

Mountain T.O.P.

Team Training Materials

Summer 2024



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Welcome to Training!

Welcome to the Team Training Materials. We are excited to provide you with a three-part training guide that will introduce your group to the basics of Mountain T.O.P., what to expect in a camp week, and what Service Project and Day Camp are all about.

We cannot fully express how important training is to this entire process. Groups who are prepared and trained have much better experiences in camp. This isn't simply because they know what to expect, but they have a better understanding about **why** and **how** Mountain T.O.P. does what we do. Sure, the *what* is important—what will we be doing, what will the week look like—and it will be covered in these sessions, but having a grasp on the *why* and the *how* will significantly shape the frame of mind and heart that participants arrive with. Furthermore, we **honor those we are serving** when we choose to invest in learning who they are, what their context is, and what assets they bring to the table. Promoting the dignity of all people is of utmost importance to us.

The team training sessions are divided into three parts and are designed to be flexible. Throughout the materials, there are suggestions about how to adapt these sessions for virtual spaces if your group is not always able to meet in-person. Please make the safest choices when considering the format of your training.

Mountain T.O.P. values faith, transformation, stewardship, and connection. You will see these values lived out in the way we work and worship together. We are motivated by the love of God to pursue the flourishing of all people. We are intentional about leveraging our resources and relationships in order to bring people together and achieve significant transformation. What starts out as a request for home repair assistance or a registration for Day Camp begins to take a new form as the Mountain T.O.P. staff develop a relationship with the family, and eventually graft volunteers into that relationship as well. By the end of a season when the project has finally been completed and the last van route finished, something incredible has been left behind: hope.

On behalf of the Mountain T.O.P. staff, we look forward to serving, safely, alongside you soon!

With gratitude,
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Session 1: Session Outline

Meet Mountain T.O.P.

Purpose of Session 1:

To learn about the basics about Mountain T.O.P.'s philosophy of ministry. Introduction to the 4 Needs, partnership, and our organizational values.

Importance of Session 1:

To help participants understand why and how Mountain T.O.P. meets the expressed needs of those with whom we work. This helps them have a humble approach to service. When we understand the area and the people we are working with, we can extend greater compassion, do more thoughtful work, and be helpful instead of hurtful.

Materials Needed for Session 1:

- Projector/computer/speakers - to show video
- Handouts from the Appendix:
 - Faith
 - Transformation
 - Stewardship
 - Connection

Session Schedule:

- Welcome: 5 minutes
- 4 Needs & Partnership Discussion: 10 - 15 minutes
- Values stations activity: 20 minutes - 1 hour (depending on the method)
- Debrief & closing: 5-10 min

Total Time: 1-2 hours

Session 1: Meet Mountain T.O.P.

Welcome:

Introduce the session to the group; include the purpose and importance of the session, and why training is important to the Mountain T.O.P. process.

Share video with participants: [An Introduction to Mountain T.O.P.](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tj2l4idHhjY)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tj2l4idHhjY>

>> *Facilitator:* This video will introduce the group to several different aspects of Mountain T.O.P., some of which will be discussed in more depth in other sessions. For now, we will look at the major themes of Mountain T.O.P.

4 Needs & Partnership Discussion

Discuss:

- What are the 4 types of needs that Mountain T.O.P. meets?
 - What is an example of each of those 4 types of needs?
- What does it mean for Mountain T.O.P. to be a partnership ministry?
 - What is the difference between doing something “for” someone and doing something “with” someone?
 - Why is our language important when speaking about those we serve?
- Soup kitchen vs. potluck imagination:
 - Ask everyone to imagine being in a soup kitchen.
 - What does it look like? What does it feel like to be there, either being served or serving? Who else is there with you? What does it feel like to not have a choice in what you eat or to have to rely on someone for a meal?
 - Now, ask everyone to imagine being at a potluck.
 - What does it look like? What does it feel like to be there, seeing everyone contribute a dish or a skill to make that event happen? What does it feel like to be able to bring something to the table?
 - What do these two places teach about the service we’re about to participate in?
 - Which format is more effective? More dignifying? Honors everyone involved?

>> *Facilitator:* You could even ask youth to act this activity out. Please be sure that the conversation is kind to those who may be accessing the services of a soup kitchen or food pantry.

- Reflection question (answers don’t have to be shared aloud): What do the 4 types of needs look like in your life?

The Values of Mountain T.O.P.

This activity will help participants understand Mountain T.O.P.'s values and why they are important, as well as giving more context for the Cumberland Plateau area in which they will be working. As you will see, some of the values show up more than once because they are often interrelated!

This activity has 4 parts or stations: faith, transformation, stewardship, and connection. Each station has a handout that can be found in the Appendix. The values do not need to be discussed in any particular order. There are a few different ways you can cover this material:

Jigsaw Method: Break your group into 4 smaller groups. Each small group is assigned to one value. They will spend about 15 - 20 minutes reading and discussing the material for their specific value. At the end of that designated time, each group reports to the large group what their learnings were. This method can be replicated easily if the training is done virtually by sending groups into breakout rooms for their designated time and then bringing everyone together for the reporting process.

Stations Method: Break your group into 4 smaller groups. The small groups will spend about 15-20 minutes at each station covering its reading and discussion questions. The small groups will work their way through all 4 stations together.

Debrief & Closing

- What was one thing you learned from these stations? Did anything surprise you?
- How will you carry out or benefit from each of these values?

Below are a few different ideas of ways your group can be praying for the Mountain T.O.P. community, as well as your own!

Pray for...

The health of the families of our community—their physical, social, emotional, and spiritual health;

The flourishing of all people—that all would know and experience love and justice;

Our own hearts as we humbly get to know the families and children we serve, that we do not know what is best for them but we do care about their stories.

Session 2: Outline

The "What" & "Why" of a Week at Mountain T.O.P.

Purpose of Session 2:

To learn about the unique characteristics of Mountain T.O.P.'s program and be introduced to the aspects of a Mountain T.O.P. camp week/experience.

Importance of Session 2:

To help participants understand specifics about the Mountain T.O.P. experience and why each element is important to the overall experience. This helps them to have appropriate expectations prior to their week at camp.

Materials Needed for Session 2:

- "Week at a Glance" - copies for each person (use the handout appropriate for the program you're attending)
- "Special Characteristics of a Mountain T.O.P. Week" - 2 copies (1 to cut up and 1 to check answers)
- Pens/Pencils/Markers
- Chart paper or white board for Special Characteristics activity
- Paper for everyone to draw on for worship time
- Bibles
- Music for worship time (can be song lyrics, YouTube videos, etc.)

Session Schedule:

- Welcome: 2 minutes
- Week-at-a-Glance: 10 minutes
- Special Characteristics of Mountain T.O.P. Week: 20 minutes
- Community-Building Game: 40 minutes
- Worship/Devotional Time: 30 minutes

Total Time: ~ 2 hours

Session 2:

The "What" & "Why" of a Week at Mountain T.O.P.

