LA VIDA
AT GORDON COLLEGE

Expedition
Course Packet

Session Options
May Trip: current students only
Summer Sessions: incoming students only

Contact Information:

La Vida Center Office: Gordon College Campus 255 Grapevine Road Wenham, MA 01984 Phone: 978.867.4111 Email: lavida@gordon.edu	**Base Camp Office (after May 15):** P.O. Box 219 Lake Clear, NY 12945 Phone: 518.891.4188 Same email

EXPEDITION CHECKLIST

The La Vida Expedition registration form and all additional paperwork can be found on the Enroll Page of Gordon's website. Please complete all additional paperwork no later than one month prior to your Expedition start date.

The following due date chart also breaks down the forms needed for your Expedition.

CURRENT STUDENTS:

Items for Review	Due Date
☐ I am registered for PED 016 and it shows on my.gordon	November/December Registration Period
☐ I have completed the College Expedition Enrollment Form	November/December Registration Period
☐ I have had a physical with a doctor within 12 months of my Expedition. Note: La Vida has access to your medical forms through the Admissions Student Portal. If your physical is out of date, you will need to send us an updated form.	One month prior to the expedition
☐ I have filled out the Essential Eligibility Criteria Form (see below in this packet for the full explanation of criteria)	One month prior to the expedition
☐ I have completed the La Vida Expedition Release Forms, including a copy of the front and back of my insurance card	One month prior to the expedition
☐ I have submitted the Expedition Arrival and Departure Form online	One month prior to the expedition
☐ I have submitted the La Vida Expedition Food Form: Allergy and Dietary Needs Details online	One month prior to the expedition

INCOMING STUDENTS:

Items for Review	Due Date
☐ I have completed the College Expedition Enrollment Form	May 1 (or sign up as soon as you are accepted to Gordon)
☐ I have completed the Medical Requirement Form and Medical Questionnaire in my Admissions Student Portal (La Vida has access to these forms	One month prior to the expedition
☐ I have filled out the Essential Eligibility Criteria Form (see below in this packet for the full explanation of criteria)	One month prior to the expedition
☐ I have completed the La Vida Expedition Release Forms, including a copy of the front and back of my insurance card	One month prior to the expedition
☐ I have submitted the Expedition Arrival and Departure Form online	One month prior to the expedition
☐ I have submitted the La Vida Expedition Food Form: Allergy and Dietary Needs Details online	One month prior to the expedition

We realize that there is a lot of information in this packet, but please read everything carefully. There are a few things you must do to ensure you are registered and confirmed for this experience and to prepare for your Expedition.

CANCELLATION POLICY

All incoming students pay the First-Year Experience Fee before starting at Gordon. This fee includes the cost of doing Discovery or Expedition. Students who participate in Expedition might not get their first semester bill until after they have completed Expedition. Since most of the expenses are incurred in preparation for Expedition, the following graduated cancellation policy has been set:

- Dropping 60 or more days before the trip will not incur an additional charge.
- Dropping 30-59 days before the trip incurs a $50 late-drop fee in addition to the First-Year Experience Fee.
- Dropping 15-29 days before the trip incurs a $100 late-drop fee in addition to the First-Year Experience Fee.
- Failure to arrive for a confirmed space or dropping within 14 days of the trip incurs a $200 late-drop fee in addition to the First-Year Experience Fee.
- Students who withdraw from Expedition after it has started will incur a $300 withdrawal fee in addition to the First-Year Experience Fee.

If you are unable to go on the Expedition, please contact lavida@gordon.edu as soon as possible. You will need to fill out a course drop form, and you will incur additional charges as noted on the above policy.

GROUP ASSIGNMENTS AND TRIP START DATE

You will be notified of your specific group assignment (backpacking/canoeing) by email by two weeks before the trip begins. Please notify us if you need to know sooner to gather appropriate equipment. Turning in your paperwork on time will help in this process.

STORAGE (MAY AND AUGUST TRIP ONLY)

La Vida provides storage space on campus for any belongings that students need to store during the May and August Expedition. The storage location will be announced closer to your trip. All items being placed in the storage room should be labeled with your name. August students should also add your dorm room to the label. All items must be removed by the night you return from your Expedition.

MEETING TIMES AND ARRIVAL INFORMATION

(For the most up to date information on arrival, please view the **Expedition Arrival and Departure Form**)

Expedition Arrival Time

Students will check in with a La Vida staff member at 8 am on the Gordon College campus the first day of Expedition. An email with the location will be sent in the week prior to the trip. If you have arranged an alternate arrival plan, see options below. We will welcome the group, introduce the trip to students (and any parents who are there), pray together, and then depart.

