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## FROM OUR DIRECTOR

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am pleased to share with you this year's annual programs brochure. As usual, the main goal here is simply to communicate the details of our upcoming lineup of trips and retreats, but there are a few other things inside that we think you'll enjoy.

On pages 5 and 6 you can read about what Kairos has been up to in the "non-trip" space, specifically our parent and youth worker offerings. On page 21 we share an extended testimony from a former Gapper about how her Gap year helped to bring her deeper into the "glorious freedom of the children of God." Finally, beginning on page 23 we present a write-up on "bridging after high school," which can be a very helpful kickstarter for that season of decisions.

On behalf of the Kairos team, thank you so much for all that you do to serve the young people of the Sword of the Spirit. Whether you are a parent, a community leader, or a youth worker, we are blessed to work alongside you. We pray every week for all of you and for the young people in your care, specifically that they would grow into radical, lifelong disciples of Jesus Christ.

God Bless You,

Stephen Giles
Director of Kairos



## **KAIROS PROGRAMS OVERVIEW**

Kairos offers trips for Sword of the Spirit teens and their friends. Outdoor Adventures and Mission Trips are available for youth in 7th - 10th grade. High school students are invited to come to the YES Retreat, our regional high-impact weekend retreat. After their junior year of high school, we invite students to attend The Summit. High school graduates are eligible to serve in the summer with Kairos as Adventure Guides, and throughout the year with the GAP Program.

	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
Spring Weekend			The YES Retreat			
Girls Summer Trip	Outdoor Adventure		Outdoor Adventure /Mission Trip		The Cummit	Adventure Guides
Boys Summer Trip	Outdoor Adventure	Outdoor Adventure	Outdoor Adventure	Mission Trip	The Summit	+ GAP Program

#### PLEASE NOTE:

The grade level for summer trips indicate the grade completed by the participant.

## **ANNUAL PARENTS FORUM**

The 2025 Parents Forum was all about freedom. True freedom is more than mere license to do whatever you please. It is the capacity and ability to choose for what is truly good, and is in fact the only road to lasting virtue. That makes it an essential ability to develop in our sons and daughters, but it is also undeniably challenging, even frightening. And it is probably safe to say that our current cultural moment doesn't make it any easier. Our personalized, curated media tends to turn us inward, as does our culture that prioritizes internal feelings and self(ish) fulfillment above all else. This is directly at odds with true freedom, the end of which is the joyful giving away of oneself in love. Freedom also requires courage from both parents and children, which likewise becomes more difficult in a day and age that eschews risk and abhors discomfort. For freedom to fully develop, one must be given the opportunity to exercise judgement and to make free choices. This opportunity could be seen as "freedom in order to grow in freedom," and it is this freedom, alongside the guidance of parents and mentors, that works to produce truly free sons and daughters: ones who can freely choose to love the Lord and to give themselves fully to him.





## YOUTH WORK CONSULTATIONS

In addition to our trips and retreats, Kairos also works with local communities to strengthen their youth bridge efforts. While these "youth work consultations" can take a variety of forms, our goal is always the same. To raise up radical, lifelong disciples, and to help communities do the same. We have been blessed to have some of these opportunities already this year, and we are grateful to walk alongside the parents, leaders, and youth workers who love these young people and who want to see them come alive in Jesus Christ. Much of our reading as a Kairos team over the last number of years has convinced us that parents are absolutely the most influential players in a young person's life, and in their relationship with the Lord. To a lesser degree, but for similar reasons, youth workers, small group leaders, and mentors are also incredibly important and influential. Our work with communities on their youth bridges seeks to support and strengthen these fundamental roles while also addressing the holistic impact a community can have in the life of a young person. To hear more about opportunities for youth work consultations, as well as foundational youth worker training, drop us line at the link below.

kairos-na.org/contact/

## THE YES RETREAT

The YES Retreat is a three-day, two-night high school retreat for Sword of the Spirit youth and their friends. The goal for this weekend is to create an environment where youth have the chance to say YES to the Lord's call of discipleship. The retreat also aims to bring youth to initial or deeper conversion, to pray with them for baptism in the Spirit, to help them grow in confidence in worship, and to encourage them in the use of the gifts of the Spirit.

Participants and volunteer staff can expect a weekend of awesome talks, testimonies, and breakout sessions; deep discussion in small groups; and powerful, God-honoring worship!

