



GUIDON UNIT

Theme: {Life}

18-25 Year Old Young Men and Women

Meaning: Guidon. n. \ 'gī-, dän, -dən\ means a standard of a troop; or the standard-bearer. For a Guidon member, it symbolizes a young adult's aspiration of rising to a "higher" standard of developing a {Life} of integrity, purity and to "Walk Worthy" in their Christian Faith while at the same time enjoying outdoor adventures.

Guidon Slogan - *Rising to a "Higher" Standard for Life!*

Motto: Walk Worthy

Vision: A program based on biblical applications and adventure for young men and women.

Mission Statement: To provide a "KUWL" (cool) and flexible program in a safe Christian environment for a lifetime of discipleship and adventure.

(KUWL = Knowledge, Understanding, Wisdom, and Life.)

What is the Guidon program's primary purpose?

To provide a platform for young Christian men and women ages 18-25 to come together either on a college campus or in their community to participate in social and outdoor activities of similar interest with a focus on their Christian walk.

Members: Members are registered adults in TLUSA.

Guests: All non-members who attend are termed "guests." Some limitation (to be determined) may be appropriate on the number of times they can attend before joining.

The Guidon Story:

It has been said that if we could hold young men's hands from the time they are 18 to the time they are 25 years old and keep them out of trouble, that our jails would be EMPTY! How true! Anyone who has visited their local jail at Christmas to hand out Christmas boxes to the inmates or otherwise participated in some type of a jailhouse ministry will readily attest to the fact that our jails are filled and overflowing with 18 to 25 year old young men.

At the very time in their lives when their testosterone level is high, and their risk taking behavior is at its maximum, we desert them. We have programs for our children and programs for our teenagers. And later when a young man gets a bit older after his college years, he gets involved in his profession and perhaps with raising his own family. But in those years between 18 to 25 years old, we let the young man flounder without proper support.

All of a sudden they are 18 years old and they can legally do as they please. Society has taught them to demand control of their own lives and that they should be able to do as they please because they are now “adults.” We send them to college or they go out in the world. And just at the age when they should be focusing on starting their adult lives with a Christ-centered focus in their life as part of the body of Jesus Christ, we release them to their own recognizance and cross our fingers hoping that we raised them well.

According to Barna Research, nearly three out of every five young Christians (59%) disconnect either permanently or for an extended period of time from church life after age 15. Other statistics demonstrate that 70% of our young men and women leave home and walk away from the tenets of their faith in God as they become exposed to the false philosophies and ideologies of a typical college environment.

We want our Christian sons to associate with the right young adults – with other young Christian men and women. However, the first week away from home at college is often the defining moment of a lifetime, as a young adult forms the first bonds with the first friends that will become their peer group as they start their lives on their own. Christian parents are rightfully afraid as they send their 18 year old daughters off to college. Who will they meet and who will they bond with? Who will take the place of their family when they leave their Christian family behind?

The Guidon Program is the Trail Life USA outreach to our Christian sons and daughters that leave home to go to college. The program can also function well as a hometown Unit for young adults that do not leave their hometown to go to college. But the concept is still the same.

It is an extracurricular program, which just like the K-12 program of Trail Life USA focuses on adventure, character, and leadership. And it does so in a biblical Christian environment where young adults can meet with other young adults that also believe in Jesus Christ. And they can lift each other up, and hold each other accountable to a Christian standard of purity that is uncommon and unappreciated in a polluted world.

Let’s take ownership of the fact that during the period of 18 to 25 years old is the period when our young adults make the most important decisions of their lives about who they will be as adults, and the most important decision as to whether they will carry the tenets of their religion into adulthood. Our culture is working overtime to tear them down. Let us raise the standard of the Guidon group to provide an opportunity for our young men and women to continue to seek God in fellowship in a fallen world!

Why start a Guidon program?