Welcome:

Introduce the session to the group; include the purpose and importance of the session.

Week at a Glance Activity:

This activity will allow newcomers to get acquainted with what a week at Mountain T.O.P. looks like, and allow returners to share their experiences with the group.

Pass out the "The Week at a Glance" document to each person. Make sure you use the handout specific for your program.

Instructions:

- Put question marks next to words or phrases you have questions about
- Put stars next to words or phrases you think are important
- Put exclamation points next to the things you are excited about (this is a chance for returners to share a little, and new participants to find something specific to get excited about).

Give them a few minutes to read and make notes. Once they've done so, ask them to share with the group. Ask returners to help answer any questions that newcomers might have or share how their former question marks turned into exclamation points.

If doing this activity virtually, provide a way for everyone to see the handout, either by dispersing via email or screen-sharing. As you talk through the schedule, have participants utilize the "Reactions" feature on Zoom to express their feelings about the different events.

Special Characteristics Activity

Print out two copies of the "Special Characteristics" handout: one to cut into squares, one to check answers. Hand out the pieces to your participants and have them match the "Characteristic" with all of its details: "What is it," "When is it," "Why it's important," and "Other notes." You could do this by having the individuals find their 4 other group members. Or, create a large chart on a white board or newsprint and ask participants to match their piece with the correct space. Keep the "Characteristic" in its column and fill in the rest.

If doing this activity virtually, assign a different characteristic to a small break-out room. Have the group discuss the details of the characteristic, then designate one person to illustrate what that characteristic would look like. Regroup and share the illustrations!

Community-Building Game: Around the Clock

As we've seen from the characteristics we've just presented, building community and getting to know each other in new ways is an important aspect of Mountain T.O.P. This game will help us to get to know the members of our group a little better.

Hand out a writing utensil and notecard to each participant, and instruct them to draw a clock with all 12 numbers on it. Make sure they have enough room to write names around the clock. After they have their clock drawn, everyone will mingle and make appointments for each of their hours. As they make appointments, they will write that person's name at the designated time. For example, if Megan makes an appointment with Matt at 2:00, they write each other's names at the 2:00 slot. (If you have an odd number of people, you can have a group of 3. If you have a group of fewer than 12, partners can have more than one appointment together.)

Once everyone has all 12 appointments booked, the facilitator will call out a time. Everyone meets up with their partner to answer the icebreaker question that was asked to the group. For example, if you call out 2:00, Megan and Matt will meet to share their answers. Some example questions have been provided below—feel free to create your own! Give each pair 2-3 minutes to share before moving on to the next hour.

If this activity needs to be done virtually, don't worry about having people make appointments. Instead put 2 people in break-out rooms for different rounds, making sure that the rooms are recreated so the pairs are changed each time!

1:00 - Why did you decide to come to Mountain T.O.P.?

2:00 - What is something that you learned in Session 1 that still sticks out for you?

3:00 - Why is serving other people important to you?

4:00 - What is your favorite thing about your community? What is something you would change?

5:00 - What are you most nervous about going to Mountain T.O.P.?

6:00 - If you could compare where you are in life right now to a season, what season would you choose? Why?

7:00 - Tell your partner about a time you went through a difficult time in life. What did you learn from that time?

8:00 - What is your favorite thing about your home? What is something you would change?

9:00 - What are you most looking forward to while serving at Mountain T.O.P.?

10:00 - When are you at your best?

11:00 - What is something that you really enjoy learning about?

12:00 - Does your family have traditions? If so, what traditions are important to you? If not, what kind of tradition would you like to have in your family?

>> *Facilitator:* This game helped us learn more about each other, right? Sometimes building Christian community involves finding out that things we thought were true about someone are actually false. Sometimes it takes slowing down and having one conversation at a time.

- Have you ever had someone believe something about you that wasn't true?
- Was it hard to move past that false belief that people had about you?
- What was it like to get to know one person at a time? Is this something that comes easily to you or not?

During this activity, we also learn that each of our understandings of what “normal” is may be different from someone else’s. What we may assume is a tradition for everyone is unique just to our family. This practice helps us to learn about and appreciate the differences between ourselves and others, without assuming they are weird, offensive, or wrong.

When serving at Mountain T.O.P., we will be broken up into Youth Renewal Groups (YRGs). This group is a mix of people from all of the churches in camp that week. The YRGs will be a mix of ages, gender, church, and Mountain T.O.P./mission experience. While you may not know each other at the start of camp, spending a week serving, sharing meals, and worshiping together has the potential to take those friendships to such deeper levels!

Worship Time

>> *Facilitator note:* you may want to move the group to a different room/location to help them transition into this time of worship. Soft music/candles optional.

Begin this time with prayer (you can ask a youth to lead the prayer if they feel comfortable) and singing a couple of worship songs. Have a volunteer musician lead this time, or just sing along to YouTube videos.

Ask participants to read aloud from Romans 12:1-2, preferably The Message translation. If you have a youth (or a few) that feels comfortable, prepare them to give a short explanation of the passage to the group.

One of the important metaphors in this psalm is God as our shelter, as our place of belonging. Take some time to discuss the sense of belonging that has been created within your youth group or mission team.

- Is our group a safe place for everyone to be fully themselves, fully respected, and fully loved?
- Is our group a brave place for everyone to be challenged, practice courage, and do the right thing?
- How can we make our group both a place of safety and bravery? How can we make sure there’s a place for everyone?

Close your time together with more singing and having a youth to lead a closing prayer.

Pray for...

The new relationships we will make while at camp;

For ever-deepening relationships within this group, as we prepare together, travel together, and serve together.

Session 3: Outline

Service Project & Day Camp

Program Specifics

Purpose of Session 3:

To learn about the unique characteristics of the specific program in which you will be participating.

Importance of Session 3:

To help participants be prepared for the Service Project or Day Camp experience before they arrive at Mountain T.O.P.

Materials Needed for Session 3:

- Service Project:
 - 2 copies of each project picture page (one cut into squares, one to check answers)
 - Copies of “Materials Philosophy” document
 - Pictures of tools (or actual tools!) for tool petting zoo
- Day Camp:
 - Bibles
 - Items found in the van bucket (See the Contact Person Resource Guide)
 - Writing utensils
 - Journals (see suggested list under “Prayer Journals” activity)

Session Schedule:

- Welcome: 2 minutes
- Service Project: 1 hour, 25 minutes
 - Substandard Housing: 10 minutes
 - Introduction to types of projects: 15 minutes
 - Materials Stewardship: 10 minutes
 - Tool Time: 30 minutes
 - Interacting with families: 15 minutes
- Day Camp: 1 hour, 25 minutes
 - Introduction to Day Camp outcomes: 20 minutes
 - Planning & Practicing Curriculum: 45 minutes
 - Interacting with youth: 10 minutes
 - Prayer Journal: 10 minutes

Session 3:

Service Project & Day Camp

Program Specifics

>> *Facilitator note:* During this session, there are separate activities for those who will be participating in Service Project and Day Camp. If your group is split between SP & DC participants, you can hold both sessions simultaneously if there is another adult who can help facilitate. Otherwise, you can have all participants do both training sessions in order to gain an understanding of all aspects of Mountain T.O.P., or you will need to hold the sessions at different times.

