

Pilgrim's Survival Journey

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION PACK

QUALIFICATIONS for PARTICIPATION

- **WILLINGNESS** to participate fully in the program to becoming involved in a follow-up discipleship program.
- **PHYSICAL ABILITY** and stamina to hike 5-10 miles a day with gear and pack.
- **ENDURANCE** for primitive sleeping & living conditions in the natural elements (heat/cold, bugs, rain, no technology, etc.).
- **POSITIV OUTLOOK** while being challenged physically, emotionally and spiritually.

*Recommended reading before trip: *Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan; www.ccel.org/ccel/bunyan/pilgrim.

The Purpose of *Pilgrim's Survival Journey (PSJ)* is **To Make Disciples** by clearly presenting what it is to be a follower of Jesus, including knowledge of how to face and overcome the challenges Christ followers face. Also, to encourage young people to seek a deeper personal walk with Christ while involving the Body (Church) in the process. All through sharing **fun** and **memorable** experiences.

GEAR NEEDS & CONSIDERATIONS

CLOTHING & FOOTWEAR: Loose fitting, lightweight pants are best for hiking in the woods because of insects. Pants with elastic cuffs give added protection against ticks. Polyester/cotton blends are better than heavy cotton or jean material clothing. Hiking shoes or boots should be good for walking in the woods. **DO NOT BUY BRAND NEW SHOES UNLESS YOU CAN BREAK THEM IN BETWEEN NOW AND THE PSJ.** Your feet may get wet in the mornings.

****Wear your grubbier clothes and an old pair of shoes to the opening night (FRIDAY). These clothes and shoes WILL BE UNWEARABLE after this point. PLEASE PACK YOUR HIKING SHOES IN YOUR PACK.****

PACKING: Please note you can **ONLY** bring items listed on the Gear List. On the first evening, there will be a gear inspection. Any items not approved will be removed and returned to you at the end of the hike. No Electronic Devices will be permitted including, but not limited to: cell phones, cameras, etc. We will assign team staff to bring cameras and cell phones as needed. Toiletries should fit in a quart size plastic bag. Clothing & other gear should fit in no more than a 2 gallon size plastic zipper bag. Remember, whatever you bring you will have to carry in addition to other gear. **Less is best.**

GROUP GEAR: Besides your personal gear, you will be responsible for helping carry some of the group gear such as tents, eating & cooking supplies, food and camping equipment. Please make sure you have enough extra room in your pack for these.

**We have backpacks, sleeping bags, & tents available for loan.*

BACKPACKS: Hikers are responsible for carrying all personal gear in addition to a tent and other group. Our Backpacks are large enough to fit all gear inside. If you would like to bring your own pack, it must meet these minimum requirements: designed for camping and hiking, include a hip belt, **capacity 45-65 ltr (3000-4000 ci.), & pass trail Leader approval.**

Packing Techniques:

- Put heavier stuff near the upper middle, back of the pack (near to the core of your body when worn).
- Makes sure the things you will need for setting up camp are not buried (i.e. tents).
- Make sure things like water & snacks are accessible while hiking.

HEALTH & FIRST AID CONCERNS: Each participant is required to complete a health form. The Trail Leader(s) and other staff have been trained in first aid and will have supplies on hand to deal with basic health related concerns. Individuals that are on medication or have special health concerns must inform the Trail Leaders of this so they can be aware of potential needs.

DROP-OFF & PICK UP: The PSJ will Begin & End at Forest Community Fellowship in Umatilla. Please plan to arrive no later than 4pm **Friday evening**. Hikes will be brought back to Forest Community Fellowship on **Wednesday afternoon**. Participants should be picked up by 2pm. Friends and family are invited to Join us for the PSJ Celebration & Potluck Lunch at ~noon. For those wishing to attend, please bring a dish to share for the potluck.

THE AREA: We will hike along the Florida Trail in the Ocala National Forest. This area is a prime example of Florida forest area and the diverse ecosystems. While relatively flat, the area varies from sandy pine forest to thick scrub. We will pass several small lakes and some places may feature natural springs/swimming holes.

LEAVE ONLY FOOTPRINTS, TAKE ONLY MEMORIES: As stewards of God's creation, we value and care for the environments where we hike and camp. This means we take care to stay on the trails as much as possible, no littering or undo destruction of the natural vegetation. Participants are required to pack out all trash and dispose of it in the proper areas every few days. As we hike, we represent Christ in how we treat the trails and camp areas expressing God's character to those around us.

HIKING & PROGRAM INFORMATION

HIKING FORMAT: Participants will hike approximately 5-10 miles a day. The group will camp-out 5 nights at primitive, wilderness areas where there are no restroom facilities or running water. Participants should be prepared for these conditions. Participants carry their own personal gear and food which must all fit inside their pack. Group gear such as tents, cooking items, etc. will be divided among the group. The Trail Leader(s) will set the pace for the group. Someone will be assigned to the front and the end of the group and everyone else must stay between these two individuals. It is important for the group to care for each other and stay together. Communication is very important. If you or someone else is struggling, please let the leaders know. The group will take regular rest and water breaks as needed.

