

Edition

1

MISSION MOBILIZATION AND CONNECTION

COVENANT MERGE MINISTRIES



Mission Team Resource Manual

MOBILIZATION AND CONNECTION/COVENANT MERGE MINISTRIES

Mission Team Resource Manual

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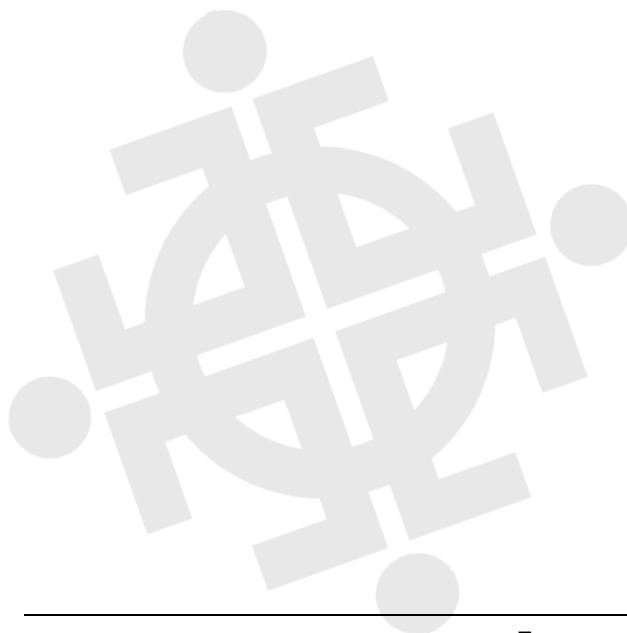
Table of Contents

Missio Dei - "We're on a Mission from God"	7
Mission Discernment - "Should I Stay or Should I Go?"	15
Team Training - "Train Them Up in the Way They Should Go"	23
Spiritual Preparedness - "Spiritually Speaking"	59
Cultural Sensitivity - "Be Sensitive!"	87
Team Building - "Team!" on Three	107
Logistics - Just the Facts	123
Follow-Up - Mission—Then and Now	161

MISSIO DEI

“WE’RE ON A MISSION FROM GOD”

What is God’s mission?	9
Learning to See the World as God Sees It	11
Bible Study, Prayer	11
Learning from Others Who Have Been Sent	13
Learning from Current Events	13





“We’re on a Mission from God”

Mission—from the Latin word “missio” means: to send, to dispatch, to release.

God—in Latin is “Dei”

God’s Mission—“Missio Dei” means God’s sending, God’s dispatching, God’s releasing

How would you describe the mission of God? Why does God “send”? What does he “send”? Whom does he “send”? Where does he “send”?

ICON KEY



Exercises



Journaling



Forms



Bible Study

What is God’s mission?

God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is beyond description, yet personal. The Triune God defies our imaginations, while revealing himself to us in ways he can be known. God as sovereign, creator, sustainer, redeemer, lover continues to guide the unfolding salvation story of his relationship to the world and all that is in it. This is the Good News.

Followers of Jesus Christ, students of the Scriptures, workers engaged in Christian ministry discover the heart of God’s sending throughout the Bible. Mission is in God’s character, motivated by his unfathomable love for the world. William

Dyrness writes, “The relation of God to the world is not the relation of cause to its effect. The relation is rather one of a personal Creator to his creation.”¹

**“Mission’ is the act of being sent with a commission to carry out the will of the superior.”
—Paul DeNeui**

God has been and continues to be at work in the world. The living God is a missionary God, according to John Stott, who acts to heal and reconcile all of creation to right relationships. One could say, God sent himself first, as he came to the Garden looking for Adam and Eve², to restore their broken relationships. Then, through a call to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, God sent his people, Israel, to be a blessing to all nations.³ God, the Father, sent Jesus to the world to bring Good News of salvation, culminating in the ultimate sacrifice, that all may be reconciled to God, to one another, and to creation.⁴ God, the Father and Son, sent the Spirit to continue the work of love and truth.⁵ God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, sends the Church as ambassadors of this ministry of reconciliation.⁶ David Bosch says, “*Missio Dei* enunciates the good news that God is a God-for-people... The *missio Dei* is God’s activity, which embraces both the church and the world, and in which the church may be privileged to participate.”⁷

God’s mission comes before any human missions.

Christian mission begins with, and belongs to, God. Human beings, made in the image of God,⁸ are called to reflect God’s character and love in this world. Our ability to conceive of this whole idea of mission comes from the very nature and heart of the One who created us. Christian mission activity, which develops from a local context, grows out of God’s all-encompassing mission for the sake of the world. Paul DeNeui, director of the Center for World Christian Studies at North Park Theological Seminary, describes the starting point this way, “Mission’ is the act of being sent with a commission to carry out the will of the superior.” If Christian mission is about being sent by Jesus Christ, to carry out the will of the Father, through the power of the Holy Spirit, then it’s important for us to take the time to listen to God’s will, his heart for the world. A key component of our involvement in God’s mission is growing our ability to see the world as God sees it.

¹ Dyrness, William, *Let the Earth Rejoice* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1983), 26.

² Genesis 3:9

³ Genesis 12:1-22

⁴ John 3:16-17

⁵ John 14:16, 26

⁶ 2 Corinthians 5:16-6:2

⁷ David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007), 10.

⁸ Genesis 1:26-27



Learning to See the World as God Sees It

How do we come to a greater understanding of who God is and what his mission is all about? Once we catch a glimpse of God's will, how do we figure out what participating in his mission looks like?



Bible Study, Prayer

We put ourselves in God's presence and spend time in the Scriptures as learners and listeners.

The great salvation story is woven throughout the Old and New Testaments. As we read, we discover God's promises, witness the growth of relationships, and learn about successes of connection with God's heart and the tragic consequences of human failure. As we spend time in the Word, we grow deeper in our understanding of who God is, who we are, and how we are invited into his mission in this world.

As we read Scripture, we place ourselves in God's presence, with an attitude of humility. Through prayer, we ask the Holy Spirit to open our minds that we might know God better, open our hearts that we may love him more deeply, open our ears that we might hear his Word for us, and open our eyes that we may see ourselves and this world through the lens of his great love.



Below is a list of Bible passages which serve as a starting point for discovering God's heart for the world, and his intentions for the Church. Study them on your own, or with a group. As you read,

- Pay attention to the context in which they were written.
- Take time to reflect on the message of those who first received these words.
- Consider how God – the Father, Son and Holy Spirit – is pictured in the stories, in the relationships, in what happens and what is said.
- Ask, “How is the Good News proclaimed?”

When you are done, identify themes that connect with God's mission in the world—who is God sending and where, what is the purpose of the sending, how is God sending?

The Law

Genesis 1-2
 Genesis 3
 Genesis 12:1-11; 22:18
 Genesis 50:1-21
 Exodus 20:1-17
 Exodus 40

The Writings

Kings 8:41-61

Poetry

Psalms 2
 Psalm 8
 Psalm 33
 Psalm 67

The Prophets

Isaiah 6:1-8;
 Isaiah 11:1-12
 Isaiah 35:1-6
 Isaiah 42:1-10
 Isaiah 45:15-25
 Isaiah 49:1-7

The Gospels

Matthew 3:13-17
 Matthew 4:12-22
 Matthew 11:1-19, 25-30
 Matthew 25:31-46
 Matthew 29:16-20
 Mark 2:1-17
 Mark 4:1-25
 Mark 6:30-44
 Mark 11:15-19
 Luke 4:17-21

The Letters

Acts 1:6-11
 Acts 4:32-37
 Acts 8:26-40
 Acts 13:1-3
 Acts 17:1-9
 Acts 17:22-23
 1 Corinthians 3:1-17
 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

TEXTS FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

Lev 19
 Lev 20:22-26
 Deuteronomy 6
 Deuteronomy 7:6-8
 Deuteronomy 28:1-14

2 Kings 4:8-36

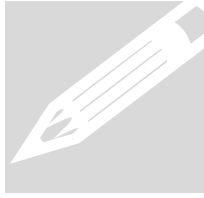
Psalms 87
 Psalm 96
 Psalm 145

Isaiah 52:7-15
 Isaiah 56:1-8
 Isaiah 61:1-4
 Daniel
 Jonah

TEXTS FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT

Luke 9:1-6
 Luke 10:1-12
 Luke 15
 Luke 24:45-48
 John 3:1-21
 John 4:1-42
 John 8:12-20
 John 10:14-16
 John 14
 John 17

2 Corinthians 5:11-6:2
 2 Timothy 2
 Philippians 2:1-22
 Hebrews 2:10-18
 James 1:26-2:13
 1 Peter 2:4-10
 1 John 3:16-18
 Revelation 21:1-5



Learning from Others Who Have Been Sent

God has been about this mission, this sending, from the beginning of time, there are a myriad of lessons to be learned about God, his love for the world, and how others have responded to being sent. From William Carey, the “Father of Modern Missions”, to Amy Carmichael, Robert & Mary Moffat, E. Stanley Jones, Cameron Townsend, Lesslie Newbigin and Mother Teresa, we can discover what “living out” a call to God’s mission looks like. So, spend time reading missionary biographies to learn from others who have been sent. How did God’s mission grab hold of their hearts and lives, how did God lead and guide as he sent them, what joys did they experience, what mistakes did they make, what challenges did they encounter?

Learning from Current Events

God is at work throughout the world. It is important for us to listen to our neighbors, read the news, watch documentaries, and allow these learning experiences to impact our hearts and minds, lead us to ask questions about causes and effects, respond in prayer. Jesus Christ is already at work, and as his followers listen to those around us, we may likely discover how to join God in his mission in neighborhoods, cities, regions, and countries around the world. Jesus Christ invites us to follow him in mission where we live, and sometimes that invitation is extended to other parts of this world.

Missio Dei Resources:

David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007).

Peterson, Roger, Gordon Aescheliman and R. Wayne Sneed, *Maximum Impact, Short-Term Mission* (Minneapolis, Minn.: STEM Press, April 2003).

Borthwick, Paul, *A Mind for Mission: Ten Ways to Build Your World Vision* (Colorado Springs, Colo.: NavPress; 1st edition, October 1, 1987).

Winter, Ralph D. and Steven C. Hawthorne, *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader* (Pasadena, Calif.: William Carey Library Publishers, January 2009).





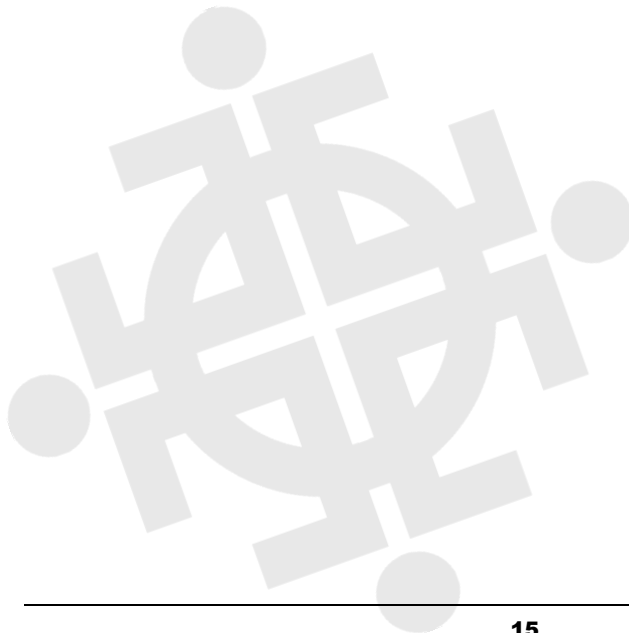
Chapter

2

MISSION DISCERNMENT

“SHOULD I STAY OR SHOULD I GO?”

The Meaning of Missional	17
God’s Vision, World Mission’s Mission	19
Small Group Interaction	20
Next Steps	21





“Should I Stay or Should I Go?”

*How do we know if we should go on a cross-cultural mission trip?
If so, where do we go?*

It seems pretty clear from Scripture that Christians are called to “go into all the world”. A quick look at Matthew 28:18-20 or Acts 1:8 can motivate a local church, a small group, or an individual to move across cultures to follow Jesus’ call. Yet, crossing cultures in mission involves more than just good intentions and a desire to be faithful to the Great Commission. “Going” involves listening to God, letting the Holy Spirit lead, allowing Jesus space to transform us along the way. There is a necessary discernment piece in the church’s desire to be faithful in mission... to be missional.

ICON KEY



Exercises



Journaling



Forms



Bible Study

Missional is a term growing in popularity in evangelical Christian contexts. The word “missional” originated with a group of North American practitioners, missiologists & theorists, called the Gospel & Our Culture Network. Christian leaders gathered to discuss the implications of Lesslie Newbigin’s work. Returning from a career of missionary service in Asia, Newbigin described Western society as pagan and encouraged the church in the US and Canada to take a missionary stance in relation to its own culture.⁹

⁹ Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Brazos Press, April 1, 2009).

As the Gospel & Our Culture Network discussed this challenge of taking a missionary stance to its own culture, they came to describe a missional church “as a community of God’s people that defines itself, and organizes its life around, its real purpose of being an agent of God’s mission to the world.”¹⁰ In this approach, “the mission of God flows through every believer and every community of faith that adheres to Jesus. Living out this mission through a local church setting means asking some big as well as personal questions. It’s important for church leadership teams to take time to consider the unique nature of the congregation’s identity, passion, giftedness as they consider how to engage with God’s mission to the world.”¹¹

The Triune God is at work in the world, restoring relationships, drawing people into his Kingdom. As followers of Christ engage in the broadest sense of “mission,” according to Bryant Myers in *Walking with the Poor*, we are to ask the question:

HOW MIGHT THE CHURCH JOIN THE LIFE-GIVING WORK
OF GOD’S KINGDOM?¹²

The answer to this question comes from a biblical understanding of God’s Mission (see the MMC-Merge “Missio Dei” study). Principles drawn from Scripture open our eyes to the depth and breadth of God’s interaction with humanity, which lay a basis for the church’s action in the world. And, from Scripture, we also discover priorities for the work of God’s Kingdom. Corbett and Fikkert in *When Helping Hurts* say it this way, “what mattered to Jesus ought to matter to us.”¹³



For example, in **Luke 4**, Jesus reads from the prophet Isaiah, to announce that he came to earth to “preach good news to the poor, proclaim freedom for prisoners, recovery of sight for the blind, release the oppressed, proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” Later in the chapter, Jesus summarizes his ministry as preaching the good news of the kingdom of God, a kingdom of love, peace, forgiveness, justice, grace, self-sacrifice, and right relationship. (This just scratches the surface of what matters to Jesus.)

According to Rich Stearns, “The kingdom of which Christ spoke was one in which the poor, the sick, the grieving, cripples, slaves, women, children, widows, orphans, lepers, and aliens – the ‘least of these’ (Matt 25:40 KJV) – were to be lifted up and embraced by God. It was a world order in which justice was to become a reality, first in the hearts and minds of Jesus’ followers, and then to the wider society

¹⁰ Hirsch, Alan, *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Brazos Press, April 1, 2009) 82.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Meyers, Bryant, *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practice of Transformational Development* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999) 20-56.

¹³ Fikkert, Brian and Steve Corbett, *When Helping Hurts: Alleviating Poverty Without Hurting the Poor* (Chicago, Ill.: Moody Publishers, July 1, 2009).

through influence. Jesus' disciples were to be 'salt' and 'light' to the world.¹⁴ They were to be the 'yeast' that leavens the whole loaf of bread.¹⁵ His was not intended to be a far-off, distant kingdom to be experienced only in the afterlife; no Christ's proclamation of the "kingdom of heaven" was a call for a redeemed world order populated by redeemed people – *now*.¹⁶

So, as the local church discerns an answer to the question, "How might our local congregation join the life-giving work of God's Kingdom?" attention must be paid to principles and priorities found in Scripture. Myers points out that this mission from God is about "sending" that is "centrifugal" ("flee" from the center) – rather than "centripetal" (following a curved path that heads toward the center).¹⁷

Ministries flow out of this center to share the love, peace, forgiveness, justice, grace, and right relationship of the Triune God.

God's mission is about sending...

about going out or "fleeing" from the center. What does this mean for a local church? Grounded in Scripture, we discover principles and priorities, which shape Kingdom commitments, and this foundation leads to ministries. Ministries flow out of this center to share the love, peace, forgiveness, justice, grace, and right relationship of the Triune God – Creator, Sustainer, and Reconciler.

God's Vision, World Mission's Mission

The Evangelical Covenant Church desires to see more disciples among more populations in a more caring and just world. In our mission partnerships around the world, we are committed to culturally relevant evangelism and the formation of communities of Christ followers, to spiritual formation and equipping God's people for ministry and leadership, and to transformational ministries that demonstrate the whole gospel by seeking to address the spiritual, social, emotional, mental, physical, and justice needs of people.

We desire to see more disciples among more populations in a more caring and just world.

As leadership within Covenant World Mission (CWM) seeks to refine vision and principle commitments, we describe our focus this way. By God's grace, we seek to be:

1. Disciples True to God's Mission of love and grace (Gen 12:1-3; Is 6:8; Jn 3:16-17; Acts 13:1-3; 2 Cor. 5:18-19).

¹⁴ Matt 5:13-14

¹⁵ Matt 13:33

¹⁶ Stearns, Richard, *The Hole in our Gospel* (Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson; 1st edition, March 10, 2009) 16.

¹⁷ Myers, Bryant, *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practice of Transformational Development* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999).

2. Participants in God's Sending to all nations (Is 49:6; Matt 28:18-20; Mk 12:29-30; Eph 2:8-10).
3. Companions with God's People serving God's Kingdom (Ps 119:63; Jn 10:16; Gal 3:26-28, 6:10).
4. Partners in God's Work of transformation and reconciliation (Jn 16:7-8, 13; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph 4:11-16; Phil 1:4-6).



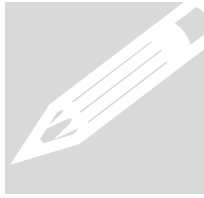
Small Group Interaction

Leadership teams need time to evaluate identity, “who are we?” and “what are we about?” before deciding, “how we are going to engage in mission?” This process ought to be bathed in prayer – as the community gathers, as teams meet, as individuals discern.

It is helpful for individuals to think through answers to the questions before the team discusses them together. Input from a variety of people helps shape a greater vision, perhaps a more realistic picture, of where God is leading the church and reflecting on what the church is up to. Consider how a number of voices may be invited into this discerning conversation. Gather input from people beyond the leadership team or paid staff.

Here are some questions to get you started in the reflection process.

1. What ministries are you currently committed to? Involved in? Leading on a regular basis? What mission commitments have you made?
2. Categorize this list of ministries – are they centrifugal or centripetal activities? Are they both?
3. How are the individual ministries contributing to the “life-giving” work of God's Kingdom? What priorities of Jesus do the ministries reflect?
4. How “engaged” is your congregation in these ministries? How many people volunteer in the work? (What percentage of the total congregation is that?)
5. What motivates people to participate? What keeps them committed?
6. As you think about the priorities of Jesus; the mission statement of your church; the gifts, skills & talents of your congregation; the needs and opportunities around you; what kinds of ministries may need to be developed? What ministries may need to be refined or re-directed?
7. How does cross-cultural ministry, short-term mission, global ministry fit into where God is leading your local church?
8. Try fit into where God is leading your local church.



Next Steps

In the discernment process, keep the guiding question from Bryant Myers before you – **How might the church join the life-giving work of God's Kingdom?**

Begin by identifying **what compels you and your church “to go”** in mission. As you compile answers, think about whether the compelling reasons for “going” lead to centrifugal or centripetal results. To use Myers’ categories, if discipleship of your “own” is at the heart of the church’s involvement in global mission, then what might seem like a “centrifugal” activity in reality is “centripetal”.

If your responses are primarily about your “own” congregation or your “own” discipleship, then perhaps a “mission trip” is not an appropriate next step. If global ministry compels a local church because it’s primarily going to benefit the members of your group or church, consider going on a Vision Trip or cross-cultural learning experience. Call it what it is – a discipleship, personal growth experience.

What ministry activity is your local church involved in that may connect you to opportunities around the world?

As we learn about what is happening all around the world, the opportunities for serving alongside people in other lands can overwhelm us. It is not possible for a local church to respond to every need, every request for help.

As you seek to “go in cross-cultural mission, take time to consider:

1. **“What are you drawn to?”** As you learn more about what is going on around the world, what needs and opportunities resonate with you? What breaks your heart? What ministry activity is your local church involved in that may connect you to opportunities around the world? What gifts and skills does your congregation or group have to offer in service?
2. **What is your church’s capacity to engage in ministry locally and globally?** Church leaders need to consider long-term impact of short-term commitments. **What does it look like to sustain the mission and ministry decisions a local congregation is drawn to?** It might seem simple to invest in a community bank for one year, but what is required to keep that bank functioning beyond the initial stages? Capacity decisions impact the local church that sends, as well as the ministry who receives.
3. **“What is your purpose in connecting?”** Identify goals for the short-term mission experience. Healthy options for goals begin with: to learn, to pray, to be present. In the discernment process, a church or group may begin with a desire to connect in personal ways, yet, as needs are identified and goals are defined, leaders may discover that “physical presence” is less of a “help” (or more of a hindrance) than long-distance

relationship. It is important for a local church to feel “permission” to not always “go in mission”.

Deciding where to go and what to do are about matching your particular church’s skills, gifts, and resources with specific opportunities where those skills, gifts, and resources may be offered **in partnership with** those living in the area. The ECC offers a variety of mission experiences through **Covenant Merge Ministries**, as well as **MMC (Mission Mobilization & Connection)**. Options include connecting with ministries Covenant missionaries are involved in.

STEM (Short-Term Evangelical Missions) has helpful resources for ministries preparing for cross-cultural ministries. Included in their materials are “Seven Standards of Excellence” that are good to consider as local churches move forward in mission.

Mission Discernment Resources:

Fikkert, Brian and Steve Corbett, *When Helping Hurts: Alleviating Poverty Without Hurting the Poor*, (Chicago, Ill.: Moody Publishers, July 1, 2009). Mission committees or church leadership teams should read through this book together & use the exercises/discussion questions to inform conversation about healthy mission practices.

Priest, Robert J., Terry Dischinger, Steve Rasmusen, C. M. Brown. *Researching the short-term mission movement*. *Missiology* 34 (4): 431-450. What impact do short-term mission trips have on those who go? How might this research help a local church as they choose to go on trips, prepare, send and follow-up?

Hirsch, Alan, *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Brazos Press, April 1, 2009). *The Forgotten Ways* is a good resource for pastors to use when thinking through vision and mission steps for a local church and considering partnerships with others.

www.covchurch.org, “Compassion, Mercy & Justice Resource Paper” for the ECC with local church discussion questions.

TEAM TRAINING

“TRAIN THEM UP IN THE WAY THEY SHOULD GO”





Who is Poor?	26
What Do You Have?	30
Assessing Options	33
Why Am I Going?	34
The Learning Aspect: Make a plan!	41
Build a Team	42
Culture	42
Debrief	43
Follow-up	44
Put what your learned into action	44
Expectations	44
SAFE-ARI vs. MISSION-ARI	46
Elevator Etiquette	48
Health, Culture and Safety in 60 seconds	50
Health Culture and Safety Explanations	51
Culture Shock	56
The Ups and Downs of Missions	56
Ways to Cope	57



Train them up in the way they should go

Team Training Reflections and Exercises

Now that your church/ministry has determined as a group you have been called by God to participate in God's work in the world by going on a cross-cultural, and possibly, international trip ...

ICON KEY	
	Exercises
	Journaling
	Forms
	Bible Study

And your team has a grasp of Missio Dei ...

It is now time to prepare your team members to have a healthy view of expectations, motivations and overall philosophy of what has been termed as "mission trips" or "vision trips." Having your entire team on the same page with the "why" and the "what" will be vital.



Who is Poor?

At the meeting ...

Ask participants to introduce themselves. Ask various questions, for example:

1. How has God confirmed, or not yet confirmed, your participation with this trip?
2. Why are you going? What is your motivation?
3. What do you expect during and after the trip?

As we prepare for a cross-cultural mission experience, we must start with our view on poverty. In general, what do Westerners view as poverty? Westerners tend to see poverty from a material standpoint. In affect, people who do not have material goods or financial resources are poor.

But what really is poverty and how does this play a part in our preparation for this trip? The answer influences our understanding of why God is sending us and what our role is.

For example, **poverty is typically defined as “deficit” or “lack”**

1. Lack of basic needs (food, shelter, clean water, safety)
 - a. Approach – provide what is lacking.
 - b. Assumption – when what is missing is provided, the poor will no longer be poor.
2. Lack of knowledge (education, training)
 - a. Approach – provide formal and non-formal education.
 - b. Assumption – if the poor learn enough, they’ll no longer be poor.
3. Lack of spiritual truth (Christian belief)
 - a. Approach – evangelism.
 - b. Assumption – if the poor find Jesus, they’ll no longer be poor.¹⁸

¹⁸ Bryant Myers, *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practice of Transformational Development* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999) 51-72.

According to Bryant Myers, all are true – poverty is deficit. But limiting poverty to this framework creates problems. Absence of things leads to solution of “provision” and the poor become recipients.

- Treating the poor as recipients devalues individuals; they are not seen, nor do they see themselves, as created in the image of God
- Another problem that can arise has to do with those who give. Responders to the need can think of themselves as messianic; and, that is not good for anyone.

Bryant Myers teaches that the nature of poverty is fundamentally relational – “Poverty is a result of relationships that do not work, that are not just, that are not for life, that are not harmonious or enjoyable. Poverty is the absence of shalom in all its meanings.”¹⁹ Poverty shows up in physical, social, mental and spiritual dimensions.

Looking at poverty in this light, allows us a framework to understand needs all around the world. Poverty is broken relationships with God, self, others, and the world. So, every human being faces poverty at some level. Poverty of the non-poor is just as real, it’s just expressed differently – as marred identity of a messiah complex or perhaps overindulgence leading to isolation from God and others.”



The community of faith is sent to the mission of reconciliation and transformation.²⁰

Reconciled to God – Father, Son & Holy Spirit

People have a broken relationship with God. They seek other gods, rather than the Creator Himself. These gods could be idols, but they could also be anything an individual makes their meaning and central purpose of life. If it is anything other than a relationship with God Himself, and living in His will, then this relationship is broken.

The reality is, in most cases, humans have broken relationship with God and still need reconciliation. Sometimes, humans have reduced God to a convenient ritual, or side bar to their life goals and purpose. God is “brought out of the box” when needed in drastic circumstances.

Our relationship with God is restored through faith in Jesus Christ and is a gift, not something earned. Once the relationship is restored the Holy Spirit becomes an active part of our life, guiding and prompting us towards godliness.

¹⁹ Bryant Myers, *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practice of Transformational Development* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999) 62.

²⁰ 2 Corinthians 5-6

Reconciled to the Each other

Our relationship to others is often filled with discord, division, manipulation, distrust and more. Human life is filled with broken relationships on various levels, whether they are within a family, within friendships neighbors, communities or even nations.

At its worst these broken relationships lead to violence, racism, oppression, slavery, dominance, social stratification, self centeredness, exploitation and more.

“Poverty is a result of relationships that do not work, that are not just, that are not for life, that are not harmonious or enjoyable. Poverty is the absence of shalom in all its meanings.”²¹

Jesus called for the most radical of reconciliation between humans. To love your enemies, give of yourself, seek restored relationships, to love your neighbor as yourself are all part of God’s call for reconciled relationships between the humans he created to worship Him.

Reconciled to Self (restored identity)

We are created in God’s image. Each human has worth and dignity. Each has a role to play in the mission of God.

