past, Mountain T.O.P. has asked churches to bring their own lunch and water coolers. If your church is able to bring their own coolers for each vehicle, you are more than welcome. It is no longer a requirement for each church.

First-aid Kits

Each vehicle—including Service Project and Day Camp must have a First-Aid kit with the following items. Camp staff will restock if needed.

- Bandages
- Medical/ athletic tape
- Alcohol wipes
- Antibiotic ointment
- Aspirin
- Hydrocortisone cream
- Cough drops
- Aloe
- Gauze
- Cotton swabs
- Latex gloves
- Scissors
- Sunscreen
- Hand sanitizer
- Medicated powder
- Thermometer
- Tweezers
- Ziploc baggies
- Antacid
- Allergy relief
- Anti-motion sickness
- Facial tissues
- Laxative
- Poison ivy cleanser
- Anti-diarrhea
- Benadryl
- Ibuprofen
- Tylenol
- Bug spray
- Clear nail polish
- Ear plugs

Tool Requirements & Process

Service Project Van Buckets

The following is a list of tools needed **for each vehicle** that will be participating in Service Project. Please put all of these tools in a “van bucket” to keep them organized. During the week, they will STAY in your vehicle. It is possible that a tool may be broken during the week. Please take the time to collect tools that are in good working condition.

Planned projects cannot be accomplished without the appropriate tools. Van bucket lists are compiled based on years of experience. As a minimum, please bring all the tools requested, but feel free to bring any extra tools! *Any church that donates their van buckets will not have to bring them again.* Don't forget your coolers for each vehicle, too!

Tool	per van	Notes
Baby Oil	1	For driving nails/Clean-up
Box End Wrench Set	1	
Carpenter's Square	1	
Chalk Line	1	With chalk
Drill - cordless or corded	1	With driver & bit set
Drop Cloth	2	For painting
Electric Adapter	2	2 prong to 3 prong
Extension Cord	2	40' +
*Impact Driver	1	With 5/16 bit
Hammer	5	16 oz +
Hand Sanitizer	1	Medium sized bottle
Hand Wipes	1	
Level	1	4ft
Measuring Tape	2	16' +
Paint Brush - Wide	4	
Paint Brush - Thin	3	

Paint Roller	3	
Paint Roller Pad	6	
Paint Scraper	5	Wide & thin
Paint Tray	3	
Pliers	1	
Post-Level	1	Optional
Rags	10	Bring them clean
Ratchet strap	At least 2	To tie down ladders
Safety Goggles	2	
Saw - Circular	1	With extra blade(s)
Saw - Hack	1	
Saw - Hand	1	
*Screws	5 lbs.	2 or 3 inches
Screwdrivers - Flat	2	
Screwdrivers - Phillips	2	
Scrub Brush	3	
Socket Wrench Set	1	
Speed Square	2	
Trash Bags	1	box
Tin Snips	1	
Utility Knife	1	
Wasp/Bee Spray	2	
Wood Chisel Set	1	Optional
Work Gloves	7	
Wrecking Bar	2	

*Not required. Screws are an acceptable alternative to using nails. Impact drivers and a 5/16 bit are highly suggested for putting in LAG bolts for construction projects.

Community Tool Shed Tools

Mountain T.O.P. is in constant need of updating our Community Tool Shed tools that we make available to all participants throughout the year. We are providing this list as a reference for you to know **what will be provided** and **what you can donate**. Much of our tool shed was stocked by church groups donating their tools to us. Churches are welcome to bring their own of these tools listed below, but are not required.

The tools that come from the Community Tool Shed will still be shared amongst the teams this summer.

- Axe
- Bucket w/ lids
- Hatchet
- Hedge clippers
- Hoes
- Ladders - extension, step
- Mattock
- Pencil point bar
- Pick
- Post hole digger
- Pruner - hand
- Pruning shears
- Pruning saw
- Rake - gravel, leaf
- Shovel - flat, spade
- Sledge hammer
- Swing blade
- Trowels
- Wheelbarrows

Day Camp Van Buckets

Just like Service Project, there are “tools” for Day Camp that are necessary in meeting the Four Needs of the children participating in our camp programs. This is a compilation of items frequently used during Day Camp, both Front Yard and Field Trip. We have found it is helpful to have some sport and craft supplies on hand either in the free time before or after an activity. Feel free to bring additional supplies that you think will be beneficial!