Welcome:

Introduce the session to the group, reading the purpose & importance.
Lead the group (or have a youth lead) in an opening prayer.

At this point, you will split off into two separate groups, if necessary.

Session 3: Service Project

Mountain T.O.P. wants to continue to be more responsive to the needs of the families in our service area. Typically Mountain T.O.P. has a set of standard projects that are completed by volunteers; however, not every project fits into the standard design. When projects deviate from the Field Guide, additional instructions will be provided. In order to be as responsive to the needs of local families, we want to maximize the skills of our volunteers. This is why making note of those with construction experience on the group's roster is particularly important! We want to steward the skill of our volunteers in order to provide the highest quality of work.

>> *Facilitator:* Before we get started talking about specific projects, let's talk about housing as a whole. One of Mountain T.O.P.'s focus areas is to eliminate substandard housing. Substandard housing isn't just housing that's unattractive or outdated. It's housing that poses a risk to the health, safety or physical well-being of its occupants and its neighbors and visitors. According to a report published by the University of California Berkeley Health Impact Group, substandard housing is associated with increased risk of disease, crime, social isolation and decreased mental health.

But first, what is substandard housing? What is severe housing?

- **Substandard:** Housing that does not provide complete protection from the outside environment and is not conducive to the resident's lifestyle (accessibility), or is unlikely to continue to do so for the foreseeable future.
- **Severe:** Housing that does not provide for resident's basic needs and proves to be a danger to their physical and emotional well-being.

Discuss in small groups:

- Why do you think these risks are associated with substandard housing? What are the implications of these risks on daily life?
- Why do you think it's important to spend time meeting the relational needs (social, emotional, and spiritual) of the families we work with?
- Imagine a stranger showing up on your porch and pointing out all the flaws in your house. How would that make you feel? What would be your reaction?
- What is the impact of working with "expressed" needs versus "assumed" needs? Which is more helpful? How can either be hurtful?

Can you identify which of these houses is severe / substandard / standard?

- Scenario 1: A trailer with no porch or proper steps coming from the front door. Occupants have no physical disabilities.
 - **Answer: Substandard** - Whether the individuals have mobility issues or not, the need for a safe entry/exit is key.
- Scenario 2: Small, three bedroom home with a kitchen and one bathroom. Three generations live here together: the grandfather, husband and wife, and their 4 children all under the age of 9.

- Answer: Substandard - While we don't know of any other physical conditions at this home, overcrowding is a marker of substandard housing. To put it simply, there should be a room for every person.
- Scenario 3: Home built in the 1950s with little to no insulation and no consistent source of heat.
 - Answer: Severe - While improper insulation by itself is a marker of substandard housing, the lack of heat makes this home severe. Homes can have heat but no AC and still be standard.
- Scenario 4: Brick, 1 story home with new vinyl windows and metal roof, all working utilities. Resident has recently been confined to a wheelchair, but there is no accessibility ramp.
 - Answer: Substandard - While this scenario is almost identical to the last, everyone needs a way they can safely and independently come and go from their home.
- Scenario 5: Brick, 1 story home with new vinyl windows and metal roof, all working utilities.
 - Answer: Standard - Given this information, everything in the home is how you would like it!
- Scenario 6: Mobile home with no underpinning or septic hook up. Family does not use their bathroom in the house and instead uses their family's bathroom next door.
 - Answer: Severe - Lack of a functioning bathroom moves this home from just being substandard because of the lack of underpinning, to severe.
- Scenario 7: Mobile home built in 1980 with water leaking in all windows and doors, causing soft spots on floors in those areas.
 - Answer: Substandard - Structural issues that affect the safety of those in the home make this scenario substandard. Those soft spots becoming large holes in the floor could move the home to severe.

Introduction to Types of Projects

Participants will be completing three main types of service projects at Mountain T.O.P.: construction, painting, and yard work. This first activity will help them think through the step-by-step process for painting and three different types of construction projects. This will give them an overview of how to do the work and make connections between the different types of construction projects, as well as help them think through each step before they start, which will be crucial on the worksite.

>> *Facilitator:* In this activity, you'll be given pictures of the types of projects you may be working on at Mountain T.O.P. There will be several pictures for each project, and you'll need to put them in order, from beginning to end. Thinking through the whole project and planning out how you're going to do it before you get started is an important skill that you'll use at Mountain T.O.P., which will help you use your resources wisely as well as prevent potential mistakes. Let's do an easy one together as an example.

[*Model with painting example.*] Any questions? We'll split up into 3 groups. After everyone is finished with their first project, we'll switch projects so everyone will have a chance to do all of them.

Put the steps (pictures from the field guide) in sequential order. Then youth and adults rotate to sort the steps for the following project types: Porch, Porch Roof, and Shed. When groups are finished, they can check their answers.

After groups have rotated through all 3 types of projects, debrief and share:

- Did you see any similarities between the different types of construction projects?
- Why is each kind of project important in helping others have healthy homes? Why do you think these are projects worth doing?
- What makes you nervous about the projects? What are you excited about?

Materials Stewardship Philosophy

This section will help to reiterate Mountain T.O.P.'s philosophy of partnership as it relates to Service Project and using materials on the worksite appropriately.

Share the "Materials Philosophy" document with the group.

- a. Remind participants about the partnership philosophy that was discussed in Session 1. All the families that Mountain T.O.P. works with have contributed in some way, often buying materials with their own money.
- b. Ask participants: What are some of the materials we use on the worksite? How can we be a good steward of those materials? [measure twice, cut once, etc.] Remind them that thinking through each step of the process before they start (like they just did with the project sorting activity) is the best way to ensure they don't make mistakes and waste materials.

Tool Time - Tool "Petting Zoo"

This section will introduce participants to some of the tools they may be using during their week at Mountain T.O.P., so they feel more comfortable when they get to the worksite. Need some video resources? Check out the Training Hands Academy channel on YouTube!

If you or other church members have any of the tools listed below, it would be great to bring them in as examples. Otherwise, you can use the pictures on the following page.

Instructions: Much like an animal petting zoo helps small children get introduced to and be comfortable around lots of different types of animals, a tool petting zoo helps us get introduced to different kinds of tools that we may be using at Mountain T.O.P.

- a. We'll start by reading the "zoo rules" - these are general rules for all tools that help us to stay safe on the worksite. (Go over the "Tool Safety Training" document, especially the safety guidelines.)
- b. Now we'll take some time to get to know our tools. Each person (or small group) will research a tool or tools and share what they have learned with the group. You'll be researching each tool as if it were an animal, and answering the questions below. To find the answers, you can ask friends in your group or use your smartphone.
- c. Each youth/small group shares their tool with the group.

