

# Mountain T.O.P.

## Spiritual Life Resources Summer 2020



Mountain T.O.P.  
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# Welcome to Camp-in-a-Box!

Or, more like camp-in-a-digital-box...! We are so excited to present you with a full camp week's worth of spiritual life programming! This year has looked far different than anything we could have imagined. Instead of campers from across the country gathering in our camps to serve in our pocket of rural Appalachia, people are staying local. We miss having you all here in our midst: seeing you take your morning daybreak across camp, celebrating the new skills you learned on a worksite, listening to your creative Day Camp cheers, singing the Mountain T.O.P. song with you (especially the big finish!), and commissioning you to return to the valley below.

Part of the work that our summer staffers contributed to while here for a few weeks was this very resource. They have created content that follows the same worship flow you would have experienced in camp. As with all our team-based resources, these elements are designed to be flexible. You can re-create a mini-Mountain T.O.P. in your own community and serve locally for a few days. Or, you can use these resources over the course of several weeks of youth group meetings. Share these resources with your youth group digitally or gather (in a safe and socially responsible way) and worship together. However you utilize this material, share with us! We would love to hear how this experience was for you.

Each day has an individual reflection (similar to a morning daybreak), small group discussion (similar to an on-site daybreak), and a worship outline. We encourage you to watch [our video](#) as an introduction to our yearly theme before diving in! This [blog post](#) will help jumpstart the conversation, too. The worship flow will take you through seasons of flourishing, slowing down, barrenness, reawakening, and responding and remembering. The natural seasons and all their distinct qualities teach us a lot about our spiritual lives. We may not fully understand the doings of God but we can trust that God is with us in all seasons. While this theme is introspective in nature, that self-reflection should lay the foundation for understanding the experiences of others. As we learn about the different spiritual seasons in our lives, we are better equipped to empathize with others.

We are thrilled to share this resource with you and can't wait to hear how it impacts your group. We look forward to seeing you back on the Mountain again, soon!

*A very special thank you to the summer staff who contributed to this incredible resource:  
Camp Directors: Caroline Hurst, Brien McChesney, Liz Murray, Kara Painter, Steven Stinson  
Program Managers: Hanna Holman, Kristin Guglielmo, Hallie Marie McErlain, Jackie Weisel*

# Parts of Worship

Below are the standard parts of worship that you will see used throughout the spiritual life resources. Each day starts with an individual reflection, includes a small group discussion, and ends with worship. During a typical camp week, we try to be intentional about incorporating different types of worship into our days because we value that different people connect with God in different ways. The worships that are included in this resource are diverse, as well. You are welcome to adapt each day's content or flow as you need to. You know your group better than we do!

## Individual Reflection

Each day starts with an individual reflection introducing the daily theme. This time, similar to a morning daybreak at camp, is designed to give participants the opportunity to be alone with God. About 15-20 minutes is a sufficient amount of time. If you have participants who have not done much alone time with God, be sure to provide guidance with how to use this time beyond just reading the provided material.

## Small Group Discussion

The small group discussion is a time for groups of 5-7 people to have a more intimate conversation about the daily theme. We advise having at least 1 adult or older youth present in each group to help the conversation stay on track. If you are doing service in your community during the day, incorporate the Small Group Discussion into your lunch break.

## Sharing

The purpose of Sharing is to invite your community to reflect on how God is present in their experiences throughout the day or week. Sharing is an integral part of the spiritual journey as it gives participants the opportunity to reflect on their experiences as they happen and build a sense of intentionality to the way we approach the connection between service and worship. Sharing is an outlet for participants to witness how God is working within themselves and the people around them.

A sample order of Sharing:

- Pray (either at the beginning or end, whichever feels most comfortable)
- Share the purpose and importance of this time, as well as expectations. (For example, don't talk when other people are talking, raise your hand/stand up, be respectful of other people's stories, limit the frequency or length of your sharing in order to give everyone the opportunity to do so.)
- Start with a light-hearted question, such as:
  - What was fun or funny about today?
  - What made you smile or laugh?
  - What was your highlight?

- How did you experience joy?
- Transition to a more serious time of sharing by offering a quote or image or scripture
- Ask more reflection questions. It helps to tie at least one of these questions to the daily theme. For example:
  - How did you see God today?
  - What new thing did you learn or see or experience?
  - What did you learn about serving others?
  - How did you see partnership in action?

Some tips for the Facilitator:

- Be comfortable with silence. It's okay—encouraged, even—to wait several seconds for people to answer.
- Ask 1 question at a time. If you ask too many questions at a time, they won't know what to answer. If you can't articulate what you want to ask in one question, rewrite it.
- Be mindful of your facial expressions and body language when leading. Everyone is looking at you!
- Always have back-up questions. Sometimes you'll need to ask your question in a different way in order to inspire a response.