Housing, Early Arrivals and Flight Information

Current students participating in May trip will be allowed to stay in their dorm until they depart for their Expedition. Please inform your RD of your departure date. Summer students can request housing at Gordon College for the night prior to their trip, at no charge. We will provide you with a sleeping bag for the night. Bring money for breakfast in the morning.

- Early Arrivals: All students who request overnight housing should try to arrive on campus between 6 pm and 7 pm the evening before the first day of the trip. You will receive check-in instructions in the week before your trip.

- Flights: Please book a flight that will arrive at Boston's Logan Airport **between 4 pm and 8 pm the evening before the first day of the trip.** A Gordon van will pick you up and bring you to campus. Airport pick-up instructions will be sent to those students closer to the trip once we finalize drivers. *Shuttle service is available ONLY from Boston's Logan Airport.* Please contact us with any questions about your flight before purchasing tickets as the dates for the trip are set and cannot change because you purchased the wrong arriving or departing flight.

Alternate Arrival Locations
Those who live closer to the La Vida Base Camp in New York can choose to report directly there. If you live in New Hampshire or Vermont along the driving route, you can choose to be picked up at one of the alternate locations listed below. We will be in touch with you before we depart to give you updated contact information for one of the drivers.

- **La Vida Base Camp in Lake Clear, NY:** please arrive between 3 pm and 4 pm on the first day.
- **Concord, NH:** 10 am at the Park and Ride off I-89 (at exit 2).
- **West Lebanon, NH:** 11:15 am at the Panera at 267 N. Plainfield Rd. near I-89 (at exit 20). The van stops here for a lunch break.
- **Richmond, VT:** 2:30 pm at the Park and Ride off I-89 (at exit 11). This is the final stop before the van gets on the Grand Isle ferry.

TRAVEL TO BASE CAMP

Pack all your personal clothing and equipment in a duffel bag, backpack or a labeled garbage bag that can be transported with you to the La Vida Base Camp in a van or trailer. Participants who are borrowing gear from La Vida will check it out at Base Camp and will have a chance to pack their things to be ready for their Expedition. Luggage not needed on Expedition will be stored in a designated location at Base Camp.

Please refer to the Adirondack Packing Guide for more details on what to pack.

Food Money
We recommend that you bring at least $25 cash or a credit card with you for snacks and meals on the way to and from Base Camp. Keep this with you during travel as your luggage will be packed away and not easily accessible during stops along the way. The first meal provided will be dinner at Base Camp. The last meal provided is lunch on the last day.

RETURN TO GORDON COLLEGE

Groups should reach the Gordon campus by 7:30 pm on the final day of the trip. You must inform La Vida via the online **Arrival and Departure form** if you will need to stay on campus that night.

Alternate Drop-off Locations
Those who live closer to the La Vida Base Camp in New York State can be picked up there at *11 am* on the final day of the trip. We typically get to Richmond around 1:30 pm, West Lebanon 3 pm and Concord 5 pm. Cell phones may be used once the caravan leaves base camp to communicate with parents on a more accurate drop-off time.

Return Flights (May and July Trips Only)
We will take a van to the airport at 8 am the following morning for students who need to fly home that day. The return time for trips is not flexible. Those who plan to fly out of Boston's Logan Airport should book a flight that leaves **after** 11 am. (We depart Gordon at 8 am) *Shuttle service is available ONLY to Boston's Logan Airport.*

PREPARING FOR YOUR TRIP

One of the best ways to prepare for your La Vida Expedition is to be in good physical condition. We recommend some walking, running, biking, sit-ups, push-ups and swimming before your trip. Expedition is designed to be challenging, so preparing ahead of time can be helpful.

Another way to prepare is to think about what you want to get out of your experience. Begin considering physical, social and spiritual goals for yourself, and how your group may help you achieve those goals. If you feel apprehensive about some aspects of your Expedition, you should also begin identifying just what you are apprehensive about, and how your group may be able to help you. Each participant will be asked to complete a goal-setting exercise at the beginning of their Expedition and will be part of the development of a group covenant which outlines how your group will encourage and support one another.

It is very powerful to identify a mentor for this experience. This should be someone with whom you can share your goals and apprehensions before the trip and then process the experience with afterward.

EXPEDITION MEALS

All meals are provided beginning with dinner at Base Camp in New York on the first day of Expedition and ending with lunch on the final day. Participants traveling back and forth between Base Camp and Gordon's campus should bring money for food on both travel days.