And yet, for a number of reasons people tend toward two extremes when looking at “self”. One is the lack of self worth, in which we are unable to comprehend any value or worth in the person God created us to be. Through years of community oppression, family problems, violence to ourselves, mental issues and more, a pit has been dug which seems difficult, or impossible, to climb out of. Day runs into day with little hope of finding any meaning in what we do or who we are

The other extreme is a god complex; the idea that we ourselves are god and can make decisions for others. We think we have been uniquely gifted, with education and seemingly unlimited resources, and are capable of saving humankind. If only others knew what we knew, and had what we had, all would be well. God Himself is pushed out, and those with a god complex “know” how to fix the world. This too is an extremely broken self-view.

Reconciled to the World

God created the world, and it was good. His role for human beings is to be good stewards of this world. Yet, humans have not been good stewards. In the name of materialism, greed, and often, downright survival, humans have neglected the earth and failed to see it as the creation of God. The end result has been deterioration in health, quality of life, inequality of land ownership, misuse of land, exploitation between those in power and those who don’t have power or position.

If poverty truly includes:

²¹ Bryant Myers, *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practice of Transformational Development* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999) 62.

- Broken relationship with God
- Broken relationship with others
- Broken relationship with self
- Broken relationship with the world

Then who is truly poor?

- Would the people you are traveling to for “service” be any more impoverished than the members of your team?
- If poverty is seen not just from a material viewpoint, but includes all of the above, in what ways are the members of your team poor?
- What types of poverty might you confront while on your trip?
- How could this realization change how you approach this trip? How do you set priorities for the trip?”
- Create a list of expectations with your team of what you hope to “accomplish” on this trip. Categorize them:
 - Reconciliation of relationship ...

Host

With God...

With others...

With self...

With the world...

- Is there any area you are missing? Why? Might it be important to consider a holistic approach to this trip, including confronting your own poverty?
- How might this shape your team’s plans for this trip?



What Do You Have?

Our role as followers of Christ is to participate in the reconciliation of human beings to God, others, self and the world.

All of us experience poverty in some form or other. On a mission trip we come with our brokenness to people who are broken and, in community, encourage each other in the restoration of broken relationships. We do this in complete humility, not as people hoping to fix someone else's problem or act as the blessed ones who have come to save the unblessed. We don't come in as experts, but as learners in this entire process.

God is at work in the world – restoring relationships and drawing people into his Kingdom.

In the broadest sense of “Mission” – remember we ask the question:

- How might the church join the life-giving work of God's Kingdom?
- Where is God at work?
 - Everywhere. He has always been at work in all corners of the earth.
- Who does God invite to join him in His work?
 - Everyone. God invites us to be involved with Him and His work.
- Where are their pressing needs?
 - Everywhere

One of the questions mission team leaders typically ask is: **What do THEY need?**

Self-sustainability comes from people realizing the need and working together to resolve those issues with the assets they have (if possible).

Is this the right question? Or does this question really mean ... what is wrong with you and how can I fix you?

A better question might be, “What does your ministry/community/society already have as an asset and how can we as a team come to enhance what is already going on?”

This is a very different way to go about creating a ministry plan for a mission trip.

Make a list of questions to ask the ministry or people group with whom you will partner. Consider:

1. What are the assets of the ministry/community we are going to visit?
2. What is your church/ministry doing in your community outside of the church?
3. What needs are in the community that must be addressed? What problems are there?
4. Does your church/ministry/community have assets to address those needs and problems?
5. How can we as a group of fellow believers encourage you in this?

Remember, needs span physical, social, mental and spiritual dimensions. ²²

- **Physical:** There ARE physical needs. Around 1 billion people living on less than \$1/day; 1.6 billion on less than \$2/day. ²³
 - Estimates from relief organizations state that between 16,000-25,000 children die every day from hunger & preventable diseases. These physical realities are a consequence of much greater systemic issues.
 - Billions of people live with inadequate nutrition, medical care, clean water and housing.²⁴
- **Social:** Roles reinforced by society's systems perpetuate injustice. Governmental, societal, and family structures may all impact individuals and communities in negative ways, which keep people trapped. In India, it's the caste system; in North America, it's class-ism. Human trafficking continues to be a huge issue in our world today, spanning individual country's systems, impacting more than 25 million current-day slaves.²⁵

²² Bryant Myers, *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practice of Transformational Development* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999) 67.

²³ Information from www.worldvision.org, www.worldrelief.org and www.thehungersite.com.

²⁴ Sider, Ronald J., *Rich Christians in the Age of Hunger: Moving from Affluence to Generosity* (Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson, April 12, 2005).

²⁵ Meyers, Bryant, *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practice of Transformational Development* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999) 20-56.

- **Mental:** Remember not to diminish the reality of debilitated mental states of poor who are affected by malnutrition and disease. There is a type of poverty that runs deeper than a lack of knowledge or technical information. It is the feeling of hopelessness which comes from a poverty of being – marred identity. The poor who do not have basic necessities, who suffer from systemic injustice, can have a distorted view of who they really are. From circumstances and relationships the poor may have a difficult time understanding what it means to be human, to be made in the image of God. Their history can become a limitation, the messages they remember, and their experiences with the non-poor often do not line up with the truth of their identity as dearly loved children of God.²⁶
- **Spiritual:** There is power in the spirit world and its impact on keeping the poor, poor. Shamans or witch doctors perpetuate fear through spiritual tradition, mistrust is fed in the context of deeply engrained cultural belief systems. The truth is that the spiritual battle is real. As Paul writes in Ephesians 6, we are not fighting against powers of flesh and blood, alone... we confront spiritual powers in their cosmic and social dimensions. People are trapped in sin, and the consequence of sin impact families, communities and generations.²⁷

In dialog with the place you hope to serve, identify pressing needs in terms of the physical, social, mental and spiritual categories. The goal of your interaction in this cross-cultural setting is not to “fix the problem” but to figure out how to work together to respond in ways that are sustainable, that utilize the assets that already exist in the location.

There may be a point when support from outside sources may be needed for self-sufficiency to take place. This is where you come in. Your team may have some education, or expertise, to help move the process along, but the physical/financial support must be very short-term to avoid creating an environment of dependency.

Knowing how to do this takes time, experience and cultural knowledge. It would be extremely important for your team to be connected with people who have experience in community and international ministry development. It takes years to learn how to do this well, and even then it is difficult. Be sure to draw support for your team from people who know language and culture to make sure decisions are appropriate within the culture and in a cross-cultural context.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

Assessing Options

It's good to assess ministries you are interested in doing to see how well they match up with where you are going. For example:

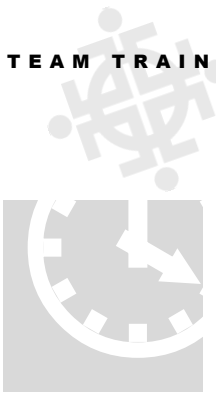
1. The mission team is planning to present a children's program. How is the local church involved in designing and presenting the program? How involved are the adults and youth of the church in participating in the program? What is the plan for the local church to follow up on the children and families touched by the program? Is there a long-term plan for the church and children? How will your group be able to help the church plan and implement their own children's program, in which your team only comes to encourage and support?
2. The mission team is planning to build a new church building. What investment is the local church making into the building? Who created the plans for the church and who is in charge of construction? How will the building be maintained? Is this really something the local church wants, or are they just allowing you to build it to make you feel useful? Would the local church be able to build it on their own? Are there ways to help the local church raise enough money, to build their own church?

As you plan for your mission experience, create a list of questions to identify assets and needs in the community. Think through every ministry idea you currently have and evaluate its long-term impact on the community and whether or not it is self-sustainable.

This evaluation should go all the way to the smallest detail of the trip. What crafts are you making? Can that church duplicate them? What food are you serving? Is this something the church people can make? In what little ways might you be creating dependency in the community?

The worst things that can happen would be:

1. The local church waits for you to return to continue the ministry YOU started.
2. The local church waits for you to send funds, or return, to continue construction on a project.
3. People in the community only get involved in the local ministry when the foreigners are around, because that is when it is "fun" or "we get free stuff."



Why Am I Going?

This is an important question to ask. **Motivation is paramount.** Motivation will lead one toward a healthy, or unhealthy, role in a mission trip. It would be good for each participant to evaluate motivation for participating.

Here are some unhealthy motives for going on a mission trip.

Tourism and Adventure

A lot of us desire to go on another mission trip to recreate the good feelings and mountaintop experience we had before. They bounce from one mission trip to another in order to experience as much of the world and adventure as possible. People give God's money to them so they can have these experiences. Is that really good stewardship?

Mission trips will take you places normal travel agencies will not. You will be immersed in a culture in a unique and personal way. You will see places more from the eyes of a local, than if you went to a hotel resort.

This is all well and good, but should it be done under the guise of a "mission" trip? Should God's money be used for your own personal adventure? Is it appropriate for the community you visit, and the people in it, to be used as your own personal National Geographic moment?

I know you would say "no." However, sometimes we allow ourselves to get caught in this trap.

Here are some questions to ask your group:

1. Are we visiting this location because it is geographically pleasing, or because God called us there?
2. Is the tourism aspect of our trip more important than our connection with the people we are going to spend time with?
3. Are we spending an inordinate amount of money on tourist activities that would shock the local people?
4. Are we going on another mission trip just because we had such an amazing experience on a previous one?

I'll Fix It

As mentioned before we see so many global issues on TV. We read newspapers, magazines and websites and discover needs all over the world. We know there are problems and God has given us hearts to go out and change the world for the better.

Nothing in mission is quick. Nothing can be fixed in one week.

This is a godly attitude in many ways, but often our own cultural bias gets in the way. An attitude of superiority gets in the way. There are many who feel if the rest of the world followed North America's lead everyone would be better off.

We have to remember what we have already learned about poverty and our role in poverty alleviation. We need to humble ourselves in the sight of the Lord and allow ourselves to build relationship, and wait, and learn and be led by others we may not understand, instead of giving in to the desire of the quick fix.

Nothing in mission is quick. Nothing can be fixed in one week.

Ask yourself these questions:

1. When you hear about the needs in the area you will be visiting, do you have the urge to come up with plans to fix the problem?
2. Do you tend to see things from a North American viewpoint and disregard the viewpoint of other cultures?
3. Do you tend to have a US is #1 attitude about the world, both economically and in ministry?

The Doer

The reason many people go on mission trips is to get something done. Few people are willing to take a week off of work, and raise over \$1000, and not get "something accomplished". The desire to complete a task is so important in our society. If we don't complete the project we tend to see ourselves as failures. In the context of a mission trip, we wonder what we'll tell the people back home if we don't get 'something' done?

Few people are willing to take a week off of work, and raise over \$1000, and not get something accomplished.

This tendency is evident in construction projects. Many men go on trips with great plans and work hard to complete what they started. Interestingly what is built is not always what the local people really wanted. Instead the locals allow the foreigners to do what they want, so they feel good about themselves. In these instances, the projects end up being unused shells for years, but the visitors sure were happy!

The "doing" dilemma also occurs in ministry. Often a team is so intent on presenting "a specific ministry" they are unable, or unwilling, to notice that what they are doing is not effective at all. The people in the community don't really care, but it is fun to watch the foreigners do their tricks. The inability to be flexible, and to really, truly follow the lead of local leadership turns us into doers.

1. Is accomplishing something the reason you are going on the trip?
2. Would the trip be worth it if you didn't complete a task, but ended up developing relationships and learning something?
3. Do you feel uncomfortable allowing people from another culture dictate what you should or should not do?

Kumbaya

Many people go on mission trips to connect with God. In many ways a mission trip takes you out of your environment (WAY out of your environment) and can allow you to meet God in a different way. You get tired, dirty, uncomfortable, and are out of your element.

This is why mission trips are such an important tool for youth pastors. Even more than a camp experience, youth pastors love to get their students away from home and challenge them with facing the material poverty and difficulty many people face around the world. Or allow their students to meet people content in their relationship in Christ, and yet not have the same material benefits people in North America have.

For this reason many teams focus on their debriefing times as paramount in their trip. All of the time spent in reflection, prayer, reading the Bible, and hashing-and rehashing-and rehashing what they experienced that day is of utmost importance on the trip.

Interestingly these same teams will miss opportunities from God to do ministry, develop relationships, or touch people's lives, because they are so self-focused. The trip is all about their own experience, instead of encouraging the lives and God-relationship of others. These are teams that think they have a week to figure out all of the lessons to be learned, but have no plan for follow-up. Once they get home they are off to the next experience.

1. Is this trip about you or about touching other's lives?
2. Is your trip schedule so focused on debriefing and devos that you might be missing opportunities to spend time with people from the community or time participating in ministry with them?
3. Are you looking more forward to bonding with your own team members than you are the people you are visiting?

Conquerors

God has called us to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. That gets us excited! Going into the world, to unreached people groups, to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ and have them respond is incredible!

The desire to lead people to Christ is wonderful when it is strongly within us, as the Holy Spirit prompts us.

Where are these unreached people groups? How many are left? Oh, wait a minute. You mean there are more believers in Latin America and Africa than there are in North America? Wait a minute. I thought we were going to share John 3:16 with people who have never heard it before. Why does that kid have 25 wordless book bracelets?

The desire to lead people to Christ is wonderful when it is strongly within us, as the Holy Spirit prompts us. The reality is our own community is the one God most calls us to share Christ with. We are unprepared and lack experience to go into another culture and properly lead someone to a relationship with Christ in a way that would have long-lasting impact, unless we work hand-in-hand with someone from the culture.

People in other cultures are very polite. They will give their lives to Jesus, if you ask, because they want you to feel good about your visit. Is that evangelism?

1. Is “how many souls get saved” really a number you are going to use to determine the effectiveness of your mission trip?
2. Are the ministries you are participating in under the leadership, partnership and follow up plan of a local ministry you can count on?
3. Do you think the community you are visiting is really an unreached people group? Are you sure?

There is nothing wrong with wanting to see God’s creation and the many cultures he created or to have a heart for the materially and spiritually poor and want to pull them out of their despair. It’s not bad to want to accomplish something for Christ using the support of dozens of Christians you know or to want to grow stronger in your relationship with Jesus. There is nothing wrong with wanting to ask people if they want to give their lives to Jesus.

The problem is much of the motivation innate in those motivations is about self. I want to see the world. I want to help someone and feel good about myself in my wealth. I want to accomplish something. I want to get closer to God. I want to evangelize someone.

“I”

It’s all about me and what I want.

Healthy motivations for going on a mission trip tend to be “others-” and “God-” oriented.

Let's explore some of these:

The Guest

I am visiting another country where I may have never been before. I am a visitor and out of my element. Therefore I will be careful how I act, careful how I dress, careful how I treat property and homes. I will do my best to fit into the local culture. I will learn in advance how to do that and keep my eyes open while I am there to learn how to be appropriate.

Tourists tend to want to be served and expect things to be a certain way. Guests tend to be inconspicuous, humble, gentle, appreciative, and do everything they can to not be a bother to the host. Guests don't want to get in the way. They just want to fit into the current system, the established program, and join in.

Guests wash the dishes, clean up after themselves, help cook if possible, and are thankful for everything. Guests don't expect, or even desire, special treatment.

Guests allow the local person to be in charge and set the agenda. They follow the lead of others and do things on the host's terms.

1. Would you consider your attitude for this trip to be one of a guest?
2. How is being a guest “others-” and “God-” oriented?
3. What might you do to develop the attitude of a guest on this trip?

The Encourager

What will you “accomplish” on a mission trip? What will have the most long-lasting impact from your visit? Possibly the most important aspect of your trip will be encouraging a group of people in another culture by visiting them, learning about their culture, loving them, praying for them and letting them know they are important in the eyes of God and in the world-wide Body of Christ. The best thing to hear from a person you are visiting is “I am so thankful you came so far to spend time with us. You have encouraged us to continue on in the ministry God has called us to do.”

Doers and conquerors are looking for something concrete to brag about (or feel good about). Encouragers are “others” oriented. Their personal needs or feelings are not most important. They have to feel like they finished something or made a huge “impact” on the world. They just come to share the love of Christ with everyone they come in contact with.

Encouragement is important for all of us, including people living in material poverty, or struggling in an area where people are closed to the Gospel, or overworked pastors languishing in places around the world.

1. What is your plan to encourage the people you are visiting on this trip?
2. Are you able to feel comfortable with the idea of not having tangible “results” from your mission trip? Why or why not?
3. Are the feelings of the people you are visiting of utmost importance to you, so that your own expectations and goals are of little concern?

The Partner

To partner with an international ministry in a healthy way is tricky. So often our own cultural values and goals get in the way. There is pressure on the home front, and from our own personality to dominate partnership with people of other cultures. It is inherent in our cultural aggressiveness and wealth.

The best partnership is to find leaders with holistic views of ministry within their congregation and to the community.

Partnering with people of another culture helps us learn to let go of control. Who really should be in charge of the local decision-making process? The team who brings the money and “expertise” with them, or the local people who grew up in the culture and know exactly what is going on? The truth is, the best decision-makers for ministry and projects in a community are the locals themselves.

For the mission team the best partnership is to find local leaders in the culture they are entering with holistic views of ministry within their congregation and community; local leaders who are trustworthy and are already doing ministry for the members of their church and community. The mission team’s job is to come alongside the local leadership, submit to its authority, and participate in what they are invited to participate in. Approaching the “task” of mission with this attitude and action shows respect for people, for ministries, for cultures.

In this model, there is no place for a sense of cultural superiority, or creating dependence.

1. Who is making the decisions for what your trip is going to be like and what you are going to do?
2. Is the ministry you are partnering with already highly involved in holistic work in their community? In what ways?
3. How will your visit enhance their ministry and further along their goals as a ministry?

The Relationship Builder

People are more important than projects; bottom line. Never, ever is a construction project, or a planned ministry, more important than spending time with people in the church, the community, or in local ministries. If a trip is solely focused on building something, it is totally missing the point of what a mission trip really is about. Focusing only on the project means missing out on the richness of the Body of Christ and anything that truly will have a long-lasting impact.

Obviously building a long-term relationship with people of another culture, and speaking another language in one week is basically impossible. However, there are ways to connect on a human and Christian level. To smile, to learn a few words of their language, to learn a skill they feel proud of, to eat together, worship together, see photos of each other's children together, and even be invited to live in the same home together, are all ways of connecting, all ways of building relationship.

1. In what ways is your team planning to develop relationships with people of the community you are visiting?
2. In what ways are you making sure people are more important than projects?
3. What temptations might there be to hide behind the safety of a program or project in order to not have to interact with the people you are visiting?

Be Creative

There is more to mission trips than construction projects and children's ministry, although that is what the majority of the people going on short-term trips think.

Figure out the giftedness, experience, education, and passions of your team before you decide what your team is going to do. Create a list of meaningful ways your team members can contribute to the mission.

Reflect on how the local ministry is at work in their community and see how the gifts and experiences of your team may enhance ministry already happening.

The backgrounds of the millions of people going on mission trips are astounding. If only they would use that giftedness and talent to further the Gospel of Jesus abroad. Think outside the box of so many mission trips that focus on construction or children's ministries, unless you do construction and children's ministries at home!

Brainstorm. Challenge each other. Be creative. Give the mission team coordinator, or pastor, or missionary, a list of what you can do, and do well. One of you may have the exact gifts a community has been waiting for. This is scarier than hiding behind the safety of building a wall, or interacting with children. It just may actually have some impact.

1. Did your team decide in advance what your team was going to do or did the leader wait to find out who was going and then inquire as to the gifts and talents of the team before deciding what to do?
2. Are your gifts, talents and experience going to be utilized on this trip? How or how not?
3. Does the host understand the breadth of possibilities a mission can provide to enhance their ministry? How have they shown that, or not?



The Learning Aspect: Make a plan!

For your team the most valuable part of the trip will be the learning that will take place on the trip. In fact it may be the only long-term impactful thing that will take place. More than likely, a common goal of short-term mission experiences is the life-change in those who participate. There is actually a problem with that goal. Studies have shown after six months few people have any changed behavior as a result of going on a mission trip.²⁸ Rather than being a transforming experience, a mission trip becomes the “in” thing to do; a way to show how spiritual you are. It becomes a mountaintop experience that quickly fades, like camp. As soon as you get home you return to the life you always lived, the way you used to live it. We need to be good stewards of the resources and time we are given. If there is no long-term impact or plan to continue to be transformed by the time abroad, it is important to evaluate if your group’s time and money could be better utilized.

Mission experiences, at their best, transform the lives of those who participate, and bring about positive, healthy relationship in the place a team travels. Accountability is key – for the lives of those who “go” and for the resources used to “get there”. There must be a favorable result among the participating members, for our church, and for our communities that comes out of these trips, otherwise we are wasting God’s money.

How do we do that?

Prepare

So much can be learned on a trip by preparing with the team. Praying together. Learning Scripture together. Building relationships through preparing programs and even buying supplies together. Prepare in community.

Most Bible study leaders would agree they learn more preparing for a Bible study than the participants learn from attending it. Most pastors would say they learn more preparing for a sermon than the congregation does hearing it. Mission team members learn more by preparing diligently a mission trip together than the receivers ever will.

²⁸ Robert Priest, Terry Dischinger, Steve Ramussen, C. M. Brown article, “Researching the Short-Term Mission Movement”, *Missiology*, 34:4, October 2006, pp 431-50.

1. What is your team's plan for preparation for the trip?
2. Are all of the team's members on board with the importance of preparing together for the trip? If not, how might you help them understand the importance of preparation? Are you willing to make preparation a mandatory requirement?

Practical Steps for Team Prep

Build a Team

Building community within a mission team is essential. It influences every part of a short-term mission experience. In the process of team-building, participants get to know each other and they learn to trust one another. Things will go “wrong” during a mission trip, and the strength of relationships within the team will impact responses to what happens.

Spending time together to build your team is essential to being able to learn on a trip. Developing relationships within your church group can change your future and change your church. The bonding that comes from preparing for a trip, going on it, and then following up on it can build a lifetime of connection with people. Take advantage of that.

1. What is your group doing intentionally to build your team?
2. What can you do to connect with each individual on the team before you go?
3. What can you do to build trust between the members of the team?

Culture

Developing cross-cultural sensitivity is another essential component of short-term mission. Take time to learn about the country, the region, and the city you are traveling to. What is the history of the area? Why are circumstances as they are? Look for books to help you understand cross-cultural communication and ministry for the local context. Spend time reading history or sociological books about the culture you are planning to visit. How about inviting people who live near you, and are from that culture, so spend time with your team and share insights with you? If you are doing ministry alongside missionaries, what information do they have about the cultural context or what books do they recommend you read?

Being culturally sensitive to the people you are going to spend time with is essential in doing healthy ministry. Learning about customs, history, geography, and what has been going on in the church in that area, are important lessons to be learned. What you learn about the cultural setting in another country may actually be helpful for you at home, as you look at the people around the city in which you live.

Is your team going to participate in any learning activities? Utilize the tools in the section on **Cultural Sensitivity**.

1. In what ways is your team planning to prepare to be culturally sensitive to the people you are going to be with on your mission trip?
2. Who might be resource people from whom you can learn the history, geography and culture of the country and people you will be visiting?

Debrief

What is your team's debriefing plan?

There is an interesting balance between debriefing too much and too little on a mission trip. Some teams schedule their trip around debriefing times for their group. When debrief times are protected too much, a group may miss out on valuable times to build relationships or partner with the host ministry. Guarding time with your mission team may become very self-serving, and can make one wonder if the trip is about “me” or the trip is about “God” and “others.”

However, not spending time in reflection on the trip will inhibit possible revelations about God and how He is working in the world. Some people need time to verbalize what they have seen and what they wonder about. Usually it is best to choose someone who has experience in cross-cultural ministry to lead these times of reflection. Often they have better insight into what the team is experiencing and lead teams away from some of the inaccurate first-impressions a team member can have (“they are so poor yet so happy,” “why are they so spiritual while people in the North America are not,” “I am going to appreciate everything I have when I get home” etc.). A facilitator who can challenge some of these early impressions can get more at the root of what is really being discovered.

The discovery of Godly truths during trips, and how to apply them to our lives, is fundamental to the success of mission trips.

1. What are your team's debriefing plans? Who will lead them?
2. What resources are you using for debriefing? Are they challenging or just justifying stereotypes that often result from a short-term mission experience?

Utilize the tools in the sections on **“Spiritual Growth”** and **“Cultural Sensitivity”**.

Follow-up

Possibly the most critical, and underutilized, aspect of mission trips today is follow-up. Healthy teams ask for a commitment to the team before the trip (for preparation and team building), during the trip, and after the trip (for follow up). Follow-up is more than a dinner and photos for the congregation after the trip. Follow-up involves critical meetings necessary for further discovery after a mission trip. Follow up meetings give team members time to reflect further on lessons learned, and provide the space for conversation about life-behavior changes confronting the team during the mission experience. These meetings set the stage for deeper relationship, for mutual accountability, for ongoing transformation.

As mentioned before, recent studies have shown six months after a mission trip most people behave exactly the same ways they did, toward God, missions, their own community, their church, and cross-cultural ministry as they did before the trip. Even though participants say the trip changed their lives, they do not act differently. Obviously this is not true 100% of the time, because we all know people whose lives changed due to a mission trip. However, we can increase the effectiveness of life-changing behavior in our relationship with Christ, and his people, if we take the time AFTER the trip to connect as teams and hold each other accountable.

1. What commitment has your team members made for AFTER the mission trip to reflect, share what they have learned and struggle with, and be accountable to changes promised on the mission trip?
2. What resources will you use for these after-trip reflections? Utilize the tools in the sections in **“Mission—Then and Now”**.

Put what your learned into action

Millions of dollars are spent on short-term mission trips each year. As we “go” in short-term mission, we need to think about what it means to be a good steward of the money we spend along the way. A measure of good stewardship in short-term mission means that the trip changes lives, both on the receiving end and within the sending team. A way to quantify how successful your trip really was is to take into account how people on the team have, or have not, put what they learned on the trip into action. Make this a cornerstone of what your trip is about, especially after the trip. Utilize the tools in the sections on **“Mission—Then and Now”**.

Expectations

The success or failure of the short-term mission experience is largely connected to the kind of expectations team members brought to the mission. If most of the expectations were met, they will consider the mission experience a success. If the trip did not measure up to the expectations of the team, they could feel like the mission was a failure. This may be a limited way of evaluating an experience, but such perspective affects the kind of reentry the team members will have.

It is very important, then, that expectations are realistic and shared with others on the team. The pre-departure orientation should cover the area of expectations: what they are, what to do when they are unmet, how and/or when to change expectations, etc. The post-return orientation should also cover the same topics.

Although participants are encouraged to expect great things from God, they may not be ready for mundane experiences. There should be a balance between expecting great things from God and having realistic expectations about the mission experience and about their return back home. Nothing is too insignificant for God to use to affect life-change...even lost luggage, cold showers, and bugs!

The other side of expectations is the reentry part. What ideas and dreams do team members have about returning home? Expectations may include positive or negative denial of life back home. Positive denial may include a glorified view of home, an inflated view of the mission experience or an exaggerated view of how one will cope back home. Negative denial, on the other hand, may include thinking that people will not be interested in their stories, anticipating depression, loneliness, and anger, or being immobile and unable to cope.

You can help team members develop realistic expectations about their reentry to their home culture. The following statements have been formulated to help short-term team members prepare for what realistic reentry may look like. Talk about them BEFORE, during and after the mission experience!

You will go through a re-adjustment period, parts of which may be difficult.

1. People will show initial excitement in my stories but will quickly diminish in their interest. I shouldn't be surprised or discouraged.
2. Stardom will feel great, but it is short-lived. Returning home may initially feel great, but I may feel alone at times and confused, sad, and misunderstood.
3. I should expect my renewed faith to be tested, tried and strengthened.
4. During the lonely times, I can expect God to be with me to comfort and guide me through this transition time. (Psalm 23) Be honest! It's OK to hit some lows.



SAFE-ARI vs. MISSION-ARI

This is an activity to illustrate proper attitudes on a mission trip.

Have half of the people on your team be “nationals” and the other half mission team members. Then split the mission team members into two teams: the SAFE-ARI team and the MISSION-ARI team. Split the “nationals” in half and assign one to interact with the safe-ari team and the other with the mission-ari team. Nationals are unable to speak English. The team members can speak English.

