



Team Training Resource

(Suggested Retreat Format)

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Welcome

God bless you for assuming the awesome role of coordinating the preparation of your team for mission work. Preparing to be God's servant in the mission world is not an easy task. The members of your team have accepted God's call to be in service and with that call comes an incredible responsibility. They not only are asked to leave their comfort zone, they also have to accept the responsibility to be Christ's hands and feet to a hurting world. A call to be Christ-like is tough for even a mature Christian. It can seem burdensome to a high school student. Your job is to help them overcome that fear by preparing them for the challenge and removing the fear of the unknown.

Your primary responsibility as a group leader is to prepare your group for a week of service at Mountain

T.O.P. -- specifically facilitating and guiding all of your group members (youth and adults) through the preparation process.

You may lead the Sessions or involve several individuals such as other participating adults, youth, and especially those who have had previous missions experience. By letting them share in the leadership responsibilities, they may find renewed enthusiasm and excitement as well as pass on their insights to the new participants. Old stories are a lot of fun to share and hear!

If you involve others in the leadership, we suggest having an organizational meeting prior to your total group sessions to familiarize them with the material as well as to assign responsibilities.

As the group leader, it is your responsibility to make sure each member of your group is informed of when training will be held. We cannot stress enough the importance of everyone participating in training. This helps ensure that youth and adults understand the philosophies and concepts are important at Mountain T.O.P.! Without this general understanding, it is harder to form Christian community at camp.

We have provided several resources within this packet to help you with the task of preparing your team. They include:

- **Tips for Leading Successful Sessions**
- **Suggested Retreat Format – Full Weekend & One Day Sessions**
- **Resource Library**

These resources are intended only to be a guide. You know your group better than anyone. Use all or part and tailor your preparation to your specific needs. The key is to be intentional about preparation. History has shown us time and again, teams that are prepared can offer the most to God's kingdom. They also get the most from their mission experience. We are ALWAYS available to help you anyway we can. Know also, we pray for each and every team during the time before your arrive.

Tips for Leading Successful Sessions

- This preparation material can be covered in five separate sessions or on a weekend retreat (schedule included with this packet). Most importantly, all of the material should be covered by all who will be serving (youth & adults).
- Try to allow the time scheduled for each activity. This will help to keep things moving and interesting to the participants.
- Try to provide a comfortable and warm setting for the Sessions. This will help create an informal atmosphere that promotes openness and acceptance.
- It is important to read each Session's materials list in advance. This will allow time to organize the materials needed as well as the flow of the Sessions activities. It may be helpful to make notes on points to bring out during the Session in the margins of your material. Planning ahead will be important with the safety session where we suggest a "hands on" building activity where your group will construct something that will allow participants an opportunity experience using tools.
- Promote enthusiasm and excitement about the learning material as well as about being together to accomplish these goals.
- Try to encourage participation from each group member in the discussions, activities, and/or devotions. The more involved people feel the more ownership they have in the learning experience.
- Try to ensure that participants understand the importance of the material they are learning and how it relates to their overall Mountain T.O.P. experience. Stating the purpose and importance of each Session as well as the purpose and importance of each activity will help you do this.

Be Inspiring!

Suggested Retreat Format – (Full Weekend)

Friday evening:

- 7:30pm** Arrive and unload
 - 8:00** Welcome group members
 - Opening Group Builders - "Get To Know You Better" Games
 - 9:00** Introduce the Retreat Purpose and Importance - Preparing for Mountain T.O.P. (so we can give our best while we are there and so we can receive the most we can from the experience). Give overview and goal for each session.
 - 9:30** Session 1: "What Is Service Project All About?"
 - 11:00** Devotion (This is found in Session 1)
 - 12:30am** Lights out
-

Saturday:

