



# Group Preparation Guide

Custom Missions – non-summer

sharing hope in appalachia

As you prepare to bring your group to Big Creek Missions, here are a few suggestions to help increase the effectiveness of your ministry while serving in Southeast Kentucky. We are strongly committed to presenting a single, unified message to the communities we serve, even though our volunteers represent multiple denominations and churches.

## The Message

“Christ in you, the hope of Glory.”

Paul, in Colossians Chapter 1, gives a detailed description of the supremacy of Christ, and the life-change that comes through faith in Jesus Christ. “We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ” (Colossians 1:28).

Our message at Big Creek missions will always be centered around the life changing power of Christ. With Christ as our focus and our message, lives will be changed as a result of HIS power working in and through us. We, apart from Christ, are fully incompetent to do anything of any value or power. In Christ, however, His power comes alive and accomplishes His purpose in His time.

Therefore, we live out the following at Big Creek missions:

- **It's about worship - not work.** We must be very careful to communicate with volunteers the true nature of missions. Although mission trips are always a time where we work VERY hard and get dirty - Christians are never called to work in order to gain God's favor. We are called to worship Him as a response to receiving God's mercy and grace through faith. One of the ways we worship Him is by surrendering to a life of missions. Missions is not an outlet so we can feel better about ourselves by accomplishing some task or goal, nor is it an opportunity for us to brag on what we “did” with our own hands. As we serve become “worshipping missionaries,” people will see Christ in us and will be drawn to His life changing power.
- **It's about surrender - not self-righteousness.** As we lay our lives down in total surrender, we should never look upon ourselves as accomplishing anything of value. We give Glory to CHRIST for using us and accomplishing His work through our surrendered lives. Often, Christians have a “holier-than-thou” attitude when serving on missions. They have this subtle mindset that invites others to “look at me” and “see what I’m doing” and “give me a pat on the back.” We do not exist to lift up any man or ministry, but the name of Christ.
- **It's about people - not projects and programs.** We must remember that our purpose on earth is not to build physical buildings. The projects we do, the homes we renovate, and the programs we offer are not our priority. The PEOPLE we serve are our priority. We must never lose sight of why we are here – to share with those people the life-changing message of Christ. The projects and programs are only TOOLS to share the message of Christ.

# About Big Creek Missions

Big Creek Missions exists to glorify Christ by serving the residents of Southeast Kentucky. We accomplish this by connecting volunteer groups with needs in our community.

## What We Do

Big Creek Missions is a volunteer “hub.” We are not a camp, nor are we a church. We partner with various local agencies and ministries to provide supplies and volunteers for projects in the community. We serve alongside local churches to assist them in meeting the needs of their community. We don’t have an extensive list of “in-house” ministries, but rather, we work with an extensive list of local ministries in an attempt to serve the residents of Leslie, Clay, and Perry Counties. When you sign up to serve with Big Creek, we will work to place you in an area of ministry that will not only challenge your group but will also assist the residents or ministry you are serving. We work in areas up to 30 miles from our mission center.

## Types of Ministries we offer

**Construction:** we partner with local agencies to locate residents who have legitimate needs. Big Creek will provide the materials and volunteers to help meet that need. Although we may not be able to afford to make cosmetic repairs, we will always try to create a safe, clean, and dry home for the residents.

**Community:** We partner with local churches and other ministries to offer services as needed. We partner with churches offering clothing, food, and hygiene kits to residents. We will provide volunteers and supplies as they are available.

**Children:** We work with the local schools to offer services as requested. In addition, we provide daycamps and other activities for children in various parts of our community.

**In-House:** Groups can choose to stay and serve at the mission center by helping maintain and upgrade the facilities.

It is important to let us know which of the above ministries your group would like to do.

## How We Operate

Big Creek is led by its founder and director, Kevin Rogers. As a 501c3 Non-profit, we operate under the leadership of a 5 member board of directors. Throughout the year, other part time staff assist with operations.

## How We are Funded

We are able to operate this mission center because of the generosity of our volunteers. Most of our funding is generated through our summer missions ministry. Throughout the rest of the year, we simply ask volunteers to cover the costs of their stay at the mission center and give additionally as the Lord leads.