This van bucket will stay in your vehicle during the week. Some of these materials are consumables and will be completely used up by the end of the week. Compiling the supplies for the van bucket is a great way to get other church members involved in your service at Mountain T.O.P. Don't forget your coolers and First Aid kit for each vehicle, too!

- 3 packs of crayons
- 1 ream of white paper
- 2 packs of construction paper
- 1 pack of sidewalk chalk
- 3 bottles of bubbles
- 1 frisbee
- 1 football
- 1 bottle of 50 SPF sunscreen
- 1 bottle of hand sanitizer
- 1 can of bug spray
- 1 roll of paper towels
- 5 trash bags

In addition to the materials listed above, we ask churches to help snacks for our Day Camp participants. We ask churches to provide 40 snack packs every vehicle they provide. A snack pack should include 1-2 snacks and a drink. Ideas of healthy snack packs include: fresh fruit, fruit cups, granola bars, fruit gummies, or trail mix, pretzels, crackers, juice box/fruit juice.

Packing List

Must Haves:

- Work clothes & shoes for one week (see *Special Notes* for specifics)
- Casual clothes for one week
- Bedding for a twin bed: sheets and blanket or sleeping bag
- Pillow
- Bath Towel
- Toiletries
- Shower Sandals
- Rain Gear (we work through the rain!)
- At least one long-sleeve shirt, jacket or sweatshirt for possible cold evenings
- Sunscreen, Bug Repellent, Hand Sanitizer
- Flashlight
- Bible, journal, pen/pencil
- Watch (so you can be on time!)
- Water bottle

Optional:

- Portable camp chair for more comfortable seating than the ground offers
- Fan (might need small extension cord for it)
- Spending money for canteen, camp store (T-shirts and other items will be sold, local dairy bars, local shops, etc.)
- Musical instrument (if you play one)
- Plastic bags for wet, soiled or filthy clothing
- Any personal tools for Service Project that you would like to use for the week

Special Notes:

- Dress Code
 - The dress code applies to all genders. Shirts are to be worn at all times. Shirts with beer, liquor or other possibly offensive subject matter should not be brought to camp. Additionally, halter or spaghetti-strap tops, bathing suit tops, sports bras, shorts with an inseam less than 4" and jeans with offensive holes are not appropriate and should not be brought to camp. Enforcing the dress code is the responsibility of the adults for their own youth as this can be a delicate situation to handle.
- **Required** during workday:
 - Service Project - Long pants (NO leggings or yoga pants), closed-toe, hard-sole shoes or work boots and shirts with at least short sleeves. Work gloves
 - Day Camp - Shorts are okay, as well as open toe shoes. Shoes should be comfortable and appropriate for all day activities such as hiking or touring the area (please no flip-flops, or other slip-ons). Appropriate shorts are fine at camp in the evening.
 - All clothes should be conservative when it comes to their content (i.e. no beer or possibly offensive designs) and how revealing they are.
 - Bring enough clothes for the entire week. Laundry facilities are not available.
 - Please leave valuables at home and/or locked in the vehicle for the week. This includes expensive jewelry, electronics, and large amounts of cash. Although we do the best we can, we cannot always ensure the security of the facilities.

The Role of the Homeowner

Our Process

Both our full time and summer staff carefully plan every service project and day camp interaction. When we first receive a referral for a home repair in the area, a full time staff member meets with the homeowner and explains Mountain TOP's mission and processes. If the full time staff member feels comfortable with the homeowner and checks their status on the sex offender registry, then they are added to our list with an active status.

If a new or current homeowner says or acts in a sexually, racially, or non-inclusively inappropriate way, a full time staff member will handle the situation and reevaluate the homeowner's active status in our system. Before each summer, full time staff checks the sex offender registry for any new additions of homeowners we work with. We want to prioritize the safety and comfortability of our participants.