- 8:00am** Breakfast
 - 8:30** Holy Time Out (Individual prayer time and study time with God)
 - 9:00** Session 2: "Building A Servant Mission Team"
 - 10:30** Devotion (This is found in Session 2)
 - 10:45** Free Time for youth
 - Adult Session with the Adults Only (This is to learn and discuss their role in the Mountain T.O.P. experience)
 - 12:15pm** Lunch
 - 1:30** Session 4: "Tool & Worksite Safety"
 - 3:30** Free Time
 - 6:00** Dinner
 - 7:30** Session 3: "Learning about the People Mountain T.O.P. Serves"
 - 9:00** Closing Devotion (This is found in Session 3)
 - 9:30** Group Bonding Time with Wild and Crazy Recreation, Group Singing and Group Games
 - 12:00am** Lights Out
-

Sunday:

- 8:00am** Breakfast
- 8:30** Holy Time Out
- 9:00** Session 5: "SEND ME LORD" – The Commissioning Service
- 10:30** Cleanup and Load Cars
- 11:30** Closing Circle and Depart

Session 1

What Is
Service Project
All About?

Session 1 - Outline

Purpose of Session 1:

- To acquaint the participants with the nature of Mountain T.O.P. including its history, philosophy, underlying program values, and program schedule.

Importance of Session 1:

- To review the specifics about a Mountain T.O.P. experience to ensure camper understanding prior to participation so that all expectations are clearly defined.

Who Participates in Session 1:

- Everyone attending Mountain T.O.P. (youth and adults)

Materials Needed for Session 1:

- Index cards
- Masking tape
- Handouts:
 History, Statement of Values, Philosophy with the Three Objectives, Week at a Glance, Special Characteristics of Camp)
- Newsprint, markers
- Large ball of yarn to be used in worship

Session Schedule:

- Icebreaker - 10-15 minutes
- Mountain T.O.P. Program to include History, Philosophy, Values, and Schedule - 45 minutes
- Closing Devotion - 15 minutes

Session 1 – Design

***OPENING:**

Introduce the session to the group; include the purpose and the importance of the session to the group members (this is located on the session outline page).

***ICE BREAKER:**

MOUNTAIN T.O.P. DISCOVERY

This activity helps the participants discover more about Mountain T.O.P. through word associations. By the time the icebreaker is over, the group members should have a general idea about the Mountain T.O.P. ministry.

Time:	10-15 minutes
Group Size:	Unlimited
Space Needed:	A large room for participants to freely mingle
Materials Needed:	Masking tape and each word about Mountain T.O.P. written on an index card (one word per card and one card per participant). See Word List below.

Leading the icebreaker

1. The leader tapes a word card on the back of each participant. Be sure the participant does not know what the word is on their card.
2. At the signal, the participants mingle around asking only YES/NO questions to the other participants in order to find out what the word is on their back.
3. After everyone has discovered their word, ask each participant to stand up and share why their word describes the Mountain T.O.P. ministry.

Special Note: For veteran participants, let them add to the word list below of words they think describe Mountain T.O.P. based on their experience. Be sure the words they contribute are good and positive words for the entire group to use to share about the program.

WORD LIST:

Servant	God
Christian	Campfire
Diversity	Commitment
God's creation	New friendships
Fishhook	Cold showers
Mission	Leadership growth
Service	Cultural exchange
Spiritual growth	Communion
Fellowship	Openness

***MOUNTAIN T.O.P. PROGRAM**

(to include Mountain T.O.P. history, philosophy, values, and weekly schedule)

1. Share with the group the background of the Mountain T.O.P. Ministry and highlights from its history to impress upon the participants how God has guided this ministry since 1975 to serve the people of the Cumberland Mountains of Tennessee. Refer to the "Statement of Values" as you describe the overall mission of the Mountain T.O.P. organization. This will help them understand who we serve, why we serve them, and where we serve them.
(pass out a copy of the "History" sheet and "Statement of Values" to each person)
2. Identify the three foundational objectives of the Mountain T.O.P. ministry. Share with the group the following points:
 - a. The three foundational objectives are not in any order of significance. Each objective has equal weight in terms of resources dedicated to them. The organization strives to fulfill all three objectives during a camp experience.
 - b. Every part of the program is identified with one, two or all three of the objectives to ensure program focus and development.
 - c. These three foundational objectives make Mountain T.O.P. camps unique within the mission field.(pass out a copy of the "Three Foundational Objectives" to each person)

Using the handout, ask group members to share specific ways the objectives can be realized during a camp week at Mountain T.O.P. Record these on newsprint for future referencing.