- This is a co-ed college age program for young men and women interested in outdoor adventure.
- The program can also be community based, like at a local church.
- To provide a platform where young Christian men and women can hold each other to a “higher” Christian standard and purity in a world where those virtues are not that common.
- To provide an opportunity to lead, conduct organized meetings, and develop leadership skills, while focusing on the development of future godly men and women in our families, communities, and our country.
- A weekly opportunity to engage in Bible Study.

These are some examples of outdoor activities that a Guidon Unit can choose to participate in:

- Backpacking in the Grand Tetons
- Camping in Great Smoky Mtn
- Canoeing in MN BWCA
- Float Plane / Backpacking Excursion in AK
- White Water Rafting
- Scuba Driving
- Community Service Projects
- Community Events
- Trip to Washington D.C.
- Camping at a State Park
- Shooting Sports
- Caving

- Deep Sea Fishing
- Mission Trips:
- Church Construction in Jamaica
- Work in Orphanage
- Climbing and Rappelling
- Snow Skiing /Boarding

All Guidon activities must comply with Trail Life USA guidelines found in the Health and Safety Guide as well as the Guidon overnight policy. As young adults that conduct and manage their own meetings, Members will have the freedom to organize which activities best suit the group, with approval of the Guidon Coach. To quote Eleanor Roosevelt, *“With Great Freedom Comes Great Responsibility.”*

Some examples of specific topics may include...

Exploring Your Faith

Avoiding Temptations
 Bible Study – Hermeneutics
 Biblical Application to Daily Life
 Biblical Worldview
 Character of God
 Christian Fellowship
 Church Leadership
 Effective Prayer
 Foundation in Christ
 Fruit of the Spirit
 Gifts of the Spirit
 How to Discuss Controversial Subjects
 How to Know God’s Will
 How to Share Your Faith
 Mentorship – Biblical Guidance
 Salvation
 Spiritual Goals
 Tenants of Faith
 Tithing

Leadership Concepts

Biblical Leadership
 Developing a Healthy Lifestyle
 How to Lead a Bible Study
 Plan a Godly Social Event
 Plan an Adventure

Life skills

Automotive
 Biblical Time Management
 Budgeting
 Choosing a Career
 Choosing Friends
 Communication Skills
 Consumer Education
 Cooking
 Critical Thinking
 First Aid
 Goal Setting
 How to Make a Major Purchase
 Job Interview
 Physical Fitness
 Setting Boundaries
 Public Speaking
 Training Others
 Water Sports

Relating to Opposite Gender

Biblical Love
 Biblical Standards of Behavior
 Characteristics of Godly Wives and Husbands
 Choosing or Not Choosing a Mate
 Developing Healthy Relationships
 How to Engage Others in Biblical Thinking

...and others suggested by the Charter Organization or Troop Ministry Liaison.

What are the requirements of membership?

- Christian men and women ages 18 – 25, who register as adult leaders in a Trail Life USA Troop, and operate as young adults within a Guidon Unit of a Trail Life USA Troop.
- Members must sign the [Trail Life USA’s Statement of Faith and Values](#) and adhere to and abide by those values.

