



Frequently Asked Questions

Where will we stay?

If camping, your experience will be based out of state parks, wilderness areas and public and private campgrounds in Kentucky (95% of groups) or Tennessee (5% of groups).

If you are staying indoors that will most likely be in our [dorms](#) located at our operating base in Wilmore, KY.

It can be frustrating as you make travel plans and attempt to budget for transportation without knowing the specific location of your stay. There are a number of factors to be weighed before determining a location for your group, including worksite suitability and availability, size of your group and matching facilities, the goals of your group, and proximity of wilderness activities. For this reason, directions and the exact location of your group will be sent to the group at least two weeks before your trip.

What time zone are you in?

Our main office is located in Wilmore, Kentucky and is in the Eastern Standard time zone. We base our experiences out of parks all over Kentucky and sometimes in northern Tennessee all of which operate on EST.

What does the per-person fee include?

The fee for the week includes all regularly scheduled meals, camping equipment and lodging from the time the group arrives until the time when they leave. The preparation materials, qualified staff, T-shirt and detailed planning and set-up for the week are also included. Some outdoor adventure equipment is included (hiking, rappelling, climbing and caving gear). We also provide primary medical and liability insurance up to \$3,000 on each camper. We do not cover the costs of transportation for your group and/or whitewater rafting.

Where do the AdventureServe staff members come from?

We hire dedicated Christian college-aged students and older individuals from around the country and internationally. They are from many different denominations. All are 18 or older, hold to the "historic creeds" of the Christian faith, are First Aid and CPR certified and have experienced extensive training.

How far away is the nearest hospital?

Group experiences operate out of parks or serve in rural communities. There are hospitals in all the counties in which we serve. There is also a functional emergency medical response system set up in all of the counties we serve. Also servicing the Middle Kentucky or Tennessee area is a life flight helicopter system (for extreme emergencies).

What is your policy about medication for youth?

All participants must fill out a Participant Information and Liability Release form that specifies their medications and the procedures for using them so that our staff are aware of the medication. A medical doctor will need to give the OK by signing the form for someone on medication to participate in a AdventureServe experience. The medication will be kept by the youth and self-administered. If this is not possible, the group leader must set up a system to oversee (or administer) the medication. Our staff will not administer any prescription medication. AdventureServe staff members may administer non-prescription medicines such as non-aspirin, antacid and antihistamine for first aid purposes only.

What if we bring someone who has not filled out his/her Participant Information and Liability Release form?

This form is mandatory. It needs to be filled out properly with the appropriate signatures and handed over to your AdventureServe staff upon your arrival. No group member (including all adults) will be allowed to participate in any AdventureServe activity without the form correctly filled out and signed (including the parents' signatures). It is imperative all of the information is completed accurately for medical and insurance purposes. If a youth arrives and the correct form is not with him/her, AdventureServe will need to make phone calls to the parents, the group leader will need to sign as witnesses to the calls, etc. It is a big hassle. Just bring the correct [form](#).

When are my payments due?

The payment deadlines vary from group to group based on when your group registers and what week your group is coming. Details about your payment deadlines are explained in the contract that you signed and returned to our office. If you cannot find your copy of the contract, please call our office and speak with our Administration Manager. You will also receive invoices prior to your payment deadlines outlining the amount due. If you have any questions about invoices you receive or any other financial questions please call our Administration Manager.

What do I do if the number of my group participants changes?

Please notify the director of your program with your number changes. All significant number changes must be made by May 1st. After May 1st, you will be financially responsible for group numbers dropping below 20% of your latest stated number of participants at May 1st. If your numbers change after May 1st (significant or otherwise), please notify the director of your program as soon as possible. We use this number to plan for your food, lodging, and other materials.

How many chaperones do I need?

You need at least one adult participant for every seven youth participants. If there is at least one female youth, at least one female chaperone is required; if there is at least one male youth, at least one male chaperone is required. If you have a problem with this policy, please contact the director of your program.

Can parents send mail to their youth?

Due to a number of considerations, AdventureServe will no longer handle any mail for group participants. If you would like your participants to receive mail, have all mail delivered to your group leader prior to your trip, and have them bring the mail along with them on the trip. They can then distribute mail at some point during your experience.

Once we arrive, how does transportation take place?