"During the YES retreat, God truly opened my heart to His presence in ways I hadn't expected. As we focused on worshiping with intention, I began to realize how distracted I often am in my daily life, missing opportunities to pray and talk to God. Through prayer and reflection, I felt a deep sense of peace and a renewed desire to keep my attention on God, not just during the retreat, but in every moment of my life. It was a reminder that worship isn't just about music or praising, but about doing everything for His glory. I'm leaving this weekend with a greater awareness of His constant presence and a stronger commitment to make space for Him in my heart every day."

YES RETREAT 2025 SOPHOMORE

"At the YES Retreat the Lord healed the migraines I had been having for 9 months"

YES RETREAT 2025 JUNIOR



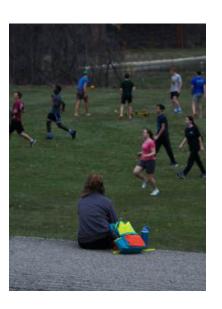
DATES: MARCH 27 - 29, 2026

LOCATION: HILLSDALE, MICHIGAN

COST: \$220

**ESTIMATED SIZE: 220 YOUTH, 125 STAFF** 

KAIROS-NA.ORG/YES











## THE KAIROS SUMMIT

The Kairos Summit is a 5-day trip for juniors and seniors. It's a time away together to experience Kairos culture and to talk about discipleship, mission, the call of The Sword of the Spirit, and the big question: What comes next? The Summit includes typical retreat elements such as talks and worship, as well as outdoor adventure activities.

The Summit exists to help youth understand their community heritage, the opportunities before them, and to call them on to radical, lifelong discipleship. Because of this, the Kairos staff believes it is the most important event we offer!

**DATES: JULY 9 - 13, 2026** 

LOCATION: NEAR LOUISVILLE, KY

COST: \$400

**REGISTRATION DEADLINE: MAY 22, 2026** 

KAIROS-NA.ORG/KAIROS-SUMMIT

A note on transportation: For those who live near Michigan, we offer transportation with the Kairos vans for an additional \$40. Those from farther away have often carpooled with other youth and local youth workers. Please connect with other families, local youth workers, and with the Kairos Staff to coordinate this.

"The Summit was exactly what I needed last summer. The ratio of prayer to fun was perfect and I loved that it wasn't too much of one or the other. Prayer is something I have always struggled with so I was nervous to be the odd one out. I have never felt more peace than I did praying that week. The personal prayer time was my absolute favorite, which is something I would have never expected myself to say. The people I met inspired and encouraged me to continue to grow deeper in my faith, not only in their words, but in their actions. God opened the door to my heart on the Summitt and I am forever grateful for the opportunity that was presented to me."

**EVA - SUMMIT 2025** 

"The Kairos Summit was a really great mountaintop retreat where I was able to look back at how God's been working in my life and how He wants to use me in college and beyond. I was really inspired to take the next step in faith and giving my life to God. I especially loved the time in solitude, but also the great times and adventures with peers from other communities."

FINN - SUMMIT 2025



## 7+8 GRADE GIRLS TRIP

This 8-day trip will be camping and canoeing in the Sylvania Wilderness Area in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Girls will learn or practice their outdoor skills such as setting up and taking down camp, canoeing, portaging, and packing gear. This trip will challenge those who already have camping and canoeing skills, but will be a friendly introduction to those without experience. Prayer, sisterhood, and serving alongside one another with joy are also key elements of this trip.

DATES: JUNE 25 - JULY 2, 2026 COST: \$410
LOCATION: MICHIGAN'S UPPER PENINSULA
FILL OUT THE INTEREST FORM AT THE LINK BELOW IN ORDER TO
RECEIVE REGISTRATION
KAIROS-NA.ORG/GIRLS-ADVENTURE-TRIPS

SUMMER TRIPS

# 9+10 GRADE GIRLS TRIP

This new trip for 9th & 10th grade girls will be heading to Winston-Salem, North Carolina, for service and adventure, visiting the prospective SOS community beginning to grow there. The service will include putting on a children's day camp and a girls' retreat and providing practical service for a community retreat. The girls who participate in this trip will all contribute in age appropriate leadership and service, like sharing testimonies, leading games and activities, and other skills they have. The group will also explore the natural beauty of the area.

