



Dear Team Leader,

We are thrilled that YOU are taking this step of faith and responding to God's call to lead a short-term mission trip! We are inspired by your courage and commitment to be involved in helping others see what God is doing around the world. Thank you for sacrificing some of your own mission experience in order to lead others into theirs. We value and appreciate you!

Many ask the question, "Is it worth all that money for volunteers to go and serve for such a short period of time?" If you are part of this training and our Short Term Leadership team, you already know that not only can well trained teams be an incredible blessing to local national churches, missionaries, and the kingdom of God but also that the impact that team participation will have on the lives of those who go cannot be measured.

It is our desire that this resource book, training, and access to coaches will provide you with everything you need to not just pull off a trip, but facilitate a meaningful discipleship experience for a small group of people.

We hope and pray that you will enjoy this ride the Lord has called you on. God has great things in store for you and the individuals He will bring to your team. It will for sure be challenging, but at the same time such an enriching experience you will never forget!

Thank you,

OCC STW Team

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This material has been developed and edited over a decade of mobilizing short term teams and by a variety of people. Content contribution includes work from the IMB Macedonia Project Training, World Servants Pre-Field Orientation, STEM Team Leader Training and resources developed by team leaders. Where original and complete work is used, it is noted. Nothing included is "copy-righted". Feel free to copy and change this information for mobilization purposes in your ministry context, NOT for any financial gain in selling of this resource. We labor together to see God's kingdom come...on earth!

Serve the World Ministries, 2018

## WHY WE SEND SHORT-TERM MISSION TEAMS

There are two overarching themes as to why we send teams out...

### **Sending an effective team blesses our field partners.**

The purposes of the trip are crafted through many conversations that STW Staff are having with the field and their needs for that particular time. We always strive to be value added to the field. We want a quality group of people, well trained and prepared to be learners of culture and servants to the work.

### **Short term mission teams develop people in their spiritual journey.**

We believe the process of preparing for, going on, and returning from a short term team can provide a catalytic experience for people to **LIVE THE CALL** and **MULTIPLY DISCIPLES**. These are huge spiritual “wins” for Serve the World at Overlake. Our job is to facilitate a team through a process that provides for spiritual growth and impact in many areas of life.

## HOW TO BECOME AN EFFECTIVE TEAM LEADER?

We believe in You! You may feel called to the place you are going or to the particular project your team will be involved with or perhaps your “call” came in the form of a challenge from one of our staff. Regardless of what drew you here, we do believe in YOU to shepherd a group of people to prepare, go, impact, and return with purpose. The following are a few things that we believe will make you more effective as a leader:

### **1) Prepare Yourself Spiritually**

As you jump into logistics and training, don't forget about letting God impact you in the process. Allowing God to break your heart for the things that break His will help you effectively lead with passion. It's hard to take people somewhere spiritually where you haven't already gone. Because you are facilitating this experience, allow God to touch your heart before you even leave.

Consider journaling your response to these and similar questions:

- What do you want to see happen in the lives of your team members?
- In what deeper ways does God want to develop your faith?
- What are the issues facing the people to whom you are ministering and do you really care about their plight?
- How might God want to stretch your worldview?
- What are the fears that you need to give to the Lord?

Spend time praying for vision:

- Vision for yourself: How can you grow personally during this trip?
- Vision for the team: What can be accomplished as a team?
- Vision for each team member: What can God do in each one's life? How do I help them grow and/or change their worldview?
- Vision for ministry: How can God use this experience to enhance the life of our ministry?

## **2) Develop Your Leadership Skills**

God can use everyone with a willing heart to lead or co-lead a short term mission trip. Core competencies we would recommend you develop are:

- Spiritual Maturity – Continue growing in your relationship with Jesus. A leader with maturity can help team members process new or different cross-cultural Christian experiences (i.e. different form of worship) that may be confusing.
- Emotional Maturity – Continue growing in your emotional maturity including anger management, self –esteem, and capacity for making decisions.
- Cross-Cultural Experience and Sensitivity – Continue growing in your cultural sensitivities. Create a deeper understanding of the impact (both positive and negative) that bringing a team into another culture can have.
- Leadership and/or Organizational Skills – Continue to develop your ability to motivate, organize people, and lead people.

## **3) Shepherd Your Team Spiritually**

Remember that one of the biggest roles you can play as a leader is to disciple your team. If this is not your strength, recruit (or at let us add for you) a co-leader who can take this on. Every member is on a spiritual journey that begins with team prep, going and returning. It's not just about the 2 weeks overseas. Do care for your team members, listen, and offer guidance as they process their experiences.

## **4) Spend time getting to know team members**

The largest load of getting a team out the door is actually knowing your team members. The more you create space for people to share at training meetings, the better you can build a stronger sense of "team". Spending the time reading people's applications (we require that ALL team members fill out applications), and having coffee with anyone who might have some potential problems will save your HOURS of headache before and during the trip.

## 5) Develop Leaders on Your Team

Another key piece of your trip experience is developing other leadership within your group. Even if it is a team of five, identify a co-leader or other areas where people can grow in responsibility. Potential leaders need to be trusted with significant responsibility. Whether you are taking 5 or 50 your trip will rise and fall on the preparation of the leadership. You will be so blessed by how people will rise to the occasion when given responsibility for ministry on an outreach experience.

Some tips for developing leaders:

- Recruit people who have specific skills you need for the team. For example, building and organizing are wonderful gifts that may engage new people.
- Communicate clear expectations. Put on paper (or use the resource provided – see Mission Trip Training Guide) the core elements that you expect from leaders. Also encourage these leaders to model a servant-spirit, such as giving up their seat, eating last, not ordering people to do things for them, etc.
- Use people that show both spiritual and emotional health. Even seemingly spiritual people can break down emotionally when they experience a new culture. You don't want any current emotional crises to impact the trip.
- Delegate one key aspect of the trip. Give away the control of finances, gear and set-up, ministry coordination, caravan coordination, prayer ministry leadership, or logistical support. If you view yourself as the orchestra conductor, having support from within the orchestra takes away the pressure of having to handle all the details. Your "musical score" is the trip planning and execution which will help you effectively "conduct" the various parts to produce a great symphony.
- Give them resources in advance to develop their heart for missions or following God. It may be a movie recommendation, a book to read or a website to view. Help them grow in their worldview, too.
- Ask them how they are doing during the process. Are they struggling to connect to others at the training meetings? Give them tips for asking questions. Do they have specific fears about the trip? Talk through those fears with them.

- Remind them that they may be sacrificing parts of their mission experience to facilitate for others. When you have significant leadership on the trip, you will probably be more focused on the participants than on your own experience. Thank them for that sacrifice.

#### **6) Delegate Tasks**

Allow everyone on the team to be part of the planning process, not just leaders. All people are necessary. Delegate prayer and devotions, money management, team communication, social media, specific ministry projects, etc. Allow individual's passions and giftings emerge and grow to love each other. This is a clear expression of the Body of Christ.

#### **7) Don't Give Up!**

Leadership can be very lonely. You will have struggles, frustrations, trials and tensions but you will also encounter some of the most rewarding, dynamic and exciting moments in your ministry. We applaud your step of faith in just holding this resource in your hands. We pray that you would be strengthened and encouraged to plunge into God's great story across your street or around your world!

#### **8) PRAY**

Continually pray for your team members and the trip. A trip bathed in prayer is by far the most powerful and effective.

## OVERVIEW OF LEADER'S PROCESS

### 1) **Commit**

Work with staff leadership to pick a trip location and project. Our focus is on activities related to our initiatives and projects with OCC supported partners.

### 2) **Develop Your “Trip Info Sheet” & “Budget Worksheet”** (found online)

The Trip Info Sheet should contain all the details of when, where, and what the trip includes and will be used by you in recruiting team members and providing them with information. The Budget Worksheet helps you determine what the estimated cost will be for the trip.

### 3) **Get Familiar with the Field Partner and Project**

If you are new to leading or this is a new location, reach out and get to know one of the key partners, go to their website for more information and history on the ministry, and learn more about specific needs of that region/issue. Talk to one of the STW coaches for specific information.

### 4) **Recruit 5 – 8 People for Your Team**

You are the leader of this trip, so it is up to you to recruit your team. Inviting people you know is most effective. The STW team will be advertising and directing interested people your way also.

### 5) **Hold an Informational Meeting**

This meeting is designed to give all the details of the trip and answer questions that people may have. It is also a time to discuss requirements to be a participant such as training meetings and schedules of when money is due. You may need to hold more than one informational meeting.

### 6) **Encourage People to Fill Out an Application**

As you and the STW team generate contacts of people interested, give them the “Trip Info Sheet” and encourage them to complete the application form available on the website under the Team Participant button. Applications will be submitted directly to the STW team and we will forward a copy to you. Ask for a preliminary commitment of a \$200 deposit toward the trip with the submission of their application.

### 7) **Review Applications & Register Team**

Get to know your team by reviewing their applications. Assess appropriateness of individuals for your trip or project. For questionable situations, please feel free to ask the STW team for help. You will also need to register your team online. A registration form can be found online under Short Term Teams-Leader's tab.

### **8) Hold Training Meetings & Guide Support Raising**

Begin holding team training meetings & guide people through the support raising process. The Mission Trip Training Journal has specific guidelines for preparing your team and what to do during these meetings. Emphasis will be placed on support raising and cross-cultural and spiritual preparation. Your team will jointly do country-specific research and ministry planning.

Don't be discouraged with people who come and go in the first meeting or two. This is an exploratory process for many people. However, it is important to define your team by the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting as it can be detrimental to team unity to add people at the last minute. It could jeopardize the team and the project.

### **9) Plan Out the Logistics**

Start planning for your ministry, transportation, flights, lodging, meals, etc. Begin collecting necessary paperwork from team members as outlined in your Document Checklist. Determine what tasks can be delegated to other team members.

### **10) Coordinate with STW Administration**

We can give you help on:

- o Getting necessary information and forms online
- o Resourcing you with training materials
- o Processing money and doing check requests
- o Purchasing medical insurance
- o Purchasing tickets for the travel itinerary you have searched/chosen
- o General questions

### **11) Stay in Contact With a STW Coach**

We are your fan, cheerleader, and coach. We are happy to encourage, give advice and problem solve through the trip prep process. We desire to stay in the loop of communication so that we can best serve you and also protect our field partnerships. Most of all, we want to pray for and support you!

### **12) Make Final Preparations**

Make sure that all necessary paperwork has been turned into STW by team members. Use the Document Checklist to help guide you. Build a Team Notebook of important documents you need to bring with you. This will be important information for you to have with you on the trip. Make sure you have left emergency contact numbers and also make sure you

have requested your cash advance for the trip at least 2 weeks in advance.

**13) Commissioning Prayer and Prayer Covering**

We want every team prayed for and commissioned before you leave on your trip. We encourage Life Groups to pray over members going out. We also will coordinate a prayer time led by an elder and STW leader between services prior to your trip leaving. Delegate and use the prayer guide template (found online) to create a specific prayer guide for your trip.

**14) GO!**

**15) Return Home and Follow-Up**

Encourage your team members to send report letters to friends who prayed and financially supported them. Turn in accounting of money and receipts to office. Someone from the staff or STW leadership will plan a debrief time with you in your leadership experience. Seek to bring resolution to any difficult situations or relationships you may have experienced on the trip.

**16) Plan a Reunion**

It is very important for the follow-up of your team to plan a trip reunion. Invite family, friends, interested people and supporters for a time of sharing pictures and stories. Best to happen in homes, but for large teams, you are welcome to book a room at the church.

**17) Disciple Your Team for Ongoing Involvement**

Remember your ministry does not end just because you left the country. Ask the challenging questions of “What’s next for you?” and encourage ongoing involvement here locally. Make sure all team members are connected to Life Groups and committed to growing. Identify those who would make good potential team leaders and let STW staff know.

## PROMOTING YOUR TRIP AND RECRUITING YOUR TEAM

### 1) Put an info packet together

A template for this can be found online in the Team Leader's section. This should include the dates and information about where and what you will be doing. Communicate as many specifics as you can, but be sensitive not to overwhelm people with too much information. It is very important to make information available and accessible in various forms.