All homeowners agree to have someone on site while a group is present; and as they are able, access to a restroom for the group.

Partnership Covenant

Partnership is a core characteristic of how Mountain T.O.P. operates as an organization. There are theological and practical purposes to this operational posture. Mountain T.O.P. defines Partnership as *two or more entities contributing equitably to a desired outcome*. Each homeowner we work with in our service project program covenants to partner with Mountain T.O.P.

Theologically, we see partnership as a way of recognizing God's gifts to humanity in all socioeconomic realities. We firmly believe everyone has something to contribute and offer to the kingdom of God. (see Luke 21:1-4). And so, by assuming that people have something to contribute, we acknowledge a person's humanity and God's love and providence in their lives.

Practically, we see partnership as a way of stewarding our resources to be able to work with as many people as we can. If a family is able to help by providing the materials to a project, we are able to use more resources while working with a family who might not be able to partner in the same capacity. Another practical component is the pride that a family can appreciate in that they contributed to the final product of a Mountain T.O.P. project.

The ideal vision of partnership in Mountain T.O.P. 's eyes for our Youth Summer Ministry Service Project Program, is the homeowner provides the materials and Mountain T.O.P. provides the labor. This is not always a viable option depending on the homeowner's economic situation. Thus, Mountain T.O.P. seeks to meet the homeowner where they are and find creative solutions to partner. Other forms of partnership which we have accepted: the family providing a meal for the work group, the family working side-by-side with Mountain T.O.P. on the project, the family volunteering to work with Mountain T.O.P. in the kitchen or our office, the family helping provide materials for another project, or donations to our yard sale.

Medical Information Form

Last Name _____ First _____ MI _____

Address _____ City _____ ST _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Occupation _____

*Social Security Number _____ Date of Birth _____

Church _____ Church City, State _____

Personal Physician _____ Phone _____

*Insurance Company _____ *Phone _____

*Policy # _____ *Insured ID # _____ *Prescription Card # _____

In case of emergency, contact:

Name _____ Relationship _____

Primary Phone: _____ Alternative Phone: _____

Name _____ Relationship _____

Primary Phone: _____ Alternative Phone: _____

Date of last Tetanus shot _____

Medication(s) you cannot take: _____

Medication(s) you are currently taking: _____

Allergies / special health problems or concerns: _____

*If you do not wish to disclose your SSN, you may attach a photocopy of the front and back of your insurance card. If you attach a copy of your card, you do not have to fill out the insurance information in the blanks.

Statement of Activities & Release Form

Mountain T.O.P. is a Christian service ministry with the people of the Cumberland Mountains in Tennessee. Volunteers participating in the activities of this ministry will be expected to be involved in all activities and to respect the people of the Cumberland Mountains at all times.

Volunteers will participate in (but will not be limited to) home repair projects and working with local youth as need determines and are within the capability of the volunteer service team. These activities may include the use of hand tools and the handling of materials and supplies. Power tools will only be used under the direct supervision of an adult and then only if the individual has the necessary skills to appropriately handle the power tool. Participants are never forced or required to engage in any work or activity in which they feel they are not able to participate safely.

Participants understand that photos and videos may be taken during the course of the camp week that may be used by Mountain T.O.P. in the future promotion of our ministries and programs.

Participants are expected to follow all guidelines of participation, philosophies, and expectations set by the organization and camp staff. Examples of unacceptable behavior include sneaking out after lights out, violating the tobacco policy, abuse or harassment, and other Mountain T.O.P. policies, going to places in the area which have been identified by camp staff as dangerous, and being disruptive to the camp life.

We acknowledge that every effort has been made in preparing the participants for this mission experience. We therefore release Mountain T.O.P., Incorporated, its agents, employees, and any and all persons connected therewith from any and all liability, claims, and causes of action of any type whatsoever arising out of or in any way connected with participation in the activities of the Mountain T.O.P.

Further, consent/permission is given for (**participant**) _____ to be treated by competent medical personnel in the event of an accident or medical emergency and to receive reasonable medical treatment as deemed necessary by a licensed physician.