3. Divide the group into three subgroups and assign one foundational objective to each small group. Give each person a copy of the handout "A Week At A Glance" to use in this exercise. Explain to each group that they are to identify the times throughout the week where their assigned objective is being met. There will be overlapping with all three objectives. After they have identified where their objective is being met, ask them to write down why they think it is being met at that particular time. Ask each subgroup to share their findings with the total group. The group should feel informed about what happens during a typical week at Mountain T.O.P. and why Mountain T.O.P. camps run the way they do.
4. Pass out the handout "Special Characteristics of a Mountain T.O.P. Camp" to each person. Discuss with the group the different characteristics of a Mountain T.O.P. camp and how these aspects of the experience enhance the overall development of a camp community. This will help the participants get more familiar with the uniqueness of the program and help them understand why we do what we do and when we do it!

SPECIAL NOTE: Ask veteran members to describe something they learned from each of the different characteristics. Ask them to be specific.

***MOUNTAIN T.O.P. PROGRAM continued**

5. Creating your group's MISSION VISION for their trip:
 - a. Have each group member identify a specific goal they have for the mission trip and list these on newsprint for future reference.
 - b. Using the individual goals, ask the group to write a mission vision that will encompass all of the individual goals within the group. Write this mission vision on newsprint.
 - c. Have the group members decide on a scripture base for their mission vision and write it on the newsprint with the statement. Be sure and hang this in a place where the entire congregation can see it. It will promote enthusiasm within the whole church for the mission trip. It will provide the congregation with a visible piece of what mission means to the youth and why they are going to serve at Mountain T.O.P!

***CLOSING DEVOTION:**

Focus: Participating in the Body of Christ

Preparation:

- Change settings so the group members will be able to separate the study session from the devotion time.
- use candles, a cross, etc. to create a devotion environment
- procure a large ball of yarn
- bring a Bible

Experience:

1. Gather the group together and have an opening prayer.
2. Have different group members read the scriptures: Phil. 2:1-4; Romans 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12: 12-26
3. Have the group discuss the following questions:
 - What does it mean to be in the Body of Christ?
 - How does a Mountain T.O.P. camp experience relate to the Body of Christ?
 - What do the scriptures teach us about being in relationship with others?
 - How can you live out the scriptures during your Mountain T.O.P. experience?
4. Gather the group into a circle. Explain to the group that in building the Body of Christ, it is important to support and encourage one another. We are going to do an activity designed to build one another up just like the scriptures call us to do. As the ball of yarn is tossed from person to person, ask the person tossing the yarn to someone to tell a gift/talent he/she feels that person has. Then the person to whom the yarn was tossed continues by tossing the yarn to someone else that has not had the yarn yet, and tells them a gift/talent they see in them. This continues until all people have been tossed the ball of yarn. Make sure to have each person hold on to a piece of the yarn before tossing it to the next person. At the end of the activity, each person should be holding on to the yarn and the group should have formed a web in the center of their circle. Illustrate to the group that if one person drops their piece of yarn, the web will be incomplete. Therefore, it is crucial to have all members in order for the group to be a success.
5. Close with group song and prayer asking God to help each group member support and encourage each other throughout the whole mission trip.

Session 2

Building A Servant Mission Team

Part 1:

**UNDERSTANDING
CHRISTIAN
SERVANTHOOD**

Part 2:

**CREATING
SERVANT
TEAM MEMBERS**

Session 2 - Outline

Purpose of Session 2:

- To help participants actively explore their understanding of Christian Servanthood and how they can apply this to their own lives and during their Mountain T.O.P. experience

After understanding the concept of Christian servanthood, participants are then asked to explore servanthood within the framework of a team. Participants explore ways they can serve as contributing members in the YRGs (Youth Renewal Groups).