Act One

Safe-ari Team

- Pretend you are getting out of a van at the ministry site and are afraid of the nationals as they come toward you. Stick together near the van, or get back in it.
- Nationals (assigned to Safe-ari team): show disappointment at the lack of greetings and trust from the safe-ari members.

Mission-ari Team

- Get out of the van and immediately engage the nationals in conversation and greetings.
- Nationals (assigned to mission-ari team) – engage with the mission-ari members and show pleasure at their interest.

Act Two

Safe-ari

- Immediately chase the nationals, taking photos of them.
- Nationals: run away and hide.

Mission-ari

- Notice the nationals participating in a national ritual and join in.
- Nationals: start a national dance ritual and invite the team to join you.

Act Three

Safe-ari

- Run after the nationals, telling them you need to save them.
- Nationals: run away!

Mission-ari

- Encourage the nationals in the what they are already doing.
- Nationals: show the team what your life is like and how you survive.

Act Four

Safe-ari

- Team members start bossing around the nationals to get them to learn how to hop on one leg.
- Nationals: allow the team to boss you around, although you don't like it.

Mission-ari

- Allow the nationals to teach you how to do something.
- Nationals: Teach the team how to do something.

Act Five

Safe-ari

- Get in the van praising God for all of the things you were able to do to help those poor nationals. Pat each other on the back for a great job.
- Nationals: as soon as the team gets in the van get back to your normal life.

Mission-ari

- Hug and thank the nationals, praying with them. Comment on how much you learned from the nationals.
- Nationals: hug and wave good-bye to the team, and show a new sense of national unity when they leave.

Questions for reflection

- How did the two groups act differently?
- How do you think mission teams act like either of the groups?
- What does this teach us about our attitudes concerning mission trips?

SAFE-ARI teams:

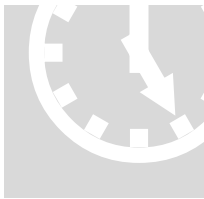
- tend to focus on have a great experience.
- tend to focus on Tourist events and having an adventure in mission.
- make decisions based on fear.
- have a sense of urgency to save everyone and meet everyone's needs.
- tend to be culturally ignorant.
- have a sense of superiority and expertise.
- praise themselves for what a great job they did on the mission trip.

MISSION-ARI teams:

- tend to show trust in the host culture and leaders.
- act like guest, are polite, and participate in the local culture.
- are servants.
- encourage others.
- learn how to be culturally sensitive and blend in.
- are willing to learn from the host culture.
- realize God has given them an opportunity for partnership and relationship.

What if Jesus would have gone on a Safe-ari, rather than be a Mission-ari?

- How would He have acted differently on earth?
- In what ways did Jesus act like a Mission-ari?



Elevator Etiquette

The rules of space and proximity are well defined in different cultures. Read the following and answer the questions according to the customs of your culture.

Discuss with your group:

Imagine that you are in a crowded elevator in an office building in the United States. All of the other occupants are unknown to you.

Have them act it out! Point to the imaginary elevator door. Have them “push” the button, wait, and enter.

- What are the rules are for standing in the elevator? How do people stand when there are only two or three people? What happens when a fourth person enters the elevator?
- How would you feel if there were two people on the elevator and a third person entered and stood right next to you?
- What happens when the elevator becomes more crowded and there are now four or more people?
- How close do people stand?
- What do people look at in a crowded elevator?
- When is it permissible to talk to the other people?

Response to Elevator Etiquette

Elevator behavior in the United States is very rigid:

- If there are only two or three people on an elevator, each person usually leans against the walls. If a fourth person boards the elevator, the four corners are normally occupied. This would be a breach of our personal “space.”
- When there are more than four people on an elevator, the occupants begin to follow a complex set of rules for behavior. Everyone turns to face the door. Hands, purses, and briefcases hang down in front of the body.
- People don’t touch each other in any way unless the elevator becomes very crowded, and then they only touch at the shoulders or upper arms.
- Everyone usually looks at the lighted floor indicator.
- It is unusual for people (who are strangers) to speak to each other in an elevator unless they are sharing some kind of similar experience. (Such as a conference) People who do know each other will usually speak softly. When a group of people enter the elevator and do not follow these rules, other occupants usually feel very uncomfortable.
- If you think this behavior is overstated? The next time you are on an elevator, don’t face the door. Turn and face the occupants. If you really want to upset everyone, give them a broad smile.
- In every culture there are unwritten rules. Be an observer and learner first!



Health, Culture and Safety in 60 seconds

Preparation:

Each team member should have a piece of paper and pencil. Tell the members you are going to say 34 statements in less than 60 seconds. After you are finished, you will say “go” and they have 3 minutes to write down as many statements as they can remember. At the end, you will explain each of the statements in detail and the one with the most written down receives a snack from you on the trip.

1. Count group members
2. Stay in groups
3. Get sleep
4. Drink Water
5. Not from the faucet
6. Wear Sunscreen
7. Wear a hat
8. Eat food given to you
9. Don't make faces
10. Don't Flush TP
11. Unclog your own toilet
12. Wear bug spray
13. Don't leave food out
14. Stomach Issues Happen
15. If sick, tell a leader
16. Too much Imodium equals bad news
17. Don't Panic
18. Don't be a flirt
19. If you're dating someone, I should be surprised
20. No Smoking, drugs, drinking or carrying firearms
21. Develop relationships before photos
22. No Dancing
23. Give-Aways go through the local ministry
24. Don't let children in your rooms
25. Don't let children use your things
26. Don't make any other promise than to pray
27. Invite people to eat with you.
28. Use as much language of the host culture that you know
29. Always greet people
30. Give special attention to Pastors and Directors
31. Stay off your phone
32. Save kumbaya time for later
33. Don't take over the road
34. Know that what you wear DOES affect the ministry

Health Culture and Safety Explanations

1. Count group members
 - Wherever you go, make sure you have everyone!
2. Stick together
 - Minors must not leave the mission site unless with an adult
 - When shopping, stay in groups
 - When going off site stay in groups of four or more
 - Never leave a site without obtaining permission from your group leader
 - Males should always accompany females
3. Get sleep
 - Your body needs more sleep when you are in a new situation
 - Remember that sleep is one of the best ways to prevent illness
 - Others around you may require more sleep, respect your team and the community
 - Whether you are an “early bird” or a “night owl”, not everyone is! Respect quiet hours
4. Drink Water
 - Dehydration is the number one cause of illness, so drink all of the time
 - Bring a personal water bottle that you can refill
5. Don't drink out of any faucet.
 - Bottled drinks and ice purchased in restaurants and stores are ok
 - When taking showers keep your mouth closed
 - When brushing your teeth used bottled water to rinse out your mouth
 - Always have enough water for your group to drink. Take water breaks often.
 - Encourage your group members to drink water, instead of soft drinks.
 - Do not open the community water thermos.
6. Wear Sunscreen
 - In most locations, you are closer to the equator and need to wear sunscreen
 - Sunburn and sun stroke is nothing to play around with
7. Wear a Hat
 - When working or walking, wear a hat to shield you from the sun
8. Eat food given to you
 - Eat food provided for you or in restaurants suggested by Merge or your trip facilitator
 - Don't eat at roadside stands

- If your church's pastor or church members invite your group for a meal the food hopefully will be safe. It would be rude to not accept their invitation.
- Always wash your hands before eating. You can wash your hands in the tap water with soap - this is perfectly safe. Just be sure to dry your hands before touching food.
- Food is a very important part of the culture. You must eat the food given to you by our hosts.

9. Don't Make Faces

- Don't forget that even though others may not understand the words from your mouth, they will understand your facial expressions!
- Body language translates in all cultures

10. Toilets

- Do not flush toilet paper or feminine products
- There is a trash can by every toilet for paper products
- The sewage pipes are not the same as in the US, so cannot accommodate paper products

11. Unclog your own toilet

- It is not your host's responsibility to unclog your toilet.
- Plungers will be available

12. Wear bug spray

- Bring bug spray and medicine for insect bites.
- Bring first-aid lotions to apply to bug-bite affected areas

13. Don't leave food out

- Don't leave food or candy out of containers.
- Do not leave food or candy in your sleeping areas.

14. Stomach Issues Happen

- Stomach illness does not mean that you ate "bad food". It means your body is not accustomed to the new food.
- Most missionaries experience problems with their stomach on re-entry to the US because they are not used to the rich, greasy food.

15. If sick, tell a leader

- If you are sick, please make sure to tell the leaders right away. It is important that your hosts know. They are most knowledgeable about healthcare in the area.

16. Too much Imodium equals bad news!

- Imodium only stops the symptoms; it does NOT get rid of the cause.
- Let your body get rid of what it doesn't like! It may be embarrassing or inconvenient, but the natural course of diarrhea is 24 hours.
- Drink plenty of liquids so you don't dehydrate.

17. Don't Panic

- Pretty self-explanatory! Panic spreads quickly and is not helpful.

18. Don't be a flirt!

- Flirtatiousness by team member females toward Latin males is often interpreted as a serious sexual advance.
- Flirtatiousness by team males toward Latin females is often interpreted as a prelude to a possible marriage relationship.

19. If dating someone, I should be surprised

- Do not allow boyfriend/girlfriend relationships to begin on mission trips
- If you are dating a member of the team, your relationship should be so "above board" that if told you are dating, I should be surprised!

20. No Smoking, drugs, drinking or carrying firearms

- In most Christian cultures, these are not acceptable behaviors for Christians

21. No Dancing

- Check with your host to see if dancing is appropriate in the Christian culture. In some, it is not.

22. Develop Relationships before photos

- Photos & video can be taken, but after relationships are developed
- We are not tourists looking for our "National Geographic" picture
- It is much more meaningful to have photos of people that you have a relationship with and can share their story.

23. Give-Aways go through the Local Ministry

- Purchasing a gift for the pastor & his/her family is appropriate. Purchasing a gift for a family you will be staying with is also appropriate as well. A recommended gift item is a gift that represents the place in the world you come from
- It is rarely appropriate to financially support a church, ministry or individual after your trip is over.
- Giving donations or gifts is trickier than you may think in another culture. There are inter-personal, cultural, and ministry issues involved in gift giving that you may not understand. If you desire to purchase a gift for a national, be sure to check with your host first to find out if and what type of gift giving is appropriate.
- If the host missionary cautions you against giving gifts (i.e. toys to children who come to a program), please listen to them and respect what they have to say – and don't give gifts away.
- It is appropriate to give a gift to someone who has provided you with housing, meals, the pastor or director of the ministry you have been working with, or the missionary host him- or herself.

- Do not give money to anyone unless you have consulted with the host missionary first.
- Do not give away personal items, such as watches or hats, because this may create jealousy or friction among those who have not received them.
- Indiscriminate handouts are destructive; but equally destructive is the habit of making promises. Do not promise any long-term favors (i.e. looking into bringing an individual home to the US for a visit or for schooling).
- Before collecting items, such as canned food, used clothing, etc, check with the host missionary to determine if it would be appropriate.
- Small gifts for friends made during the mission trip may be appropriate, but should be gifts of friendship that will not create begging or jealousy. If you make a bracelet for one person, make one for everyone. Photographs, bookmarks, even postcards from your home are nice gifts. They indicate a friendship rather than a demonstration of the difference between the haves and the have-nots.

24. Don't let children in your rooms

- As a safety issue, do not invite children into your sleeping area

25. Don't let children use your things

- Letting children use your camera or other things creates competition with other children

26. Don't make any other promise than to pray

- We want to be people of our word and do not know what tomorrow holds.
- Sometimes in the emotion of the moment, we want to promise things that in reality are not appropriate or feasible.
- Please do not even promise to write people. It is better for them to be excited and surprised you wrote than disappointed that you did not.
- Saying, "you should come visit me" is a promise on your part that you will help make that possible. That includes, expenses and VISA paperwork to get them there!
- Prayer is the one thing you can be sure to follow-through with. And don't forget, prayer is powerful!

27. Invite people to eat with you

- Accept all invitations to eat with the church members at church or in homes.
- Spend time talking to people from the host culture.
- Plan in your group schedule intentional times to get to know people.

28. Use all of the host language you know no matter how rudimentary

- This shows you are wanting to get to know people.

- “Please” and “thank-you” go a long way in the host language!
 - Be a learner! Let your hosts teach you their language. This is one of the biggest ways to build relationships.
 - Humble yourself! Yes, you are going to make mistakes. You are not offending your host, you are showing you are trying everything you can in order to share with them.
29. Always greet people
- Every time you enter a room, spend time to go around to greet everyone.
30. Give special attention to Pastors and Directors
- Ministry is hard work! We want to be an encouragement to those that are ministering in their community.
31. Stay off your phone
- The more you stay connected to your home culture, the less you are connected to the host culture. Be present in the moment that God has placed before you.
 - Plus, you are going to have a huge roaming charge bill upon your return!
32. Save kumbaya time for later
- When you are with your hosts, BE with your hosts. You have time for team building before your trip and after.
33. Don’t take over the road
- Remember that pedestrians do NOT have the right-of-way
 - It can be very intimidating to see a huge group walking down the street together. Walk in a single-file line or in small groups.
34. Know that what you wear DOES affect the ministry
- We never want what we wear to be a barrier to ministry. Consult your host on what is appropriate.
 - Always model your way of dress by what the local pastor and spouse wear.
 - Some general guidelines:
 - Covered Parts
 - Mid-section
 - Shoulders
 - Chest
 - Knees (women)
 - No see through/sheer
 - No plain white t-shirts
 - No darkness (evil, disturbing, black, etc.)
 - Ask your host about piercings and tattoos



Culture Shock

When people go on mission trips, even for one week, it is highly possible some members will experience a level of culture shock. Knowing the symptoms and how to deal with them can help your team be more effective. Talk with your team about each aspect and give them time to journal about where they feel they may have difficulties. Some signs of culture shock may include feeling:

Frustrated

- Time: The local culture has a completely different sense of time than you do, and it is bothering you.
- Housing: Your housing is not what you are used to, and you don't feel comfortable in it. It is difficult to sleep.

Confused

- Language: your lack of language skills are frustrating you and you don't want to talk to anyone.
- Ministry: the events you planned for your ministry are not going as you thought they would.
- Culture: you are having a hard time understanding why people in the local culture act as they do.

Embarrassed

- Language: you are afraid to try to say anything in their language.
- Ways of doing things: you don't want to try anything new.

Tension

- Are we prepared? Tension arises among team members as they try to present any programs. Anger and gossip grow between team members.

Insecure

- Can I really do this? Wanting to just be alone and not participate anymore.

The Ups and Downs of Missions

First Days—Exciting, New, Learning

- Usually the first day or two of a mission trip is full of wonder and excitement. You are experiencing things for the first time, and seeing new places and people have energized everyone on the team.

Middle Days—Tedious, Frustrating, Tiring

- Then reality sets in. Your ministries are not going as well as you hoped. Housing is difficult. You are tired and hungry. Conflicts arise among team members. You wonder how much longer the trip is going to be.

- These are the days of danger. Be aware that culture shock may be setting in.

Final Days—Encouraging, Relationships, Success

- If you deal with culture shock correctly, these are the best days of your trip, when you have built relationships, have been encouraged by and have encouraged your hosts, and things seem to be going smoother. You are getting in a rhythm, and don't want to go home.

Ways to Cope

There are different ways to cope with culture shock. You can:

- criticize the hosts and other members of your team.
- be impatient with your hosts and other members of your team.
- refuse to try something new.
- become inflexible sticking to your schedule without any ability to take advantage of new opportunities.
- withdraw—stay alone, away from the hosts and team members.

Or you can:

- learn: from the hosts and try to learn about their culture and life, which is confusing you.
- understand: why people do the things they do
- listen: to people sharing their lives with you
- ask questions: about life, culture, what is going on, etc.
- be flexible & available: taking advantage of new opportunities of ministry you have never had before.
- take risks: despite not wanting to, try something you would never normally do.
- be relational: don't allow yourself to withdraw, but stay connected with people.

How you and the people of your team deal with these feelings will make a difference. Be ready to remind each other of positive ways to act through feelings of culture shock.



SPIRITUAL PREPAREDNESS

“SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING”

Keys to Spiritual Growth	61
Journaling Exercise	62
Group Lesson #1—Spiritual Concerns	63
Translation Boobos...	64
Group Lesson #2—Getting Ready to Tell Your Story	65
A Testimony in 3 Easy Steps	66
Another Approach to Telling the Salvation Story	67
Journaling My Testimony	69
Group Lesson #3—Paul, “Barney” or “Tim” ...Which one am I?	70
Personal Preparation	71
📖 Devotions/Quiet Times/Bible Study	71
✍️ Journaling	71
👐 Encouragement	71
Devotional Resources	72
Philippians Study	73
Topical Journal	77
Journaling Exercises	82
Group Debriefing During the Experience	85









Spiritually Speaking

Spiritual Preparedness is foundational, not additional.

Spiritual preparation of the team and of individuals is foundational to the mission experience. As you consider what God is going to do through your team in the “tasks” of the mission, what Jesus will do in your team members’ cannot be assumed or neglected.

ICON KEY	
	Exercises
	Journaling
	Forms
	Bible Study

Keys to Spiritual Growth

*Have a healthy prayer life. Pray for all aspects and people involved in your trip.

*Be open to the Holy Spirit and to what God may be saying.

*Be open and responsive to God’s blessings.

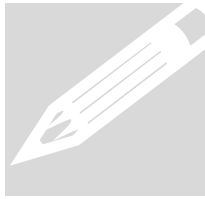
*Be willing to learn, to grow and to expand your own horizons.

*Ask your local church for prayers of encouragement and support of the mission.

*Keep a journal about the mission. Note how you saw God at work each day. Tell the story of the mission when you return home.

Call the team to personal reflection – through solitude time with God, Bible reading, prayer, journaling, and practice of other spiritual disciplines. In each training session, there is opportunity to take time for corporate spiritual preparation and conversation. While the team is on the mission, encourage team members to continue personal devotional times (you may want to provide guided sheets) and lead the team in devotions and debriefing. The spiritual aspect is not to make the trip “all about your team,” but serves to help the team focus on the reason for and the goal of the mission. Jesus calls us to follow him; Jesus sustains and strengthens, as we seek to build the Kingdom of God throughout this world.

There are suggestions for Journaling/Personal Reflection and Team Devotions. You know your group and what they need... use these if they're helpful, modify them or find other resources. Be careful not to compromise the spiritual aspect of the trip out of busyness, the stress of deadlines, exhaustion or tasks.



Journaling Exercise

(to do before your first meeting together)

Assignment: Get a journal – one you can use for your trip prep and take with you when you go. When you are writing your thoughts down, let the words flow. Don't worry, no one is going to see what you write, unless you show them. No one is going to judge your thoughts or edit what you have to say. Let the discipline of journaling be a way to process what Jesus is teaching you about God, yourself, the team, the experience of traveling to another country to participate in what God is doing there.

Before the next group meeting, take some time to think about your expectations for the mission trip. Write down your thoughts about:

- Why do you want to go on this particular mission opportunity?
- What do you hope for, as a result of the experience?
- What are you excited about?
- What makes you nervous?



Group Lesson #1

Spiritual Concerns

Team members may face issues of spiritual pride and struggle to reintegrate back into the life of the church when the experience is over. Being prepared for this before you go is key to dealing with new and possibly heightened feelings. They may have had an enriched spiritual experience and are aware of the “apparently mediocre” commitments of Christians around them. It’s important not to look down on others who haven’t experienced this trip.²⁹ There may also be a crisis of faith for the team members during the mission experience. They may have seen or experienced things that may have shaken their faith. This should be handled with compassion and understanding.

What does the Bible have to say?

Split your mission team into groups of three. Have them read and discuss **Matthew 6:25-34** and talk about how these words from Jesus encourage them as they look ahead to the mission experience.

Now it is time to pray. Ask each individual to share a personal concern they’d like their small group to pray about. In the prayer time, invite the groups to pray for the individual concerns discussed; for the team as a whole – cultural sensitivity, wisdom in relationships, unity; for those you are going to work with and serve.



“The Storyteller”

A Group Discussion

We need to consider the culture we come from and the culture we are traveling to as we think about how to best communicate our story and The Story of God. Part of any mission experience is to share with people what God has done in our own life and what he wants to do for others. Have the group discuss the following questions:

- Describe a “good” story – what’s it like? what makes it interesting?
- Do you think of yourself as a storyteller? Why, or why not?
- There are some elements important to telling a good story. Good stories include a setting, plot, characters, conflict and resolution. As we tell stories, words, obviously, matter. In cross-cultural settings, we need to choose our words carefully. Use the skit **Translation Boobos** (next page), with 2 actors (a speaker and a translator) to illustrate how a translator may actually translate phrases, which would create some communication difficulties.

²⁹ Romans 12:3

Translation Boobos...

Choose someone to be the speaker and one to be the translator. Read on...

The speaker

1. Tell them I'm very pleased to be here.
2. When you asked me at lunch to speak to today, I had butterflies in my stomach.
3. I'd like to talk with you today about the contextualization of theology in the the third world.
4. But first let me share with you my testimony.
5. My past is a very dark one and divided into two parts.
6. When I was just a kid...
7. I didn't understand why Christ died on the cross.
8. But then He convicted me of sin through His Holy Ghost.
9. He set me free.
10. He made me a new creature.
11. (faster and more excited) ~ Now I have a new life. I am part of the body of Christ. They are my family. I'm so excited. I want to tell you about it.

The Translator

1. She says to tell you she's very happy to be here today.
2. At lunch I ate some flies that got into my stomach before speaking today.
3. I'd like to talk to you about a text from another world.
4. First I want to share my ????
5. My behind is dark and divided into two parts.
6. When I was a small goat...
7. I did not understand what happened when Christ died at the intersection.
8. But a ghost arrested me for it.
9. I was let go.
10. I was made into a new animal.
11. She's very happy. Please clap for her.



Group Lesson #2

Getting Ready to Tell Your Story

People love to hear a good story... and they love to tell theirs. It's important we listen to people's stories and think about (even **prepare** for) how to tell ours. When you go someplace to visit people, to listen to their stories, work in their midst, you'll likely be asked "why you've come". How will you respond?

What does the Bible have to say?

Break into small groups and read the following passages and answer the questions:

1. 1 Peter 3:15-16a: What is Paul's encouragement in these verses? What words does he use to describe our stories?
2. 1 Timothy 4:12-16: in what ways does Paul challenge Timothy? In what ways does Paul challenge you as you seek to follow Jesus Christ in your daily life and serve him through this mission?
3. As you think about telling your story, what gets you excited? What makes you nervous? How might our team pray for you as you prepare?
4. Take some time to pray for each other.

Put it into practice

- For some, telling our personal story can feel overwhelming or challenging; for others, it can seem so simple, that we don't think through it ahead of time; for all, it's actually important to prepare how we would say what we want to say. Oftentimes, we only have a couple minutes to tell people about what Jesus has done in our lives – either that's the amount of time given in a "formal service" or that's the maximum time of a person's attention span. So, we want to communicate effectively in the time we are given.
- When asked to bring a greeting in a church service, find out from the host church if that means saying "hello" on behalf of the team or if an individual is expected to share his/her story. A casual question in a conversation with a local about why you've come to their town, may be an open door to talk about spiritual matters. So, it's important for each team member to do some preparation to tell his/her story.
- In considering where your team is going and who you will be serving, walk through how to prepare and share a testimony with the team. Resources for this preparation are found at the end of this section.



A testimony in 3 easy steps

We don't want to elevate or glamorize ourselves when telling our story. Sometimes we can feel pressure to make our stories dramatic—and we end up embellishing on past experiences or dwelling on all our sin. The point of our testimony is to lift up Jesus Christ and what he has done in our lives. So, consider this:

1. **What was your life like before you met Jesus Christ?** (This should be less than a minute).
 - If you can't point to a specific time/date, but your choice to follow Jesus was a process over time, describe your life as you were growing up – family, friends, and activities. Generally describe the things you struggled with, since we all deal with sin in some way.
2. **How did you meet Jesus Christ?** (This should be less than a minute).
 - If you can point to a specific time you chose to follow Jesus, talk about the experience. What happened? What led you to the decision?
 - If you can't point to a specific time/date, at what point did your faith become your own? There are transitions every person goes through which become markers as we go deeper in our relationship with Jesus Christ. Talk about a significant marker.
3. **What is Jesus Christ doing in your life now?** (Less than a minute).
 - Describe how you are doing currently in relationship to Jesus Christ. How is Jesus making a difference in your life? Where are you growing?

Things to Remember

- Be sure to **include a verse** from Scripture somewhere in your story... connecting your story to God's Story.
- **Your story is your story.** Don't evaluate how good or bad it happens to be, based on the drama of your conversion experience. Jesus Christ speaks through all of our stories to reach people in ways we might not realize.
- **Think through themes** in your life as you look at each question. Consider what may best connect with the people whom you are serving. Stay away from churchy language – as you heard in the skit. Keep it simple. Keep it short.

- **Practice your story** and ask people around you for feedback. What makes sense? What is unclear? When you give your testimony, remember to speak in short phrases to give the translator time to translate.

Another Approach to Telling the Salvation Story³⁰

Some Christians find it hard to give a clear, concise presentation of the gospel, especially when telling it with their personal testimony. Billy Graham Evangelistic Association has a tract called “Steps to Peace with God” which explains the gospel in five steps using Scripture.

In preparing a 3-minute testimony for one-to-one contact or creating a longer version for speaking with larger groups, it is important to give witness to and help people understand:

1. That God loves them and wants them to experience peace and life – abundant and eternal.
 - We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.³¹
 - For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.³²
2. That God made us in His own image but also gave us free will so we could choose to love Him. We make choices to disobey and go our own way and this separates us from God.
 - For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.³³
 - For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.³⁴
3. That people try their own ways to bridge the gap between themselves and God.
 - There is a way that seems right, but in the end it leads to death.³⁵

³⁰ Adapted from the *STEM Team Member Training Manual* (Minneapolis, Minn.: STEM Press, 2006).

³¹ Romans 5:1, *The Bible*, The New International Version (TNIV), (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2006).

³² John 3:16, *The Bible*, The New International Version (TNIV), (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2006).

³³ Romans 3:23, *The Bible*, The New International Version (TNIV), (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2006).

³⁴ Romans 6:23, *The Bible*, The New International Version (TNIV), (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2006).

- Your sins are the roadblock between you and your God.³⁶
- 4. That Jesus Christ died on the cross and rose from the grave. His death paid the penalty for our sins and it's only by His blood that we can be saved.
 - For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.³⁷
 - But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.³⁸
- 5. That we must believe and personally invite Jesus Christ to be our Lord and Savior.
 - Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.³⁹
 - That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.⁴⁰
 - If the person/people you are talking with desires to begin a relationship with Jesus Christ, you may lead the person in a prayer confessing his/her sin, repenting, believing that Jesus died for his/her sins and committing to follow Jesus as Savior and Lord.
 - Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.⁴¹

³⁵ Proverbs 14:12, *The Bible*, The New International Version (TNIV), (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2006).

³⁶ Isaiah 59:2, *The Bible*, The New International Version (TNIV), (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2006).

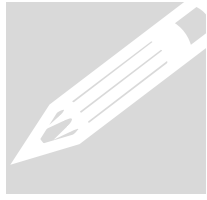
³⁷ 1 Peter 3:18, *The Bible*, The New International Version (TNIV), (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2006).

³⁸ Romans 5:8, *The Bible*, The New International Version (TNIV), (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2006).

³⁹ John 1:12, *The Bible*, The New International Version (TNIV), (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2006).

⁴⁰ Romans 10:9, *The Bible*, The New International Version (TNIV), (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2006).

⁴¹ Romans 10:13, *The Bible*, The New International Version (TNIV), (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2006).



Journaling My Testimony ⁴²

As 1 Peter 3:15 instructs, we must always be prepared to explain the reason for our hope. That answer is found and expressed through our personal testimony. Testimonies can consist of where you used to be, where you are now, and most importantly, how you got here. The following points will help you prepare.