TOOL	What is this tool's habitat? (On what kind of worksite would you find it?)	What does this tool do? (Which projects or parts of the project would you use this?)	How do you care for this tool?	What are the dangers of this tool? What can cause this tool to attack or die?	What does this tool "eat?"
Circular saw	Construction	Cutting any type of lumber (cross cuts and rip cuts)	Make sure you are aware of the power cord; change blade when dull; never use in the rain	Must know where the blade and guard are; can kick-back when blade is dull or wood pinches blade	Wood, electricity
Ladder	Construction or painting	Safely reach areas out of reach	Ensure stable ground, that step ladders are locked into place and that extension ladders are not too steep	Dangerous when moving ladder improperly or overreaching when on it; Standing on the top rung	Heights
Drill	Construction	Drive fasteners (screws) into wood or pre-drill holes for nails	When pre-drilling, go at a 90 degree angle to the wood so bits don't break; avoid use in the rain	If bits get stuck in wood, the drill will still want to turn in your hand, hurting your wrist; Bits will be hot to the touch when in use	Wood, bits, screws, electricity
Sawhorse	Construction	Support for lumber being cut	Ensure legs are extended and everything is on stable solid ground	If cutting between the sawhorses, wood will pinch the saw blade. Always cut on the outside of both horses	
Reciprocating saw	Construction	Good for demo work, cuts through wood and nails	Wear safety glasses while in use; ensure sharp blade and be aware of what you are asking it to cut through	Only use if comfortable, they are powerful tools!	Wood, nails
Hand saw	Construction	Cuts lumber where power saws may not be as safe (top of posts already set in ground)	Keep sharp and always have it ready in an emergency	Using a hand tool can tire you and make you lose focus	Wood, muscles

>> *Facilitator Note:* The tools in the zoo are not an exhaustive list of those that will be in the van bucket, or even used on a worksite. This would be a great time to assemble van buckets so Service Project participants are familiar with the different components of the van buckets.

Interacting with Families On the Worksite

Mountain T.O.P. many service projects are outside. Our “job” on the worksite involves not just the physical labor of building, painting, or doing yard work, but meeting the social, emotional, and spiritual needs of families in the community as well. Those other needs are no less important than the physical needs. In all things, we want to be promoting the dignity of the homeowners we are serving. This includes paying attention to our language—for example, we say we work “with” families, not “for” them—act as humble guests rather than saviors, be a gracious listener, and respectful partner.

Ask youth to name the 4 needs they will be meeting at Mountain T.O.P., which they learned about in the first session. How will your involvement in Service Project be meeting each of the needs? How does your involvement in Service Project fit into each of Mountain T.O.P.’s four values?

Alternately, ask everyone to share a time when they’ve had the opportunity to spend time with someone who is different from them. What was that like? What did you learn? What needs did you meet or did the other meet for you?

Connect to Home

To obtain additional experience with construction projects and worksite safety, find a small service project your group could complete in your own community. Here are some ideas:

- Contribute to a facility improvement project at your church
- Advertise to your church members or local community that you’re looking for small service projects and schedule times to visit homes and complete a project
- Build benches, picnic tables, trash/recycling receptacles, bookshelves in small groups. These could be used at church, at home, or for a community organization/businesses.

Close this session with prayer (ask youth to lead if they feel comfortable).

Pray for...

Safety and alertness while working on projects;

Patience and endurance when projects don’t go entirely the way we want them to go;

Courage to try new skills and persistence when we don’t get things right the first time.

Session 3: Day Camp

Introduction to Day Camp Outcomes

>> *Facilitator:* Day Camp is not just a VBS or a daycare or babysitting. Day Camp is a program that teaches resilience through the love of Jesus Christ. Mountain T.O.P. utilizes a curriculum for Day Camp that is based on social and emotional learning. This curriculum encompasses the themes of resilience and social connectedness, which are unique to a Mountain T.O.P. experience. During a camp week you will not hear the phrase “social and emotional learning,” but you will lead and participate in activities that are directly tied to a trait that supports this type of learning. Social and emotional learning builds our ability to integrate skills, attitudes, and behaviors to deal effectively and ethically with daily tasks and challenges.

Resilience

- When you think of the word “resilience” what other words come to mind?
- We use these basic definitions:
 - In the physical sciences: the ability for material objects to resume their original shape upon being stretched or bent.
 - In people: the ability to bounce back after encountering difficulty
- What objects do you think represent resilience well? (rubber bands, Slinky’s, bouncy balls, Jell-O, etc.) What characteristics do they have that we have? What would it look like for us to be resilient like these objects?
- Why would teaching resilience be important?
 - Teaching/fostering resilience helps young people address the underlying issues that become barriers to an abundant life.
 - Resilience doesn’t know socioeconomic barriers. EVERYONE benefits from learning to be more resilient, including us.
 - It is the lasting effect we can have on young people living in tough environments.

>> *Facilitator:* One primary way we build resilience is through social connectedness. Let’s take a look at what that is.

Social Connectedness

- When you think of “social connectedness” what other words come to mind?
- Share definitions and examples: the measure of how people come together and interact
 - At an individual level, social connectedness involves the quality and number of connections one has with other people in a social circle of family, friends, and acquaintances.
 - Going beyond these individual-level concepts, it involves relationships beyond one’s social circles and even to other communities.
- Why is it important that we are socially connected to our communities?
 - We are created to be in community. It’s biblical/biological.

- Support networks of people build strength and protect during times of stress and danger.
- Connections encourage us to give to others.
- Social connectedness reinforces other resilience factors as well as promoting specific moral ethics like trust, healthy competition, reciprocal support, common cause, community and altruism.
- What are the dangers of not being socially connected?
 - High levels of stress, depression, and PTSD
 - Higher incidents of physical health issues
- What will be important strategies when delivering the Day Camp program in a way that promotes social connectedness while staying physically distant?

Planning & Practicing Curriculum!

As was mentioned in the introduction, the YRG will be responsible for planning and delivering the daily activities for the children in front yard Day Camp. Each day will have its own theme that fits under the overarching theme, "Cultivate" inspired by Galatians 6:9. The activities that you plan will be repeated at every stop along your van route that day. Each stop will include the following:

- A brief introduction to the daily theme
- Bible story that connects to the daily theme
- Craft that illustrates a visual aspect of the daily theme
- Games
- Songs
- Time writing in the prayer journal

For practice, work in small groups of 3-4 people to put together a plan for a 45-minute session. Use the passage Ecclesiastes 3:1-14 as your inspiration. (This was our 2020 theme!) Identify one season and build your activities around that season. You could use the natural seasons (winter, spring, summer, fall) to talk about how God is with us no matter the seasons we experience. Or, you could use some of the different examples listed in the passage to talk about how sometimes we experience happy things and sad things at the same time, and that is okay. Be creative! Remember the resources that you'll have in your van bucket when planning your games or crafts. Also, consider that most children will be between the ages of 6-11, but be prepared for younger siblings or older siblings to be present and participate, too! How might you adapt your plan if you have children that are younger or older?