DATES: JUNE 15 - 22, 2026 COST: \$460
LOCATION: NORTH CAROLINA
FILL OUT THE INTEREST FORM AT THE LINK BELOW IN ORDER TO
RECEIVE REGISTRATION
KAIROS-NA.ORG/GIRLS-ADVENTURE-TRIPS





# 7th GRADE BOYS TRIP

This is our classic backpacking trip! We meet up at a cabin in western Virginia, then hit the trail Monday through Friday, carrying everything we need for the five days and four nights. At the end, after we've learned to hike, cook, and chase wild ponies, we return to the cabin to wrap up and celebrate our trip.

**DATES: JULY 18 - 25, 2026** 

LOCATION: VIRGINIA

COST: \$410

FILL OUT THE INTEREST FORM AT THE LINK BELOW IN ORDER TO

**RECEIVE REGISTRATION** 

KAIROS-NA.ORG/BOYS-ADVENTURE-TRIPS

# 8th GRADE BOYS TRIP

For our 8th grade trip, we meet up at Algonquin Provincial Park, north of Toronto, in Ontario, Canada. Instead of backpacking, we go canoe packing. Our backpacks will be tied into our canoes and we float from campsite to campsite for the entire week. Passports are not required for the boys; just birth certificate copies and a border-crossing consent letter.

**DATES: AUGUST 1 - 8, 2026** 

LOCATION: ONTARIO, CANADA

COST: \$460

FILL OUT THE INTEREST FORM AT THE LINK BELOW IN ORDER TO

**RECEIVE REGISTRATION** 

KAIROS-NA.ORG/BOYS-ADVENTURE-TRIPS



# 9th GRADE BOYS TRIP

Big mountains, big adventure. This trip has everything. Two days out and two days back for driving, three national parks, backpacking, fishing (trout), mountain climbing (13,000 feet), and great times with the guys. This is our "capstone" wilderness trip for good reason.

**DATES: JUNE 24 - JULY 6, 2026** 

LOCATION: WYOMING

COST: \$460

FILL OUT THE INTEREST FORM AT THE LINK BELOW IN ORDER TO

RECEIVE REGISTRATION

KAIROS-NA.ORG/BOYS-ADVENTURE-TRIPS

# **10th GRADE MISSION TRIP**

The 10th grade boys' trip is a mission trip to eastern Kentucky; a region of the country with a lot of need! We will be doing home repair and other construction work for vulnerable families and individuals. This trip will help us all grow in our Kairos value of "servant-heartedness" and will help the boys take their next steps as young men in the Lord.

**DATES: JUNE 15 - 21, 2026** 

LOCATION: KENTUCKY

COST: \$500\*

**SUMMER TRIPS** 

FILL OUT THE INTEREST FORM AT THE LINK BELOW IN ORDER TO

RECEIVE REGISTRATION

KAIROS-NA.ORG/BOYS-ADVENTURE-TRIPS

\*Fundraising is a good option for offsetting the cost of this trip



## **KAIROS ADVENTURE GUIDES**

The Adventure Guide program is the apex service opportunity within Kairos. Adventure Guides are pushed out of their comfort zone and into real responsibility. The program is 2 months long and is designed for 18-22 year olds who have graduated from high school. Guides will spend their summer serving as staff on the Kairos summer trips and will act as big brothers and big sisters to participants. It will be a summer of growth, mission, and friendship.

DATES FOR MEN: JUNE 8 - AUGUST 10, 2026 DATES FOR WOMEN: JUNE 8 - JULY 26, 2026 COST: \$3,900 FOR MEN - \$3,500 FOR WOMEN

