

**Leading a short-term missions trip:**  
from preparation through debriefing  
a free resource created by Eastern Mennonite Missions



*Going where the church is not... yet.*

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## Section 1: Team leader's responsibilities

### Checklist

*As you lead and coordinate a short-term missions trip, consider the suggested schedule below. (Note: The timetable allows some flexibility. It may be helpful as you plan to fill in your specific dates.)*

Confirmed dates of trip: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 6 months before trip: \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ Determine outreach location and on-site hosts.
  - Consider your church's mission strategy and how you might advance their vision.
  - Consider serving alongside a missionary your congregation supports, or another person with whom you are connected.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Contact potential hosts to confirm an opportunity, and set dates for the trip.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Begin initial planning of training weekend (dates, location). You may use the teaching materials yourself or contact info@emm.org to reserve dates for an EMM training weekend.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Create a preliminary budget and set the cost per participant.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Create a trip summary sheet and make it available to the congregation and others.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Distribute short-term missions application and reference forms. (See sample forms in next section.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Form a discernment cluster to review and approve potential team members.

#### 5 months before the trip: \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ Book a facility for the training weekend.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Work with outreach hosts on:
  - initial schedule and ministry focus
  - food and lodging options
  - travel at outreach location (rentals, ticket purchase, etc.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Receive initial deposits from approved team members (suggestion: \$300 per person).

#### 4 months before the trip: \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ Finalize team members.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Check in with team members to make sure each has a current passport, and ask for a photocopy of each.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Keep in touch with approved participants, and inform them about training weekend details and planned team meetings and/or activities.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Research immunizations needed and inform team members.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Arrange for travel visas if needed for your location.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Start fund-raising efforts.

#### 3 months before the trip: \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ Finalize the budget.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Make travel arrangements.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Gather the team for an initial team meeting and/or fun activity.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Continue fund-raising.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Invite congregation to be praying for the team.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Training weekend preparation:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Finalize dates and location of training weekend.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Check out options for "Logistics" session. [If someone from your congregation has been to the location or culture, you may want to invite the person to share during this session.]
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Two weeks before training weekend:
    - \_\_\_\_\_ Distribute the questions for the "Sharing your story" session (found on page 54) and ask team members to respond/prepare for this session.
    - \_\_\_\_\_ Make arrangements for food preparation. (When possible, have someone who is not on the team prepare the meals, so that team members do not miss any of the sessions. Also consider arrangements for the "cross-cultural understanding" meal.)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ After the training weekend, return training evaluations to EMM if you chose to obtain training through EMM.

**2 months before the trip:** \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ Continue shopping for airfare/travel and look to purchase tickets.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Gather the team for one or two team meetings and/or fun activities.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ask all team members to make sure that their medical insurance plans cover them while they are overseas. If they are not covered, encourage them to consider a short-term policy with an insurance agency that will provide coverage.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ask team members whether they have ordered the pre-field devotional book, *Prepare Your Heart: Short-term Mission Preparation Guide* by Cindy Judge – 12 Bible studies plus trip journal. (ISBN# 0 -9712-320-4-0)

**6 weeks before the trip:** \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ Confirm travel visas (if needed for outreach location).
- \_\_\_\_\_ If you haven't yet, refer to the team member roles/delegating responsibility document and consider ways to share responsibilities.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ask team members to complete the "Emergency Medical Information Form" and return it to you.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Distribute "Parental Consent Form" to team members under age 18 (if parents are not part of the team) and have forms returned to you.

**5 weeks before your trip:** \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ Confirm the maximum weight allowance for baggage on the airline you will be using. Also confirm airport security guidelines and items restricted from carry-on luggage. Ask for the cost of checked-in bags and if it is cheaper to pay for checked-in bags online before the day of the flight.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ask congregational leadership to give the team an opportunity to share prior to the trip, and to be commissioned.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Request names of prayer supporters from each team member, and designate one of the prayer supporters to be the Prayer Coordinator.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Prepare a trip itinerary and give it to your team members.

**2 weeks before your trip:** \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ Remind team members to use the "Prepare Your Heart" devotional booklet.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Take inventory of items going with the team (tools for work project, etc.).
- \_\_\_\_\_ Plan transportation to and from the airport.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ensure that any monies transferred to the host site have been received.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Photocopy visas, passports, and emergency medical information forms. Carry a copy with you to outreach, and give a copy to each participant's emergency contact person.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Photocopy reflection/debriefing material to use on outreach with team members.

**1 week before your trip:** \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ Obtain the address and phone number of the U.S. Embassy in the host country.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Designate one person who's staying home to be your contact in case of an emergency. Give him or her each team member's emergency contact information, and make sure that he or she knows how to contact all the others.

**3 days before departure:** \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ Confirm flights.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Tag luggage with I.D.

**Day of departure:** \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ Ensure that team members have their passports with them.

**On field**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Ensure team is oriented by hosts and that crisis/emergency plans have been shared.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ensure that on-site sessions and teams are in place.
- \_\_\_\_\_ One or two days before you return, begin reflection and debriefing.

**After you return:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Ask team members to use the post-trip reflection material.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Gather the team 2-3 times after the trip to debrief, share, and reflect.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Arrange a time for the team to report to the congregation about their experience.

## Forming the team

The first step in putting together a short-term mission team is to share the opportunity with others. Prepare a trip summary sheet (see sample sheet following) to invite your congregation and other interested persons to consider joining the mission trip.

Include the following information on your summary sheet:

**Location:**

**Dates:**

**Nature of trip and any specific skills needed:**

Describe the ministry or task you plan to do.

*Example: We will serve alongside church members in the VBS ministry. We will plan to help construct a new church building. We would like to have several persons with experience in construction to be a part of this team.*

**Purpose of trip:**

Describe the larger purpose of your mission experience.

*Example: Discover how God is working through the believers in Mexico. Encourage and learn from our missionaries and sisters and brothers in Mexico. Encourage our church family back home to pray for and support missions.*

**Cost:**

Include the total estimated cost per person. (The cost should include travel, food/lodging, training weekend, immunizations, etc.)

**Leaders and contact information:**

Describe how to apply for the trip (who to contact, deadline, etc.)

## Summary sheet example

North Africa

Tentative Dates: June 21 – July 6, 2009 or July 6-20, 2009

North Africa is one of the last great frontiers of the 10/40 window. Some of the most unreached people groups remaining on the face of the earth reside in this predominantly Muslim region. North Africa is said to be 99% Muslim, with less than 1000 known believers and barely 200 mission workers in this nation of 31 million people. It is illegal to convert to Christianity, yet the good news of Jesus is going forth and by the power of the Spirit the Church is being established! This is a strategic location for Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) as they look towards sending future long-term workers into North Africa.

The need: A team of approximately 15 persons to do work projects at a developing orphanage in a small village. This is one of only 2 Christian orphanages in the country. There are needs for masonry work, agricultural work, painting, and direct work with children in the orphanage and the village.

Who can go? We are looking to send up to 15 persons. All generations, from youth to older adults are encouraged to participate; minimum age: 13. Youth ages 13-17 will be considered if a parent/guardian will accompany them on the trip.

Estimated cost: \$1300-1600 per person (includes training, travel, lodging, and food)

To apply, contact team leader, \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_.

Additional details:

Passports:

You will need a current passport, valid for at least six months after your return. It generally takes 6 weeks to receive a passport. Applications and instructions are available at [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) under "Passport Services."

Recommended immunizations:

All adults are required to have tetanus, polio, and MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) immunizations up to date. In addition, we recommend Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, and typhoid immunizations. See your doctor 4-6 weeks before your trip if possible. Visit the Center for Disease Control's website at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) for more information.

Medical coverage:

You are required to have medical coverage while on assignment. Check with your provider to be sure you are covered while overseas.

Appropriate clothing:

No clothing with Christian logos or symbols; dress conservatively and modestly, out of respect for North African culture. (Anything sleeveless, tight, low-cut, high-slit, or midriff-baring is not appropriate.) Bring lightweight clothing suitable for work projects. Temperatures will be quite warm. Women need a long skirt to wear when going into town.

Lodging:

Dormitory style at the orphanage.

## Forming the team - application and discernment of team members

One of the most important things a leader does is determine who will be on the team. Remember that you will be responsible to lead team members. The experience of the team and the lasting impression to those who you go to serve will be determined by how the team works together and interacts with others.

Many people may want to go with the team, but some may not be ready to go. Team members need to have enough spiritual, emotional, and relational maturity to step up to the task before them. This is not the time to bring someone along hoping they make a commitment to Christ while on the outreach. Team members should have demonstrated the ability to be good church members and have quality relationships.

We have provided a sample **application form** (page 6-7) that you may photocopy or use as a guide in preparing your own application form. We suggest that you ask each applicant to provide one or more references along with their application. We have also provided a **reference form** (page 8), which you may use or adapt to help you gain more information about the potential team member. It is valuable to get references (even for members of your church) because it is helpful to get as much perspective as possible on a potential teammate. A reference from the pastor or leader in the church is helpful alongside one other reference.

An important part of team formation is gathering a **discernment cluster** to help you process applications. The discernment cluster should consist of yourself and at least two other individuals from your congregation. If possible, one should be a member of your congregation's leadership team.

If you ask for team members to give reference forms, keep in mind that you should consider the information confidential and should not share it with the applicant or with those outside of your discernment cluster.

To assist you in knowing what to look for in discerning an individual's readiness and ability to contribute to your team, we have listed a set of qualifications and a covenant that EMM uses for involvement in our short-term programs. If your discernment cluster has a particular concern about a specific situation or individual on your team and would like outside counsel, you may contact Eastern Mennonite Missions at [info@emm.org](mailto:info@emm.org) or 717 898-2251.

## Qualifications for short-term mission team members

**Potential team members should consistently demonstrate:**

1. Personal relationship with Jesus Christ
  - A clear commitment to Christ (for at least one year prior to trip)
  - Active participation in a congregation (for at least one year prior to trip)
  - A sincere desire to grow and learn in relationship with Christ, other cultures, and team members
  - Desire to serve and share faith in both word and deed
  - Godly character, including being trustworthy, having integrity, and maintaining purity in relationships
2. Healthy relationship with family
  - Respect and love for family members
  - Ability to communicate constructively with family members and resolve differences in a positive manner
  - Support of family members to participate on a short-term assignment
3. Healthy relationships with others
  - Teachability – an openness to hear and see another person's perspective
  - Respect/honor for authority
  - Commitment to live and work in a team or communities of accountability
  - Willingness to work out differences in relationships with sensitivity
4. Self-understanding, strong character
  - Emotional stability, generally not given to extreme highs or low
  - Maturity in adapting to different situations
  - Flexibility in adjusting to change in schedule and living conditions
  - Accurate perception of personal strengths and weaknesses

## Application

Please return your completed application to the team leader by \_\_\_\_\_.

A small group from the congregation will determine whether you may participate on the team. They will notify you when they reach a decision.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Address (*exactly as it appears on your passport, driver's license, or birth certificate*):

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Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency contact: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

(If necessary, use an additional sheet of paper to answer the following questions.)