After you have your content and activities chosen, imagine you were going to be leading this session at 4-5 different homes. Consider who would lead each part. Would group members take turns leading different parts of the plan at each house, or would the same person lead the same activity each time? Remember that you'll be planning and leading all the activities for all 5 days of camp so there will be plenty of opportunities to try different formats of leading. Once parts are assigned, practice leading the other members of your mission team through your activities! If you have people who are participating in Service Project, this would be an excellent time to demonstrate the work you'll be doing with Day Camp!

Prayer Journal

>> *Facilitator:* Self-awareness, the ability to accurately recognize our emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence our behavior, is one of the core values of social and emotional learning. One way we teach self-awareness during Day Camp is through prayer journaling. Through journaling our prayers, we are expanding our ability to accurately assess our strengths and limitations, with a well-grounded sense of confidence, optimism, and a “growth mindset” anchored in our relationship with God.

Give the group time to reflect on the following questions to create a prayer journal that can be used throughout your time preparing for Mountain T.O.P. and continue after the mission experience. Questions may be answered with words or drawings - really in any way imaginable. Encourage the group to be open to the ways God is speaking to them.

- Who is God to me? How do I see God in this world?
- How do I listen best to God?
- What do I need to thank God for?
- What am I worried about?
- How is God asking me to share the love of Christ?

Suggested Materials: Journaling can be as simple as a pen and paper! This list is to help you brainstorm on the appropriate type of journaling for your group.

- Journal - spiral notebook, booklet, etc.
- Markers, Colored pencils, Crayons
- Magazines - make a prayer collage
- Glue
- Scissors
- Scrapbook supplies
- Craft supplies

Interacting with Youth

Our “job” during the day involves not just playing games and singing songs, but also meeting the social, emotional, and spiritual needs of the children. No need is any less important than the other. In all things, we want to be promoting the dignity of the families we are working with. This includes paying attention to our language—for example, we say we work “with” families, not “for” them—act as humble guests rather than saviors, be a gracious listener, and respectful partner.

Ask youth to name the 4 needs they will be meeting at Mountain T.O.P., which they learned about in the first session. How will your involvement in Day Camp be meeting each of the needs? How does your involvement in Day Camp fit into each of Mountain T.O.P.’s four values?

Since the Day Camp program will take place at the homes of children, parents may be present with their children—this is okay! Feel free to include them in the conversation and activities so the whole family is involved.

Connect to Home

To obtain additional experience with working with young children, find a way your group could serve in your own community. The children you will be working with in Day Camp are typically 6-11 years old. Here are some ideas:

- Participate in your church's (or another church's) Vacation Bible School program
- Volunteer to help with the nursery or children's Sunday School
- Connect with a local school's after school programs by tutoring or mentoring
- Host a Parent's Night Out for your church. High school youth will provide childcare for an evening so parents can have time to themselves.

Pray for...

The children we will meet in Grundy County;

That we will all grow in our resilience skills, that when we face hard things we will find the resources and strength to work through those challenges;

Patience, kindness, and gentleness as we work with children;

Gratitude for our own social networks and the people who support us!

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Value 1: Faith

At Mountain T.O.P., we are motivated by our faith in Christ and take seriously the example that Jesus set for us. At this station, we're going to look at a few passages from the Bible and see what they have to teach about interacting with others. You'll probably hear some of these same verses being read while you're at camp!

Deuteronomy 6:4 - 5

Matthew 4:18 - 20

Matthew 25:34 - 40

Luke 10:25 - 37

After reading all the passages, discuss the following questions:

- What does it mean to love God? What does it look like to love God? Be specific!
- What is the difference between being motivated to serve God because of pride and being motivated by love?
- What themes do you see in these passages? Try to summarize the messages of these passages into 1-2 sentences.
- Try finishing these sentences: I can love God today by.... I can love others today by...
- Think about what motivates you to serve others. How can you align yourself more with the example of Jesus?

Value 2: Transformation

One reason why transformation is so important to Mountain T.O.P. is because we care about the flourishing of all people. But what does it mean for people to flourish? Let's take a look at the definition of flourishing: *to grow or develop in a healthy or vigorous way, especially as the result of a particularly favorable environment*. Mountain T.O.P. wants to be part of people's journey in helping them be the healthiest, fullest version of themselves, fully growing into and living as who God created them to be. We do our best to create spaces where people are encouraged to be brave so they can continue to grow.

Take some time to [read this article](#) from the *Grundy County Herald*, our local newspaper. This article, "Grundy County's own piece of the Civil Rights Movement: Highlander Folk School," tells the story of the Highlander Folk School, which used to be in Monteagle, TN, not too far from Camp Cumberland Pines. You can use the link above or go to grundycountyherald.com and search the title.

After reading, discuss the following questions with your group:

- Are there names of famous civil rights leaders you recognize in this article? What have you learned about those leaders?
- Why did the Highlander Folk School exist? How did their work help the Black community who have long been denied rights to education, proper housing, and voting?
- Sometimes, when we are trying to pursue important justice-related work, other people want to stand in the way and stop it from happening. This happened both when a senator from Mississippi and the Tennessee Attorney General tried, and succeeded to close down the school with false claims. What can be some of the challenges we encounter when trying to help others grow? How did the school overcome those challenges?
- If you have time remaining, research what civil rights action may have happened in your community. How does your church or community seek to dignify the lives of African Americans?
- What does it mean to be complicit in undignifying ways? Can you identify ways that you or your community have been complicit with injustice?

Value 3: Stewardship

What is stewardship? Let's start with a definition:

- the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care

Sometimes "stewardship" is used when asking members of the congregation to support the life and ministries of the church with their money or time. Sometimes we use "stewardship" to talk about the way we take care of nature and the environment. Have you heard this word used before?

At Mountain T.O.P., we use "stewardship" to talk about a lot of different things. We want to be people who take care of the donations that we are given—either money, time, or materials. Many of the resources we use to complete our home repair projects are built using donated materials, like lumber and paint. Our organization is dependent on financial donations and volunteers giving their time to serve others. Typically, we use "stewardship" to talk about things, but what do you think it looks like to be a good steward of relationships? For Mountain T.O.P., we want to steward our relationships well by treating our homeowners, community partners, volunteers, and staff with respect, dignity, and love. This is why we find partnership to be so important. We want everyone to be encouraged to offer their gifts to the work we do.

Read 1 Corinthians 12 and discuss the following questions:

- Why is it important that we all are different and have different gifts? What gets lost if we are too similar?
- When working with a team that shares the same goal, why is it important that people are able to contribute to that goal in different ways?
- When working with a team—it could be while playing sports, on a school assignment, helping with a church activity—what are the roles that you feel most drawn to? Where do you feel like you are more able to contribute?
- If you have been to Mountain T.O.P. before, consider the ways you've offered your gifts to Service Project, Day Camp, or worship before. What advice do you have for first-time participants in how to share their gifts to the community?

Close your time together listening to this song: "[Kids From the Sticks](#)" by Seth Layne. Seth is a local barber and loves to share his songs online.