Food Philosophy
Meals are an essential part of every La Vida Expedition, serving as moments to give thanks to God for His goodness and provision. Shared meals build unity, deepen relationships, and remind us of our dependence on God and one another. Cooking, eating, and cleaning together provide practical opportunities to serve, love, and grow in community. Proper nutrition is vital for individuals' safety and optimal well-being. We want to take care of ourselves by consuming a proper diet and staying hydrated.

It is important to note that the cooking method on Expedition is an institutional/expedition-style cooking method, which is more efficient for large groups and for the Adirondack backcountry. This may vary significantly from methods utilized in thru-hiking, solo/small-group backpacking, or trips to other geographic areas. We gather as a group for three meals each day, with snacks rationed for daily use. The menu varies from trip to trip, but all meals are planned with the needs of the entire program in mind, including any dietary needs.

All participants should fill out the Allergy and Dietary Needs Form. Our staff have handled many allergies and can accommodate most food needs, although we cannot accommodate food preferences. If you have additional questions, please contact lavida@gordon.edu to discuss your food options. If you need to have a small supply of personal food for a medical or other reason, please also reach out to us for more information about what you can and cannot bring.

SOLO AND FASTING

The solo is a 2-day period towards the end of the trip where you will have the opportunity to practice the classic disciplines of solitude, simplicity and silence as well as fasting and prayer. It is a unique chance to step back from the normal distractions of life and evaluate what is important to you, set goals for the future and realize what you are thankful for in your life. Participants are placed approximately 150 feet from each other and given the space to read, journal and spend time in nature while under the close supervision of the Expedition trip leaders. Many students say this is the most impactful time of their experience.

One element of solo that adds into the experience is fasting. Most people, but not all, do fast on their solo unless they are diabetic, hypoglycemic, have an eating disorder, or are required to eat food with their medication. Your leaders will prepare, support and encourage you to challenge yourself in this experience. They will be checking on you a few times during the day. Fasting has a long history, especially in the church, and many others before you have chosen to try it. It is a chance to give up something so that you can grow in your faith. If you choose not to fast, food can be provided, or you can do a partial fast with a smaller amount of food. We strive for open and approachable conversation regarding solo, so please initiate a conversation with your leader if you need to make any of these modifications.

The solo experience is managed very closely by the leaders. All students are within a short walking distance of the leaders' campsite. Students are checked on a minimum of twice a day and are given water and any medications that need to be distributed. Students who are a little more anxious about the experience are placed closer in proximity to the main campsite. Students wear a whistle at all times in case of emergency and are given a strobe light to turn on if they have to blow their whistle in the middle of the night.

CAMPING AND WILDERNESS TRAVEL

You will be camping outdoors every night of the trip and canoeing or backpacking most days of Expedition. This means that you have chances to see the lakes and rivers of the Adirondack State Park, develop your canoeing and backpacking skills, set up tents at different sites and become efficient travelers. Groups travel approximately 5 miles a day; however, each itinerary is different.

You will canoe or backpack with all your gear as you travel to different campsites. This gear includes your personal gear as well as group gear: food, cooking utensils, camping equipment etc. The packs can way between 35-45 lbs initially but will get lighter throughout the trip as the food is a majority of the weight. Students should only carry 30% of their body weight, so the group will work together to distribute items as necessary.

Maintaining hygiene in the woods is easily attainable if you have the right supplies. We provide hand sanitizer and biodegradable hand soap for each group to keep their hands clean. Students are welcome to bring one travel size biodegradable soap as long as they follow Leave No Trace ethics. You can also bring unscented baby wipes. Once

used, these are considered trash and must be carried with you until you get to Base Camp where you can throw them away. Your leaders will review hygiene and LNT principles at the start of your trip.

CONTACT DURING THE EXPEDITION

You will not have access to communicate with family once you have arrived at La Vida's Base Camp. We encourage students to be fully invested in the experience and to remain present throughout all activities. Our philosophy of "Be Here Now" starts from the time you arrive at Base Camp to the time you depart and hopefully is implemented in your life after your Expedition.

Special Note to Parents: Likewise, the La Vida staff will not be sending regular updates to parents during Expedition, nor will we be able to deliver non-emergency related information to your son or daughter. Once your student arrives to Base Camp, our attention is 100% on them to ensure a seamless experience. We try to send out one email update towards the end of the trip but cannot always guarantee this. You can trust that your student is in good hands with our staff. Our program has had an impeccable safety record during our 50+ years of ministry, and although we recognize that this time apart can be difficult for both parents and students, we think this can one of the steps in establishing their independence and transitioning into the college experience.