In the event treatment is called for which a physician and/or other professional health care provider in the hospital/clinic refuses to administer without my consent, we hereby authorize:

Contact Person (*Print full name*): _____
and

MTOP Camp Director (*Print full name*): _____

to give such consent for us in the event that we are not readily accessible by phone. If in the event it becomes necessary for either of the identified persons to give consent for us, we agree to hold such person free and harmless of any claims, demands, or suits for damages arising from giving such consent. We understand that Mountain T.O.P. requires proof of personal insurance or acknowledgment of financial responsibility for all medical expenses. We agree that our insurance company (if applicable) will be used for all necessary medical expenses and we are aware that we may be billed by the medical provider for any medical expenses not covered by our personal insurance policy and will be responsible for payment of those expenses.

This is the _____ day of _____, 2023.

Signature (Participant)

Signature (Parent or Guardian if participant is a minor)

Please circle one:

I give permission to release this information to adult drivers and summer staff in order to ensure my/my youth's health issues are properly addressed. **YES / NO**

THIS FORM MUST BE NOTARIZED for anyone under the age of 18:

Subscribed and sworn to before me this _____ day of _____, 2023.

Notary Public signature

My commission expires: _____

Place Notary Public seal or stamp in this space.

Creating Safe Communities

A packet for all adult
participants 18+



What does it mean to create safe communities?

Friends,

Thank you for volunteering to be an adult on this mission trip. Your participation allows the youth in our camps the opportunity to experience and share the love of Christ in many transforming ways. Our goal is to provide a safe and welcoming place for all to be able to grow in their faith. We never want to be a barrier to someone knowing Christ.

As adults in camp, **you play a very important role** in providing a safe, encouraging environment for the youth to stretch and grow in their confidence as persons loved by God. You have a great responsibility in helping us to provide an encouraging and caring place for the youth.

We have developed guidelines and procedures that are included in this preparation packet that are essential to providing this safe space. We ask that you carefully review this information before embarking on this journey. In the following pages you will be introduced to:

- **Expectations for Participation:** These guidelines apply to all people, but we depend on adults to consent and model these expectations.
- **The Role of the Adult:** In every step of the process, adults are a meaningful and important aspect of creating a safe place for youth.
- **Adult Self-Screening form:** Remember that all adults 18 and older need to submit the Adult Self-Screening form along with a copy of their current background check at the time of final payment.

You are encouraged as part of the adult team to meet with your fellow travelers to discuss this information. Any questions or concerns should be addressed with your trip contact person, or the Mountain T.O.P. staff.

Thank you again for your commitment to growing new leaders in the kingdom of God. I look forward to seeing you at camp.

With gratitude,

Julie Keel
Program Director
julie@mountain-top.org | 931-692-3999

Expectations for Participation

The following are some of the basic expectations we hold for all youth and adults who participate at Mountain T.O.P. All participants should be aware of these expectations prior to arrival. Adults are expected to hold themselves and their youth to these standards. On Sunday, the camp director will also lead an Adult Meeting with all participants 18 or older to review more specifically the expectations of in-camp behavior for the week. This time is meant to be a review, as adults will have through this information already.

Camp Attendance and Participation

Groups commit to arriving at 1:30pm CST for the beginning of the Mountain TOP Program. Arriving late or leaving early from the camp week is **not** an option. Leaving at any time during the week and coming back to camp is also **not** an option. We design our program very carefully to ensure that all participants receive the maximum benefit from their experience. On Sunday, our staff will be breaking the community into work teams and on Saturday morning, the community will have its final closure experience. Missing either of these would hinder the experience for a person and the community. Furthermore, an adult leaving the week means a team would be left without a driver or second adult and therefore incapacitating the group. If there is an extreme situation, we are willing to address special cases.

Programming

Youth and adults are expected to attend and participate in all structured activities, recreation, programs, and worships. Please do not ask us for any exceptions to this camp participation expectation. We want everyone to gain the most they can while at camp together.

- If Contact People need to assemble their church together for a meeting, we encourage them to do so during Free Time at the end of the day. Please confer with the Camp Director when arranging that church meeting time.

