

Mountain T.O.P. Resource Guide Spring Break Out 2019



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The Foundations of Mountain T.O.P.

Foundational Objective

Through Christian community and faith-based relationships, we help meet the physical, spiritual, social, and emotional needs of all the people we encounter. We see all four needs as equally important. Through home repairs and day camps, Mountain T.O.P. seeks to meet these needs. We serve in partnership with other agencies, churches, governments, business, and leaders to help develop the communities in which we work.

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

Statement of Values

Mountain T.O.P. (Tennessee Outreach Project) is a Christian organization affiliated with the Tennessee Conference of the United Methodist Church dedicated to a mission of rural life ministry in the Cumberland Mountains of Tennessee. Specifically, Mountain T.O.P. seeks to empower people through a philosophy of partnership with those whom it serves. It seeks to enable the staff, camp participants, and Cumberland Mountain families to realize their potential and their responsibility as God's servants to holistically address physical, emotional, social, and spiritual needs. Mountain T.O.P. is concerned with achieving immediate results through direct social service programming. Mountain T.O.P. is a referral-based organization, serving those who have expressed a need. It strives to serve as a "faith-in-action" classroom from which those touched can be energized to do likewise.

Foundational Scriptures

"As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 'Come, follow me,' Jesus said, 'and I will make you fishers of men.' At once they left their nets and followed him." Matthew 4: 18 - 20

"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' ... The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'"

Matthew 25: 34 - 36, 40

Helping in the eyes of Mountain T.O.P.

A look at how Mountain T.O.P. approaches helping families in our service area. The first thing to remember about helping at Mountain T.O.P. is that we are here because we have answered the call Jesus gives us in Matthew 28:19. In the past two thousand years, men and women all over the world have tried to define and act upon this call and MTOP is no different.

We believe that we are fulfilling Jesus' call by offering the opportunity to love one another through mission. We are all part of a much larger picture and giving others the opportunity to participate in Christ's love is vital to our world. We hope that your experience with MTOP will help you discover what God is calling you to do specifically in this world while discovering what it means to be a disciple of Christ.

The second thing to understand about MTOP is that we seek to empower everyone with whom we work. From our staff to the Day Camp children to each one of our participants to our wider communities, MTOP is a partnership ministry. We are intentional about inspiring initiative in people's' lives because that is what Christ's love has done for us.

“But we're only here for a short period of time. How can we make a difference?” This is part of the mystery of Christ's love! When you come to MTOP, you are part of a flow of ongoing ministry support in this region. You are joining with past participants, local families, churches, teachers, and other supporters to spread the message of abundant life in Christ. He takes what we have to offer and uses our efforts to bring about restoration and healing.

When you arrive at camp, it is important for you to recognize that MTOP sees needs in four categories (see our Foundational Objectives). We seek to meet the physical, social, emotional, and spiritual needs of the Cumberland Mountain people. No one of the four needs is any more important than the other. Having a conversation with a lonely widow or playing a game of tag with a child is just as important as swinging a hammer. Our staff works very hard prior to your arrival to uncover the needs that exist and provide you with a meaningful experience in helping those needs.

While you are here, we hope that you seek your work as fruitful and have the opportunity to build relationships with the people you serve. These relationships can be transformational in someone's life, reflecting the love of Christ. Helping at MTOP means the work you do will not only be fulfilling basic physical needs, but will act as a reminder that all people are loved and belong to the body of Christ. “For Christ so loved the world...”

Special Characteristics of SBO

Mountain T.O.P. camps share a common purpose which integrates the building of a Christian community, helping others meet different needs (physical, social, emotional and spiritual), and emphasizing faith development throughout the total experience. Listed below are specific characteristics that make our camp experience unique.

Group Morning Devotional

To be intentional about our time with God while at Mountain T.O.P., we provide participants with the opportunity to begin their day with the Lord. Group morning devotional time is for participants within the camp community to lead the conversation to start the day focused on the Lord. The Mountain T.O.P. staff will provide the theme for the day and it is up to those leading this time what takes place during this time.

Ministry Production Team (MPT)

We call the group you will be working in Ministry Production Teams (MPTs). Depending on your preference, you can form your own MPTs within your group or you can mix with other groups in camp. Either way, we encourage MPTs to be a balance of gender, age, experience, and geographic location. We also encourage MPTs of people who don't know each other very well so that the group becomes a place where expectations and norms from familiar relationships are laid aside. As an MPT, you will work on a wide variety of projects including roofing, floor repair, interior and exterior finish work, porch building, wheelchair ramp building etc. All members of the MPT are responsible for team development, growth and stewardship of materials.

Community Evening Programs

The evening always includes a sharing time and worship. Sharing gives everyone the opportunity to express their thoughts and insights from their day with the community. Worship is an ecumenical experience designed to focus on serving God. It is an opportunity for campers and staff to engage in reflective moments as they seek to grow closer and further develop their commitment to God. On Wednesdays, the Mountain T.O.P. will take groups to a local church service as a way to experience a different context of worship and interact with our community more.

Fish hook Worship

This worship is dedicated to celebrating the journey of the camp community throughout the week and to asking participants to commit to being a fisher of people in the valley below. This time of reflection is designed to highlight for participants that the Mountain T.O.P. experience does not stay on top of the mountain, but it goes home with each participant in their hearts.

Closing Circle

This celebration is designed to reconnect participants with their own groups and to challenge each group to go forth and continue to share God's love in the valley below. Mountain T.O.P. seeks to enrich the lives of its participants so they will take their experience and build on it when they return home.