



# Discovery Ministries

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## **PARTICIPANT AND GUARDIAN BACKPACK CHALLENGE INFORMATION**

We look forward to having you with us on your backpack challenge trip. Our mission at DM is to enable individuals and groups to grow to be like Jesus through challenge and recreation. Notice that our goal is not to teach backpacking skills, although you will learn many in the process. The purpose of this trip is to put you and your group in challenging circumstances so that you grow and learn how to thrive, through Jesus, when you are pushed out of your comfort zone mentally, physically, and spiritually. Backpacking with a group of novice backpackers is challenging in many ways. Our basic philosophy is if we tell you how to do a skill, like backpacking or social interaction, you will soon forget it. If you struggle to figure out how to do a skill and bear the responsibility for applying it, you will remember it forever.

Our facilitators are trained to allow you to struggle. They set the parameters for the trip, provide instruction as they see necessary, lead debriefings designed to help participants reflect, and provide Wilderness First Responder (visit [www.wildmed.com](http://www.wildmed.com) or call 1-888-wild-med for more details) level medical knowledge. Often our facilitators are viewed as mean and uncaring the first few days of a trip since they allow participants to reap the natural consequences of actions or inaction. By the end of the trip, participants usually realize this style of training is very loving. Visit our web-site for more information.

**ARRIVING:** The trip starts when you arrive. So, be prepared to think and act wisely as soon as you pull in the driveway.

**MEDICAL and PARTICIPANT AGREEMENT forms:** NO ONE will be permitted to participate in the program unless these forms are signed and on file with us. Please get these forms to your organizer so your organizer can get them to us at least 2 weeks before the trip.

**SPENDING MONEY:** You may want to purchase souvenirs or candy in our canteen, and you may be charged for lost or damaged equipment.

**MAILING INFORMATION:** Right before you depart for home, you will receive any mail sent to you.

**TELEPHONE:** You will not have access to a phone.

**IN CASE OF EMERGENCY:** Messages may be left by calling or e-mailing the office. We may or may not be able to make contact with your group to get the message to you.

**CELL PHONES AND OTHER ELECTRONICS:** We will not allow you to take them on the trip.

**BOOTS AND FOOT CARE:** A good quality lightweight hiking boot with laces is necessary. Boots should be purchased and worn so they are well broken in before the trip. We suggest wearing a polypropylene liner and lightweight hiking sock when you hike in your boots. Wearing the boots not only serves to break them in, it also helps condition your feet and help avoid blisters. Any exercise that will toughen your feet will be a benefit. We cannot over emphasize good footwear, proper conditioning and care of feet. Be sure any ingrown toenails, corns or other chronic foot problems are taken care of well before you come.

### **PERSONAL EQUIPMENT AND CLOTHING LIST:**

Try not to add too much to this list; however, traveling clothes can be added for return home and in camp after the trip. Army Surplus, Good Will and Salvation Army stores sell second-hand clothing which is inexpensive and suitable. Buy for function not looks. You carry all your personal items on your back!

A general saying in the wilderness is “cotton kills!” Cotton gets wet, stays wet, and robs heat from your body. Wool, polypropylene, nylon, and many other man made materials dry quickly and keep you warm even if wet. Even in summer, if a big storm blows in and pours rain, you can get cold quickly.

Another wilderness dressing principle is dress in layers. It is better to have a warm non-cotton shirt, fleece jacket, wind jacket, and rain jacket then to have 1 heavy fleece lined rain coat. If you have layers, you can add or take away articles to get warmer or cooler. Of course, in summer you can do without one or two of the middle layers.

**REQUIRED ANY SEASON:**

lightweight Bible  
pen/pencil  
lightweight hiking boots  
socks--3 heavy pairs + 3 light pairs  
1 bandanna  
for walking in water - gym shoes, aqua socks, or  
teva type sandal  
rain protection (poncho is minimal) – the colder it  
is, the better rain gear you will want  
polarized sunglasses  
flashlight, extra bulb, batteries

**OPTIONAL:**

small towel  
minimal personal toilet articles  
gaiters for winter  
light gloves for winter camp chores  
head net for summer  
pocket knife  
camera/film  
personal journal – we provide a small one  
hat with brim

**MINIMUM FOR WARM WEATHER:**

long-sleeved shirt  
long pants--not tight fitting  
2 pairs modest shorts  
non-cotton jacket or sweater  
swimsuit – most two piece swimsuits need to  
be covered by a non-white t-shirt. See  
“Participant/Parent Information” on our  
web site for a more thorough discussion of  
“modesty.”  
2 sets of underwear  
2 T-shirts  
sunscreen --SPF 15 minimum  
bug repellent

**MINIMUM FOR COLD WEATHER:**

heavy mittens  
2 long-sleeved wool, polypropylene, or other  
warm wicking shirts  
2 pairs non-cotton pants  
2 sets non-cotton long underwear, polypropylene  
is good  
heavy non-cotton fleece or insulated parka  
wind-proof jacket that fits over fleece  
non-cotton stocking cap or balaclava – 75% of  
body heat escapes through the head and neck  
insulated boots are best for winter

**PRE-COURSE CONDITIONING:** We recommend that the following conditioning be carried out for at least two months prior to the trip. The better your condition, the more enjoyable the trip.

1. Run at least 1 mile each day or hike with a 40lb. backpack or do an equivalent amount of biking or swimming. Stretch before and after exercising.
2. Do push-ups, pull-ups, and/or sit-ups 2-3 times per week. Stretch before and after.
3. Be sure the boots and shoes you will wear fit properly. Take care of any foot problems. Wear boots regularly so your feet are adjusted to them.
4. Take care of any dental problems. You'll be a long way from a dentist!!

Please feel free to call or write with any questions while packing for the trip. We are praying that Jesus will challenge and grow all of us through this trip together.

Grace and Courage,  
The Discovery Ministries Staff