Service Team Experience

Participants in the Youth Summer Ministry (YSM) will be mixed up with other churches to create Youth Renewal Groups (YRGs). YRGs are created through a spirit-led, staff-facilitated, and participant-driven process in order to create groups that have a balance of experience, age, gender, and church background.

Adult to Child Ratio

Adult to Child Ratio We require a 2:5 Adult to Child ratio in a group. Both adults must be at least 3 years older than the oldest youth in the group.

Adult Self-Screening Forms

All adults ages 18 and over need to have completed a satisfactory and current (within the last 3 years) background check before they arrive at camp. Background checks can be run by the participant's church or by Mountain T.O.P. for \$10/check. **A signed copy of the Adult Self-Screening form for each participant 18+ must be submitted to the Mountain T.O.P. office at the time of final payment.**

Dress Code

The dress code applies to all genders. Shirts are to be worn at all times. Shirts with beer, liquor or other possibly offensive subject matter should not be brought to camp. Additionally, halter or spaghetti-strap tops, bathing suit tops, sports bras, shorts with an inseam less than 4" and jeans with offensive holes are not appropriate and should not be brought to camp.

- **Service Project:** For safety reasons, the youth and adults with Service Project are to wear long pants (**no** leggings or yoga pants), closed-toe and hard-sole shoes and shirts with at least short sleeves during the workday. Scrubs are allowed. Appropriate shorts are fine at camp in the evening.
- **Day Camp:** Youth and adults participating in Day Camp can wear appropriate shorts instead of pants and do not have to wear closed toed shoes. Shoes should be comfortable and appropriate for all day activities such as hiking or touring the area (please no flip-flops or other slip-ons).
- The Mountain T.O.P. staff relies on adults from within the church to monitor the dress code of their participants. If necessary, the staff will assist in addressing the situation.

Electronic Devices & Social Media

Social media can either be a great tool or a destructive barrier. It can bring people together or drive a wedge in the spiritual practice of building community. During the camp week, we encourage minimal use of devices. Adults are definitely encouraged to have a cell phone with them in case of emergencies and to communicate with camp staff. We ask that devices are not used during meal times or programming events because we want to be present and build relationships with the people in front of us. We encourage churches to have conversations with their participants about the safe and healthy use of social media and devices while at camp. The camp staff is prepared to take action against reports of virtual bullying if needed. Mountain T.O.P. supports churches who decided to withhold participant's cell phones during the time in camp, but that is not a requirement. Adults should never interact with youth on social media without the permission of the parents. No one should ever be photographed or posted about without their permission.

Lights Out Policy

Your camp staff will set times for "lights out" each night, and they typically set a slightly later time on Friday night. The staff will take responsibility for the initial bed check at the designated lights out. Our expectation is that all participants will stay in their cabin after this time. We do not intend for the staff (nor are they able) to stay up for hours putting people back to bed and/or chasing them around camp. We ask for your group's understanding and cooperation in this matter. *We depend on the leadership and maturity of the adults present in camp for assistance.* If campers are found out of their cabins, the staff will find the Contact Person. Repeated offenses will require the participant's parents to be called, with the possibility of being sent home at the individual's expense.

Tobacco

The use of tobacco is discouraged and prohibited in some cases due to camp regulations, sensitivity and fire hazards. Anyone under the age of 21 is prohibited from smoking, using, or possessing tobacco in any form—including vaping and electronic cigarettes. Mountain T.O.P. recognizes the need to establish a designated tobacco area for those who use tobacco. This designated area is to be in a private and discreet area of camp. This is due to our desire to discourage the use of tobacco products and the need to not promote the use of tobacco as a social activity or as a part of the community process.

Alcohol & Drugs

Do not bring any alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs to camp. Those who bring such items can be sent home at the individual's expense.

Prescription Drugs

Sharing of prescription drugs is strictly prohibited. Those who do can be sent home at the individual's expense.

Fireworks

Do not bring fireworks into camp – these are dangerous items, especially in wooded areas.