1. Write your testimony to organize your thoughts. Use it while speaking.
2. Keep your testimony brief (3-5 minutes).
3. Avoid speaking “Christianese” – using words that only church people understand (for example: saved, sanctified, cleansed, blessed). Assume the audience knows nothing about Christianity.
4. Be personal by mentioning specific places and people who have touched your life. Avoid gory details.
5. Adapt your testimony to fit the culture and the audience. (You may need to adjust it after you arrive. Talk to the missionary/pastor on-site about cultural cues.)
6. Present the plan of salvation clearly.
7. Be sure the bulk of your testimony describes the saving grace of Jesus.
8. Express why you chose to follow Jesus and why you still choose to follow Him. How is Jesus at work in your life today?
9. Be flexible – be prepared to tell your story in three minutes or thirty. Your testimony could be a few words at the beginning of a sermon, or you may be asked to turn your testimony into a short teaching on grace or forgiveness.
10. Your story is unique and profound. Be confident in your story. Be authentic, honest, and real! Give all the credit to God by emphasizing what He has done in you, not what you have done.

Jesus loves to hear you talk about how you first met Him and about your life together. Remember, as followers of Jesus we have overcome the enemy by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of our testimony.⁴³

So, let your preparation be one of devotion. Allow God’s Holy Spirit to guide you so that others may be encouraged by your story. Pray as you prepare, write down ideas, think about whom you’ll be speaking to. Write it out, practice it, reflect on it, ask others for feedback, and revise it.

⁴² Adapted from the *STEM Team Member Training Manual* (Minneapolis, Minn.: STEM Press, 2006).

⁴³ Revelation 12:11



Group Lesson #3

Paul, “Barney” or “Tim”...Which one am I?

Break the team up into two groups: one group to study the passages relating to Paul and Barnabas’ relationship; the other to discuss the relationship between Paul and Timothy.

Group One: Study the relationship between Paul and Barnabas:

- 1 Corinthians 9:6
- Galatians 2:1-10
- Acts 11:25-30; 12:24–15:39

Group Two: Study the relationship between Paul and Timothy:

- 1 Timothy
- 2 Timothy

Have the groups read their passages and discuss:

1. What are the characteristics of each individual
2. What are the characteristics between each relationship?

As a large group, discuss their findings and the following:

1. Paul, Barnabas or Timothy? Which one do you think you are the most like?
2. Can we be all 3?
 - In our lives, it is possible (and healthy!) to be mentored by another and to be mentoring another. In this model, there is an acknowledgement that we aren’t always the one who “knows everything.” We have a lot to learn from our sisters and brothers in Christ.
3. How can we model these relationships in our daily lives? Who has God put in your life to be mentored by and to mentor?
4. How will we show we are teachable to our hosts on the mission field? What are some practical ways we will establish time to be taught and to teach?

Personal Preparation

Ministry is the integration of your faith with action. It is reaching out in love and sharing the truth of the gospel in any and every way to draw all people to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Ministry preparedness is one of the most important parts of your missions training.

Ministry preparedness is one of the most important parts of your mission training. Because you will be serving in a cross-cultural setting for a short period of time, the more prepared you are, the more effective you will be.

No matter what kind of ministry your team will participate in, pay attention to the Biblical principles shared along the way.

Attitudes and actions will communicate to those you come alongside, so be aware of the message your group is sending. As the team prepares, focus on Biblical priorities you long to share with people you encounter – love, humility, grace, and respect. These priorities will influence how the team members respond to people and circumstances during the trip, and you will discover that your lives will be a blessing to those you seek to serve.

Individual and Team Spiritual Exercises

Devotions/Quiet Times/Bible Study

It is essential that each team member spend time alone with God before, during, and after the mission experience. During the trip, life will be busy and you will be tired, but **time should be set aside to spend with God each day.** Spending time with God, reading His Word, is vital. There are so many messages competing for our attention in this world, and we need to make time to listen to what God has to say. Reading the Bible and spending time thinking about what it says shapes the way we look at God, the world around us, ourselves. There are different options listed next, which describe ways to connect with God and His Word, specifically for a mission experience.

Journaling

Journaling is an individual's collection of memories from an experience...joyful, painful, frustrating, challenging memories and stories of God's faithfulness in the midst of it all! **If you have never kept a journal...now is a good time to start!** You are about to set out on an experience that will remain with you for the rest of your life. You will forget many details even after they occur as vivid, meaningful experiences. Those who journal will be able to process experiences more completely, communicate with others about this experience more effectively and recall all that God has done through what has been written!!

Encouragement

How can you intentionally encourage each other while in this experience together? Encouragement is a powerful thing and will improve team unity and effectiveness on the field. The challenge for you is this: find creative ways to practice giving and encouragement.

Devotional Resources

Purpose: To provide team members with structured Bible studies and personal reflection during the mission trip.

Format: As a team leader, it is important to provide the team members with structure and modeling of time in the word each day. There are several ways, which you can provide the team members with structure. Plan to utilize some model – one suggested below – or one of your own.

Option One: Choose a book to read through. Do a chapter each day and discuss. Suggestions:

- *Knowing God* by J.I. Packer⁴⁴
- *Through the Gates of Splendor* by Elisabeth Elliott⁴⁵
- *Orphan Girl* by Cornerstone⁴⁶
- *Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Secret* by Hudson Taylor⁴⁷
- *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger* by Ronald Sider⁴⁸
- *The Success Fantasy* by Tony Campolo⁴⁹

Option Two: Choose a book of the Bible to read through and discuss portions daily. A sample devotional book using the book of Philippians has been included at the end of this section.

Option Three: Address topics pertinent to your experience, using various Scripture through the Bible. A sample “random” journal following this format is at the end of this section.

Option Four: Depending on the maturity level, you may ask members of the team to lead a devotional time on an assigned morning during the trip. This would allow them the freedom to study on their own in the Word as well as enable them to lead and encourage fellow teammates.

⁴⁴ Packer, J.I., *Knowing God* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Books; 20th Anniversary ed. Edition, June 24, 1993).

⁴⁵ Elliott, Elizabeth, *Through the Gates of Splendor* (Carol Stream, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.; Rev Edition, June 3, 1981).

⁴⁶ Marie James as told to Jane Hertenstein, *Orphan Girl: the memoir of a Chicago bag lady* (Chicago, Ill.: Cornerstone Press Chicago, 1998).

⁴⁷ Taylor, Dr. and Mrs. Howard, *Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Secret* (Chicago, Ill.: Moody Publishers, September 30, 1955).

⁴⁸ Sider, Ronald J., *Rich Christians in the Age of Hunger: Moving from Affluence to Generosity* (Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson, April 12, 2005).

⁴⁹ Campolo, Tony, *The Successful Fantasy* (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, October 1993).

Option Five: Provide a journaling guide for participants to use before, during, and after the trip to help them think about expectations, process the experience and relationships as they serve, and reflect on the trip when they return home. A sample for this journal is found at the end of this section.



Philippians Study

Day One

Read Philippians 1:1-6

Consider:

When Paul thinks of the Philippians, what is he led to do?
What is it that he is confident of?

Apply:

What do you do when think of others?
How could you pray for them?

Ponder:

What were some of the prayers you said for others today?

Day Two

Read Philippians 1:7-11

Consider:

In what ways does Paul desire for their love to abound?
What does he want them to be able to do?

Apply:

What things in life have caused your love to grow?
What new ways can it grow today?

Ponder:

In what ways did your love abound today?
How was the fruit of righteousness displayed in your life today?

Day Three

Read Philippians 1:12-20

Consider:

How did Paul feel about the others that were preaching the gospel?
In what did Paul declare he would rejoice?
What was Paul's eager expectation?

Apply:

What are some of your motives for serving today?
How is Christ exalted in your life?

Ponder:

Thinking back on the day, how was Christ exalted in all you did and said?

Day Four

Read Philippians 1:21-29

Consider:

How does Paul tell the Philippians to conduct themselves?

What does Paul wish to hear of them?

Apply:

What are some ways in which you will conduct yourself following these guidelines today?

What are some ways in which you do not conduct yourself in this manner?

Do you find yourself having “one spirit, one mind, striving together”?

If Paul made a sketch of your team, what would it look like?

Ponder:

How did you see your conduct improve today?

In what ways did you seek to “strive together” today?

Day Five

Read Philippians 2:1-11

Consider:

What is the attitude Paul wishes the Philippians to have?

What did God do for Jesus as a result of his humility?

Apply:

By your actions and words, how will you show others they are more important than you?

In what ways do you tend to seek to exalt yourself?

How can you avoid doing that today?

Ponder:

Who are people on your team that live with the attitude of others being better than themselves?

What are ways you displayed this attitude today?

Day Six

Read Philippians 2:12-15

Consider:

How are we to act according to these verses?

How does Paul desire those in Philippi to appear to the world?

To what are the Philippians instructed to hold fast?

Apply:

What might cause you to grumble today?

How will you stop yourself?

Ponder:

In what circumstances did you choose not to grumble today?

Day Seven

Read Philippians 2:16-25

Consider:

What are the character qualities that Paul points out in Epaphroditus?

Apply:

Which of these character qualities do you feel is your highest strength?
weakest?

If Paul were to write about you, what would his verse read?

Ponder:

How did you display the qualities you wish to be descriptive of you?
How would you re-write verse 25 to be descriptive of your host leader?

Day Eight

Read Philippians 3:1-6

Consider:

What are the things Paul lists in which he could place confidence?

Apply:

In what skills or strength do you place your confidence?

Ponder:

What were the ways that you relied upon your own strength or skills today?
How did you rely upon the Lord today?

Day Nine

Read Philippians 3:7-11

Consider:

How does Paul regard those things that the world highly regards?
What does Paul count all things loss in regard to? Why?

Apply:

Describe the attitude of someone whose highest priority is knowing Christ.
What things do you count as more important than knowing Christ?
How will you display that attitude today?

Ponder:

How did you show others around you that the highest gain for you today is knowing Christ Jesus?

Day Ten

Read Philippians 3:12- 16

Consider:

Paul states that he has not already obtained full knowledge of Christ Jesus. What is his response to this?
What three actions does Paul do in order to “press on”?

Apply:

How do you respond when you realize you have not achieved that which you want?
What do you want to “forget” that lies behind?
What are you “reaching ahead” for?

Ponder:

In what ways did you choose to “press on” today?
Draw a picture of forgetting, reaching, and pressing on.

Day Eleven

Read Philippians 4:1-7

Consider:

What does Paul command the Philippians to do here repeatedly?
What instructions are given regarding requests?

Apply:

What does it mean to rejoice?
What are you anxious about today?

Ponder:

In what situations would rejoicing have been a better response?
How did you see God answer prayers regarding those things you were anxious about today?

Day Twelve

Read Philippians 4:8-9

Consider:

What things does Paul instruct the Philippians to think about?

Apply:

What are you tempted to think about that is contrary to Paul’s instruction?
What could distract you from Paul’s kind of focus today?
How will you keep centered on this instruction?

Ponder:

What did you dwell on today?
Draw out your thought process when a thought contrary to Paul’s instruction came to mind.

Day Thirteen

Read Philippians 4:10-14

Consider:

What attitude has Paul learned?
From where does Paul find strength to do what is instructed of him?

Apply:

How have you learned to be content?
In what areas could you have more contentment?
What things has God asked you to do that you were unsure you could do?

Ponder:

In what circumstances did you choose to be content today?
What did God ask you to do today that you could not have accomplished without him?

Day Fourteen

Read Philippians 4:15-20

Consider:

For what does Paul seek the gift from the Philippians?

What is Paul's perspective on the true nature of gifts?

Apply

List needs in your life. Which ones should be considered as wants instead of needs?

How has the Lord met needs in your life thus far?

Ponder:

In what ways were you amply supplied today?



Topical Journal

Day 1

AM: Read Acts 10:1-35

What's the main point of these verses?

How does it relate to what I am about to experience?

What can I learn from this passage about what my attitude and behavior should be?

PM:

What are my first impressions of the people? of the country? of my place here?

How could I describe my reactions and feelings?

What expectations do I have for this venture?

How do my first reactions relate to the Bible study of this morning?

Day 2

AM: Read Psalm 91

Sketch the verse/phrase that jumps out to you as you reflect on the Psalm.

What is one thing for which I feel a need of God's protection?

Tell God about it.

PM:

One incident of the day during which I felt uncomfortable

or "out of my element" was...

How did I see or sense God's protection or care today?

Day 3

AM: Read John 13:34-35

What is Jesus saying?

What does he mean?

What would that look like in my life today?

What is one thing I will do to show that “discipleship” today?

PM:

What was different about today?

What significant thing happened? How did it impact me?

How was my “discipleship” (see this morning)?

Day 4

AM: Read 2 Corinthians 5:18-20

Jesus is all about relationship. What do these verses say about that?

What do they say my job is?

What makes me nervous about my job?

How will I be an “ambassador” today?

PM:

With whom did I have conversations today?

What was significant about the conversation(s)?

Was I an “ambassador”? How so?

Day 5

AM: Read Philippians 2:14-15

Has the newness of this mission experience worn off?

How would I rate my attitude?

What am I most likely to grumble about?

What specific things could I do/say today to “shine like a star”? Will I?

PM:

What observations do I have about today’s activities?

How was my attitude?

How did I “shine” today?

Day 6

AM: Read Psalm 92:1-4

What does this say about God?

What's my role?

What will I do today if I believe this?

PM:

What was today like?

What new experiences did I have?

Did my life today reflect my study this morning? How so?

Is there anything from today I would like to become a part of my life at home?

Day 7

AM: Read 2 Corinthians 4:1, 7-11, 16-18

How would you summarize Paul's point in one sentence?

How does it apply to me? To our situation here?

If here, what words of encouragement would Paul give our group?

PM:

How is the work going?

Is it how I expected it to go? How do I feel about that?

How did I encourage my teammates today?

Day 8

AM: Read Philippians 2:3-8

Paul says to have the "same mind" as Jesus... the same attitude. What was Jesus' attitude?

What would I look like to others if I had that attitude?

What's one thing I will do to express that attitude today?

PM:

How has my attitude been today?

What opinions do I find changing – for better or worse?

Why are they changing?

Day 9

AM: Read James 2:14-17

What needs do I observe in my teammates?

What needs do I observe in the local people with whom I am working?

Put a star beside the one I could meet.

Here's what I plan to do today to put my faith into action...

PM:

Where did I see Jesus at work today?

Did I do my "faith in action" plan from this morning?

How did it go?

Day 10

AM: Read 1 Corinthians 3:6-8

How will I feel if we don't finish our project the way we intended?

What was Paul's perspective on teamwork?

How do I feel about building on someone else's work, or someone building on mine?

What does this mean for me? For our team?

PM:

Diagram how your team works during the day.

How does my contribution to our day interact with others?

Did I view our work today any differently?

How would the work have gone differently if we had been at home?

Day 11

AM: Read Colossians 3:23-24

It's getting close to the end and everyone is getting weary.

If there's one task I would like to get out of, or do halfway, it would be...

What is Paul's perspective on how we do the things we have to do?

How will I remind myself (and others) today that what we do, we do for Jesus?

PM:

What is the average hourly salary in your hometown for the kind of work you are doing here?

What is the average hourly salary here where you are today?

How do you feel about the discrepancy?

What value does Jesus place on your participation (including your attitude) today?

Day 12

AM: Read 1 John 3:16-18

Now that you are thinking about leaving here, what do these verses mean to you?

What does it look like for me to love in truth and action?

How has my perspective changed from the reflections I had on Day 3?

PM:

If I were a member of this community in which we have worked, what would I be thinking as I saw this group leave?

What would I think of Jesus, if they were the only picture I had of Him?



Day 13

AM: Read Job 42:1-5

Job saw God differently through a difficult and challenging situation.

Who has shown me Jesus in this place?

How do I see God differently now?

What image of God do I want to carry from this place?

PM:

Looking back to Day 1, what expectations have been met? Unmet?

Were my first impressions right?

What can I learn from this?

Day 14

AM: Read Philippians 4:11-13

Rewrite the verses in terms of life here and life at home.

Have I been content here? Why/why not?

Will I be content at home? Why/why not?

What is the secret of contentment, according to Paul?

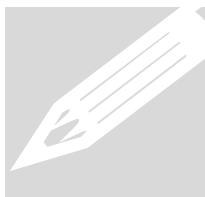
What does that mean for me?

PM:

What is the most significant thing that has happened to me this entire trip?

How is it significant?

How do I think it will change or affect my life?



Journaling Exercises

Before the Trip

What are your expectations of the culture? What are some of the fears you have about what you will be doing? What worries about the trip do you need to take before God? How do you hope He will change you?

How do you feel God is preparing you for your time of service? How do you see Him working in your life? How do you hope to see Him work through you as well as in you?

Upon Arrival

Describe your impression of the culture. What are you learning about your host country? What is their political situation like? How would you describe their family life?

What special events or activities have you participated in? What is the church service like? Write down things they do differently. Describe any interesting foods you eat. Try and capture as many details as possible.

Describe the ministry you are doing with people in country. How do you feel about what you are involved in? In what ways do you see God working as a result of this? Write about people you have met while ministering.

During the Trip

Through the team devotions, what are you learning? How has your way of life changed? Are there spiritual or relational issues, which need “taking care of”?

What are some qualities you value in your teammates? What are you looking forward to on this mission trip? Do you see your relationships with your teammates growing?

Write about your relationship with God. What new things have you learned about Him as a result of your trip? How do you view His purpose in the world? What are you learning in your times of study?

Write about your relationship with others. How are you relating to the team? The missionaries? The nationals? Who have you connected with? Who has made an impact on you? (Write down names, because with time you may find it hard to remember.)

What are you learning about yourself? Is God revealing imperfections in you? Are you learning more godly ways of responding to others? Are you learning about new gifts and abilities or improving upon old ones?

What are your questions and thoughts about future mission possibilities? What will your part be in the Great Commission?



Write down prayer needs and praises as well as those of your teammates.

Coming Home

Upon returning, what are some of the thoughts you have about the American society versus a foreign country? What strikes you as very much the same? What is different?

How are you relating to your friends and family? Are they interested to hear about your trip? Are there certain people you find easier to talk to than others about your experiences? Is it hard to engage in common conversations?

What are some of the things you remember most clearly about your trip?



Group Debriefing During the Experience

Initial Impressions

Use these questions upon first arriving in the country and during the first few days in your conversations with the team.

- What did you see today?
- What did you hear today?
- What did you taste today?
- What did you smell today?
- What is your first impression of the people?
- What apprehensions do you have about being here?
- What are you expecting to have happen to you during this trip?
- What strikes you as the same as home? Different than home?
- What questions do you have at this point?

Mid-Trip Evaluation

- What image comes to mind quickly from today/first few days?
- Draw what your heart looks like right now. Discuss.
- How do you perceive the team working together?
- How do you see God at work in the team?
- How do you see God at work in this country?
- What are the things you are learning about yourself that you desire to be permanent changes?
- How do my days differ here than my days at home? (time, attitude)
- What is one significant thing that has happened since we arrived?
- What is one thing you want to do before you leave?
- How have you seen God at work in yourself?
- How have you seen teammates serve well?
- How do you think the locals are perceiving this group?
- With whom have you established relationships?
- What ministries have you found that you enjoy? Ones that are more challenging?
- How well are we keeping our Covenant?
- What things are helping you to feel comfortable?
- What things are causing you to feel uncomfortable?
- How have some of your expectations been met or not met?

Ending Questions

These are appropriate questions for the end of the trip. Any previous questions can be reused at this time as well.

- How could you have felt more prepared?
- How will you convey what God has shown you or taught you to those at home?
- How have you grown?
- If you could take one image home and paint it on your bedroom wall, what would that be?
- How has God changed you?
- How has this experience changed you?
- How has your image of God changed?
- How has your image of the church changed?
- For what personal growth do you want to be held accountable for upon return?
- How has God surprised you?
- What specific ways have you learned to pray for the country? people? missionaries?
- What characteristics of the culture would you like to integrate into your own life?
- If you were a person of this culture, how would you describe our group to another person?
- What was the most rewarding experience?
- What was the most challenging experience?
- What were the strengths of this team?
- How could we have worked together better?
- Is there anything that you need to say to an individual or the entire team?

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

“BE SENSITIVE!”





Introduction	89
Hot-Climate and Cold-Climate Cultures	90
Country Lesson	93
Developing Relationships	94
Personal Conduct	95
Community Respect	97
Teaching Through an Interpreter	100
Life-Shaping Events	101
Cultural Attitudes	101
Attitude #1—The Guest	101
Attitude #2—The Servant	103
Attitude #3—The Learner	104
Communicating in a New Culture	104
Language Lessons	105
Things to Remember	106



Be Sensitive!

Cross-Cultural Sensitivity

Cross-cultural sensitivity is the quality of being aware and accepting of other cultures. A culturally sensitive person seeks to understand another countries’ traditions and ways of life, and attempts to apply new understandings. Importantly, culturally sensitive people attempt to be free from prejudices and preconceptions about other cultures. Developing cultural sensitivity is important because what is acceptable in one place may be rude or derogatory in others. Our actions, in turn, affect our ability to develop relationships and further the Gospel.

I C O N K E Y	
	Exercises
	Journaling
	Forms
	Bible Study
The New Testament (especially Paul’s teachings) gives evidence of social awareness and cultural sensitivity, but never advocate conformity for conformity's sake. We must always read culture through the lens of the Bible’s teachings. There are people groups who view everything in a given culture as “bad”. It is important to realize there are things in each culture that are not honoring to the Lord, some things that are honoring, and some things that can be redeemed. We must pray for discernment to know the difference.	

Foreign to Familiar,⁵⁰ is a book well worth reading. It is a book of cultural observations geared toward helping people identify the type of culture they come from, and the culture in which they'll serve, and how those cultures shape views of relationships, communication, identity, hospitality, priorities. Lanier has discovered during her life of mission service that identifying these categories provide handles with which to grasp basic cultural similarities and discover how to embrace differences.

The following is adapted from *Foreign to Familiar*. The overview of “hot- versus cold-climate cultures” is helpful. Depending on where your group is traveling, you may want to do more research about how the topics Lanier discusses influences the culture of the country you'll visit.

Hot-Climate and Cold-Climate Cultures

“Hot-climate” cultures are relationship-based. These regions are “the Southern United States, Asia, the Pacific Islands, South America (one exception would be much of urban Argentina, which is eighty percent European), Africa, the Mediterranean countries (except the Jewish population of Israel), the Middle East and most of the rest of the world.

“Cold-climate” cultures are task-oriented. This includes “Canada, the northern US, Northern Europe (Switzerland and above), Israel (the Jewish population that came primarily from Europe), the white populations of New Zealand, Australia, and southern Brazil, and the white population of South Africa and any other countries or parts of countries largely settled by Europeans, such as Argentina.”⁵¹

One of the most important differences between hot- and cold-climate cultures in the work setting is the value of relationship for those from hot-climate orientation versus the value of task for cold-climate people. This is crucial to grasp: “All hot-climate communication has one goal: to promote a ‘feel-good’ atmosphere, a friendly environment. The truth can take a backseat to the relationship.”⁵² This is not to say that hot-climate folks are liars; it simply means friendliness matters more than accuracy. For example – if you have a terrible hair cut, a hot-climate person will tell you that your hair looks nice. He or she will trust you'll find out your hair looks bad another way. This relational orientation means that people are the primary in every situation. In this context, task is combined with relationship, so getting the job done may be delayed by giving attention to the relationship.

For “cold-climate” cultures, “accurate communication is valued... personal feelings are kept separate from objective issues.”⁵³ Feelings are not considered in the

⁵⁰ Lanier, Sarah A., *Foreign to Familiar* (Hagerstown, MD, McDougal Publishing, 2000).

⁵¹ Ibid. 20

⁵² Ibid. 25

⁵³ Ibid, 26.

communication process. What matters most is an accurate response. When a job needs to be done or a question answered factually, the cold-climate person is focused on the task. For example – if you have a terrible hair cut, a cold-climate person will tell you he/she thinks it looks bad. “It’s not about you. It’s about your hair.”⁵⁴ This task orientation means the job or the goal is the priority, and relationship is separate from the work to be done. In order to accomplish tasks, relationships may need to be “set aside”, feelings may be neglected.

It’s important to remember that most people think that everyone is wired the way they are. So, when a task person interacts with a relational person, offense may be taken by actions and attitudes and hurt may develop. If we understand the different orientations, then adjustments can be made as we interact with each other.

Some Points to Remember About Communication

Hot-climate cultures communicate indirectly; Cold-climate cultures communicate directly.

Direct Communication

- Short, direct questions show respect for the person’s time, as well as professionalism.
- A ‘yes’ is a ‘yes,’ and a ‘no’ is a no.’ There are no hidden meanings.
- An honest, direct answer is information only. It does not reflect on how the person feels about you.
- You can say what you think (nicely), and it will usually not be taken personally.

Indirect Communication

- It’s all about being friendly.
- Every question must be phrased in such a way as to not offend by its directness.
- Use a third party for accurate information if you sense that a direct question will be too harsh, or not get the results you are seeking.
- A ‘yes’ may not be an answer to your question. It may be the first step in beginning a friendly interchange. Or verbal compliance may be required by the culture. Therefore, avoid yes-or-no questions.
- Avoid embarrassing people.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

- **Discuss:** What adaptations may you need to make after learning the differences between hot-climate and cold-climate cultures—with one another, with those you will serve alongside?



What does the Bible have to say?

As we think about cultural differences, how do we put the knowledge into practice? Philippians 2 gives us the place to start. Read Philippians 2:1-5. Ask the group to reflect on the following questions:

1. What characteristics of a follower of Jesus does Paul describe with “if” statements, found in verse 1? List them. Why do you think Paul uses these characteristics as the foundation for what comes next?
2. In verse 2, what does Paul call followers in Philippi to? What might this have to do with your team, with your mission?
3. Read Philippians 2:3-4 again. Paraphrase these verses. How do they connect with relating to people of another culture?
4. What does verse 5 challenge us to be?

Putting it into practice

Cindy Judge, writes:

“Demonstrating your acceptance of the way things are done in other countries shows honor, respect, and the love of Christ.”

“If we are to be servants with the humility and love of Christ, we need to show openness and acceptance to the way of life of our hosts. When it comes to doing a task, you may be tempted to think and act more like an American than a Christian. When you’re tempted to ask the typical ‘American’ question, ‘How can this job be done better or faster?’, you need to stop and remind yourself that this culture is operating with different values and that your question might be inappropriate or even disrespectful.”⁵⁵

So remember:

- Be open to learning why your hosts do things the way they do.
- It may not be important to introduce them to your favorite higher technology.
- You are trying to build relationships that honor the Lord, whom you represent.

⁵⁵ Judge, Cindy, *Before You Pack Your Bag, Prepare Your Heart* (Wheaton, Ill.: Campfire Resources, Inc., 2005), 21-23.

- You have come to serve in whatever capacity is needed.
- You have come to learn from your new friends.
- You have come to accept and love brothers and sisters in Christ who are different from you.”⁵⁶

A little homework for the team – memorize Philippians 2:3-4. Spend some time praying about openness to learning from a culture unlike your own.



Country Lesson

It is time for a little lifestyle lesson about the country/region where you will be serving. The Team Leader (or someone in the group) should do some research on what life is like in the place you will be serving. What kinds of houses do people live in? What types of work do people do? What is family life like? What clothes do people wear? What religion(s) is (are) practiced in the country or in the area in which you'll be staying? How does religion impact daily life? What values are important to people in the country your team is traveling to?