Your group is responsible for all transportation and transportation costs during the week. Most groups use 15 passenger vans or mini-vans. Buses are not recommended as

many aspects of your trip involve very rural routes beyond the capability of a bus. Some groups will ride to the campground in a bus and then rent vans during their stay. Please call us for contact numbers if you need vehicle rental information. There are national chains in Lexington and Louisville, Kentucky as well as Knoxville and Nashville, Tennessee (depending upon which direction you are coming from).

Can we arrive early on Sunday?

We ask that all groups do not arrive until after 6pm (EST) on Sunday evening. This ensures that our AdventureServe staff have time to pack all your food and gear for the week. It also gives them time to drive up to three hours from our offices to meet you at your assigned state park or base camp and then set up some of the campsite area. Also, remember that your group needs to eat dinner prior to arriving.

What happens if my group arrives late on Sunday?

Often groups run into traffic, have vehicle problems or take more time than planned to eat. If you will be arriving more than 1 hour late, notify the director of your program. That allows him/her to notify your AdventureServe staff. It also allows the AdventureServe staff to begin setting up camp, so you will not have to do it in the dark. Please do your best to arrive on time Sunday as there are many key activities planned for the evening.

Can we leave early?

Occasionally, groups will choose to leave Friday after their daily activities are over if they have a long drive or scheduling issues. If you are planning on leaving early, please notify your program director, so he/she can make food and staffing arrangements. We do not offer refunds for early departures.

What is the food like?

We try to provide your group with healthy food for the whole week. High sugar foods, high fat foods and other so-called “junk foods” are avoided as much as possible. We challenge each group to try to avoid the junk food for a full week (it is much harder than you think!). The food as a whole is tasty, nutritious and will be devoured by all! The group members will be preparing and serving these meals. For more information, check out the [second packet of information](#).

Can we bring snacks?

We discourage groups from bringing extra snacks as it distracts from meals and can be unhealthy. Participants should not keep food of any kind in their tents as this is not allowed in most campgrounds. Occasionally participants with special medical concerns will need to bring along special food or snacks for their condition. We recommend that their snacks be kept in a cooler or sealed container with the rest of the group food.

What will the weather be like?

Although the weather varies, the average summer highs are between 82-90°F. The average lows are around 60°F. It typically rains about 5 inches a month, so chances are high that it will rain at least once while you are in Kentucky or Tennessee.

What happens in the case of severe weather?

All AdventureServe staff members are trained in our severe weather procedure. The procedure includes working with local park rangers and officials to determine the severity of the weather and leading groups to approved shelter in the area.

What are the tents like?

All participants, except Wilderness Backcountry and those that ask for indoor lodging, sleep in 6-person dome tents by Kelty. All tents have a floor, screens and a rain fly. We also set up the tents with a tarp between the tent and the ground to help avoid moisture. We make intentional efforts to keep all participants dry, but it is camping. Occasionally things will get damp due to rain and dew, especially if items are touching the outside edges of the tent. For more information, check out the [2nd packet of information](#).

Can chaperones have their own tents?

Your chaperones can either share tents with other chaperones or bunk in with the youth. The choice is up to you. The director of your program will discuss your sleeping arrangements and tent requests with you about two weeks prior to your trip.

Can we bring our own tents?

You are welcome to bring your own tents if you choose. If you decide to bring your own tents, make sure they are sturdy and have an adequate rain fly. (Some of the cheap tents

do not hold up well in TN and KY summer weather.) Also, notify the director of your program when you discuss sleeping arrangements.

Can we bring air mattresses?

We highly encourage you NOT to bring air mattresses. They take up too much room in the tents. Plus, some campsites do not have electricity nearby to plug in the air compressors to fill them. If you want to bring something to make your sleeping more comfortable, we recommend ground pads like a Therm-a-Rest ®.

Will swimming be available?

Wilderness Trips

Swimming is a core part of most wilderness trips, but we do not force anyone to swim. Any time your group goes swimming, there must be a certified lifeguard present and on duty. Your AdventureServe staff, or at least one of them, will be a certified lifeguard, to enable your group to swim and bathe. If you have any lifeguards in your group, they can be backup lifeguards, if the AdventureServe staff are busy doing other tasks. Please ask your lifeguards to bring their certification with them, as the AdventureServe staff must see their cards before they can recognize their qualifications.