If you need to reach your child in an emergency during the Expedition, please call the La Vida Base Camp at 518.891.4188. The La Vida support team members will hike into your child's group to deliver the message. They would likely have to hike out to call home.

Essential Eligibility Criteria

If viewing digitally, fill out your EEC form here.

We are so excited that you are considering a La Vida Expedition! Most Expedition participants have rarely, if ever, gone on a camping trip before and may find that this experience will stretch them. That opportunity for growth through challenge is exactly what makes Expedition so unique and powerful! With that being said, the location and activities of a La Vida Expedition are remote and exposed to outdoor elements. Due to the rigorous nature of the activities, we invite you to thoughtfully review the criteria below regarding various challenges associated with an Expedition:

The health and safety of our students and staff are a top priority, along with the educative quality of the program experience for all participants. The Essential Eligibility Criteria are applied to all students on an Expedition. If an applicant does not meet the specific criteria, La Vida may be able make some modifications to the Expedition only if they do not:

- Jeopardize the health and safety of the other program participants or staff
- Place an undue administrative or financial burden on La Vida
- Severely alter the programmatic goals and methods used

Requests for modifications to the Expedition must be discussed with La Vida staff at least **one month prior.** Modifications are not guaranteed; La Vida will work with the requestor to determine the feasibility of the request. A final plan must be reviewed and approved by La Vida. Requests that are sent in within a month of the Expedition start date are less likely to be approved given the challenges in making late modifications to the Expedition.

Each individual La Vida Expedition participant, and guardian, if participant is a minor, are responsible for reviewing the relevant Essential Eligibility Criteria below.

Gordon College Students Only: If La Vida is unable to modify the Expedition, the student will be invited to participate in the Discovery program.

General Eligibility Criteria for all La Vida Expeditions:

As you read the criteria below, consider your ability to meet these requirements from a physical, mental health, cognitive, and emotional perspective.

Participants should be able to meet the following requirements:

- Understand and follow verbal and visual instructions individually, and in a group setting.
- Comprehend hazards and safety concerns when explained by leaders and adhere to safety policies and procedures even when staff and trip leaders are not immediately present.
- Identify hazards posed by the environment (steep terrain, sun, cold, etc.) and other participants (fatigue, state of mind, etc.).
- Effectively communicate to others personal distress, injury or need for assistance.
- Stay properly hydrated and nourished, including drinking water regularly and eating food provided (bearing in mind food allergies are accommodated but food preferences are not). Understand hydration and nourishment are essential for maintaining safety and health on trip.
    - Food on trip is calculated and packed to maximize nourishment for each participant. Participants are expected to eat the food provided at every meal.
    - Each Expedition group carries water filtration devices to refill water bottles.
- Learn skills for self-care, including proper hygiene and use of clothing and equipment.
- Refrain from the use of alcohol, tobacco, controlled substances, and any misuse of prescription or over the counter drugs.
- If using prescription drugs, self-administer medications under staff supervision according to New York State Department of Health regulations.
- Contribute to a safe social and learning environment and maintain appropriate relationships with other group members and instructors.
- Refrain from harassment, bullying, and all other behavior that disrupts the learning of others or the

cohesion of the group.
- Abstain from cell phone use for the duration of the program.
    - La Vida staff carry communication devices for emergency situations but, otherwise, a La Vida Expedition is a cell phone-free program
- Wear a climbing harness, helmet and any other safety gear correctly after instructed.
- Live and function in an outdoor camp setting without access to electricity for up to 12 days.
    - No prior camping experience is expected nor necessary. This criterion is meant to address students who have medications or other medical interventions that require access to electricity.
- For participants bringing a personal medical device (i.e. glucose monitor, hearing aid): function in a wilderness environment, knowing it is at risk of water damage.

Backpacking Activities: Participants should be able to meet the following requirements:

- Walk continuously for up to 2 miles at a moderate pace (2 mph) over steep and uneven terrain unassisted while carrying a backpack weighing 30-50 pounds and then repeat following 5-15 minutes of rest (up to 9 miles total in one day).
- Not have immediate access to advanced medical care facilities for the duration of the backpacking portion of a program. Participants may be up to an 8-hour hike from definitive care.

Water Activities: Participants should be able to meet the following requirements (if you haven't done these activities before, you will receive training on them):

- In the event of a capsize, independently get out from under capsized canoe, remain face- up in water with personal floatation device, and identify, make progress to and ascend shoreline with or without instruction.
- Carry a canoe with another person (≈ 75lbs) over uneven terrain for up to 1.5 miles with periodic breaks.
- Get in and out of a boat from the shore or from the water independently or with a reasonable amount of assistance.
- Swim in water, while wearing a personal flotation device.