Cultural Radar

- Identifying values is important as you prepare to enter into another culture. Discuss with the team, what values are evident in North American culture?
- *Possible responses:* materialism, cleanliness, thriftiness, work ethic, guilt/shame, practicality, initiative, self-reliance, privacy/personal property, superiority of physical power, determination, opportunism, aggressiveness, concern for physical appearance, preparation for the future, fatalism, entitlement, idealization, pride.
- How do they relate (or not) to the culture in which the team will be serving? We, who travel, need to be aware of the cultural values that shape us, as we encounter differing values in other places (this can be true of domestic travel in the US, as well as international travel).
- Now, it's time to talk about some things the team needs to consider in entering into a new culture.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

We serve a relational God—One who created us and desire us to be in relationship with Him and others. Therefore, we must live a life where our relationship with God and others come first.

Developing Relationships

Getting to know the people is the most important aspect of your mission trip. This must be of the highest priority. As you prepare and as you go, pay attention to the people around you and be intentional in getting to know others. It is good to build and fix things, but for your host, it is more important to get to know you. Therefore, loving and encouraging people are the greatest ministries you can offer. Manual labor and people ministries can be the context in which you build relationships.

The most important relationship you will have is with the pastor/director and church leaders of the ministry hosting your team. They are to be treated with respect at all times. Before your team travels, learn a bit about the ministry leadership you'll be working with, ask for prayer requests from them, and pray for them as a team. When you meet the pastor/director and church leaders, shake hands, nod, bow (or greet them in the culturally-acceptable manner).

In speaking with community and church leaders, be sure to address them in a way that is respectful. Learn and use titles that are appropriate to them. Listen to how other people speak to them and ask what is courteous.

Remember that what the pastor/director and church leaders set priorities for what should happen during the mission experience. Conversations about tasks and programs will all be dealt with before your team arrives. Yet, there are always changes to plans, given the way circumstances unfold. If you have concerns about priorities or schedules, you may respectfully voice a suggestion to the Merge staff or your trip facilitators. Let trip facilitators be the liaison with the local church leaders. Your group is there to fit into the agenda and desires of your host ministry. Respect is key to relationship with host leaders, families, and participants in the mission experience.

There are simple steps you can take to build relationships during your mission experience. 1) Spend time talking to people. Think about questions you can ask those you meet, even before you travel. 2) Plan time in your schedule to get to know people. Invite locals to work with you. Beware of multi-tasking. It's OK to stop what you are doing to talk with someone. 3) Accept invitations. If a pastor's family invites you to dinner, make it a priority to adjust your schedule to make it happen. Accept all invitations to eat with the church members at church or in homes. Eat what you are served. 4) Graciously accept all gifts and help offered. 5) Ask to look at your hosts' family photo album. Bring your own pictures to show them your family. 6) Invite hosts to participate in your cultural/tourist days. Know that when someone is a guest, whoever invited them is to cover all expenses (travel, meals, housing, etc).

Personal Conduct

Flexibility

- It is important to be flexible on your mission trip. This attitude is key to your effectiveness, group unity, and peacefulness.
- Ministry opportunities are your ultimate priority. Make changes in the original schedule, if necessary, to accommodate these opportunities.
- Do not feel the need to finish a work project. Most hosts are comfortable with unfinished projects. They care more about relationships than accomplishments.
- Make sure people are more important than work projects.
- Make excellence and interaction your goal in people ministries.

Clothing and Appearance

- Our goal is to be as culturally sensitive to the people we are ministering to as possible. When wearing T-shirts decide whether what you are wearing is a good witness for Jesus Christ or at least neutral. In some countries, such as some Latin American countries, crosses and pictures of Jesus are seen as “a Catholic thing” so the Evangelical world here tends to shy away from wearing crosses and t-shirts with Jesus on them. Remember you are traveling, not as a tourist, but as a guest.
- For some mission teams, clothing restrictions are controversial. Cultural values are different between Christian and non-Christian people. Your ministry is compromised if your group is unwilling to follow the conservative dress of the local Christian people. The goal is not to push boundaries, but to make clothing a non-issue in your ministry. Many other countries already have the idea that youth from Western cultures are sexually loose by the clothing choices and sexual decisions they make, as seen on American TV shows and movies.

Opposite Sex

- Problems often occur when members of the mission teams begin to focus on developing relationships with people they’re ministering to, whom they’re also attracted to. Do not allow boyfriend/girlfriend relationships to begin with someone to whom you are ministering.
- Sexual misconduct is a reason to send a group member home immediately.
- Flirting can send confusing signals to your brothers and sisters about the purpose of your trip. It can also be interpreted as a sexual advance and invitation for a more serious relationship. This can lead to serious consequences for your group and complicate ministry.

- Care should also be given to relationships among team members as well. The hosts will notice if your group is more interested in flirting with each other than in doing ministry.

Attitudes & Actions

Remember that the culture you are entering is not weird or bad, just different. Your role is to discover the beauty of the culture.

- When driving or visiting any area it is best to look, but not point.
- When in a situation that is upsetting to you, try not to yell, scream, or make negative remarks. People understand a lot by the tone of your voice.
- Swearing is a negative response and a lousy witness.
- Ask about the appropriateness of 'leisure time' activities. Is it OK to play cards? If so, be sure to invite your hosts into the game. Don't gamble.
- Respect the church sanctuary - behave respectfully at all times.
- Avoid wrestling, roughhousing, and horseplay when you are with your hosts.
- Many of your hosts may know limited English, but sarcasm crosses the language barrier very easy. Avoid it!
- Watch what you say! The only thing you should promise is to pray...you can fulfill that promise.

Personal Touch/Boundaries

- Restrictions should be made on dating couples going on mission trips. Physical affection and the need to always be together can cause disunity in groups, a lack of proper focus for ministry, and a loss of respect for the team by the hosts. Excessive touch between males and females is not looked upon positively. The best thing to do is for males and females not to hug or kiss in public. No back rubs in public either.
- Married couples should be cautious of their physical contact in order to be sensitive to the culture. Holding hands may be okay, but check with the mission host.
- When interacting with people during mission ministry, touching someone of the opposite sex over the age of 10 is discouraged. This can be easily misinterpreted.
- Young children can be hugged, but it is best by someone of the same sex.

Smoking

- Your group must decide its own rules on smoking. Be aware that evangelical churches in many countries believe Christians should not smoke. In fact, smoking can be seen as offensive. Therefore we ask that you follow these guidelines:
 - No smoking on church property.
 - Do not smoke in a place where you can be seen by pastors, church members, or children.

Illegal Substances and Drinking

- It may be tempting to participate in these activities, but they are absolutely wrong on mission trips.
- These trips are to be illegal substance free. No drugs!
- These trips are alcohol free. No drinking!
- If a member of the group is found in possession of drugs or alcohol, the group should send that team member home immediately
- Do not purchase alcohol even as gifts for family members.

Community Respect

Quiet Hours

- Most likely your housing will be near homes of others. Therefore, to ensure the good reputation of the ministry please be quiet at appropriate times.
- Please be quiet until a designated time (around 7 am).
- Please be quiet after a designated time (around 10 pm on weekdays).
- Keep voices at a low volume in restaurants. Don't be loud & obnoxious foreigners.

Photography and Videography

- Taking pictures and video is acceptable in most cultures. Out of respect for the people to whom you are ministering follow these guidelines:
- Do not take photos or video until the last two days at your ministry site when you have developed the proper relationships.
- Do not take photos or video during a food distribution.

- Photos of children & adults in neighborhoods, at churches, and at children's homes are appropriate after relationships have been developed. Please ask for permission to take the photos.
- Many home churches want to see the “results” of your mission trip, but please be sensitive to not act like tourists. Different people (including the children) have said that they do not want pictures taken because they don't know where they are going or what they are for. Unfortunately, because of people who have put photos of kids on the Internet for their own benefit, people can be leery of picture taking, so always take great measures to be sensitive.
- Designate a team photographer for each day. Then you can share photos at the end of the trip. Rotate who takes pictures, so the photographer doesn't get pulled out of ministry opportunities the entire time.”

Shopping

- Stay in groups of 3-4 people. Always have at least one male in each group.
- While shopping protect your wallets, purses and backpacks from theft.
- Bargaining is not only acceptable, but expected in many countries. Please be respectful in this, however. You may be able to get a rock bottom price, but what may that say about Christian tourists? Ask your hosts for advice in bargaining practices.

Donations, Gift Giving and Give-Aways

- Giving donations or gifts is trickier than you may think in another culture. There are inter-personal, cultural, and ministry issues involved in gift giving that you may not understand. If you desire to purchase a gift for a national, be sure to check with your host first to find out if and what type of gift giving is appropriate.
- If the host missionary cautions you against giving gifts (i.e. toys to children who come to a program), please listen to them and respect what they have to say – and don't give gifts away.
- Purchasing a gift for the host pastor & family is appropriate. A recommended gift item is one that represents the area you come from (T-shirts, mugs, souvenir items, etc.) and something that they cannot buy.
- It is appropriate to give a gift to someone who has provided you with housing and meals, and the missionary host.
- Do not give money to anyone unless you have consulted with the host missionary first.

Giving donations or gifts is trickier than you may think in another culture. Indiscriminate handouts are destructive. Equally destructive is the habit of making promises.

- Do not give away personal items to individuals, such as watches or hats, because this may create jealousy or friction among those who have not received them.
- Indiscriminate handouts are destructive; but equally destructive is the habit of making promises. Do not promise any long-term favors (i.e. looking into bringing an individual home to the US for a visit or for schooling).
- Before collecting items, check with the host missionary to determine if it would be appropriate.
- Small gifts for friends made during the mission trip may be appropriate, but should be gifts of friendship that will not create begging or jealousy. If you make a bracelet for one person, make one for everyone. Photographs, bookmarks, even postcards from your home are nice gifts. They indicate a friendship rather than a demonstration of the difference between the haves and the have-nots.
- Determine in advance what you will do with your group's food or water. If you give a drink or snack to one person, you must be prepared to give to everyone!
- Having snack time, for the kids, at a children's program is appropriate.
- Inviting a pastor's family to eat with your group is appropriate.
- Orphanages need certain items, but rarely used clothes. Check with Merge or your trip facilitator about what is appropriate to donate.
- It is rarely appropriate to financially support a church, ministry or individual after your trip is over. Communicate with the host missionary or Trip Facilitator about the appropriateness of this type of support requests you may receive and how to implement it.
- Please don't expect to leave your junk at the ministry site when you leave.

Tips

- Locals are paid very low wages. Most survive off of the tips they receive.
- Tips for waiters should be 10% in many Latin American countries.
- Tips should not be given to beggars, street entertainment, etc.
- Do not give money to people on the street who wash your car windows unless you request for them to clean them. If they initiate it try to discourage them by waving your finger "no" and do not pay them.

Teaching Through an Interpreter

Interpreters are very special people. They clarify and provide understanding. Here are some tips on how to best utilize your interpreter:

1. Interpreters handle translation in different ways, depending on their knowledge, experience, and comfort level. Some prefer simultaneous translation, while others are more efficient when sentences or a paragraph are spoken by the English speaker and then translated. Generally, simultaneous translation is less effective for training workshops.
2. Before you teach, review all technical terms and words important. Also, talk about nuances, key sentences and ideas to be covered. Discuss any explicit and implied meanings.
3. If using an overhead projector and handouts, be sure to ask the interpreter or someone fluent in the language to translate and prepare these before the workshop.
4. When using a chalk or white board, do some examples with the interpreter of what you intend to use. This lets the interpreter see how you handle the materials and where you will be positioned.
5. Interpretation usually means the English speaker will have about half the allotted time to share. So, if the time slot is 60 minutes, the spoken time for the translator will be closer to 30 minutes or less. Keep this in mind when preparing.
6. When working with a translator, be sure to watch the faces and eyes of the listeners. This will help you determine whether or not the subject, idea or illustration is being grasped. Be ready to repeat or rephrase something said.
7. When working with interpreters, English speakers are more effective when care is taken with word choices and how sentences are formed and expressed.
8. Do not rush through what you want to say or share. You want your listeners to learn with understanding and insight. And you can help learners discover a truth by using an illustration or anecdote. Decide ahead of time what is essential and important.
9. Some interpreters prefer to work from a manuscript. Be cautious about a word-for-word translation. Good interpreters grasp ideas and concepts to give clarity to what is being said. Translation is more effective and enjoyable when the English speaker and

interpreter are a synchronized team, as together they explain, explore, show and guide.

10. Interpreters must also be effective in handling translation from participants who raise a question, give comments and ask for clarification.
11. Interpretation is extremely demanding, so the English speaker needs to beware of overburdening the interpreter. If possible, the interpreter should have an alternate or backup person.
12. Never take your interpreter for granted. Always remember that without your mouthpiece—the interpreter—your words and ideas will remain beyond understanding and you will be out of touch with your listeners.



Life-Shaping Events

It is time for a little history lesson about the country/region where you will be serving. To give context for the current life situation, it is helpful to highlight significant events for the country and its people. What national and global experiences have shaped the lives of people whom your team will serve?

Be sure to do some research regarding the place you will travel. What significant events happened 100, 50, 25, 10 years ago? What has happened recently that shapes the life of people in the country? Make time in training sessions to cover important markers in the story of the nation, so team members are a bit more aware of context as they get to know people and learn about life in this place.

As your team prepares to enter into new relationships in a new location, be intentional about developing attitudes that will help you make the most of your experience. You may want to study one “Attitude” each meeting.”



Cultural Attitudes

Attitude #1—The Guest

Group Discussion

Think about and share answers to the following questions (in small groups or with the whole team).

- What is your favorite food? What is your least favorite food?
- What is your reaction when your least favorite food is placed before you?
- When you were young and you went to a friend’s house, what advice did your mother give you about how you should behave?
- Was her advice hard to follow? Why? or Why not?

- As you anticipate traveling to the country where our team will serve, what do you think will be most challenging for you as you think about being a guest in a new culture?



What the Bible has to say

The apostle Paul had quite a story... born a Jew, as an adult he was a model follower of Yahweh. There were lines drawn for faithful Jews – to stay clear of that which would make one unclean – and that meant staying away from Gentiles. Paul met Jesus on his way to Damascus, which completely transformed his heart and life. As if the transformation from faithful Jew to Christian wasn't enough, Paul was later called to share the Good News with Gentiles. As a Christ-follower, Paul's orientation and pre-conceptions were continually challenged. God expanded his understanding of love and grace, which extends to all people, everywhere. In responding to God's call on his life, Paul crossed borders and cultures to interact with people who were not like him. He learned to value people and places that were different from what he was used to and who he was. Through his personal transformation, Paul was able to be a bridge, seeking to heal the animosity between Jews and Gentiles.

Take a look at what Paul learned on his journey with Jesus in Ephesians 2:1-5; 17-22. Read the passage. And answer the following questions:

- What main ideas stand out in these verses?
- What does this text tell you about Jesus and his hope for the world?
- What is the goal, or end result, of being joined together with people from other cultures?
- What personal challenge, about interacting in new cultures, do you find from Paul's words?

Is it possible to conclude from this passage that, in order for any of us to experience ALL that Jesus Christ has for us, we need to be connected with others from around the planet? True connection is made up of love, respect, honor, care, peace, and unity.



Attitude #2—The Servant

Group Discussion

Break the team into small groups and discuss the following:

Describe a time when someone did something for you. How did you feel about it?

When you hear the word “servant”, what comes to mind? Is it a positive image? negative? mixed?

The second attitude that is essential on a mission trip is that of being a servant. We do not expect others to serve us; we are to serve them. A true servant asks, “How do you want this to be done?” rather than “Let me show you the right way to do this.” We go to another culture to assist them in what they consider to be important.



What does the Bible have to say?

Now, have the small groups read one of these passages:

John 13:1-17

Philippians 2:5-11

Mark 10:35-45

Discuss and record reactions to these questions:

- What does this passage say about the attitude of being a servant?
- How is this different from the way most of the world functions?
- What would it look like if we applied it to our life together as part of this team?

Put it into practice

Come back together as a large group and debrief the findings of each small group.

- What characteristics describe the heart of a servant?
- What do the opposite of these characteristics look like?
- Which three would be most helpful to us as a mission team?
- What is one characteristic you want to focus on developing this week in your life?

Close the session in prayer in small groups. Pray for attitudes developing within team members. Pray for the host country and the needs of the ministry that you'll support while on the trip. Pray for the missionaries who are working with the ministry now.



Attitude #3—The Learner

Group Discussion

In small groups, talk through the following:

Describe a learning experience.

What attitudes does the person learning have?

How does learning relate to traveling to a new place?

Have the small group create a list of things you think are important to learn about where you are going, before you go. Give this information to the Team Leader.

Demonstrating your acceptance of the way things are done in other countries shows honor, respect, and the love of Christ.” (p.21)

With the whole team together – Read Philippians 2:3-4. “If we are to be servants with the humility and love of Christ, we need to show openness and acceptance to the way of life of our hosts. When it comes to doing a task, you may be tempted to think and act more like an American than a Christian. When you’re tempted to ask a typical American question, ‘How can this job be done better or faster?’, you need to stop and remind yourself that this culture is operating with different values and that your question might be appropriate or even disrespectful.

Demonstrating your acceptance of the way things are done in other countries shows honor, respect, and the love of Christ.”⁵⁷

Communicating in a New Culture

Unless you have been fortunate enough to have had ongoing language study of some sort, you will be entering into a culture with little or no knowledge of the language. Your team’s efforts in learning the local language communicates to another culture that you care about them. It is a bridge-builder.

Important things to remember are:

- willingness to try the language
- willingness to laugh at yourself for language blunders
- willingness to learn all you can before going
- willingness to accept the fact that you probably will not be fluent! Dr. Tom Brewster, who has written books on language learning, said “learn a little, use it a lot!”⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Brewster, Dr. Tom and Betty Sue Brewster, *Language Acquisition Made Practical* (Pasadena, Calif.: Lingua House, 1976), 6.



Language Lessons

Lesson 1

Practice learning the sounds of the alphabet, as well as the sounds of other letters not found in the English alphabet (i.e. ll, rr in Spanish).

Learn a simple chorus that has the same tune as one sung in English. Pick one with a few words and is repetitive.

Try to learn the pronunciation of each team member's name in the language.

Lesson 2

- Practice the alphabet already learned.
- Introduce yourself using the pronunciation of your own name in the language being learned. "Hello, my name is _____."
- Begin to practice basic vocabulary for daily life. Include: "hello", "good-bye", "please", "thank you", "I'm sorry"
- Learn to count from 1-10.

Lesson 3

- Review previous lessons – numbers (add 11-20), the song, phrases
- Have the team members work on a very simple introduction to themselves—their name, siblings and other relatives, job, where they live, what they like.
- Learn another song in the local language.

Lesson 4

- Review the previous lessons – numbers (add 21-100), songs
- Have team members practice introducing themselves to each other, talk about where they live, family, etc...
- Develop a list of simple questions that can be learned --- What is your name? Where do you live? What is your work? How old are you? How are you?

Lesson 5

- Review previous lessons – introductions, questions, songs
- Learn John 3:16 in the local language
- Develop a list of survival phrases: "Excuse me", "I'm sorry", "Good", "Bad", "Where is the bathroom?", "Jesus loves you"

- Learn vocabulary for the work the team will do while on the mission.

Remember that your sincere attempt to learn and use the language of the country will greatly encourage the people you are with, even if the pronunciation is not perfect. Learning a language is a way of learning the culture. A language is learned by speaking it – not just listening to it. Be bold and willing to try.

Set aside time to review language lessons. Review songs you may have learned already. Split the team up for practice conversations with one another.

Things to Remember

1. Remember that team members are servants of Jesus Christ, called to be in ministry with the host team.
2. You are not in charge. You are God's servant.
3. Expect things to be radically different from home. Prepare for less comfort and a different diet.
4. Expect different ways of doing things. Understand that cultures are different, not superior or inferior.
5. Respect the host's religious faith. The expressions of faith may be different from those of team members.
6. Be supportive of the ministry that is going on in the area where the team is serving.
7. Look forward to meeting new friends and experiencing a unique Christian fellowship.
8. Expect to learn new skills and ways of thinking. Look forward to the experience of a lifetime.
9. Don't worry about time. Most of the people will not own a watch. It has been said in Latin American contexts, "In the US everyone has a watch, but no one has time. Here we don't have watches, but we have time."
10. Refrain from negativism and complaining when unexpected and undesired circumstances occur in travel and ministry.
11. Rejoice in the Lord always and be thankful for the diversity of God's people.

TEAM BUILDING

“TEAM!” ON THREE

Introduction	109
Getting to Know You—Balloon Bop	110
Dealing with Crisis—Sharing a Meal	110
Building Communication—Lego Mania	111
Raging River	112
Cohesiveness—Relay Races	112
Essential qualities of effective team members	114
Characteristics of an effective team	115
Team Attitudes	117
Communication	117
What does the Bible have to say?	118
Method of Conflict Resolution	118
Styles of Conflict Resolution	119
A Team Covenant	121
Team Covenant Example	121





“Team!” on Three

Team building

The Bible talks about followers of Jesus as the body of Christ, each having its function and purpose in the body. God has gifted us all in unique and special ways. We need each other in order to serve more effectively. In order to be an effective team, we need to learn how to work with the other body parts! In this section, there are different team-building exercises, reflection activities and Bible studies to engage your group in how to work together more effectively and Christ-like. This section also includes “Characteristics of an Effective Team” and some sample Team Covenants.

ICON KEY



Exercises



Journaling



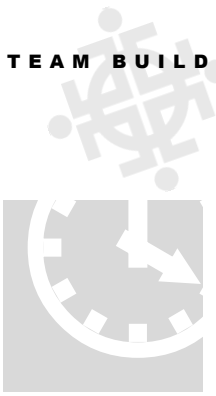
Forms



Bible Study

If you want to go a bit deeper with self-reflection and team coordination conversations, take a look at David Kiersey and Marilyn Bates’ book, *Please Understand Me*.⁵⁹ It has an abbreviated version of the Meyers-Briggs Personality Indicator, along with descriptors. You may also use other personality-type tests such as Meyers-Briggs Personality Indicator or DISC.

⁵⁹ Kiersey, David and Marilyn Bates, *Please Understand Me*, (Del Mar, Calif.: Prometheus Nemesis Book Co, 1984).



Team Building Exercises

Local Service

Find opportunities for your team to serve locally before you travel to another part of the world. Coordinate a local project – i.e. work in soup kitchen, volunteer at local shelter.

Balloon Bop

Supplies—5-6 medium sized balloons.

Make sure the whole team is introduced before you begin the game. The point of this game is to help people learn names and work together. Stand in a circle. Toss a balloon in the air and call someone's name. That person must hit the balloon to keep it in the air. If the person succeeds he/she calls the next name. You can have more than one team, for competition, or have the whole group play together to see if the balloon can stay in the air long enough for each person to have a turn.

Variation—As well as calling out someone's name, also call out a body part, which that person has to use to keep the balloon in the air until he/she calls another person's name and body part.



Dealing with Crisis—Sharing a Meal

Begin a meeting with a meal... not an ordinary meal; it's a meal that comes with a lesson. Before you eat, be sure you pray.

Cook a meal together from the country where you will be traveling. Split the team into smaller groups, responsible for different parts of the dinner. Once the menu has been chosen, have some people shop, others cook, the rest set-up and clean up.

Variation—The Team Leader is to create a “lunch crisis” – (you may wonder what this has to do with team building, but it will make sense as the activity unfolds).

Options for creating the crisis:

- Pre-order food at a nearby restaurant. Send a designated group to pick it up and have them determine how the food will be divided among the whole team.
- Elect one person to purchase food for the entire team without any discussion or input from the team members (about \$3 per person).
- Give each person \$3 and send them to a grocery store to purchase lunch, then eat together.
- Pre-pack food and allow a chosen group to distribute it according to their determination.

Discussion

After the team is done eating, unpack the experience a bit. Ask:

- How did the “task” of feeding the team get accomplished?
- Did everyone get to eat (and have enough)?
- How were decisions made?
- How did the team feel? Was everyone happy? Why or why not?
- Did we learn anything about how we function from this exercise?
- What might this have to do with the mission experience?

Building Communication—Lego Mania

Supplies: Lots of Legos

Here is a chance to see how groups work together, how they communicate, who rises to the top as a leader. This activity includes a discussion time at the end to help the team process their experience.

- Divide the Legos into four identical piles (same amount ~ color, shape and size). Before the activity, take one of the four piles of Legos and make a fairly complex object. Don't let the team members see this model (hide it someplace).
- Create three teams for the activity. The goal of the game is be the first team to duplicate the model you've made.
- At the start of the game, each team sends one representative out of the room to study the model for 10 seconds. That person then returns to the team and describes how to assemble the Legos. But the person who looked at the model cannot touch the Legos.
- Every 30 seconds, another person from each team gets 10 seconds to look at the model.
- As the game develops, there will be confusion and conflict in terms of whose descriptions are correct and whose are not correct. How each group handles the process will yield valuable insights as to how the participants will work together under stress.
- End the game in 5-10 minutes, or when a team successfully completes their model, whichever comes first.

▪ Debrief questions:

1. How did team members communicate in ways that were helpful?
Not helpful?
2. What can we all learn about communication from this activity?

Raging River

This bridge-building activity is an interactive way to learn about team and communication. For this bridge-building exercise you will need to create a river (piece of tape to mark the borders of the river) and for each team, which people can stand on. Divide your mission team into 2 or more groups of 8 people. The goal of the activity is for each group to get across the river. The objects used by each team must always be touching someone...if they set the object in the river and take their hand/foot off of it...it is gone and the team only has four objects now...and so on. Add some more challenges for the group to deal with: choose one team member to be blind, another to only use one leg, another who cannot speak. If any one touches the river, they must start all over. It is fun to see who leads, who follows, who encourages, etc...

Bring the groups together and ask the following questions:

1. What did you find out about yourselves as you tried to work together?
2. Who became the group leader? Why? How did the rest of you feel about your leader?
3. Did everyone in your group participate? If not, why not?
4. What new skills did you discover in your teammates?

Cohesiveness—Relay Races

Relay Races are a great way to laugh and encourage teamwork. There are a myriad of ideas for teams competing against each other to get objects or people from one place to another. The point of this activity is to have fun, develop relationships, and see how your group functions together (or not). Split your mission team into at least two groups and let the races begin.

Take video of your mission team doing relay races. They can be quite entertaining to watch later! Here are a few ideas:

Cotton Ball Relay

Needed: Cotton balls and spoons for each team. Two bowls for each team.

Rules: Determine a starting line and a turn back line about 15 feet apart. Divide the group into even teams and have them line up at the start line. Put cotton balls for each player in a bowl at the start line. Place the empty bowls at the turn back line.

Say Go!. Each player uses the spoon to scoop a cotton ball from the bowl and then walk (or run) to the other bowl and drops it in. If they drop it along the way they don't pick it up. Instead they return to the bowl and get another cotton ball (you'll want to have at least 2 cotton balls for each player just in case they all drop a few). After they've completed the task successfully, they race back to the line and hand the spoon to the next person. The race continues until one team wins.

Old Clothes Relay

Needed: Box of old clothes for each team.

Rules: Divide players into equal teams. For each team have a suitcase or box containing a large shirt, shorts, boots and hat. In turn each player must put on old clothes and run to a certain point where they take the old clothes off, put them back in the box, and run back to start where the next player repeats the process etc. until one team finishes and wins.

Shave the Balloon Relay

Needed: Balloons, shaving cream, and razors

Rules: Divide into equal teams. Blow up balloons for each player team and cover with shaving cream. Hang balloons from a string tied to an overhead pole etc. You can even draw faces on the balloons for fun. Each team sends one player at a time to shave their balloon.

Winning: Each completed balloon gets a point. Each popped balloon gets zero points. The most points wins!



Construction Skill Relay

Figure out a way to practice skills that need to be used on the mission site. Will you dig holes? Hammer? Nails? Saw wood... with an actual hand saw? Sounds like it's time for a Skills Relay.

This takes a little time to plan for materials/tools and it takes some space to allow people room to move around. Determine 6 essential skills that will be helpful to your work project – in addition to those mentioned above, what about sweeping (it's important to learn the correct way to do this), painting, measuring? There will be one station for each skill.