Although we do occasionally receive some grants for specific purposes, we do not receive any regular funding from any specific denomination, agency, ministry, or church. We rely on the gifts of the local church!

# How to Prepare for This Mission Trip

## Now:

- Determine your scheduled arrival, departure, and daily routine
- Determine which type of ministry you'd like to take part in: Childrens, Community, Construction, or In-House.
- Schedule your time of ministry by calling Big Creek Missions at 606-653-0513 or fill out the pre-registration at [www.bigcreekmissions.com](http://www.bigcreekmissions.com). Once we have your schedule, we will begin designing ministries specifically for your group!
- Recruit kitchen help
  - Contact Big Creek Missions with name / phone of kitchen coordinator
- Recruit construction coordinators (1 coordinator per 10 volunteers working construction)
- Distribute "Release Forms" for all participants
- Determine the following and give this information to Big Creek Missions:
  - Number of volunteers working Construction: \_\_\_\_\_ (# of teams \_\_\_\_\_)
  - Number of volunteers working Community: \_\_\_\_\_ (# of teams \_\_\_\_\_)
- Recruit Drivers and plan transportation (rental vans, etc)

## 7 Days Prior:

- Give out emergency information:

Phone: 606-653-0513
- Give out "encouragram" information (Inform parents & prayer-partners at home they may send encouraging messages via our website to volunteers while on site. In addition, your youth leader can post daily updates at [www.bigcreekmissions.com](http://www.bigcreekmissions.com)).
- Call Big Creek Missions with any last-minute changes to your group information.

# The Typical Day

A suggested schedule for your group might look like this:

7:00 am	Wake
7:30 am	Breakfast & pack lunches
8:00 am	Morning Devotional** & Sendoff
12:00 pm	Lunch on Ministry Sites
4:30 pm	Return from Ministry Sites, clean up
5:30 pm	Dinner
7:00 pm	Evening Worship **
11:00 pm	Mission Center Lights Out

\*\* About Worship: We ask all groups to plan some type of corporate worship opportunities for your group. Whether it is singing, Bible Study, or just a simple, straightforward devotion, it is important that your group starts and ends each day with a proper focus. Nothing unites a group more than worshipping and sharing the Word of God together. A lack of focused worship has proven to result in an unfocused group.

The Center director will be pleased to assist you with morning devotionals, evening messages, or other types of Biblical worship as needed. He is experienced in speaking to groups large and small of all ages.

## Local Attractions

No joke: there's not much to see around here. Although this is a beautiful area, there is not an abundance of activities. Please keep in mind: mission trips don't need a "side event" to make them entertaining. Because of the tremendous blessings one receives, any volunteer can return home blessed because of how God works in and through their lives.

Often, student group plan big events at the end of their week (amusement parks, water parks, etc). I hear the students from those groups say, "we lost our focus at the amusement park." "We were all tired, got irritated, and it wasn't a good experience." "It was fun, but it didn't have a point." While on mission, students hear and see God at work, and those activities that are planned to fill up time seem to lose their luster.

Don't worry about trying to entertaining your group or pass the time. The rural setting provides an experience most volunteers aren't accustomed to: peace and quiet. It allows groups to spend time together just growing closer and getting to know each other. The slow pace is refreshing and relaxing. You won't want to leave!

With that said. . . .

Hyden – 15 minutes away – small town with a nice downtown park for picnic or "hanging out"

Manchester – 20 minutes away – small town with several small parks, a few restaurants

London Kentucky (35 miles away) – several restaurants & parks

Hazard Kentucky (30 miles away) – several restaurants, indoor laser tag, putt putt

Williamsburg: (60 miles away, off I-75): small water park

Wal-Marts: "basic" Walmart – in Manchester (closes at 10 pm). Supercenters in London and Hazard.

# The Facility

In February 2008, Big Creek Missions finally obtained a “home” for missions! The former Big Creek Elementary School has been converted into a full-time ministry center. Although not luxurious, your group will appreciate the facilities as they provide for a great mission center.

