GORDON
LA VIDA CENTER FOR OUTDOOR EDUCATION

40th Anniversary

WILDERNESS expeditions
LA VIDA
A TRANSFORMATIONAL ADVENTURE

College should offer young people the time to discover who they are, pursue their dreams and seek adventure that can be transformational. Gordon College offers first-year students challenges that help develop the qualities and confidence to be people of character.

Mission

Our mission is to provide a supportive experiential environment that encourages participants to explore the meaning of their faith in Jesus Christ and develop the necessary skills for future service and leadership.

We do this by providing youth and their leaders with challenging, small-group, wilderness adventures, facilitated by trained and qualified staff, all through which God’s Word can be heard, experienced and integrated into daily life.

What Is La Vida?

La Vida is an educational adventure designed to develop character, leadership and Christian maturity. It’s a time of testing and learning to trust. It’s rappelling the face of a vertical granite wall or canoeing through a 30,000-acre wilderness preserve. It’s experiencing the breathtaking natural beauty from some of the highest peaks in the Northeast. It’s spending solo time along a mountain stream with your journal, your Bible and God—finding out who you really are.

Why the Wilderness?

The wilderness has been God’s training ground throughout history. It provides:

• Time away from everyday distractions and powerful influences

• Time to have significant shared experiences within a small group, which fosters true community

• Time to explore your core beliefs and seal your relationship with Christ

The La Vida experience encourages participants to develop crucial leadership skills through a variety of opportunities such as:

• Critical thinking and decision making

• Serving others in the group

• Peer feedback sessions

• Goal setting

• Examination of your Christian worldview

What Are La Vida’s Goals?

La Vida functions as a covenant community designed to foster growth, maturity and commitment.
to Jesus Christ. You will have the opportunity to discover your physical, mental and spiritual potential through a wide variety of activities such as:

- Setting goals, reflecting on your experiences and keeping a personal journal, entering into group discussions and Bible studies, etc.
- Helping to create a group covenant for fully valuing the experience and applying it to your future
- Participating in adventure activities on a “challenge by choice” basis and trying your best
- Living ethically in the wilderness by practicing stewardship and minimum-impact camping
- Stepping away from our fast-paced, high-tech society, which often breeds separation and depersonalization

## What Does La Vida Look Like?

La Vida consists of four phases that take place during a multi-day mountaineering, canoeing or kayaking expedition. Patrols are composed of 6-10 participants and two La Vida instructors, or Sherpas.

1 **Training:** Training begins with group initiatives/team-building games and an extensive ropes course. Lessons learned include minimum-impact camping skills, rock climbing, rappelling and backpacking, canoeing or kayaking.

2 **Group Expedition:** Using skills acquired during the training period, your patrol will execute a short expedition apart from your La Vida instructors. This is typically referred to as finals, and it lasts one to two days.

3 **Solo:** The solo is a one- to two-day period free from distractions, worry and responsibilities—a chance for you to think, pray, fast, read your Bible, write in your journal and plan future goals without life’s usual distractions and interruptions.

4 **Celebration and Debriefing:** One or two final challenges and many surprises fill out the final days of your La Vida expedition. Time will be given to contemplate and celebrate the events of this powerful experience and how it applies to your life.

www.gordon.edu/lavida
For more information

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