

Mountain T.O.P.

Registration Packet

Summer 2021



Mountain T.O.P.
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Greetings, Contact Person!

Welcome to the guide with the resources you'll need to register for Mountain T.O.P. in 2021! We are thrilled that you are considering a mission trip with us. We appreciate all the time, energy, and resources that you will be investing in coordinating a trip to Mountain T.O.P. It is no easy task but it certainly has a significant and meaningful impact on everyone involved. COVID-19 has changed our world and our programs along with it. We have made some important changes to Youth Summer Ministry as a result of the pandemic, which are outlined throughout the packet.

Here are a few important highlights about our programs:

- Churches will be staying together to create their teams, both for Service Project and Day Camp, instead of mixing together with other churches.
- We will be making only 100 spots available per week. We will open more spots as it is safe to do so. We will be offering 100% refunds for all COVID-19 related cancellations and our deposit policy has changed.
- In 2019, we lowered the minimum age for participation for Youth Summer Ministry (YSM) to rising 7th graders. However, to serve with Day Camp, participants must be rising 9th graders or older.

As the Contact Person, your responsibilities are:

- To communicate with the Mountain T.O.P. staff frequently,
- To ensure that payments and paperwork are submitted on time,
- To train your participants before arrival

I am here to talk about any questions or concerns you have; choose your method—call or email. I am here to serve alongside you in any way I can. Our hope is to offer more flexibility in our logistics process as we continue to adapt our programs for the ever-changing realities. More preparation materials and updated training guides will be released in early 2021.

It is by the grace of God that we continue to be part of the good work happening across the Cumberland Plateau. We can't wait to see you on the Mountain in 2021!

Thankful to serve with you,

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Welcome to Mountain T.O.P.

Mission

Through Christian community and faith-based relationships, we help meet the physical, spiritual, social, and emotional needs of all people we encounter. We see all four needs as equally important, and we meet those needs through Service Project and Day Camp. We serve in partnership with other agencies, churches, governments, businesses, and community leaders to help develop the communities in which we work.

Mountain T.O.P. values faith, transformation, stewardship, and connection. We approach our work from a Christian faith perspective but it is never a prerequisite for those who participate in our programs. We desire to operate in a way that aligns with the teachings of Jesus, acting in a way that centers the message of love and justice. Because we believe in the gospel, we desire to pursue the flourishing of all people in a holistic way. In all things, we take great care to wisely leverage our resources and cultivate generosity. We believe that connection is one of the greatest gifts within the Mountain T.O.P. community, and we seek to promote connection between people and God.

Mountain T.O.P. (Tennessee Outreach Project) is an interdenominational, non-profit Christian Mission affiliated with the Tennessee Conference of the United Methodist Church, dedicated to rural life ministry in the Cumberland Mountains of Tennessee. Each year we welcome groups that come from Methodist, Episcopal, Lutheran, Presbyterian, non-denominational backgrounds, among others.

Mountain T.O.P.'s 5 Focus Areas

- Eliminating Substandard Housing: to provide direct services and organizational support that addresses severe housing issues in our service area.
- Leadership: to foster growth among staff, participants, donors, and the community.
- Community Development: to engage in solutions with community partners for holistic and sustainable community growth.
- Education: to provide and support opportunities for lifelong learning and personal growth for all ages.
- Health: to promote lifestyles that support healthy choices.

Service Project

The scope of our service projects includes construction, painting, and yard work. However, doing home repair is about more than building a porch or clearing a yard. It's about the accessibility that is gained when a family now has a safe way to enter and exit their home. It's about how that entryway will serve as a much more significant entryway into a healthier, more sustainable, and more socially-connected lifestyle. It's

about providing youth the opportunity to learn about power tools and the power of social connection.

Day Camp

Building resilience, exploring community, reading, growing in healthy lives, playing, learning about Jesus—this sums up a week of Day Camp. Five days of Day Camp broadens horizons, brightens futures, and builds hope in youth ages 6-11 from Grundy County. Participants may visit local farms, churches, state parks, a historical society, and Sewanee: University of the South. These field trips give participants the opportunity to connect with their communities and understand the plethora of good things going on around them every day. Day Camp is intentional about pairing Youth Summer Ministry participants with the Day Camp children, giving the YSM participants the opportunity to grow in their leadership and mentorship skills. For this reason, we require that YSM participants be rising 9th graders or older.