\*THIS AMOUNT IS FUNDRAISED, AND A \$600 STIPEND IS INCLUDED

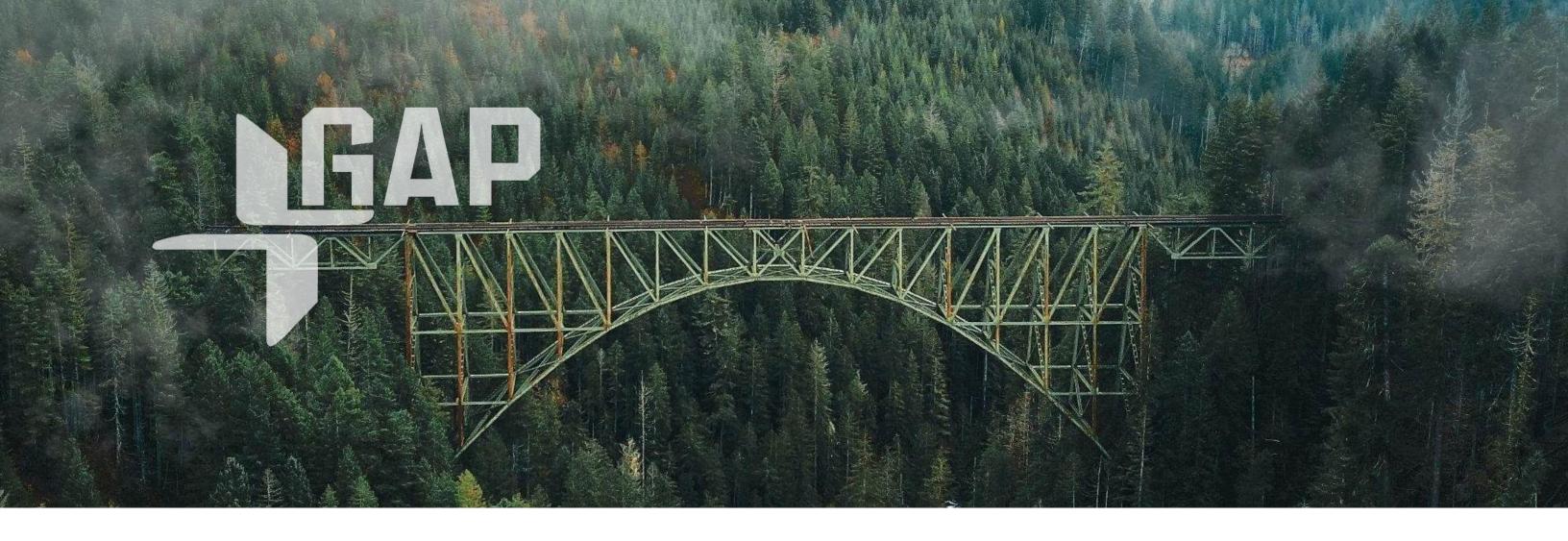
AVAILABILITY: 2 MEN AND 2 WOMEN KAIROS-NA.ORG/SERVICE-PROGRAMS

"This summer was one of the most chaotic, exciting, tiring, and fulfilling summers I have ever had! It was such a joy to serve as a Kairos Adventure Guide alongside Rebeca Sastre and I learned so much. Every trip was a challenge, but they were also filled with the blessings of building relationships, leaning on the Lord for strength, and trusting that He is the one who will supply me with everything I need in the moment. Looking back now, I can see how the Lord used this past summer to equip me for this fall, especially spiritually. It was vital for my relationship with Him to have complete and utter trust



that He is good and faithful in all circumstances. I'm immensely grateful that the Adventure Guide program gave me the opportunity to surrender my life radically to the Lord!"

ANNABEL LUDWIG
Adventure Guide 2025



# THE GAP PROGRAM

The Kairos Gap Program provides high school graduates with an opportunity to radically orient the rest of their lives towards Jesus Christ and His Kingdom. Through service, formation, community, and more, Gappers will grow into men and women who impact the world for Christ! Taking a year off to be a Gapper can be intimidating, but we have seen time and time again that doing a Gap year helps set a young person up for a life of not just success, but significance.

DATES: EARLY AUGUST 2026 - MID MAY 2027

LOCATION: LANSING, MI

TO INQUIRE OR EXPRESS INTEREST IN THE GAP PROGRAM, FOLLOW

THE LINK BELOW.

KAIROS-NA.ORG/SERVICE-PROGRAMS

# WHAT DOES A GAP YEAR LOOK LIKE?

What a Kairos Gap year looks like can vary somewhat by each individual, their circumstances, and what they are looking for. However, a few key elements always exist, namely: rich community life, robust service, and finally, personal and spiritual formation.

