



## **The Lutheran Pioneer Ministries**

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Thank you for taking time from your busy schedule to serve as a volunteer in the Lutheran Pioneer program of youth ministry. This program for boys, established in 1951, has continued to serve the Lord for almost 60 years. During that time we have been blessed with the opportunity to touch the hearts of well over 75,000 boys, parents and men and women volunteers. We praise and thank our Lord for that opportunity and pray that He will continue to guide us as we seek to help our boys “put God’s Word into action” as they travel the “Godly road to Christian adulthood.”

Congregations that participate in the Lutheran Pioneer Ministry are chartered and called Trains (we needed to call them something rather than just group and Train relates to our heritage). Trains are assigned a Train number that is theirs from then on. Should the program become dormant for a time and then reactivate the same Train number is used as before. Membership in the Lutheran Pioneer Ministry involves a base fee for each congregation involved. That fee is the same for each group. In some areas congregations can choose to join together to form a Train. In that case the base fee is slightly higher depending on the number of congregations involved. More information on the base fee and fees for each individual program are explained in other materials available on-line or from the Lutheran Pioneer office @ 262-767-9787 or [office@lutheranpioneers.org](mailto:office@lutheranpioneers.org)

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We have a program that is constantly changing, updating and developing new ideas and methods while continuing to remain true to our main purpose of sharing the wonderful Gospel message of salvation. This article explains the various parts of our program currently in use or planned for the future.

As society has changed so have the needs and situations of our many congregations. For that reason we have begun to offer new programs that may better serve the ministry plans of a variety of congregations. Your congregation can choose to use any or all of the various programs. Fees are based on which programs you use rather than on the number of boys and/or adults involved. Following is an explanation of what we now offer or are developing for future use:

## Buckaroos (Grades K-2)



This program for boys in grades K-2 is hands-on and activity based. First developed in the late 1960's it has grown to become almost half of our membership at this time. The program gives boys an opportunity to begin developing leadership and team skills as they work with other boys. The program lays the ground work for later learning of useful life skills that will benefit the boys as they serve their Lord out of thankfulness for all he has done.

Topics include:

God's Wonderful Creation  
Citizenship  
Basic Outdoor Skills such as  
    Directions  
    Maps  
    Basic Knots  
    Basic Measuring

Basic Beginner First Aid  
Fire Safety  
Manners  
Basic Non-electric Tool Safety  
Animals  
Personal Cleanliness  
Respect for Others.

Materials, ideas, plans and instruction guidelines are provided for volunteers as they work with the program.

A simple uniform of t-shirt or polo shirt along with a neckerchief is available. Also available are emblems and certificates marking advancement through the program and recognition of effort.

## Boy Pioneers (Grades 3-8)



When one thinks of Lutheran Pioneers in the past this is the program that often comes to mind. It was our initial program founded in 1951 and continues to be widely used by many congregations today. There are 6 main units of study containing a total of 26 sub topics of instruction. The Main Units and Sub Topics are:

God's Wonderful Creation  
    Environmental Awareness  
    Recycling  
Christian Leadership and Citizenship  
    Lutheran Pioneer organization  
    Church Structure  
    Citizenship (for your country)  
    Service  
Camping  
    Knots  
    Compass  
    Mapping  
    Measuring  
    Firebuilding  
    Camp Tools  
    Camp Cooking  
    Camping Sites and Equipment  
    Hiking and Backpacking  
    Canoeing

- First Aid
- Safety
  - Bicycle Safety
  - Fire Safety
  - Water Safety
- Skills for Independent Living
  - Personal Cleanliness
  - Clothing
  - Cooking in the Home
  - Home Repairs and Carpentry
  - Budgeting
  - Etiquette

Additional topics are also offered as time and interest is available. Materials, ideas, plans and instruction guidelines are provided for volunteers as they work with the program.

Boys move through a series of 3 levels or ranks in the Boy Pioneer program. They begin as Recruits in the 3<sup>rd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> grades, become Campers in the 5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grades and then finish the program as Frontiersmen in the 7<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grades. Boys continuing in the program past 8<sup>th</sup> grade become Junior Leaders and may be part of a Trooper program if one exists in their area.

A variety of uniform options are available from a formal uniform shirt with a neckerchief or ascot to a polo shirt or t-shirt with the neckerchief. Emblems and certificates are available to show progression through the program and recognition of efforts.

## Adventures in Christian Living (Grades 3-8)



This program is one of our new efforts to meet needs of different congregations. We hope to have it fully functional by the end of 2010. Currently some materials are available and new ones are being developed.

Many of the topics in the Boy Pioneer program are also offered in the AICL program but in a different format. Additional topics are being developed and made available. Plans call for materials on the following subjects:

- |             |             |                           |
|-------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| Photography | Weather     | Christian Decision Making |
| Archery     | Evangelism  | Cooking/Grilling          |
| Gardening   | Stewardship | Lawn Mower Safety         |
| Geocaching  | Astronomy   | Small Engine              |
|             |             | And many more             |

The materials are arranged in a flexible format and set up for two different groups; 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> grade and 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Trains can pick and choose topics to meet the interests of the boys and availability of volunteers. All can do one topic or if enough help is available a variety of topics allowing the boys some choice can be provided.

T-shirts and polo shirts will be available for use by Trains choosing the AICL program. Certificates are being developed to recognize efforts. Currently there are no plans for emblems but since the program is quite new that may change.

## Faith Full Fathers (Fathers and Sons in Grades 3 and up)



This program is in the early development stage and how quickly it becomes available will depend on funding and staffing. We are looking for congregations that would be interested in helping us develop the program and serve as a trial group for materials and activities.