## **Gathering**

The purpose of the gathering is to prepare participants to enter a time and space of worship. The person who gathers the group should set the tone for the worship space they are entering into. The tone can be quiet and reflective or active and celebratory! Preferably, the gathering happens in a space separate from the worship area so that everyone can make both the physical and mental transition. It helps to read scripture, a poem, or a quote or lead a prayer during this time. Feel free to give a word of instruction about how to enter the worship space; for example, fill the seats from front to back, sit with your work team, etc.

## **Call & Response / Corporate Prayer**

These pieces of liturgy can help worshipping communities speak words of love and truth aloud together. Sometimes, when we find it difficult to form our own prayers, we can lean on written prayers to help us communicate with God. These are great moments to have students lead small parts of worship.

## **Message**

With each day, there is a link included to a message written and recorded by a current summer staffer. You are welcome to use this video, create your own message, or ask a student to prepare a message!

## **Response**

We believe that we are not just to be hearers of God's word, but doers of the word (James 1:22-25). We also believe in the importance of being active participants in our relationship with the Lord. Inviting participants to respond within worship mimics the holy invitation we have to move into a closer relationship with God. Sometimes a response looks like getting out of our seats and doing something with our hands. Other times, it can be a guided reflection that is less active and more contemplative. When describing the response, the facilitator should balance logistic instruction with the symbolism of the activity so that participants both know what they are doing and why it is important.

## **Benediction**

The word benediction means "good word." It is the last thing people hear before leaving worship; therefore, it is important that the benediction is a thoughtful wrap-up to all the preceding parts of worship. The benediction can include instruction about what is to come next, but the logistics piece should not be the last thing people hear. If your worship space allows, invite participants to remain there so they have additional time to reflect or pray if needed.

# Service Philosophies

Mountain T.O.P. has been in ministry for 45 years and since the beginning, we have been intentional about the way we approach service. Below are four major components of service that lay the foundation for the relationships we have with our homeowners. As you consider how you can serve locally, we encourage you to find ways to incorporate these philosophies into your community. Mountain T.O.P. is based on the principle that community members know their community best. Connect with your church members, gather referrals, and partner with existing organizations in order that you may come alongside the existing good work happening near you!

## 4 Needs

Mountain T.O.P.'s mission is rooted in a holistic view of humanity. We view every person we encounter as a beloved and unique creation of God. Thus, we seek to meet the physical, social, emotional, and spiritual needs of every person we meet, rather than just focusing on a physical injustice. We approach every program with these four needs in mind, from major and minor home repair projects to day camp programs. It's not just about the project or the program, it's about the people and the relationships we build along the way.

## Partnership

We believe that every person has assets to bring to the table. Recognizing this keeps us focused on the gifts of our community, rather than the gaps. When we work with families, we explain this philosophy and ask how we can work together to help them. Sometimes, families are able to purchase the supplies for a project or are able to make a financial donation. Other times, a family might fix lunch or share some expertise with a group. In our day camp programs, we partner with parents to encourage their children to come to camp, as well as work together to cover the associated fees. In addition to these tangible forms of partnership, the language we use is important, too. We always say that we work WITH people, rather than FOR them. It is a hand up, not a handout. These practices empower the people we work with to recognize the gifts they can add to our ministry and the community.

## Expressed Needs

Alongside this, we only try to meet expressed needs. While we do advertise our services to the community, we do not solicit our services to individuals unless they or someone they know initiates that relationship on their behalf. We intentionally balance responding to the needs that an individual expresses with our professional and experienced perspectives. Our goal is never to diminish someone's dignity or pride in their home; however, if we see something that seriously impedes a family's health or safety, we will make recommendations for the scope of a project.

## **Stewardship**

The use of materials in a good manner is something Mountain T.O.P. focuses on throughout the service philosophies. It is not uncommon for the families we work with to provide the materials we use on projects. It is important to use those resources respectfully and appropriately. Things to remember when working with materials are things like 'measure twice cut once' so we do not waste any wood or sorting the wood at a site to ensure there is no mix-up and waste of materials. Most paint for painting projects is purchased by the family so having paint fights while working, though might be fun, is totally discouraged. We always want to be respectful while serving at someone else's home because we are their guests.

Interested in learning more about community development and missions philosophies? Check out any of these titles below:

Toxic Charity by Robert Lupton

When Helping Hurts by Brian Fikkert and Steve Corbett

Slow Kingdom Coming by Kent Annan

# Games

## **Blob Tag (in person)**

1. Choose someone as "It".
2. "It" starts the game as regular tag, but when s/he catches someone, they must join hands with "It" to create a Blob.
3. Once the Blob has 6 people, they can split into groups of three only, and may split into groups of three any time thereafter.
4. The person left without being tagged, is "It" and the game starts again.