Importance of Session 2:

- The Mountain T.O.P. experience is based on the foundational understanding that we are called as Christians to serve others. By understanding this concept, participants will be able to fulfill their charge at Mountain T.O.P. to meet the needs of others. The YRG experience will be fulfilling if all participants are striving to serve one another and helping to make the team a positive one for all involved.

Who Participates in Session 2:

- Everyone attending Mountain T.O.P. camp (youth and adults together)

Materials Needed for Session 2:

- word art list for Ice Breaker
- paper
- pens
- poster board for each person
- newsprint
- Tinkertoys
- poster board for small groups
- markers
- tape

Session 2 Schedule:

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| • Ice Breaker | 10-15 minutes |
| • Part 1: Understanding Christian Servanthood | 30-40 minutes |
| • Part 2: Creating Servant Team Members | 30-40 minutes |
| • Closing Devotion | 15 minutes |

Session 2 - Design

***OPENING:**

Introduce the session to the group, making sure to include the purpose and importance of the session (located on the session outline page).

***ICE BREAKER:**

Bible Art Scramble

This exercise is a creative energizer in which participants experience cooperation and teamwork in small groups.

Time: 10-15 minutes

Group Size: unlimited

Space required: large room for small groups to spread out and work together

Materials needed: Leader needs the "Bible Art Word List"

Each small group needs a stack of paper and markers

Score sheet hanging on the wall

Leading the Ice Breaker:

1. The leader divides the group into small groups of 4-6 people. Each small group is asked to pick who will draw first, second, third, etc.
2. The group leader stands in the middle of the room and the small groups locate around the leader. Be sure the small groups are not too close to the leader and are spaced equally.
3. The first drawer from each small group gets ready to run to the leader in the middle of the room and get the "word" he/she is to take back to the group and draw for them. The first small group that guesses it, stands up and shouts the word! The artist/drawer cannot speak or use symbols or letters to communicate the word. The word is drawn in picture form for the group.
4. Scoring: The first group to guess the "word" stands up and shouts and receives the following points: 1st - 5 points 2nd -3 points 3rd - 1 point Record these on the score sheet hanging on the wall.
5. Continue this activity until all persons have had the chance to be the artist for the group. The team with the most points at end of the activity is the winner.

Bible Art Word List

Giant Loaves
Adam
Empty Tomb
Ark
Carpenter
Lion's Den
Children
Mule
Sabbath
Community

Goliath
Bread
Resurrection
Fishhook
Communion
Inn
Missionaries
Eve
Satan
Holy Spirit

Light
Egypt
Jesus
Synagogue
Good Shepherd
12 Disciples
King David
Stone Tablets
Fisherman
Foot Washing

PART 1: UNDERSTANDING CHRISTIAN SERVANTHOOD

Purpose:

- Part 1 is designed to help participants further explore the concept of Christian Servanthood.

Importance:

- This is valuable for participants as they prepare for their mission trip to Mountain T.O.P., dedicated to serving others and meeting the expressed needs of the families in the Cumberland Mountains.

1. Ask the group to discuss "the meaning of Christian Servanthood" and how it could relate to the Mountain T.O.P. experience.

Possible resources for the leader to use:

- Leadership, Greatness, and Servanthood by Philip Greenslade
- Improving Your Serve by Charles Swindol
- Serving One Another by Gene A. Getz
- By Hook or By Crook by Jill Briscoe

2. Divide the group into small groups of 4-5 members. Ask them to read Mark 10:42-45 and brainstorm what the scripture is telling them about following Christ and servanthood. Have them put their brainstorms on newsprint so the whole group will see their ideas.
3. Ask each small group to choose a representative to share with the total group their group's ideas.
4. Ask the group to get back into their small groups and create a symbol of Christian Servanthood out of poster board and markers, etc. You can use all type of materials for them to express their creativity.
5. After they have made their symbol of servanthood, have them create a "servant covenant" describing how they plan to be servants at Mountain T.O.P. as well as at home, school, and church. Have them write the small group covenant and put it on their symbol.
6. Have each small group share their servanthood symbols and covenants with the total group.