1. Why would you like to participate on this short-term missions trip?

2. Have you had any previous cross-cultural experience? Please describe.

3. In what ways are you currently serving in your church, school, or community?

4. What skills, knowledge, and gifts do you have to offer this trip?

5. How would your closest friend describe you, including your personality, strengths, and weaknesses?

## Personal Covenant

### I will be committed to:

- The lordship of Jesus Christ and the authority of Scripture
- Active participation in a local congregation
- Adapting to different cultural and social environments, and being sensitive to local believers' standards of living and dress
- Emotional, social, and spiritual growth
- A lifestyle based on biblical teaching; I affirm that living consistently with biblical teaching is essential
- Understanding sexuality as God's gift to humankind, and Christian marriage and Christian celibacy as gifts for the good of the individual, the church, and the world. Therefore, I will refrain from homosexual, premarital, and extramarital sexual behavior.
- Treating my body as God's temple, I will refrain from the use of tobacco, alcohol, and non-medicinal drugs. However, I will be sensitive to local believers regarding the use of wine in communion services and/or limited special occasions.

I affirm and agree to this Personal Covenant:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## Covenant of understanding concerning personal safety

In participating in short-term missions, I understand that many difficulties and dangers are involved with serving the Lord in ministry. Persons serving in short-term missions acknowledge that any assignment may involve one or several of the following:

- Threats of violence and/or violence done to self, family, or others
- Injury and/or death
- Unlawful arrest, false accusations, imprisonment, denial of rights as a foreign citizen, exposure to many forms of disease
- Kidnapping and extortion of self, family, or others. In these cases, it is understood that EMM will use ethical and peaceful means to secure the release of any detained person, but without the payment of ransom demands or engagement in political bargaining.
- Emotional distress and/or trauma

These represent a sample of the various types of dangers and risks a missionary may face. No place in the world is free from such risks, but missionaries should be especially aware of these possibilities as they consider making commitments to serving Christ. As it is not within anyone's ability to predict or prevent the difficulties or dangers experienced on an assignment, the undersigned agrees to accept full responsibility for his or her decision to participate, and will not hold the sending congregation liable for any emotional or physical injury incurred during service.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## Reference form

To help in discerning the following person's readiness to be involved in a short-term missions trip, please complete the following form. Information provided will be kept confidential.

Please return it to \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_.

Name of potential missionary: \_\_\_\_\_

1. How long have you known this person, and how well?

2. How do you feel about their....

a. family relationships?

b. marital relationship (if married)?

3. What do you consider to be his or her strengths?

4. What do you consider to be his or her weaknesses?

5. Do you have any concerns about this person being involved in a short-term missions trip?

6. Do you recommend this person for involvement in short-term missions?

\_\_\_ yes, with no reservations

\_\_\_ yes, with some reservations

\_\_\_ no

7. Other comments or thoughts:

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

## Forming the team - building relationships

After your team has formed, begin building and/or strengthening your relationships before you head to your outreach location.

Depending on the size of your congregation and/or the make-up of your team, the existing level of relationship will vary. But it is important for your team to have opportunities to get to know each other better and bond as a team before the team experience actually begins.

Participating in the training weekend will be one opportunity, but we strongly encourage you to plan for **at least 2 other occasions** for your team to spend some time together. Any opportunity your team has to get together, whether it is for prayer and planning for your trip or simply a fun activity, will greatly benefit your team. Consider getting together for a meal or movie that relates to your mission trip location. Go bowling together, or have a game night. You may want to designate an activity planner to assist you in these details.

**Note:** One of the sessions during the short-term mission training weekend will be “Sharing your story.” This is a time for your team members to hear each other’s faith story. You will need to ask the team to prepare for this before coming to the training weekend. The preparation questions – which will help team members to share their story – are on page 54.

**Sample idea for a team get-together:** Two weeks before you meet, divide your team into groups of 2 or 3 and assign a particular topic to research related to your outreach. Encourage them to use the internet, possibly the local library, and perhaps your church resource center. Then on the night you get together have each team report and “teach” the others about what they have learned.

What are some of your ideas for how to help your team build relationships?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

## **Forming the team - delegating responsibility**

Now that your team has formed and you are starting to get to know each other better, you may want to delegate some specific responsibilities to other team members according to their gifts, interests, and abilities. Listed below are some ideas you may find helpful as you consider how to involve your team members in specific responsibilities. Use them to the extent that they are helpful to your team.

**Prayer and praise reporter** – A person designated to stay in contact with the team’s home prayer coordinator. He or she sends prayer and praise items via e-mail back to the prayer coordinator at least every three days while the team is on outreach. (Remember the need to write carefully when serving in sensitive locations. Contact [info@emm.org](mailto:info@emm.org) for more details if needed.)

**Activity planner** – Helps to organize team-building activities, fundraisers, etc., prior to and after your team’s trip.

**Luggage and/or people counter** – Counts all luggage every time the team is ready to travel. It is helpful to have a count for suitcases, and another count for carry-ons. This person also counts team members to make sure nobody is left behind!

**Devotional coordinator and/or worship leader** – Coordinates the daily team devotional and/or worship time for the team. See section 6 for team devotional guides.

**Meal organizer** – Plans meals, organizes meal preparation and cleanup assignments.

**Treasurer** – Carries team money, keeps track of expenses, saves all receipts, and prepares financial report (if needed).

**Photographer** – Takes pictures on behalf of the team (particularly in situations where it would be insensitive to have a group of people all taking pictures, like in a worship service, or pictures of children begging in the street). Photographer should offer to make copies of pictures for team members upon return.

**Team medic** – Puts together and carries a team first-aid kit. The medic should also be aware of any special medical needs of team members.

**Gift coordinator** – Purchases small gifts ahead of time to be given to the hosts.

**Journal keeper** – Asks team members to take turns writing about team activities and impressions in the team journal (i.e. one person may write for the team each day); distributes copies of the journal to all team members upon return to the U.S.

**Thank you note person** – Keeps track of names and addresses of all hosts, churches, host families, etc., and asks team members to write the thank you notes.

**Translator** – Someone fluent (or at least somewhat knowledgeable) in the local language who can translate for the team.

## Involving the congregation

Your congregation is a built-in support group for your team. The more you keep the congregation informed and involved along the way, the more you will feel their support behind you when you are serving.

We offer the following suggestions to keep this vital connection strong:

- From the initial planning stages, keep the congregation informed of the vision for the trip and trip details through your bulletin, church newsletter, or announcement time.
- Every few weeks place a tidbit about your trip in your church's newsletter or bulletin. Suggest ways to pray for the people you will be serving, and/or ways to pray for you as a team as you prepare.
- Ask people to serve as prayer partners for your team members.
- Ask your congregation's leadership to have a time of prayer and commissioning for the team on a Sunday before you leave. Invite a team member to share hopes and fears about the trip.
- Ask the prayer supporters to gather with your team just before departure and spend a few minutes praying together.
- Plan a time for your team to share their experiences with the congregation after the trip.

### Prayer support

We believe strongly in the importance of prayer support. Everyone participating in a short-term mission assignment should have a group of persons committed to praying for them as they prepare to go, and as they serve on outreach.

We strongly encourage you to ask each of your team members to find at least three persons who will commit to praying for them, for your team, and for the persons you will serve on your trip. Ask each team member to give you names and e-mail addresses of their committed prayer supporters.

From this list of committed prayer supporters, designate one person to serve as the prayer coordinator. Also designate one of your team members to be the prayer/praise reporter. It will be this team member's responsibility to pass on prayer requests and/or praises to the prayer coordinator on a regular basis. On outreach, this should occur every three days. (E-mail should be accessible in most locations at internet cafés, libraries, etc.) The prayer coordinator is responsible to receive the updates and forward the information to the rest of the prayer supporters.

Some additional ideas:

- Plan times for your team to meet before your trip to pray together. You might want to invite your prayer supporters to join your prayer time(s). As a team, research the location you are going to, and the needs of the people you will be serving. Ask the Lord to show you how to pray.
- Consider pairing up team members to be prayer partners to pray for each other before, during, and after the trip. It is best for these partners to be of the same gender.

## Medical preparations

Each team member should be covered by a medical insurance plan while on the mission trip and carry the medical insurance card with him or her. Ask each person to double check whether their medical insurance will cover them while they are overseas. If their coverage does not include overseas travel, they may want to consider getting a short-term policy with an insurer who will provide this coverage. Two options are: [www.insuremytrip.com](http://www.insuremytrip.com) and [www.GOMissionTrip.com](http://www.GOMissionTrip.com). EMM does not have any connection with these websites, and is not responsible for the service or options these websites provide.

### Immunizations

Research immunizations that are required or recommended for your outreach location. You can do so by going to the website for the Center for Disease Control at [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel) and look at the “Traveler’s Health” section. You may also want to check with your family doctor, or with agencies such as Passport Health.

Passport Health in Lancaster, PA:  
150 Farmington Lane #201  
Lancaster, PA 17601  
(800) 839 4007

After determining what immunizations are needed, pass this information on to your team as early as possible so that they can make arrangements to receive any needed vaccinations.

We frequently recommend the following for our short-term teams for all locations:

- Tetanus, diphtheria (Td). All adults should have an updated booster every 10 years.
- Measles, Mumps, & Rubella (MMR). All children or young adults should have a second MMR as a booster.
- Prescription for traveler’s diarrhea

The following are dependent on location:

- Polio. A one-time booster is needed as an adult if a booster has not been given since childhood. This is particularly critical for those traveling to developing countries.
- Malaria. Medication and dosage varies depending on location. Consult with your doctor.
- Hepatitis A. Risk increases with duration of travel, and is highest for those who live in or visit rural areas, or frequently eat or drink in settings of poor sanitation. However, it can also occur in normal accommodations and food consumption.
- Hepatitis B. This vaccination should ideally begin six months before travel in order to complete the full series. However, the vaccination schedule should be initiated even if it will not be completed before travel begins. You may be able to receive a combined Hepatitis A and B series.
- Typhoid Fever. Vaccination is particularly recommended for those who will be traveling in smaller cities, villages, and rural areas off the usual tourist itineraries. Travelers should be cautioned that typhoid vaccination is not 100 percent effective and is not a substitute for careful selection of food and drink.
- Yellow Fever. This immunization can be given only at certain designated centers. In Lancaster, Pa., an appointment can be scheduled at Passport Health (800 839 4007) or General Internal Medicine (717 397 2738). Some countries require a signed certificate; ask your physician for proper documentation and bring it on the trip with you.

### Emergency contacts and crisis planning

Check with your hosts about their plan for responding to an emergency should the need arise (location of closest medical facility, the best route, etc.). Thank them for preparing for such a contingency plan. Inform team members what to do in the event of an emergency or crisis (stay where they are or gather at a particular location, etc.). Carry with you the information you would need in the event of an emergency. This includes the following:

- Name and phone number of designated emergency contact (someone staying at home who will receive any calls, and pass on information as appropriate) and prayer coordinator
- Emergency medical information forms

- Host country contact person – phone, e-mail, etc.
- Detailed itinerary including hotel/guest house addresses and numbers for each place your team will be staying
- Phone number of local embassy or consulate for emergencies (embassy information worldwide can be found at [www.embassyworld.com](http://www.embassyworld.com))

**Emergency medical information**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Passport #: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of emergency contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Day phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Evening phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of doctor: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any special medical conditions that we should be aware of during your trip? (Allergies, low or high blood pressure, etc.)

