

# **Mountain T.O.P.**

## **Registration Packet**

### **Youth Summer Ministry**

### **2024**



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# Greetings, Contact Person!

Welcome to the guide with all the resources you'll need to register for Youth Summer Ministry! 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. We look forward to operating at a higher capacity than recent years, reaching more volunteers, homeowners, and areas of the Cumberland Plateau.

Here are a few important highlights about our programs:

- In the hope of creating a safer and more welcoming environment, we will operate under Safe Sanctuary guidelines during all camp weeks. This *requires* a ratio of 2 adults (21+) for every 5 youth (17 & under). 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. This helps to ensure an appropriate age gap with the youth and the children participating in our day camp program.
- We have included a new payment schedule. This adjustment doesn't reflect a change in price only adjusting how much you pay at each deadline.

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. This packet serves as a primary overview of the program and requirements for participation.

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 2024!

Thankful to serve with you,

Jacey Brady

Logistics Coordinator

[jacey@mountain-top.org](mailto:jacey@mountain-top.org) | 931-692-3999

# 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 organizations, churches, government offices, 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, and non-denominational backgrounds, among others. Our program and mission are ecumenical in nature.

## 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. These projects help meet physical needs expressed by families in our service area. 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. Whenever we

interact with a family we seek to help meet their needs holistically. The physical need opens the door to a relationship between the family and Mountain T.O.P. where participants can help meet the family's social, emotional, and spiritual needs, while addressing the project at hand. So our service project work is not just about providing youth the opportunity to learn about power tools, it's also about giving the opportunity to act as Jesus would through social and spiritual engagement with the folks in our service area.

## **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 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 day during free time.

## **Safety: Safe Sanctuary Guidelines**

Mountain T.O.P. is committed to creating a safe environment—physically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually—for all involved. We will be following Safe Sanctuary guidelines during *all* camp weeks beginning this summer. These standards for appropriate adult behavior are outlined at length in the Creating Safe Communities information, which is part of the Contact Person Resource Guide. Safe Sanctuary requires a ratio of 2 adults (21+) for every 5 youth (17 & under). 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. Adults and youth will have separate shower times. We trust that groups will appropriately screen their adult participants for the safety of the camp community.

## **Communicable Illness Protocols**

We request that all participants please monitor yourself for the 48 hours before you come for COVID-19 and any communicable illness symptoms. While we have

recommendations prior to your arrival for COVID-19, most of our procedures are now focused on if someone were to test positive while in camp. Vaccinations are not required for camp participation, but our protocols will differ based on vaccination status.

## Program Requirements

- Service Project participants must be **rising 7<sup>th</sup> graders or older**. Day Camp participants must be at least **rising 9<sup>th</sup> graders or older**.
- Groups will **mix** between churches to create Youth Renewal Groups (YRGs)—both for Service Project and Day Camp. YRGs is the group you will be doing work with in the community during the day.
- Adult : Youth Ratio
  - There must be **2 adults for every 5 youth**. One adult must be at least 21 years old, the other at least 25 years old. Groups must abide by these guidelines. If you think that your group will struggle to have the correct number of adults, please contact Jacey ([jacey@mountain-top.org](mailto:jacey@mountain-top.org)).
- Vehicle Requirements
  - Service Project:
    - If participating in Service Project, you must provide one 7-passenger vehicle for 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 roof racks 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.
  - Each group must provide 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 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.
- Mountain T.O.P. does not discriminate on the basis of race, age, gender, creed, national origin, sexual orientation, or ability.

# Dates & Fees

## Summer 2024 Schedule:

**Week 1:** June 9 – 15

**Week 2:** June 16 – 22

**Week 3:** June 23 - July 29

**Week 4:** June 30 – July 6th (*discounted rate!*)

**Week 5:** July 7 – 13

**Week 6:** July 14 – 20

*The week is from 1:30 p.m. CST on Sunday to 9:00 a.m. CST on Saturday, no exceptions. Full participation is expected from all, at all times.*

## Costs:

- \$405: Returning churches regardless of payment method
- \$385: First-time churches regardless of payment method
- \$325: All Churches participating in Week 4 regardless of payment method

## Discounts:

- Free: 1 Contact Person\*
- Free: 1 Clergy Person/Pastor\*
- \$385: Former MTOP staff\*
- Week 4: \$325 (See Fee schedules)

\*These discounts will be applied on the final invoice. \*\*\*The contact person discount is now contingent upon the group meeting all critical deadlines and due dates, i.e. submitting payments on time and a group roster by May 1st.

## New Fee Schedule Starting 2024

Mountain T.O.P. has been in operation since 1975 and a lot has changed since our inception. As we are constantly looking to improve and expand upon our practices, our fee schedule is no exception. The amount you will be paying per participant is not changing. We are adjusting the portions of payments to help us become more in line with our peer organizations and industry standards and to synchronize our payment schedules between groups. These changes primarily include standard deposits and clearer payment schedule guidelines in regards to registration dates.

Each payment schedule is dependent on when you register and your participant fee. Our new payment schedule is outlined in the following tables. Each table below is describing a different scenario. Please find the section that applies to your participant group based on the time you register.