### 2) Use the Power of "The Ask!"

Your strongest tool is to directly ask people to go. However—and this is **important**—make sure you ask at least six months in advance. Pulling a first time mission trip together in three months or less will not yield the volume or the effectiveness you hope for. Ask some of your solid lay leaders serving in other ministries to directly ask some others to consider participating. They will feel special that you approached them.

### 3) Use Media to Advertise

Nothing stirs the human heart like a good video clip or film. If your partnering agency doesn't have media resources, there are plenty of appropriately rated movies out there that depict human suffering. Even your local library might have some short clips or longer features that will build compassion in people's hearts. Be sure to advertise a few months prior to your cut-off date.

### 4) Hold an Informational Meeting

It is important to hold 1 or 2 informational meetings as well as ongoing conversations with interested potential team members. Encourage people to fill out an application. Make sure they know how to access all the needed forms online. Post things on the internet, email a link to the Short Term Trip Application to different families that you know.

### 5) Continue to Follow-Up

As you continue to talk with people and after informational meetings, keep following up with people. Ask: "Where are you on a scale of 1 to 10? What is your hesitation with going?" If they are in the 5 and above range, have them show up to meetings and start support-raising.

### 6) Get to know Potential Team Members

The application is a great opportunity for you to get to know your potential team members better. It is also a great way to communicate that this is a unique experience that must be taken seriously. It should give you better

insight into how people see themselves spiritually and relationally. If you do not know some of your participants well, set aside time to meet with them. Or if you have plans to break your large team into smaller teams, have that small group leader meet with potential team members. Use these questions to better get to know them:

- Tell me about yourself, your family, work, etc.
- How did you become a Christian?
- How would you share your faith with someone?
- Why do you want to go on this short-term mission trip?
- What do you hope to gain from going on this trip?
- How do you think God may want to use you?
- How do you feel about raising support? Do you need help with ideas?
- What other concerns do you have? (Use this information as a chance to encourage the participant.)
- Do you have any health problems?
- Address any areas of concern.

### **Tips for Recruitment:**

#### **1. Carefully Select Your Team**

If this is the first international trip you are leading, leave the problem children at home. Sure, there are many people whose lives were changed from partier to Jesus-freak through going to another place in the world; but it took concentrated relationship, conversation and confrontation when the issues arose on the trips. It takes a little experience, much prayer and a lot of grace to help maneuver those individuals through a trip like this. Listen to God's Spirit and go with your gut when considering them.

A liberal filter may be:

- Use the application. It will be a natural screening process. Have potential participants put down a financial deposit when they submit the application.
- **Require attendance at training meetings** and participation in a small group for the duration of preparation. This may provide the needed structure to help people get over some discipline issues before they go.
- Have hard conversations with people that have caused issues at events in the past. Unless you see a change in their attitude and behavior well before your trip, do not take them.

- Make it clear that there is no substance use/abuse on the trip (tobacco, alcohol, drugs, etc.). Fear of nicotine fits may cause someone to remove themselves.
- Check your gut. If you are having red flags (or even yellow), talk it through with someone else before allowing that person to commit to the trip.

### **What about Non-Believers?**

Not-yet-believers can serve their world in wonderful ways. I'm an advocate of taking seekers on mission trips. You have to do your homework though. If you do not know these people, you have to get to know them and hear their story. If they are antagonistic toward Christianity, this will probably not be a great experience for them. For those that are neutral or positive to Christ, I would require their participation at training meetings and in a small group. If they are willing to participate at this level, take them! God is doing something in their heart and this trip may encourage them to step across the line of faith in Jesus. Culturally, people in our communities are placing increasing value on serving locally and globally. If we're open to it, it wouldn't be surprising to see more and more youth come to Christ as a result of a mission trip experience.

### **2. Use Your Connections to Recruit Others**

Past team members are a valuable resource in engaging new people and/or referring others to the team. Relationship will be a powerful component for this entire experience.

### **3. Get People to Engage Quickly**

Give individuals something to do right away that will get them engaged and excited about going. Ask them to "lead" some aspect of the trip, such as putting packets together, ministry preparation, etc. This will quickly build ownership for the trip.

### **4. Help Breakdown Common Stereotypes**

You will hear phrases like:

"I'm not good enough."

"Can God use me?"

"I can't raise the money."

"What if something happens?"

"I don't have the gift of missions."

"My family is freaked out about me going."

"I don't like tacos. They give me gas."

How you respond to these statements or questions will influence their next step. Smile. Tell them you understand, then share your enthusiasm

for the opportunity, and end with “and I just think God has something really special in store for you.” This is not spiritual manipulation since scripture does promise a reward for stewarding our time, talents, and treasures on behalf of the Kingdom. Detailed answers to some of these questions can be found in the back of this section.

## 5. Recognize and Attend to People’s Concerns

There are many aspects of international travel that may frighten a handful of potential participants. Some of the common fears and misconceptions include:

- Fear of getting sick or injured in a strange place
- Fear of not understanding the local language
- Fear of discomfort, disease, and difficult circumstances
- Fear of not having a place to go to the bathroom (I’m not making this up.)

All these concerns are legitimate and need to be addressed. With reassuring words and an encouraging challenge to step out in faith, God will use this process to stretch people’s vision and hearts. As you talk with people about their fears or misconceptions, educate them on the most important attitudes of all: a servant’s spirit and flexibility. This will be invaluable as you recruit.

## 6. Watch for Red Flags

- **Medical Problems:** Will a person with special medical needs create difficulties on the team or field? Would you need to make special provisions for the person? Issues may include dietary restrictions, physical limitations and necessary medications.
- **Wrong Motivations:** Does the application indicate that the person is motivated by reasons that conflict with the team’s goals? For example, is the person looking to escape some major problem at home (e.g., broken relationship, death in family)? Is the person going because he or she wants to be with someone who is on the team? Is he or she just looking for an opportunity to travel?
- **Financial Difficulties:** Is this person doing her part in raising support?
- **Negative Attitude:** Is their attitude toward life consistently negative? What has been your experience with him/her in the past?
- **Emotional or Psychological Difficulties:** If a person has recently shown symptoms of suicidal or harmful thoughts or actions, get them

help immediately. Taking them into a cross-cultural situation will only magnify the behavior, not correct it.

### **7. Keep Them Accountable**

As you train and work through the process, you (or your other delegated leader) will need to continually ask people how they are doing with their preparation for the trip. If you see folks lagging behind in raising support, you need to ask them how many letters they sent out and when they sent them. These are those beautiful coaching/discipleship moments you've been longing for. Refer people to the checklist you gave them that shows all they need to do.

## DO THE LOGISTICS

A short-term mission trip should provide an experience that will offer meaningful service or ministry. It should help the missionary, nationals, or agency extend the vision as well as provide a good glimpse at mission work, introduce other cultures/lifestyles and ultimately CHANGE LIVES. The goal is to see participants engage with their world, not merely be travelers. Give attention to planning the logistics so that you are available to people while on the field. Keep in mind that there will always be “surprises” that will stretch and mold the team, but good planning makes a difference!

The first resource is the month-by-month Trip Planning Guideline that will be your security blanket if you start feeling overwhelmed by the details. Once you’ve completed the checklist for that period of time, you can breathe till the next timetable shows up. The second, goes into more detail on some of the various tasks in the Trip Planning Guide.

### **Note on the Importance of Delegation**

Leadership isn’t about control, but engaging and empowering others in a cooperative manner to achieve your team’s goal. It should be a core value of any short-term trip leader to give away responsibilities. This will solidify team members’ personal and interactive investments and build and stretch the individual in new ways. Some suggestions for team delegations before and during the trip:

- Administrative details – collect paperwork, remind people of deadlines, assist in flights, lodging, etc.
- Finances – assist with support raising management and/or hold cash and reconcile receipts during trip
- Scheduler – responsible for the schedule on the field and moving people from place to place
- Devotional Coordinator- responsible to organize who is leading devotions which day and coordinating worship
- Materials Coordinator – order and organize materials for ministry project
- Prayer Prompter – keep team mindful and initiate prayer walks during the trip
- Ministry Coordinator - coordinates the ministry project, schedule, and who is doing what and when.
- Photographer/recorder – keep account of activities and complete trip report on returning, etc.
- Social Media Coordinator - Responsible for posting pictures and updates on the team’s Facebook page as well as STW FB & Instagram account.
- Videographer – shoot and edit video for return reunion gathering (and possibly to show team supporters)

## TRIP PLANNING TIMELINE

We realize there are differences in leadership and organizational styles. This Timeline is an optimal pace in which to bring together a team. We would encourage you not to be so loose that it creates chaos, but not to be too rigid, that it does not allow for divine interruptions. Keep plotting through it. Once you've completed the list for the given time-frame, take a breath and thank Jesus that He is in control of this trip.

TRIP: \_\_\_\_\_

DATES: \_\_\_\_\_

### 6+ MONTHS BEFORE

- o Spend ½ day solo reflecting on the leadership aspect of this trip
- o Connect with one of the STW coaches for more information.
- o Contact agency or field partner to establish relationship and gather information they provide on logistics, ministry planning and documentation.
- o Email a “save the date” to potential members you would like to invite.
- o Recruit key friends, skilled people, or co-leaders through conversation.
- o Ask 3-5 people to be your personal intercessors as a leader.

### 5 MONTHS BEFORE

- o Keep talking and inviting people to consider your trip.
- o Create a preliminary team budget using the Budget Worksheet.
- o Create a Trip Info Sheet on the trip with who, what, where, when, and cost per person for the trip.
- o Hold an information meeting.
- o Ask people to fill out applications online.
- o Hand out Mission Trip Training Guides to committed participants.
- o Stay in contact with the STW Team with any new information. Email: LauraA@occ.org
- o Continue intermittent contact with field partners to develop your relationship, but be careful not to be too needy on them at this point.
- o Create schedule/plans for
  - Applications due and cut-off date
  - Training Meetings (need to meet at least 6 times)
  - Payment schedules
  - Reunion Party
- o Confirm documentation needs for travel (passports and visas) and inoculation needs by browsing [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

#### **4 MONTHS BEFORE**

- o Register team online (link can be found in Team Leader's section).
- o Hold first training meeting (or repeat an info meeting).
- o Select team participants and deal with those who aren't a good fit for this specific trip. Ask a STW Coach for help if needed.
- o Meet with any participants one on one whom you do not know.
- o Collect deposits and make sure all applications have been sent to you.
- o Have team apply for passports if they don't have.
- o Confirm trip focus and ministry needs with field partners.
- o Create a preliminary schedule/itinerary for the trip.
- o Begin team fundraising events (including personal prayer and support letters).

#### **3 MONTHS BEFORE**

- o Confirm that all participants have passports and apply for visas (recommend that you do this as a group).
- o Confirm that all participants have begun or completed necessary inoculations and scheduled any appointments with doctors/dentists.
- o Continue team support-raising.
- o Hold Training Meeting # 2
- o Delegate trip responsibilities to team members.
- o Encourage team members to submit all necessary documents to the STW team (copies of passports/visas, Medical Consent, Release of Liability, and Discipline Agreement).

#### **2 MONTHS BEFORE**

- o Reconfirm project, team size, and lodging/transportation with field partner.
- o Purchase and ship project materials if applicable. (Your team can also check a 2<sup>nd</sup> bag for ministry supplies that you take as a team).
- o Second funding deadline (50% of total to cover airline tickets).
- o Book airline tickets.
- o Hold Training Meetings 3 & 4.
- o Order printed materials, supplies, etc. related to your ministry project.
- o Follow up on required documents needed for STW

#### **1 MONTH BEFORE**

- o Hold Training Meetings 5 & 6.
- o Pick a Sunday for Team Commissioning with your STW Coach.
- o Distribute in-country emergency contact phone numbers and final itinerary to team members (guide online in Team Leader's section)
- o Edit prayer guide template and distribute to team (template online in Team Leader's Section). Confirm prayer support of 5-7 people for each participant.
- o Complete support raising (100% in by 2 weeks before leaving).