## Outdoors

We have several acres of open fields, volleyball net, two playgrounds, ball field, and a very small picnic pavilion. There is plenty of space for flag football, ultimate Frisbee, softball, or other games.

## Sleeping Areas

We currently have nine classrooms set aside as sleeping areas. These rooms were refurbished in the winter 2008-2009 with new paint, new beds, new Heat Pump units, and some with new flooring. Each classroom will sleep a maximum of 18 students or adults. The classrooms are 21'x 30'. Each room has 16 or 18 beds and mattresses (size twin or twin XL) Most sleeping areas are tile.

**Lodging:** Because of the costs incurred with operating the mission center, we are not able to provide private sleeping areas. In order to keep costs down, we ask all groups to maximize space in each room, sleeping the maximum per room. To heat or cool additional rooms creates unnecessary costs.

**Males / Females:** In all situations where students or children are involved, no females are to enter males rooms and males are not to enter females rooms. (exception is during group meeting times.)

**Cleanliness and Food:** Food and drinks are not allowed in rooms under any circumstances. The cafeteria is open for snacks and other food. Water is allowed in rooms.

**Cleanliness and Clothing:** Clothing is to be left packed in bag, and dirty clothes should be placed in a container (bag, etc) and stored near bag / suitcase.

**Heat/Air units:** We will set the temperature at a comfortable level. Please do not adjust units.

## Gymnasium

We have a full court gym with two goals end to end, and two additional goals on the side. The gym may or may not be available due to different ministries and equipment occupying the area. The gym will not be available during the summer months, as it doubles as our worship area.

## Restrooms / Showers

We have three sets of restrooms. All showers and toilets are private with doors or curtains.

Showers are supplied with endless hot water.

Set 1: Females: 3 toilets, 5 sinks, 4 showers

Males: 3 toilets, 2 urinals, 3 sinks, 4 showers

Set 2: Females: 3 toilets, 2 sinks. (open with groups of 50+)

Males: 1 toilet, 2 urinals, 2 sinks (open with groups of 50+)

Set 3: Females: 3 showers, 3 sinks (open with groups 100+)

Males: 3 showers, 2 sinks (open with groups 100+)

## Washer / Dryer:

Washer and Dryer are reserved for staff and kitchen use. We do not have the capability to wash volunteer's clothes.

## Kitchen / Cafeteria

Our kitchen is fully equipped with a walk-in refrigerator and freezer, four-compartment steam table, (two) five-shelf convection ovens, eight shelf roasting oven, 36" griddle, 36" cooktop stove, automatic commercial dishwashing system, and almost all pans, pots, plates, cups, and silverware needed for groups up to 220. We encourage groups to designate a coffee person to bring their favorite coffee, as coffee drinkers are very picky!

## While at the Facility

**Other Groups:** While staying at Big Creek, your group may not be the only one staying at our facility. If so, we will work with both groups to coordinate the use of facilities. We are all part of the Body of Christ, and He is glorified when His body is unified. Therefore, if you are hesitant to work or reside alongside another group Big Creek may not be the place for you.

**Kitchen Preparation and Cleanup:** Big Creek Missions has no kitchen staff. All volunteer groups are asked to provide their own kitchen staff and cleanup volunteers (typically, all volunteers pitch in to assist with cleanup). Volunteers: please do not change the layout, organization, or setup of kitchen in any way without the prior consent of the center director.

We ask the groups to provide a kitchen team and one kitchen coordinator: That person will be asked to complete a simple online “food preparation course” (approximately 1 hour) to make sure they understand the basics of kitchen sanitation, basic health practices, and proper cooking. This is required by the health department. (if more than one team is on site, we will coordinate volunteers) Because we are a licensed food-service facility, we must follow all basic rules of commercial kitchen sanitation and operations. The center director will assist in compliance with all rules.

**Maintenance / Cleaning:** Big Creek Missions has no maintenance or custodial staff. During your week of missions, your group will assist with all cleaning and maintenance of the facilities. We will divide your team into work groups to assist with these duties. We will all work together to provide a safe, sanitary facility.