Do you have any special dietary needs?

List all prescription medication you are taking:

Insurance carrier:  
(Make sure your policy covers you overseas.)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Policy #: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

In the event of a medical emergency, I hereby authorize those in charge to take me to the nearest licensed physician, medical center, or hospital to secure the necessary treatment to protect my well-being. I will be responsible for all medical costs not covered by my insurance.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

If under 18, signature of parent/guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Emergency First Aid**

### **Broken bones and sprains**

Immobilize the affected extremity in the position found. Apply ice packs to minimize swelling. If the broken bone protrudes through the skin, cover it with a dry sterile dressing, but DO NOT try to push it back in. If bleeding is excessive, use direct pressure over the area to try and stop the bleeding. If you suspect multiple broken bones, or that the person's neck, back, pelvis, or thigh might be broken, DO NOT attempt to move the person. Let trained medical personnel transport the person.

### **Bleeding**

With a clean cloth or sterile dressing, apply firm, direct pressure over the wound to stop the bleeding. Maintain the pressure until trained medical personnel arrive. Have the person lie down to avoid fainting. Raise the person's feet higher than their head. DO NOT use tourniquets unless an amputation has occurred and direct pressure cannot control the bleeding.

### **Burns**

Remove the person from danger. Keep the burned person lying down. Raise burned arms or legs higher than person's heart. Cover burned area with a cool, wet cloth. DO NOT break blisters or remove burned skin. DO NOT use butter, ointments or other home remedies.

### **Choking**

- If the person can speak or cough, then he or she is able to breathe and the airway is not totally blocked. Encourage the person to cough out the object. DO NOT interfere with efforts to do so.
- If the person cannot speak or breathe but is still conscious, you must quickly dislodge the object that is blocking the airway by using the heel of your hand and giving four, quick, very hard blows on the person's back between the shoulder blades.
- If the object does not dislodge with the back blows, then use the Heimlich Maneuver.
  1. Stand behind the person and place one clenched fist just below the ribs in the middle, upper abdomen. Place your other hand on top of the first hand.
  2. Very forcefully pull the clenched fist directly backward and upward under the rib cage (as in a bear hug from behind). This should loosen the object.
- If the person has already collapsed, call for emergency medical help immediately. Place the person on his back, turn the head to one side, open the mouth and look for and remove any visible foreign material. If none is seen, place the heel of your hand on the person's middle-upper abdomen and give a forceful push. This should dislodge the foreign material into the mouth, from which you can remove it.

### **Convulsions**

Call for emergency medical help immediately. Protect the person from further injury. Turn the person onto one side so that saliva is able to drain out without being inhaled into the lungs. DO NOT force anything into the person's mouth. DO NOT try to restrain the convulsive movements.

### **Fainting/dizziness**

If a person reports "feeling faint," have him lie down on his back until he feels better. Raise his feet higher than his head. Check the person's airways, breathing, and pulse. Apply a cold compress to the person's forehead and have him inhale aromatic spirits of ammonia. If fainting is associated with chest pain, convulsions, or severe headache, or if it lasts more than one or two minutes, transport the person by ambulance to a hospital. Fainting is a relatively common problem. Nevertheless, heart attack, stroke, internal bleeding, insulin reaction or other serious conditions should be considered.

### **Head injuries**

Call for emergency medical help immediately. Always consider whether there might have been an associated injury to the neck. If so, DO NOT move the person until trained medical help arrives. Apply a sterile dressing over the wound and secure it snugly with a roller bandage. Severe, deep lacerations should not be cleansed. Heavy pressure should not be applied to severe lacerations. Make sure the person's pulse and respiration are normal.

### **Heart attack**

The person may experience pain or feel heavy pressure in the center of his chest. Pain may extend to the jaw, shoulder, and arms. The person may feel a burning sensation in their chest similar to a feeling of indigestion. He or she may perspire, feel nauseated, vomit and/or have difficulty breathing.

- DO NOT wait to see if the pain/discomfort goes away.
- Call for emergency medical help immediately.
- Have the person lie down, and make the person as comfortable as possible. Loosen the clothing at neck, chest, and waist. Keep the person warm, but not hot.
- If the person suddenly collapses and loses consciousness, try to awaken him or her. If the person cannot be awakened, and if he or she is not breathing and has no pulse in the neck, begin CPR.

### **Neck or back injuries**

Call for emergency medical help immediately. Immobilize the head, neck, and shoulder area to prevent movement. DO NOT move the person at all unless absolutely necessary to save their life. DO NOT touch or prop up the person's head. If the person stops breathing begin mouth-to-mouth resuscitation immediately (4 quick breaths followed by 2 breaths every 5 to 10 seconds.). DO NOT move the person's neck unless absolutely necessary to open the airway.

### **Poison/overdose**

Swallowed poison: **Do not give anything by mouth until you have called for professional advice.** Chemicals or household products: Unless victim is unconscious, having convulsions, or is unable to swallow, give milk or water immediately and then call for professional advice about whether you should make the victim vomit. Call the Poison Control Center or hospital emergency department and describe the product, the amount swallowed, and the time ingested. Look inside the person's mouth for burns that might indicate the ingestion of an acid or alkali. Also, smell the person's breath to see if it smells like a petroleum product (gasoline or kerosene). If either sign is present, DO NOT induce vomiting. Loosen clothing at person's neck and waist. Keep person quiet and warm. Take container of suspected poison along to the emergency department.

Inhaled poison (fumes): Immediately get the person to fresh air. Avoid breathing fumes. Open doors and windows wide. If victim is not breathing, start artificial respiration.

Poison on the skin: Remove contaminated clothing and flood skin with water for 10 minutes. Then wash gently with soap and water and rinse.

Poison in the eye: Flood the eye with lukewarm (not hot) water poured from a large glass 2 or 3 inches from the eye. Repeat for 15 minutes. Have victim blink as much as possible while flooding the eye. Do not force eyelid open.

### **Unconsciousness**

Call for emergency medical help immediately. Check for an open airway and for a pulse. If the person cannot be roused, but is breathing well and has a good pulse, they should be placed on one side in case of vomiting. Do not induce vomiting. If the person is not breathing and has no pulse in the neck, begin CPR. If drug ingestion or poison is suspected, take the container of the suspect toxin along to the emergency department.

## Travel logistics

### Itinerary

Several weeks before the trip, prepare an itinerary for your trip and give it to your team members. Make sure team members understand that things could change and they need to be flexible.

Your itinerary should include:

- Flight information - include airline, flight number, departure and arrival times
- Notes about luggage allowance. A general rule of thumb is one piece checked in (50 lbs maximum) and one carried on. (Contact your travel agent or airline to confirm weight and size restrictions on luggage, as well as security restrictions.)
- Expected plans for each day (prepare your team for unexpected changes)
- Lodging and contact information (if available)
- Time zone differences
- Notes about exchanging money
- Last minute packing instructions (necessary bedding, etc.)

### Passports and entry visas

If team members do not have current passports, have them begin the application process immediately. If they currently have passports, have them check the expiration date. Some countries require passports to be valid six months after your return to the U.S. If a passport will expire within six months after your anticipated return, have them renew their passport as soon as possible.

Passport applications and information can be found at [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov). Applicants usually receive passports in the mail within 30 days. We recommend that you carry photocopies of each team member's passport with you, in the event the passport is lost or stolen. (Keep the photocopies in a different location than the passport!)

Entry visas – In most cases, trips of a few weeks do not require entry visas. However, it would be wise to check with your travel agent, or do research on the internet to be certain. You can locate embassies and visa requirements on websites such as [www.embassyworld.com](http://www.embassyworld.com) or [www.travel.state.gov/foreignentryreqs.html](http://www.travel.state.gov/foreignentryreqs.html).

### Travel and packing tips

Be sure to check with the airline to find out the luggage allowances and packing restrictions. It is important for the team to know these limits well of ahead of time so they can pack accordingly.

**Pack lightly.** Using information from the airline as a guide, make specific luggage requirements for your team members. Be specific about the number, size, and weight of the bags (1 check-in, 1 carry-on). **Emphasize that they must be able to carry whatever they bring in one load, by themselves, for up to half a mile.** Encourage your team members to plan ahead so they can share items as much as possible. Leave sentimental items at home.

**Review packing list in team member handouts:** Check with your on-site coordinator about additional items your group may need to bring. Have one team member bring a basic first-aid kit (Band-aids, Neosporin ointment, Pepto-Bismol tablets, antacid tablets). Remember to pack mosquito repellent (with DEET) and sunscreen.

**Empty your wallet.** Take your driver's license, health insurance card, and just enough cash for the trip. As the leader, take some "just in case" items, such as your AAA card, a long-distance calling card, extra cash, and a credit card or an ATM card. Team members should not carry a lot of credit cards. Leave your Social Security card at home.

**Put a team member in charge of luggage.** Designate one or two team members to oversee the luggage. They should know how many bags the group as a whole is taking and make sure that all bags are loaded. They can also help you keep track of group items that people are assigned to bring. Consider tying a colored ribbon/yarn on the handle of each team member's suitcase to make them easy to identify at baggage claim.

**Documents:** Each team member should take a driver's license, student ID card, or another form of identification that includes a photograph, as well as a passport if leaving the U.S. As the leader, you should carry a medical release form and insurance information for all the team members.



**Media tips**

Before taking photos, check with your hosts about any taboos regarding photography. If you are in a sensitive location where Christians face persecution or discrimination, showing their picture even in the United States could have serious results.

Be sensitive to the timing of your picture taking. Don't disturb worship services, especially prayer meetings. In some areas, photographing or videotaping a worship service is strictly prohibited. Try to always ask local people before taking a close-up picture of them.

You might want to consider designating one person on your team as the team photographer, would who be responsible to take some photos to later reprint for the team. (Other team members could still take cameras, but this helps in not drawing more attention to you than necessary.)

## Team covenant

A team covenant is an important part of team work and community life. Even though you will only be together for a short time, it is vital that each member be committed to the team. You may want to consider other commitments that fit the setting or that the team would like to add.

### Team leader(s) and members:

- We commit to the Lord and to each other to work together as a team, seeking to glorify Jesus Christ and to honor each other.
- We commit ourselves to humility and gentleness, recognizing that the host people have much to teach us about living for Jesus.
- We submit ourselves to the host leaders, being sensitive to their needs and expectations.
- We commit to being culturally sensitive and to blessing our hosts, the local church, and its leadership.
- We commit to being flexible and open to schedule changes, laying down our own agenda and expectations.

### Team leader(s) to team members:

- I commit to leading this team to the best of my ability with God's help and strength.
- I commit to seeing every member as a vital part of the team; I will attempt to honor every person as we serve together.
- In decision making, I will prayerfully use a variety of healthy styles, seeking to discern and use the one most effective for each situation.
- I will seek to maintain clear understanding and communication during our time together.
- I commit myself to pray for and support the team in this venture together.

### Team members to team leader(s):

- I accept and affirm the authority God has given you to lead in this realm of service.
- I commit to honor you as leader as we serve together.
- I affirm your freedom and responsibility to prayerfully choose the decision making style you consider most helpful in any given situation, and I will honor your leadership.
- If I feel that there are choices or patterns with which I disagree, or about which I lack peace, I commit to come to you and share with you in a constructive, respectful way. I will do this instead of speaking critically of you behind your back, especially to other team members.
- I commit to pray for and support you in this venture together.