***PART 2: CREATING SERVANT TEAM MEMBERS**

Purpose:

- Part 2 is designed to help participants understand the importance of having a team spirit and mentality while at Mountain T.O.P.!

Importance:

- This is valuable for participants as they strive to be effective team members in the YRGs and as they strive to help the whole Mountain T.O.P. community work together for a common purpose.

1. The leader asks the group to discuss...

- What does teamwork mean?
- How do teamwork and servanthood go together?
(record their responses on newsprint)

2. The leader then asks the group to discuss...

- When is it difficult to be a good team player?
- What is important to remember when you are experiencing these difficult times?
- What Christian servant qualities can you use to help you remain a good team player through difficult times?
-

3. The leader then leads the group through this team building activity called: "Effective Communication the Tinker Toy Way"

- The group leader divides the group into subgroups of 4-6 people. Try to be creative when dividing groups, such as by favorite toothpaste, ice cream flavors, tallest to shortest, etc.
- The leader explains that each group will have an assortment of tinker toys. Each group is to build a structure with their pieces. The leader tells them how realistic it should be or if it should be as tall as possible, or that it should be a functional structure designed to do something. The leader can be creative here with the instructions.
- Each group is to spend 5 minutes discussing their building strategy; they may not actually build yet, and they cannot touch the pieces during this phase.
- Each group then gets 5 minutes to build the planned structure. However, they may NOT speak during the time. Each player must be an active participant in the building process.
- After time is called, the groups should discuss the effective and ineffective ways they saw communication and teamwork during the activity.

***CLOSING DEVOTION:**

(change environments if possible to help participants focus their minds and hearts on Christ)

1. Gather everyone together for a group song with the focus on serving. An example is "Here I Am Lord", which is in most hymnals.
2. Have different people share the following scriptures with the whole group:
 - Matthew 20:28 Ephesians 6:10-28
3. Lead the group through prayer asking for insight from God's Word that has been shared.
4. Give each person a piece of poster board and have them trace their hands and feet onto the poster with a black marker so it can be seen.
5. Have each person write their name on their poster and tape it on the wall.
6. Discuss with the group the concept that Christian Servanthood is an active concept and requires each of them to "do" for Christ out in the world. This "doing" is represented by our hands and our feet. This is how we can put our faith into action - by using our hands and feet to serve Christ by serving others.
7. Ask group members to look around the room and realize how awesome it is to think this many hands and feet are working for the Lord all over the place.
8. Have each participant take a marker and go to each poster and write one quality/characteristic they see in that person that makes them a good servant for Christ. Be sure and encourage group members to be unique and not to write the same thing on each poster or the same thing someone else has written already on the poster.
9. This time should be a very uplifting and affirming time for participants. It should also remind them that God gave everyone qualities and characteristics that can be used to serve others.
10. Close with prayer.

Session 3

Learning about the People Mountain T.O.P. Serves in the Cumberland Mountains Of Tennessee

**PART 1: TAKING A LOOK AT THE APPALACHIAN
CULTURE**

**PART 2: UNDERSTANDING CHRISTIAN HELPING
THE
MOUNTAIN T.O.P. WAY**

PART 3: STEREOTYPES AND PERCEPTIONS

Session 3 - Outline

LEARNING ABOUT THE PEOPLE MOUNTAIN T.O.P SERVES
IN THE CUMBERLAND MOUNTAINS OF TENNESSEE

Purpose:

- Session 3 is designed to help participants explore the region they will be serving on their mission trip to the Cumberland Mountains this summer.

Importance:

- This is valuable for all participants in order for them to effectively interact with the people of Appalachia, to study their understanding of how to help others, and to learn about helping the Mountain T.O.P. way.