- o Work with STW Office to get medical insurance for all team members.
- o Email a check request to [Lizw@occ.org](mailto:Lizw@occ.org) for team cash advance. (This is for cash needed in country to cover remaining expenses)
- o Have each participant sign and turn in Release and Team Covenant.
- o Confirm and collect any forms still not turned in.

## **2 WEEKS BEFORE**

- o Make prayer a personal priority over travel details.
- o Be prepared for a few more emails and phone calls than usual
- o Final funding deadline for any late support raisers.
- o Divide and hand-out ministry supplies for team members to pack.
- o Pick up & pack Mission Trip Devotional Books from the STW office (1 for each team member)
- o Create team and logistics notebook (copy to take and copy to leave with church contact person). Notebook contents:
  - Copy of itinerary and field emergency contact information
  - Copy of tickets and itinerary
  - Copy of passport and visa page for each participant
  - Consent for treatment and international travel (original go with you, copies stay)
  - Emergency contact information for each participant.
- o Pick up and sign for cash advance. Take to bank to cash.
- o Set time and place for meeting/departure.
- o Organize transportation to and from the airport.
- o Hold Optional Final Gathering – Dessert and Commissioning Night with family and supporters.
- o Participate in your Sunday prayer commissioning.

## **DAY OF DEPARTURE**

- o Be sure all team members and luggage are at the airport ready for check-in at least three hours (for international) or two hours (for domestic) before departure.
- o Confirm all luggage has ID both inside and outside.
- o Pray together.
- o Keep any students or kids with you and under tight supervision on the front side of getting to the gate. Keep an eye on first time international travelers.
- o Buy everyone a bottle of water to drink at the airport.

## **FIRST DAY ON THE FIELD**

- o Remind team not to drink tap water or use to brush teeth.
- o Have orientation time with local personnel.
- o Establish daily schedule including individual devotions and team debriefs.

### **DURING THE TRIP**

- o Hold team devotions and worship every morning.
- o Hold team debrief sessions every evening.
- o Work and serve hard.
- o Watch out for culture shock.
- o Seek individual conversations with each team member.
- o Ask individuals to share their story with the team.
- o Get to know nationals and missionaries.
- o Keep track of all expenses and gather receipts where possible.

### **LAST DAY TOGETHER ON THE FIELD**

- o Debrief and play together.
- o Challenge participants to make the experience a part of their lives.
- o Reconfirm transportation and departure flight in advance.

### **1 WEEK AFTER RETURNING**

- o Email team reminding them of the normal experience of trip let-down and that you will be together soon at the reunion.
- o Have a cleaning party to clean, pack and put away any supplies used and returned.

### **2 – 3 WEEKS AFTER RETURNING**

- o Write up trip report to send to STW Staff and your own personal supporters.
- o Turn in receipts and Cash Advance Worksheet to finance department.
- o Turn in some key stories and pictures from your team experience.
- o Hold a Reunion Celebration with team, family and supporters.
- o Write thank you notes to host organization and/or national workers.
- o Remind team members to send a trip report and pictures to their supporters.
- o Take an extra personal day off to reflect, rest and renew your own heart.
- o Launch a 4-week Post-Trip Debrief Group. (Resource available for that).

### **1 MONTH AFTER RETURNING**

- o Debrief with STW Leadership.
- o Strategize for greater mission investment.
- o Follow-up with individual team members on personal next steps.

## A CLOSER LOOK AT LOGISTICAL DETAILS

### Flights

- o Use a travel agent to book tickets. It is worth the extra \$10 per ticket fee for someone else to wrangle the best deals and carry the weight of searching. The STW team can help with booking through a travel agent.
- o Pay the extra cost on tickets to get the flexibility of the change option. You will ALWAYS have people drop out and then you are stuck with a \$1200 ticket.
- o Make sure the money is in to cover cost of ticket before purchasing tickets for anyone. STW cannot pay for the tickets of people who decide to drop out.
- o Get frequent flier information.
- o Establish an itinerary of in-country flights before solidifying dates. Many developing countries may only have 1-2 flights per week.
- o Find out luggage size and weight limits for international air travel.
- o Suggest that each traveler bring only one suitcase and one carry-on no matter how long the trip. You can provide members with an additional piece of luggage, if needed, containing food, tools, or literature.

### Passports and Visas

- o Find out what passports, visas, or tourist cards are needed. Is a letter of recommendation, invitation, or guarantee needed?
- o Put the passport pressure on people. Set an early deadline for having this information returned to you. Passport applications are available at the Post Office or online. Make sure people check their passport expiration date. **A passport cannot be less than 6 months to expiration on day of travel.**
- o When a birth certificate is required, get an official copy with a raised seal from the Department of Vital Statistics in the state of your birth.
- o If country visas are required, do it as a group and build the cost into the team budget. You will need everyone's passport, visa application, and two more passport pictures for the visa.
- o Make multiple copies of passport and visa pages to bring with you and submit to STW.

### Required Documents

A Document Checklist can be found online in Team Leader Section.

- o **Please submit the following documents to the Serve the World team:**
  - Team Registration Form
  - Trip Info Sheet
  - Mission Trip Applications for each team member
  - Copy of Medical Consent for each team member
  - Release of Liability for each team member
  - Discipline Agreement for each team member

- Copies of all Passports & Visas for each team member
  - Copy of Contact information, Hotel Information & Itinerary (Also be given out to family members)
  - Copy of all E-tickets & Hotel Information
  - Signed Team Covenant
- o **Please bring the following documents with you on the trip:**
    - Original Medical Consent for each team member
    - Copy of Trip Medical Insurance for all team members
    - Copies of all Passports & Visas for each team member
    - Copy of Contact information, Hotel Information & Itinerary
    - E-tickets
    - Signed Team Covenant (gives you a platform for confronting any negative behavior).
    - Cash Advance Worksheet
  - o **Possible Additional Needed Documents**
    - Notarized Minor Consent to Travel Form -Some countries require this for minors to travel internationally (even with one parent).
    - Vehicle Permission Form - When taking borrowed vehicles across a border, have a notarized letter from the owner stating that each driver (by name) is allowed to drive the vehicle (license and vehicle ID number) into the country.
    - Accident Insurance - near the border that will be valid in the other country if necessary. Make sure you have the registration papers, too.

### **Transportation**

- o Establish ground transportation. Are there shuttles at the airport?
- o Does the ministry partner arrange transportation to the ministry project destination daily? Assess your needs and ministry project. Check into renting a van and driver for the week instead of public transportation.
- o Be sure to have adequate room for all the people, luggage and equipment. Confirm and reconfirm these arrangements.

### **Meals and Water**

- o Determine who will plan menus, do shopping, pack supplies, and cook.
- o Encourage team members to pack snack-foods, but not fill a suitcase.
- o Training on food and water should include health and safety tips. Drink only bottled or boiled water, only eat that which is cooked or can be peeled. No fresh vegetables or fruits where skin is edible.
- o Ask the host or have a plan to purchase bottled water at the airport on arrival. Tell team to save some for brushing their teeth that night.

### **Lodging**

- o Make hotel and dorm reservations in advance and reconfirm several times. Get information on conditions that would be out of the ordinary (shared bathrooms, no linens/bedding, etc.).
- o Confirm method of payment allowed.
- o Allow the team to form roommates before you leave. Be flexible with this process. In larger groups, assigning may be necessary.
- o Provide hotel name, address, phone number and any other lodging contact information for family and friends. You will also put this in a folder with the flight information and itinerary for your church contact person.

### **Medical**

- o What inoculations are required and/or suggested? Get information through your travel agent or [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).
- o A Serve the World staff member will obtain your medical insurance for each team member before you leave on your trip.
- o Medical insurance is non-negotiable. Our insurance will cover emergency medical, evacuation, and kidnapping negotiating.

### **Devotional & Debrief Times**

- o Coordinate who is going to lead devotions on which day
- o Coordinate who will be in charge of leading worship during those times.
- o Are song books needed for worship? A speaker? Playlist?
- o When will debrief times be held, who will lead?

### **Ministry Project**

- o Understand your project (i.e. building houses, training, community outreach, cultural exchange, etc.).
- o Designate a point person to put the ministry agenda and resource needs list together. It would be ideal for that person to be part of the training and even go on the trip to run the ministry project.
- o Partnering with a local national church to do children's outreach with a VBS type program is a fantastic trip experience for family teams and can make an impact in that community.
- o If you are building or doing a labor work project, find someone who has experience in that field. It releases you to focus on facilitating and discipling your team through this experience.
- o Your team training should equip every person to share their faith story and pray out loud in small groups. Even on work teams, you will probably be visiting a national church where you will be asked to preach and team members to share testimonies.
- o Ask your field partner about the need for interpreters. It is helpful if you can recruit someone from your community who speaks the language, even from another church. This will expand your mission movement by connecting locally with ethnic churches. Look for opportunities to create partnerships after the trip is completed.

## TEAM FINANCES

### 1) Set Your Budget

Fill out a Budget Worksheet (sample included) to determine the expenses of a trip. A two-week low-end international trip is typically \$750 plus airfare. Extra expenses may include in-country travel, interpreters, ministry project money, or a fee to the sending organization. **Please allow room in your budget for unexpected expenses. STW is not obligated to cover extra expenses beyond what was raised.**

### 2) Set & Enforce Payment Deadlines

You need to plan the deadlines so that you have enough to cover airfare when you purchase tickets and enough to cover your cash advance prior to leaving.

The following are suggested payment deadlines:

- \$200 non-refundable deposit given with application
- 50% of funds due 2 months before trip departure to cover airfare
- 100% of funds due 2 weeks before trip departure

### 3) Monitor Support Raising

Keep a close eye on your team in their support raising efforts.. Ask specific questions to keep them moving along:

- How many letters have you sent out?
- What are you feeling led by God to do?
- Have you had any follow-up conversations?
- How much of your own personal money are you prepared to contribute?
- Do you need some ideas on support raising?

### 4) Submit Team Money

Collect checks from team members at each team meeting and turn them into the finance office or delegate someone on your team to be in charge of this. Checks are posted to the trip account every Wednesday. You should be getting an updated report every week as money is coming in.

### 5) Request Cash Advance

Please request money to be used in-country **no later than 2 weeks before trip departure, preferably 3 weeks before.** The week prior to leaving get your checks off to the organization and your cash advance into the bank. Unless you have lots of cash to cover your cash advance, you will need to give your bank a couple of days before they allow you access to those funds.

## **6) Reconcile Cash Advances**

After returning, cash advances need to be reconciled within 15 days to the finance office using the Cash Advance Worksheet. The finance office needs receipts for all major expenses for auditing purposes. Getting receipts for airlines and from your facilitating organization should not be a problem, however receipts for other in-country expenses can be more difficult to obtain. Please do your best to obtain as many receipts as possible but for those you do not have, just track the expenses by category (i.e. meals, daily transportation, special expenses, etc.) on the Cash Advance Worksheet.

### Budget Worksheet (Per Person/ Per Team)

CATEGORY	PER PERSON	TOTAL TEAM	NOTES
Airfare			Suggest using a travel agent
In-country flight			
Vans/Taxi			
Culture/Tour Day			
Food & Water			Approx. \$20 per person/per day
Lodging			Approx. \$30 per person/per day
Special Team Meal			Suggested \$25 per person
Organization Fee			
Visa Cost			
Country Exit Visas			Ask your travel agent about this
Trip Insurance			A necessity! Usually \$30 per person for the entire trip. (Directions in the timeline.)
Pre-trip training			Build in \$10 per person for a cultural experience.
Resources			
Ministry Supplies			A lot of this can be donated.
Interpreters			Ask your host typical expense
National Partner Gift Money			Ask your host what amount is appropriate to give to nationals
Project Expense			
Emergency Funds			Suggested \$100 per person OR access to a credit card.
Misc. Tips/Fees			Suggested \$10 per person
Other:			
Other:			
<b>TOTALS:</b>			

**TOTAL TEAM GOAL:** \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL COST PER PERSON:** \_\_\_\_\_

## CASH ADVANCE WORKSHEET

**Name of Trip:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Team Leader:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Cash Advance Amount:** \_\_\_\_\_

Please breakdown how the cash advance was spent into each of these categories:

Transportation	\$
Food	\$
Lodging	\$
Ministry or Project Expenses	\$
Gift Money	\$
Recreational/Tours	\$
Organizational Fees	\$
Emergency Expenses	\$
Misc. Fees	\$
<b>Total Amount Spent:</b>	\$
<b>Total Amount Returned:</b>	\$

**PLEASE ATTACH AS MANY RECEIPTS AS POSSIBLE!**

## RAISE THE SUPPORT

Asking for money is tough and it can be completely humbling, but it's an experience that actually helps prepare people's hearts for the trip. You can't be a good giver until you've learned to receive from others. It helps to have a good view on why we raise support and to communicate that to your team members.