Programming Philosophy

We desire to expose our participants to a variety of worship styles because we value the beauty of connecting with the Lord in different ways. Built into our daily schedule are four times to worship, either individually, in a small group, or as a whole community. Each day starts with an individual devotional time with material provided, during the day a staff member will lead a small group discussion on-site with the Youth Renewal Group (YRG), and each evening ends with a time of sharing and a time of corporate worship. Churches will also have an opportunity to meet together for a time of discussion and reflection once a week during free time.

Safety

Mountain T.O.P. is committed to creating a safe environment—physically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually—for all involved. Background checks are mandatory and are to be on file either at the church or with Mountain T.O.P. for all participants 18 years old and older. We trust that groups will appropriately screen their adult participants for the safety of the camp community. We have standards for appropriate adult behavior that are outlined at length in the Creating Safe Communities information, which is part of the Contact Person Resource Guide.

COVID-19 Protocols

We are paying attention to CDC guidelines and best practices recommended by the American Camping Association as we make plans for our programs in 2021. Based on the uncertainty surrounding the accessibility of a vaccine, we will not be requiring participants to vaccinate prior to coming to camp. Our health and safety protocols will be heavily influenced by non-pharmaceutical interventions that are within our capacity to manage. We will be limiting the number of participants in our camps. In 2021, we will be offering 100% refunds if a church or Mountain T.O.P. is forced to cancel our programs because of COVID-19.

Program Requirements

Youth Summer Ministry (YSM)

- Youth Summer Ministry participants must be **rising 7th graders or older**.
 - Participants in Day Camp must be at least **rising 9th graders or older**.
- Groups will **stay together** and create Youth Renewal Groups (YRGs) from within their own church for their service experience—both for Service Project and Day Camp. Further, churches will stay together for meal times and cabin assignments.
- Adult:Youth Ratio
 - There must be **1 adult (25 or older) for every 5 youth** (17 or younger).
 - Originally, Week 6 was specifically designated as a Safe Sanctuary week, which requires two adults per five youth. With churches now staying together, Safe Sanctuary requirements will be as needed. Churches signed up for any week can follow Safe Sanctuary requirements if their church necessitates such.
- Vehicles
 - Service Project
 - Ideally, there should be 1 vehicle for every 7 participants so a team can travel together. A team of 7 participants (youth and adults) is ideal for keeping everyone involved in the project and not overcrowding the homeowner's home. Groups of 5-8 are suitable for Service Project. If this is not obtainable based on your group's resources, please contact Rachael.
 - Day Camp
 - Ideally, there should be 1 vehicle for every 4 participants so a small group can travel to children's homes to provide a front yard program. Groups should be no larger than 5 people as not to overwhelm the ratio of participants to children. If this is not obtainable based on your group's resources, please contact Rachael.
 - Each group must provide the coolers, first aid kits, and the necessary Service Project tools or Day Camp materials, as listed in the Contact Person Resource Guide.
 - Background checks for all participants 18 years old and older are **mandatory**. These checks must be either on file at the adult participant's church or with Mountain T.O.P. and current within 3 years. If participants need Mountain T.O.P. to run a background check for them, they cost \$10/person.
- After January 15, payments previously paid for dropped spots are forfeited and cannot be applied towards the remainder of the group's balance. Groups that decrease in size after a payment due date still are responsible for the payments

for those dropped spots, and will be charged the full balance incurred as of the due date.

- Mountain T.O.P. does not discriminate on the basis of race, age, gender, creed, national origin, sexual orientation, or ability.
- The week is from 12:30 p.m. CST on Sunday to 10:00 a.m. CST on Saturday, no exceptions. Full participation is expected from all, at all times.

Dates & Fees

Summer Schedule

Week 1: June 13 - 19

Week 2: June 20 - 26

Week 3: June 27 - July 3

Week 4: July 4 - 10

Week 5: July 11 - 17

Week 6: July 18 - 24

Costs

- \$385: First-time churches regardless of payment method
- \$405: Returning churches who make all payments by **check**
- \$415: Returning churches who make all payments by **card**

Discounts

- Free: 1 Contact Person
- Free: 1 Clergy Person
- \$385: Former MTOP staff

Event	Deadline	Payment Amount
Priority Registration: October 1 General Registration: October 15	January 15	\$25/person – new church \$45/person – returning churches paying by check \$55/person – returning churches paying by card
2 nd Payment	March 15	\$180/person
3 rd Payment	May 15	\$180/person

*Churches who register later will have a modified payment plan that works for your group.