Who participates:

- everyone (youth and adults)

Materials needed:

- local mountain newspapers
- different colored markers for each small group
- a copy of the essay “Meet the Culture of Appalachia” per person
- newsprint
- tape
- diversity exercise
- Mountain T.O.P. Helping Handout per person
- construction paper
- scissors per person
- construction paper
- markers
- The True Story of the Three Little Pigs by Jon Scieszka

Session Outline:

Ice Breaker	10 minutes
Part 1: Taking a look at the Appalachian Culture	30 minutes
Part 2: Understanding Christian Helping the Mountain T.O.P. way	30 minutes
Part 3: Stereotypes and Perceptions	30 minutes
Devotion	15 minutes

For additional insights:

Call your local library or university to see if they have any Appalachia videos. There is one available from Maryknoll World Video Library in NY called Appalachia: No Man’s Land; 914-941-7590.

Session 3 – Design

* OPENING:

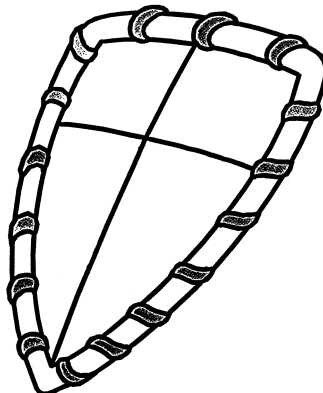
- Introduce the session to the group, making sure to include the purpose and importance of the session (located on the session outline page.)

* ICE BREAKER:

"YOUR COAT OF ARMS"

Materials needed:

- paper for each person
 - colored pencils for everyone
 - an example of a Sample Coat of Arms
1. The leader explains to the group that each person will be drawing their own "coat of arms" that represents who they are, their beliefs and values, etc.
 2. Give each person a piece of paper and colored pencil. Have them draw a "coat of arms" on their paper - have a sample one to show them.
 3. Ask the members to fill in the spaces on the "coat of arms" with symbols or words answering the following statements....
 - Illustrate or describe one thing you strongly believe in
 - Illustrate or describe one thing you highly value in life
 - Illustrate or describe one thing you like to do
 - Illustrate or describe something about God and your life
 4. Ask the group members to share their "coats" with everyone (have the group member put a long trench coat on as they are telling about themselves).



***PART 1: UNDERSTANDING THE PEOPLE MTOP SERVES**

Purpose:

This session is designed to help participants explore what the Cumberland Mountain culture is like, how it is similar to the participants and their culture, and how it is different to the participants and their culture.

Importance:

This is valuable for the participants to be able to have a positive cross-cultural exchange experience during their Mountain T.O.P. mission trip. By realizing similarities and differences, people can strive to overcome negative perceptions or biases, which might hinder the development of effective relationships.

1. Pass out the essay “Meet the Culture of Appalachia” to each participant. Ask everyone to read the essay silently, making notes as they go on significant points to remember.
2. Have a discussion on the essay, giving everyone a chance to ask questions and highlight key points.
3. Leaders divide the group into three groups.
4. Distribute an enclosed Mountain T.O.P. newspaper and two different colored markers to each group.
5. Tell the group to explore the newspapers for articles, phrases, words, pictures, etc. that are descriptive of characteristics or values that are similar to their own. They should circle the descriptive pieces with one color. Then instruct each group to do the very same thing, but in this case they will look for characteristics or values that are different from their own. They will then circle these descriptive pieces with the other color marker you have given them.
6. Ask each small group to share their findings with the total group. Encourage the group to ask questions and explore those cultural traits that are similar and different to theirs.
7. Be sure the group highlights the following concepts:
 - having different traits than someone else does not mean better than yours or worse than yours
 - learning to accept others that are different is Christ-like
 - discovering similarities between different cultures is an important part of Christian relationship making
 - cross-cultural exchange experiences are opportunities for learning

PART 2 : Helping in the Eyes of Mountain T.O.P.

Purpose:

- This part is designed to help participants explore the helping concept in a Christian way, and more specifically, in the Mountain T.O.P. way.