#### **COST BREAKDOWN**

- Program fee: \$2,500
- Living expenses: \$2,500 \$6,000 depending on housing situation
- Gappers from the US can work a part time job to contribute to living expenses. International gappers are not legally allowed to work for pay

## **GAP ALUMNA TESTIMONY**

#### Katrisse Bautista

Growing up, I was chronically online. Most of my life as an adolescent was spent on a computer. I didn't grow up climbing trees, or exploring my neighborhood, or eating dirt. I grew up playing Minecraft with my friends on Discord for hours at a time, and COVID only cemented this lifestyle. My parents, to their credit, had tried very hard to get me offline, but I was painfully stubborn. If they blocked off websites, I knew how to get around it. If they blocked off the wifi, I knew all of the loopholes. If they confiscated the laptop I was using, I would borrow Chromebooks from my school library. I remember staying up to insane hours or waking up at equally crazy times of night to play games or watch movies while they were asleep. Part of the reason why I did this was to defy my parents, but it was also because I had no self control. I was comfortable in my disobedience and I was used to being a slave to dopamine, and in all of this I actually thought I was a pretty good Christian. I was bloated with conceit, and I was blind to the fact that my relationship to the Lord was dragging in the dirt because I insisted on living life on my own terms.

Because of these pitfalls, I found myself in the darkest mental, spiritual, and academic time of my life, and I was forced to look my sins in the face. It was here that the Lord gave me the grace to seek Him and to ask Him for help. Like the Prodigal Son, I realized how far I had run from my Father, and so began my journey home by begging Him for His forgiveness and asking Him to change me. It was at this point that I went to this high school retreat called Kairos Summit. I was told about the Kairos Gap year and my initial reaction was, "Yeah, that sounds kind of cool, but it's not happening." A year later I packed my bags and headed over to live in the USA. I can easily say that this began the most formative and freeing year of my life.

For almost the first time in my memory, I truly touched grass. I signed at least two or three commitments saying "I will use media responsibly and wisely," and with the support and influence of my household, my small group, and the staff of Kairos and UCO, I began to develop good habits and a wonderful prayer time.

I was in no way perfect, but the way I approached life was more fulfilling. I actually made friends and had time to invest in those relationships. I also picked up some sweet hobbies and spent more time investing in those, as well. Prayer, Formation talks, Gap training, and the books I read last year were all inputs that very positively reinforced the new habits and the discipline that I so desperately needed and sought.

But it was, and still is, an uphill battle. I had to learn, in real time, how hard self-control and surrender could get. I had built for my whole life this habit of indulging myself whenever I wanted, and it wasn't like that was going to disappear overnight. But according to 1 Corinthians 10:13, "God is faithful, and he will not let [me] be tempted beyond [my] ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that [I] will be able to endure it." The Lord has changed me so much in the past year, and I believe that he will continue to transform me in the days to come. His goodness is worth the struggle. Praise God!

Katrise Bautista grew up in the One with God Community in Toronto Canada and was a Gapper during the 2024 - 25 school year. She is currently involved in University Christian Outreach and is studying business administration.



Katrisse (back right) with her women's household

## **BRIDGING AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

At the end of this brochure, we want to take some time to talk about what comes next for your high school graduate. For parents of upperclassmen, the time is approaching when your son or daughter will make a significant decision about his or her future - the decision of whether or where to attend university.

#### For The Workplace Bound

Some of our young people will enter the workforce directly from high school or after attending a vocational school. It is the case that, in North America, most of the post-high school ministries connected to our communities are focused around university life and university student outreach. This can make it difficult for a young person who is working full-time to connect with these environments. However, it is still quite possible, and usually very good, for your high school graduate to connect with his or her peers in a university outreach context.

Even if they are not attending university, your son or daughter would usually be most welcome to join the formation program at a university outreach. Often, they would even be able to apply to live in a household. Connecting with a local director or coordinator can be a great place to start.

For some people who enter the workforce right out of high school, being part of a university environment simply doesn't work. This may be due to something as simple as an early morning work schedule. If this is the case, encourage them to speak with a local coordinator about getting into an appropriate men's or women's group and about ways to receive formation that works with their life. This will probably mean connecting with people who are a few years older. But the input of people with more life experience can be very helpful to a person trying to get established in life. It should also be noted that some community youth have found it very fruitful to serve in the high school programs from which they graduated. This seems to give them a good connection with their community and a significant way to be on mission.

On the topic of mission, we should note that the communities of our region are not currently very effective in reaching people that work in the trades or take a career path right out of high school. But likely all of us realize that it's not just college students who need to be evangelized or need Christian community; it could be the case that our own children will help us improve in this area!

#### For The College Bound

The transition from high school to university is one of the most crucial times in the life of a young person, and the four years (or more!) spent in university are the years when the seeds for many decisions about the future are planted and nourished. These decisions have long-term effects on one's life and stem from the choice of where to attend university.

