

Digital Detox: Disconnecting to Reconnect

One intentional aspect of this trip will be a **Digital Detox**. A digital detox is a period of time during which participants intentionally reduce or eliminate the use of electronic devices—such as phones, smartwatches, tablets, and laptops—in order to increase presence, connection, and overall well-being. For this trip, a digital detox simply means **no phones during the experience**.

Many well-established youth programs and trips have successfully incorporated digital detoxes, and the results have been powerful. When youth are free from the constant pull of notifications and social media, something meaningful happens. They become more engaged with one another, more open to reflection, and more deeply connected to the experience itself. Conversations grow richer. Friendships form more quickly. Moments are remembered—not because they were posted, but because they were truly lived. In fact, many youths report that the digital detox becomes one of the most meaningful parts of their trip.

Youth will still have access to their phones while traveling to the meeting location so they can communicate with family and confirm safe arrival. Once the group is together, phones will be securely stored by trip leaders for the duration of the trip and returned during travel home. We **encourage youth to bring a stand-alone camera** if they would like to take photos. In addition, designated trip photographers will document the experience, and photos will be shared afterward.

By removing digital distractions, we create space for spiritual growth, cultural connection, and clarity about the future. Our hope is that youth return home feeling strengthened in their faith, more confident in themselves, and inspired about the paths ahead of them.

While stepping away from devices may feel unusual at first, we truly believe this experience will greatly enhance the trip. Thank you for trusting us with your youth. We look forward to this meaningful journey together.

With gratitude,

Gathering of Tribes Youth Leadership

Digital Detox – Frequently Asked Questions

Why are you doing a Digital Detox?

A digital detox helps youth be fully present, build stronger friendships, and focus on spiritual, cultural, and personal growth without the distractions of phones and social media.

Will my youth have access to their phone at all?

Yes. Youth may use their phones while traveling to the meeting location to check in with family and confirm safe arrival. Once the group is together, phones will be securely stored by trip leaders and returned during travel home.

How will I know my youth is safe?

Youth will be supervised by adult leaders at all times. Leaders will communicate important updates as

needed, and emergency contact procedures will be in place throughout the trip. Also, we will be posting memories on social media.

What if there is an emergency?

Trip leaders will have immediate access to phones at all times. Parents will be able to reach leadership if an urgent need arises.

Can youth take pictures?

Yes. Youth are encouraged to bring a stand-alone camera. In addition, designated trip photographers will document the experience, and photos will be shared after the trip.

What if my youth is nervous about not having their phone?

That's completely normal. Many youth feel unsure at first but we ask that youth trust this will be one of the most meaningful parts of the trip.

Is this policy meant to be punitive?

Not at all. This is a positive, intentional experience designed to support connection, reflection, and well-being.