**Noise:** In cooperation with group leaders, the center director will set a “lights out” time for all groups. Group leaders are expected to monitor their own groups.

**Accessibility issues:** contact us if a member of your group needs special care. Our facility is one level with no steps. We do have one accessible shower and two accessible toilets.

**Telephone / Email / Internet:** Group leader will have use of telephone and wireless internet as needed. We have broadband internet and free long-distance calling. Internet use is for communications only and not to be used for entertainment purposes unless approved by director. Students are not allowed to use internet.

# Estimated Costs

As a ministry center, we work hard to minimize the costs to you, as a volunteer. Although we will never demand that groups pay a “rental” for our facilities, we do ask that you prayerfully consider assisting us by covering the costs that we incur as a result of your stay.

## Food Costs

Food: You may provide food at your own discretion. Realize that the closest Wal-Mart is approximately thirty miles away, and the closest small grocery store is fifteen miles away. Kitchen teams are expected to keep the kitchen clean, sanitary, and organized at all times.

If you provide your own food and are using the kitchen to prepare your meals, we do ask that you assist us by providing meals for our staff while on site, as no other preparation facilities are available for staff.

We have a basic menu from which we can order food and have it ready for your volunteers to prepare. (see menu options on last page). All our meals are simple to prepare, and utilize good quality foods. If we provide meals, these are our approximate costs per meal:

<b>Breakfast</b>	<b>2.50 per meal</b>
<b>Lunch</b>	<b>2.50 per meal</b>
<b>Dinner</b>	<b>4.00 per meal</b>

## Facility Costs

Our facility consists of 24,000 square feet of usable space. As you can imagine, the utilities alone can be extremely expensive. During extreme hot and cold months, our electric bill alone can cost over \$3,000! Your donation will help offset the costs of electric, water, phone, propane, and liability insurance.

In addition to utilities, please consider the use of water, propane for water heaters, kitchen disposables, tissue paper, towels, and cleaning supplies.

**It is impossible to put a “price tag” on staying at Big Creek – but a donation of \$5 or more per person, per day, would assist us greatly. Remember, this is how we pay our bills!**

## Construction Costs

Construction projects can cost between \$300 and \$1500 depending on the nature of the project. We will work with you to find a project suitable for the skills of your group.

- We ask that you provide construction coordinators and tools for projects, we will have materials ready for you at the ministry center.
- We will cover the cost for materials for our facility renovations, but gladly accept donations.

## Bottom Line

Including meals, a suggested minimum donation to help us cover some of our costs would be about \$15 per participant, per day. Construction costs would be additional. We want to work with you in providing a life-changing missions experience for your group, money is not our goal - However, we must cover our costs in order to remain open and serve this community!

# Menu & Options

## Breakfasts:

Daily include cereals, toast, condiments, puddings, and fruits. Repeat this menu as desired.

- Option 1 Eggs, Bacon, French Toast Sticks, Biscuits, Gravy
- Option 2 Sausage Patties, Pancakes, Waffles,
- Option 3 Eggs, Bacon, Biscuits, Gravy, Cinnamon Rolls
- Last Day Continental: muffins, cereals, toast

## Lunches:

Students will typically pack their own sack lunches to take out on site

Options include:

- Choice of Breads (hoagie, white, wheat)
- Choice of Meats (ham, turkey, roast beef)
- Choice of Cheese
- Choice of Chips
- Snacks (fruit cups, pudding cups, snack bars)
- Dessert (assorted snack cakes)

## Dinners:

During non-summer months, we can modify this and change menu if desired.