Preparation: Gather enough sample materials for up to 5 people to “practice” at a time. Assign a “knowledgeable/capable” leader to each skill station, which are set up around a room or a parking lot or someplace else you can get messy. Materials should be set up at each station, ready to use. The leader's job is to demonstrate the correct way to do the task; then, have each participant do the task – until they accomplish it well. The leader gives the final approval for the participants to move on to the next station.

Running the Relay: Divide your mission team into smaller groups (3-4 people is ideal). Assign each group a skill station at which to start. When all people in the group have the approval of the skill station leader, their small group may move to the next skill. Be sure the groups are rotating from station to station in the same direction... be sure all groups go to all stations... keep the groups together... this is NOT a race to finish first. The point is to finish well, help the team members develop skills and learn to work together to accomplish the tasks.

Relay Race Debrief

With your relay team, have group members answer the following questions:

- Share a past experience in which you were a member of a group or team (i.e. sports, music, planning committee). List the experiences shared on newsprint, visible to all.
- Share the benefits of being part of these teams? What were the challenges?
- What is the difference between a group experience and a team experience? Have your small group come up with a definition of a team... and write it on newsprint.



What does the Bible have to say about teamwork?

Have each small group look at one of the following passages:

- 1 Corinthians 3:6-9
- 1 Corinthians 12:12-19
- 1 Corinthians 12:20-27

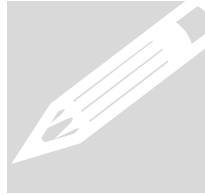
What does the passage have to say about being a part of a team? List your answers on newsprint.

- 1 Cor. 3:6-9 (different people have different roles; God causes growth; we're all in this together)
- 1 Cor. 12:12-19 (no room for inferiority; necessity of all parts; all one body)
- 1 Cor. 12:20-27 (no superiority; no division; one-for-all/all-for-one)

Essential qualities of effective team members are:

- A Christ-centered life.
- Commitment to the mission work of the church, exemplified by an enthusiastic and positive attitude.
- Willingness to follow guidance of the team leader.
- Flexibility and openness to other cultures and ways of worship.
- Willingness to serve in friendship and mutuality with the host and the host church.

- A cooperative and courteous way of relating to others.
- The Bible talks of the body being made up of many functions and desires that we function as one in spite of our differences.



Characteristics of an effective team

Divide into groups and discuss the following characteristics of being an effective team. Each group should record their reflections and share them with the larger group. When the exercise is over, it would be helpful to get the notes from each group to compile for future use in creating a Team Covenant.

Clear purpose and vision

1. Why are we going?

Recognition of gifts, abilities and personalities in each other

2. What gifts do you see in others?

Agreement on the plan

3. We will adhere to the agenda of our hosts, not ours.

Environment of affirmation and appreciation

4. How can we do this?

Solid relationships

5. How will we accomplish this?

Trust

6. Are there any issues of trust we must address?

Able to manage mistakes

7. Know and follow Biblical guidelines for conflict. (Mathew 18)
8. How will we act WHEN others screw up?

Good communication

9. What's our model of communication?

Selfless contribution

10. What area is it going to be difficult to be selfless in?
11. How can you encourage others?

Respect for others

12. What will this look like?

Free flow of information and communication

13. Communication is key.

Develop positive attitudes

14. Culturally, how will this happen with a language barrier?

Commitment to learn. Never assume you know everything

15. What is one area you could stand to grow in?

Flexible

16. Is this an area you will have problems in?



Team Attitudes

Like Christ

Your attitude should reflect Christ at all times. Your words will often be validated or cancelled by your attitudes.

Attack the problem, not the person. James 4:11

Verbalize feelings. Don't act them out. Eph 4:25

Forgive, in place of judging. Mark 11:25

Give more than you take. Acts 20:35

Let love dominate. Luke 10:27

Humble yourself before the Lord. James 4:10

Actions will speak louder than words. John 13:35

Do not complain. James 5:9, 1 Thes. 5:16

Flexibility

Being flexible is essential to survive cross culturally. Many things may seem wrong to you but they are just different. Without flexibility, both cultures will seem wrong. Be open to learning what is important in other cultures and why it is important.

Toward Relationships

The way you interact with each other is what will make your teamwork possible. Be aware of the way you treat: team members vs. team leaders, best friends, cliques, nationals you will come into contact with, dating relationships on your team and/or in your host culture. Be intentional in developing relationships with many people you come in contact with—sometimes the places you least expect it.

Leadership

Attitudes of leaders, and attitudes toward leaders vary from place to place. It'd be helpful for your mission team to discuss expectations of team leaders as well as expectations of team members. Find out the accepted leadership structures in the place you are traveling. If you are from a context that is more collaborative in approach, inviting input from many people, it may be surprising to encounter cultures where there is clearly defined hierarchy. In all contexts, leaders ought to follow the example of Jesus Christ – who loved others deeply, used authority wisely, and was sacrificial in his responses to people.

Of Servanthood

Jesus Christ calls us to serve others; to love others. As team members interact with each other, remember the call to service. How will servanthood fit into your team? What does Phil 2:3-4 say and how can you apply it as a team?

Reminders for Healthy Teams

1. Work out problems one on one as often as possible
2. Involve team leadership if it cannot be worked out one on one.
3. Prayer times as individuals, small groups, and as a team are vital.
4. Build team unity. Work at it. Commit to it.
5. Realize conflict is not all bad. Sometimes, rightly handled conflict will bring you closer as a team.
6. In conflict focus on the issue, not the personality or person
7. Avoid blaming, anger and rage. Often these will cause deeper conflict.
8. Do not attack, gossip, or avoid the conflict.

Communication

Inevitably, there will be communication challenges within the mission team (with people who speak our “mother tongue”!). There will be times that someone is misunderstood, someone is hurt, and conflict will come. In order to work through these times, it is important to set some communication ground rules, and teach the team how to resolve conflict.

The art of relating

Respect other team members. Seek to understand what the person is saying, where they are coming from. Be careful not to jump to conclusion, but hear them out.

Participate in discussions

As an individual member of the team, your opinions, thoughts, facts, and feelings are important. Your silence may indicate agreement with a decision or opinion, whether or not that is true.

Address behavior, not personality—and be specific.

Keep from making generalizations like, “you’re always thinking of yourself,” or “you’re too sensitive.” Instead, give the person you are speaking with concrete examples like, “it is important for you to limit the time you spend in the bathroom so there is adequate time for each of us.”

Speak for yourself.

Share your own thoughts, feelings, and opinions. It is important not to disclose the feelings or thoughts of another person. Allow them to do so for themselves.

Use “I” messages.

This allows you to share your own feelings without making others feel defensive. For instance, “I was angry when you gave everyone but me a piece of candy” allows you to express your frustration and allows another person to hear it. Had you said,

“You make me angry,” the other would have felt attacked and had no specific behavior to address.

“Never” use “never” or “always.”

These are inflammatory phrases. “You never do your share,” will hurt feelings and is hardly ever true. Better phrasing of that would be, “It seems to me you were trying to avoid carrying as many blocks as some of the others today.” That allows for discussion of the perceptions and the realities, such as the person wasn’t feeling well or the viewer wasn’t there to see them at all times.



What does the Bible have to say?

Scripture lays out important principles for us in relating to one another. Take a moment to pray for your group and the hearing of God’s Word. Read **Mark 12:28-34** and discuss the passage:

What is the greatest commandment? What does loving God entail?

What is the second greatest commandment? How are we to love others?

How does loving God, loving others, loving ourselves keep us close to the Kingdom of God (vs. 34)?

How does this passage call the mission team to relate to one another? Would putting these verses into practice change how you responded to the “food crisis” at the beginning of this meeting? How?

Put it into practice

Time to talk about resolving conflict... it will enter into some part of the mission experience... when we encounter a time, place, relationship, experience where there’s conflict, what do we do?

Method of Conflict Resolution

- Check my attitude (Philippians 2:3). Ask, “am I being overly sensitive or is this an issue that needs to be dealt with?”
- Approach the other in love (1 Peter 4:8). Remember that others are out of their normal environment, just like you.
- Ask for clarification. Ask the person you are in conflict with, “did I understand you correctly?” or “what did you mean by...?”
- Listen (James 1:19). You have two ears and one mouth. Seek to understand, rather than to prove your own point.
- Own your own stuff. Acknowledge your responsibility in the conflict or misunderstanding.

- Work out a mutually acceptable understanding or solution. It's not about one person "winning" and the other "losing" but find middle ground, a compromise.

Styles of Conflict Resolution⁶⁰

Compromising

- The compromiser doesn't feel it's possible to satisfy everyone fully; the aim is to make all parties partially satisfied, preserve relations.
- The compromiser subordinates personal desires for the common good of all parties and/or the organization. This person seeks both creativity and effectiveness.
- "Win some; lose some". While giving up the "best", it often achieves the "good".
- The goals of all parties are valid; a compromiser does not believe the differences are worth fighting over. Time doesn't allow for deeper solutions.

Competing

- The competitor's goal is to win at all costs. S/he believes his/her ideas, values, and goals are supreme and cannot let people stand in his/her way.
- The competitor operates with the belief that their way is the only way. This person will make their way through assertion, domineering behavior with smooth diplomacy or raw power.
- "I win; you lose." In this mode there is possible short-term gain. But, the approach creates:
 - Polarization between the parties in conflict and fosters hostility.
 - Sometimes the competitor is needed when a quick or unpopular decision must be made.

Avoiding

- The avoider stays out of conflict; seek neutrality. This person doesn't care enough about the issue to suffer tension or discomfort over it.
- The avoider is unassertive, passive, does not cooperate in defining conflict or finding solutions. This person reacts with denial and withdrawal to tense situations.

⁶⁰ Adapted from World Servants, *Pre-Field Training* (Siloam Springs, Ariz.) 5-8.

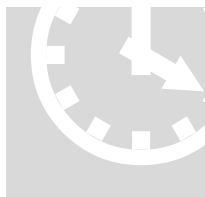
- “You lose; I lose.” Avoidance is a non-productive strategy. This approach abdicates responsibility and produces great frustration.
- The avoider believes the problem is not their responsibility. The problem is viewed as relatively insignificant. Participants may be helpless, as they are too fragile or insecure. The differences are irreconcilable.

Accommodating

- The accommodator preserves relationships, within groups and opposing parties, at any cost. This person believes that the work and goals are less important than relationships.
- The accommodator tries to embrace everyone involved in the conflict. He/she will sacrifice self and accept blame to bring peace to relationships.
- “You win; I lose.” This person eventually feels like a doormat. S/he allows those who always get their way to believe their ideas are superior.
- This person thinks the problem is not too significant, when s/he is unsure about his/her own ideas or weak position. The accommodator considers other solutions.

Collaborating

- This individual works to achieve a “win” situation for all parties. Conflict is not to be avoided, but turned to a passive, problem-solving process.
- The collaborator is assertive but also flexible. He/she promotes mutual respect, open communication, and full participation by all in the process of managing a conflict.
- “You win; I win.” This approach benefits all. This person leads to honest clarification of issues, with shared decision-making and implementation.
- In most conflicts, especially those involving long-term goals and relationships, requires maturity and patience.



A Team Covenant

It's almost time to go... the team has had a variety of experiences to this point in which to learn. There have been opportunities for self-understanding and group dynamics. The team has shared stories, studied Scripture, and prayed together. Now it's time to commit to acting upon lessons learned. As a team, you will write and sign a team covenant.

On a large piece of butcher paper, list the team's responses to the following questions:

1. What is the goal/vision of the mission trip? (Why is the group going?)
2. What kind of attitudes do we want to show to each other?
3. What kind of behavior do we want to practice on this trip?
4. What kind of traits do we want to characterize our group?
5. How will we help each other do the above?

After a thorough discussion, decide how you want to write your group's covenant. There is a "template" at the end of this section you may use as a place to start.

Once the Team Covenant is written up, have the entire team sign the paper. You may even want to photocopy the agreement, so every team member may have a copy to remember the commitment they have made to each other, to God, and the host ministry. You may want to bring the covenant with you to keep in a place your team will be reminded of their commitment to one another and to the mission.

Team Covenant Example⁶¹

We, the members of this mission team, believing that God has called us together to serve, agree to commit to the following: We desire to be a team of people characterized by Christ-like behavior exhibited through unconditional love, unselfish service and unified teamwork. Our ultimate purpose as a team and as individuals is in accordance with 1 Cor. 9:23.

We believe that we can fulfill this covenant through the following commitments:

- To maintain a servant attitude to my hosts, my team leaders and the team.
- To remember we are guests working at the invitation of local churches/ministries.
- To be a learner, not a judge.
- To ALWAYS try to be as adventurous as possible.
- To refrain from such comments as "at home we do it this way!" We realize that our team is here for just a short while, but the local church is here for the long term. We will respect their knowledge, insights and instructions.
- We will uphold our motto: Absolutely NOTHING can happen that can make me complain! Instead of whining we will be creative and supportive.
- We commit ourselves to resolve all team conflicts according to biblical principles. We will talk directly to those we have a problem with before we gossip to anyone else about it. Then, if necessary, we will get a leader involved. We also commit to pray through these situations.

⁶¹ A print version is available in the Logistics section

- We commit to not being exclusive in our relationships. If my boyfriend/girlfriend is on the mission experience, we will make every effort to interact with all members of the team. If attraction to another team member develops, I will not pursue an exclusive relationship until after I return home and my parents support it.
- We commit ourselves to personal quiet times with God knowing that growing individually is essential to growing as a team.
- We all commit ourselves to work to the best of our God-given ability every day. We will encourage each other to work hard and we will make the time as fun as possible. We know that our attitudes while working are a huge testimony to the local community!

We recognize that _____
 _____ are the official leaders of our team. In situations of team concern, these leaders will be the team guides. We also recognize that this short-term mission experience is an opportunity for us all to develop God-given leadership ability.

I, _____, as a member of this short-term team will commit myself to abide by this covenant to the best of my God-given ability.

Signed _____ Date _____

"...I have voluntarily become a servant to any and all in order to reach a wide range of people: religious, nonreligious, meticulous moralists, loose-living immoralists, the defeated, the demoralized – whoever. I didn't take on their way of life. I kept my bearings in Christ – but I entered their world and tried to experience things from their point of view. I've become just about every sort of servant there is in my attempts to lead those I meet into a God-saved life. I did all this because of the Message. I didn't just want to talk about it; I wanted to be in on it!" 1 Cor. 9:23
The Message

LOGISTICS

JUST THE FACTS

Travel Preparations	125
Checklist	126
Transportation	127
Travel Documentation	128
Permission Forms	129
Immunization	129
Food	129
Health and safety	131
First Aid Kit	134
15 Ways to Stay Healthy...	135
Money and Budget	136
Fundraising	138
Raising Financial Support	140
Biblical Basis for Support	140
Team Fund-Raisers	140
Contributions	141
Important Tips for the Day of Travel	142
Packing Tips	143
Arrival at the Airport	145
Suggested Packing List	149
Team Information Sheet	151
Emergency Contact Information Form	153
Letter of Consent to Travel	154
Consent to Medical Treatment	154
Team Covenant—	155
Volunteer Release Memo	157
Mission Trip Evaluation	159





Just the Facts

Logistics—Before, During and After

This document contains seven sections of important information about the basic facts of the trip. We hope that these tools are helpful as you prepare the logistics of travel, food, health and finances. However, travel planning is only a small part of what it means to prepare for a mission trip. Please use these tools for the logistics of the trip in conjunction with the Missio Dei, Spiritual Growth, Team Building, Cultural Sensitivity and Follow-Up tools.

ICON KEY



Exercises



Journaling



Forms



Bible Study

Travel Preparations

You can never start too early with your preparations!

Pre-Trip

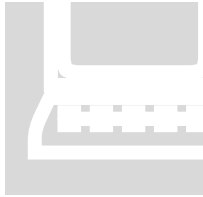
It is highly recommended for your group to send people/a person to the mission site in advance of your mission trip.

Your host missionary or ministry will arrange housing, local transportation, introductions and showing the site. Video or take photos of the areas where you will be on the trip. This will give you a much better idea of knowing what ministries and work projects are available for your group. Every year your ministry site and opportunities change, so this pre-trip is helpful every year.

Make your pre-trip reservations with Mission Mobilization and Connection, your ministry host or your Merge Trip Facilitator as early as possible.

Photos of Ministry Sites

If you cannot get to the ministry site for a pre-trip visit the host ministry or trip facilitator can send you photos of your ministry site. Photos and video can be shared through e-mail, websites, blogs or Facebook.



Checklist

Use this form to keep track of tasks that need to be completed for your team. If you have appointed a Team Administrator, that person on your behalf can complete these tasks.

- _____ Determine dates and location of ministry with Mission Mobilization and Connection, a ministry partner or Merge Ministries.
- _____ Initial Deposit sent to Covenant World Mission
- _____ Flights booked and information e-mailed to ministry host or trip facilitator.
- _____ Final numbers with a breakdown of males and females, as well as student/adult ratios e-mailed to ministry host or trip facilitator
- _____ Balance due to Covenant World Mission one month before trip begins
- _____ Responsibility/Parental Consent/Medical Forms handed out, completed thoroughly, collected
- _____ Emergency Contact Form completed, copies made (For team leaders and Church Office)
- _____ Have all airline tickets and passports in your possession (We suggest the team leader carries all tickets and passports for youth teams. Adult teams may choose to let individuals carry their own - make sure people have theirs before departure.)

Travel planning is only a small part of what it means to prepare for a mission trip. Make sure you do not neglect the other sections in order to engage in true partnership.

_____ Make 3 copies of each passport-picture page open (Individuals need to carry one copy on them at all times, team leader should carry one set at all times and one should be left with your church.)

_____ Other:

Transportation

Airlines

A number of travel agencies are available which provide excellent discounts on international air travel. For group mission trips it is best to go through an agency. It is recommended to have an agent working on your behalf to find the best deals and in case there are any last-minute changes to your itinerary. Agencies who work with team travel include:

- Raptim Travel, Inc (www.raptimusa.com); 800.777.9232
- MTS Travel, (www.mtstravel.com)
- Fellowship Travel International, (www.fellowship.com)
- A Wide World of Travel, (www.wideworldtravel.com)

Using a travel agent may give you access to group rates. Shop for fares in order to get the best prices. Arrange for tickets 2-3 months prior to travel. The larger the group, the earlier the travel arrangements should be made. Be sure you check with your hosts in regards to the itinerary before you purchase the tickets.

Travel

The team leader may want to handle tickets or designate another adult on the team to carry the tickets for everyone. Groups should be at the airport 3 hours before departure. It takes longer for groups to move through check-in and security than you may imagine. Summer can be a busy travel time for airlines. It is better to be too early and wait at the airport than risk not making the flight.

Ground Transportation

In most countries, the receiving mission will provide local transportation from the airport and to the project site. Work through ground transportation details with the host. The mission may be able to provide chauffeurs for vehicles. It is possible that passengers will need to ride in the back of an open truck. Check ahead with the mission, so that appropriate clothing for getting in and out of trucks may be brought (such appropriate clothing may not include shorts for women). Be prepared to be flexible regarding the use of local transportation. It may not leave on time; it may not arrive at the destination on time; it may not be comfortable; it may not be air-conditioned. Never leave anything valuable in a parked vehicle.

Rental Vehicles

If it is necessary to rent a vehicle for the team, check well ahead of time about the requirements for rental vehicles. In most cases, the driver must be over the age of 25. A major credit card must be used.

Driving yourself is not the best answer in many countries! Talk to your host missionary. Oftentimes it is better to give someone who knows the area and culture a job.

Check the limits of your church's vehicle insurance. Find out vehicles covered and coverage in the country to which you are traveling. Often a 15-passenger van is not covered for insurance by the church's policy and the insurance coverage offered by the rental agency must be used. Find out if the host country requires international drivers' licenses. In some countries, it is illegal for a foreigner to drive a vehicle owned by a national.

It is often advisable to rent vehicles from an American company in the country you are going, if it's possible. Local companies may have many hidden costs not listed up front.

Chauffeur

The designated driver should be mature and competent, as well as confident in their driving. In an aggressive (as related to driving) international situation, a timid driver may put your group in danger.

Caravans

When driving in a caravan, keep up with the vehicle in front of you. If you become separated from the caravan, pull over to the side of the road and wait for the trip coordinator to find you. Do not attempt to locate the caravan on your own.

Travel Documentation

Passports

Entering another country will require a passport. Apply for passports and renewals as soon as possible. If you have a passport in hand already and it will expire within 6 months of the trip, apply for a new passport. All information about passports and renewals can be found at <http://travel.state.gov/>

Visas

The team leader should determine the visa requirements of the targeted country. Start early on the process of obtaining a visa. At the same time, be aware that most visas should not be obtained sooner than three months before departure or they may expire before they are utilized. Travel Document Systems can provide information regarding visa needs in other countries. They provide visa application forms as well, and will process visa requests, if necessary, for a modest fee. You can find them at <http://www.traveldocs.com>, or phone them: 1-800-874-5100.

Care of Documents

A copy of the passport should be carried separately from the passport. It is advisable that a copy be kept by the leader, as well as with a contact person at home. When teenagers are involved in a trip, it is recommended that an adult be assigned to be responsible for all documents for the teenagers. It is advisable that the team leader be aware of the location of the nearest American Embassy or Consulate in case of lost or stolen passports.

Permission Forms

For any child under the age of 18, a signed **Parental Release Form** must be provided to the team leader. A signed **Volunteer Release Form** for each participant should be provided to the team leader. Samples of these forms included at the end of this document.

Immunization

Some countries require immunizations before allowing the traveler to enter. The team leader should check www.travelersvaccines.com (or contact your local doctor's office) to find country-specific requirements for vaccines and any disease warnings. If an immunization is required, the US Public Health Department will provide a yellow international immunization booklet, in which all immunizations will be recorded. Additional optional immunizations may also be recorded, such as Tetanus. Each team member should carry this document with his/her passport.

Food

How to eat well and stay healthy.

If possible, it is most helpful to have one person, or group, take care of all your meals and food needs. (If you are working with Merge they can coordinate this for you.) A per-person food fee includes all food, water and donations to the cooks.

Money not spent on food will be reimbursed to your group. Food service coordinated by one person or group should include: □

- **Breakfast**—Every breakfast will be cold food including cereal, fruit, juice, sweet rolls, etc.
- **Lunch**—(Depending on your country, lunch and dinner may be switched.) Lunches will be sandwiches, chips, cookies, fruit, vegetables & other assorted items.
- **Dinner**— Dinner will be your one cooked meal of the day. Merge will hire local cooks to make authentic, regional dinners for your group.
 1. A food coordinator encourages your input on what your group would like to eat. Be sure to mention dietary restrictions, food allergies and vegetarians before you arrive.
 2. Food coordinator will supply all water and ice - always purified.
 3. Meals at restaurants are not included in the food service price.
 4. All money not spent on food will be reimbursed to the group at the end of the week.

□ Please note that some of this information is Merge specific

5. Eating local food meals makes your ministry more effective. The nationals appreciate your desire to understand and know their culture. Food is an important part of every culture.

Do Your Own Food

Your group may save money by bringing your own cooks, purchasing your own food, and preparing your own meals. Kitchen facilities may be available for your use, however the quality of the facilities varies according to the site. If your group cooks its own food, your group is responsible to purchase your own water & ice for your group. You will need to bring your own ice chests and water coolers.

If you are coordinating meals yourself the ministry host or trip facilitator will guide you to a local grocery store. Please note that the products available are not what you would be use to in North America. Also, the language may be different and you will need to bring your own translator to help with shopping.

Consider having the women of the church prepare your dinners, since culturally their way of being involved is to make dinners for the groups. Talk to your ministry host or trip facilitator about your destination to find out more.

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Food Choices

We must remember that we come from wealth, from a culture full of choices. The food options of North America are not the standard around the world. While refusing food might be an entitlement here in our culture, it can be considered rude in a culture that is not afforded such options. Acceptance of the food is a much bigger deal than we may even realize. For many hosts, providing a meal is a way to express hospitality, gratitude and deep care for your team. Refusing food may insult the hosts and undo what the

mission team seeks to communicate about the love and grace of Jesus Christ.

With this in mind, if there are picky eaters, vegetarians, or individuals struggling with eating disorders on your mission team, you need to talk about a “plan of action”. If food is served that you are unsure about, don’t refuse it outright – either subtly share it with another team member or spread it around on your plate so it isn’t obvious you didn’t eat it. If there is a way to graciously decline, do so. If the food looks unappetizing to you, be aware of your verbal and non-verbal reaction to it – don’t make faces or squeal or stick your tongue out. Vegetarians may need to eat a bit of meat during the mission, so they won’t go hungry or disrespect the hosts. Eating disorders bring in another level of conversation – so food is not wasted and individuals do not get ill.

Here are a few things to remember about food:

- Lack of refrigeration, pasteurization processes, or adequate food-handling regulations may contaminate the local food supply.
- Food prepared by the team members is safe, if basic rules of food-handling are observed:
 - Wash hands before touching food,
 - Cold foods should be kept cold, and hot foods kept hot.
 - Peel local fruits and vegetables,
 - Avoid lettuce unless properly disinfected.
- Food prepared by mission guesthouse staff, or by local cooks chosen by the team leader or missionary, should be safe.
- Food prepared in restaurants may have some unsafe items. Best choices – fully cooked food served hot, fresh breads, fruits that can be peeled, bottled water or drinks, or hot drinks.
- Food prepared on the street is the most dangerous, even though it smells delicious!
- Do not eat raw eggs, uncooked meat, or unprocessed cheese.

Health and safety

Health Guidelines

Oftentimes traveling to a new place, eating new food, sleeping in a new environment, living among different people (by different we mean your mission team – they're not your familiar family), working with a new schedule can all challenge people physically. Flying overseas and not eating your favorite cereal every morning can mess up your internal systems and cycles. So, it's important the team take care of themselves. Here are some matters to consider:

- It is strongly advised that each participant be sure to have health clearance. A health condition (including allergies of any sort) would not necessarily keep a participant from going on the mission trip, but a doctor's clearance is very advisable in order to prevent a health crisis while the team is away.
- The host mission should be advised of any specific food allergies (not likes/dislikes!) among members of the team in order to plan appropriate menus. If alternative foods are not available in the trip location, the team member may need to bring their own food.

Health History/Emergency Contact

Each team member should bring prescriptions (including epi-pens) necessary for the duration of the trip. Team leaders should gather a summary of each participant's health history and prescription routine.

Choose an Emergency Contact Person at home who can retain all pertinent contact information for families of persons on the mission trip. In this way, should an emergency involving the entire team occur (i.e. delay in departure), one person can be contacted from the country. That person will then call the other families involved.

The team leader should also have a list of the contact name and phone number of each individual on the trip. The emergency contact number of the project site should also be distributed to all families of the team members. The number should be used only in case of emergency.

Medical Insurance

All trip participants are required to show proof of medical insurance. Check with your own insurance plan to determine whether it covers you when outside the borders of the United States. Make no assumptions about the coverage. Each team member must fill out a Medical Insurance Information form and give it to the team leader before the team departs. (See sample at the end of this section.)

If your insurance plan does not cover you outside the United States, the following are a list of some Travel Insurers that may be contacted:

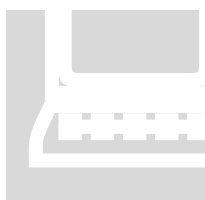
- **Access America:** www.accessamerica.com 800-284-8300
- **Travelex Insurance:** www.travelex-insurance.com 800-228-9792
- **TravMed:** www.travmed.com 800-732-5309

Water

- Be sure to ask the host if the tap water is unsafe or safe.
- Never drink **unsafe** water, eat ice made from it, or use it to brush your teeth.
- Drink **safe** tap water sparingly the first few days, especially if you are sensitive to water changes. Be careful about all cold drinks made with water.
- If the water is purified, there should be no problem. Remember if you need to drink purified water, use it to brush your teeth as well.