Importance:

- This is valuable for participants to ensure a positive experience serving the people of the Cumberland Mountains. By understanding the way Mountain T.O.P. helps people, participants can truly experience the Mountain T.O.P. ministry in its fullest. Once at Mountain T.O.P., campers become agents of the Mountain T.O.P. ministry while they are with the people in the local areas. Therefore, it is crucial that agents of this organization understand why we serve the way we do.
1. Leader passes out "Helping in the Eyes of Mountain T.O.P." handout to each person. Allow time for them to read and underline important concepts they think everyone should remember while at Mountain T.O.P.
 2. Ask the group to discuss the following:
 - When should someone help someone?
 - Why is Christian helping an empowering act?
 - What does a person gain when they help the Christian way?
 - Why is it important for Mountain T.O.P. to help only those who have asked for help?
 - Why is it important for Mountain T.O.P. to not determine what someone needs?
 3. Divide the group into small groups and have them brainstorm...
 - How can you help your YRG?
 - How can you help the people you serve in the mountains?
 - How can you help the whole camp community?
 4. Have small groups share with total group.
 5. Give each person a piece of construction paper, marker, and scissors. Have them trace their hand and cut it out. Have them write on one side of the hand something they want to give to the Mountain T.O.P. community and the other side of the hand something they hope to give to the people of the Cumberland Mountains.
 6. Share the "hands" with the total group.
 7. Tape them around the church building so the congregation can see how "helpful" the youth want to be at Mountain T.O.P.!!!!!!

**BE SURE THE PASTOR PRAYS WITH THE YOUTH
ABOUT CHRISTIAN HELPING AND THEIR MISSION TRIP!**

***PART 3: STEREOTYPES AND PERCEPTIONS**

Purpose:

- To further enable participants to see how false stereotypes and perceptions may limit their ability to be fully devoted followers of Christ.

Importance:

- This is essential to the participant's preparation in order for them to be as effective as possible with their YRGs and with the Cumberland Mountain People.
1. Read to the whole group the story titled: "The True Story of The Three Little Pigs" by Jon Scieszka. You should be able to find this in most bookstores and/or libraries.
 2. This story is about the perspective of the Wolf in the story of the Three Little Pigs. This is a great illustration of how different angles and perspectives add a whole new twist to a common thought. This Wolf will help you teach your youth and adults about how important it is to not just take one perspective as the only one. It is healthy and critical within a Christian community to avoid thinking one way of doing things is the only way, or that just one idea is all that is needed.
 3. Lead a discussion on the meaning of perception, how situations look different depending on the chair you sit in, and how this relates to the Mountain T.O.P. experience. It is important for participants to understand that their own perception is not always right or better. It is important to share and exchange thoughts and ideas. The more we prepare ourselves to enter the Cumberland Mountain culture, the more we will be able to accomplish our goals of "servanthood". This is what needs to happen with the people of the Cumberland Mountains. Talk with the group about how to share opinions and ideas and not alienate people in the process. Help participants see that narrow mindedness and closed mindedness are not helpful while serving others.
 4. Ask the group to make three specific goals that will illustrate these points. Hang them on the wall as a visual reminder for everyone.

CLOSING DEVOTION

(Be sure to create a worship environment that is different from the training session to help participants shift focus from the study session to encountering God.)

Experience:

1. Leader gathers the group together and opens the devotion with a prayer.
2. Have group members write a letter to God asking for help in serving the people of the Cumberland Mountains, in removing barriers, biases, prejudices, or close-minded attitudes from them, and to help them serve as the best team members possible while at Mountain T.O.P.
3. Have an offering where each participant offers his or her letter as a serious petition to God, asking for the strength to overcome the personal obstacles they are facing.
4. Have a group member read Ephesians 6:10-24 to the group. Discuss with the group the following concepts:
 - God is teaching us in this passage how to prepare ourselves for the world and being in it.
 - God gives us instruction on how to be the best we can be for God in our daily actions.
 - By preparing ourselves with the Armor of God, we can then prepare to serve others because first we have gotten ourselves ready. Discuss with them the need to get ready before they can help anyone else.
5. Divide the group into six small groups and have them make their part of God's Armor. (pass out poster board, markers, scissors)
 - Armor around the waist for TRUTH
 - Armor around the chest and shoulders for RIGHTEOUSNESS
 - Armor around legs and feet for READINESS TO PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL OF PEACE.
 - A shield of FAITH
 - A helmet for SALVATION
 - A sword for GOD'S WORD
6. Reassemble the group. Have a volunteer stand in front of the group to be "armored in God" and prepare to go forth and meet needs of the Cumberland Mountain people. Dress the volunteer as a symbol of how we should all look as we go on the mission trip.
7. Have a closing prayer asking for God's strength to see everyone through the experience.