### Communicate Why We Raise Support

- A Prayer Team Will Result. When people are challenged to give financially, they are likely to pray for you.
- Your Faith Will Grow. Support raising is a faith journey. When days go by and your support level does not increase, you may be tempted to question your call to missions. But those are the days to be reminded that God has called you and that He will supply every need. Often the best faith lessons appear as we wait on God. That's when we learn that we are limited and God is limitless.
- It Broadens the Missionary Vision of Our Church. You are the best recruiter for world missions. When you share your passion with others, you are able to communicate your vision and your call. Your enthusiasm and dedication stimulates and challenges interest and involvement in missions.

### Communicate How We Raise Support

- Pray that God will lead you and your team to look for the resources for this trip.
- We strongly encourage individual support letters (samples are included). From our experience personal support letters tend to yield the most financial fruit for trips. People give out of relationship to you. An email blast is impersonal and easy to delete, a personal letter is harder to ignore. Make a target of sending out at least 100 letters.
- Look outside of the church. Friends, relatives, co-workers and neighbors (even unbelievers) may feel blessed to invest in you and God's leading in your life. Seek their support.
- Ask inside of the church. Ask your small group or ministry team friends to pray about God's leading to give prayer and/or financial help for this opportunity. However, do not ask people unless you have some kind of

connection with them. And only ask your pastor to support you as a way to practice—not for real money!

- Express the importance of follow-up with people with whom they have sent letters to. They can follow up either through email or a phone call.
- Encourage the team to follow-up each gift with a personal thank-you note.
- Upon returning from the trip, encourage the team to send a report letter to all the people who supported them, both through prayer and finances.
- Encourage team members to evaluate their own contribution. Other people can tell you the surprising places God provided money: unexpected refund checks, garage sales, extra income opportunities, etc. Challenge individuals to plan ahead and to evaluate what sacrifices they can make in the next few months to contribute toward their trip.
- Facebook and crowd funding sites are good tools, but they have NOT been proven to raise the full amount. Don't let that be your only way of raising funds.
- For the die-hards or for extra project funds, we have included a resource called "20 Ways to Raise Support" that you might find helpful.

### **Communicate How To Process Support**

A Support Raising Guide is included in the Mission Trip Training Guide and should be given with the information packet.

- When sending out letters, have people include a self-addressed, stamped envelope with their home as the return address. Ask them to make copies or keep a list of checks they receive before turning them into the church.
- Include in the letter the online option for giving. Go to [www.occ.org/servetheword](http://www.occ.org/servetheword) page. There is a "donate to team" button that will allow them to specify which trip and person the donation is made to.
- Submit checks/cash as they ARRIVE at training meetings; otherwise you end up with money in pockets, going through the wash, in desk drawers or stuffed in your Bible. Place all money in one blue missions

envelope per person that is clearly marked with their name and team information.

- Delegate the job of “support processing” to a team member (or someone who can’t go on the trip) who will turn all funds into the finance office.
- Checks should be made payable to OCC.

For donations to be considered tax-deductible the following MUST happen:

- Must **NOT** designate the gift to you anywhere on their check (use the Mission Giving envelopes to designate toward specific people).
- Understand the giving is to the church and trip that will then support the people’s participation.

**NOTE:** According to federal guidelines, individuals who receive more money than is required are NOT in control of extra funds. Any funds above and beyond your trip will be used at the discretion of the church for mission-related activities.

**SUPPORT FOR TEAM LEADERS:** We ask most team leaders to make an effort to raise support, however we seek to cover most of the travel costs. For those who are managing ongoing projects and teams, we will work with you for ongoing expenses of travel and mobilization.

## TWENTY-THREE IDEAS FOR SUPPORT-RAISING

**Please Note:** Due to the volume of our teams, the IRS does not allow us to use the building for fundraising purposes. All supplemental fund raising must be done off site.

1. *Pray.* Seems obvious, but we often don't spend enough time asking God to supply the needs for us and the trip.
2. *Personal Prayerful Commitment.* Challenge them to pray about giving toward their trip first with what they believe God wants them to contribute.
3. *Personal Letters.* Sample letters can help spur team members onto this very difficult task of asking for money. Letters by far are the most effective. They need to send letters to at least 35 people.
4. *Garage Sales.* Joint or individual. Utilize the example flyer as a way of gaining more "stuff" to sell from neighbors.
5. *Bigger and Better Game via Facebook.* Team members can create a page using a paperclip or golf ball, where they start with an object they own and trade up. In the end, they will sell an item worth an amount on Craig's list. This can get viral quick.
6. *Birthday Mission Party.* Theme the party based on the country/project you are going to and have guests donate travel items, ministry supplies and money.
7. *Parent's Night Out.* Partner with the children's ministry and provide babysitting at the church. Engage your whole youth ministry to serve. Plan a great activity night and have a minimum asking donation. Make sure parents know what you are raising money for.
8. *Labor Drive.* Offer doing labor at the homes of other church members for a donation to the trip.
9. *Coffee House Gig.* Get a band to do a benefit concert.
10. *Teach about Sacrificial Giving in your Life Groups.* Challenge the group to stretch in their support.
11. *Themed Dinner and Silent Auction.*
12. *Car Detailing.* Pre-sell detailing tickets to neighbors/friends/family to get more than a car-wash.
13. *A month after the support letters were sent,* have people send emails to the same people asking them to pray that the money would come in. (It's a great way of reminding people of the need without asking them to give again)

14. *Part Time Jobs.* Even a Jr. High student can appeal to neighbors and friends for babysitting, lawn, and house cleaning jobs to put toward the trip.
15. *Engage other “experts” in your congregation.* Find those with gifts/experience in special event planning and host a 5K run, mini-triathlon (based on activities suitable for your region), trekking teams, etc. With fairly low-cost community advertising and promo at another local event, you can raise quite a bit of funds.
16. *Promote the cause for collective fundraisers* that are communicated to the community. Instead of saying, “Help this team go on a mission trip to Mexico”, use language like “Caring for children in impoverished communities”. Focus your language on the goal of the project.
17. *Throw a community carnival.* Spend time planning costs well before incurring expenses to see if this can be an income producing for your community.
18. *Youth Trips: Parent’s part-time jobs.* How much “parent change” in the pocket do you have? Any of the parents willing to work a part-time job for a month or two and give their earnings toward the trip?
19. *Live near a field?* Negotiate your group working a few Saturdays during Harvest Season in exchange for an equitable donation toward the trip.
20. *Got a booth and a parking lot?* Christmas Trees...Fireworks....local harvest crop....
21. *Local restaurant fund-raiser.* Several chains (like Red Robin and Ruby’s) or a local community restaurant will offer a proceeds night in exchange for advertising and bringing in a crowd.
22. *Recycle Event.* Check on costs for disposing of paints, batteries, large appliances, etc. Add a delivery cost to the dump fee. Arrange your parking lot into a one-stop drop for customers. Get volunteers with trucks to deliver to appropriate waste sites. Advertise in the local papers as a community event.
23. *ASK local companies for support and donations.* Even your own employer might use the do-gooding as promotion for being an engaged business for social causes.

## SAMPLE LETTER #1

Dear Aunt Millie,

I know it's been a few months since we have talked. Things in my life are going well. I have been.....

A new opportunity for me has come up. I feel led to go with my church on a Short Term Mission Trip (for a non-believing audience, you can use Service Project Trip, etc.) to ..... We will be doing .....

I am excited about this because..... Our trip dates are .....

Would you be willing to prayerfully consider supporting me in both prayer and finances? The cost of the trip is \_\_\_\_\_. I am planning on contributing some out of my own resources, but am reaching out to my circle of friends and family to join me in this project.

If you are willing and able, please feel free to write a check to OCC (Overlake Christian Church) and use the enclosed SAS envelope. Please do not write my name in the memo line if you would like a tax deduction. If you would like to give online, you can do that by going to [www.occ.org](http://www.occ.org). Click on Short Term Teams and then the DONATE button. You will get a drop down of our trip - \_\_\_\_\_ and then can designate it toward me on that page.

I will send you some update news on how the preparations are going and then what we experienced while on the trip. I appreciate your prayers and any support you could send. Thanks for joining me in this.

Sincerely,

## SAMPLE LETTER #2

Dear Family & Friends,

God is leading us in a new direction, to join an Outreach Team on a trip to East Asia. We will be leaving November 1st and will be returning November 12th.

Our purpose is to:

- \* Prayer walk for insight on reaching the city for Christ
- \* Gather and experience logistical information for future teams (hotels, restaurants, city maps, key locations, etc.)
- \* Be available for opportunities that God provides like meeting with business people, conversational English classes, etc.)
- \* Develop new friendships with a couple of people
- \* Give out Bibles or Jesus films to those new friends
- \* Come back and mobilize others to get involved for future trips

In order to make this trip possible, our church has asked us to assemble a Sponsorship/Prayer Team....people like you who can sponsor us financially and/or would be willing to pray for us and the success of the trip. The total amount that we need to raise is \$2000. This amount includes travel expenses, food, lodging, and ministry materials. It is recommended that we have our support raised by October 1<sup>st</sup>. All gifts are tax deductible and your check needs to be made payable to Overlake Christian Church with the words "East Asia Trip" written in the memo section of your check. We have enclosed a self-addressed envelope to mail your gift back to us which we will deliver to the church to ensure the proper accounting of your gift.

We would appreciate your encouragement and prayers as we prepare for the trip and especially in November during the trip. Please pray for the financial needs of the team, good communication and teamwork, for our Christian witness to the people of East Asia, and for our strength, health and safety.

If you have any questions or would like more information about the trip, please don't hesitate to call or e-mail us. You can reach us during the day at (425) 413-XXXX or e-mail us at jXXXX@aol.com.

Thank you so much for reading our letter and supporting us.

In Christ's Service,

### SAMPLE LETTER #3

Dear Friends and Family,

I write in appeal for your love, prayers and assistance in an incredible opportunity I have this coming November to travel to Thailand with a group of Godly people to minister, love and bring hope to those who have been trapped in human sex-slave trafficking.

I can only imagine their despair. I am eager to be a part of this work with others from local churches and the community to put an end to this deplorable injustice!

On the ground, some of the initiatives include support and counseling, safe transitional housing, education, job training and placement opportunities for those trapped in this life of horror. Not Abandoned, a non-profit organization, along with Overlake Christian Church continue to fight to raise money to end this war on human sex trafficking through local charity events and donations.

This brings me to an important part of my letter. With your loving help, in order to go, I need to raise \$3000.00. God has put this on my heart but I cannot do it without your assistance! I'm asking for you to prayerfully consider what you can send. Any amount is so appreciated. For those who have already sent their support donations, I am grateful. Thank you! I have approximately \$1000.00 raised but need the remaining \$2000.00 Time is at the essence! Please do not delay!

Two simple ways are available in which you can assist me. Your donations are tax deductible if you write your checks to Overlake Christian Church. Please do not write my name on your check. Or you can give on line: 1. [www.occ.org](http://www.occ.org). 2. What We Do -3. Serve The World- 4. DONATE – Follow prompt- (1<sup>st</sup> time users need to Create an Account.) then fill in your e-mail address and password of your choice- Find the team name and follow prompt.

You may also contact me if you have any questions. I can be reached at 000-000-0000 or by e-mail: [myname@gmail.com](mailto:myname@gmail.com)

With humble regards,

## **SAMPLE LETTER #4**

Greetings loved ones!

I believe with all my heart that God calls me to follow Him in short term missions. With that being said, I am writing to let you know I am planning on leading a very small team to Asia in May.