Scholarships Available

Mountain T.O.P. is offering a discounted camper fee for those who meet and agree to the following requirements. The intent of this scholarship is to make serving with Mountain T.O.P. as accessible as possible, especially for local and small churches who are serving with us for the first time. If awarded, groups will attend for \$250/participant.

Requirements

Churches applying for scholarships must meet at least one of the following:

- Located in Mountain T.O.P.'s Service Area: Grundy, Marion, White, Warren, Bledsoe, Sequatchie, and Van Buren counties of Tennessee
- Have an average Sunday attendance of 100 people or less

The number of scholarship spots is limited per week, and receivers of the discounted price will be awarded on a first come first serve basis. Preference will be given to first-time churches. Once your initial registration is received indicating that your church is applying for discounted fees, a link to a separate online application will be sent to you. If approved, an invoice and an adjusted payment plan will follow.

Registration Information

- Registration will open in two waves.
 - Priority Registration will be *exclusively* for churches who were signed up to come to camp in 2020. Registration for these churches will start on **October 1, 2020 at 10:00 am, CST.**
 - General Registration for all other groups will be available starting on **October 15, 2020 at 10:00 am, CST.**
- Once a registration is received, the Contact Person will be invoiced for the deposit amount. Deposits will not be due until **January 15, 2021.** We have changed this policy because we understand that churches may not be in the financial position to make such payments. Further, churches can decrease their group number between the time of registration and January 15, 2021 without financial penalty.
 - We highly suggest collecting these deposits from participants in advance to encourage financial investment in the trip, and avoid drops later in the year.
- **After January 15, payments previously paid for dropped spots are forfeited and cannot be applied towards the remainder of the group's balance.** Groups that decrease in size after a payment due date still are responsible for the payments for those dropped spots, and will be charged the full balance incurred as of the due date.
- We encourage groups to **register conservatively**, then add more participants as they confirm them and as space allows.
- If a church or Mountain T.O.P. is forced to cancel any of our programs due to COVID-19 or any other health crisis, churches will receive a 100% refund.
- The financial guidelines have been developed in order to operate responsibly and make decisions as far as staffing, open facilities, food purchasing, etc., in a timely manner. This fee includes all meals, lodging, project materials, programming, and camp staffing.

Registration & Payment Instructions

To Get Started

- The Contact Person of the group will register on behalf of the entire group. Individuals within the group will not register for themselves.
- Please use mountain-top.org/camp-registration to begin, or any of the “Register Now” links on our website.
- Begin by choosing your desired camp week. Once on this specific camp week’s page, select the type of group you are registering.
- Next, you will select the quantity of participants you are registering. Please ensure this is your TOTAL number, including all youth, adults, the Contact Person, and a clergy person, if applicable. When you click “Add to cart,” the registration questions will pop up.
- Please fill out all the information as asked.
 - Please have a second choice camp week ready. Since we are limiting the number of available spots to 100 per week, we may have to wait-list you or move your group to another week.
 - The number of Service Project participants + the number of Day Camp participants should equal the number of participants selected in the first step. Again, these numbers should include all youth and adults.
 - Each group can use up to 2 free spots, one for the Contact Person and one for an on-staff clergy person. It is assumed that all groups will use their Contact Person discount. (Even if the person organizing the trip does not attend, an alternative individual will be the in-camp contact and receive that discount.) If your Contact Person is also clergy, please select “1 Contact Person.”
 - Once all of the questions are answered, please click “Add to Cart,” at which point a black box will appear on the top right of your screen. Click on that black box to proceed to the shopping cart, then onto “check out.”
- If you have chosen to pay later, your subtotal will stay at \$0.00 and you will not be charged during the checkout process. No discount codes are needed. Your discounts will be reflected in the invoice that is emailed to you.
- If you have chosen to pay now, your subtotal will reflect your deposit fee times the number of participants. During checkout, you may use the following discount codes, as needed.
 - Returning churches:
 - 1 Contact Person: CPFREE
 - 1 Contact Person + 1 Clergy Person: CPX2
 - First-time churches:
 - 1 Contact Person: NEWCP
 - 1 Contact Person + 1 Clergy Person: NEWCPX2