Neat Idea: Ask the Senior Minister if the youth going to Mountain T.O.P. could lead the children's sermon one Sunday morning and illustrate to the children how they are preparing themselves to go serve other people and how this is God's charge to His people.

Session 4

Tool & Worksite Safety at Mountain T.O.P.

*All this session entails is thoroughly going over the “Tool Safety Training Resource, including an activity.

Session 5

"Send Me Lord!"

Session 5- Design

Purpose:

- After the group has completed the three study sessions and safety session in preparation for their mission trip to Mountain T.O.P., the group should be commissioned into "service" by the total church congregation. The church congregation will also be asked to support the mission team further through the "prayer journey experience" enclosed with this session.

Importance:

- The group will have studied God's Word together, discussed and experienced teamwork, sought further understanding of the concept of Christian Servanthood, and studied the concepts of perceptions and stereotypes related to their Mountain T.O.P. experience. By this time, the group will be ready to celebrate the excitement of going forth and serving for the Lord. The closing Commissioning Service is designed for all participants and church members to prepare to be "ambassadors for Christ" on the Mountain T.O.P.!

PLANNING THE COMMISSIONING SERVICE:

1. As the leader plans this service, they should try to focus on the commitment of servanthood that has been emphasized throughout all other sessions. This service is a time of covenant with God and each other to try to not only to be the best servants, but also to be focused on meeting the needs of others before ourselves while at Mountain T.O.P.!
2. Reference "Suggested Commissioning Service for Mission Team"

Session 6

Being a Follower in the Valley Below

Session 6 - Design

PURPOSE:

- This session is to encourage the mission team to share their Mountain T.O.P. experiences with the congregation who supported them in their journey. It is also designed to help participants explore how their lives can express what they have learned while on the mountain.

IMPORTANCE:

- This session is crucial for the participants if they are to have a full experience. Each person is encouraged to reflect on their personal growth and changes so they can be stronger witnesses for Christ.

BACK HOME

This is their response to "Follow me, and I will make you fish for people." (Matthew 4:19 NRSV)

1. This is a super way for the youth and adults to share their mission experience with the total church family. The church family is the partner with the youth group who went to Mountain T.O.P.! Sharing their experiences, their growth in faith, and the ways they have grown closer to each other and God is a powerful message to bring back home to the church. This is an excellent opportunity to take the Mountain T.O.P. ministry and youth experiences to the "valley below" and spread the word about what has been so meaningful to you.

*We encourage and stress the importance of continuing the MTOP experience back home.

PLEASE LET US KNOW WHAT YOUR GROUP DOES BACK HOME AS A RESPONSE TO ITS TIME AT MOUNTAIN T.O.P., SO WE CAN PASS IT ON TO THE THOUSANDS OF OTHERS WHO WOULD WANT TO KNOW HOW GOD IS WORKING IN YOUR GROUP AS A RESPONSE TO THEIR MISSION TRIP!!

2. Be sure to set aside time for group participants to debrief their trip and experience together. Be sure each person receives the Reflection Journal enclosed with this session. It takes a lot of energy on the leader's part to show the importance of doing this type of exercise. Teaching youth and adults the importance of evaluation and reflection is a life long skill that will serve them well all of their lives. Groups without a plan and purpose lose much of what they have invested in the time at Mountain T.O.P.! Begin discussions about the new directions the group can take because of your identity as followers of Christ in the valley below.
3. Ask group members to answer the questions in their "Reflection Journal" and stress the importance of them being honest with themselves and God. Change is hard but with God's help and the group's support, exciting things can happen to individuals as they become more committed to Christ.