All other programs

Swimming is not a part of any AdventureServe mission experience. These staff members are not trained lifeguards, and without this precaution, we cannot take any group swimming. Please note that if you would like to swim on your trip, you need to provide a lifeguard (with current certification). This individual is not just present, but ON DUTY at all times. If you still would like to go swimming and you do not have any lifeguards in your group AdventureServe will ask you to complete the [Swimming Liability Release](#) form. In some instances, the park where you are staying may have a pool with a trained lifeguard. In these instances, your group may go swimming at your expense. When you receive your park assignment, your program manager will be able to let you know whether swimming is available at that park.

Do we have to worry about bears and snakes?

Bears are not a problem in most of the camping areas that we use, so you don't have worry about them. However, we do have issues with skunks, raccoons and squirrels getting into food. That is why we don't allow any participants to keep food in their tents. Some people are concerned about the skunks, but most of them are tame enough that they will not spray unless they are intentionally provoked.

Kentucky and Tennessee are home to several species of snakes. Most of the snakes in the area are harmless. However, there are two types of poisonous snakes in the areas we work. The poisonous types are the Timber Rattler (not commonly seen), the Rattlesnake, and the Copperhead (more commonly seen). We do encourage participants to exercise caution.

Do you have problems with ticks and bugs?

Depending on the weather, we typically have a fairly large quantity of ticks, especially near the beginning of the summer. We recommend daily tick checks, even if groups do not spend very much time in the woods. We also train our staff how to properly remove ticks. As far as other insects go, most are not a huge problem. Depending on the area and weather, we occasionally have issues with mosquitoes and chiggers. Your best bet is to bring insect repellent, but please do not spray it on or around our tents as it ruins the water-repellent material.

What about bees and wasps?

We do encounter a fair amount of bees and wasps. Some of our campsites also have sweat bees, which are annoying but really quite harmless. We encourage participants that are highly allergic to bee stings to carry an epi-pen with them while they are in Kentucky or Tennessee. ADVENTURESERVE staff DO NOT carry epi-pens.

Is there poison ivy in the area?

Unfortunately, poison ivy is quite common in Kentucky or Tennessee, especially in wilderness areas. Our staff will show participants what poison ivy plants look like, so they can be looking out for it during their experience. If participants are exposed to poison ivy, we recommend washing the affected area with soap and water after

exposure. This process removes the poisonous oils from the skin and decreases the chance of a rash breaking out.

What is the evening worship service like?

The evening worship services can be designed however you desire. Typically, the group leader will allow chore teams to plan and lead the evening worship services. However, some group leaders may also plan and lead the service themselves. For more information on this topic, check out [Packet 3](#).

Should we bring musical instruments?

If you have musical instruments such as guitars, small drums, etc., feel free to bring them. They enhance evening worship times and free time. However, you may not want to bring extremely expensive instruments that may be seriously damaged by heat and humidity. If your group has limited packing space, you may also want to limit the number of instruments your group brings. Please do not bring electric amps and equipment, as you may not have electricity to plug them in and we must be courteous to our neighboring campers.

No one in my group plays a guitar. Can you provide a guitar player for us?

Usually some of our AdventureServe summer staff members are guitar players. If you would like AdventureServe to provide a guitar playing staff member for your group, notify the director of your program and let him/her know your request prior to the beginning of the summer. We will do our best to arrange it for you, but we cannot guarantee that we will have any guitar playing staff members available to work your group. You may have to sing without accompaniment.

Can I take my group out to eat one night?

AdventureServe provides food for your entire stay. However, some group leaders choose to treat their group to a dinner out at a restaurant one night. We are happy to accommodate you at your own expense. If you choose to do this, the AdventureServe staff leading your trip will be able to give you suggestions for local places to eat and may be able to help you make arrangements. If you choose to eat out, we typically suggest Friday evening as an end of the week celebration.

How is my group broken up into smaller chore teams?

Groups can be divided up in several different ways. Most youth leaders sit down with the AdventureServe staff on Sunday evening after they arrive and divide up the teams.

Some group leaders divide their group into chore teams prior to arrival, so they can separate troublemakers, siblings, cliques, etc. We can accommodate either style. If you choose to divide up your group before you arrive, it works best to have 3 to 6 chore teams with 3 to 7 youth on each team. Each chore team should have at least one chaperone member.

