

# **Rainbow Trail Lutheran Camp**

## **Compass Points Trip Planning Guide**

Welcome to the CP Trip Planning Guide! We're so excited to work with you this summer and want your group to have a truly amazing experience on the mountain. The intent of the CP Trip Planning Guide is to assist you, as a group organizer, in making your Compass Points backpacking trip a great one. The journey for your group starts now as your group plans and prepares for the adventure and we're here to help! Below you will find information gained from the hundreds of groups that have attended Rainbow Trail in the past. We know that each group is different, however we've found that the more of these practices you include in your pre-trip journey, the more your group will gain from the experience. This guide is designed to be broken up into 5 parts, starting with this one in January, and the others being sent out once a month so you've received the full planning guide before you start driving to Rainbow Trail. Please feel free to adapt and mold it to fit your pre-trip meeting needs, and as always, if you have any questions or need anything from me don't hesitate to ask!

### **Start The Journey Early**

On trail it is important to get moving early in the day so that you can make it to your destination and have time to enjoy all of the amazing things you encounter along the way. The same is true when planning your trip. Here are some tips to help you get started:

- **Hold a trip planning meeting** (if you haven't already) to share information about the trip and the activity options that the group has to choose from. An outline for this meeting is included and has lots of information and links to forms that you'll need.
- **Get individuals to make a financial commitment when they sign up for the trip.** We ask for a \$100 per person non-refundable deposit (minimum 10 people) to reserve a charter. If you collect a \$100 non-refundable deposit from each participant you will not have to pay any money for your deposit from congregational funds. Individuals will also be less likely to back out later if they have made a financial commitment early.

### **Take The Lead!**

Every trip is better with great guides. You will need to fill this role in your congregation, and we'll help you through it. Keep information in front of kids on a regular basis, remind them to get registered through Campbrain, and be a leader for your youth! It is your job to get your youth and congregation excited about your upcoming adventure, so bring the energy to your meetings and keep this energy up all the way to your trip! If there are bad attitudes, clear it up early and walk with them to get them excited and prepared both mentally and physically.

## **Set An “All-Day Pace”**

While we are on trail, we work to set an all-day pace. This allows us to travel as a group, enjoy the company of one another, and comfortably travel long distances. Although your Compass Points trip may seem far away, there is a whole journey of preparations before you come to Rainbow Trail and we've found that setting that “all-day pace” when planning for your trip keeps it doable, fun and stress-free!

- As I mentioned before, once your charter is organized, it is important to keep the trip in front of your group. Try to experience something new about the trip at least once a month in the beginning. Starting in April or May try to put something in front of them about every two to three weeks.
- The following ideas are ways that other congregations have used to help keep kids thinking about the trip:
  - Organized group hikes and fun workouts to get in shape
  - Group shopping trip to buy gear
  - Monthly trip planning meetings
  - Go electronic! Have everyone follow RTLC\_Compass\_Points on Instagram! Send monthly emails, post on Facebook!
  - Articles in the church newsletter
  - Notes/postcards mailed to their houses
  - Everyone wear their gear to church day!
  - Setting up installment payments so the participants can make small financial steps
  - Backpacking Trivia Nights (Trivia works on Zoom, need help? Let me know!)
- There are also some resources on our website with extra information and videos that I've found to be helpful in preparing for a week in the backcountry! Just head to <http://www.rainbowtrail.org/compass-points/forms/> and scroll down to the “Extra Info/Articles” section. And as always if you or your kids have any questions or are looking for other resources, please don't hesitate to ask!

We will help you through the planning process and provide regular correspondence that includes bible studies, sample meeting outlines, trip information, and ways for your group to shape the experience into something that is uniquely their own. I encourage you to reach out to brainstorm creative ways to engage! The January Trip Planning Guide will begin monthly correspondence that will continue through May. We're looking forward to having you up here!

God's Peace and Happy Planning,



## **Pre-trip Planning Guide #1**

### **Get Everyone Registered!!**

- **New Online Registration** - This year we started a new online process for registering for Compass Points. This should streamline the registration and documentation process for both the trip coordinator and myself, the director of Compass Points. Through our portal, campers will be able to fill out all required forms and access the physician's physical examination form that is required before coming to camp. This portal will give me visibility and transparency to who is registered, who has their forms in, and what dietary restrictions will need to be met. I will keep in touch regularly to make sure we are on the same page to who is registered and who has their forms in. This eliminates the long paper trail of forms going down and back up the pipeline of communication from me, to you the coordinator, to the kids and parents, and back up to me.
- **Newsletter Article** -- Share the experience with others in your congregation through an article in your January newsletter. It is important that the rest of the congregation is aware of the trip and knows a bit about it. It's also a good idea to include information about who will be going on the Compass Points trip. If there are still openings for your trip, this article may also be a great way to reach a few more participants.
- **What to Bring** -- Start thinking about any equipment you might need. Rainbow Trail will provide most of what is required but there are a few things that people may need to get before the trip. It's a great time to share with your participants the packing list for their Compass Points trip. Print copies of the "What To Bring" list and distribute it to all participants. After Christmas sales are also a great opportunity to pick up some great deals and spend time together if you do a group shopping trip.