## **Blind Folded Dodgeball (in person)**

### Supplies

- Soft, throwable objects (socks, beach balls, hacky sacks, foam balls)
- Blindfolds or bandannas

### Game Play:

1. Set boundaries for where the game will be played. (i.e. stay in the youth center or gym or form a circle with pool noodles that the players can't cross, etc.)
2. Everyone needs a partner. One person will be blindfolded.
3. The blindfolded person is the only one who can pick up or throw the "dodgeballs" and try to play dodgeball as normal. The seeing partner can accompany the blindfolded player into the playing area to direct and guide the blindfolded person.
4. If the blindfolded player gets hit, they're out.
5. Once everyone's out, the partners switch.

### Variations:

- The seeing partner can still shout instructions and directions at the blindfolded partner but cannot walk with the partner. The seeing person has to stand on the perimeter of the playing area.
- The seeing partner is only allowed to say, "duck," "throw," "left," and "right."

## **Fishbowl (in person or online)**

### Supplies

- 3 pieces of paper for everyone
- Writing utensils
- Bowl

### Game Play

1. Each person writes one thing on each piece of paper that can be described using words and actions and then place the papers in a bowl.



2. Divide into two teams
3. Choose one person to go first from each team.
4. The chosen person stands in the front and will read the pieces of paper and try to describe them for their team to guess. They try to get their team to guess as many as possible in 1 minute. Both teams go.
5. Next round a new person tries to get their team to guess the things that were left over in the bowl. This round they can only act out the word.
6. Next round, a new person tries to get their team to guess the words but is only allowed to say one word. The team has to guess the word based on that one word they say.
7. Whichever team guesses the most words total, wins.

## **The Name Game (in person)**

### Supplies Needed

- One small piece of paper per person, per round
- Bowl

### Game Play

1. Sit in a circle
2. Choose a category and have each person write something down on a piece of paper from that category. Examples of a category could be 'your favorite Disney character' or 'your favorite food'
3. One person from the circle will collect all of the papers from the participants.
4. The person who collects the paper will read each one twice out loud to the group.
5. Everyone must pay attention to what is being read because they are only read twice. When the papers are done being read, have the person to the left of the one reading go first.
6. The person to go first will try and guess what another person in the group wrote down on their paper. If the person guesses correctly then the person they guessed right will stand behind them and join their team.
7. The goal of the game is to get everyone on your team by guessing what they wrote down. Every person added to your team can help you guess who wrote what down to gain more people to the group.

## **Lamentations or Taylor Swift? (online or in person)**

1. The leader reads off a quote, and youth have to decide if it is 1) a passage from the book of Lamentations, one of the more "depressing" reads in the Bible, as it details the destruction and demise of Jerusalem or 2) a lyric from a Taylor Swift song, one of the more "depressing" songwriters of our generation, as she details every breakup and slight she's ever suffered.
2. Have youth go to the left side of the room if they think the quote is from Lamentations, and the right side of the room if they think it is from Taylor Swift. After the answer is

revealed the incorrect group will be 'eliminated', and the next quote is read. Continue this until only a few, or one, player(s) remain. Or, you can play without eliminations.

- I remember it all—oh, how well I remember—the feeling of hitting the bottom.
  - Book of Lamentations
- Have you ever seen anything like this? Ever seen pain like my pain, seen what he did to me?
  - Book of Lamentations
- It rains when you're here. And it rains when you're gone.
  - Taylor Swift
- Long were the nights when my days once revolved around you.
  - Taylor Swift
- Walls of insincerity, shifting eyes, and vacancy vanished when I saw your face.
  - Taylor Swift
- I weep, weep buckets of tears, and not a soul within miles around cares.
  - Book of Lamentations
- I gave up on life altogether. I've forgotten what the good life is like.
  - Book of Lamentations
- Did you have to do this? I was thinking that you could be trusted.
  - Taylor Swift
- Like shadows in a faded light. Oh, we're invisible.
  - Taylor Swift
- We've been to hell and back. We've nowhere to turn, nowhere to go. Rivers of tears pour from my eyes.
  - Book of Lamentations
- See the vultures circling dark clouds. Love's a fragile little flame; it could burn out.
  - Taylor Swift
- Time turns flames to embers.
  - Taylor Swift
- These walls that they put up to hold us back will fall down...The time will come for us to finally win. And we'll sing hallelujah. We'll sing hallelujah.
  - Taylor Swift