The Faith Full Fathers program is a loosely structured program that seeks to help fathers develop a strong relationship with their children. This is done through 3 areas in the program.

1. Weekly or oftener e-mail messages that provide tips on being a better dad and husband. This is done through a subscription (at no additional cost besides the program cost). The tips are short items with options for more detailed articles and suggestions for topics for fathers to use in talking with their children.
2. The second area is regular (monthly or oftener) father/son breakfasts. These gatherings are meant to be about 45 minutes to one hour in length. A light breakfast is served, a topic is presented and time is given for discussion between dads and their children.
3. A final area is special father/son activities. These may involve joining with others at an All Pro Dad's Day at an NFL team's facility. Another possibility would be a father/son weekend retreat. Other activities might include some special service project, participation in a Pine Car Derby, a field trip to a unique location, a day long bike ride or whatever else might be suggested by the group.

Program guidelines and Christ-centered materials will be developed to help groups in setting up and conducting local program. The Faith Full Fathers program is a great tool to reach out into your community. All fathers can benefit from being involved whether they are members of your congregation or not. Groups are encouraged to invite friends, neighbors and relatives to join them in the program.

While there is no real uniform, t-shirts and polo shirts will be made available for groups to use in developing a feeling of belonging and being part of a group.

## Troopers (High School age)



Troopers has been or currently is a part of some Lutheran Pioneer Trains and Districts. However it has not been used to the extent it can. We plan to expand the program and provide materials that will help local Trains and Districts establish groups.

The benefits of a Trooper program include the opportunity for high school age boys to be a part of a group that carries out service projects, develops leadership skills, develops communication skills, shares information about various careers and develops teamwork. The program can also provide an

opportunity to participate in some unique activities such as rafting trips, cave exploration, extended bike trips, backpacking trips and canoe trips, visits to businesses and industries, visits to potential higher education schools and a wide variety of others.

Troopers can also help out at local Trains as they conduct their programs.

## **Adventure Activities (Participation grades vary depending on the activity)**

Lutheran Pioneers has developed and conducts a variety of activities open to participants of any of our programs and to their friends, neighbors and relatives. Currently there are 5 activities being regularly conducted and several others that are on hiatus or dormant for now. Following is an overview of the various activities:

### Pine Car Derby

This is a one day activity currently held in the spring of the year. Local groups can participate in the program by building the Pine Car racers from kits purchased from Lutheran Pioneers. The cars are then raced at a local race. Various Districts and Regions of our program conduct District races. Boys who finish in the top levels of those races move on to the International Pine Car Derby. In Districts where there is not race, individual Trains are able to send cars to the International Derby to participate. Boys are able to participate in either speed or craft competition at the International level. At local and District levels they often compete in both categories. Trophies and ribbons are awarded at the International level. Boys do not need to be present to participate. Cars may be sent to the race if it isn't possible for the boy to attend.



### Camp LP



Camp LP is a week long resident camp for boys who have completed 3<sup>rd</sup> grade or higher. A volunteer camp staff instructs the boys in a variety of topics and provides a variety of activities during the week. Boys can choose topics that are of interest to them. Each day includes Bible Study time. A kitchen staff provides meals. Boys sleep in cabins except for one overnight off sight activity (bike trip, canoe trip, hiking trip or campout). Site of the camp varies but is generally in the upper Midwest.

### Voyageur Canoe Trip

This is a week long canoe trip in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area of northern Minnesota. Participants need to be able to paddle a canoe for longer periods of time, carry a pack on portages and help out with cooking meals and setting up camp sites. Generally boys in 8<sup>th</sup> grade and older can participate.



### Ranger Backpacking Trip



The Ranger Trip is conducted in the odd number years and alternates between two locations (San Juan Mountains of Colorado and Paria Canyon of Arizona and Utah.) Participants must be able to hike the distances involved carrying their equipment in a backpack. Generally boys need to be 15 or older to participate.

## Bike Trip



This activity currently is a week-long ride across southern Wisconsin. Participants provide their own bikes. They stay in churches or school along the way, prepare their meals as a group and ride about 40+ miles per day. To participate a boy must be able to bike the distances involved. Generally they will need to be in 8<sup>th</sup> grade or older.

## ABOGIALC Canoe Trip (Currently on hiatus)

The ABOGIALC trip is not currently being conducted. It is possible that in the future we may once again offer this activity. The weekend trip involves traveling one of several larger rivers in a 24-30 foot voyageur style canoe. 12-16 participants are in each canoe along with their gear.



## Ridgewalker Backpacking Trip



This week-long activity takes place on the Appalachian Trail of Eastern United States. We currently are not conducting the trip but the possibility exists for it to once again become an activity. In the past the group has traveled through Pennsylvania, Maryland, West Virginia and Virginia. Participants must be able to carry their personal items in a backpack while hiking the distance involved. In general boys need to have completed 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

## Royale Hiker Backpacking Trip

The Royale Hiker Trip has not been conducted for some time. In the past it was a week-long trip across Isle Royale in Lake Superior. The group traveled to the island by seaplane and returned by boat after transversing the island. Participants must be able to carry all their equipment in a backpack and help with the cooking and camp site chores. In general, the trip was open to boys who had completed 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

## **Summary**

Based on the information supplied in this section you should discuss what programs would work best for your congregation. Your decision will depend on available volunteers, interest and commitment of the boys and their parents and what fits your congregation and community best. Keep in mind that your Lutheran Pioneer programs can serve as an outreach into your community much the same as your Vacation Bible School and Sunday School do. In fact, we encourage you to use the programs, especially the "Faith Full Fathers" program, in that way. It is the main reason we set our fees in the manner we have. We do not want "numbers" to be a deterrent to the program usage.