

# Quest

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Quest is a week-long adventure style camp for teenagers (rising 7<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> graders) who live in Grundy County, TN. Our goal is to provide an experience where youth are able to explore character building through challenging events such as rock climbing and ropes course elements. Mountain T.O.P. partners with the Grundy County High School guidance counselor and various other social service agencies to recruit youth who would most benefit from this type of program.

Mountain T.O.P. staff sets the program for Quest, but AIM participants actually facilitate the week. They act as mentors, guides, and caregivers for the youth by encouraging each other in word and deed. Each day's activities are centered around a specific character trait. There are also opportunities for volunteers to share their faith story in group and individual settings.

Through providing challenging adventure-based activities, we hope to increase resilience in youth participants. Other desired outcomes for Quest participants include:

- increased participation in extracurricular activities
- increase in healthy life choices
- increased community engagement
- increase in number of mentors
- increased overall well being

Each activity in the Quest camp week is carefully planned so that we can see evidence of these desired outcomes reflected in our participants at the end of the week. Assistance from adult volunteers is vital to the success of the program, as mentors play a crucial role in the program.

## **Mentorship**

Volunteers who are assisting in the week are called “mentors”, and serve in this role for the teenagers during the entire week. In this role, the mentor builds relationships with the teenagers and encourages them in each adventure challenge. They work alongside the teenagers during the day, helping them complete activities and providing support. The mentor also provides for the teenagers logistically by getting them what they need for the tasks at hand. In addition, mentors facilitate moving from place to place and any breaks that are given, as well as hosting for lunch (hosting duties are explained on Sunday at orientation).

A summer staff person will call all participants the week prior to arrival at camp to help with any last minute plans and details. This will also be a time to get information about the teenagers who will be attending camp.

## **Van Routes**

Mentors are also asked to be willing to provide transportation for teenagers to and from camp and to adventure challenge sites. Van routes are planned by MTOP staff and take into account timeliness and efficiency. This is a good time for mentors to get to know the teenagers and to provide an environment where the teenagers begin bonding with each other. Van routes also provide mentors with the ability to see the teenagers home environment. Someone from summer staff will contact volunteers before the camp week to coordinate logistics.

## **Discovery Time**

Discovery Time is a 30 minute block of time to review the theme of the day. Summer Staff may decide to lead this time or instruct adult volunteers to do so. Either way, this is a good time for adult volunteers to mentor youth participants and share their own life experiences. Participants will be learning about God and how biblical messages apply to their own lives.

## **Adventure Challenges**

Each day, a new adventure challenge will be offered to help illustrate the character trait theme for the day. Mentors are NOT required to attempt the challenges; however, mentors must be avid participants, encouraging the teenagers and providing appropriate support. They can act as sounding boards to help the teenagers process meeting their challenges and debriefing their experiences. Mentors should motivate the teenagers to actively participate in each challenge and be a part of the total community, cheering each other along.

## Opening and Closing Circle

This is the first and last activity of the camp day. The entire camp community- staff, adult volunteers, and youth participants- all gather to go over logistics and set the tone for the day then relay final announcements. Staff members will introduce the theme of the day and may lead songs or activities as well.

## Lunch

Lunch can sometimes seem chaotic because the teenagers need to release energy and speak with each other (sometimes loudly!) in an unstructured environment. This is a wonderful time, though, for adults and teenagers to get to know each other and have fun. Adult leadership is needed to facilitate the lunch process, to include making sure everyone receives something to eat, and keeping the lunch experience within the time allotted, including cleanup. Some days, lunch will be a picnic; other days lunch will be in the dining hall.

## Typical Week at Quest

### Monday-Thursday

8:10-8:30am	Quest Adult meeting
8:30-10:00	Van Routes
10:00-10:15	Opening circle
10:20-12:00pm	Group 1- Free Swim, Group 2- Canoe
12:00-12:30	Lunch
12:35-2:15	Group 1- Canoe, Group 2- Free Swim
2:20-2:40	Discovery Time
2:45-3:00	Closing circle
3:00	Van Routes

### Friday – Celebration Day

9:00am	Begin van routes
10:00 -10:30	Opening Circle and discussion of Focus Trait
10:30 12:00pm	High Ropes course
12:00 – 12:30p	Lunch on site
12:45 -2:00	Continuation of Adventure Challenge
2:00	Quest Celebration
3:00	Van Routes

Quest volunteers can wear shorts at camp, although we do ask you to wear the longer walking shorts. MTOP staff members will provide information about specific clothing needs for the adventure challenges.