Signatures:

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

(Adapted from "Decision Making for Healthy Teams" by Mervin Charles)

## Leading successful team meetings

### Planning ahead/structure

You can rarely “wing it” effectively! It is very important to have some idea of what you want to accomplish before each team meeting. Have some extra ideas or agenda items ready for discussion also. The goal is to have God lead and direct meeting times to see his goals accomplished. While it is best for the meetings to be initiated and led by the Holy Spirit, you are responsible as the team leader to pray and discern ahead of time what the plans will be for each session. Of course having plans does not mean that you cannot change them if you sense God leading in a different direction.

### Delegating responsibilities

Beware of the temptation to do everything yourself. The best way to make sure that every person on the team feels that he or she is contributing and involved is for you to delegate responsibilities. Generally, don't give away leadership of an entire team meeting but do delegate specific parts.

### Leading a discussion

Ask open-ended questions that require more than a “yes” or “no” as a response. Discuss areas that you agree on and areas that you disagree on. Be certain to allow all persons to state their opinions whether you agree with them or not; if a team member feels that you always disagree with what he or she says, that person will stop talking. Be sure to keep the discussion on the right trail. It is easy to get sidetracked and lose the issue at hand, but you as leader need to bring the discussion back to where it belongs. Ask how the issue being discussed can teach us about God, and what God might want to be teaching members personally or as a team.

### Keep your team informed

Tell them in advance what will occur in the meeting, day, week, etc.

- “On Friday, Jim will be leading our prayer time.”
- “On Wednesday, we'll go play soccer in the park.”
- “This coming Friday, I thought we might have an extended prayer time and then do something special. What would you like to do?”
- “Be prepared to discuss James 3. Each person please have two points ready to discuss that you find helpful or interesting.”

### Cultivate flexibility

Beware of the danger of falling into a rut and not sensing the needs of the team or individual members. Remember that team times should reflect the identity of the combined personalities of team members, not just the personality of the team leader. Allow the team and yourself to discern together what areas should be emphasized more than others and what activities you will do together.

## Responding to team members

In times of differing opinions or conflict within your team, how you respond as a leader is important.

**Pray** that the Spirit and not the flesh would lead you in your response.

**Listen** to find out what is happening. Put aside your thoughts and agenda, and listen authentically to fully understand their perspectives.

**Evaluate** prayerfully what they are saying and then make decisions. Is this a legitimate reason for an exception to the guidelines? Would doing this help this person grow spiritually? If so, go for it.

**Feedback.** Give feedback on the situation and why you are making the decision that you are making. Also, explain the purpose and reason for why the guideline exists. Enter into the situation fully. Do not be quick in dismissing something. Continue to check your attitude.

**Follow up** after the event. Go back to the person and talk about the event. This is a teachable moment to help him or her grow and have heart transformation, rather than just outwardly following a “rule” while having a rebellious heart within.

We are servant-teachers, not enforcers of law.

Remember:

- One’s anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires. James 1:20
- Honor one another above yourself. Romans 12:10
- Love is patient, love is kind . . . it is not rude, self-seeking, or easily angered. 1 Cor. 13:4-5
- The wisdom that comes from heaven is . . . peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. James 3:17
- Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs. Eph. 4:29

*Let us be servant leaders following the model of Christ in order that we may help others become more fully committed followers of our Lord and Savior.*

## Section 2: Financial preparations

### Budget

This section of the handbook is to assist you, the team leader, in forming a budget for your outreach. Your overall budget will determine the estimated cost of your assignment. But remember that these figures are guidelines for your spending; you will need to exercise flexibility in shifting money from one category to another as costs become actual. Your task is to manage funds so that your books balance – but more importantly, you must provide for your team and ensure that you meet your outreach objectives.

#### Budget cash

Once you have established the total team budget for your outreach, you will need to determine how much you should take with you as cash. You will spend this money for travel, housing, food, materials and supplies, tolls and airport fees, and so on. Typically, debit cards are the simplest way to conduct these transactions and will give you the best exchange rate. However, to know if debit cards can be used en route and on location, you will have to connect with your outreach contact person to verify the availability of ATMs, so that you can withdraw your cash on location. Other options include taking travelers checks (but again, you need to make sure you have opportunity to cash them) or simply taking your full budget amount in cash. This last option is obviously not the most secure and can be cumbersome.

#### Finance comparisons: individual vs. team

##### Individuals are responsible for:

- Activities apart from the entire team that are determined by the team leader to not be a defined part of the assignment
- Souvenirs
- Thank you gifts for host families (take a gift with you) unless this is delegated to a gift coordinator for the team
- Personal hygiene items and cosmetics

##### The team budget is responsible for:

- Activities, fees, or expenses incurred during a total team activity or other activities which the team leader deems within the budget and consistent with the overall objectives of the outreach (i.e. admission fees, food, travel)
- A project or special personal need which the team feels led to respond to, is affirmed by the local pastor/leader, and is within the constraints of the budget
- Materials and supplies necessary to accomplish the overall objectives of the outreach
- Transportation costs directly related to the outreach objectives, including cost of checked in airline bags
- Essential items used by the entire team (kitchen utensils, plates and flatware, toilet paper, etc.)

See *budget worksheet on next page*.

## Team budget worksheet

### General information

Team name \_\_\_\_\_ Number of participants \_\_\_\_\_

Outreach location \_\_\_\_\_ Outreach dates \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ - \_\_\_ / \_\_\_

Outreach leader \_\_\_\_\_ Training location \_\_\_\_\_

### Team costs

Training (training weekend\*: lodging, food, speakers, training handouts) \_\_\_\_\_

Airfare, taxes, and checked luggage costs \_\_\_\_\_

Ground transportation (stateside and on-location) \_\_\_\_\_

Visas and country taxes (when applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Lodging \_\_\_\_\_

Food (include in transit and in-country) \_\_\_\_\_

Honorariums/Gifts (for hosts, for national church, etc.\*\*) \_\_\_\_\_

Materials and supplies (work/ministry projects as applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Miscellaneous (recommended to add \$20 per person for unexpected) \_\_\_\_\_

Re-entry (Lodging, food as applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL TEAM COST \_\_\_\_\_

Number of participants \_\_\_\_\_

Per person cost (team cost divided by number of participants) \_\_\_\_\_

\* Option of attending EMM training weekend or running a training weekend as a congregation.

\*\* We highly recommend that teams seek to cover all of their costs. If a host refuses to accept reimbursement (this can be common), then a gift should be made to the family and/or church as appropriate. Do not give large sums of money or commit to raising funds to give later. Seek to be a blessing and give an amount that is appropriate in that context.

## Fundraising

After you determine the cost for each person to participate in the trip, the next step is to discuss fundraising options/ideas with your team. Depending on your situation, you might choose to have individuals raise all of their own support, and/or plan team fundraisers, dividing the support raised among the team members.

If you will be planning team fundraising events, consider asking one of the team members or another volunteer from your congregation to assist you in organizing these events. As a team, brainstorm some creative ideas, prioritize them, and set dates for the top fundraising activities.

Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Car wash – consider selling tickets beforehand
- Spaghetti dinner
- Service auction
- Silent or regular auction of donated products or services
- Two-by-two yardwork – hire out pairs of team members to do an hour or two of yardwork for a donation
- “Bail Me Out” – ask for donations to bail the pastor out of his/her “jail cell” at a central location
- Sub sale, bake sale, etc.

If you want to hold a fundraising meal before you go, consider making a dish that will give a taste of what you may be eating during your trip. Look online to find recipes that are unique to or popular in the area where you will serve.

## Bookkeeping

### The financial record sheet

To begin, refer to the **financial record sheet** located in this section. On it you will find columns for recording your expenditures as well as beginning transactions and exchange rates. Each time you spend any amount of money, no matter how small, make an entry that includes the following:

- **Date**
- **Description** of the item/service paid for
- The amount of **money spent**, entered in the appropriate columns
- The adjusted **running balance**

**Always get a receipt.** File receipts in an envelope. If it is not possible to get a receipt, make your own with date, description, and amount spent.

### When you exchange U.S. dollars to foreign currencies:

- Enter the date.
- Note in the description that an exchange took place.
- Enter the starting transaction amount.
- Record the exchange rate.
- Record the amount of foreign currency received, and also transfer that amount to the appropriate ledger page for that currency.
- Adjust the running balance.

### Start a new ledger page for each currency

For example, your initial exchange from U.S. dollars to foreign currency would look something like this:

- U.S. dollars will appear in the currency space for all stateside funds up to your first exchange of money into foreign currency.
- When you make your first exchange, record the initial transaction on your U.S. dollars record sheet.
  - Record the date.
  - Describe the transaction as currency exchange.
  - Record the transaction amount – the U.S. dollars amount that you are exchanging for foreign currency.
  - Record the exchange rate – how much of this foreign currency you will be getting for each U.S. dollar you exchange (i.e. In Mexico you might get a 10:1 exchange – 10 pesos for each U.S. dollar).
  - Finally, record the amount of the new currency received for your total exchange (i.e., If I exchanged \$1,000 U.S. into pesos at 10:1, I would receive \$10,000 pesos).
- Now, transfer the amount of foreign currency received from the U.S. dollars page to the running balance column at the top of a new record sheet marked by the currency you are now using (i.e. In Mexico I would now record pesos in the currency space provided in the top left corner).
- Now, record all expenses using that new currency on this corresponding page(s).

### Remember:

- Create a new ledger sheet for each foreign currency.
- Do NOT exchange foreign currency for foreign currency. Exchange leftover funds back to U.S. dollars at the airport before leaving the country.
- Always go back to your U.S. dollars record sheet for a new exchange to a new currency.

### Overview of expenditure categories

You will notice four basic categories listed in your budget. These are broad categories, so use your discretion as to where you record expenses.

- Food costs – include kitchen supplies, gas for cooking, drinking water, etc.
- Lodging
- Travel
- Miscellaneous – expenses that do not fit into the categories of food, lodging, or travel. For example, any

gifts or honorariums you give your hosts, or major projects you do. Be sure to describe all expenses in this column so you can sort them out upon your return as needed.

### **Some final thoughts**

Bookkeeping is not always an easy task, especially when you face numerous exchange rates and lots of small expenditures along the way. However, it will honor your team and supporters if your financial record sheet amounts equal the actual amount of money the team spends.

**Keep running balances on each type of currency** and check often to be sure these amounts equal the money you have in your possession.

**Record your expenses daily** to avoid items “falling through the cracks” or misplaced receipts.

**Always carry a small notebook** or piece of paper and a pen with your money, so that as soon as you spend any amount, you can immediately make note of it. Also remember to get a receipt if possible.

**Take a small calculator** with you to assist you in calculating exchange rates and running balances.

If using travelers checks or cash, **keep them in various pieces of luggage** rather than in one place in case someone attempts to steal them.

Thank you for taking the time and energy to be a good steward of the money your team members have raised and the Body of Christ has given for the building of his kingdom.



