

Voyageurs Lutheran Ministry provides opportunities for Christ-centered spiritual growth, leadership development, and outreach in God's great northwoods!

## Important Information about Your Trip

### Health and Safety

Health and safety are top priorities at Voyageurs Lutheran Ministry. Your guide is carefully chosen and undergoes a vigorous three-week training session before leading a canoe trip. All guides are certified in remote first aid, water safety, and CPR. By filling out your Health History Forms and mailing them in, we are better prepared to take care of your group during your trip.

It is important to note that participants will be challenged physically within their own limits and capabilities. Carrying canoes, lifting backpacks, and paddling for extended periods of time are regular occurrences on a Voyageurs Canoe Country trip. Be realistic when selecting a trip type for your group.

Voyageurs Lutheran Ministry takes every reasonable precaution for the safety and enjoyment of every person on a Voyageurs Canoe Country trip. There are, however, inherent dangers, which arise due to a combination of factors associated with canoe trips. Each participant should exercise caution and care for their own safety and the safety of others during the trip.

### Insurance

VLM carries accident/injury insurance. This insurance is a modest secondary insurer policy, which may help cover expenses your insurance company does not cover if an injury occurs while participating in a canoe trip with VLM. Each participant is expected to be covered by a primary insurance policy of their own, or through your organization.

### Swim Check

All canoe trip participants will take part in a simple swim check after arriving at Camp Vermilion and prior to leaving for your trip. Canoe trip participants will be asked to swim approximately 150 feet (using a stroke of his or her choice in waist- to neck-deep water using as much time as he or she needs) and tread water for 2 minutes. Swim checks are important for the guide to understand the swimming abilities of trip participants for purposes of supervision and emergency preparedness.

Swimming in lakes and other bodies of water may give rise to certain risks because of unknown surface or subsurface conditions. For their safety, all trip participants must exercise caution when swimming, and at all times they must comply with the swimming safety rules provided by the guide.



# Voyageurs Canoe Country

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**All participants are required to wear a Personal Flotation Device (PFD) while swimming, regardless of swimming ability. PFDs are provided by Camp Vermilion.**

## What to Expect from a Trip with Voyageurs Canoe Country

*Below is a short narrative about a typical day in Canoe Country. This itinerary is fairly typical for the Boundary Waters Classic trip type. Read it for your enjoyment or to get a feel for the fun you will be experiencing this summer!*

Sunrise: Wake up! No clocks or alarms allowed out here, we sleep, eat, and travel with the sun. Today we have a fair distance to paddle and some great sights to see. Plus, the earlier we get moving the greater the likelihood that we will see some wildlife, like a moose or deer. Today, our guide woke us up for an early morning devotional. I didn't want to get up at first, but after watching the sunrise, listening to a story about faith and wilderness, I'm feeling thankful for the way Christ is working through this place to bring our group closer together.

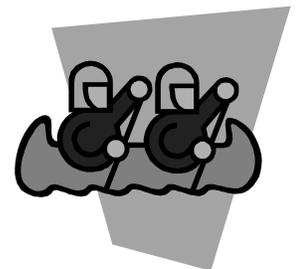


Breakfast: This morning it's pancakes. We were lucky enough to come during the peak of blueberry season, so this breakfast is extra special. For the breakfasts later in the week, our group chose oatmeal and something called "Moose Munch" (our guide assured us it wasn't made with real moose). After breakfast we clean our dishes, pack up camp, and get into our canoes for another beautiful day of paddling.

Mid-Morning: After a few hours of paddling and a couple of portages we stop for a mid-morning snack. The last portage we crossed was nearly a quarter-mile long. I chose to carry a canoe, and while it was heavy, I made it across with only one stop. My group is getting pretty good at portaging. We started off pretty rocky yesterday, but by now, each one of us knows what to carry and how to help each other out. We're all thankful for leaving extra clothing and unnecessary stuff back at camp or else we'd be carrying all of it across these portages. The snack we're eating is a special trail mix, the camp calls it 'Gorp.' They've added extra dried fruit for taste, which makes it better than the stuff we buy back home.

