

## **Workcamp Frequently Asked Questions (Parents)**

### **What is Workcamp?**

Workcamp is a week-long mission trip designed for high school youth and their 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 is Group Mission Trips?**

St. Mary of the Lake plans the Workcamp Mission Trip with a non-profit organization, Group Mission Trips. Their mission is to create service experiences to help people grow in their relationships with Jesus and each other. Group Mission Trips serves communities in need throughout the United States. More information about Group Mission Trips is available at [www.groupmissiontrips.com](http://www.groupmissiontrips.com).

### **Who goes to Workcamp?**

Workcamp is open to those who have completed 9<sup>th</sup> grade and beyond. Youth Workcampers are considered those under 21. Those older than 21 may participate in Workcamp as an adult leader.

### **How is the location selected?**

St. Mary's selects the week of Workcamp and then looks at what areas Group Mission Trips will be serving during that week. St. Mary's staff make the final decision for the annual Workcamp destination.

### **How does the St. Mary's group get to Workcamp?**

St. Mary's contracts with a professional coach bus company to transport all participants to and from the Workcamp location. Two professional drivers accompany the Workcamp crew on the trip. Drivers take turns working four-hour shifts, and the bus stops for shift changes at rest stops and/or restaurants depending on the time of the day. Workcampers' personal items and work tools, paintbrushes, etc. are transported on the bus as well.

### **What is required of parents/caregivers once a youth is registered to attend Workcamp?**

We encourage you to support your son or daughter in the months leading up to Workcamp. During meetings, Workcampers receive information about fundraisers and account balances, and they also work on developing relationships with fellow Workcampers and exploring their relationship with God. Talk with your Workcamper about what they are learning during the planning meetings. There are two meetings that you are asked to attend, where you are provided important information about the trip and its preparations.

### **What is required of the youth once they are registered to attend Workcamp?**

Workcampers are asked to attend our (almost) monthly Gatherings, where we will keep everyone up to date on fundraisers and other important info, as well as do

group building and prayer activities to get to know each other before we go on the trip. They also need to attend a few required fundraisers which help the group pay for things like transportation.

### **What are the fundraising opportunities?**

Youth are required to pay \$800 to cover the cost of their Workcamp trip. St. Mary's offers multiple fundraisers – including rummage sales, coupon card sales, bake sales, flower sales, and more – throughout the months leading up to Workcamp. Some fundraiser profits go directly to individual Workcamp accounts; some fundraisers go into the general fund to help pay for the cost of the bus (these fundraisers are mandatory for all).

### **Is it possible to fundraise it all?**

Yes. You are asked to turn in a \$100 down payment when registering, after that it is possible for a Workcamper to finance their trip through fundraisers. St. Mary's provides fundraisers throughout the year and Workcampers can ask for sponsors through our stock program-family and friends can directly support your son or daughter with a donation. Encourage your Workcamper to participate in fundraisers.

### **How does the parish support the Workcampers?**

St. Mary's parishioners pray for Workcampers throughout the planning months and also support Workcamper fundraisers.

### **What are the repair projects like at Workcamp?**

Workcamper projects depend on the destination and the needs of the community. Staff from Group Mission Trips meet with the community and assess resident applicant needs months before we arrive. Group Mission Trip staff writes work description, which detail exactly what is to be accomplished throughout the Workcamp week. Projects may include building or repair of wheelchair ramps or decks, weatherization, painting inside and outside. All of this will be done on homes as well as trailer homes. Many neighborhoods will be impacted.

### **What if my son/daughter doesn't have any experience building or painting?**

No experience is required!! Before we go, we have Skills Training where we practice basic construction skills the Workcampers might need. At Workcamp, a typical crew is made up of six Workcampers, usually five youth with one adult. The adults provide experience and guidance for the youth on their site. Group Mission Trips also has a team of "site coaches" who help as needed on work sites. The site coaches make frequent site visits and are available for consultation as needed. Youth are never alone, and they are guided through projects, but also given the opportunity to be leaders and have responsibilities that help the entire crew.

### **What if my son/daughter is nervous about being away from home?**

For some youth, this may be their first time away from home for a long period. To help everyone feel more comfortable and welcome, St. Mary's adult Workcampers

make sure everyone is included from the very first Workcamp Gathering, throughout the trip, and when Workcamp concludes. Your son/daughter will have the opportunity to get to know fellow youth Workcampers and adult participants in the months leading up to Workcamp. Our goals are to help everyone learn about each other, learn about what to expect at Workcamp, and to have fun. We hope that by getting to know the group better they will feel more comfortable when away. Youth and parents/caregivers are encouraged to talk with Justin or other adult Workcampers if they have concerns.

### **What does my Workcamper need to bring to Workcamp?**

Workcampers need to bring the same things they would for any trip, clothes, toiletries, etc. as well as tools and work clothes. You are encouraged not to over pack so we have space for everything.

A complete list of suggested personal items and tools will be provided a couple months before we go at a Meeting with parents. You do not need to purchase lots of tools or materials for this trip. Bring what you can.

### **Where will my Workcamper sleep while at Workcamp?**

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.

### **How long is the Workcamp trip?**

St. Mary's Workcampers leave for their destination on the Saturday of the Workcamp week, and they arrive around noon on Sunday. Workcamp crews work Monday through Friday, approximately 9 AM-3:30 PM. St. Mary's Workcampers usually have a day of fun on the Saturday after the Workcamp week, and then head for home Saturday evening. Workcampers typically arrive home Sunday afternoon.

### **What will my Workcamper eat while at Workcamp?**

The Group Mission Trips staff take care of most of the meals for Workcampers during Workcamp week. Breakfast and dinner are served in the high school cafeteria, and multiple options are available. Workcampers have lunch at the work site, which typically includes a sandwich, fruit/veggies, a snack and dessert. All meals on the traveling days to and from Camp are at the expense of the Workcampers.

### **How many people from St. Mary's attend Workcamp? How many people will be at the Workcamp site? Who are the participants outside of St. Mary's?**

Our bus limits our group to 50 participants, including adults. Camps can vary in size from 150 to 400 Workcampers. The Camp consists of Christian churches from around the country, which provides the Workcampers an opportunity to meet people from all over the country and talk about everyone's funny "accent."