

Workcamp Frequently Asked Questions (Youth)

What is Workcamp?

Workcamp is a week-long mission trip designed for high school youth and adult leaders. Workcampers will do home repair work for those in need, as well as pray and reflect to help them grow in their faith and build a relationship with Jesus.

What will I get out of Workcamp?

Workcamp is a chance to make new friends, grow in your faith and build a closer relationship with Jesus. You will have the opportunity to grow spiritually through music, worship, scripture contemplation, and meditation time. Workcamp is a Christian environment, and participation in programs and group discussion is individually driven. Listen or share at your own level of comfort.

What am I going to do at Workcamp?

You will have a chance to help people in a new community with projects that will change their lives. Projects may include interior and exterior painting; ramp, stairs, and deck building; repair work; and more. Each crew consists of 5-6 people and a house may have more than one crew working on it, if the project is very big.

How long is Workcamp?

St. Mary's Workcamp trip is eight days, including two days for travel. The Workcamp crew projects take place Monday through Friday of Workcamp week, from approximately 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. each day. Programs and devotions with your St. Mary's youth group take place in the evenings.

How much time is spent working? Is there downtime?

Workcamp offers busy days, with time allocated for crew projects, program with the large group, and devotion time with your St. Mary's youth group. Sometimes crews finish the day's work early, and so there is some free time before supper. Typically there is downtime before meals and after youth group devotions in the evenings. Participants often bring cards, games or craft projects they can work on together during free time. Youth groups from different cities also often bond and it's not uncommon for one group to challenge another in a game of kickball. Participants also can use downtime to take a break and relax if quiet time is desired.

Who goes to Workcamp?

Workcamp is open to those who have completed 9th grade and beyond. Youth Workcampers are considered those under 21. Those older than 21 may participate in Workcamp as an adult leader. You do not need to be a parishioner at St. Mary's to participate in the St. Mary's Workcamp program. Encourage your friends to join you for this amazing experience!

Where will I sleep?

Workcampers typically sleep in classrooms at a local high school. Though the classrooms aren't locked, the main buildings are locked through the nighttime hours. Workcamp male and female participants are separated in different areas of the building. St. Mary's women stay in the same room on the female side and St. Mary's men stay in the same room on the male side. Youth and adults have separate, scheduled shower times.

Can I bring my phone and/or other electronic devices?

Yes. You are asked not to use your cell phone while working on your project, during the evening program and at devotion times, but otherwise, feel free to let everyone at home know what a fun time you are having!

Will I make friends?

The Workcamp program presents the perfect opportunity to get closer with your St. Mary's youth group participants and to meet other youth from across the country. St. Mary's Workcampers get together multiple times for meetings, service projects, and fundraising projects in the months leading up to Workcamp. You'll make friends and get to know adult leaders who want to see you have a good time, grow in your faith, and succeed in your crew projects. Working together to accomplish goals is an amazing way to bond with your crew, and it's common for crew members to stay in touch well beyond the Workcamp days.

What do Workcampers do during the bus ride to Workcamp?

The bus ride to Workcamp is part of the adventure! For sleeping time, bring a pillow and a light blanket or sheet. You're welcome to bring books (paper or electronic); music with headphones; DVD movies (may be shown on bus screens); trivia games; etc. Adult Workcampers also may organize a trivia contest that focuses on trivia about the destination.

I've never picked up a paint brush or a hammer. Is Workcamp for me?

Typical Workcamp crews are made up of six Workcampers, usually five youth with one adult. The adult serves as the crew leader and helps guide the flow of the work outlined on the work orders. Group Mission Trips also has a team of professionals who help as needed on the sites. You are never alone, and you will be guided through projects but also given the opportunity to be a leader and have responsibilities that help the entire crew, regardless of your experience.

I don't feel strong in my faith. Is Workcamp for me?

Workcamp is for anyone, no matter where they are in their faith. During Workcamp, you will see faith in action through physical work, stories of others, devotions, and personal meditation time. You are in charge of what you get out of and take away from Workcamp. Approaching Workcamp with an open heart and mind will help guide you through the days. No one will force you to sing, share, or pray. Though you will be surrounded by many, your faith experience is personal.