- Once the initial Troop has been chartered and the Guidon Unit leadership positions are assigned per the organizational chart (below), the Guidon Unit should choose a nomination process for future membership. New members, known as recruits are nominated by an existing Guidon Member, Coach, or Trail Guide.
 - Coach: An older adult male (26+ years old) that is a representative of the Charter Organization and serves to oversee and provide insight as needed to the younger adults in the Guidon Unit.
 - Trail Guide: One or more additional male or female older adults (26+ years old) that act in a similar capacity as the Guidon Coach.
 - President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary: Guidon young adult Members (age 18-25) serve in the leadership roles in their own Guidon Unit.
 - Members: Young Christian men and women ages 18 to 25 years old that have been accepted as members according to the membership criteria established by the local Guidon Unit.
 - Recruits: Potential new Members serving in a sort of probationary period during which their participation in the Guidon group is considered and accepted by the Guidon Unit.
- If the Guidon group is a stand-alone unit (i.e., not part of a K-12 Trail Life USA Troop), then it will need to also have a qualified Charter Organization and the 5 positions required to Charter a Trail Life USA Troop, with the following clarifications:
 - The *Troop Ministry Liaison* is still a required position, and if he is a male he can also serve as the *Troop Chaplain*.
 - The *Troopmaster* and Guidon Coach roles can be filled by the same person, and should be a male representative of the Church.
 - The *Committee Chair* and *Treasurer* can also serve as the Guidon Trail Guides and can be filled by males or females age 26 and older.
- The Unit may set forth a time period in the Unit's by-laws during which Recruits are evaluated to become members. This nomination process protects the Guidon Unit's primary purpose, which is to unite a group of Christian young men and women that stand accountable to each other for their Christian walk. The system allows evaluation of potential members as like-minded Christian young men and women to fellowship together as they enjoy community, high adventure, and travel opportunities.
- The Guidon Unit is chartered by a local church
 - For Members on a college campus, this would encourage involvement in a local church. Although we would encourage our college aged youth to attend regular Church services, we understand that college youth often do not wake up early enough on the weekends to attend Church as hoped. The Guidon Unit provides a weekly focus on biblical study which will help keep young adults centered in their walk with Jesus.
 - Each Unit has a male Guidon Coach and one or more Trail Guide(s) approved by the Chartering Organization and Trail Life USA to provide oversight and mentoring to the Members. Trail Guides are required to be co-ed if the Guidon unit is co-ed.

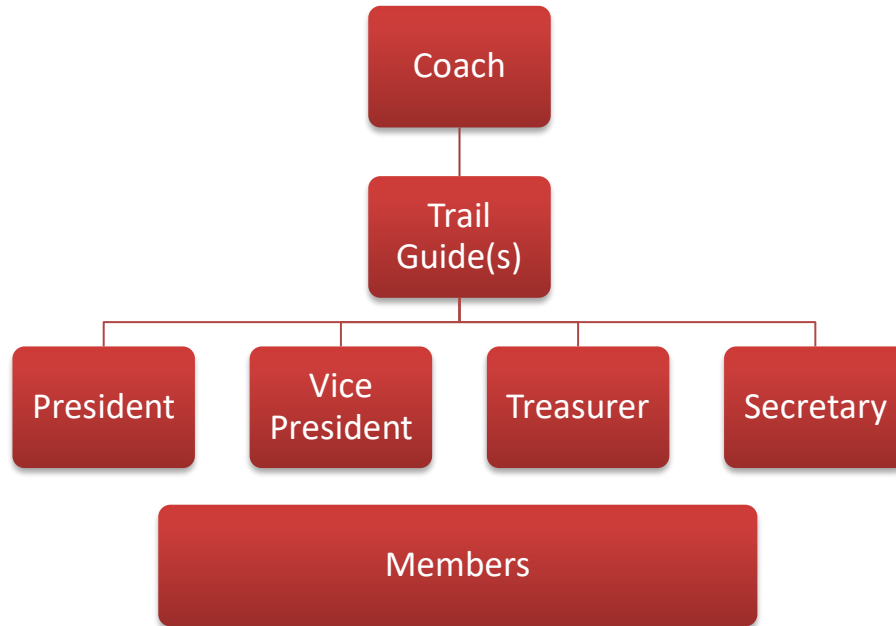
Who can start a Guidon Program and what is the chartering process?

- An existing Trail Life USA Troop
- A church
- Other Christian Organizations
- Consistent with the charter policy of Trail Life USA, any 501c3 with a Christian statement of faith in their articles of incorporation/bylaws. This could be a Christian College or University.

How can we start a Guidon unit with Trail Life USA?

- Visit <https://www.trailifeusa.com/start-a-troop/> to charter a new Troop.
- If already chartered, you can register new Guidon members using the normal registration process. Select the Guidon Member (18-25) or Guidon Coach (26+) leader position. Or add it to a current registered member's position in their profile on Trail Life Connect.

What does the unit structure look like?



What does the Guidon Unit meeting look like?