Our goal is to support a Godly woman who has been in country for a while and established a women's center which fulfills a desperate need to minister to Muslim women who have been in abusive situations, endured hardships, depression etc.

Each day, we will spend time in front of our Lord asking His guidance and strength! We will be praying for the women and their families, we'll pray for their hearts to hear and know God's indescribable love. I hope to begin with at least one prayer walk around the neighborhood where the center is located. I know from years past, prayer walks in the name of Jesus produce great results. We know that God goes before us and prepares the hearts of those He knows will be open to finding his peace and love. We want to establish relationships with the women, shower them with love, joy and offer hope.....the hope of the cross.

We are delighted about the suggestion of doing some crafts with them and I am planning a tea party for our last day! How fun will that be?

I'm very excited about the team members, women I highly respect and esteem. A small team is perfect!

Our goal is to leave May 2nd and return by May 9th. I ask for your support! Your prayers and financial support are vital! Any amount will help so please pray about what God is putting on your heart to give. Making your checks out to OCC (Overlake Christian Church) allows them to be a tax deduction for you. Included is a self-addressed envelope.

As you can see by the date of this letter, time is VERY short for raising funds needed. The cost of the trip is \$2200.00. I am praying over each letter that is sent that you will prayerfully consider supporting this effort.

Please feel free to contact me by phone or e-mail. Both of which you will find at the close of this letter.

Blessings and love to you!

Home:

Cell:

E-mail:

## TRAIN YOUR TEAM

One of your greatest tasks as a team leader is to prepare your team to GO with impact and RETURN with purpose! A well trained team can be an incredible blessing to local national churches, missionaries, and the kingdom of God. However, on the flip side, a poorly trained team can be a nightmare for our field partners. Poor preparation will almost certainly create unnecessary stress, conflicts and lessen your ministry impact.

A Mission Trip Training Guide and Journal will be provided for you and all your team members to use at all training meetings. Please use this tool in order to be sure that all important topics are being covered in your training. The guide is to provide a deeper journey for participants and to make a training easier on you. If there is a different order you desire to do, please feel free. **Please strongly emphasize to your team the importance of attending all team training meetings!**

The training meetings will focus on:

- Building **TEAM UNITY**
- Spiritually developing the team members' **HEARTS**
- Developing a call to **PRAY**
- Preparing for the **MINISTRY project**
- Awakenning their **CULTURAL** sensitivity
- Giving practical help to **LOGISTICS** in travel

For purposes of your leadership preparation, we will walk through the following in greater detail:

- Team Dynamics – using personalities and crises to build team cohesiveness while fostering personal growth
- Issues related to Health and Safety
- Closed Country Security Concerns
- Cultural Cues and Sensitivity
- Culture Shock

## TRAIN ON TEAM DYNAMICS

There are plenty of personality tests and category books out there. You might want to engage the team in a conversation to hear about what they have read, heard or discovered about themselves. Every personality type has strengths and weaknesses. Working together as a team highlights an individual's strengths and helps grant grace in each person's moments of weakness. The following might be a helpful tool to your discussion:

- **Easy-going Eric** – never in a hurry, enjoys the moments, will not add to the mix of strong opinions, and tends to be the “rock” of the group. May have difficulty making decisions or finishing a task. He can get lost or lag behind if someone doesn't watch out for him.
- **Fun-loving Farah** – life of the party, great people connector, laughs a lot. May have difficulty confronting tough situations and staying in touch with her emotions as she experiences culture shock. She can become a distraction for others unless you help keep her focused.
- **Leader-driven Linda** – great leadership capacity, steps in when there is a need and sees things through to completion. May have difficulty with letting things go and relaxing. Often needs to know what's happening next in order to process. She will drive you crazy unless you give her something to run.
- **Deep-thinking Dean** – will create great discussion for team, process information and experiences well. May struggle with being melancholy and disconnecting a bit from the group. He might become divisive in the group if you don't keep him engaged.

A large part of your team training is to build connectedness amongst your team. Can you play together? Laugh together? Pray together? The experiences of the trip will definitely bond the team, but be intentional during the training to connect people to each other through delegating tasks, sharing life story information, praying and caring for the needs that arise, and watching out for potential problem dynamics. The tighter the group is BEFORE you go, the more impact during and after the trip.

### Create a Team Covenant Together

A good covenant involves expectations, objectives, how to deal with conflict, and specific guidelines for sensitive situations. You will create a team covenant during your team trainings and this process will bond your team and help you better understand the process. Once all have signed off on this covenant, it then becomes a tool for accountability. Words like flexibility,

humor and servanthood should appear somewhere on your covenant. A sample covenant is included.

## **PRAY**

Pray together as a team. Pray for your team members. Pray for the trip. It will build a Spirit of unity and invite the Holy Spirit to journey with you.

## **TRAIN ON HEALTH AND SAFETY**

You will be their mother! It doesn't matter if you are a man or a woman, 52 or 25 years old; you will have to remind them to drink bottled water, go to the bathroom before you leave and dispense cold medicine. This is the nature of leading and facilitating trips. People get sick, homesick, and heartsick. They will need some nurturing, reminders to be safe, leadership during threatening situations, and redirection, when necessary. The training guide will help train and prepare your team on what to expect, how to stay healthy, and being safe.

### **Staying Healthy**

Before you leave, encourage people to get plenty of rest, exercise, and develop healthy habits that will strengthen their body for travel. Other imperatives to suggest are:

- Visiting your dentist for unfinished work or a check-up.
- Going to the doctor for an updated tetanus and vaccinations.

During the trip, remind your team about:

- **Water:** Drink and brush your teeth with boiled or bottled water ONLY! In restaurants, inconspicuously (so not to offend hosts) wipe down any water off of plates or glasses. Be careful not to ingest any water during showers.
- **Food:** Do not eat lettuce or other green leafy vegetables in foreign countries. The general rule of thumb is eat only what is cooked or can be peeled.
- **Sun:** Bring sunscreen and a hat, and do not work shirtless (hopefully you realize this is just for guys). Depending on latitude, the sun can be much more intense than you are accustomed. A sunburn can incapacitate you for days, so take precautions.

- **Parasites:** In foreign countries, do not swim or enter a body of water without first asking your host. There are parasites in some fresh water bodies in developing countries that could harm you by entering through your skin. Do not walk barefoot at any time. If you have to dig in the soil with your hands, wear gloves. Hookworm enters through bare skin.
  
- **Jet Lag:** Help your team deal with jet lag. Upon arriving (after what may be long travel), encourage team members to take a walk and get some exercise before going to bed if it is a reasonable hour. Typical symptoms of jet lag include
  - Fatigue and drowsiness
  - Disorientation and fuzziness
  - Emotional outbursts
  - Sleeping patterns disturbed
  - Dehydration – headaches, sore throat, etc.Drinking lots of water, staying somewhat mobile during the days and trying to force a new sleeping schedule should help cope with jet lag.
  
- **Sickness:** Expect to experience diarrhea. Even the slight changes that result when you go to parts of the United States can result in intestinal disturbances. Taking Pepto-Bismol tablets every day can help ward off intestinal problems.
  
- **Malaria Medication:** If this is a requirement for where you are traveling, make it a team dinner ritual while on the trip. Follow-up with team members to ensure they're continuing the malaria medication once they return home. (NOTE: Any team members that take antidepressants need to check with their doctor on specific malaria medications that could cause problems).
  
- **Allergies:** Make sure you are aware of any allergies on your team. If it is a younger group, you probably want to hold and dispense medication. I would navigate that decision with their parents.

### **Suggested Individual First Aid Kit**

- Imodium Tablets
- Pepto-Bismol
- Band-aids and Neosporin
- Anti-Bacterial Wet Wipes
- Ibuprofen/Tylenol
- Antihistamine (especially important for flights)
- Personal Medications in marked prescription bottles

### **In Case of an Emergency**

If possible, acquire information on local hospitals, clinics, or other health care options prior to traveling. In developing countries, hospitals are not always the best place to take sick team members.

### **Tips during an emergency**

- Don't panic.
- Secure the situation. For medical emergencies, ask your field contact for help.
- Notify the appropriate people – your church, the family, and your international travel insurance company.
- Get the team praying and doing something.
- Document the event – what happened, dates and times, what you did, and the determined plan of action. It is best to have 2-3 people do this to insure all facts are accurate.

### **Staying Safe**

- Be aware of your surroundings. Most teams have a Disneyland mentality. Be alert to issues or potential dangers.
- Do not display wealth – jewelry, large amounts of money, electronics.
- Don't carry large amounts of money with you.
- Watch actions. Limit the loud and obnoxious behavior, large groupings in public, etc.
- Travel in pairs. Have team members pick a "buddy" who is always making sure that person has arrived on the bus, at a meal, to the project, etc. Do a "buddy check" when traveling from place-to-place.
- Never walk alone.
- Dress appropriately for the situation.
- Respect laws of the land. (See security section for missionary activity in closed countries.)
- Do not become demanding or imposing as an American with rights and entitlement. You are guests in that country.
- Help women on the team recognize that conversation with male nationals might have implications in that culture.

### **Security in Closed Countries**

- Avoid the use of Christian and mission words.
- Always assume every conversation can be heard – taxi's, hotel rooms, phone calls, emails, etc.
- Encourage team to not read incoming emails so as to control information that can be monitored. Outgoing emails need to be sensitive to people's names, locations, activities, etc.
- Avoid taking pictures of any religious activity that is not approved.

- Do not identify yourself as a missionary or another on the field as a missionary.
- Do not carry ID or business cards that would identify you with a religious organization.
- Do not mention specific ministries or activity.
- Avoid political conversations.
- Only share information on “need to know” basis. Ask, “Why am I telling this?” When in doubt, leave it out.
- Do not publish pre or post trip details on missionary names and locations on the web or in print.

### **What You Can Do**

- Shine! Smile, share your story of love for Christ, talk about your customs, cultures and holidays.
- Pray while walking. Pray on-sight with insight. Ask God what to pray and respond. Pray for blessing on people.
- Meet new people and ask questions regarding family, life, beliefs, desires and dreams. There will be plenty of opportunity to share out of your own life without preaching or proselytizing.
- Ask questions in response to questioning your presence or information. Example: “Do you know John?” Answer: “I don’t know. I know many people named John.”
- Share information with our prayer team on activity and specific concerns without needing to give them the name of specific places or people.

## TRAIN ON CULTURAL SENSITIVITIES

You might be tempted to skip this part of the training. People tend to focus exclusively on logistics, such as what to pack and how they are getting to the airport. Don't let these details consume your time, as most logistical information can be given on paper; however, you cannot do the same with culture training.

There will be a cross-cultural emphasis for every team training session in the Mission Trip Training Guide. These are incredible discipleship opportunities. God is working to stretch our worldview and shift our perspectives. Most people don't do these things naturally, so your training provides them with a unique opportunity to grow together with the team in their understanding of how other cultures live and worship.

The most effective way to train a team for cross-cultural ministry is to take on the learner and servant approach. Even if you don't know or understand all the nuances of a culture, this approach will at least slow down people to look, listen, learn and serve others' needs before serving your own.

### **Learn from others**

Help people learn to observe and ask questions. North Americans inherently take on the role of expert, activist, seller or teacher. Instead, we need to show a heart to learn, receive and observe. Being a learner means you will learn to say basic words like "hello, please and thank you" in their language.

Questions to ask include:

- What do I need to learn about the culture?
- What do the people like?
- What are their foods, customs, and values?
- What are their holidays and family interactions?
- What is the relationship between men and women in this context?
- What is the Christian climate like?
- How has the history of this country impacted the Christian movement?
- What is taboo or disrespectful?
- How do people greet one another?
- What is the worship style of the national Christians?

Assign homework to your team between training sessions to research one of the above questions and have them share when you're together again.

### **Seek to serve others needs before your own.**

Use Philippians 2 to consistently communicate this concept. Serving your teammates means you give up the best seats, let others go before you, and decide to forgive when wronged. Cross-culturally, this means that:

- We will build the bridge of friendship by learning to greet in a culturally appropriate way.
- We will be a good receiver of their hospitality, even if the food or drink does not look (or taste) appealing.
- We will serve the needs of the field (i.e. they want us to play and teach children) vs. serving our own needs (i.e. thinking the orphanage walls need painting again).
- We will adapt our dress and manners around our host culture.
- We will be considerate of our host's time.