Furthermore, for us in Sword of the Spirit communities, we should note especially that the long-term ability of our young people to participate in our communities is greatly influenced by their college choice. Most community youth who do not connect with one of our Sword of the Spirit outreaches, or college outreaches friendly to our movement, during their college years do not participate in our communities as adults. Finally, our community youth have an important part to play in reaching their peers and building Christian communities on campus. Where they go to college, and the groups they join, will limit or encourage this contribution.

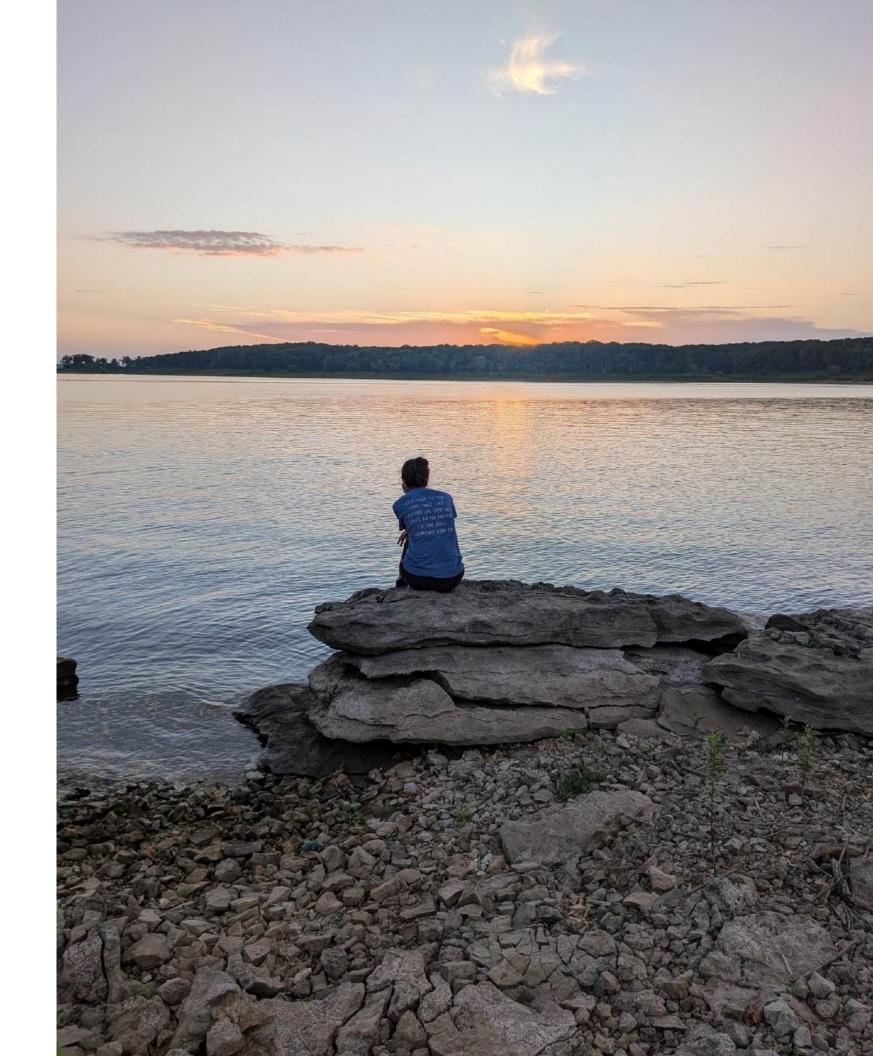
Even for young people who do well in high school, it can be extremely difficult to continue on a path to the Lord and to life in Christian community. For this reason, we strongly recommend that you help your child choose a university with a strong discipleship formation program, a vibrant community, and a missionary culture.

In addition, here are some very simple strategies you may find useful in helping your son or daughter connect with such outreaches:

- 1. Over the next few months, talk with your child about how their college choice will or will not allow them to connect to the Sword of the Spirit and its broader work. Recommend that the presence of a Sword of the Spirit outreach be an important factor in choosing a college.
- 2. Financially support the options you endorse: If you plan to pay for or contribute to your child's college education then you have created a large seat at the decision-making table. Use it to encourage your child to choose a college with a Sword of the Spirit outreach.
- 3. Some of our young people just want to "get out of town" for a while. This is not always a bad thing. Talk to them about where they could go to college within the wider network of the Sword of the Spirit, and help them connect with the leaders at those schools. Part of this strategy could be to delay their college choice for a year. Present the option of doing a year of service before deciding on a college the Kairos GAP program (page 19) might be a great fit!
- 4. Even if your child attends a college without a Sword of the Spirit outreach, there are still ways for them to connect. The *Kairos Adventure Guide* program is open to any high school graduate (see page 18). We've loved having college students spend their summer with us. Without joining UCO, your child can participate in UCO's *Campus Mission Academy*, a 6-day conference held each August. Both programs will provide your child with Christian inspiration, training, and a network of Christian friends.