Dinners include salad bar and dessert

- Option 1 Grilled Chicken or Pork Chops, Seasoned Potato Wedges, Green Beans, rolls
- Option 2 Grilled Burgers and/or Dogs, Tater Tots, Macaroni and Cheese
- Option 3 Pulled BBQ pork, Grilled Cheese, Baked Beans, Fries, Texas toast
- Option 4 "Mexican" night: Tacos / Nachos with shredded beef or chicken, Quesadillas, toppings
- Option 5 Fried Chicken, Mashed Potatoes, Green Beans, rolls
- Option 6 Italian Night: Noodles with Meat Sauce or Alfredo, Breadsticks, Pizzas

Desserts include: :

Assorted cakes with icing (white and yellow), Banana Pudding, Brownies, Apple Pie, Ice Cream

## Salad Bar typically includes:

Lettuce mix, seasonal vegetables, tomatoes, shredded cheeses, croutons, bacon bits, (other toppings as available), Honey mustard dressing, Ranch dressing, Italian dressing, and Thousand Island dressing

**Special Dietary Needs:** Please inform us of special dietary needs well in advance of your arrival. We may or may not be able to accommodate all requests.

# Transportation Policy

Because Big Creek Missions does not own any vehicles available for transportation, it is the responsibility of each group to provide drivers, vehicles, and insurance for their vehicles. Here are some things to remember that will help make things run smoothly while at Big Creek.

- **Vehicle Safety:** Churches are expected to inspect and verify that all vehicles are SAFE to operate, have been maintained properly, all lights and seat belts are working properly (if equipped), and tires are in good condition, and inflated to a proper level. All churches should verify insurance coverage prior to departure.
- **Vehicle Drivers:** Please consider having several approved and trained drivers for each vehicle! This enables us to place all adults in their desired ministry tracks!
- **Vehicles suggested size:** Between five and fifteen passengers. Because we divide students into ministry groups of 8-15, we require you to bring enough vehicles that you can divide and transport your students into groups of 10-15. Example: If you bring a thirty passenger bus, plan to bring additional vehicles so you can transport fifteen in the bus, plus fifteen in additional vehicles. (Summer: If we don't have enough vehicles, the groups will be larger than normal, and this will inconvenience EVERYONE at Big Creek during your week of summer missions!)
- **Drivers Safety:** Drivers should be responsible and comfortable with the vehicle they are driving, and should be willing to enforce ALL seat belt rules and drive safely while transporting students. Drivers are not to do anything that could compromise the safety of the volunteers they transport, including, but not limited to: Chinese fire-drills, donuts, unnecessarily fast acceleration or deceleration, and other actions that are dangerous and even illegal.
- **Drivers and Ministry Tracks:** If a person wants to "guarantee" their placement in a construction crew, it is important that the person DOES NOT drive a vehicle that is used primarily to transport students (i.e. van/bus). It is advisable that they drive separate if they want to guarantee their placement in construction. This is the only way we can GUARANTEE a person will be able to work construction. Even if they drive separate, we will use their vehicle to transport students / adults to their worksite. Should a person drive a van or a bus, that person should realize that vans and buses typically are assigned first to COMMUNITY and CHILDREN's MINISTRIES because those groups are typically larger. Regardless, we ask that adults act with Christian humility and maturity if we ask them to serve in an area that wasn't their "first choice." Our first priority must be transporting the participants to their sites!
- **Driving Distances:** Because we serve in three counties, drivers should be prepared to travel distances of close to 30 miles to their sites per day depending on your location.
- **Location of Hospitals:** Prior to departure, all drivers should familiarize themselves with the area, and know the location of hospitals within driving distance. A large wall map is available at the mission center.

# Adult Volunteers

We are always thankful to have such wonderful adults who assist with the ministries at Big Creek Missions. In an effort to promote unity in the body and insure consistency with expectations, attitudes, and actions, we ask the following from all churches:

**Background Checks:** We strongly suggest that your church runs thorough background checks (local, state, and federal criminal and driving history) on all adults working with students prior to attending Big Creek.

**Staff Relations:** During the summer months, all ministry groups will have a staff representative at all times. During non-summer months, groups may or may not have staff representation while on your ministry site. The staff at Big Creek Missions is carefully selected by the center director so we may be consistent in all our ministries. We promote one message as one body in Christ. Because we come from such diverse ministerial backgrounds, our staff will be working hard to present a consistent front to the community we serve. Their task will be to extend the philosophies and ministries of the Big Creek Mission and it's director into the community. The staff act as the official representatives of the ministry at all times. We thank your adults in advance for showing a willingness to submit to the humble leadership of our staff, although they may be much younger. In the event of a misunderstanding, we ask adults to promote unity by discussing issues in an adult, Christian manner in private, rather than in public. Additional concerns may be addressed to the director first in private.