Lunch: The rest of the morning has gone by quickly. A small rainstorm came up just as we were pulling up to a campsite for lunch. We grabbed our raincoats and helped our guide put up a tarp for protection. I've never seen anyone tie knots the way she can! The rain looks like it will pass quickly though. For lunch, we're eating hearty crackers with peanut butter and jelly.

Afternoon: We've just pulled up to a waterfall and it is an incredible sight to see. We left our canoes a ways back and followed our guide up to the falls to get some pictures. The roaring is loud but there is something graceful in that sound. In a few minutes, our guide says she's going to lead us in a Bible Study right next to the falls. Later this week she's bringing us to a large rock with ancient Native American paintings still on it. I can't wait!



Supper: We pitched camp and everyone helped out. Now we're waiting for our guide to finish dinner: a pot of warm chicken, rice and vegetables. Last night we had steak! She says she's even going to make a camp specialty for dessert: Scrambled Brownies. The sun is setting and we're all pretty tired from a long day of paddling, so I think it's going to be an early night for most of the group. I'm going to stay up though and see if the northern lights come out. You wouldn't believe the stars up here!



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## Bible Study

Voyageurs Canoe Country uses the *Portage Bible Study Method*. It differs from those Bible studies that happen at our main camp and day camp sites. During trips into the Boundary Waters it is hard to carve out a large block of time for a Bible Study. It is even harder to set a regular time to “have” Bible Study. Because of this challenge, the method used on the water is one that allows for flexibility of time and schedule. It is based on the dynamics of small group development. Though the daily texts mirror the onsite theme, the method allows for the group to go where they need to, rather than to stick to a curriculum. It is rooted in the Lutheran experience of the Word and still allows for the individual gifts and talents of the guide to flourish.

At Voyageurs we believe that a structure to hear and discuss the Word of God is necessary so that staff members have guidance in how to shape “Life –Together” with their campers in the name of Christ. *The goal of this method is to create opportunities for conversation and faith exploration in a Lutheran Christian context.*

### 2018 Theme- Go and Do Likewise

Rules. Our lives and world are full of rules to follow – do this, don’t do that. When it comes to our faith, God also put some rules in place for people to follow. People worked hard to live by those rules, or commands, and even implemented other rules, perhaps as a way to help interpret the original 10 and make them easier to keep. But more rules doesn’t always make things easier. And then Jesus gave us new rules to follow and showed us a simpler way-love.

Laws and rules are good things as they help us learn how to live with others. But sometimes those in charge of setting or enforcing the rules can go too far and cause the people who have to live under the rules to struggle and never quite be good enough. Jesus came and challenged that thinking. God’s love was for everyone, not just those who lived “the right way”.

Similarly, Martin Luther, who spent a lifetime studying theology and the Bible, came across two verses that made him challenge church practices. Luther took on the challenge of helping people hear the message of love and grace that Jesus taught while going against some of “rules” the established church was implementing.

After learning about laws and rules, and how Jesus and Martin Luther challenged those rules when they prevent people from experiencing God, it’s our turn. What will we do to ensure that everyone can hear that God loves them? Go and do likewise. It sounds so easy and yet we all find ways to not do it. That is our challenge – to truly love our neighbor, all of our neighbors, and help them to experience God’s love. 2018 daily theme verses:

*God’s Rules—Law and Gospel (Exodus 20:1-20, Matthew 22:34-40)*

*Love Rules—Jesus gets to the point (John 8:2-11, Matthew 12:9-14)*

*Grace Rules—Martin Luther refocuses (Matthew 4:12-17, Ephesians 2:4-10)*

*“Road” Rules—Putting it into action (Matthew 19:16-22, 25:14-30, 28:16-20)*

*God Rules—Go and Do Likewise (Luke 10:25-37)*



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## **Portage STEPS**

Moments when a guide engages the group in the Word of God are called **STEPS**. Like a portage, our faith journey is taken one step after another. There are moments when we are carrying heavy loads and look to others for support. There are also times during the portage that we may go back to help someone with their load. Both of these are needed to get the whole group (and all the equipment!) to the end of the portage. While traveling with a Canoe Country group, the Voyageurs will take steps together as they explore the Word of God.