#### **How We View Ourselves**

- With rights and freedoms
- Entitled to fast service, personal choices, opportunities, and privilege
- Outgoing, curious, and creative
- Individualistic and problem-solving
- Opinionated, educated and confident
- Relaxed
- Here to help

#### **How Other Cultures Often View Us**

- Obtrusive and demanding
- Experts and affluent
- Arrogant
- Land of opportunity and privileged
- Time-driven and uptight
- Have funny clothes, accents, and mannerisms
- Inappropriate with the opposite sex
- Here to give

### **GENERAL CULTURAL GUIDELINES**

These are fairly universal guidelines that will hopefully help you as you navigate different cultures. Remember, the key is to come in as a learner and a servant!

- 1) Focus on building relationships** with people over getting something accomplished. Small talk is extremely important. Show concern and interest by spending as much time as possible with the people. Learn their names. Make conversation. Share about your family, show pictures, etc.

- 2) **Learn the proper greeting etiquette** of the culture you are going (especially between genders). Greetings are very important in many cultures. Always be sure to greet people when you arrive and leave.
- 3) **Learn the proper social etiquette** of the culture you are going. How do you show respect to the elderly, women, men, etc?
- 4) **Be very careful to maintain a high moral standard.** Avoid being loud and boisterous or getting angry in front of people.
- 5) **Show respect to the host, churches, pastors, & community leaders** you will be working with. They have worked hard to build and maintain good relationships in their community and ministry.
- 6) **Appropriately dress in a way that is respectful to the culture** you are serving. Ask your host & team leader for suggestions.
- 7) **Learn some words or phrases in the language** of the people you are serving. This will help you build relationships and help you minister more effectively.
- 8) **Be gracious as you visit with people.** Accept invitations to visit homes. If offered a gift, or food receive it. Try everything that you are offered to eat unless you think it is unsafe.
- 9) **Be flexible with time.** Go with the flow of the culture and ministry you are involved in. Being on time is not of high value in other cultures.
- 10) **Learn the appropriate interactions between a male and a female** in the culture you are going. Avoid being alone with or talking at length with someone of the opposite sex.
- 11) **Respect cultural differences** such as strange customs, habits, and ways of doing things without passing judgment. Just because something is different does not mean it is wrong. Also try not to make too many comparisons between the two cultures.
- 12) **Avoid taking a lot of pictures right at the beginning.** It makes you look like a tourist instead of a person who is truly interested in them. It is also always nice to ask the person if it is ok if you take their picture.
- 13) **Avoid making any promises** such as sending money, writing to them, or offering work in the US. They will expect you to follow through with these promises.
- 14) **Avoid giving financial or material gifts** to people while on your trip or even after you return home. This is a difficult situation to navigate so it is best to give through your host contact.

## TRAIN ON CULTURE SHOCK

Everyone experiences culture shock. Even the most seasoned traveler will be processing new information or new experiences. Leading and guiding individuals through their own process will be key to how this experience impacts their spiritual walk as well as their continued mission investment.

For every team that goes on a mission trip, there will be a cross-cultural experiences waiting. Cross-cultural simply means leaving the things that are familiar (music, language, customs, clothing, food) for a culture that is unfamiliar. These experiences can trigger feelings of anticipation, fear, excitement, confusion...much like your first day at a new school. It will surprise you how people cope:

- Regress: Yes, even adults may shock you with radically juvenile behavior.
- Needy: Forgetting everything and creating scenarios for attention.
- Sleepy or faking sickness.

### **What you can do:**

- Talk about it in the large group before you leave and after the first day.
- Use each incident as a teachable moment for that person.
- Invite individuals to talk with you one-on-one. Ask questions about their experiences.
- Debrief with your team every night after the first couple of days.
- Allow a member to have some space, but not isolation. If they are faking illness, create a way to give them a two-hour break to rest (staying behind until lunch or sleeping in the van).
- Remind them their emotions are normal and everyone experiences this differently. God wants to work in and through the emotions.
- Divert their attention with tasks or activities.
- Try to connect them to something familiar (familiar soft drinks, a bed, a conversation, buy them a snack, etc.)
- Reassure them of your leadership. Give them some specific information on what to expect next.
- Encourage them to rest and exercise to deal with the jet lag compounding the culture shock.

## TRAIN ON LOGISTICS

It is important that the team is clear as to the schedule, packing, and other logistics that go into going on a mission trip. The following are just a few logistical things that you should be sure to go over in your training meetings.

- 1) **Raising Support** - Guide your team on why we raise support, how we raise support, as well as how to process the support. Also be their biggest cheerleader as they walk through this faith building exercise!
- 2) **Packing List/Dress Code** - Be sure you go over the packing list as well as any dress code that people need to following in order to be appropriate in the culture you are going. You may need to show examples for the ladies of what may or may not be appropriate to wear.
- 3) **Documents** - Please remind team members that STW needs on file their application, Medical Consent, Release of Liability, Discipline Agreement, and copies of their passport and visa.
- 4) **Passports & Visa** - Help walk team members through how to apply for a passport and visa (if needed). Follow-up to make sure they are being proactive about it. Have members check passports to make sure they are less than 6 months from expiration at time of travel.
- 5) **Schedule & Airline Tickets** - Be sure to keep everyone in the loop on schedules, changes to schedules, and airline tickets. Remind them we cannot buy tickets until they have money in to cover the ticket.
- 6) **Luggage** - Remind your team of the appropriate luggage requirements for travel (i.e. how many bags and how much weight each can be). You want to avoid any unnecessary luggage fees at the airport. Also remind them to label their luggage both inside and outside (keep copy of passport inside).
- 7) **Money** - Make sure they have enough cash on hand to cover their expected personal expenses. Inform them if they need to exchange money ahead of time or if they can do that in country. Remind everyone that it's always a good idea to bring a credit card with them when they travel to help cover incidentals they may not have considered or in case of an emergency. Also please have them inform their banks of their travel plans.
- 8) **Cell Phones** - Be sure you contact your cell phone carrier about adding on an international plan for your travel if you plan to want to use your data. You don't want to come home to a large cell phone bill!

Otherwise it is best to keep your cell phone in airplane mode while traveling and just use it for Wi-Fi.

### TRAIN ON MINISTRY PLANNING

- 1) **Ministry Project-** Continually be planning in your training meetings for your ministries. What has been done, still needs to be done, resources that you need and how you will get them, anything that needs to be practiced, curriculum that needs to be written, who is in charge of what, etc.
- 2) **Sharing Testimony** - Help guide your team on how to share a personal testimony. There is information on how to do that in the Mission Trip Training Guide. Practice together as a group to begin to feel more comfortable.
- 3) **Prayer Walking-** Train your team about prayer walking. Any great movement has been predicated by prayer. It is documented through Christian history. Even recent stories of deliverance, people groups coming to faith, and city renewal have had a very strong prayer presence BEFORE any work was tackled. Prayer connects us with what God has been doing and is doing in that given city, village, or region. He is the one already at work and invites us to join Him on His mission to people. Prayer walking is on-site intercession. It's simply praying in the places that we expect God to bring forth His answers. It's simple....
  - Identify streets or space for which your team will focus.
  - Send them two by two to walk and pray what they see and notice.
  - Consider giving topics like worldviews holding the culture captive, or poverty related issues, or for God to be known.
  - Encourage people to pray praises to God and declare His truth in places that are dark. This isn't the time to speak out and "warfare against evil" unless you have a specialized team with gifted individuals. For the average team goer, claiming God's truth truly has effect in those areas.
- 4) **Delegate Tasks-** See that every team member has some sort of job or responsibility along the way. It is best if they can have at least one logistical responsibility as well as one ministry responsibility.

## **TRAIN ON PRAYER**

Remember our BIG God? He wants to do something profound in us. He is asking us to offer our fish and loaves so He can do miracles in front of us and for other people. Some of it is very dramatic on mission trips and outreach experiences; some of it is more subtle. Prayer is the key in engaging our hearts to recognize God moving.

### **Praying Together**

You can never have too much prayer. Teams that pray together really do stay together. It reduces conflict, and helps spiritual antennas be more attuned to the Holy Spirit's movement. Some encouragement for both training before and during the trip:

- Create safe ways for people to pray out loud (one on one).
- Have them pick prayer partners in between each training, to pray for each other and email needs that arise.
- Give them a scripture related to the trip to pray.
- Allow those with gifts of discernment and wisdom to share insights they are learning.
- Encourage all to share things that God is laying on their heart.

### **Prayer Covering**

Require each team member to identify and find 5-7 people committed to praying for them before and during the trip. There is a Prayer Guide Template (sample included) you can have a team member edit it for specific purposes of your team. Each member can send it to those that are praying to strengthen the prayer base. Create an opportunity for elders or church leaders (lay leaders are just as fine as staff) to lay hands on and commission the team. This is a very affirming moment and reinforces a sense of mission purpose on behalf of Jesus and the church.

## IN COUNTRY GUIDE

### THE FIRST DAY ON THE GROUND

#### 1) Get Your Team Settled

- Let people settle into their rooms/housing and get unpacked.
- Remind them NOT to brush teeth with the tap water. Give them access to filtered water.
- After an hour or so feed them, smile, and look for anyone who might be struggling.
- If arrival is in the morning, repeat above and then use the next steps in your day.

#### 2) Meet the Field Hosts

- Introduce the field hosts and ask them to share a bit of their story.
- Ask them to share details on the ministry, the area of the city you are in, any issues of which to be aware, and the general schedule for the day.
- If in a city, have each team member carry a business card or printed material with the lodging's name and address in the local language (i.e. hotel business card). If lost, you can jump in a cab and point to the card.

#### 3) Meet the Local People

- Get your team out and away from the training center or housing for a few hours of practical on-location experiences.
- Allow them to meet and interact with as many nationals as possible. Practice saying "hello" and "thank you."
- Visit local street markets, religious places of worship, historic sites, etc. Let team members begin bonding with the nationals. If appropriate, use local public transportation.
- If you have a large team, break into smaller units. Encourage people to pray as they walk.

### THE REST OF THE TRIP

#### 1) Repeat the Daily Schedule

You will need to repeat what is next and where you expect people to meet. It is usually more appropriate to give a daily schedule each morning (or if meeting in the evening, for the next day). Too much information can be overwhelming. Not enough information can cause emerging leaders or high controllers to feel insecure. People will forget your details. Don't take

it personally; they are just trying to adjust to the travel and new environment.

## **2) Meet for Devotions and Debrief**

It's important that you take time each day to meet with your team for prayer and debriefing. Typically, we've found devotional time helpful in the morning, and debriefing in the evening. God's Word can bring comfort and contentment before and after your day in the field. Being proactive in this manner, offers insight into possible concerns or blessings that your team members have experienced. It allows each person to reflect on how God is using their talents and hearts.

## **3) Reinforce the Cultural Sensitivity**

Although this should have been covered in pre-trip training, remind team about appropriate dress and cultural sensitivity. We need to be especially sensitive to the Christian community with which we work.

## **4) Get Them Serving**

- The first day you pull up to the national church with a load of children bursting with excitement, your team will step out of the van or taxi and stand there with a glazed look on their face.
- Unless national leadership has a meeting planned, just take the lead with greeting any national within proximity. Put a ball in one of your team member's hands and point to a kid with whom she should play. Or direct another on asking questions. Once you literally get the ball rolling, the rest will jump in.
- If you are a work team, remember that most cultures are about relationship over task. You don't really experience the culture until you are sharing a cup of tea with a national.

## **5) Create a Culture of Care for Your Team**

If you have more than 15 people on your team, you have to have some help in caring for them. You need another caring leader who will ask questions, listen, and connect with each person individually. You can use the same debriefing ideas for those conversations.

The one-on-ones are when you will be able to make the most of ministry moments. Use these moments to ask life questions. Listen to your team member's hopes and dreams. Speak words of affirmation and blessing into their lives. Talk openly with great care about any hang-ups or habits that you have seen getting in the way of their spiritual growth.