Can we make a covenant before we arrive?

If your group would like to make a covenant before you arrive, that is great. If you would like to wait until you arrive to make a covenant, our AdventureServe staff can help guide you through the process. For more information on covenants and options, see the section about covenants in [Packet 3](#).

What fun things are there to do in the area?

While you are participating in your AdventureServe experience, you will find very little extra time to sightsee. However, many group leaders seek extra activities prior to and after their experience. Kentucky and Tennessee have a variety of opportunities. For more information, check out www.tnvacation.com or www.mykentuckyvacation.com and feel free to contact your program director.

Can we change our wilderness activity?

We ask groups to choose a wilderness activity early so that we can order enough gear for the summer and assign your group a base location that is near your wilderness activity. However, we will switch wilderness activities for your group if you notify the director of your program by May 1st. If you decided to switch your wilderness activity after May 1st, call our office as soon as possible. We will do our best to accommodate your request, but we cannot guarantee changes after May 1st. Also note, that you may have to drive further to your wilderness activity if you make a last minute change.

Can part of my youth group do one wilderness activity, and part of my group do another activity?

We do not usually allow groups to choose more than one wilderness activity at a time for a number of reasons. Some of our wilderness activities are located in different areas of the state, up to three hours away from each other, making transportation difficult. Because we do not mix groups with other groups, we may not have the staff and equipment available to safely facilitate multiple activities simultaneously.

Where will we be whitewater rafting? How difficult is it?

AdventureServe contracts our whitewater rafting activities with independent rafting outfitters. We will book rafting trips during your experience from our office. All levels of experience can participate as each raft has an experienced guide leading the descent. Due to state laws, all participants must be at least 6 years old in order to raft.

Can you schedule my group to whitewater raft when we leave on Saturday?

AdventureServe will not schedule your group to whitewater raft on Saturday. You are responsible for scheduling your own rafting times prior to or after your experience with AdventureServe. However, if you call our office, we can provide you with the name and phone numbers of suggested rafting outfitters.

I have concerns about one of my group members physical ability to participate in activities.

For the most part, all of the activities during your trip are adaptable to almost all levels of physical fitness. If you are overly concerned about any of your participants, feel free to contact the director of your specific program for more details. Also, please notify your director if any of your participants have major physical limitations.

I'm worried about the rope breaking during climbing.

The ropes we use have a breaking strength of 6500 pounds, well above the weight of any participant. In our rappelling system, we use two ropes in our system for safety and rescue in case of emergency.

How high are the cliffs that we will climb and rappel off?

Most of the cliffs that AdventureServe uses for climbing are 25 to 70 feet high. The rappelling cliffs range from 40 to 120 feet.

Is everyone forced to participate in the wilderness activities?

We never force anyone to participate in any activity. It is "challenge by choice" alone. Most group members will participate when they understand the safety of the activity and when they are encouraged to challenge themselves by others in the group.

If participants are claustrophobic, do they have to go in the cave?

We never force anyone to participate in any activity. The caves we use are non-commercial wilderness caves, which are not normally used by the public (other than other serious cavers). Our caving trips are strenuous and while most of the trip will be walking each trip may involve some crawling. Due to the nature of this activity many participants experience the "Yellow zone" while caving and we think this is great! However, we never want to force anyone into the "Red zone" and the difficulty of the route can be adjusted mid-trip by your AdventureServe staff if necessary.

I still have questions

If you don't see your question contact one of the following people to have it answered. For questions about...

General Information about AdventureServe

- [General Information](#)

My specific trip's details: locations, activities, when to arrive, etc...

- During May-August: Talk to your trip's program manager. You should be contacted by them via email or phone in May. If you do not know who this is, contact the Program Director.
- All Year: [Program Director](#)

Payments and accounting

- [General Information](#)

Adding people to my trip

- During May-August: Talk to your trip's program manager. You should be contacted by them via email or phone in May. If you do not know who this is, contact the Program Director.
- All Year: [Program Director](#)

Paperwork

- [Program Director](#)

Work site information

- Home Repair Manager: this person will send you work site information about 3 weeks before the trip. They should make first contact with you and tell you their contact info in May. If you have not heard from them, then:
- [Program Director](#)