Appropriate and Inappropriate Behaviors with Youth

Things that are appropriate:

- Side hugs initiated by the other person.
- Asking permission, including with technology.
- Using positive techniques of guidance, including redirection, positive reinforcement and encouragement rather than competition, comparison, and criticism to manage or change behavior.
- Respecting a person's rights to not be touched in ways that make them feel uncomfortable.

Things that are not appropriate:

- Private situations. If, by accident, you find yourself alone with a youth, go with the youth immediately to a public place.
- Be alert to youth who continually seek you out, who stare at you and expect or request a disproportionate amount of your time.
- Never initiate a hug and always be the one to end the hug.
- Never allow another camper to sit on your lap.
- Profanity, inappropriate jokes, sharing inappropriate details of one's personal life, and any kind of harassment or sexual references shared in any sort of communication, including virtually.
- Tickling, wrestling with, or excessively teasing a youth.

Any potential adult participant identified with a known history of inappropriate behavior toward a minor will not be considered a candidate for participation in YSM, nor will they be permitted to participate in any program where minors are present in the future.

Abuse Tolerance

Abuse of any kind is antithetical to any true expression of Christian community and the values of Jesus Christ as expressed in the scriptures. Therefore, Mountain T.O.P. has a zero tolerance for abuse. It is the responsibility of every adult participant to act in the best interest of youth at all times. In the event any participant observes any inappropriate behaviors (i.e. policy violations, neglectful supervision, poor role-modeling, grooming, etc.) or suspected abuse (physical, emotional, sexual, or virtual) it is the responsibility of each such participant to immediately report their observations to the Mountain T.O.P. staff. In the state of Tennessee, everyone is a mandated reporter whether you or a state resident or not.

We will briefly go over examples of abuse and inappropriate behaviors and how to identify them. Finally we will summarize our next steps at Mountain T.O.P. on how we address these different situations should we encounter them in our contexts in camp and out of camp. A final note: though we do not expect any of these situations to occur, it is important for all adults to be on the same page that we are responsible for the well being of the children and youth in our charge and to know what to do in the case of a situation of abuse, neglect or cases of inappropriate behavior.

Identifying Abusive, Suspicious or Inappropriate Behaviors

It is important for adults to be able to identify abusive and suspicious or inappropriate behaviors so that they may come to an end as soon as possible. The State of Tennessee defines Child abuse and Neglect in the following Categories:

Physical abuse: Non-accidental trauma or physical injury of a child, or failure to protect a child from harm.

Neglect: Failure to provide for a child's physical survival needs to the extent that there is harm, or risk of harm, to the child's health or safety.

Sexual abuse: When a child is involved in intentional sexual acts that produce sexual arousal and/or gratification for the perpetrator or sexual behaviors/situations in which there is a sexual component.

Psychological harm: A repeated pattern of caregiver behavior or extreme incident(s) that convey to children they are worthless, flawed, unloved, unwanted, endangered. May include both abusive acts against a child and failure to act.

Examples of Abuse or Neglect:

- Frequently appearing injuries such as bruises, cuts, and burns
- Marks that either cannot be explained or the explanation does not fit the injury
- Destructive, aggressive or disruptive behavior
- Passive, withdrawn or emotionless behavior
- Fear of going home or fear of parent(s)
- Extremely hungry
- Extremely Tired
- Very Ill, no sign of appropriate medical treatment

- Child left unsupervised
- Sexual knowledge/ actions that is inappropriate for their age
- Child tells you in any, way, shape, or form that they are being abused

Examples of Suspicious or Inappropriate Behaviors:

- Child is markedly afraid of adults
- Child wears lots of clothing inappropriate for weather
- Child is often late or absent
- Nightmares
- Inappropriate punishment

A Note on Poverty And Neglect:

Poverty can be summarized as a lack of choices. There are families whom we may encounter in our service area who may not have the resources to provide everything that their household needs or everything that you might be accustomed to. Some families choose between healthcare and food or paying the electric bill or rent. There may be circumstances beyond their control or challenges that Mountain T.O.P. is not equipped to help them with. If you encounter a family in the community you feel is in need of resources or may not know about resources available to them, let a Mountain T.O.P. staff person know and we may be able to point the family in the direction of a resource. Our goal should always be to give the family a dignified avenue to obtain the resources that they may need. These signs of abuse and neglect are not comprehensive and are meant to be used as a guide, but not all inclusive or exclusive. We want to believe a child if they are showing signs of abuse or neglect but must remember that the ramifications of living in poverty are not always explicit abuse or neglect.