PREPARING FOR THE HIKE

Part of the Pilgrim's Survival Journey requires large amounts of physical exertion and stamina. Participants should be prepared for this. For those not involved in regular physical activity it is recommended they begin preparing 3-5 weeks in advance by taking 2-5 mile hikes with a loaded backpack. This will prepare you for some of the endurance needed for this experience. It is also important that participants break in their hiking boots/shoes ahead of time. New boots = new blisters.

RELATIONSHIPS: One of the main focuses of the PSJ is growing in your relationship with God. Participants should focus on getting as much as possible from this experience. We recognize that while enduring challenging conditions, groups and individuals' bond quickly due to the intense nature of the circumstances. While we encourage participants to get to know their team members and fellow hikers better, this is not a time to concentrate on one-on-one relationships, especially with romantic or exclusive relationships. This time is special, please do not waste it. In the circumstances relationship issues become a distraction for participants, the leadership will intervene.

PROGRAM & GROUP ACTIVITIES: The Pilgrim's Survival Journey is more than just a youth camp or hike with a few breaks for activities and teachings. It is a comprehensive mobile training program that incorporates simulations, experiential learning activities and teachable moments. Even eating and casual gathering times are utilized to illustrate aspects of discipleship and the Christian walk. From the moment the program begins, until clean-up is complete, participants are asked to actively engage in all events. While the spiritual emphasis is on the individual and his or her walk with Christ, the program is also inherently team-oriented. We will hike together, share together, laugh together, struggle together and eat together. For the program to run smoothly, everyone needs to be involved. If one person refuses to be involved the entire group is affected. Therefore, apathy and disengagement are not allowed as part of the program.

BASIC SCHEDULE

Day 1 Forest Community Fellowship Gear Inspection Hiking Orientation POTLUCK Opening message Shuttle to Campsite Campfire stories LIGHTS OUT	Day 2-5 Wake-up & Break Camp BREAKFAST Devotions Hike Activity & Teaching LUNCH Hike & Set-up Camp DINNER & Teaching Campfire & Worship	Day 6 Trails End Break Camp Hike to Trails End Brought back to Church Air Our Gear Wrap-up PSJ Potluck Celebration Put Away Gear Head Home
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Start & End location: **Drop-off & Pickup**
 Forest Community Fellowship,
 15475 SE 182nd Avenue Rd
 Umatilla, FL 32784

CONTACT INFORMATION: Robb Elmatti, Program Director -- PilgrimsSurvivalJourney@gmail.com -- (352) 267-5087

GEAR LIST

Check-off

WHAT TO BRING:

Wear OLD CLOTHES for first night: (*These WILL get wet and be unwearable for rest of hike!*)

- _____ Socks & OLD shoes
- _____ Pants
- _____ Shirt
- _____ Long-Sleeve shirt/layer
- _____ Underwear

Change of clothes (pack in plastic grocery bag)-Write your First & Last name on this bag:

- _____ 1 pair of Hiking Shoes
- _____ 1 pair of Pants
- _____ 1 T-shirt
- _____ 1 set of Underwear
- _____ 1 pair of Socks (full mid-calf hiking/thick socks-*for minimizing tics & blisters*)

Extra Clothes bag (Pack in one 2-gallon sized zipper bag):

- _____ 1-2 pair Underwear
- _____ 1-2 pair of Socks (full mid-calf hiking/thick socks)
- _____ 1 set of light Shorts & T-shirt (for sleeping in)
- _____ 1 Long-sleeved Shirt (for bug protection and cool nights)
- _____ 1 Fleece or Sweater (for cooler weather)
- _____ 1 Rain Poncho/Jacket
- _____ 1 Small Towel or Washcloth
- _____ 1 Swimsuit (modest, not 2-piece for girls)
- _____ Small Flashlight (headlamps are preferred)
- _____ Small Notebook & Pen—we will provide you with a small Bible for backpacking
- _____ Sunglasses and/or hat

Toiletries bag (Pack in one-quart sized zipper bag):

- _____ Sunscreen (travel size)
- _____ Toiletries: (travel size) biodegradable soap, toothbrush & paste, wet wipes, deodorant, etc.
- _____ BYOTP (Bring your own **Toilet paper** – *only what you need—travel tissues are best*)
- _____ Any personal medication (check-in with Trail Leader on these)

Optional

- _____ Flip-flops/water shoes-lightweight
- _____ Sleeping Pad

Available for check-out (Trail Leader approval required to bring personal gear for these items):

- Backpack [multi-day hiking pack with hip-belt & at least 45+ liter volume]
- Sleeping Bag [Lightweight, compressible, & rated to at least 30°F]
- Tent/shelter [Lightweight & willing to share with assigned tentmate(s)]

DON'T BRING ANYTHING NOT ON THIS LIST!

Any additional items must be approved by Trail Leader during gear inspection.