### Each STEP of the portage Bible Study is comprised of the following:

- |              |  |
|--------------|--|
| Scripture    | Each day has a defined “Daily Word” that becomes the base for all of our <b>STEPS</b> . These verses correlate with the Summer Theme for Voyageurs Lutheran Ministry. In addition to this theme verse, other Bible verses may be added.  |
| Travel       | The <b>Portage Bible Study</b> is mobile. It is designed to be lightweight, flexible, and dependable. Our participants have chosen our programs because we are Lutheran. If we don’t have time for Bible study, or don’t make it a priority, they might as well sign up to travel with any number of outfitters in the Boundary Waters. Bible study is required equipment. The Word goes with us throughout the week. Reading the Bible during our adventures at Voyageurs helps the campers continue to explore the Word when they return home. Carry your Bible with you. Review and have an understanding of the background of the selected texts, try to grasp what the basics of Lutheran Theology are and know the objectives of the day. Being able to relate these ideas into your daily adventures is key to the understanding of the theme. Being able to search for and use other scriptures for those “un-planned” discussions also allows the campers to become familiar with their Bible. Be open to the members of the group suggesting other scriptures. |
| Experience   | The group will experience a lot during their trip into the BWCA. Some may be in the wilderness for the first time and some may be traveling back to their favorite place. Try to refer to the daily scripture often as you go through the day. Let the paddlers compare the scripture to the events of the day. Compare that to previous experiences from home, school or church. And finally, reflect on how that compares to how we are called to live together in Christ.   |
| Proclamation | Share a personal story, anecdote, or life event that helped you in your faith life and relates to the day’s Biblical theme. Say what you believe, what Lutherans believe, and help the campers struggle with what they believe. Meet the campers where they are in their faith journey and help them live the Word in their daily lives.   |



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## Portage Bible Study Method

### **Morning Mai** 3- 5 Min.

“Grant me, O merciful God, that I might ardently love, prudently ponder, rightly acknowledge, and perfectly fulfill all that is pleasing to you, for the praise and glory of your name.”– St. Thomas Aquinas

Reading the daily Word with the travelers before the canoes leave for the day. After they break camp and the canoes are packed and ready, one of the group will read the assigned scripture for the day. Though there may be some conversation and reflection soon after the Word is read, the goal is simply to read the scripture. The scripture becomes the “lobstick” or landmark for our travels during the day.

**Mai** – Lobstick; pine or spruce with lower branches trimmed away, as landmark.

### **Pose** 10 Min.

“What I wear is pants, what I do is live, what I pray is breath.”  
– Thomas Merton

A Pose is the introduction and practice of praying a specific way throughout the day. The Pose can be done anytime during the day; while resting at the end of a portage, during lunch, or while waiting out a windy part of the day. Try to introduce a new Portage Prayer each day of the trip. This allows each paddler to choose a way to pray that works for them. Prayer reveals God in the different segments of the day. Practicing prayer helps us see God in the different segments of our lives.

**Pose** – The length of a portage was computed by the Voyageurs in a characteristic way. The canoe and goods were carried about a third of a mile and put down, or pose, two or more trips often being required to transport all the load to this point. Then, without resting, the men shouldered their burdens, and went on to the next pose. A pose was not merely a resting place; it was also a temporary depot, and all the packs were brought to the first pose before any were carried to the second. This arrangement was designed as security against possible raids by the Indians. And so on until all the poses had been passed. Today they are measured in rods (16 ½ feet each) in the United States and in yards (3 feet) each in Canada.

### **Rubbaboo** 15-20 min.

Life can only be understood backwards, but it must be lived forwards.  
– Soren Kierkegaard

As the group is eating the last meal of the day at the campsite, it is common to spend some time reviewing the events of the day. The travelers will take this opportunity to “boil down” the day making sure to give all members of the group a chance to share. After the meal is over and cleaned up, relax – all of you have earned some time at the campsite. Set a time to gather just before dark to wrap up the day.