**IF YOU REGISTER BEFORE JANUARY 31**

	Due January 15 or upon registration until January 31	Due March 1	Due May 1
Returning Church	\$75	\$200	\$130
New Church	\$75	\$200	\$110
Week 4	\$75	\$200	\$50

**IF YOU REGISTER BETWEEN FEB 1 AND MARCH 31**

	January 15	Due March 1 or upon registration until March 31	Due May 1
Returning Church		\$275	\$130
New Church		\$275	\$110
Week 4		\$275	\$50

**IF YOU REGISTER BETWEEN APRIL 1 AND START OF YOUR CAMP WEEK**

	January 15	March 1	Due May 1 or upon registration after May 1
Returning Church			\$405
New Church			\$385
Week 4			\$325

\*\*\*Registrations after May 1 will have fees due upon the receipt of the invoice.



As we continue to strive to provide the best possible experience for our volunteers, community partners, and Mountain T.O.P. as an organization we expect to encounter questions. Please reach out to Jacey ([Jacey@mountain-top.org](mailto:Jacey@mountain-top.org)) with any questions along the way. If there are any adjustments that need to be made in order to abide by your church's financial calendars please contact us so we can find the best path forward. We thank you for your grace and flexibility as we grow into this new schedule.

## **Scholarship Availability**

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 at a discounted rate. Scholarships are limited based on available funds.

### **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.

\*If you or your group would like to help Mountain T.O.P. offer scholarships for other churches, please email Mike Feely at [mike@mountain-top.org](mailto:mike@mountain-top.org).

# Registration Information

- Registration will open in two waves.
  - Priority Registration will be *exclusively* for returning churches and groups. Registration for these churches will start on **Wednesday, September 27th, 2023 at 10:00 am, CST.**
  - General Registration for first-time churches and all other groups will be available starting on **Wednesday, October 4th, 2023 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. Further, groups can decrease their group number until January 15 without financial penalty. After January 15, groups are obligated to pay for the spots for which they have registered.
  - We highly suggest collecting these deposits from participants in advance to encourage financial investment in the trip, and avoid drops later in the year.
- **All 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. As we get closer to the summer, service projects and day camp participants are scheduled based on participant numbers, so large changes in group number also affect members of our service area.

# 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 [this link](#) to begin, or any of the “Register Now” links on our website.
- Begin by choosing your desired camp week.
- Next, you will enter the number of participants you are registering for each program. Please ensure this is your TOTAL number, including all youth, adults, the Contact Person, and a clergy person, if applicable.
  - The Contact and Clergy person discount will be applied on the final invoice.
- 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.”
  - *The contact person discount is now contingent upon the group meeting all critical deadlines and due dates, i.e. submitting payments on time, completing Mountain T.O.P. trip training and a group roster by May 1.*
- Fill out group information as requested.
  - The Contact Person is whomever is organizing the trip, even if they will not be attending the camp week.
  - If invoices need to be sent to administrative staff, in addition to the Contact Person, please list their name and email when prompted.
- After reviewing the summary of your registration details, click “COMPLETE REGISTRATION.” You will receive an automatic email from Typeform confirming your group’s registration.
- You will not be charged during the registration process. Jacey will email you an invoice within 2-3 business days of registering for your group’s payment, which can be paid by credit card, bank draft, or check.

- For Groups who register before January 15, deposits are due January 15
  - Registrations between January 15 and the end of January: deposit amount is due upon receipt of an invoice.
- Groups that register on or after February 1 will be required to pay the total of the deposit and second payment amounts on March 1.
  - Registrations between March 1 and March 31: the total amount of the deposit and second payment is due upon receipt of an invoice.
- Registrations on or after April 1: the total amount will be due on May 1.
  - Registrations on or after May 1: the total amount is due upon receipt of the invoice.
- Please see the payment charts on page 8 or if you have any questions or desire an exception to this fee schedule please reach out to Jacey at [Jacey@Mountain-top.org](mailto:Jacey@Mountain-top.org)

By registering to come and work with Mountain T.O.P., you are agreeing to the terms outlined in this registration packet and confirming that you are authorized by your church/participant group to commit the time, preparation, people and financial resources required to serve the people of the Cumberland Plateau and Mountain T.O.P.'s service area through Mountain T.O.P.'s Youth Summer Ministry Programs. This includes but is not limited to: the correct vehicle size and ratio, a correct Adult to Youth ratio (2:5), and submission to Mountain T.O.P.'s methods of ministry in our setting and any other requirements for service outlined in the Registration Packet, Contact Person Resource Guide and Creating Safe Communities Packet. If a church/group commits to coming to Mountain T.O.P. and has a participant drop or withdraw, it is the church's responsibility to find a replacement for the trip. Mountain T.O.P., reserves the right to collect any participant fees if a church/participant group fails to pay in a timely manner.

You can reach the Mountain T.O.P. office at 931-692-3999 Monday-Thursday 9:30am-5:00pm.

Our office hours are subject to change depending on when we have a group in our facilities.

Mountain T.O.P.'s office is closed the following days:

MLK Day | Good Friday | The Monday After Easter | The Second Week of August (after the Summer Season) | Labor Day | The Week of Thanksgiving |  
The Last two weeks of the calendar year for Christmas |