



Backpacking with Sonlight Adventures

A Christian Youth Camp in the San Juan Mountains of Colorado

Welcome to Sonlight Adventures! We are pleased that your church or camp will be participating in a backpack trip through Sonlight. Included here are some details and suggestions to help ensure a great week!

Who we are...

Sonlight is a year around youth camp located seven miles north of Pagosa Springs in southwest Colorado. We are a not-for-profit organization that has been in operation since 1979. Sonlight is operated by three full time directors and governed by a Board of Directors. We are licensed by the Colorado Department of Human Services to operate a youth camp and hold accreditation by the American Camping Association. Please visit our web site at www.sonlightcamp.org.

What we do...

Wilderness backpack trips in the Colorado high country are one of the summer options at Sonlight. Your church or camp will come to Sonlight as an organized group, providing the counseling staff and Christian education program. Sonlight will provide two guides who are experienced with back country travel and trained in first aid to guide the trip. Sonlight will also provide most of the equipment that you will need. We provide tents, backpacks, sleeping bags, pads, cooking and eating utensils, food, and first aid. You just need to bring personal items including a good waterproof raincoat, water bottle and good hiking shoes. (See suggested list of what to bring.)

Most of our backpack trips are conducted on the San Juan National Forest or the Rio Grande National Forest under a US Forest Service special use permit. Trips are open to all without regard to race, creed, gender, religion, national origin, cookie preference, or education. Participants should keep in mind that backpacking is essentially a strenuous activity. Once on the trail, you will be moving every day carrying all that you will need for the week. Each person will share in carrying group gear and food so packs will weigh 35-50 pounds. Mileage covered over the week will depend on the fitness of the group and the specific trail utilized. The week will be more enjoyable for you if you are in basically good physical shape.

Trips are intended to be a wilderness adventure. With wilderness comes some inherent risks and hazards. Sonlight's staff are trained in wilderness travel and exercise the utmost caution to minimize the inherent risks related to high country travel. Risks, however, cannot be eliminated from the activity completely so you should be aware of them. For more information on the risks associated with high country backpacking see the "Acknowledgment of Risks, Indemnification, and Release of Liability" and backpacking health forms. You will need to read and sign both forms.

What to expect when you get here...

Upon arrival at Sonlight, you will have some time to stretch your legs and meet our staff. After dinner together, we will have an orientation to wilderness ethics and trail guidelines. Then, we will distribute equipment and gear. The first night will be spent at Sonlight in the Weminuche Backpack Base. The following morning participants will enjoy a Sonlight breakfast and will then be shuttled to the trail head.

On the trail, each group will function as a community. Every person will share in daily duties such as cooking, dishwashing, setting up and breaking down tents, hauling water, and gathering firewood. Generally, groups do travel everyday with some optional peak climbs. Information concerning program and program focus may be obtained from your youth director, camp staff, or trip leader. Meals are designed to be tasty and nutritious. We use dehydrated products and high energy foods to provide much needed calories. The trip should not be viewed as a way to lose weight. Vegetarian alternatives are available upon request if **two week advance** notice is given.

The last afternoon, the group will be shuttled back to Sonlight Camp to unload our gear and equipment. After a wonderful steak dinner with all the trimmings, we will go to the Pagosa Hot Springs for showers and soaking in the numerous hot springs pools. The last night will be spent at Sonlight Camp sleeping in the backpacking building. We will say our goodbyes the following morning after breakfast.

What are these forms?

In addition to this information sheet, you should have received a Sonlight Backpacking Health Form and an Acknowledgment of Risks, Indemnification, and Release of Liability. Both of those forms need to be completed, signed, and turned into your trip sponsor several weeks before your trip. All campers and adults in Colorado are required by law to have a completed health form on file for each participant. The health form should be signed by you, your parent or guardian (if you are under 18 years of age) each year. A physician or nurse practitioner should fill out the physical exam page within 2 years of your backpack trip. **NO ONE (INCLUDING ADULTS) MAY PARTICIPATE WITHOUT BOTH OF THESE FORMS ON FILE WITH SONLIGHT CAMP.** You may download these forms from our web site at www.sonlightcamp.org.

•**PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE** Label all items belonging to you with a permanent marker. Sonlight can assume no responsibility for items left at camp. Lost and found items will be kept for two weeks after the conclusion of your week of camp and then donated to the local thrift shop. We will make every effort to return items to their rightful owners, but we need your help. **If you want it back, put your name on it.**

• Sonlight is licensed by the Colorado Department of Human Services. Should you have a concern about childcare at Sonlight Camp, please contact Winston Marugg, Executive Director, at Sonlight Camp, or you can submit your concerns to:

Department of Human Services, Division of Child Care
1575 Sherman Street, 1st floor
Denver, Colorado 80203-1714
303.866.5958 or 970.259.5465

• Should you suspect child abuse, or child neglect, while your child is at Sonlight Camp, please contact Winston Marugg, Executive Director, immediately. You can also contact the Archuleta County Human Services Department:

PO Box 240
Pagosa Springs, CO 81147
970.264.2182
fax 970.264.2186

• For more information about Sonlight Christian Camp (our mission, history, staff, directions to camp, awesome pictures of camp, etc.) check out our web site at www.sonlightcamp.org.

• ***If you have any other questions, concerns, or if we can help in any way, please feel free to call us at 970. 264.4379 or e-mail at sonlight@sonlightcamp.org.***

Winston Marugg, Executive Director

Suggestions for What to Bring

- hiking boots that are well broken in. Good walking shoes are better than new boots
- a good waterproof raincoat with a hood is a must (ponchos are not recommended)
- rain pants are a good idea
- tennis shoes or teva type sandals for getting wet
- 3 pairs of wool socks (60-80% is OK) Smart Wool is good stuff.
- 1 pair of long pants (non-cotton is best) Some material that dries quickly.
- 1 pair shorts
- underwear
- 2 or 3 t-shirts. Polypropylene is good.
- 1 long sleeve heavy shirt (flannel or wool)
- 1 wool sweater or fleece jacket
- 1 cap for warmth
- 1 cap for sun
- bandanna
- sunglasses
- small flashlight (with extra batteries and bulb)
- waterbottle (Sonlight sells Nalgene's for \$8.00 each)
- personal items (toothbrush, toothpaste, soap-ivory or other biodegradable, lip balm and sun screen at least 25 spf)
- swim suit for the Hot Springs
- bath towel for the Hot Springs
- clean clothes for the trip home

Optional Items to Consider

- camera (film if needed)
- small paperback (in case we spend a day in the tents due to rain!)
- fishing equipment (Colorado license required, about \$26.00 for 5 days)
- light gloves or mittens for warmth
- small light weight Bible

Sonlight Christian Camp
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