Introduction to the 2018 Theme and Pre-Trip Sessions

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?’
And I said, ‘Here am I; send me!’ - Isaiah 6:8

Hello!
In a few short months, you will climb into a van with the rest of your group and head off to your destination in Central Appalachia. We can't wait to see you!

While your actual travel is still months away, your trip starts now. Encourage the members of your group to attend every session in the same way that they will travel every mile on the highway with you. Your group grows closer with each moment you’re together, and the whole group misses out when someone isn’t there.

Even if your group has done dozens of ASP trips, keep in mind that "No one ever rafts the same river twice; either the person has changed or the river has." Every trip (and pre-trip) is an opportunity to see God at work in new ways. For this reason, it's important that every group starts its trip using the prepared pre-trip materials.

This year's ASP theme—Call(ed) to Action—is an expression of purpose, service, and invitation to participate in God's ongoing work in the world and reflects this summer's theme verse: Isaiah 6:8. God sends out the call, and God's people are the called. We are called to stand with those who are hurting and struggling. We are called to speak on behalf of those who do not have a voice. We are called to serve all people—"right where they are, just the way they are."

Appalachia Service Project is celebrating 50 years of answering the call to serve among the people of Central Appalachia with humility and enthusiasm in the same way that Isaiah answered the call from God to serve in his time and place. We are excited to see how God continues to call us into our future together!

You'll have a chance to interact with this theme in 4 specific ways:

1. The Pre-trip Sessions (which—by the way—are very important) in this packet. Ideally, your group will get together about once a month between now and when you leave for your trip. These sessions include activities and conversations which you can customize to your group's needs. Preferably, your group would do all of the sessions in this order so that every volunteer group has prepared similarly and have a common foundation upon which they have been building.
Session 1: Who are we? – Get the ball rolling by thinking about the unique people who are in your group. Your group will also have its first chance to interact with this year’s theme verse from Isaiah.

Session 2: Who are they? – In this session, your group will focus on how the people in your group tend to think about others.

Session 3: Campfires and Covenants – Campfires are great places for amazing conversations. They are also where you’ll think about who—and how—your group wants to be.

Session 4: Difficult Choices – How would you decide which clients we can serve this summer?

Session 5: Let’s Build Something! – Get those tools out! Whether you produce a picnic table (like the one for which we’ve provided plans) or something else, give your entire team a chance to have some hands-on experience.

Session 6: Meet the Parents – One last chance to go over details and gather some parental thoughts on your coming trip.

After the Trip: We’re Home; Now What? - How can your team share this trip with your families and friends once you’ve returned? How do you process an experience in which many lives have been changed? This session will be available later in the spring.

2. The Devotionals which you’ll receive as you get closer to your trip. This year’s devotional materials will also include the day(s) of travel before and after your time on-site with ASP.
3. The Field Guides you’ll receive once you arrive to your ASP center.
4. The on-site Evening Gatherings (EGs in ASP-speak) when you will have a chance to process your days and reflect on God’s work within your group.

May God bless you as you respond to God’s call and plan for an incredible experience of Spirit-filled service!

Peace,
Pastor Dean Smith
Director of Spiritual Programs