**6) Make the Most of Teachable Moments**

Let me remind you of something important: Things WILL go wrong. Even the best of planners cannot anticipate flat tires, unreliable transportation, other culture’s sense of time, miscommunication, interpersonal team conflict and illness. It is all uncontrollable. If we can embrace this reality from this side of the experience, it can turn into an amazing platform for defining moments in the lives of your team.

Use the chart below as a guide of what the typical ebb and flow of a mission trip often looks like and how people respond to what they are experiencing. You can use this tool to help prepare your team to navigate the highs and lows and make the most of the experience. These collection of moments are what become life defining for spiritually forming your team. As leaders use these moments to encourage, guide and intervene. The Holy Spirit wants to impact their hearts as much as he wants to use them to impact their world. Both things can happen at the same time.

**In a typical mission trip with a group of imperfect, loving people...**

DAY	WHAT CAN HAPPEN	TEAM OR PERSON RESPONSE	LEADING THROUGH THE SITUATION
Travel 1-2	People late, miscommunication, emotionally charged	People are anxious and have a hard time with too much info. Natural leaders will take over, disrupting your leadership	Give people clear, simple directions for each step in the process. Focus on building relationships and team bonding & trust.
Day 2-3	Initial culture shock	Emotional, critical or withdrawing	Pull person aside and talk through it. Allow people to have “space”, but not to isolate.
Day 3-4	Not engaging in ministry	Struggling to find their fit. Disappointment	Model it for them. Do ministry with them to get them started and connecting.
Day 5 – 8	Illness or accident or some type of “crisis” happens	Team gets distracted by issues with a person.	Care for the person in need, but remind the team to stay focused on the task of ministry.
Day 7 – 8	Hitting the wall	Irritations with team mates and ministry	Need to model and show lots of energy. Distract and engage your team. Confront any individual with poor behavior. Set clear boundaries.
Day 9 – 11	Starting to process impact on life back home.	With-drawl, frustration, over commitments to people on the field	Make sure you are doing debriefs DAILY with group and seeking out individual conversations with people.

Day 12	Tired, but excited	High connection with each other	Use the debrief and R & R to help people reflect on what God has next. Also give detailed info on what traveling home looks like.
Day 13-14	Traveling Home	People disconnect a bit. Need less directive leadership.	Allow grown-ups to be that! Give them some space and autonomy in traveling home (i.e. boarding planes at certain times, group having to stay together). Stay engaged relationally as a leader! You are still shepherding their process.

**DEBRIEF YOUR TEAM THROUGHOUT THE TRIP**

Do not wait until your ministry experience is over, bags are packed and the team is standing in the airport before having a productive debriefing meeting. Decide in advance that you are going to provide your team with a designated daily time to process the whirlwind of events and activities they have experienced together. Your final day should include space for your team to shop, play, shower, rest and then have an extended debriefing time.

People need to process. Team members will develop their perspective on debriefing by observing the way it is profiled by the team leader. If it seems important to you, it will be important to them.

Gather together almost every day during the trip to reflect on experiences, observations, frustrations, and spiritual dynamics. You might skip it a couple of times as a large group, but use that time to let them journal or have some quiet time.

Quality debriefing sessions cannot be rushed. This material will digest better if prepared in a "relational crock pot" than in a quick fryer. Every team member will add a unique flavor of his or her own. You may be surprised to discover some very sensitive issues surface as team members begin to process the experiences of the trip.

Some team members simply will not verbalize issues they are facing. Purposefully solicit feedback from your team by way of journaling. Challenge team members to begin thinking about their next steps in discovering any lifetime investment toward missions.

**Get Them Talking!**

You can get people talking using the D.I.E. method.

**Describe** – “What did you see and experience today?”

**Interpret** – “How was your experience meaningful? What did you feel?”

Examine and Apply – “What will you do with that experience? How does this change the way you see things?”

Most of the time, you won't have to get to the third question because people will blurt that out as they respond to the first two questions.

## PREPARE TEAM FOR RETURNING HOME

As a team leader, you need to help your team prepare for re-entry. One of the most difficult aspects of any mission team is returning home. After an intense experience with a team of people, you return home to a new group of people who have not had the same experience, who do not understand how meaningful your team experience was, and who—sometimes—don't seem interested to hear all your stories.

The following suggestions are intended to help your team readjust. The process of debriefing is important if your team is to leave with good memories in their minds, so please take the time to communicate the following:

- 1) **Don't expect family and friends to be as excited about your trip as you are.** They have been having a series of experiences totally different from yours. So it is important to keep realistic expectations so you are less likely to be disappointed.
- 2) **Pick two pictures that represent two stories from this trip and tell them to people.** Most people won't sit through all 692 digital pictures, but they do need to hear a story of what you experienced.
- 3) **Review your journal.** This will help you readjust. You will recall the growth you experienced. It will also bring specific instances to mind that you can tell your friends when they ask you about the trip.
- 4) **Make a few practical applications for yourself after your trip.** The excitement of a mission trip can sometimes lead people to make unreasonable demands on themselves when they return home. Make realistic applications on how you intend to build your interest in and knowledge of missions.
- 5) **You will experience letdown, frustration, jet lag and a variety of emotions.** This is normal and part of God's plan to deepen you and this experience. Common things they will experience as they return home include:
  - **“Unexplained” feelings of sadness, confusion and/or loss.** New information and experiences change how we view our lives and the

world. Expect crisis of belief systems and patterns of thinking. The loss of community and team life can also be hard. Make an effort to touch base with your team. This is another incredible opportunity to nurture and disciple significant life change.

- **Frustration and judgment over materialism or lack of interest.** This experience has given you a new awareness to the bigger picture of life. Others have not been touched by that and will not share or understand your passion. Be patient with them and continue to share pictures and stories from your trip.
- **Changing life goals and catching up with life.** In the midst of jet lag, life will demand that you jump back into its pace. Within a week or two you will have a surreal feeling of “was I just in ....?” It is important to go back through your journal, stay connected with your experiences and lessons, and reflect on what God may have next for you.

### Use these Tips for Returning Home

- **Plan the reunion date before you leave.** Meet with your team within a month after you return. Sometimes this is the best way to deal with the depression, loneliness and frustration that can occur after your trip.
- **Try to stay in touch with one or two of the people** that you met on the mission field. Receiving a letter from the place where you served helps you to remember the good experiences you had. Also, consider any people from your team that you got to know better and spend time with them.
- **Contact your prayer partners and ask them to pray for you** as you readjust to daily living. Thank them for their prayers and tell them about your trip.

## FOLLOW-UP AFTER YOU ARE HOME

“Wow, I can’t believe we’ve been back for a week already.”

“It feels like it such a long time ago.”

“I want to go back. I’ve never experienced anything like that before.”

“God changed me.”

Hopefully these will be the statements you hear from your team upon returning from your mission or outreach experience. With all the time, attention and money it takes to pull it together, it is easy to enjoy the moment and move on. Don’t let the opportunity to follow-up pass.

People are ripe for serving in more meaningful ways. As a matter of fact, if you don’t help them find a way to engage, they will become frustrated with your ministry in general.

### 1) Use the Reunion Night for Momentum

Reunion Nights allow people to relive the trip through pictures, video and—especially—speaking about their experiences. Invite family, church staff and elders, and other supporters who contributed financially and prayerfully to join in.

Ask if you’d like ideas for how this evening should go. Toward the end of the evening when all are lauding you for leading them to parts unknown in this life-changing endeavor, share the vision for the next steps of your ministry. You have relational “change” in your pocket. Call them to a deeper place with Christ and a new way to serve. Give the practical ways that people can take a next step in the ministry to develop into leaders.

Make sure you put this date on the calendar before you leave on the trip and talk about its importance at one of your pre-trip meetings. Busy schedules can crowd out this opportunity quickly and it is hard to capture the momentum of this trip without it.

### 2) Go Deeper With People

Follow-up from the one-on-one conversations you had with individual team members during the trip. Some may have made radical commitments to Christ over that period. Make sure they are connected with a mentor or small group. Let their small group leader know and celebrate the commitments they made. If there were issues and concerns that surfaced, make sure that person gets the appropriate professional or lay help to work through them. Keep speaking words of affirmation into their lives. You may want to use one of these ideas to help keep the impact of the trip alive:

- During the pre-trip training, have people write notes on what they want God to do in their lives. Send the notes to them a few weeks after the trip so they can compare then and now.
- As you come across photos of people, either use them as postcards or write a note on the back saying, “You were great in Mexico!” or via e-mail. They will love the personal touch.
- For youth, call their parents (or e-mail or write) and tell them something affirming you saw in their child on the trip. Every parent wants to hear something great about his or her kids.
- Ask people to do the same kind of ministry they did on the mission field in your home church (give a testimony during a service, lead a children’s program, share their love in practical ways, start a ministry, etc.).

### **3) Develop Emerging Leaders**

Schedule a new leaders meeting before you even leave for 2 – 3 weeks after you return. During the trip, look for those who surprise you with their leadership ability and servant spirit. Ask them to consider joining you for that meeting in a few weeks. Continue the process of developing that potential leader. Consider making a team covenant with this group where members agree to do the following:

- Commit to pray for five non-Christian friends.
- Get involved in a small group and develop habits that help them grow in their faith.
- Serve in a key program or lead a new service ministry.
- Understand more and more that this lifestyle is an act of worship to God.

### **4) Strengthen Commitments and Launch New Ministries**

You have the opportunity of momentum to build something new. Your people should feel connected, cared for and motivated. They are ready to give back. Now is the time to challenge them to begin something new and experience at home what they accomplished on the mission field. Think about some of the following ideas:

- Participate in local serve projects in the community, food drives, school campus clean-ups, etc.
- Adopt an international cause (HIV, orphans, child trafficking, poverty, etc.) and make it a central focus of the ministry year-round where there is connection from the trip to their giving, praying, and serving.
- Teach on giving and set a goal for raising funds for a cause.
- Ask for a team to step forward to plan the next local or international outreach trip.
- Get people connected to OCC’s adopted causes that were connected to the trip. Ongoing ministry involvement is the goal.

## HOW TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR CORNER OF THE WORLD

### “What do I need to do next, after a mission trip?”

- God has a mission for the world and is already working to reach out to the hopeless, hurting, and lost people groups. He has invited us to respond to his call to join Him at work around the world.
- We want to help you develop a heart for your world.
- You have something unique to give! God desires to use your gifts, passions and life experiences as a unique life mission to serve your world.

Plan your schedule for the next 30 days by committing to some of these suggestions. Keep these commitments with you as a reminder in discovering your life mission.

### 1) Pray for a world vision

*"When he saw the crowds, he felt sorry for them because they were hurting and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Jesus said to his followers, "There are many people to harvest but only a few workers to help harvest them. **Pray to the Lord**, who owns the harvest, that he will send more workers to gather his harvest." Matthew 9:36-38*

- Pray for 5 friends, family members or neighbors that need a relationship with Jesus. Include someone of a different ethnicity than your own. How can God use your recent mission trip experience to expand your vision locally?
- Ask God daily for the next month: "Help me see the world the way you do."
- Pick someone you met from your trip and pray for them consistently. Pray for people in their community to come to Christ.
- Pray for your passion issues globally. (i.e. abused kids, health, poverty, orphans)
- Ask God to give you opportunities to share God's love in practical serving ways and to share a bit of your faith story with them.

### 2) Consider where your dreams might help the worlds needs

- Ask yourself: What would I do for God if I knew I couldn't fail? Then write it down! Commit to praying about that dream.
- Take the full Discovering My SHAPE Class (info on [occ.org/stw](http://occ.org/stw)) and meet with a SHAPE Coach to learn more about your unique call.
- Read to increase your understanding of living out your unique life mission.
- Get involved in an ongoing ministry team. Meet with your team leader or one of the coaches to consider how to Live Your Call.

### 3) Get connected

*"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds." Hebrews 10:24*

- Commit to a Life Group or recommit to your Life Group. Be a mission's influencer in your group and get them serving.
- Commit to giving some money on a regular basis to missions or Serve the World.
- Help co-lead the mission trip for next year or for one of our local initiatives. Contact [servetheworld@occ.org](mailto:servetheworld@occ.org).