- Gathering time activity
- Opening (including prayer)
- Bible Study – the Guidon group has flexibility to determine their own bible study topic, or they can use study materials provided by other Christian ministries
- Mentorship – discussion of sin issues that the group needs to deal with in the World and popular culture
- Food – even if they split a giant bag of chips – there has to be food. Christians will break bread together!
- Activity planning – the Guidon Group should plan a monthly event of some type, whether it be an evening event, a day event, or a weekend or extended travel event. Try to plan one or two big events each year around school schedules.
- Skill Session or activity period – could practice a camping skill or just do a fun group activity.
- Closing with prayer especially focused for members that need lifting up.

The example above is flexible, based on the needs of the Guidon unit. Outdoor activities, service projects, and outreach events would differ somewhat based on the nature of the planned event. A partial list of possible program content might include the following broad categories....

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|------------------|---------------------------------|
| ➤ Accountability | ➤ Purity |
| ➤ Faith | ➤ Responsibility |
| ➤ Fun | ➤ How to plan a Service project |

What about Ranks and Awards?

As the TLUSA program moves from attainment of *ranks* in Navigators to achieving *awards* in Adventurers, we envision that *Guidons will require no ranks or awards at this time*. However, Guidon Members could create their own special awards if they wish. Some examples might be recognitions for accomplishment such as a long hike, etc.

What about Standards of Conduct?

Given that the Guidon Program is a Christian program, Guidon members will be expected to adhere to Christian values while participating in organizational activities. Membership *requires* an agreement to adhere to the following standards.

- Illegal drugs and any other substances prohibited by the Charter Organization are not allowed at Guidon activities.
- Sleeping arrangements are segregated by gender. The only exception is for those who are cohabitating with their own spouse. All others may not share the same sleeping quarters with the married couple unless they are family.
- When camping, tents will be arranged by gender and at least one tent distance between opposite sexes.
- If bathroom facilities are not available, gender-specific latrine areas will be created and maintained.
- No public displays of affection (kissing or hugging).
- The Trail Life USA buddy system will apply with Guidons, defined as groups of three or more.
- Clothing choices will be governed by the Charter Organization's standards, the intent being that clothing is both appropriate to the planned activities and modest.
- Respect and consideration should guide all conduct decisions.
- The Guidon Event Leader will establish quiet times appropriate to the event/venue.
- Campfires must have a designated fireman responsible for tending and extinguishing the fire. A bucket of water and a shovel must be present at campfire while fire is burning.

What does it mean that this is a “pilot program?”

Being a pilot program means that we would like to see if our membership finds this useful as a ministry tool in their Charter Organization, how they are using the program to meet their goals and what recommendations they have as we move toward full approval in the future. Full resources are not yet developed for Troops who wish to implement this program at this time and will be developed after analyzing what would be helpful based on feedback received. Thank you in advance for helping with this process!

Communications

- A national blog to facilitate discussion of program and activities ideas. This may give rise to Area, Regional and National events or gatherings for Guidon members.
- An informal list of life resources be developed and made available through Trail Life Connect. This should be considered by the TML as a possible list of resources. It might include life topics such as the idea list that appears earlier in this document.

Possibly to be developed:

- Guidon Insignia / logo
- Guidon Uniform
 - Polo shirt with “Guidon” name and logo on L or R sleeve.
 - Logo near the same color as shirt. If charcoal gray, logo a lighter gray. Blue a lighter blue.
 - The intent is that Member would wear their polo anywhere
- Manuals and Forms - to be downloadable from Trail Life USA website (no cost or low cost)
 - Initial manuals should be developed with maximum simplicity in mind

- A handbook for Guidon Members would be useful as the program develops.
- Charter Organization / Coaches guides
- Guidon Program Guide including:
 - Statement of Faith
 - By-Laws Section for Unit developed By-laws
 - Overnight policy

Feedback

Please tell us if you are blazing a trail with Guidon in your area! Email Program@TrailLifeUSA.com and we will notify you of any ongoing resources being developed.