## Section 3: Religion and culture preparation

### Learning about your outreach country

Your team will probably consist of people with varying levels of cross-cultural experience, and who will have a variety of experiences adapting to your host country.

You are the leader, so expect others to follow your example. The attitude you carry will be adopted by your team members. Therefore, it is important to set a positive example and encourage sensitivity and perseverance in adjusting to the new culture. You want the team to go in with a positive, flexible, and “learner’s” attitude. Cross-cultural understanding will be addressed during your team’s training weekend.

The more you understand about the host country’s culture, the more effective you will be. Thanks to the vast amount of information available today, you can gain a great deal of understanding about the place you will visit, and with that information begin adjusting yourself personally to enter the culture. As you research and study the following areas, look for ways to creatively impact your host culture with the message of Jesus Christ. Utilize nationals from the host culture, the internet, and resources such as *Operation World*, travel brochures, and periodicals. Specific areas to research are listed below.

We also encourage you to help your team learn about the location you are going to by doing the following:

- Visit the local library as a team to research the culture.
- Search the internet (try sites such as *Lonely Planet*, *Frommers*, *Operation World*, and others).
- Invite an experienced missionary who served in the region to spend an evening with your team (EMM might be a resource to help you find someone).
- Have a theme night (make an ethnic meal, watch a video that relates to your location).
- Learn some basis phrases in the language used where you are going.
- Divide your team into small groups, assign them one of the areas listed below, and have a reporting night. Encourage them to present the information creatively:
  - Dress as a person from the country
  - Bring in a map
  - Make up questions about the topic and have the group play “Jeopardy” to answer them
  - Do a short skit or drama

#### Cultural research

**Religious background** – Study the religious beliefs of the people. How do these beliefs differ from Christianity? How devout are the people? What are creative ways to communicate the message of Jesus Christ?

**Political background** – What is the primary political system of the culture? How long have they operated under this system? What would be the major differences in thinking politically from your home culture?

**Social background** – How is the social structure set up? Family structure? Male roles? Female roles? How do men and women interact? How should your team adjust to honor their social structure?

**Geographical background** – What is the basic geography and climate of the country? How does the climate affect the culture? (For example: A hot culture often shuts down during the afternoon and has events late into the night.) What can your team expect to experience as a result of the geography, and what adjustments will you need to make?

**Historical background** – Understand the historical overview. Has the country been war-torn? Stable? Strong world influencer? How does the history affect the way the nationals view themselves? Recent changes?

**Economical background** – What drives the culture’s economy? Industry? Agriculture? Tourism? What is the standard of living? Average income? What can your team expect of the culture’s living conditions?

**Cultural background** – Investigate the country’s cultural celebrations. Holidays? Arts, drama, music? Is their culture tied to their religious beliefs? How do they celebrate?

**Church growth or impact** – What has been the church’s impact in the country? Church growth statistics? Prayer needs for the church? (*Operation World* is a good source of information for this area of research.)

**Statistics and other facts** – Population? Crowded living conditions? Racial mix?

## World religion information

### Buddhist world

#### Origin of Buddhism

Buddhism started in India as an offshoot of Hinduism. Its founder was Siddhartha Gautama, who lived in northern India from 566 to 486 B.C. Gautama lived a privileged life in a palace, as his father was very wealthy. However, one day he took a trip outside the palace and saw four people: an old man, a sick man, a dead man, and a beggar. He was upset by the suffering he saw, and decided to seek an answer to the pain and suffering in the world.

During a time of meditation, Gautama experienced Nirvana (the highest degree of God-consciousness). He believed this was the answer to the pain and suffering in the world. Gautama became known as Buddha (“the enlightened one”) and began a teaching ministry.

Many people in India had become dissatisfied with Hinduism, so Gautama had a ready audience. By the third century B.C., Buddhist teaching had spread to Sri Lanka. Monks carried it to China, Korea, Japan, and Tibet. In the past two centuries, Buddhism has also become popular in Europe and North America. Today there are several million Buddhists in the United States.

#### Buddhist terms

**Samsara:** The concept that everything is in a birth and rebirth cycle. Buddha taught that people do not have souls. Therefore, what goes through the cycle of birth and rebirth is not the individual soul of a person but rather a set of feelings, impressions, present moments, and the karma that is passed on. The new individual in the next life will not be exactly the same person, but will have similarities.

**Karma:** The law of cause and effect – reaping what one has sown. Buddhists believe that every person must go through a process of birth and rebirth until he reaches the state of nirvana, which breaks this cycle. Buddhists believe that what a person will be in the next life depends on their actions in the present life.

**Nirvana:** This is an eternal state of being, when the law of karma and the rebirth cycle come to an end. It is the end of suffering, a state in which a person has no desires and the person’s consciousness comes to an end. No Buddhist truly understands the condition of Nirvana, but it is the eternal hope.

#### The way of salvation

Gautama sought to answer the question, “Why is there pain and suffering?” He also believed in reincarnation; after death a person returns to life in a higher or lower form depending on his/her good or bad deeds.

Therefore, Gautama needed to also answer a second question: “How does a person break this rebirth cycle?” He answered these questions with “the four noble truths” and “the eight-fold path.”

#### The four noble truths

1. There is pain and suffering in the world. To exist means that we will all encounter suffering.
2. The root cause of suffering is desire. The craving for wealth, happiness, and other forms of selfish enjoyment cause suffering.
3. Suffering will cease when a person can rid himself of all desires.
4. The way to extinguish desires is by following the eight-fold path.

#### The eight-fold path

Step one is right views. One must accept the four noble truths.

Step two is right resolve. One must renounce all desires and thoughts such as lust, bitterness, and cruelty. One may not harm any living creature.

Step three is right speech. One must speak only the truth.

Step four is right behavior. One must abstain from sexual immorality, stealing, and all killing.

Step five is right occupation. One must work in an occupation that benefits others and harms no one.

Step six is right effort. One must seek to eliminate any evil qualities within.

Step seven is right contemplation. One must be observant, contemplative, and free of desire and sorrow.

Step eight is right meditation. After freeing oneself of all desires and evil, a person must concentrate his efforts in meditation so he can attain a state of perfection. Through self-effort one can attain the state of peace and eternal bliss called Nirvana.

*Information from www.gospelcom.net*

### **The five precepts**

The five precepts encompass the minimum moral obligations of a lay Buddhist. They are not commandments, but rather ideals to live up to.

The five precepts are:

1. Not to destroy life
2. Not to steal
3. Not to commit adultery
4. Not to tell lies
5. Not to take intoxicating drinks

### **God and Buddhism**

We have not yet mentioned God or an eternal deity. Clearly Gautama did not claim to be divine. He claimed to be the one to point the way to Nirvana, but it was up to each individual to find his own way there. The concept of a personal God does not fit into the Buddhist system of religion. In general, Buddhists view God as an impersonal force that is made up of all living things and holds the universe together.

Since Buddhists do not believe in a personal God, they do not have worship, prayer, or praise of a divine being. Buddhism offers no form of redemption, forgiveness, heavenly hope, or final judgment.

### **Christianity vs. Buddhism**

#### **Scriptures**

Much of the Buddhist scriptures and sayings attributed to Gautama were written about four hundred years after his death. By the time they were written, Buddhism had split into many sects, so even the best scholars are not sure of the accuracy of the Buddhist scriptures. In Christianity, we have an accurate historical account written by eyewitnesses to Jesus and the events surrounding his life.

#### **Deity**

Buddha only claimed to be the way-shower to Nirvana, not a deity. Jesus claimed to be God and not simply a way-shower, but instead the only way to eternal life.

#### **Eternal life**

Buddhism offers neither assurance of forgiveness or eternal life. Buddhists hope to enter into the state of Nirvana, but they have no clear, objective proof or teaching on what occurs beyond the grave. Buddha left no clear teaching on Nirvana or eternity. The facts of life after death still remain an unsolved mystery in Buddhism. In Christianity, Jesus taught eternal truths with authority. His authority came from the fact that he existed before creation, and he proved his claims by rising from the dead.

*Information from www.gospel.net*

### **Witnessing to a Buddhist**

First, the spiritual conflict demands concentrated prayer to break the controlling forces of darkness in the heavens. God answers prayer, but demonic forces may hinder and frustrate his answers at times. Pray that God will break down these powers and free Buddhists to hear the Word of God through the Holy Spirit. Christians must depend on God and his grace. Do not be surprised by his sovereign intervention.

Essential to sharing with Buddhists is a bold, though humble, proclamation of the gospel. Buddhists need a dynamic encounter with the living Lord, in contrast to the dormant Buddha and the feared spirits. Rather than confronting Buddhism directly, evangelists should note the power of the demonic fear controlling people. They

should also emphasize the message of Christ's power to liberate from evil spirits or from spiritual bondage. The power of Jesus over the demons and the triumph of the cross over the power of darkness is good news for Buddhists to hear.

Evangelists must be patient when working with Buddhist peoples. It takes time for the message to be understood and to spread. Few people in Asia know much about the true gospel, yet some evangelists expect them to make an immediate decision for Christ. Evangelism of whole families, rather than just individuals, is also vital. At times baptism of an individual may be delayed so that the Word diffuses throughout the nuclear family.

*Information from [www.gospel.net](http://www.gospel.net)*

## Catholicism in Latin America

Catholicism is by far the dominant religion in Latin America. In 1977, 90% of the people in Latin America were Catholics. However, evangelicals are making inroads. By 1998 that figure had dropped to 88%. Evangelicals in Latin America have grown from 50,000 in 1990 to 64 million in 1997. According to the Latin American Catholic Bishops' Conference, an estimated eight thousand people in Latin America turn from Catholicism to Evangelicalism every day.

*Information from [www.adherents.com](http://www.adherents.com) and [www.missiology.org](http://www.missiology.org).*

Following are excerpts from an article titled "A Latin American Catholicism – church in transition," found at [www.sim.org](http://www.sim.org).

"Latin American Catholicism is unique. Whereas much of the Catholic influence in North America came from Ireland and Italy, the church in Latin America was planted by missionaries from Spain, who continued the Inquisition in both the Old and New Worlds to counter the Protestant Reformation, as well as to oppress the Jews."

"From the time the conquistadors came from Spain and Portugal to South America in the early sixteenth century until evangelicals began preaching there in the nineteenth century, the religious influence of the Catholic church remained unchallenged. By that time, Latin American Catholicism had become culturally entrenched, dominating almost all aspects of public and private life."

"A major distinction of Latin American Catholicism is the way it has syncretized pagan beliefs. Catholic crosses on the tops of mountains throughout the Andes often have the bones of pagan sacrifices at their bases. This syncretization of pagan practices with Catholicism demonstrates the measure of accommodation the Catholic church can allow in order to maintain its acceptance and authority."

"Like many other institutions in the late twentieth century, the authority of the Catholic church in Latin America is being challenged from within and without. The strongest external challenge comes from the growing influence of evangelicals. Many Catholics are attracted to the evangelical idea of a more personal relationship with God through repentance and faith. This loss of Catholics to the evangelical camp has spurred a response in which the appealing features of evangelical Christianity are being absorbed and presented to parishioners under Catholic auspices."

"Whatever attempts may be made toward 'narrowing the gap' between Catholics and evangelicals, the beliefs that separate the two are the same ones that brought about the original Reformation and subsequent Vatican persecution through the Inquisition."