**Expectations:** It is important that adults set a high standard for behavior. We must guard ourselves against any accusation. Therefore, all adults are expected to follow all written and verbal rules while on site. Written expectations and policies are posted on the group documents page at [www.bigcreekmissions.com](http://www.bigcreekmissions.com). Adults are expected to participate in all worship opportunities, without question, so as to set an example for the students. Please understand that this is not camp. This is a mission center where we place strong emphasis on worship (including the teaching of God's Word) and mentoring of students and young adults. Therefore, we set a high standard for adults to lead by positive example. Immaturity, divisiveness, disregard for mission center policies, and disrespect of designated leadership will not be tolerated. In all situations, we will follow the example Christ set forth for Biblical reconciliation in Matthew 18:15-17. Adults who choose to be belligerent or not abide by center policies will be asked to leave immediately.

**Tobacco products:** Tobacco products are not allowed in or around the mission center at any time. Those who choose to smoke may do so at a minimum of 50 feet from the nearest door or ventilation unit. Tobacco products are not allowed on ministry sites at any time, for any reason.

**Valuables:** We recommend adults and students leave all valuables at home.

# What To Bring

This is a rather comprehensive listing of items your group members will want to bring!

## Bathroom Stuff:

- All toiletries
  - Towel
  - Washcloth
  - Soap
  - Toothbrush & Tooth Paste
  - Deodorant
  - Contact Solution & Case?
- Sunscreen and bug repellent
- Hairbrush? Glasses? Mirror?
- Bag for dirty clothes

## Other stuff:

- BIBLE & pen
- Bedding
  - Air Mattress or cot
  - Sheets
  - Blanket / sleeping bag
  - Pillow
- Ear plugs to deal with snorers
- Medicines
- Recreation for free-time (Frisbee, football, etc.)
- Water Bottle (also available for purchase)
- Water-flavoring packets

## Money:

Here are examples where you might need money:

**The Store** – We have a simple store available at the mission center. We offer: snacks, gum, water bottles, t-shirts, keychains, and several other simple items you may want to purchase.

Cost: \$.25 - \$.7.00

## Cameras:

- Camera & Accessories
  - Batteries?
  - USB cable (for picture uploads!)
  - Case?

Website for pictures: [www.bigcreekmissions.com](http://www.bigcreekmissions.com)

## Tools:

For those working in construction, we encourage you to bring tools you use in basic framing and construction work. (saws, levels, tape measures, drills, hammers, etc)

## Clothing

- Everyone needs the following:
  - **Work Clothes:** Everyone should bring at least 1-2 sets of construction clothes you don't mind to ruin. Long pants are required on construction
  - **Active Clothes:** if children's ministry options are offered - t-shirts, modest shorts/pants, tennis shoes.
  - **Modest Clothes:** for community ministry and worship – suitable for visiting nursing homes and other public places where we will represent Christ.
- underwear & socks
- shorts / pants
- long pants for construction and work projects
- shirts
- shoes: closed toed shoes required on sites (typically, tennis shoes are always best!)
- shower shoes – cheap sandals for showers

### Dress Code Summary:

A complete dress code is available on the expectations handout!

#### Girls-

- clothing should be loose fitting & modest
- no soffe shorts / cheerleading shorts
- no tank tops / spaghetti straps
- no suggestive messages on clothes
- no negative messages on clothes
- swimwear: 1 piece or overlapping tankini

#### Guys:

- clothing should be loose fitting & modest
- no tank-tops or sleeveless shirts
- no clothing with negative messages
- no clothing with suggestive messages

## What NOT to bring:

- practical joke items
- expensive electronics
- fireworks
- tobacco products
- anything you don't want broken or lost
- anything distracting to your spiritual growth
- bad attitudes