Value 4: Connection

For over a year, phrases like “physical distance” and “shelter in place” have become more popular than any of us could have imagined. These phrases remind us of the importance of keeping our distance in order to prevent the spread of the virus. But, as so many of us have learned, being far away from people can be really hard. We are relational beings, created to have families, friends, and communities around us to love and care for. While we have been creative in finding ways to stay connected virtually, it doesn’t quite replace the experience of being near other people.

Mountain T.O.P. values connection because we have witnessed the power in people coming together. Service Projects are not completed by individuals, they are completed by teams. A camp community is not just one church; it consists of multiple churches serving together. The Day Camp program happens because different community partners, staff people, and volunteers all contribute to the process of meeting children in their homes. All parts of Mountain T.O.P.’s mission happens because of the connections between local families, community partners, staff people, and volunteers.

Not only is Mountain T.O.P. invested in our own mission, but we are actively participating in other initiatives in our community by connecting with other organizations. In March 2019, Grundy County was featured in the Daily Yonder, an online news platform dedicated to reporting the stories of rural America. Mountain T.O.P. and Julie Keel were included in this piece entitled, “[A Healthy Attitude—Rural Leaders in Tennessee County Organize to Address Well-Being.](#)” You can find the article by using the link or searching the title on dailyyonder.com.

Questions to discuss:

- How many community organizations can you find mentioned in this article?
- How are the different organizations contributing to the goal of helping Grundy County become a healthier community?
- What other organizations, neighborhoods, or other churches does your church partner with in order to connect with your community?
- Why is it important that different organizations work together instead of trying to work separately?

The Week at a Glance

Sunday

- 1:30 Gates open - Registration, submit medical screenings, unload, move-in
- 2:30 Adult Meeting with Camp Director
- 3:15 Camp Orientation
Community Game
Program Orientation
Break (healthy snack)
Field Orientation
Major Group Division
YRG Development
- 6:00 Dinner
Worship
Free Time
- 9:45 Lights Out

Monday - Thursday

- 7:30 Breakfast
- 8:00 Morning Daybreak
- 8:30 Major Group Meetings
- 9:00 Leave camp, head to work-sites or Day Camp van route
- 3:00 Front yard Day Camp YRGs return, plan curriculum
- 4:30 Service Project YRGs return to camp
- 6:00 Dinner
Major Group meetings
Evening programming
Free time, bed prep, lights out

Friday

- 7:30 Breakfast
- 8:00 Morning Daybreak
- 8:30 Major Group Meetings
- 9:00 Leave camp
Service Project: ½ day projects
Day Camp: van routes
- After lunch: YRG Celebrations
- 4:00 All YRGs return to camp
- 6:00 Dinner
Campfire
Fish hook Worship
Free time, bed prep, lights out

Saturday

- 7:00 Breakfast
Camp evaluation
- 7:30 Morning Daybreak
- 8:00 Camp clean-up
Closing circle
- 10:00 Departure

Evening activities will vary each night. Tuesday evening the Camp Director will host an Adult Huddle to gather feedback. Thursday evening a meeting for those interested in summer staff will be held.

Special Characteristics of a Mountain T.O.P. Week

Characteristic	When does it happen?	What is it?	Why is it important?	Other notes
Camp Director	All week, all the time!	This person oversees the staff team and everything that happens during the camp week.	The Camp Director works closely with the Mountain T.O.P. Support Staff and Contact People to keep everything running smoothly and safely.	You'll see the Camp Director giving announcements at meal times, leading sharing, giving messages, and always being available to help out!
Morning Daybreak	After breakfast	A 15-20-minute time after breakfast when campers sit alone for study, reflection and prayer.	Time alone with God is important to our souls. It is vital to slow down, be quiet, and hear from God. For some of us, this is a brand new practice. This time gives us the opportunity to meet with God before our day gets busy.	Everyone will be given some reading material as they leave breakfast that will introduce the daily theme, provide some journaling/reflective prompts. Bring your Bible and journal with you to breakfast so you're prepared!
Youth Renewal Group (YRG)	All week, all the time!	The team you will work with all week: 1-2 adults and 5-7 youth. You'll also be sharing meals and cabins together.	The best YRG has a diverse set of ages, genders, skill level, and experiences. A well-mixed YRG gives everyone the chance to lend their individual gifts when serving.	While you may know everyone in our YRG prior to arriving at Mountain T.O.P., use this unique time to get to know each other in new ways!
Mid-day Daybreak	Around lunchtime	For Service Project: a small group conversation held on the work-site, led by your Major Group leader For Day Camp: a small-group conversation had with your YRG, with content provided by your Major Group leader	For Service Project: This is a time to invite the family to be part of your conversation about the daily theme. For Day Camp: As you are teaching and leading different activities with the Day Camp children, this is a great time to pause and recenter.	Since YRGs will be together during so much of the week, mid-day daybreaks will provide the opportunity to have deeper conversations about the theme and faith journeys. Don't neglect this chance to really build up friendships with your YRG.

Characteristic	When does it happen?	What is it?	Why is it important?	Other notes
Community Evening Programs	In the evening	Games - a time to have fun Sharing - a time to express our experiences about our days Worship - a time to sing, listen, reflect, and respond	We need to have fun and worship together in order to build a rich community and grow in our relationships with God. Worship helps us connect the "what" of service with the "why" we are serving.	We are intentional about incorporating a variety of worship styles over the week. We know, and want to honor, that we come from different faith backgrounds and connect with God differently.
Major Group Leader	All week, all the time!	On Sunday, a staff person will be assigned to lead your Major Group. This person will lead your morning and evening meetings, and supervise your service experience.	Your Major Group Leader is the best person to ask when you have questions about your Day Camp activities, Service Project, what's happening in camp, or general life questions.	If your Major Group Leader doesn't know the answer to your question, they'll know who to ask!
YRG Celebration	Friday afternoon	A closing celebratory time for each YRG	After spending a week working together, deep friendships will have formed and we want to celebrate those new relationships.	Some YRGs will want to exchange gifts, but that is not required. Writing notes, giving scraps from a construction project, or small tokens of appreciation are the most memorable.
Friday Fish hook Worship	Friday evening	Our culminating worship	This worship is dedicated to celebrating the journey of the camp community through the week and asking participants to commit to being a fisher of people in the valley below.	Part of this worship includes communion. Mountain T.O.P. believes in an open table - everyone, no matter where they are in their faith journey are welcome to partake.
Saturday Morning Closing Circle	Saturday morning	The last time we gather together	This brief moment is designed to commission them to share God's love in the valley below.	Contact People will have the group's health forms returned to them, along with a certificate from the staff to take with them.