"[We must] continue to declare the fundamental tenets of evangelical doctrine, such as salvation by faith alone; the priesthood of the believer; Jesus Christ as the only intercessor between God and humankind; and the sole, final authority of the Scriptures on all matters of doctrine."

"Against the backdrop of a changing Latin American Catholicism, evangelicals will continue to share the unchanging truths of God's Word with the spiritually seeking people of South America."

# Muslim world

## Introduction

One fifth of the world's population follows the teachings of Islam. We probably all have mental pictures of what an Islamic country is like and how Muslims behave. This picture is greatly affected by the Western media and probably includes images of terrorists, men with black beards, minarets, and veiled women. Yet this image can be misleading. Islamic countries differ: some are Arab, others are Asian. Some are conservative, others liberal, and still others radical. So it is important to keep an open mind and try to avoid preconceived ideas when traveling to a new country.

## Cultural guidelines for visitors

### Dress

The clothes that we wear make a statement about who we are and communicate a message to those around us. It is our aim to offend as few as possible so as to win as many as possible. That may mean dressing a little more conservatively than usual and not copying the younger, more liberal elements of society, who may be considered "loose" by older people.

### Women

It is considerate for women to dress conservatively: no mini-skirts, sleeveless tops, or tight-fitting clothing. Although you will see young local girls very fashionably dressed, women will feel more comfortable if they are dressed modestly, as men tend to stare at foreign women.

### Men

Men, too, should dress respectfully, particularly in rural areas. They should not wear shorts or sleeveless shirts. In tourist areas this dress code may be relaxed.

### Behavior

Tourists in general are there to be exploited – all are considered rich and gullible! In some places you may be pestered by young boys who try to sell you something or lead you to a shop. Never get angry, but smile politely and say nothing. You will get less hassle if you walk around in small groups and keep your voices down. Always try to be polite with people who approach you; remember that you are probably a lot better off than they are. But don't be afraid to say no firmly if you don't want to buy or don't need help.

### No contact with the opposite sex

In most Western cultures it is normal for there to be a certain amount of physical contact across the sexes and fairly unusual for there to be much physical contact between people of the same sex. In the Islamic culture, the reverse is usually true. It is very common to see men holding hands or walking arm in arm; this does not make a statement about their sexuality. Conversely, traditionally there is little contact between men and women outside of family relationships. Although this is changing and you may see a young couple holding hands, it is wise to be sensitive to the majority and to avoid contact across the sexes.

### Eye contact

For women: while eye contact and smiling at men in the street may be considered pleasant in your home culture, is understood as "loose" behavior in this culture.

## **Islamic beliefs**

### **Belief in One God**

Islam is a monotheistic religion. Muhammad proclaimed that Allah alone is God and that other idols were not to be worshipped. Muslims reject the Christian concept of the Trinity.

### **Belief in angels**

Muslims believe that God created angels, who are sinless. In Muslim tradition, angels hold various ranks. Some engage in praise of God, others watch over and intercede for believers, others aid in battle, are present for, and can cause, death. Muslim traditions name the four archangels: Gabriel, Michael, Izrail the angel of death, and Israfil who will blow the trumpet on the last day to awaken the dead. Gabriel brought God's messages directly to Muhammad. God is too exalted to speak directly with humans. The Qur'an also attributes Gabriel with appearing to the Virgin Mary to announce to her that she would have a son.

### **Belief in God's prophets**

Muslims believe that God sent many prophets to the nations to teach erring men his ways. The Great Prophets are Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad. Each of these prophets was given books that were God's word, and the Qur'an took the place of all previous revelations of God's will. Jesus is considered to be the greatest of all the prophets except for Muhammad.

### **Belief in the books of God**

Muslims believe that God has spoken and has given a number of books to his prophets. In the Qur'an there are references to the Torat (of Moses), the Suhuf (sheets or books of the prophets), Zabur (Psalms of David), Injil (Gospel of Jesus), and Qur'an (of Muhammad). Only the Qur'an is considered binding.

### **Belief in the resurrection and judgment**

One day the trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised and judged for their deeds. Muslims believe in paradise and hell, and they do not profess to know where they will go until the day of judgment. Only those who die as martyrs slain in the battle for Islam are granted immediate access to paradise.

### **Islam and the Qur'an**

The word "Islam" means surrender, or submission, to the will of God. The religion called by that name emerged over 1300 years ago when Muhammad, a merchant from Mecca, began to see visions and receive messages that he believed were the direct words of God. These messages were recited and then written down, and became known as the Qur'an. The Qur'an holds a very special place in Muslim life: Muslims believe it to be the exact revelation of God to humanity. So translations of the Qur'an are not referred to as translations, but interpretations.

### **The Hadith**

The Hadith includes the sayings of Muhammad and examples from Muhammad's life. Muslims use it constantly as a guideline on how to live a holy life. Islamic tradition says if you do not know what to do in a given situation, go to the Prophet. He was closest to God, therefore they should follow his example.

### **Muslims and Jesus**

Muslims believe in and honor many of the prophets of the Old Testament. But they also say that the Bible must have been corrupted because it points out the errant behavior of these prophets; since no prophet of God would ever err, the Bible must be wrong. Muslims have great respect for Jesus, but to say that Jesus is Divine or the Son of God is the highest blasphemy. The Qur'an says God is not a man, therefore he cannot have a son, and God is so transcendent and "other" than humankind that he would never stoop to enter our world. Muslims also reject the crucifixion narratives of the New Testament. First, of course, they do not see the need for Jesus to die for our sins, and second, they do not believe God would allow one of his prophets to die in such a disgraceful way. Instead they say, God put someone else on the cross in the place of Jesus. The story of Christ's death reinforces their belief that the Bible has been corrupted over the years.

## **Islamic practices**

The primary practices of Islam are the five obligatory “acts of worship,” also called the “pillars” of Islam.

They are:

### **Confession of faith**

The first pillar is to confess verbally that “There is no god but God, and Muhammad is the Apostle of God.” This is known as “Shahada.”

### **Ritual prayer**

The second pillar is the pillar of prayer, or the “Salat.” All Muslims are expected to perform these ritual prayers, spoken five times a day along with the correct postures.

### **Obligatory alms**

The third pillar is the giving of alms, known as the “Zakat.” Muslims are expected to give a percentage of their possessions every year as a constant reminder that there are others in the world who are worse off than they are. The Zakat goes toward helping those who are less fortunate.

### **The fast of Ramadan**

The fourth pillar is fasting, or the “Saum,” during the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar, the month of Ramadan. Muslims go by the lunar calendar, and so Ramadan moves every year. From sunrise to sunset, Muslims do not eat or drink. Smoking, sexual contact, swearing, and anger are forbidden. The faithful are encouraged to use the month of fasting to draw closer to God, and to renew their spiritual strength.

### **The Pilgrimage**

The fifth pillar is the Pilgrimage to Mecca, the “Hajj.” Every Muslim who can afford to and is not sick must complete the Hajj. This is a time when all are deemed equal before God regardless of social or financial position. As part of Muslims’ purification process, participation in the pilgrimage heightens their social status. *Information from Gospel.com– for more information including questions and answers about ministering to Muslims, refer to the website.*

## Postmodern world

What is Postmodernism? “Postmodernism” is a word which simply sums up the way much of the world thinks today. It includes these viewpoints:

- There is no objective absolute truth. “Truth” is what you believe it to be. Something can be “true for you, but not true for me.”
- “Choice” is a big virtue in our consumer society. Choice extends to value systems, beliefs, and lifestyle choices. All are equally valid. Choice of religious belief is by mix and match – whatever you feel comfortable with.
- All people are products of their cultures. We are not unique individuals created in the image of God. Instead, our identities are defined by our cultural heritage.
- Any system or statement that claims to be objectively true or unfavorably biased towards the values, beliefs, or lifestyle of another culture is a power play. No one culture can dominate others.

Postmodernism, therefore, encourages such choose-it-yourself faiths as the New Age Movement. The ethos of the internet relates closely to the postmodern view – everyone is free to offer, or find, any viewpoint. We live in a postmodern world where people demand choices and freedoms. A top supermarket chain that offered 3,000 product items in 1987, now presents consumers with 30,000.

*Information from [www.gospel.com](http://www.gospel.com).*

### Problems with postmodern thought

- The loss of any center or unifying themes in culture and life in general. Postmodernism celebrates diversity, and the result is fragmentation.
- The sense of distrust and even betrayal felt by Generation X. The American dream for them is a fairy tale that previous generations might have lived but that is out of their grasp. Why should they buy into a lie that even their parents’ generation is beginning to realize is not worth the cost?
- Willingness to find sanctuary in what we might call a “virtual reality” worldview. This world finds security in its insulation from the pain and disappointment found in the real world. Thus we have chat rooms devoid of human contact and computer games. There is a certain disengagement from life that keeps people, and even life, at a safe distance.
- Postmodern culture has no fixed anchors, especially moral norms. Postmodernism judges such norms as mere inventions of culture that are meant to keep people in bondage.

*Information from [www.newlifeministries-nlm.org](http://www.newlifeministries-nlm.org).*

### How do we minister in a postmodern setting?

We must present the gospel differently in postmodern situations. People may not initially be interested in our version of truth, especially if we present it dogmatically and without humor. However, people may be interested in solutions that meet the problems they face in life.

*Information from [www.gospel.com](http://www.gospel.com).*

Ray Jones of the North American Mission Board points out that reaching postmoderns will occur only through Christians who are willing to invest their lives in them. He says, postmoderns “want to know you are the real deal. They want to know that you are not after them as an evangelistic headhunter. If they see you’re real and you’re authentic, that grabs postmoderns because nothing in this world to them is authentic.” He also says that “reaching postmoderns is sometimes a process, not an event. Relationships are huge. If you can develop and cultivate relationships, you are [going] a long way to[ward] being able to reach postmoderns.”

*As quoted in an article by Lee Weeks entitled “Postmoderns extremely receptive to the gospel, says evangelism head” found at [www.namb.net](http://www.namb.net).*

## Hindu world

"If you want to know something about India, you must empty your mind of all preconceived notions. Why be imprisoned by the limited vision of the prejudiced? Don't try to compare. India is different and exasperating as it may seem, would like to remain so... This is the secret of India, the acceptance of life in all its fullness, the good and evil."

- Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India, 1964-1984

There is no actual one Indian culture; India is a melting pot of different cultures. These cultures can vary from place to place, people to people, urban to rural, etc. However, some general principles apply.

### Contrasting aspects of cultures

The "Western" way of thinking does not easily fit into the Indian way of thinking. Set aside your Western presuppositions and have an open mind to learn from the Indian people. Ask questions and observe. Just because a culture is different does not mean it is wrong. There is much you can learn from the culture in India. For example, India with its emphasis on respect for authority and close family relationships in some ways reflects Christian values more than post-Christian Western society.

**Dating vs. never dating:** Most Indians do not date. Marriages are usually arranged through their parents. A man and a woman seen alone together are assumed to be married.

**Confrontational vs. nonconfrontational:** Westerners rarely hesitate to confront or ask brash questions. Indians often avoid confrontation and take time to get to the point. Indians rarely display anger.