**Rubbaboo** – A boiled-up mixture of flour and pemmican.



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## **Wattape**

15-20 Min



As the sun begins to set, the group gathers one last time together to “Tie the Day Together”. Before it gets dark, the guide will ask a member of the group to read the daily Word again in addition to a selected quote or poem. After a time of silence, the group is asked to reflect on how the two passages connect with the events of the day that were shared earlier at the meal. End the conversation with prayer. After the prayer, those who want to head to bed early can, and those that want to continue the conversation around the campfire, can stay up to talk more.

**Wattape** – *The fine root of some coniferous tree, usually the spruce, was used in lieu of rope or thread to sew together the strips of bark in making canoes. (Note: “Watap Lake” in T65N, R1E, lying between Mountain and Rose Lakes. Obviously named after Wattape, although spelled differently.)*

### **Camp Vermilion Canteen**

A canteen (or camp store) will be available to Voyageurs Canoe Country participants for purchasing snacks, t-shirts and other camp memorabilia, before and after their trip. For budgeting purposes, we’ve included a short list of products and prices below.

- Pop/Candy/Ice Cream .....\$.25 to \$2.00
- Camp Vermilion souvenirs .....\$.50 to \$15.00
- T Shirts.....\$10.00-\$15.00
- Performance Shirts .....\$15.00-\$30.00
- Sweatshirts.....\$20.00-\$45.00
- Nalgene Water Bottles.....\$10.00
- Boundary Waters Maps .....\$8.00

### **VLM Mission Project**

Each year VLM, through the canteens at Camp Vermilion and Camp Hiawatha, emphasizes a special mission project, which all campers are invited to support with donations or transfer of unused canteen funds. This provides a broader way to support the broader ministry with our neighbors around the world. Designated charity details are posted in the canteen.



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## Suggested Packing List

Remember: If you pack it, we carry it. We have to portage between lakes. Pack lightly!

### Necessary Items:

- Necessary Personal Hygiene Items (Toothbrush, prescription medication, contact solution, feminine hygiene products etc.)
- 2 Shirts (short sleeve or tank-tops)
- 1 Long-Sleeve Shirt
- 1 Light Jacket/Fleece
- Sleeping Bag (Small enough to fit into a shared pack. Put in a waterproof bag or heavy-duty garbage bag.)
- Sleeping Pad (provides warmth and comfort. No large, bulky air mattresses please.)
- 2 Water Bottles at least 20 oz. each. (Nalgene's are for sale at camp store)
- 2 Pairs of Wool or Other Quick Dry Socks
- 2-3 Sets of Underwear (can substitute swimsuits)
- 1 Pair of Pants (No jeans or cotton; quick to dry is key. Zip-off pants or wind pants work great.)
- 1-2 Pair(s) of Shorts
- Raingear: 1 Jacket and 1 Pant OR 1 Jacket (Ponchos are not ideal.)
- Swimsuit- Please bring modest swimwear.
- Hat
- Sunglasses
- SPF Lip Balm
- Sunscreen

### Necessary Footwear:

Camp Vermilion has a 'Wet Foot' policy, which means that all participants must load and unload gear while their canoe is still floating in the water. **Because of this policy, one pair of each participant's shoes/sandals/boots are guaranteed to get wet.** For this reason, we strongly suggest bringing two pairs of shoes/sandals/boots: one "wet shoe" for daily travel and one "dry shoe" for walking around campsites. Additionally, all participants must wear wet shoes while swimming.

- Many combinations of boots/shoes/sandals work fine. Use the following information to choose what combination is best for you.
- Water shoes do not have good support or traction on land we do not suggest wearing them on trail.
- All sandals MUST strap securely to your foot (no 'flip-flops').
- Boots support ankles on rough terrain. Close-toed shoes help avoid injury from rocks and sticks. Sport sandals like Teva, Chaco, or Keen, dry quickly and can serve as wet and dry shoes, but don't protect as well.
- To avoid blisters and other foot problems, please break-in new footwear before coming to Camp Vermilion.