If you have any questions on these Essential Eligibility Criteria or about your ability to meet one or more criteria, please contact La Vida at LaVida@gordon.edu.

Hygiene Needs on La Vida

Hygiene can easily be maintained while in the woods for extended periods of time, so here are answers to our most frequently asked questions about all things related to hygiene!

Will we shower on Expedition?
Participants and leaders will not have access to showers or bathtubs throughout the trip. Hearing that you can't shower for 12 days can be intimidating! Keep reading for tips on how to stay clean while living in the woods for almost two weeks.

How do I stay clean?
For your safety and health, it is vital that you wash your hands with soap and water before preparing each meal and before and after you go to the bathroom. Here is a list of biodegradable and environmentally friendly products that we suggest for your backcountry expedition:

- Unscented, alcohol-based gel hand sanitizer
- Organic Pure Castile Liquid Soap (Baby Unscented) Dr. Bronner's
- Wilderness Wash–Sea to Summit
- Ez Wyp Biodegradable Non-Alcohol Wipes

If you plan to wash during the trip, you'll have to carry a bucket of water 150 feet off trail so that you do not leave any soap residue in the body of water. Everything brought into the woods, must be packed out, so we suggest bringing an extra Ziplock or two to carry personal trash with you throughout the trip. You can throw this away in trash bins at the La Vida Base Camp when you return from the woods.

How will we go to the bathroom?

The great outdoors is your bathroom! We'll teach you more details when you arrive, but basically, you are going 150 feet off trail to go to the bathroom. If you have to go poop, you will dig a hole (we provide the shovel!) that is at least 6 inches deep and then bury your waste and toilet paper in that hole.

Brushing teeth
We advise that every person brush their teeth twice a day and floss once a day. Neglecting to brush your teeth will not only deter your peers from quality conversations but also put you at risk of serious health concerns such as gum disease and cavities. Leaders are trained to deal with medical emergencies during your La Vida trip, but an infected gum or molar can result in an immediate removal from trip. If you have recently had oral surgery (i.e. removal of wisdom teeth), please inform the program director prior to arriving for your Expedition.

What if I wear contacts?
We highly recommend using glasses for your trip. If you do want to bring contacts, bring daily contacts plus solution. You'll just have to make sure that your hands are really clean before putting them on. Bring your glasses as well just in case you lose the contacts or just want to give your eyeballs a break.

Why can't I bring deodorant?
Wearing deodorant has become a daily practice that is hard to imagine living without. While on your trip, it is common for multi-day hikers to leave their antiperspirants at home. For the following reasons:

1. The smell and ingredients of deodorant attracts bugs and other curious wildlife.
2. Deodorant does two things to counteract unwanted bodily odors. It kills the bacteria that lives within armpit hair (the source of the smell). Antiperspirants prevent sweating by clogging the pores. Because you will be constantly sweating on trip with no access to showers, the application of deodorant with an antiperspirant can clog your pores so much that it would be unhealthy for your skin. Rashes and irritation can occur if too many layers are applied without continual cleaning of that area.

What if I have hair that requires more maintenance?
The risk of tangled/knotted hair is real and uncomfortable. We encourage participants to bring a small hairbrush or comb. Wearing your hair in braids can also help eliminate tangles. Although we would love to think that your trip will be sunny every single day, we know the reality is that you will experience some rain. For those on canoeing trips, the possibility of getting your hair wet is even greater. If you have hair that does not do well with being wet, think ahead on how to prepare for those situations.

What if I get my period on the trip?
Having your period during an Expedition is not a big deal. It just takes a little preplanning. In order to be confidently prepared and to avoid yeast infections and urinary tract infections we recommend packing the following:

- Thin panty liners: Instead of bringing many changes of underwear, which take up more space, thin panty liners are lightweight and can be disposed of every day.
- Compact tampons and/or pads. Pads with wings and extra sticky strips are good because they will stay in place as you move.

Packing Tips:

- Remove all of these items from their cardboard boxes before packing.
- It is important that ***every*** woman brings the supplies mentioned because new types of physical exertion and the proximity of other women who might be on their periods can cause you to get yours unexpectedly.
- Use one Ziplock bag for unused, clean items and another zip-lock bag for used items. Store both bags in a small bag or stuff sack. You can wrap used products in tin foil and store in a plastic bag. This will eliminate odor. La Vida sells stuff sacks for $3 during gear check-out at base camp on the first day of your trip.

Read more of our FAQ's, **here**