Pictures for Painting - example activity



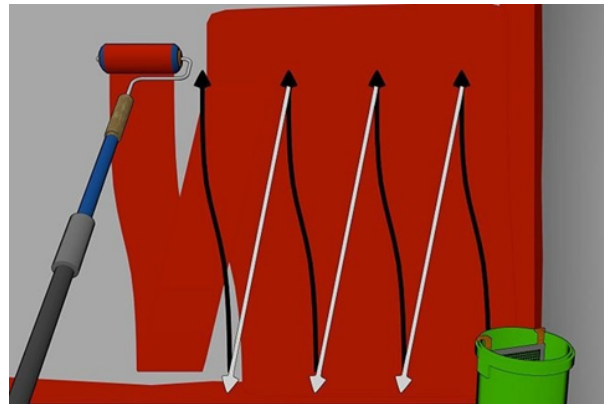
Stir paint



Apply painters tape & lay out drop cloths



Use paint brush on area next to painters' tape



Use paint roller on remaining areas



Remove painters tape

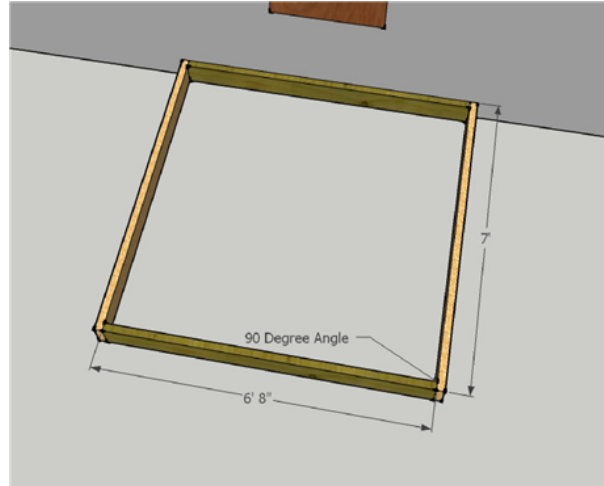


Clean up brushes & paint trays

Building a porch



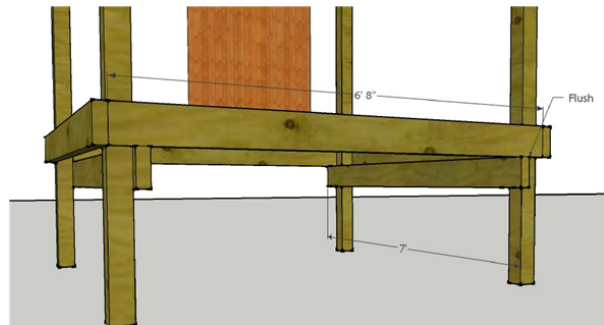
Sort out & inventory lumber to make sure you have everything you need



Build outer band



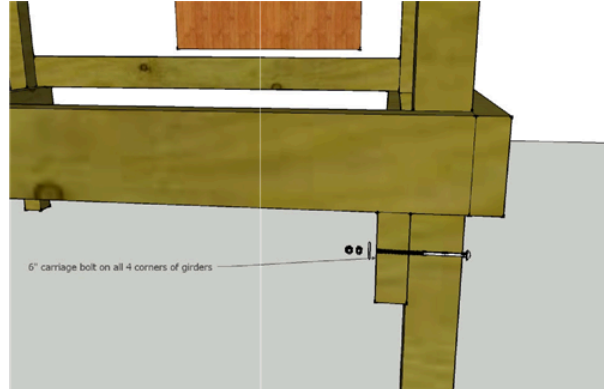
Dig post holes



Install beams & outer band on posts



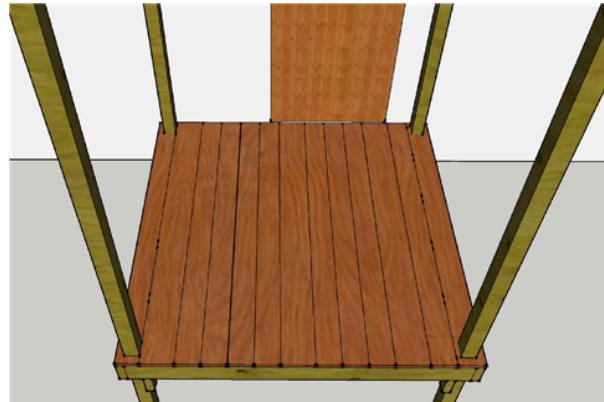
Use concrete to anchor posts



Install carriage bolts



Install common joists

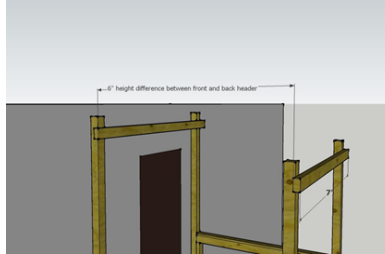


Install decking

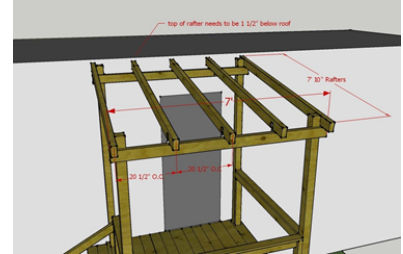
Building a porch roof



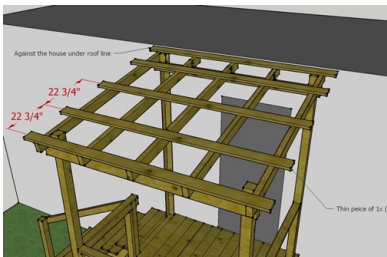
Inventory lumber & other supplies to make sure you have everything you need



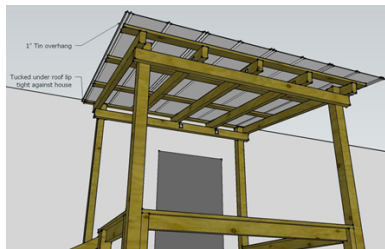
Install header boards



Install rafters



Attach lathing


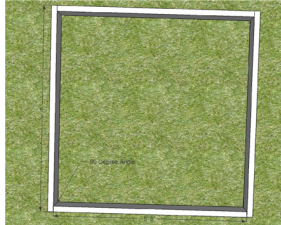

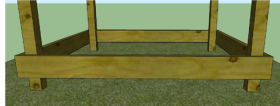

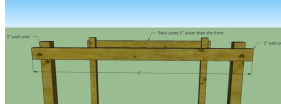

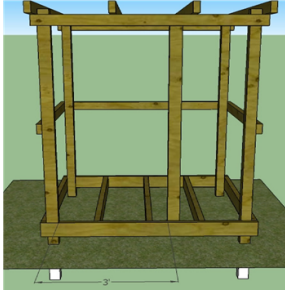

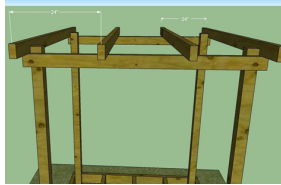
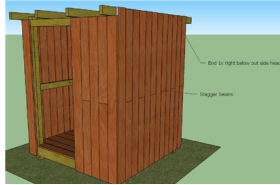
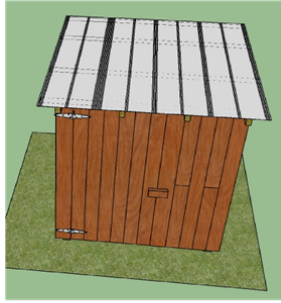