### Optional Items:

- Small Bible or New Testament
- Insect Repellent/Bug Bite Medication
- Gallon-sized Ziploc bags to pack clothing
- Camera
- Card Games or Book to Read
- Pocket Knife (blade must be less than 6 inches)
- Pen/Pencil and Journal/Notebook
- Small Flashlight or Headlamp
- Lightweight/Small Towel (Chamois/Sarongs)
- Winter Stocking Cap (Ideal for June & Aug. trips)
- Fishing Gear, All Tackle must fit in small fanny pack (Collapsible poles work best. No large Tackle Boxes, please). (See FAQ section for license info).

### For Base Camp Use at Camp Vermilion Before and After Trip:

- Clean Clothes
- Toiletries for shower
- Towel for shower, sauna
- Optional money for snacks/souvenirs

### \*\*\*What NOT to Bring on Trail\*\*\*:

- Jeans/denim (Will not dry when they get wet)
- Electronics (iPods, portable gaming devices, portable DVD players, radios, etc).
- Umbrellas
- Large Tackle Boxes/Bulky Bait Containers
- Cotton sweatshirts (Will not dry if they get wet)
- Glass or Metal containers
- Personal food like candy, beef jerky, etc. VLM provides more than enough food for the week.



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## Detailed explanation of clothing and gear to pack:

*Below is a more detailed explanation of some of the items on the Suggested Packing List. Your Voyageurs Canoe Country adventure will be an exciting time of challenge and growth. It is important that you are comfortable and ready for the experience that awaits you. Anyone with further questions is invited to contact Brett at 218-780-2696.*

**On a budget?** Check thrift stores or borrow gear from friends and family. Walmart and Target are expanding their “quick dry” clothing options as well. You don’t need name brand items. Just avoid cotton since it doesn’t dry as fast.

**Shirts:** Bring clothing that can get dirty – long-sleeved for night time and keeping the bugs off on portages and short-sleeved for warm weather. Quick dry is preferred. Look for clothing made of nylon, polyester, or other synthetics.

**Warm fleece jacket or heavier shirt:** Bring one of these for keeping warm on cold nights or mornings. A wool shirt would also work. Cotton sweatshirts are not ideal, since they are bulky and do not dry quickly.

**Rain gear:** Rain is all but a guarantee in the Boundary Waters. If your clothes get wet, they may not dry for the rest of the trip. Because of this, it is essential that you bring good rain gear. Also, if the wind is cold and you need to warm up, you can put on your fleece and wear your rain jacket over it to cut the wind. Keep this in mind when choosing rain gear to bring. You may want it to be large enough to allow for extra space. Ponchos do not work as well as jacket and pants sets.

**Swimsuit:** Bring one for swimming and make sure it is comfortable and modest. Some participants choose to wear their swimsuits all day, and thus bring two so they don’t have to put on a wet suit in the morning.

**Socks:** Bring two pairs of socks on the trip. Wool and synthetic are preferred as they will dry more quickly.

**Sleeping bag:** Ideally, you want one that is warm enough for cold nights and mornings, but light enough to portage. The most important feature, though, is size. “Stuff sack” sleeping bags work well and allow sleeping bags to compress.

**Waterproof bags:** Keeping your clothing dry is very important. Each participant shares one “Duluth Pack” with another person for all clothing, sleeping bags and pads. Duluth Packs work great for carrying, but are not waterproof. While Camp Vermilion provides a thick plastic liner for each pack, if your clothing and gear are not protected, they will get wet. Ziploc bags – large and small – work well for packing clothes and other items. A large garbage bag or two, a large Ziploc bag, or a “Dry Bag” would work for your sleeping bag.

**Water Bottle:** It is important to stay well hydrated on the trail, so a quality water bottle is a necessity. The camp store sells durable “Nalgene” water bottles if you would like to purchase one after you arrive at Camp Vermilion. We suggest having two water bottles while on trail.

