



LAUNCHPOINT

Pre-Trip Participant Guide



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INTRODUCTION

Congratulations! Your willingness to serve the Lord through a short-term

missions trip gives you a great opportunity to serve God and grow spiritually.

Please realize the importance of this trip and the long-term, strategic opportunity. A missions trip should be viewed as an opportunity to experience living with a specific focus on fulfilling the Great Commission. You aren't just going to evangelize and serve; you're going to make disciples. Let the lessons you learn provide a foundation for you to grow even after you return home. View this trip as an opportunity to experience full surrender to the Holy Spirit and continue that submission long after your return home. Let this trip be a flagpole moment for your spiritual transformation!

GUIDE OVERVIEW

We designed this manual to help prepare you for your upcoming short-term missions trip. The tips and recommendations throughout the manual come from numerous years of experience leading teams in multiple contexts and areas of the globe.

The manual provides overarching themes and suggestions, as well as the guide to your training sessions. It's divided into three sections: Spiritual, Cultural, and Physical/Logistical. The Spiritual Section provides spiritual preparation tips designed to equip you and the team in important areas to prepare the team for this spiritual journey. The Cultural Section will help prepare you to engage with the culture you will serve to ensure you don't unintentionally offend anyone. The Physical/Logistical Section will provide physical and mental suggestions and highlight the administrative responsibilities necessary for your trip.

The training sessions will be divided into three sections: Spiritual, Cultural, and Physical/Logistical. God will use the training meetings and discussions to prepare you and the other team members to be more effective vessels during this journey. Make sure you prepare for every meeting, focusing on your own spiritual preparation. Without the proper spiritual preparation, you will miss the opportunity for true spiritual transformation and be less effective for ministry.

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SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

You've already submitted to God by your willingness to serve. Now, you're about to embark on a spiritual journey with the Holy Spirit that will require continued submission and obedience to his will.

Spiritual Readiness

Rom 12:1-2 *"I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."*

You aren't just going to share Christ; you're going to represent Christ – to be his hands and feet to serve others. The people you encounter will associate your behavior with Jesus. It's not enough to talk about Christ, you need to imitate him. While this may sound like a lot of pressure, it's not if you are spiritually prepared. True preparation won't happen by skimming these pages on the plane to your mission field. Spiritual preparation takes time and a willing heart as the Spirit transforms you.

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Spend time in communion with God every day, through studying his Word and prayer. Don't waste time; start this daily time of devotion as soon as you can. Consistently spending time with God will cause intimacy, which will change you from the inside out. To keep you on track, we suggest an accountability partner. This is the foundation for your spiritual growth, so please take it seriously and prioritize this time each day.

Your impact on the field will rise or fall based on your spiritual readiness. Many go and serve without impacting one life spiritually. Your call is to impact lives for Christ! Learn to depend on Christ now, and it will come naturally in the field. Become a beacon of light through which Jesus shines. Not only will you impact others, but you'll become more like Christ. You will be transformed into the image of Christ (Rom. 12:2).

“ Your call is to impact lives for Christ! ”

Follow Your Leadership

If you're part of a group and there's a trip leader, always follow his/her instructions. Trust the leader has prepared to lead the team and is working with the local ministry leadership to make decisions. Also, remember you're a guest of the ministry hosts. You're only in their community for a short time, but they live there. No matter how seasoned a traveler you may be, trust the ministry host to know the community better than anyone else – including you. Always defer to your leaders and trust their planning and preparation. Also, when the opportunity is available, make sure to put the local ministry team member out front when engaging with the community because he/she will be there for follow-up long after you're gone. Whether it's passing out food or sharing Christ, make sure a local ministry member is part of the process to ensure the person being ministered to knows who to come back to after you have returned home. Remember, you aren't expected nor needed to be in control; take the mind of a servant (Phil 2:5-8) and allow those God has put in charge to lead you and the team as they see fit.

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Always defer to your leaders and trust their planning and preparation.

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Cultural Tips

Although each culture will have specific details which should be understood, there are several general steps and attitudes you should adopt to prepare to live and serve in a different culture. The information below covers some of these general guidelines but is not an exhaustive list. Your leader will connect with the ministry host to get culture-specific information related to the region and culture where you will serve. Make sure to learn this information. Refer to **Appendix D** for some additional cultural Do's and Don't's.