## Online Participant Registration Instructions

Here are step by step instructions for creating a RTLC Compass Points Forms Portal.

1. Click this link <http://rtlccompasspoints.campbrainregistration.com>.
2. Create an account by completing the New User Sign-Up.

ADULTS: Please type your first and last name, email address, and create a password.

PARENT/GUARDIAN OF YOUTH PARTICIPANT: Please type your first and last name, email address, and create a password. **Do not type the youth participant's name.**

3. You will come to our Homepage. Click "Begin" below Rainbow Trail Chartered Compass Points Forms 2026.
4. Read instructions and click Continue.
5. Click the box next to the participant's name and fill out the information that pops up. Click Continue.
6. Select the Chartered Compass Points trip by clicking "Show Details." Then click "Add to Cart."
7. Complete the Household information form with an asterisk beside it. Click open form, complete the form, click Complete. When complete, click Continue.

ADULTS: Please enter your name in "Parent 1."

PARENT/GUARDIAN OF YOUTH PARTICIPANT: Please enter your name in "Parent 1."

8. Complete other online forms. If the participant is under 18, a parent/guardian must complete the forms.
9. Click Submit.
10. Check your email for a confirmation email.
11. Sign back into your account to download and print the Health History and Examination form. When completed, upload both pages of the form in the designated spaces.

## **Group Meeting Outline**

1. Open with prayer – we will be praying a lot on trail and hope that youth and adult members of your group will be comfortable praying for the group. Instead of asking for a volunteer to pray, we will approach people prior to the prayer and ask them individually to pray. This is a great way to help people learn to pray out loud in a group setting.
2. Welcome and Introductions
  - a. You know your group better than we do, but we never assume that everyone knows each other well, or even all the names.
  - b. Explain the purpose of the meeting:
    - i. Start getting to know the group that is going on Compass Points
    - ii. Start the planning and preparation process and set a good “All Day Pace”  
The “All Day Pace” is one that lets the group travel at a comfortable pace and enjoy the journey along the way. It involves lots of little steps, even the biggest mountain is climbed one step at a time.
3. Hand out the **Online Participant Registration Instructions**, if you haven’t done so already, and set a date for when you would like to have them registered.
  - a. We need a registration for each person, youth and adult, going on the trip.
  - b. They need to be registered by **May 1<sup>st</sup>**. This is designed to help us track collected forms and documents, we recommend that you get them to register as soon as possible.
4. Have everyone follow [RTLCLC\\_Compass\\_Points](#) on instagram! There is a great Preparation guide on there that shows the importance of layering and what to bring for trail! I will also be posting Physical Preparation suggestions to get in shape before your trip.
5. Remind people of the individual deposits that need to be paid. We recommend that you get a \$100 deposit from each person as they sign up for the trip.
6. Hand Out the [Compass Points Packing List](#) and show them the [On-Trail Packing Video](#)
  - a. This explains both the what and the why of the items that you will need to bring with you, as well as tips on purchasing things that you might not have.
  - b. We understand some of these items may be expensive and not every family has the privilege to afford gear, especially for what will be a one-time hiking adventure for many participants. We at RTLCLC have extra gear to loan out on trips such as rain coats, sleeping bags, hiking boots, and thermal base layers. We are limited on what we have but money should never be a reason someone can’t make it to camp. Please inform your campers that there are options for them and they do not need to stress about being adequately prepared if finances are a problem. Thrifting and Facebook Marketplace are also incredibly resourceful for many pieces of gear.

- c. We know that Christmas just ended and there are lots of great sales going on in the next couple of months - this can help ease any financial hardship that might exist if some gear needs to be purchased.
  - d. The list is designed to cover everything that you might need during your trip. It is divided into sections for both onsite and on-trail. Before going out on trail your guides will help the group determine what from the list will actually go with you. The rest will remain safely in your housing at RTALC.
7. Have everyone share one thing about the trip that worries them and excites them.
- a. Make notes (on paper) of common or extreme excitements or worries.
  - b. If you would like help in dealing with them prior to the trip let the RTALC staff know.
8. Close with a prayer – try asking one of the youth before the meeting if they would pray for the group at the end. Encourage them with suggestions for the prayer if they are reluctant.