**Individual vs. group:** Westerners (especially Americans) are very individualistic. They are independent, need privacy, and make decisions by themselves. In India there is more of a group orientation. People like to do most things together and are used to little privacy. Decisions are often made in a group. Entire villages or tribes have even received Christ as a group.

**Personal ownership vs. communal:** In the West people are more possessive of personal belongings. In India things are more communal. A person's walkman or stereo can be used by everybody. Things borrowed are not always returned. If anyone in a group buys food, that person will share with everyone in the group.

**Equality vs. respect for elders and leaders:** In the West, everyone is treated somewhat equally, regardless of rank, age, or position. Relationships are more informal. In India, people have much more respect for elders and leaders. Pastors, government officials, and village leaders should be carefully treated with respect.

To add to the confusion . . . India is fast becoming more modernized and cosmopolitan. Outside influence is biggest in large cities and tourist areas. Indians who have worked a lot with Westerners are usually quite gracious and will often try to accommodate your Western way of doing things.

Therefore, sometimes you will find Indians on the Western end of the spectrum on various issues: events are punctual, some younger Indians date, and so on. Your challenge will be to figure out just how much a person or community has been influenced by outside culture, so you can know what to probably expect. Whatever the case, be adaptable, respect their way of life, and enjoy the experience of being a part of a different culture.

### Dress

Modesty and neatness are the goals! Modesty is defined differently by various cultures. Below are some guidelines that define modesty in this culture.

**Women:** Women should not wear shorts in any situation, nor should they wear blouses that are low-cut or see-through. Clothing should always cover the shoulders and upper arms. Women should wear slips with skirts made of light materials. Avoid any "hippie type" appearance as much as possible. In Pentecostal or village churches, do not wear jewelry or make-up, or keep it to the very minimum. Tie or braid your long hair. In church,

you may be expected to cover your hair with an odni dupetta or shawl (available with Punjabi suit) during times of prayer.

A Punjabi suit (or shalwar chameez) is a combination of loose pants, long dress, and dupetta. It is the most suitable and comfortable outfit to wear during times of outreach and church ministry. They cost around \$10-15 U.S. The dyes may be unstable. Punjabi suits can be tailor-made for larger women and generally cost around five dollars more.

**Men:** Keep your hair short and neatly cut. Long hair on men is considered rebellious and inappropriate. Do not wear shorts except on Goa or some beaches. Tattered or faded (worn) blue jeans are not allowed. You may wear blue jeans when traveling long distances by bus or train, as well as in certain more Westernized areas in some cities. Full length neat cotton pants are best for looks and comfort. Do not walk around with only a towel or lungi on for any reason.

Men must always wear shirts in public areas. When doing ministry of any type, wear shirts with collars or team T-shirts (if told they are appropriate). Avoid printing team T-shirts that are obviously Christian. When attending church, take special care that your clothes are neat and clean. Do not wear blue jeans or a T-shirt to a church service.

The traditional Punjabi suits for men are also available (\$5 - \$10 U.S.). They are more popular in the north (Delhi, Calcutta) but rarely worn in the far south (Madras).

### **Giving up cultural “rights”**

Be prepared to lay down your cultural “rights” when in India. Some things that are perfectly acceptable in the West are offensive in Indian culture. If you are willing to give up your “rights” in order to fit into the Indian culture, you will find that you will have a much more effective outreach.

The Apostle Paul wrote, “Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law” (1 Corinthians 9:19-20 NIV).

### **Miscellaneous cultural guidelines**

- Avoid any kind of touching of the opposite sex (including within your own team), even the laying on of hands.
- Men sometimes hold hands with each other.
- A single man and a single woman should not spend time alone together or go out in public together. Guys should avoid going into girls’ rooms, and vice versa.
- You should use your right hand for all social interactions, whether passing money, tracts, food, or any other items. When eating without utensils, use the right hand only.
- When meeting, men often shake hands with other men, but not very often with the women. Men should not offer their hand to shake hands with a woman. If a woman offers her hand to shake hands with a man, then it is okay.
- Take off your shoes when entering a home (and most churches also), even if you are told to leave them on. At some churches you will only need to remove your shoes if you go to the front altar area to preach or sing, etc.
- Never direct the soles of your feet toward any person.
- When attending a church, the offering will likely be fairly visible; have everyone in your group bring at least a small rupee note to put in the offering; remember 10 rupees is only 25 cents!
- The views of many Christians in the less Westernized parts of India are similar to those seen in American churches in the 1950s: secular music, going to movie theaters, and playing cards are all sin! In order not to offend, be prepared to sometimes have to fit in under their “dos and don’ts.”
- Conversation should be gentle and not too loud (especially, for example, in nicer restaurants). Do not interrupt someone when he or she is speaking.

- Women, beware of “Eve teasing” (men pinching women), which occurs more often in crowded situations, and more commonly in north India. It is okay to tell someone to stop. Men, treat the women on your team as your very close sisters. Be protective.
- Tip at nicer restaurants at 5-10% of the bill.
- Indians often politely refuse refreshments or other things offered to them. If, for example, you offer to buy an Indian friend a Coke and he or she refuses, it may be best to give one anyway, since he or she probably really does want it.
- When visiting an Indian home, do not enter the kitchen unless invited to do so.
- Be sensitive about taking photos of people, especially women, who may find it offensive; always ask first. Using a zoom lens can help you be less obtrusive. But taking photos at a death ceremony, religious ceremony, or of people bathing (in baths or rivers) may cause offense.
- Do not identify yourselves as “missionaries.” In the minds of some Indians, that word brings up the image of “the white man coming to Christianize the natives.” Rather, identify yourselves as students or tourists.
- Do not get angry when bargaining; it is meant to be a sort of a game. Be firm but friendly at the same time! Realize that as a foreigner, in bargaining situations you will usually have to pay more than the usual price. Your goal should be not to pay too much more! If you offer a certain amount for something and they accept, then customarily you must buy.
- Postage stamps are not licked; at least don’t do it in public! Water or paste is provided to moisten them.
- Do not preach against idolatry or other religions. Rather, tell people about Jesus.
- When preaching or teaching in an Indian church, begin and end with prayer.
- If a person invites someone else to join them for a cup of tea or lunch, usually it is expected that the person who did the inviting will pay the bill.
- In more culturally traditional Christian settings, women always cover their heads with a shawl (dupetta) during times of prayer.
- Earrings on men (and sometimes earrings on women), long hair on men, very short hair on women, shaved heads, and nose rings should be avoided.
- Especially in the South, avoid getting tika dots (bindis) on your foreheads. The tika dot is seen by many to be the identification mark of a Hindu.
- Beware of pickpockets and thieves in buses, theaters, railway stations, or any other crowded situations. Keep your money belt underneath your clothing.
- When a guest comes to visit you, always offer at least some water (and chai, coffee, or crackers if available).

### **Spending and giving money**

Be careful not to flaunt your purchased items or clothes to each other in front of the Indians you are staying with. Be discreet. If you want to give to an Indian believer, it’s often best to give anonymously and indirectly, as we do not want to cause Indians to look to Westerners to supply their needs. It is usually best not to give things to Indian friends that will “westernize” them.

### **Beggars**

You will encounter beggars in India. Since there is virtually no state welfare system in India, many beggars have no other way to support themselves. Always be kind to beggars in any case. The usual amount to give is between 20 paise and 2 rupees. It helps to always have some small change with you. It also can be good to give beggars food.

### **Travel**

Traveling across India is best done by train. Watch your belongings (especially shoes and small day packs) when traveling. Most thefts occur during the confusion of loading on to the train; do not leave any bag unwatched for even a moment. Lock your luggage to the seats if possible. Indian trains also can be late, sometimes as much as 12 to 14 hours! Purchase your train tickets as far in advance as possible. It is easier to get tickets if there is a tourist quota where you are. On the regular quota, trains can be booked weeks in advance.

Bus travel is also inexpensive, but much less comfortable than the train. Bus rides are usually wild and bumpy, and if you're on a video coach, you will be entertained by loud Hindi videos blaring away all through the night.

Local travel is usually done by motorized rickshaw. The prices on the meter are often out of date, so the driver will show you a card with the adjusted price. In some cities like Madras or Delhi, the rickshaw drivers will refuse to go by a meter and you must therefore bargain.

## 1 CORINTHIANS 13: A guide to adapting to a new culture

If I speak with the tongue of a national  
but have not love  
I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.

If I wear the national dress and understand the culture and all forms of etiquette  
and if I copy all mannerisms so that I could pass for a national  
but have not love, I gain nothing.

Love endures long hours of language study, and is kind to those who mock its accent;  
love does not envy those who stayed home; love does not exalt its home culture,  
is not proud of its national superiority.

Does not boast about the way we do it back home  
does not seek its own ways  
it is not easily provoked into telling about the beauty of its home country  
does not think evil about this culture.

Love bears all criticism about its home culture,  
believes all good things about this new culture  
confidently anticipates being at home in this place  
endures all inconveniences.

Love never fails  
but where there is cultural anthropology, it may fail  
where there is contextualization, it may lead to syncretism  
where there is linguistics, it may change.

For we know only part of the culture and we minister to only part.  
But when Christ is reproduced in this culture, then our inadequacies will be insignificant.

When I was in America, I spoke as an American, I understood as an American.  
I thought as an American.  
But when I left America, I put away American things.

Now we adapt to this culture awkwardly, but he will live in it intimately.  
Now I speak with a strange accent, but he will speak to the heart.

And now these three remain: cultural adaptation, language study, and love.

But the greatest of these is love.

*Author unknown.*

## Section 4: Team member handouts

### Team member checklist:

#### Preparing for outreach

- \_\_\_\_\_ Ask the Lord to prepare your heart for outreach, and begin praying daily for your upcoming assignment.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Gather at least 3 prayer supporters, and give list of names and e-mail addresses to your team leader.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Meet with your prayer supporters.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Apply for or renew passport (must be valid for six months past the date of your return). Passport information can be found at [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov). Applications will normally take at least 30 business days so start early.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Give a photocopy of your passport to your team leader.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Receive immunizations recommended by team leader for your outreach location.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Obtain from your doctor a prescription to treat Traveler's Diarrhea or visit Passport Health in Lancaster 1 800 839-4007 or check [www.passporthealthpa.com](http://www.passporthealthpa.com) for more information.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Begin praying for the trip, the location, your team members, and team leader.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Begin research on the country where you will go; check *Operation World* or do a web search to find sites that highlight the Christian movement in that country.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Prepare for your personal costs – passport, immunizations, food/snacks on trip, souvenirs/gifts, laundry, offerings and host gifts, film/batteries, and miscellaneous for activities you will be responsible to pay for.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Order the book *Prepare Your Heart: Short-term Mission Preparation Guide* by Cindy Judge – 12 Bible studies plus a trip journal. ISBN# 0-9712-320-4-0

#### Before the training weekend

- \_\_\_\_\_ Prepare in writing for the “Sharing your story” session.

Write out your responses to the following questions on a separate piece of paper:

- How and why I accepted Christ.
- What my life was like before accepting Christ.
- A specific event/moment of new understanding or growth in my relationship with Christ.
- How is my life different now as a result of my faith in Jesus?
- Why I wanted to be part of this mission team.
- My concerns about the trip and how you can pray for me.