**Hat/Sunglasses/Sunscreen:** The sun’s reflection from the water and aluminum canoes adds a lot to the potential for getting sunburned. PLEASE bring some form of protection from the sun.

**Fishing gear:** VLM welcomes fishing by participants. The fish can be a fun addition to the meals on trail. All campers over the age of 16 must have a current Minnesota fishing license. Licenses can be purchased from a number of places in Cook, MN. Anyone planning to purchase a Minnesota fishing license MUST have their social security number with them at the time of purchase. More information on Minnesota fishing regulations, including fees and types of permits available, can be found at [www.dnr.state.mn.us/licenses](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/licenses). We also ask that if you plan on fishing, please purchase your license prior to arriving at Camp Vermilion.



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## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Who provides transportation for my group to and from the entry points from Camp Vermilion?**

Responsibility for transporting your group and your personal gear rests with your group. Voyageurs Lutheran Ministry transports canoes, food and equipment packs, and VLM staff in camp vehicles. More details will be given upon arrival at Camp Vermilion. Transportation for your group is available on a limited basis for a fee. Please inform VLM on the mode of your transportation in your Trip Planning Questionnaire.

### **What time does my group need to arrive at Camp Vermilion?**

Orientation begins at 2:00 pm. As a courtesy to other groups, please be on time. If you are running late, please call Brett, Program Director at 218-780-2696 so VLM staff can adjust schedules as needed.

### **Do Group Leaders need to fill out Health Forms?**

Yes! All participants, regardless of age, must send a completed Health Form to Camp Vermilion. If the participant is below the age of 18, this form must be signed by a parent or legal guardian. A copy of the Health Form is included in this packet.

### **What about our group's permit?**

If you received a permit in the mail, it is only a place holder for your group. When you arrive at camp we will print the real permit and update the numbers on it. Each group leader will then sign the permit for their trip.

### **What is a Wet Foot Policy and why does Camp Vermilion suggest two pairs of shoes/boots/sandals?**

In the tradition of the voyageurs who handled their canoes carefully, our groups step into the water when entering and exiting their canoes to minimize canoe scrapes and damage. No weight will be put into a canoe while that canoe is on land. For this reason, two pairs of boots/shoes/sandals are necessary, one pair of "wet" shoes and one pair of "dry" shoes. See the Packing List for more information.

### **Members of my group want to fish. Is this OK? Is there anything more I should know?**

Camp Vermilion welcomes fishing by participants. As a courtesy to us, please mention on the Trip Planning Questionnaire if, and how many, campers would like to fish. This information will help us plan for your group. Additionally, be sure to read the information about fishing licenses in the Detailed Packing List section of this document or visit [www.dnr.state.mn.us/licenses](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/licenses).

### **Tell me about portaging and canoeing each day. What is "portaging" and what should I know about the packs we will be carrying?**

The average personal pack weighs less than 45 pounds (depending on how much gear you bring) and each pack contains the gear for two participants – this includes all clothing, personal items, sleeping bags and ground pads. As you can see, the lighter and smaller the gear, the better. The equipment and food packs weigh about 75 pounds each at the beginning of the week. We use aluminum Grumman and Alumacraft canoes, which are durable, but are heavy to carry - about 75 pounds. Typically, groups will paddle between 7 and 15 miles a day. Between lakes, groups will carry all gear across the portages (also called "portaging"). We try to carry no loose or hand-held items across portages in order to save time and energy.

### **I'm worried about the amount of gear I am bringing. Is all this stuff necessary?**

Good question! Below are some handy tips for minimizing the amount of gear you bring with you:

- Fancy, expensive gear is unnecessary.
- Comfort, not style is key.
- Share a bottle of sunscreen.
- A pair of shorts can double as a swimsuit bottom or vice versa.
- Share flashlights.
- Use layers of clothing (t-shirts, jacket) instead of a heavy sweatshirt or jacket.
- Share a tube of toothpaste.
- Use rolled up T Shirt/Fleece as pillow.
- Share Bibles.
- If you bring a towel, keep it small.