Thank you for your work in raising young men and women for the Kingdom of Christ. Your parenting is a contribution to the Lord's work, and the work of the Sword of the Spirit. It is a pleasure to serve you and your children.





## **HOW TO MANAGE ALL THESE TRIPS**

All the trips and retreats Kairos offers can really add up. Both in terms of quantity and cost - especially if you have a large family! We'd like to offer you, the parents, a little input as to how to navigate and prioritize.

#### How do we pay for all this?

- 1. If you're having trouble affording a trip, first check with your local community. Most of our communities have funds to get their youth on regional trips.
- 2. Many communities have systems in place that allow youth to fundraise for their trips; check with your local youth group leader to see if this is an option. More pastorally, having a high schooler fundraise for their own trip is a great way for them to take ownership of that trip!
- 3. If your community is not in a position to help and fundraising is not an option, please contact us. While it's true that Kairos is not set up to provide scholarships to all the youth of our Region, we're usually able to offer some sort of discount. We believe that lack of funds is a bad reason for your child to miss out so we'll do our best to make something work.

#### What trips and events should we prioritize?

- 1. We think that The Summit is the most important thing for your child to attend we would love to have 100% of our incoming high school seniors attend!
- 2. The YES Retreat is the second most important; ideally, a high schooler would attend this retreat every year (though we certainly recognize that for the communities that have to fly to the retreat, this may not be a possibility).
- 3. For the adventure trips, while it's great if youth can go on all of them, if that's not possible, going on one or two is excellent! High schoolers usually have a lot of options in the summer, so it may work better to prioritize trips for 7th and 8th graders. This is also a strategic way for your youth to build relationships with future YES Retreat participants.
- 4. Lastly, we don't want to compete with the plans of local communities. If there is a direct conflict, we think it's good to participate in the local community's trip, camp, or retreat.

## **ARRANGING TRANSPORTATION**

We know that arranging transportation to and from a Kairos summer trip can be a real challenge. First of all, we would like to thank the many parents who, over the years, have driven youth to trips, planned with other parents, and volunteered their cars to make it possible for young people to attend. This is a huge service that often goes unnoticed, but it has been hugely important - so thank you! Second, we would like to offer a few thoughts to hopefully help make this area less cumbersome.

First, while we can't simply "solve" the transportation issue, we do want to be a support. So, if you think it's going to be a problem, contact us so we can work together, share ideas, and hopefully find a good solution. The sooner we start the conversation and get other families looped in, the better. The first step would be to fill out the trip interest form and contact the listed trip leader.

Second, get in touch with other families from your community who may have youth on the same trip. We can let you know who else has expressed interest. Starting these conversations early can be very helpful.

Finally, there is often one parent who does a lot of work to organize transportation for a number of youth from their area: a *Transportation Champion*, so to speak. We'll now be offering a trip discount to that family, based on the work they do to make the trip a reality for multiple youth. If you're interested in doing this, let us know!



















### WHAT WE VALUE

#### **Kairos Time**

We value time that is set apart: different from the everyday, protected from distraction. These are times when God acts, and we can respond.

#### **Embracing the Struggle**

Life is full of hardships and obstacles. We want to encourage our youth to rise to these challenges, meet them with hope, and become antifragile.

#### **Community-Glue**

Christ-centered, life-long relationships help hold our communities together. We seek to provide the environments where these are built.

#### **Servant Heartedness**

We are honored to serve young people. And we serve them greatly when we model a servant's heart, and invite them to serve one another.

#### **Big Life Vision**

God's plan for our life is bigger than our own. We want to help young people look to eternity, and see their lives as the Lord sees them.

#### "Yes, Lord"

Every person's walk with God involves a next step. We value these opportunities for growth, and invite all to say "yes" to Jesus, the Lord.