Sanitation

- Utilize the basic rules of hygiene:
 - Always wash your hands before eating, after using the toilet, etc.
 - Use gloves when digging in the dirt.
 - Keep your fingernails short.
 - Keep your shoes on as much as possible to avoid parasites that enter through the skin of the foot.
 - Keep your hands away from your mouth and face.
 - Carry wet wipes with you, since washing facilities are not always available. Hand sanitizer is OK, but it's good to have a place to wipe your hands when you wash.
 - Wash hands after handling currency.
- Notify the team leader and seek medical care if any of the following occur:
 - Diarrhea lasting more than 72 hours
 - Inability to have a bowel movement in 72 hours
 - Persistent or severe abdominal cramps or pain



First Aid Kit

Medical kit for the group

Designate a medical person for the team who will be responsible for the medical kit at all times and who will check in with team members regarding health matters.

- Cotton swabs
- Latex gloves
- Alcohol swabs in packets
- Band-Aids of all shapes & sizes
- Thermometer
- Cipro or Floxin (broad spectrum antibiotic)
- Pain relieving rub
- Pepto-Bismol tablets
- Imodium AD
- Ace bandages (3"/4")
- Cloth tape
- Hydrogen peroxide
- Triple antibiotic cream
- Caladryl cream
- Hydrocortisone cream
- Non-stick sterile pads
- Robitussin cough syrup
- Vitamin C tablets
- Cough drops
- Benadryl
- Sudafed
- Gauze bandages (2"/3")
- Visine eye drops

Personal medical kit

The designated medical person will have a medical kit for the team, but not supplies for everyone to use everything. It's suggested that individuals bring some first aid supplies and medications taken regularly.

- Aspirin, Tylenol, Advil – for minor pain
- Antihistamines
- Decongestant nasal spray
- Pepto Bismol or Imodium – for mild traveler's diarrhea
- Small box of Band-Aids and Q-tips
- Antibiotic ointment
- Insect repellent
- Sunscreen
- Multiple vitamin and Vitamin C tablets
- Cough syrup
- Sudafed

15 Ways to Stay Healthy

1. Drink water before you are thirsty – if you are thirsty, you are already beginning to be dehydrated.
2. Do not talk negatively about the local food before the trip. Team members can psych themselves into being sick even before eating the food.
3. Make sure everyone in the group is eating properly. This is not a time to be dieting!
4. Soda is not a replacement for water. Drink water when you are thirsty.
5. Be sure to take regular breaks during a work project – this is true for everyone... even the “tough” guys!
6. Take care to pace yourself – even though you take breaks, you need to vary the tasks you do and the speed at which you work.
7. Be sure to get enough sleep. Don’t stay up late at night talking... the mission isn’t one big slumber party.
8. Wash your hands after (and often before!) using the bathroom and before eating.
9. Don’t share cups or water bottles.
10. Don’t use hands to remove ice cubes to put in a cup.
11. Be careful about staying out in the sun too long – even if you are wearing sunscreen.
12. Make sure to wear a hat when you are working in the sun (and sunscreen)!
13. Make sure the designated medical person is tough and understands psychology. Sometimes a group that needs a lot of attention needs a psychologist more than a nurse!
14. Plan a day “off” – at the beach, shopping or a cultural tour of the city.
15. Designate a night for a USA style dinner. Familiar food can help the team’s morale.

Money and Budget

Budget

Determine the budget for the trip early on in the process. Each team member should have a clear understanding of what is covered in the budget in order to provide clear information to those contributing to the team member's support.

Remember to consider the exchange rate in setting the budget. A helpful website to check out current rates is www.yahooofinance.com. Items that could be considered for inclusion in the budget could be (but not exclusive):

- Preparation costs for orientation sessions
- Leader's expenses, (i.e. pre-trip to project site, group gift for pastor)
- Ministry supplies (i.e. Bibles, songbooks, craft materials, building supplies)
- Food and water
- Housing
- Interpreter
- Medical supplies
- Transportation costs (i.e. airfare, ground transportation, tolls, gas, insurance)
- Documentation costs (i.e. passports, visas)
- Cultural events (i.e. museum visits, ethnic restaurant)
- Miscellaneous (i.e. emergency expenses)

Foreign Exchange

When planning an overseas trip, you should be aware that the exchange rate for the local currency may change daily. The budget for the trip may have been planned based on a specified exchange rate, but on arrival in the country, you discover the exchange rate is lower and the trip will cost you more. An awareness of this possibility should be built into the budget by designated emergency funds to be used to cover such exchange losses.

By the same token, the exchange rate may change to the advantage of the team. The group would need to decide together how to utilize any funds remaining from the trip due to an exchange advantage.

When arriving in a country, determine from the host how accessible will be facilities for providing foreign exchange. Exchange small amounts of dollars at a time if the

currency exchange facilities are easily accessible. Larger amounts may need to be exchanged if such facilities are more difficult to get to. The team leader needs to determine in advance, in consultation with the host, how much money should be exchanged on arrival in the country.

Team members should be aware that they can exchange local currency back into dollars, but the exchange will probably result in a loss of perhaps 10% of the value. Coins are not accepted in currency exchanges. (If the leader has access to the particular foreign currency, it would be good to show the group to help learn value and begin to recognize bills and coins by sight.

Credit/Debit Cards or Cash?

Team leaders should discuss with the host the best way to pay expenses in country – whether it's through carrying cash, withdrawing money from a local ATM or transferring money to the host ahead of time. If the team carries cash over, divide the cash for the team between leaders on the team to carry. **Do not bring Traveler's Checks.**

Do not assume that credit or debit cards can be used in the area or country where you are working.

Although ATMs may be freely available, be sure to consult with the host in the country before assuming all financial transactions can be carried out by ATM. (Sometimes the ATMs are accessible, but out of cash!) Be sure to call your bank to let them know you will be traveling out of the country, they will put a travel alert on your account so you can use your debit card in the places you travel.

Individual team members may prefer to carry a small amount of personal cash, but should be sure they have a secure way of carrying it. Using the document pouch and tucking it inside one's clothes may be the safest way. If men carry their wallets, it's recommended they put them in a front pocket, not the back. It's a little more difficult for pickpockets to get them. Women should be careful carrying a purse, even gripping the handles doesn't guarantee the straps won't be cut and the purse taken.

Personal spending money would depend on the country to which the team is going. A certain amount for souvenirs and tourism should be planned for. It is difficult to advise regarding the amount, but it should be kept in mind that the primary purpose of the trip is for ministry, and there will be limited time for shopping and tourism events.

Money

The team leader needs to determine at the beginning of the planning process when payments toward the trip need to be made by members, so that appropriate purchases may be made in a timely manner.

There may need to be a decision at the beginning regarding members who do not make payments on time, as to whether they will continue to be members of the team.

The team may want to determine an appropriate percentage of return should a member need to withdraw during the process. For instance, 90% would be refunded if the withdrawal is 6 months from departure, 50% refunded if 2 months from departure, and so on.

- Bring small bills. Many merchants often refuse bills larger than a \$20!
- Exchanging money into the local currency is best.
- Market shopping is in cash only, small bills only.
- Traveler's checks are very difficult to cash. DO NOT bring them.
- Credit cards can be used at some locations, but most team members would have little or no need for them. Some merchants will charge you more for credit card purchases.
- ATM machines are available in some areas.
- Plan to bring, in cash, the money that you will need while in country.

Fundraising

Support

The two primary support needs of a mission team are prayer and finances. They go hand in hand. When people give financially to an endeavor, they are usually also praying and thinking about it.

Prayer

This process must begin with prayer. Acknowledge that apart from Him we can do nothing, but through Him we can do all things – that includes raising the needed funds for the mission trip. Pray for your heart attitude as you begin (some will fear the support-raising process). Pray for His will with your future supporters. Pray that the money is wisely used and with it, that we can effectively minister to many. Pray through all that you do.

Letters

The mission experience needs both prayer and financial support. Each team member should ask family and friends to pray for the trip, and invite them to support the work financially (if appropriate). The team leader should write a sample letter (or copy the one below)⁶² to pass out to the team. This prayer letter should provide ministry details and share personal needs – both for prayer and for finances. Be sure to include information about to whom and where to send a support check.

⁶² This sample letter is adapted from the STEM Ministries, *Sending Partner Training Manual* (Minneapolis, Minn.: STEM Press, 2006).



Dear **[name]**,

I have exciting news! I've been given an opportunity to go on a short-term mission this summer with my church.

Our 14-day mission to location departs date and returns date. We will describe the type of work the team will do. The reason we're going is to share the good news of Jesus Christ with the people of location.

I'd like to ask you to participate with me in this ministry as a sending partner. Financially, I need to raise \$cost before date. Spiritually, I need dedicated prayer support through every phase of this mission – for my fund-raising efforts and team preparation before we leave as well as safety and effective ministry during the mission.

To partner with me through prayer or financial support, please fill out the response form below. Then return the form to the church, include address, in the enclosed envelope with your check payable to the church. Your tax-deductible gift will be receipted.

Remember to pray for safe, effective ministry, health, and changed hearts. I'll tell you all about it when I return home!

Thanks for your prayers, time and generosity.

In His service,

Your name

____ Yes, **[your name]**, I will support you and your short-term mission in prayer

____ Yes, I will support you with a gift of \$_____ to help with this mission.

Make checks payable to the **[church name]** and return to the church office in the enclosed envelope. Do not write the team member's name on the memo line.

Name _____ Phone _____

Address_____

City, State, Zip _____



Raising Financial Support

Support given to those serving the Lord is a biblical principle. Some are reluctant to ask for support because they feel they are begging for money. Raising support for mission service is not begging for oneself, but offering the opportunity to others who cannot go to become part of the mission trip. Remember that people give to God and God gives to you.

Biblical Basis for Support

- Numbers 18 – guidelines for the provision for the Levitical priests.
- Matthew 10:9-10; Luke 10:4-7 – Jesus’ instructions to His disciples.
- Philippians 4:19; Mark 12:41-44 – where our support comes from.
- Romans 15:24; Luke 11:9-10; Nehemiah 2:5 – asking directly for financial support.

Once you are sure that God’s desire is to provide for you as His child, you can raise support with confidence. This assurance only comes after prayer. The people who support you need to see themselves as part of your team, helping to make you as effective as possible in the mission venture you are undertaking.

Team Fund-Raisers

The team can work together to raise support for the mission experience. Take some time to brainstorm fund-raising activities – or discuss options from the ideas listed below.⁶³

Support-ers Activity

Pass out paper and pens and have the team members start making a list of potential support team members. This would be a group of people the individual will ask to give both prayer and financial support to the work of the mission. The list can include family and friends from church, school, work, and the neighborhood.

Buy-a-Mile

Make a poster of a map with a line drawn or string placed between your town and the location of your mission. Or, blow up a map at your local printer and put it on a piece of foam core. Take the total cost of the trip for your group and divide that number by the number of miles you need to travel. This number will be the “cost per mile” of the trip for your group. Then ask people to donate one or more miles. Keep a running total of how many miles are left to raise by drawing in the route with a color marker.

⁶³ Adapted from the STEM Ministries, *Sending Partner Training Manual* (Minneapolis, Minn.: STEM Press, 2006).

Fun Run

Sponsor a 10K run/5K walk. Participants seek sponsors and are charged an entry fee. This provides an opportunity to share about your outreach.

People Auction

People offer services to be auctioned. A variation on this theme is “rent-a-kid” for yard cleaning, window washing, or childcare. A combination of the Event and Auction is to ask local merchants and restaurants to donate products, services, and gift certificates. These certificates can also include certificates by young people to baby-sit or do housecleaning or yard work.

Mission-Themed Dinner

Team members serve as waiters and waitresses in national clothing and present a drama they plan to present on the mission. Prepare food similar to the cuisine of the region where the mission will be. Team members will sell tickets ahead of time and at the door.

Duck Race

Buy, have someone donate, or have a sponsor buy a bunch of yellow bathtub ducks. Write a number on each and “sell” them. On the appointed day, release them into a local stream or creek. The first duck to cross the finish line wins. (Typically a donated dinner at a nice restaurant makes a good prize.)

Penny Drives

Collect change and have supporters gather change for a period of time. You can also have a big jar for collecting change at your church.

Teach-a-Skill

Teach a skill at a workshop. For example, computer introduction for 3 hours, calligraphy, origami, painting, guitar. Charge the by half hour, hour, or session.

Contributions

What makes a contribution tax-deductible?

- Donation made to the church or organization – not to any individual participants. If a donor want to designate for an individual, they may include a post-it note or card that says the individual’s name.
- All purchases and spending are done by the church, organization or team leader representing the organization.

What donations are NOT tax-deductible?

- Donations made to individual participants.
- Donations for individual purposes, spending money etc.

Accounting

All funds must be handled with integrity and honesty. All contributions go to the organization for appropriate receipt and reporting. The team leader may be responsible for directing and administering all team-related expenses, or may choose to designate an individual on the team who has particular gifts in financial detail.

Every dollar that changes hands should be accounted for. Receipts are not mandatory but should be received whenever possible, and especially for every expense over \$20.

Consider using a money pouch or waist bag for keeping cash, receipts, and records of expenditures. Make sure to write down daily expenditures, including the date, description and amount.

Thank You Notes

The church should provide information to team members when a support check is received. Thank you notes should be sent promptly upon receiving information regarding a contribution or a pledge of support.

Important Tips for the Day of Travel

Confirm flight times and reservations at least twenty-four hours in advance.

- Make sure each team member knows exactly where and when to meet. If the team is meeting at the airport, check with airline re: sufficient meeting time, allowing more time for a group. Stress promptness.
- Identify the team luggage with a bright visible tag or tape of some kind.
- Check in as a group. Do not have individual team members check in for the flight. The team is traveling as a group and the airline requires groups to check in together. Collect all the return tickets at this point. This avoids the possibility of someone misplacing their ticket and creating time delays for everyone.
- Have all necessary cash you will need for the mission trip.
- Have your own passport and copy of passport.
- Make sure each team member has their passport and copy of passport. For youth teams we suggest that the team leader collect and carry all passports and tickets.
- Have the phone number of the contact and an international calling card, in case there are delays and/or changes during your travel.
- Leave emergency contact info, itinerary and flight info with your church office or other contact.

Be aware of any special medical needs of team members. You also need to be aware of anyone carrying their own prescription medication.

Packing Tips

Checked Luggage ⁶⁴

- If carrying prescription drugs, keep them in the original bottle. Have a doctor's letter with you if you are carrying any kind of narcotics. Carry in carry-on luggage.
- Carry a roll of toilet paper with you.
- Bring a small sewing kit with extra safety pins.
- A travel clothesline can come in handy.
- You may want to bring detergent, so purchase small sample sizes or bring a small container.
- Remove batteries from any items that you pack.
- Do not take anything you do not need ~ including any credit cards.
- Couples traveling together should put some clothes in each other's bag, so if a bag is lost, there are still some clothes available.
- Use travel sample sizes of shampoo and soap. If carrying liquids, double bag them in Ziploc bags.
- Bring some durable snack foods with you. Sometimes it is good to have familiar food, in case the local food does not agree with you.
- Bring washable clothes that mix and match.
- Check on outlets and voltage so you have the proper adapters and plug-ins for any small appliances you may have with you.
- Pack clothes in plastic Ziploc bags. This will keep them from moving around and maintain better shape. Tissue paper can also be used to separate layers. Stuff empty corners with small items.
- If you are taking some supplies for projects that will remain there, carry them in a duffel bag, which can be put in your suitcase on your return home.

⁶⁴ Adapted from David C. Foreman, *The Essential Guide to Short Term Mission Trip* (Chicago, Ill.: Moody Publishers; Spi Edition, January 12, 1998).

Carry-On Luggage

Your carry-on should be packed so that if your checked baggage never arrives you can still “carry on”!

- Include a change of clothes, comfortable pair of shoes, a couple changes of underwear, toothbrush and toothpaste, deodorant
- Basic toiletries and cosmetics – don’t forget the 3-1-1 rule now – no more than 3 oz. of liquid in a container, must be packed in a 1-quart Ziploc bag, per passenger.
- Any prescription meds
- Important items you can’t afford to lose (i.e. camera, charge cards, Bible)
- A few snacks
- An empty water bottle. For long flights you may want more water. Fill the bottle after security check.

You will find a suggested packing list, a medical kit for the team, and personal medical kit at the end of this section. Depending on where your team is traveling, you may need to modify the lists.

Document Pouch

You may want to buy a document pouch to carry around your neck and under your clothes. They are available at a variety of stores – discount, travel, or department. You can fit your passport and ticket in the pouch, along with important phone numbers, addresses, some money and your insurance card. Having your documentation separate from your carry-on baggage will make check-ins and security points much more efficient.

Keeping together

It is imperative that the group remain together when traveling and that individuals do not wander off from the group without notifying the team leader. Travel plans may be delayed or even missed entirely if a member has left the team and not returned in a timely manner.

While traveling or at the project site, no team member should leave the group at any time without informing the team leader.

- Minors should not leave the mission site unless accompanied by an adult.
- No one should leave the mission site without informing the team leader.
- When shopping, stay in groups.
- When going off site, stay in groups of three or more.
- Males should always accompany females.

Plane Travel Tips

Your body functions in relation to the cycles of the sun, daylight, and darkness. When these are disrupted, a condition called “jet lag” often results. Individuals vary in ability to adapt, but usually the changes in time and climate occur more quickly than the body can assimilate them.

Your major symptom will probably be fatigue, and perhaps a feeling of irritability or mental disorientation. You may need a few days to adjust, so be patient with yourself (and with those around you!).

For the Plane Ride

- Wear loose-fitting clothes. Avoid tight undergarments. Your feet will possibly swell after long periods of sitting, so wear shoes that will accommodate this.
- Drink lots of liquid while traveling, but avoid an excess of soft drinks. Water and fruit juices are best. A lot of moisture is taken from your body by the low humidity in the airplane. Bring an empty water bottle and fill it at a water fountain in the airport, after security check.
- Move around the plane, even if no more than a few minutes every hour or so. If it's a long flight – over 4 hours, you may want to do some stretching on one of your walks.
- Try to get some sleep. Use earplugs and eye shields.
- If subject to travel sickness, start medication about one-half hour before departure.
- If you have a sensation of popping in your ears, chewing gum, yawning, or swallowing will help.

Arrival at the Airport**For International Travel**

Arrival at some international airports can be a little unsettling or confusing. The team leader should be aware of the situation at the arrival airport through contact with the person who will be meeting them there.

Immigration

Upon exiting the airplane, passengers will need to find their way through immigration. You will receive forms, either from the flight attendant or at the gate, to fill out for registration and customs.

It is best to check “tourist” trip, not “business”. Do not mention on the forms that you are coming to serve as a missionary. That could create unnecessary problems.

While waiting in the immigration line, have your passport and seat assignment from the airplane in hand, along with the completed form. Be quiet, patient, and respectful as you wait. No pictures are allowed in this part of the airport – so keep your cameras in your bag.

Keep the conversation to a minimum – don’t speak in English with your friends or laugh amongst the group.

When talking with the agent, be respectful and polite. Look straight ahead and do not joke around. Answers questions briefly. Be honest and answer what is asked. It is not

necessary to volunteer answers to unasked questions. You may be requested to indicate the contents of your bag; it is not necessary to recount the packing list you used to get ready.

Never try to import firearms or fireworks anywhere!

Getting your luggage and going through customs

The team leader should have a plan ahead of time as to how to handle the luggage. Part of the group should pull bags off the baggage claim, while the rest of the team holds the retrieved bags. Be sure the number of bags you checked equals the number you take from the airport. Report any lost or stolen bag to the airline before going through Customs. Use luggage carts to take your items through Customs.

Be sure to come with a phone number and street address of a contact person or hotel

It’s important for the group to go through Customs together; let the team leader do as much of the talking as possible. Listen to, and comply with, their instructions. Team leaders, be sure you keep an eye on every person in your group to be sure they all get through and no one is stuck.

It is often the case that freewheeling baggage-handlers and children may grab the team’s luggage or hassle the travelers, regardless of what the traveler wants. Often the missionary meeting the team will have arranged with their own designated porters and will also arrange for appropriate tips. In this case, be polite in your refusal, and hold onto your luggage until instructions are clear.

Be sure to come with a phone number and street address of a contact person or hotel, in case no one is able to meet the team, or for some reason that person has not yet arrived at the airport. If no one has met the team, fall back on the plan made for handling your baggage. Team leaders should have tip money accessible, in case it is needed.

As the team exits the airport, be sure everyone has their documentation tucked back in a safe place. Keep passports and visas in pouches that are hidden from sight.

Random Travel Tips

- Travel lightly – remember, you will be carrying your own luggage!
- Leave any valuables at home. Watches, jewelry, computers... all can be lost, broken, stolen.
- The clothes you wear will be dictated by the culture of the country you are going to, not your own culture or preferences. Bikinis and tank tops are usually not appropriate. Check with your host regarding clothing... and please respect what the host has to say.
- If you have a tendency to travel sickness, be sure to bring Dramamine or a generic brand of travel sickness medicine with you.
- Clean out your wallet – bring only necessary identification.
- Americans have a reputation for being loud, impolite, demanding, and abrasive; be respectful, courteous, considerate to all persons you come in contact with.
- Carry a copy of your flight information with you so you are always aware of where you need to be at what time.
- Septic systems are different in all countries. As a general rule, if there is a waste receptacle in the bathroom stall, your used toilet tissue should be placed there instead of in the toilet itself.
- Give important travel information to family members.
- If you buy new shoes before leaving, be sure and break them in before you leave!
- Leave room in your suitcase for souvenirs on your return!
- If you will be visiting several countries, take small cloth coin purses or Ziploc bags for each currency you will be using. Be sure to become very familiar with the exchange rate before you start spending the new currency!
- If you are dependent on glasses, it would be a good idea to take a spare pair with you as replacements may be impossible to obtain along the way.

Packing

Allow the team some time to pack up supplies necessary for the work and ministry projects. Give the teams responsible time to pack “team bags” and double-check the supply lists.

Emergency procedures

The team leader should notify the team members that the host missionary will have an emergency plan in case of the following events: It is important for the team leader to discuss emergency plans with the host and communicate necessary information to the team.

- Vehicular accidents
- Personal accidents or serious illness
- Hospital care
- Evacuation due to natural disaster or civil war
- Serious crime against a member of the group
- Lost team members

Perhaps the team leader and host will come up with a code phrase, which will instruct the team that they are in “emergency mode”. It is imperative the team respond with cooperation and without question in the event of an emergency. The team needs to let the host, the missionary and the team leader lead.

Baggage

Allowance

Baggage allowance is constantly changing. Check with your airline for their international baggage allowance. Even if the airline might allow two pieces, individuals should carry no more luggage than they are able to handle by themselves. PACK LIGHT! Team members should not count on other team members helping them carry their bags.

NOTE: the team may need to check two bags per passenger because of the supplies you bring with you. In this case the team leaders need to coordinate how to get supplies to the place you are serving, so that your team doesn't end up with more baggage than you are allowed – or more baggage than you can manage.

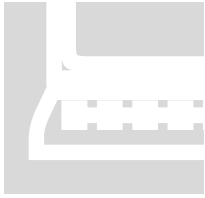
Be sure you count the number of pieces your group is checking when you leave, when you are at the airport and when you pick them up, to be sure you have everything.

Identification

Each piece of baggage belonging to the group should be identified in some similar way – an emblem, sticker, or colored duct tape. This makes it easier to grab luggage off the baggage claim.

An Idea...

One team decided to choose one bag that each member would utilize. This bag had the name of the team emblazoned on the outside. The team members could only take as much as could be packed in this bag. The bags were easily identified at the airport. The cost of the bags was included in the trip fees.



Suggested Packing List

Important Items & Documents

- Plane ticket/e-ticket print out
- Passport/Visa
- Immunization record
- Travel authorization form (give to team leader)
- Photo ID (if passport is not necessary)
- One credit/debit card
- Money (carried in a money belt or divided between 2 or 3 pockets)
- Money belt
- Travel insurance card
- Travel size phrase book or dictionary
- Phone numbers of contacts at home
- Addresses for postcards or pre-addressed address labels
- Items related to project
- Gifts for hosts – missionaries, families you stay with, pastors you meet – such as food, napkins, candy, t-shirts, hats, etc. For security reasons, don't wrap the gifts!

Clothing

- Sunglasses
- Jacket (for rain or warmth)/sweater
- Work clothes
- Work gloves (if doing building project)
- Hat
- 2 pairs long or ³/₄-length pants
- 2 pairs shorts (modest)
- 3-4 cotton shirts or t-shirts (no questionable designs)
- Dress clothes for church (men: cotton slacks & collared shirt; women: dresses or skirts – below the knees)
- Underwear
- Socks
- Sleeping attire
- Swimsuit (modest)
- Flip flops
- Shoes for ministry/church
- Work shoes (closed-toe)

Personal Devotion Items

- Bible
- Journal
- Paper/pens

Toiletries

- Medicines and prescriptions, in original containers.
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Soap or shower gel
- Shampoo and conditioner
- Deodorant
- Razor and shaving cream
- Feminine products and cosmetics
- Eye glasses
- Contacts (extra pair and solution)
- Towel/washcloth/beach towel
- Toilet paper – 2 or 3 rolls
- Lotion
- Sunscreen and lip balm
- Plastic bags for wet or dirty items
- Insect repellent
- Small amount of liquid laundry detergent

Other Items

- Picture of your family to show hosts
- Backpack
- Snack food
- Flashlight
- Camera
- Video camera (optional)
- A/C adapter
- Extra batteries
- Travel alarm
- Deck of cards/travel game
- Book – for light reading
- Pillow
- Mat and sleeping bag or sheets
- Water bottle
- Earplugs

Team Information Sheet

Merge Trip Facilitator's Cell

Full Name (As on passport)	Passport # (of passport)	Country	Preferred Name	Birthdate (m/d/y)	Age	M/F	Allergies/Health Conditions
Ex. Stanley George Swenson	045436675	USA	Stan	03/25/85	18	M	Allergic to Peanut Butter/ Asthma

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

Emergency Contact Information Form

[illegible]

Letter of Consent to Travel

I, _____, provide my
consent for my child, _____,
to travel with _____ to
_____ from the dates of _____.

Signed _____

Date _____

Parent's Name _____

Telephone/Contact
Address:

Signature of Notary

Notary's Printed Name
Notary Seal:

Consent to Medical Treatment

This consent form gives permission to seek whatever medical attention is deemed necessary, and releases _____, **[Covenant Merge Ministries/Covenant World Mission]** and its staff of any liability against personal losses of named child. I/We the undersigned have legal custody of the student named above, a minor, and have given our consent for him/her to attend events being organized by _____. I/We understand that there are inherent risks involved in any ministry or athletic event, and I/we hereby release _____, its pastors, employees, agents, and volunteer workers, along with Covenant Merge Ministries from any and all liability for any injury, loss, or damage to person or property that may occur during the course of my/our child's involvement. In the event that he/she is injured and requires the attention of a doctor, I/we consent to any reasonable medical treatment as deemed necessary by a licensed physician in the event treatment is required from a physician and/or hospital personnel designated by _____. I/we agree to hold such person free and harmless of any claims, demands, or suits for damages arising from the giving of such consent. I/We also acknowledge that we will be ultimately responsible for the cost of any medical care should the cost of that medical care not be reimbursed by the health insurance provider. I/we also agree to bring my/our child home at my/our own expense should they become ill or if deemed necessary by the student ministries staff member.

Child's Name

Parent/guardian signature

Date

Telephone/Contact

Address:

Signature of Notary

Notary's Printed Name

Notary Seal:

Team Covenant—

We, the members of this mission team, believing that God has called us together to serve, agree to commit to the following: We desire to be a team of people characterized by Christ-like behavior exhibited through unconditional love, unselfish service and unified teamwork. Our ultimate purpose as a team and as individuals is in accordance with 1 Cor. 9:23.