### 4) Explore the next steps

"My children, we should love people not only with words and talk, but by our actions and true caring." 1 John 3:18

- Consider taking a class on missions and world-view. **Perspectives on the World Christian Movement**. For more information, check out the Perspectives website: [www.perspectives.org](http://www.perspectives.org)
- Lead out in an opportunity to practically serve in the community. Encourage other members to participate with you.
- Host an international student in your home for an evening meal near or during the holidays. This is a key opportunity to show Christ's love with the next generation of leadership in China, Indonesia, Iran, Europe, etc. Contact your local college for how to meet someone to host.
- Tell your mission story. Encourage others to step out in faith and be stretched to see and experience their world in whole new ways.

## LAST WORDS

We realize reading numerous pages of lists can make this whole task feel more daunting than if you unknowingly stumbled through the process. After you take a deep breath, be encouraged to know that it is all written down for you! You don't have to remember it all. What a relief!

We have a BIG God who is inviting His people to participate with Him where he is at work in the world.

Remember that you aren't done when the plane lands. We all will make the effort to continue the discipleship journey with our team through:

- Email encouragements to the team towards Next Steps
- Planning and having a Reunion Night within 3 weeks of the trip so people can retell their stories and talk about re-entry.
- And encouraging individuals to return with purpose. What might their ongoing involvement look like?

You can do this!

It's the loaves and fish story God wants to unfold through you. Jesus just wants us to show up with our little lunch and offer it to Him in faith. He will bless it, break it, and feed the masses. I pray that as you step out of your comfort zone, you will experience a God-thing that forever changes your life and the life of our church.

Serving with you,

Laura, Lynne, & Dawn

## BREAKING DOWN STEREOTYPES

### **“I WANT TO GO, BUT....”**

#### **“I’ve never traveled overseas.”**

Great! What a better way to experience overseas travel, then with a group of Christians from your church. It can seem frightening to think of stepping on a plane and leaving what is known to what is unknown. That is part of God’s plan to grow your faith. What you may not know is that every team is led by a caring, trained, and experienced leader who will prepare you each step of the way. You will find all about what to pack, how to prepare, what shots you need, how to get a passport, and even what to expect cross-culturally. You will grow in your faith as you obediently take that next step.

#### **“I don’t have the time.”**

Most of our international trips are 10 days to 2 weeks. Because they fall over weekends, most of our team members only have to take 5 – 8 days of vacation time to participate. Look at the calendar and the opportunities list. Several opportunities are built into existing national holidays, cutting down on the time off work. Plan ahead for your time off next year and take a trip with a different kind of purpose.

#### **“I don’t have the money.”**

Where God guides, He provides. As you pray about going, God will lead you in decisions on how to save, make money, and ask for support from friends and family. He will also surprise you with financial support from people or places you would never have imagined.

#### **“I’m not sure what I can do or have to offer.”**

Can you smile, hand out Bibles, pray, and care about the lost? Your presence and prayers make all the difference in corners of the world where there is no witness of Christ. Additionally, your pre-trip training, you will be equipped and prepared for the activities of that mission trip.

#### **“I’ve never thought I was ‘called’ to do missions.”**

Neither did John or Allison or Jake. They went out of obedience and discovered the amazing blessing of being available to God. God uses ordinary people (even students) doing extraordinary things. You may not be called to spend the rest of your life living overseas, but missions is one of the primary purposes for why your church exists. Your experience internationally will help you discern God’s plan for your life.

## DEVELOPING A TEAM COVENANT AND EXAMPLE

As a group, brainstorm commitments that students and adults should make to this trip. Try to word statements in a positive manner as opposed to rules and consequences. Words like servant, flexibility, and grace should show up somewhere on the convenient. Once you have brainstormed, pull together into a document that you hand out at the next training meeting that all students sign off on. This becomes a tool for behavior accountability.

### China Mission Trip Commitment Sheet

- I commit to have an open and pure heart before God. Psalm 51:10
- I commit to be flexible and offer grace to my team mates.
- I commit to representing the Lord and my church well, including abstaining from using alcohol or tobacco during the duration of this trip (as an act of love for others who might be caused to stumble by it.)
- I commit to resolve conflict quickly and by going to the person with whom I have an issue. I will involve another only if the conflict is at an impasse.
- I will submit to God by following the leadership designated for this team.
- I will attempt some things that I feel uncomfortable with, and reach out beyond myself to share Christ's love in a culturally sensitive way.
- I will follow the security guidelines always moving with groups, communicating with my leader, and following directions.
- I commit to keeping in confidence any information about nationals, long-term workers, city details and sensitive material that can put work and people at jeopardy.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

## TRIP PRAYER GUIDE

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***(Note to Trip Leader: Make sure you change the dates around this guide)***

### ***Africa Trip November 6 - 19***

Thank you for committing to pray for this trip into Africa. Through being a **PARTNER IN PRAYER**, you can walk beside the team to bless them and lift them up as they come face to face with people who need compassion and care. The purpose of this trip is to build relationships with key people in unreached cities who will potentially open the doors for ministry platforms. Remember, they are 16 hours ahead of our time zone, so you may find yourself praying at unusual times. Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's prompting at different times throughout the trip of the need to pray. Through prayer "God has given you a way to make your presence count, a way to be a true partner in His kingdom's work." (Wesley Duewell) Never underestimate the power of intercession inspired by the Holy Spirit.

**Team Leaders:**

**Team Members:**

## Daily Prayer Guide

### **Fri, Nov. 6**

The team departs this morning for Africa.

PRAY for all the final preparations to be made smoothly.

PRAY for safe travel and health as they begin the trip.

PRAY for team unity and bonding during their time spent in route.

**Scripture to Pray:** *“Spread your protection over them that those who love your name may rejoice in you. For surely, O Lord, you bless the righteous; you surround them with your favor as with a shield.” Psalm 5:11-12*

### **Sat, Nov. 7**

After arriving at their destination, the team will have some brief rest from traveling and orientation.

PRAY for all to pass through customs smoothly and safely.

PRAY for peace around any lost luggage.

PRAY for the Lord to prepare their hearts for service.

**Scripture to Pray:** *“Let the peace of Christ dwell in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.” Col. 3:15*

### **Sun, Nov. 8**

After visiting and sharing in a local national church the day will be spent in orientation for the team. They will be establishing basic logistics and spending time connecting with local people.

PRAY for God’s plans for each one to be accomplished on this trip.

PRAY for the team to have cultural discernment as they interact with those around them.

PRAY for the team to be flexible to whatever God has for them to do.

**Scripture to Pray:** *“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your father in heaven.” Matt. 5:14-16*

*“Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.” John 16:24b*

### **Mon, Nov. 9**

The team starts the bulk of their work schedule today. For the next several days, they will be visiting orphanages and schools sharing with children.

PRAY that each person would get over jet lag quickly so they will not be tired out.

PRAY for them to assimilate all the information they need to today.

PRAY that they would feel peace and security in God’s plan for them to be there.

**Scripture to Pray:** *“Be joyful always; pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” I Thess. 5:16-18*

*"But the Helper will teach you everything and will cause you to remember all that I told you...I leave you peace; my peace I give you. I do not give it to you as the world does. So don't let your hearts be troubled or afraid." John 14: 26-27*

**Tue, Nov. 10**

The team follows a "typical" daily schedule, going wherever they have been scheduled.

PRAY for them to have just the right things that they will need in each place.

PRAY for openness among the recipients, not only for physical needs, but for spiritual needs also to be met.

PRAY for translators to be accessible when needed.

**Scripture to Pray:** go through *Ephesians 6:10-16*, praying the armor of God on each team member.

**Wed, Nov. 11**

The team follows a "typical" daily schedule, going wherever they have been scheduled.

PRAY for unity on the team.

PRAY for discernment on where to explore open doors.

PRAY for endurance through the work and schedule.

PRAY for opportunities to pray with those who are open.

**Scripture to Pray:** *"How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity. It is like precious oil poured on the head." Ps. 133:1-2*

*"Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name." Heb. 13:15*

**Thurs, Nov. 12**

The team follows a "typical" daily schedule, going wherever they have been scheduled.

PRAY for God to take away any homesickness or anxiety over being away from home.

PRAY for the team to be encouragers to one another as well as to the local people they are working with.

PRAY for "divine appointments" by God with people He has for them to meet.

**Scripture to Pray:** *"For the kingdom of God is...righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men. Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification." Rom. 14:17-19*

**Scripture to Pray:** *"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive...as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts...Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom" Col. 3:12-16*

### **Fri, Nov 13**

The team follows a “typical” daily schedule, going wherever they have been scheduled.

PRAY for stamina in ministry as the team reaches the halfway point in their time in Africa.

PRAY that God will continually refresh each member of the team as the days pass.

PRAY that good relationships will develop with the people they meet or have met.

PRAY for spiritual conversations to occur with the relationship built.

### **Sat, Nov 14**

The team works again today wherever scheduled to go.

PRAY for the team to adjust to any climate and culture challenges they may be facing.

PRAY for their safety as they move about.

PRAY for God’s Spirit to encourage their hearts in what He is doing in Asia.

PRAY for receptivity on the hearts of people they come in contact with.

**Scripture to Pray:** *“May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.” II Thess. 2:16-17*

### **Sun, Nov 15**

The team works again today wherever scheduled to go.

PRAY for the seeds of the gospel that are sown to bear fruit.

PRAY for continued strength and energy to minister daily.

PRAY for their courage to share in local national churches.

PRAY for opportunities to minister to and bless the staff at the sites they will be visiting.

**Scripture to Pray:** *“And for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador...that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.” Eph. 6:19-20*

### **Mon, Nov 16**

The team ramps up for more ministry in a new location. They are probably feeling tired and a little homesick....

PRAY for endurance for each team member.

PRAY for lasting fruit, both seen and unseen, and that God would remind them of the seeds they are planting.

PRAY for times of prayer and devotions among the team to keep them focused.

**Scripture to Pray:** *“For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the earth, so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth.. It shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it. For you shall go out with joy, and be led in peace...” Is. 56:10-12*

### **Tue, Nov 17**

The team continues in this new location.

PRAY for refreshing from God to cover their weariness as they travel today.

PRAY for each team member’s life to be changed by this trip.

PRAY their hearts be filled with gratitude for all that God has done.

PRAY for the families and friends at home as they await their loved ones return.

**Scripture to Pray:** *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” Matt. 11:28-30*

*“For I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.” 2 Tim 1:12*

### **Wed, Nov 18**

The team has one more day before they take a day of rest.

PRAY for each team member to be physically strengthened today. They have been giving of themselves tirelessly and need replenishment.

PRAY for greater learning and understanding of this country’s history and culture.

PRAY for them to be Christ’s ambassadors wherever they are.

PRAY for opportunities for the team to share the gospel or their testimonies.

**Scripture to Pray:** *“Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ...that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.” Col. 4:2-4*

### **Thurs, Nov 19**

The team has the day off today for a safari. This is a fun day, but also planned to help students transition home after such a heart wrenching experience.

PRAY that students would find words to share their experience.

PRAY that God would deepen the lessons that he has taught them.

PRAY that their hearts are being prepared to return home.

**Scripture to Pray:** *“Lord you establish peace for us; all that we have accomplished you have done for us.” Is. 26:12*

### **Fri, Nov 20**

The team leaves for home today and arrives back in Seattle.

PRAY for God to speak to each member today as they reflect on what has taken place.

PRAY for others here at home to be blessed by the reports back from this trip.

PRAY for their acclimation back into the climate, school, and time change quickly.

**Scripture to Pray:** *“Come and see what God has done, how awesome his works in man’s behalf! Praise our God, O peoples, let the sound of his praise be heard; he has preserved our lives, and kept our feet from slipping.” Psalm 66:5, 8-9*

### **Sat, Nov 20 – Tue, Nov 23**

PRAY for the team as they get back into work and family schedules.

PRAY that the seeds planted would take root and continue to work and be protected

PRAY for the national brothers and sisters that live in work in these hard conditions all the time.

THANK God for what He has done on and through this trip.

**Scripture to Pray:** *“Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ...that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.” Col. 4:2-4*