Reporting Abuse, Suspicious or Inappropriate Behaviors

Mountain T.O.P. is committed to providing a safe, secure environment for minors and intends to create and foster a culture of communication, reporting safety concerns, or policy violations. Any report of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and will be reported, in accordance with Mountain T.O.P. policies and state law, to the Department of Children’s Services and/or other appropriate agencies.

In the event of apparent or suspected child abuse.

- 1) If necessary call 911
- 2) Tell a Mountain TOP Staff person. The staff person will notify a full time staff member and we will make a report along with all involved parties to the State of Tennessee’s Department of Children’s Services or with the appropriate law enforcement or other agency.

For more information on child abuse in the State of Tennessee, Mountain T.O.P. encourages you to visit the DCS website [here](#)

The Mountain T.O.P. Summer Staff has overall responsibility for all activities. Therefore, camp directions and expectations given by the staff are to be followed.

The Role of the Adult

During the Preparation Process

The role of the adult during the preparation process is very crucial. The preparation process is a time of learning together and preparing to be a team in ministry. The adult is often the person who sets the tone of the session by showing enthusiasm as well as seriousness about the importance of preparation. When youth see adults wanting to learn, grow, and prepare, they begin to understand the necessity of working through the material.

Because adults are full participants in the Mountain T.O.P. experience, it is important for adults to share in the preparation process with the youth. By involving adults in the preparation, they will not only feel a part of the group, but will also know what to expect when they arrive at camp. We hope that adults will help establish buy-in with the medical protocols and resultant program changes being made as a result of COVID-19.

At Camp and with the Camp Staff

The role of the adult at camp is one of support and partnership with the staff. It is important that all adults and staff work together so that the experience will be one of wholeness for everyone involved. The Mountain T.O.P. experience is designed for youth, with adults playing a supportive role. When youth feel ownership in the experience, they learn and grow more. We desire for our participants—no matter their age—to grow in their leadership skills, confidence, and spiritual depth. That doesn't happen unless the adults are invested and encouraging.

The adult is a role model for the youth. Therefore, we encourage all adults to help set a positive, uplifting, spiritual, and motivating attitude at camp so that the spiritual community concept will work! If there is a problem, the adult who demonstrates care, concern, and love for others during the situation is a powerful model for the youth. By keeping a positive outlook on the experience, adults teach youth a vital lesson in maturity.

Adults are expected to participate in 100% of the camp activities because they, just like staff and youth, are a part of the community forming process. When everyone plays, works, and worships together, people begin to see a Christian community at work in their lives. Everyone working for the same goals and objectives is the power behind a community that is working for God.

While Serving

We are intentional about calling the drivers "drivers," and not team leaders. The adult is a team member, which means that we encourage adults to let youth take responsibility and leadership within the team. An example of this might look like assigning a youth to be the safety coordinator for the day. Or, let the youth be the decision-makers for the group's worship station. This gives the youth a chance to experience leadership and taking responsibility.

The adult plays a significant role in challenging youth in this area. Letting the group make decisions together is an effective way of being a team member. Some adults have the tendency to play the role of decision maker and decide what the group should do. While letting go of the decision-making can be difficult, we encourage adults to let the leadership

formation be a group process so that this handful of individuals becomes a team, working together for the good of everyone. Adults who encourage and empower the group to make decisions and take responsibility will see a tremendous difference in the youth with whom they work.

We fully acknowledge that what we ask of our adults is not easy and it certainly requires a lot. However, we know that we are asking the right things. It can be a bit of a dance to learn when to step in and when to step back, when to empower and when to decide. Though our program may be called Youth Summer Ministry, we know that adults are learning and growing themselves, too.