We believe that we can fulfill this covenant through the following commitments:

- To maintain a servant attitude to my hosts, my team leaders and the team.
- To remember we are guests working at the invitation of local churches/ministries.
- "...I have voluntarily become a servant to any and all in order to reach a wide range of people: religious, nonreligious, meticulous moralists, loose-living immoralists, the defeated, the demoralized – whoever. I didn't take on their way of life. I kept my bearings in Christ – but I entered their world and tried to experience things from their point of view. I've become just about every sort of servant there is in my attempts to lead those I meet into a God-saved life. I did all this because of the Message. I didn't just want to talk about it; I wanted to be in on it!" 1 Cor. 9:23 The Message
- To be a learner, not a judge.
- To ALWAYS try to be as adventurous as possible.
- To refrain from such comments as "at home we do it this way!" We realize that our team is here for just a short while, but the local churches are here for the long term. So, we will respect their knowledge, insights and instructions.
- We will uphold our motto: Absolutely NOTHING can happen that can make me complain! Instead of whining we will be creative and supportive.
- We commit ourselves to resolve all team conflicts according to biblical principles. We will talk directly to those we have a problem with before we gossip to anyone else about it. Then, if necessary, we will get a leader involved. We also commit to pray through these situations.
- We commit to not being exclusive in our relationships. If my boyfriend/girlfriend is on the mission experience, we will make every effort to interact with all members of the team. If attraction to another team member develops, I will not pursue an exclusive relationship until after I return home and my parents support it.

- We commit ourselves to personal quiet times with God knowing that growing individually is essential to growing as a team.
- We all commit ourselves to work to the best of our God-given ability every day. We will encourage each other to work hard and we will make the time as fun as possible. We know that our attitudes while working are a huge testimony to the local community!

We recognize that _____

_____ are the official leaders of our team. In situations of team concern, these leaders will be the team guides. We also recognize that this short-term mission experience is an opportunity for us all to develop God-given leadership ability.

I, _____, as a member of this short-term team will commit myself to abide by this covenant to the best of my God-given ability.

Signed _____ Date _____

Volunteer Release Memo
Short-Term Mission Trip

TO: Persons participating in Merge Ministry or Covenant World Mission trips

FROM: Covenant Mission Mobilization and Connection

RE: Safety, Liability, and Insurance

If you are volunteering to serve, you should be aware of risks, be cautious and use good safety procedures.

Some of the areas volunteers might visit may have unusually high risks of unsanitary food or water, disease, civil disturbances or crime. There are dangers inherent in travel and in construction projects. Be a good steward of your life and health. Find out what the risks are and be prepared to meet them. Participants, churches and agencies should talk directly about risks and precautions and not rely on Covenant Mission Connection for advice.

Persons volunteering to serve in various programs are not employees or contractors. Therefore, they are not covered by any Worker's Compensation Insurance or accident or group health or life insurance supplied by the church or agency they are serving. You should obtain any insurance you need. If traveling outside your country, you should check to make certain that you have appropriate medical insurance coverage in effect outside your country.

[SAMPLE FORM]**Volunteer Release Form**

I acknowledge that I am a volunteer and not an employee or contractor.

I have a responsibility to obtain my own insurance, if needed.

I also have a responsibility to find out about potential risks and take necessary precautions.

I release Covenant World Mission and/or Merge Ministries and any church that is sending or supporting me, the church or agency I am serving, and their employees and agents, of any liability for any injury to me in my volunteer work.

Adult signature

Date

Print name

Church

Dates of Trip

Location of Trip

FOR PARENTS OR GUARDIANS:

Fill out trip information above and sign below.

On behalf of my minor child, _____,

for whom I am responsible, I acknowledge this release.

Adult signature

Date

Print name

Mission Trip Evaluation

Please answer the following questions to help leaders learn from the group's experience and use for planning future trips.

1. What aspect of the trip did you enjoy the most? The least?

2. How did the team communicate work? Did it go well? Why, or why not? How might communication be improved?

3. How did you personally uphold the team covenant? Did the team, as a whole, uphold it? (explain)

4. Was your preparation adequate? How could you have been better prepared?

5. On a scale of 1-10, how well do you think you were exposed to missions? What would you wish were added to the exposure?

6. What relationships (within the team) grew through this experience? How might you continue to grow those relationships?

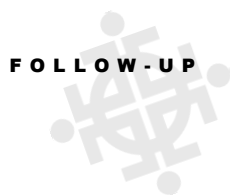
7. What would you recommend to be done differently on a future trip?

8. In what ministry would you like to participate in the future?

9. How would you like teammates to pray for you now that you are home?

10. Do you feel that you/we satisfactorily completed the ministry projects?





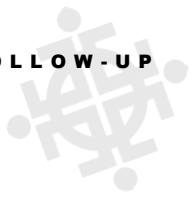
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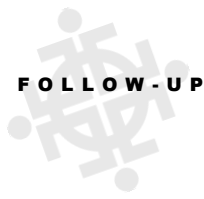
8

FOLLOW-UP

MISSION—THEN AND NOW

Introduction	163
Follow up before you even leave	164
Looking back—a habit that starts from the beginning.	165
My Impressions of...	165
Trip Evaluation	170
Re-entry—Things Seem Different	170
Reverse Culture Shock	171
Post-Trip Depression...	172
Change	172
Identity/Self-Worth	173
Group thank-you	174
The road ahead!	174
Coming Home	175
The Month After...	176
Remember What God Has Done	176
Stay connected	176
Three Months and Six Months After Follow-Up Gatherings	177
Report/Presentation Service	178





Mission—Then and Now

The mission trip may be over, but the mission is not!

It isn't over! A lot of times we are relieved as leaders after a mission trip. "Whew, that's done!" Well, the work has just begun! Mission trips should be an integral part of the lifelong discipleship process. The hope is that a mission experience will impact daily life, where the work for the Kingdom gets done! Follow-up is essential. Participants need to take time to reflect and pray; to ask God what He requires of us from what He has shown us. Below are resources to help in that process.

ICON KEY

 Exercises

 Journaling

 Forms

 Bible Study

It is our desire that your mission trip not just be a good experience or a nice memory, but rather that it would make a radical, lifelong change in each member of your mission team. This section is designed to help leaders and individuals continue to process how God is working in their lives and to keep the flame of service and mission alive after they return home from the mission trip. This section includes resources to help you incorporate ministry abroad with ministry at home.

Follow up before you even leave

Short-term mission trips have become a common practice in churches of North America. They offer a great way to connect with mission work around the world, engage another culture, get out of one's "comfort zone" and serve others in a tangible way.

Another commonly expressed goal is that the mission trip experience would have a long-term impact on the devotional lives of the participants and that mission trip participants would return home fired-up and ready to serve others in their own community.

These are worthy goals and yet many trip leaders explain the challenges that the effects of a mission trip fade as participants return home and re-engage in the everyday activities of life.

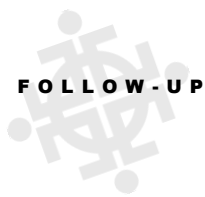
Lasting effects of healthy mission experiences are best facilitated long before a mission trip and can continue long past.

Here are a few steps to take BEFORE the trip that will help individuals and to integrate the mission trip experience into their spiritual life.

- Careful discernment
- Pre-Trip training
- Continuous reflection and
- Planned follow up activities and mission commitment

Below are some questions to consider as you plan your mission trip. The hope is that these questions, and following action steps, will help make the short-term mission experience part of an on-going missional ministry at home.

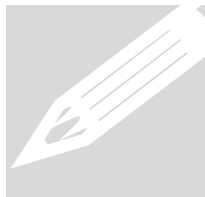
1. How is God at work in the community surrounding our church?
2. Are there any people groups or areas of town where we could begin to create lasting relationships?
3. In what ways is our church already involved in mission work? Abroad? In our community?
4. Can this team participate in mission work before they go? If so, how?
5. Are participants required to go through training? Pre-trip journal exercises?



6. Is there someone in the church (not going on the trip) who can lead the on-going mission work? Or a team of people?
7. What follow-up activities can be planned before the trip?
8. How can the mission trip be a catalyst for local mission involvement?

Looking back—a habit that starts from the beginning.

Debriefing, reflection and journaling are helpful tools to incorporating the actions of ministry into the spiritual life of participants. This practice should be encouraged from the very beginning, when the team is being formed, and long past when the team returns home and to normal life. Below are some reflection questions, journal prompts and discussion ideas to facilitate healthy and thorough reflection. Reflection for before and during your trip can be found in the **“Spiritual Growth”** and **“Cultural Sensitivity”** sections.



My Impressions of...⁶⁵

(Reflections for the end of your trip)

Begin by remembering the different things you saw on your mission experience...both the expected and the unexpected. You may want to review your journal if you kept one. One thing is for sure – Your eyes were opened while you were away. Does that sound like a ridiculous statement? How could one’s eyes not be open? Yet very often in our everyday lives we go through our routines and never “see” things. We are too busy or too preoccupied to notice them. But it was different on your mission experience – you prepared yourself to “see”. You were determined to observe the various things you would encounter each day. Take some time now to reflect upon what you saw.

THE PEOPLE

What did you see in the people that you did not expect to see?

Which of their needs are most vivid in your memory?

What aspects of their lives impressed you most?

THE COUNTRY

What things did you see in the country that was different from your expectations?

Is there any picture that quickly comes to mind? (Why it has stayed with you?)

Seeing is a discipline we need to develop. It is the first step in making a difference in our world. Unless one sees the needs, one can never meet the needs. Because you

⁶⁵ Excerpts from *Back Home Reflection Journal*, www.mountain-top.org

were willing to keep your eyes open on the mission experience, you probably “saw” quite a bit. Not merely sights and sounds all jumbled together, but needs, issues, and concerns festering beneath the surface. We hope that what you saw will stick with you and, more importantly, you will continue to keep your eyes open.

Jesus admonished the disciples to “open their eyes and see” – an admonition well suited for His disciples today as well. So many Christians live without ever really seeing. Perhaps you were one of them before this mission experience. Now the question is not only whether you will remember what you saw in the country you were in, but whether you will continue to “see”.

What keeps you from “seeing” in your world?

What goals did I have for myself before or during the mission trip?

How were those goals accomplished?

What goals have I set for myself now that the mission trip is over?

How can I make sure that these goals are accomplished?

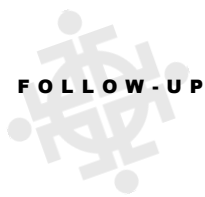
After the mission trip, have there been any changes in my attitudes about any or all of the following areas (check all that apply):

- _____ prayer
- _____ faith/God
- _____ community ministry
- _____ family
- _____ racism
- _____ poverty
- _____ finances
- _____ priorities
- _____ other (explain)

What changes can I make in my lifestyle to reflect these changes in my attitudes?

Do you have someone who can hold you accountable to make sure that you are making these changes?

If you do not currently have someone to hold you accountable, make a list of possible people here:



WHAT I LEARNED

As your experience in and knowledge of the host country has grown, perhaps some ignorance in your perspective about the world and its inhabitants has been dispelled. We hope you took time to listen and learn from those you encountered. Take time to reflect upon what you have learned.

List two things you learned about each of the following:

- The people
- The country
- The church in the country
- The people on your team
- Yourself
- Which of the previous surprised you? Why?

Needs do not simply appear out of nowhere. Factors contribute to their existence. If we understand these, we are better able to identify with people and work with them in meeting their needs.

What factors have contributed to the needs of the people you were with? (Think through the sociological, political, spiritual, emotional, and physical factors you may have learned)

Understanding our world requires effort. Far too often, people put forth no effort to become educated about the situations around them. Seeing needs is a necessary beginning, but without understanding what we see we can be of little help. The question for you is, now that you have seen and understood the people's needs, will your life be the same as it had been before the trip?

What keeps people from learning about and understanding the needs in their world? What practical steps can you take to continue this learning process?

WHAT I FELT

The writer of the gospels tells us that whenever Jesus Christ encountered people in need, He was deeply moved by what he saw. He felt the pain of their need and situation. During your time in the country there were probably situations that caused you to feel deeply. As you saw a particular person or an incident, you may have been deeply moved.

In those times you were most likely being challenged by God in some way. Think of at least one situation on your mission experience when you really felt deeply about something. Write a description of the situation.

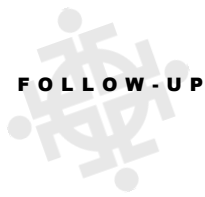
What was it you felt? (Try to describe the feelings you had at that moment.)

Were you surprised by your feelings? Why?

As you reflect back on that situation, what growth do you think God had in mind for you in those feelings?

Feelings come and go, there's no doubt about that. Yet, the feelings you experienced on this mission experience may be etched in your memory forever. Their memory may prompt you to feel deeply again and again in the world in which you live. God meant for you to go on this trip. He will continue to challenge you to grow. Will you pay Him the same sort of attention now, as you return home, as you did on your mission experience? He is not through with you yet!!

What factors may prevent you from being deeply moved in the world in which you live?



WHAT I FEEL NOW THAT I'M AT HOME

Now that I am back, I feel...

My understanding of mission now includes...

Some days I find it difficult to...

My family/friends tell me...

My concept of God...

I wish...

Trip Evaluation

It's important to think about how the trip went, once the group returns. This feedback should be considered in shaping future mission experiences. An **evaluation form can be found in the logistics documents** along with the permission and volunteer forms. You may want to discuss them among the group or you can have team members write out answers to be collected.



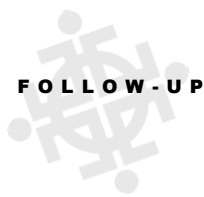
Re-entry—Things Seem Different

It is not unusual for individuals to experience a letdown or depression of sorts when coming home from a cross-cultural experience. It is normal. Sometimes individuals have a strong reaction to the culture to which they are returning. It is important not to make any rash decisions (i.e. selling all you own, or chastising others for materialism). People at home cannot completely understand the individual's experience.

Four Common Reactions

1. Condemning Claire --- being judgmental of people who have too much, don't understand, or are uninterested in what the individual just experienced.
2. Withdrawn Wilma --- feeling depressed and alienated, and pulling back from others for the same reasons listed above.
3. Reverting Ralph --- trying to live life just as it was before the trip, denying any changes, challenges, or discomfort.
4. Changed Charlie --- attempting to integrate the new information and lessons into life at home.

Discuss: How have you seen yourself express these characteristics since your return?



Reverse Culture Shock

“Reverse culture shock” may be defined as a heightened awareness of your familiar culture in contrast to the experience of another culture, which may be seen in a new sensitivity to how relationships function, injustices & inequality, consumerism, priorities of what has been normal.

Some questions to consider:

1. Have you found yourself feeling guilty for living in the “land of plenty”?
2. Have you felt guilty for not feeling guilty?
3. Have you discovered any change in your relationship with your possessions (i.e. desiring to sell/give it all away)?
4. How would you describe American friendships? Are they similar or different from those in the location you served?
5. Have you found yourself responding to “regular life” with more or less frustration? patience? anger? joy? love? peace? kindness? sacrifice?

Post-Trip Depression...

“Post-trip depression” can hit anyone in the days following a mission experience. There are a few sources for this.

- Major events are often followed by a natural letdown, given the time and energy required for planning and implementation. It is normal to feel a void after an expenditure of energy and involvement in life-changing events.
- Experiencing a new culture and new people is very tiring. To live life in an environment different from what’s normal can be a drain on us physically, mentally, and emotionally. Once a person returns to their normal environment, the body and mind may feel fatigued or depressed from sheer exhaustion. Sleep and relaxation usually take care of this.
- Missing your teammates. Going through a particular experience together bonds people in a unique way. In addition to being together in worship and work, the group played and laughed together. Not only do you lose the proximity once everyone returns home, but now the people you may spend most of your time with have no real connection to this major event that has altered your life.

Other Questions

Talk about the following:

1. What, if any, difficulties are you having in adjusting back to life here?
2. How are you dealing with those difficulties?

Making it Personal...

There are ways to respond to post-trip depression, healthy choices to walk through the period.

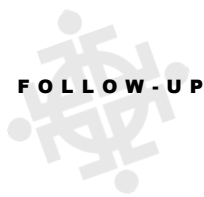
1. Acknowledge how you feel – and recognize that it's normal.
2. Take time to journal and pray through Scripture, telling God what's on your heart and mind.
3. Keep connected to at least one other teammate with whom you can continue to share the experience and your reactions.
4. Do not expect too much of yourself or others. Be reasonable in how quickly and drastically you can change the ways you think and live.
5. Don't make any drastic changes or important decisions.
6. Laugh, relax, and trust God to help you strike a balance.

Change

The person that started out on the mission experience is not the same one returning home. Each person will have changed in some way as they have seen God move in and through them during the mission experience. Team members will be looking at the world around them through different eyes. For example, they may have faced poverty for the first time in their life and now they consider, 'Do I need...' or 'Do I want...?'.

Hopefully, the changes will include both a shift in belief and perception as well as in behavior. In order to handle the changes, as a team leader, you need to help the team members to:

1. Recognize and accept that they have changed and how they have changed.
2. Identify which changes are temporary (negotiable) and which changes are permanent (non-negotiable).
3. Identify which changes in the team member will alienate them from their family and friends at home and why.



4. Identify which changes will attract people back home to Jesus Christ.
5. See Jesus as their model. He was very much a part of his society and yet part of a distinctly different culture.
6. See themselves not only as changed people but as change agents as well. They need help in introducing change in their spheres of influence.
7. Keep their faith in Jesus who is “the same yesterday, today and forever.”⁶⁶
8. Recognize and expect Satan’s attacks to discourage you. It is normal to experience a low after an intense focused time. Be aware that Satan will attempt to “steal, kill and destroy”.⁶⁷

Identity/Self-Worth

Another related issue related to transitioning home is self-worth. Transitions in life have a way of exposing what stuff people are made of at their core. The mission experience may have redefined the participants’ self-worth and perception of themselves. They may have felt valuable, needed and appreciated while away from home. Upon return, however, they may not receive the same affirmation. Or, the short-term mission experience may have stripped the participants of the things they consider important and the places where they have placed their worth and value. They may be returning with a new confidence.

The re-entry transition is a good opportunity to evaluate where a person’s self-worth lies. You may need to walk the participants through Biblical passages that address this issue (i.e. Psalm 139, 1 Peter 2:9-12, Titus 3:5).



HOW I WILL RESPOND

Now comes the tough but exciting part – the application of what you saw, learned and felt. What are you going to do with your experience? How are you going to respond to the things God is teaching you? It is one thing to go on a mission experience and have a great time. Many do.

But it’s quite another to go on a mission and allow the experience to change you and the world in which you live. The process of responding is an ongoing one that requires you to make decisions day by day. It requires ongoing action. Your mission experience only began a process. The process is not finished yet! In this section, think about the present and the future.

⁶⁶ Hebrews 13:8

⁶⁷ John 10:10

What changes have begun in your life as a result of what you've seen, learned, and felt?

Why those changes?

Think in terms of three areas of possible ongoing responses to the world you live in.

How might you use your time differently based on what you have experienced?

How might you use your money or resources differently based on what you have experienced?

How might you adjust your lifestyle based on what you have experienced?

What ideas do you have for remembering the people you met and experiences you had?



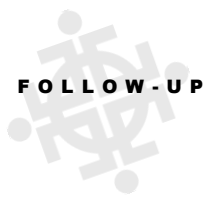
Group Thank-you

Have the team write a thank you note to your hosts – the missionaries, the nationals, the ministry leaders. Be sure to include some lessons learned or ways God touched your life through them.

The road ahead!

It is important to integrate some of the new interests and passions you have discovered. Now that the mission experience is completed, what can you do to stay involved in missions? The following are suggestions:

- Play an active role in your church congregation.
- Make disciples. Who might God be calling you to invest in?



- Pray daily for unreached people. Use a book like *Praying Through The World III: The Unreached Peoples*⁶⁸ or *Operation World*.⁶⁹
- Enroll in the “Perspectives on the World Mission Movement” course or other missions-related course.
- Pray daily for the people you met (missionaries, locals, etc...).
- Find a local outreach organization in which to invest.
- Continue to meet with some of your teammates for prayer and/or outreach.
- Consider a longer term of service.
- Adapt a budget to include additional offering for missions.
- Educate others regarding a world Christian mentality.

Coming Home

Tell the story

Sharing your experience with others is part of the mission experience. It is important to give witness to God’s work in the lives of the team and the new relationships that were built.

Remember other people have not experienced what you have. They have not seen the things you have seen. As much as they want to relate and understand, they can’t.

Here are some tips for relating to those at home:

- First, and most important, pray. Pray that God will give you patience and understanding with people who can’t or won’t relate to your mission experience. Pray that God will use you to open some people’s eyes to Him and/or to missions through sharing your experience.
- Give information in small doses. Do not try to dump everything you learned all at once.
- When describing your mission experience try to use specifics. Tell stories about individuals. Describe situations vividly. Weave details in the story so that the listener can visualize the scene (the squeaky chair, the smell of incense, children splashing in a puddle, your own feelings at that time).

⁶⁸ Johnstone, Patrick, John Hanna and Marti Smith, *The Unreached Peoples: Praying Through the Window III* (Seattle, Wash.: YWAM Publishing, 1996).

⁶⁹ Johnstone, Patrick, *Operation World: When We Pray, God Works* (Waynesboro, Ga.: Gabriel Resources 21st Century Edition; Revised edition, September 1, 2001).

- Avoid comparison statements that reflect negatively on your own culture since such statements might cause a listener to be defensive.
- Make notes about specifics while you are on your mission experience. Combined with pictures you take, notes will help you communicate your experience with sensitivity. (See journaling)

The Month After...

We have found that many times team members who have gone on a mission trip return home frustrated because they find that they have no one who truly understands the things that they have experienced, and no one seems genuinely interested in listening to their stories. During your first meeting, give team members the chance to tell stories and relive memories with each other. During this meeting it is also important to write down team members' goals (individual as well as team goals), and implement a plan for holding them accountable to reach these goals.



Remember What God Has Done

Read Joshua 4:1-9, where the Israelites put up stones to remember how God let them cross the Jordan, and to tell future generations how He had worked among them.

Bible study questions:

- What happens to Israel when they forget the things that God has done for them? (This happens a lot in the Bible – give several examples)
- Why is it important for us to remember the things that God has done in our lives?
- Why do you think it is so easy for us to forget?
- What are some ways that we saw God work during our mission trip?
- What is a way that we as a team can build a “remembrance stone” to remember these things?
- What is a way that I as an individual can build a “remembrance stone”?

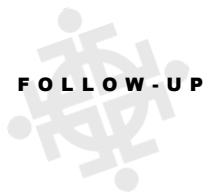
Stay connected

Connect on-line

Stay connected to your host ministry through Facebook, websites, blogs and picture-share sites. You can start a Facebook group or fan page and invite your team as well as your host ministry and home church.

Read the news

It is easy to access on-line news sites that give updates about the region you visited. Keep learning about the socio-economic and political issues that affect the lives of



your new friends. Pray for the churches in this area based on what you've read and learned.

Host Missionary/CWM/Merge Newsletters

If you missed the opportunity during your trip to sign up to receive your Host Missionary or Merge Trip Facilitator's newsletter, or CWM/Covenant Merge Ministries' general newsletter, email you host at any time and they will add you to the list. Read the newsletters to stay updated with what is happening in your ministry site!

Communication with your host

Feel free to email letters for your host to your Trip Facilitator or ministry/mission host. They will translate them (if need be) and make sure that they reach their destination.

Reconnect with your team

In order for your mission trip to have a long-term impact, we believe that follow up meetings with your team are absolutely necessary. We recommend meeting one month, three months, and six months after returning from your mission trip.

Team Reunion

Plan a team reunion within one month of returning home. This can be an informal time of being together, sharing pictures, memories, food, worship, prayer and/or a challenge or encouragement. Your team will want to be together and it is healthy to gather as a group with a shared experience. You may want to schedule other reunions...3 month, 6 month, 1 year, etc. This is a great time to refresh each other about what God did and remind each other of commitments made, to enjoy being together and encourage one another.

Three Months and Six Months After Follow-Up Gatherings

Assess your team's goals and accountability. Encourage your team members to continue on in reaching their goals and making life changes. Remind them of the initial fire that they had when they returned from the mission trip. Below are some more ideas to use to make your meetings fun.

Share

If your church allows it, plan a service or a time in the service where people on your mission team can share what they have learned and experienced.

Picture night

Collect everyone's pictures from the mission trip and show a slideshow at the church or in someone's home.

Dinner

Get everyone together for dinner one night. If someone learned a local recipe during the trip, try it out!

3-Way Calls with Merge Staff, or Ministry/Mission and Pastors

Talk with your area director to see if organizing a 3-way call with your ministry site is possible. For many areas you can arrange a Skype call for your group or your entire congregation.

Keep Serving

Serving others and cross-cultural relationships are not just what you do on a trip. It should be part of your on-going ministry and faith practice. Get your team together and help out a local organization for the day or once a month.

Bible Study

Start a Bible study with members of your mission team. Observe how God is at work in your hometown or area. Consider how your mission team can get involved with God's work at home in the same way that you worked together on the trip.

Debrief One on One

Use the debriefing questions and journal prompts from earlier in this document to help discuss what you learned on the trip, your feelings and thoughts since coming back.

- “How would you like to serve God this year?”
- “How do you feel the Lord is leading you to serve?”

Accountability Partners

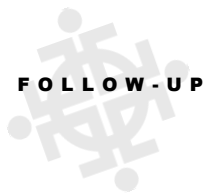
Before leaving or upon your return, have all team members form pairs for accountability, to check in with each other and to pray together. There may be times when team members can share best with someone who has been through the same experience. Having prayer/accountability partners provides another way for ministry to continue with each other after the trip.

Report/Presentation Service

“Show and Tell” is where team members carefully select an item from the mission experience as a “memory souvenir” and share why it has meaning to you. It may not have cost you anything but is maybe something you found or something a national gave them. Whatever it is, it must help you to explain a specific feeling, incident or memory of your mission experience.

Keep in mind these guidelines when preparing a presentation:

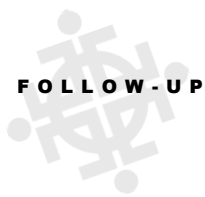
- Start with a “hook” – a sentence that will capture the listeners’ attention. Use words and concepts to draw people in to your story. Do not begin with, “well, um, the church has only given me five minutes...”
- Be creative! Use stories and descriptive words to communicate concepts and lessons. Speak with energy and enthusiasm.



- Share about people. Others will enjoy more hearing about the ways a life was touched by Jesus Christ than how well the team cleaned up after VBS.
- Accentuate the positive. It is important to share the positive aspects of the culture and people. Sharing the negative will reinforce stereotypes of unfamiliar people or places. Communicating the negative aspects may lead supporters to believe that the trip was not worth taking and their support was wasted.
- Pay attention to presentation skills. Make eye contact, speak loudly, and avoid chewing gum.
- Use good media. Audiences want to see well-put together pictures and videos. Practice using the media beforehand, to take care of any technical challenges ahead of time.
- Be brief. Eliminate unnecessary details. It is important to convey lessons and examples with as few tangents as possible. There are many stories to tell, so be sure the ones you share enhance the point you want to make.
- Practice what you are going to say before you say it. Use notes to help you stay on track.

And try to avoid these:

- Generalizations. Your encounter with one police officer that wanted a bribe is not a portrayal of all residents of the country. Remember that what you say paints a whole culture to others.
- Travelogues or lists of places and people
- Emotional pleas to gain pity or impose guilt
- Inside jokes
- Telling all (In a public presentation, leave out gory details and life-threatening situations, unless it is in the context of glorifying God.)
- Being a martyr (Tell close friends about being eaten by bedbugs, but leave it out of public presentations.)



These materials were compiled and edited by Covenant Merge Ministries
and Mobilization & Connection staff in Covenant World Mission

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