Install tin



Do a happy dance

Building a Shed

 <p>Sort out & inventory lumber to make sure you have everything you need</p>	 <p>Build outer band</p>	 <p>Dig post holes</p>	 <p>Attach band to posts</p>
 <p>Use concrete to anchor posts</p>	 <p>Install common joists</p>	 <p>Install headers</p>	 <p>Install 2x4 band around posts</p>
 <p>Frame outdoor area</p>	 <p>Install decking</p>	 <p>Install rafters & attach w/hurricane ties</p>	 <p>Install shed walls</p>
 <p>Build & attach door</p>	 <p>Install lathing</p>	 <p>Attach tin roof</p>	 <p>High five your YRG members!</p>

Stewardship of Materials Philosophy

The Mountain T.O.P. experience can be a joyous and rewarding one: a community of believers gathered together for a week to serve the Lord. Mountain T.O.P. is in partnership with the people of the Cumberland Mountains and with the youth and adults who volunteer. A firm understanding of this concept is crucial to forming significant relationships during the week and after participants return home.

Mountain T.O.P. participants join a partnership agreement with the people in the communities they serve. There are three partners:

1. Mountain T.O.P.
2. Youth and adult volunteers from across the country
3. People living in the Cumberland Mountains

Each partner brings a unique element and makes the whole greater than the sum of the parts. The idea that $1+1+1$ is greater than 3 represents the synergy that occurs on the mountain.

What does each part bring?

1. Mountain T.O.P. provides structure, staff, field work, and management of financial resources.
2. The volunteers contribute money through their participant fee, labor, and tools.
3. Individuals, churches and businesses from the communities also contribute financially. The families that Mountain T.O.P. directly works with give whatever they can. Their contribution is very important to the empowerment of the people of the Cumberland Mountains. Families who cannot afford to contribute to a project financially are asked to find alternative ways to participate, which could be joining in the work or making a jug of tea. The resulting partnership raises the level of ownership and involvement of the families with whom we serve.

Occasionally a participant may want to make a contribution to a family. We encourage this kind of generosity, but ask that the partnership philosophy is always kept in mind. That same contribution made to Mountain T.O.P.'s materials fund may be better utilized and possibly applied to many projects. Mountain T.O.P. has year-round involvement in the community and will know well where resources are needed the most to help the most people.

Furthermore, when families offer to make a donation to Mountain T.O.P., accept it! This may be a family's contribution to the project. We ask that any donations are given to a staff member once you arrive back at camp. The donations we do not accept are animals (living or dead) or any illegal items.

Tool Safety Training

It is important that everyone is trained to safely use tools in order to assure parents, youth, adults, pastors, and congregation members that the proper precautions have been taken. Mountain T.O.P.'s expectation is that all work sites are safe environments for those who are working there. We at Mountain T.O.P. spend many hours on safety training with our camp staff and we want all groups to have the opportunity to learn how to maintain a safe environment while on the work sites themselves.

Using tools properly is an important element to the Service Project experience at Mountain T.O.P.! The following information is designed for you as the group leader to share with your youth and adults who will be attending camp. This session has been created so that each participant has a higher level of comfort out on the work sites with the various tools they will be using during the week. It's designed to increase the participant's knowledge of the various tools that they might use while at Mountain T.O.P. as well as teach them how to use the tools properly for the safest work site.

Know Your Tools





















This is a good opportunity for you to go over the tool list with your group; you could even let them see and hold each tool as you go over it. Tool Requirements for groups are listed in the Contact Person Resource Guide, as well as the Community Tools listed in the Tool Process. **It is important to stress to each participant that they only have to use the tools they feel comfortable with while at Mountain T.O.P.!** We do not want anyone to think that they have to use a power saw or any other tool they do not feel comfortable using. It is up to them.










General Safety Guidelines:

- Use each tool only for the job and the way it was designed for.
- Keep fingers and hands away from cutting edges of tools.
- Secure or clamp down wood being worked with.
- Safety glasses should be worn at all times while using power tools.
- Be patient and never use force. Let the saw do the cutting.
- Don't work with tools when tired. Alertness is necessary.
- Don't wear loose clothing or jewelry, which can be caught in moving parts. Wear your nametag, but tuck it into your shirt.
- Never use electrical tools in damp or wet locations.
- Power tools must have adult supervision each time they are used. At no time are youth forced to use any tool they are uncomfortable with.
- If extension cords are used, be sure they are heavy duty.
- Unplug all electrical tools when finished and put them back in their case each time use is done. Don't leave any power tools unattended.
- Keep tools sharp, clean and oiled. Make sure the tools are in good condition before using them.
- Work areas should be large enough for people to remain safe during the use of power tools and should be tidy to avoid tripping over things.

- The workspace should have proper equipment to use with the power tools like saw horses or level cutting areas for power saws.
- Only make cuts from the outside of saw horses. When cutting between them the wood will pinch the blade and cause a kick-back. Be aware of this anytime someone holds a board while it is being cut.
- Use ladders only on stable and level surfaces unless they are secured to prevent movement.
- Keep the area around the top and bottom of ladders clear of debris.
- Maintain ladders free of oil, grease, and other slipping hazards.
- Don't tie ladders together to make a longer ladder.
- Face the ladder when going up or down.
- Don't carry objects or loads that could cause you to lose your balance and fall.
- Don't use the top of a stepladder as a step.
- Always use and lock the metal spreader or device that holds the front and back sections apart.
- Don't move, shift, or extend ladders while they are in use.
- Extend ladders at least 3' beyond the surface you are accessing so you have a handhold when getting on or off and set the ladder 1' away from a wall for every 4' that it extends (if ladder goes up 16', it should be 4' from base of wall.)

Tools for Tool Petting Zoo

 <p>Carpenter Pencil</p>	 <p>Caulk Gun</p>	 <p>Chalk Line & Chalk</p>	 <p>Crow Bar</p>
 <p>Extension Chord</p>	 <p>Claw Hammer</p>	 <p>Extension Ladder</p>	 <p>Step Ladder</p>
 <p>Level</p>	 <p>Mattock</p>	 <p>Post Hole Digger</p>	 <p>Post Level</p>
 <p>Circular Saw</p>	 <p>Power Drill</p>	 <p>Cordless Drill</p>	 <p>Drill Bits</p>
 <p>Drill Bits (Spade)</p>	 <p>Reciprocating Saw</p>	 <p>Flat Bar</p>	 <p>Hand Saw (Lumber)</p>

 <p>sawhorse</p>	<p>Shovel</p> 	 <p>sounding rod</p>	 <p>pencil point bar</p>
 <p>carpenter square</p>	 <p>speed square</p>	 <p>tape measure</p>	 <p>tin snips</p>
 <p>utility knife</p>	 <p>combination wrench</p>	 <p>sledge hammer</p>	