General Guidelines:

- Research your target culture in advance (see topics in the Preparing for New Culture section) and learn as much as you can, even practicing with things like food and language
- Remember you're a student of the culture and not a teacher; observe and listen
- Be respectful and show interest in the culture. Ask questions of the locals and be respectful
- Focus more on relationship building than project completion
- Understand that taking pictures can be offensive, especially when it focuses on surroundings and poverty. Ask people before you take their picture.
- Dress appropriate to the culture. Unless told otherwise, dress plainly and conservatively to blend in
- Strive to see things from the host culture perspective
- Be cautious of your facial expressions and body language, especially regarding sights and smells

Health Considerations

As you prepare for traveling, make sure your health is part of your preparation. Healthcare where you will be serving will likely be different from the healthcare you're used to. **If you have any health conditions or concerns, make sure to discuss your trip with your doctor or health professional. Be sure to get advice on how to best prepare yourself and what to do should you have any issues on the trip.** Also, be sure to inform your trip leadership about any health considerations, to ensure the planned ministry does not pose unnecessary risks.

All teams members should refer to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) website to determine any needed vaccines and immunizations for the region you will be visiting: <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list/>. If applicable, make sure to discuss medications (i.e., anti-malarial drugs) with your physician and discuss any pre-existing sensitivities that might cause adverse reactions.

Make sure to pack prescription medications and over-the-counter medications for potential issues on the trip. Any prescription medications should be packed in their prescription containers to prove it's a qualified prescription, in case questioned at customs. You should pack enough for the whole trip and an extra day or two if medications are required daily in case the trip gets extended due to flight issues. Over-the-counter medications should be packed in the original containers to prove their origin. Recommended over-the-counter medication types are included in the suggested packing list in **Appendix E**. If you don't have a team leader, consider taking a medical kit with the following supplies: bandages, tourniquet, alcohol and/or antibacterial wipes, antibiotic ointment and burn cream, hand sanitizer, electrolytes for dehydration, Benadryl (allergies), laxatives/stool softeners, Tylenol, Advil, Pepto Bismol, Imodium AD, Tums, Theraflu, Nyquil, Chloraseptic, and Benadryl cream for insect bites.

Traveler's diarrhea can sideline you by weakening the immune system. In more remote areas, bathroom facilities may be below expectations. Anyone suffering from traveler's diarrhea should drink plenty of fluids and follow a bland diet until the illness runs its course (usually around 3 days). You may consider letting it run its course instead of stopping it with Imodium to rid the body of the bacteria UNLESS it looks like dehydration is a possibility. Consider taking rehydration aids, such as Drip Drop or electrolyte powders (i.e., Gatorade) to minimize dehydration. If possible, discuss potential prescriptions (i.e., Cipro) to treat this and other prevalent but short-lived illnesses with your doctor. Always remember: the first line of defense is to take extra precautions in remote regions.

“ Always remember: the first line of defense is to take extra precautions in remote regions. ”

Below are some general safety rules when it comes to food in remote areas. Before reading them, make sure you remember you don't want to offend your host. While these guidelines are generally applicable, you should make every effort not to offend the host who is most likely sacrificing to provide food for the team. If you don't have a team leader, discuss anything that is obviously going to be a problem with the host in private but only when you're confident something will cause you illness. You should default to discreetly applying the below concepts, and ultimately participating in some way eating the food given. When faced with such a dilemma, simply ask God

APPENDIX B

PRAYER TOPICS AND SUGGESTIONS

Prayer for You

Pray God will glorify himself through your ministry.
Pray for humility, flexibility, servant-mindedness, and an obedient heart.
Pray for opportunities to share your faith and boldness to seize the opportunities.
Pray for a sensitivity to the Spirit's guidance throughout this journey.
Pray for a strengthening of your faith.
Pray for a transformation of your heart, eyes, and mind as the Spirit guides you on this trip.
Pray for God to use this experience to create a passion within you for all people as you return home.

Prayer for Team

Pray for the team leader to be guided by the Spirit in all areas.
Pray for team unity.
Pray for your relationships to grow with one another.
Pray for safety in travel and health on the field.
Pray for humility and a flexible spirit among all team members.
Pray for cultural sensitivity and understanding.
Pray for peace and comfort for family left at home.
Pray for the team members to have a passion for others as they return home.

Prayer for Local Ministry

Pray for God to glorify himself through his work among this community.
Pray for God to prepare the hearts of the people you will serve alongside.
Pray for God to protect Christians in the country as they share Christ.
Pray for relationships with the national believers.
Pray for provision for the ministry host and all those serving in the ministry.
Pray for a unified spirit among the nationals and a willingness to serve together.
Pray for new seeds of ministry and the gospel to be scattered on this journey.
Pray for the families of the nationals, for safety and provision.

Prayer for Community You Will Serve

Pray for God to prepare the hearts of the people you will serve.
Pray for the Lord to send laborers into the harvest fields.
Pray for a willingness to hear the gospel among the lost people.
Pray for the salvation of many people through the ministry from this trip.
Pray for churches in the country to reach out to meet the needs of the people around them.



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