#### 1-2 weeks before outreach

- \_\_\_\_\_ Use the *Prepare Your Heart* devotional guide.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Purchase a small notebook to take with you on your trip for journaling.

#### After outreach

- \_\_\_\_\_ Use the debriefing handouts.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Write thank you notes to your prayer partners and financial supporters.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Write a thank you note to your on-field hosts.

## Principles for successful short-term mission trips

### God is the head of the mission

- You are not taking God to this place; rather, God is taking you! (Gen. 12:1-3; Ps. 139:1-10)
- God has been at work in this place long before you arrived.
- God has a plan for this community, this people, and each person. (Jer. 29:11; 1 Tim. 2:3-5, 2 Peter 3:9)
- Follow God's lead, not yours.
- God will always be with you. (Matt. 28:20b, Rom. 8:38-39; Heb. 13:5)

### Open heart, open hands

- An open heart is free to be filled by the Holy Spirit and overflow with love. (John 14:15-17; Acts 13:2-4; Rom. 5:3-5)
- An open heart is free to be broken by the injustices and poverty of the world. (Deut. 15:7-8; Ps. 9:18, Ps. 82:3-4; Gal. 2:10)
- An open hand is ready to receive. Be willing to accept their gifts and hospitality.
- An open hand is a sign of good will and humility. (Gal.5:22)
- An open hand cannot clutch a clock, a schedule, or a stereotype. Take interest in the people, asking questions about their culture and way of life.
- An open hand is willing to eat the food being served. Food offered to you will be of their best and they will be honored or dishonored by how you react.

### 'Doing' is less important than 'being'

- Be like Jesus. Walk as Jesus walked. (1 John 2:6; Matt. 5:1-16; John 15:1-14)
- Be human beings not "human doings"! (1 Thess. 5:11)
- Focus on people, not just on the task. (1 John 3:18)
- Work on building relationships, not monuments. (Rom. 12:9-15)
- Take a deep breath when things don't start or end on time; there are more important things in life than sticking to a schedule.
- Be flexible – things will rarely go as you planned. Look for God's surprises in the unexpected.

### A servant's heart

- Learn from your hosts; honor them and God by serving them. (John 13:12-17) Remember that you are a guest; lay down your rights to time, privacy and energy.
- Find out what your hosts pray for, and commit to praying for that, too. (James 5:16)
- Accept the leadership of your hosts. You are not the one in charge. Do what you are asked humbly and with joy.
- Practice humility. (Luke 22:24-27; James 4:10)
- There are many ways to do things; yours is only one way, and it may not be right for this time or place.
- Be adaptable – try new things, set aside biases, and work on fitting into the culture.
- Try to speak the language. Taking an interest in their language is taking an interest in them as people. Learn to laugh at yourself for mistakes and try again.
- When with local persons, do not joke in English unless someone is there to translate the joke. People who do not understand English will wonder if you are laughing at them.

*Adapted from: 2000 by AECBorquist*

## Praying for your trip

Prayer is essential – don't leave home without it!

### Praying through your motive and mission:

The quality of our experience in another culture will largely be determined by our reason for being there, and our expectations for the encounter. Thus, we must be clear about our motives.

Ask the Lord to show you the motives of your heart for going on this mission trip. Write a personal “mission statement” describing why you are going on this trip.

What do you hope will be the impact of this experience on you?

### What to pray for:

- **Spiritual needs:** a growing relationship with God through his Son, Jesus Christ; time and energy to nurture that relationship; to have a deep awareness of God's love; for the preparation of your heart for the ministry.
- **Emotional needs:** a growing sense of God's presence; loving relationships; healthy self-image; ability to adapt cross-culturally; a learner having a teachable spirit.
- **Physical needs:** health and strength; safety in danger; wise precautions.
- **Financial needs:** for the provision of finances for yourself and for the rest of your team members; for the time to be released in your schedule for the time away.
- **Team relationships:** healthy give-and-take; ability to work in harmony; courage to be honest; a sense of appreciation for others.
- **Effective ministry:** sensitivity to the cultural setting and a desire to learn from another culture; eagerness to share the message of God's healing and hope.

### Intercessory prayer for the region:

Through prayer:

- We utter God's “NO” to all the forces of the kingdom of darkness and God's “YES” to all the forces of the kingdom of light.
- We agree with God's will that his kingdom will come and his will be done on earth with the same fullness as in heaven.
- The power of God is further released for the transformation of the world.

Ask the Lord to show you more about the region where you are going. What is his heart—his dreams and plans—for that region? What may be some of the strongholds of that region against which you pray? Use Eph. 6:10-20 as a guide.

### More personal reflections and prayers:

God is about to send you into a remarkable classroom - God's world - with remarkable teachers - God's people and God's Spirit. A good short-term mission experience will lead people to reflect on several sets of pivotal and challenging questions. (Dearborn, p.12)

What can I learn about myself?

*Seek to be open as a learner—even about yourself.*

What can I learn about God?

*Seek to understand why others believe as they do.*

What can I learn about the people of God, about the Church, about community?

*Seek to understand what contributes to a vibrant Christian community.*

What can I learn about how culture impacts the way we live and understand the gospel?  
*Seek to gain new insights into the gospel that emerge from a different culture.*

What can I learn about justice, economics, poverty, and politics?  
*Seek to explore these tough and urgent issues. Why are some poor and others rich? What does God say about this?*

What can I learn about discipleship as a follower of Christ?  
*Seek to gain one new insight into what it means to be a disciple of Christ and have one new step of faithfulness permanently incorporated into your life.*

What can I learn about a globally appropriate lifestyle?  
*Seek to discern one way you can live differently after you return in response to the needs of others in the world.*

What can I learn about my own vocation?  
*Seek to understand ways you can even more appropriately steward the gifts, talents, and time with which God has entrusted you to participate fully in God's purposes in the world.*  
*Adapted from From Mission Tourists to Global Citizens: A Preparation Workbook for Short-Term Mission Teams, Tim Dearborn*

## Packing and travel tips

Pack lightly. You will need to be able to carry your own bags, sometimes for long distances. (As a general guide, assume you'll need to walk a ½ mile carrying all of your luggage.)

Pack well – as though someone will drop your suitcase from a height of six feet.

More clothes will fit in your suitcase if they are laid flat, rolled up, and stored tightly. This will also help reduce severe wrinkling. Don't take clothes that need special care or ironing.

Put all liquids (shampoo, cologne, etc.) in Ziploc baggies to prevent them from leaking in your suitcase.

Carry an extra set of clothes and some personal items in your carry-on backpack, in case your suitcase is lost or delayed.

Don't take anything that you really don't want to lose (such as an expensive watch or jewelry).

In addition to your passport, take another form of photo ID if possible (driver's license, student ID, etc.).

Be aware of the airline's luggage size and weight limits, as well as security restrictions for carry-on items.

Clearly label all pieces of luggage with your name, address (including U.S.A.), and telephone number. You can get free labels at the ticket counter in the airport.

Don't leave your luggage unattended in the airport, or it will be removed and destroyed.

Tie a distinctive color ribbon to the handle of your luggage so it can be easily recognized at the baggage claim. As a team you might want to decide on a color so you can all recognize each other's luggage.

You might find it helpful to carry a few small snacks with you, such as granola bars or other dry snacks, particularly on long travel days.

Take your camera with you but plan to have your pictures printed when you return. Your photos will cost less and be of better quality that way. Take pictures along of yourself and/or your family to show to new friends you meet.

Be aware that electrical voltage varies from country to country. If you have to take a hair dryer or curling iron, make sure it is the correct voltage before trying to use it. Someone on the team may want to have an electric socket adapter along.

When on outreach, always listen to your outreach coordinator(s) and other "locals." They know the area and will help guide you.

If you carry a backpack with valuables in it, carry it in front of you for added safety.

Remember to pack small gifts for your hosts. Appropriate gifts include simple things from your home area such as a framed picture of your family, a calendar with local photos, etc.

## Hot climate vs. cold climate

*Foreign to Familiar* by Sarah A. Lanier

<b>Hot climate</b>	<b>Cold climate</b>
Relationship based	Task oriented
Communication must create a “feel-good” atmosphere.	Communication must provide accurate information.
A “yes” may not be an answer to your question.	A “yes” is a “yes” and a “no” is a “no.”
My behavior reflects on the whole group.	My behavior reflects on me, not on the group.
Team members expect direction from the leader.	One must know how to make one’s own decisions.
The group protects and provides for me.	I am a self-standing person.
Group oriented	Privacy oriented
Possessions are to be used freely by all.	People are expected to ask permission to borrow something.
It is not desirable to be left to oneself.	People enjoy time alone.
Hospitality is spontaneous.	Hospitality is planned ahead of time.
Host fully cares for the needs of the guests; guest pays for nothing.	Guests pay for transportation, meals, etc.
A gift is usually expected.	Hospitality is a special occasion, taking the full attention of the host.
Event oriented	Time oriented
Saving time is not as important as experiencing the moment.	Enjoy using time efficiently...will plan out their days.
Spontaneous and flexible	Expect events to start on time

## Section 5: Training sessions

### Introduction to training sessions

Mission teams that are not prepared well to enter another culture – with sensitivity and understanding – can do more harm than good. Therefore, we put together training that assists with discipleship, ministry, cultural, and relational dynamics.

Within your congregation you can plan to teach the sessions yourself or you can contact EMM to do the training for your team (see below).

#### **Doing your own training:**

You may do this teaching as a training weekend or during evenings over a period of weeks. When you plan to teach sessions, personalize them beforehand. Spend some time in study and preparation. We hope that you will keep the heart of the content, but make it your own so that you communicate with ownership and energy, seeking to impart and not merely deliver information. We desire that God touches each person present and that the training will be transformative.

If you choose a training weekend, we recommend a “retreat-type setting” where the team can get away together. The training event is designed to be a blend of teaching input, group sharing and process, and personal reflection

#### **For EMM to train your team:**

Contact EMM at 717 898-2251 or [info@emm.org](mailto:info@emm.org).

Discipleship Ministries has developed a training weekend that is designed to give you basic knowledge and understanding to successfully participate in short-term mission, and at the same time enable your team to get to know each other better.

## Training session 1 - Communion with God

### Purpose

- To understand God's love for us and longing to interact with us
- To cultivate a deeper, more intimate relationship with God
- To develop skills for hearing God's voice
- To work at listening to God individually and as a team, especially as it relates to the team's mission

### Leader preparation options

- Pursuit of God* by A.W. Tozer; Chapter 6: The Speaking Voice
- Celebration of Discipline* by Richard Foster; Chapter 2: The Discipline of Meditation
- Hearing God 30 Different Ways* by Larry Kreider

### Materials needed

- 4 blindfolds

### Introduction

1. Our highest calling is to know God (Phil. 3:8) and to love God fully (Mark 12:30).
2. Out of knowing and loving God, the ministry of knowing, loving, and serving others will follow (Mark 12:31, 1 John 4:7).
3. Service, evangelism, programs, and productivity are important but they are never goals in and of themselves. They are only important to God if they come out of communion with God; out of listening to God.

### Lesson - As we prepare for ministry, Jesus is our example

Jesus ministered out of intimacy with the Father.

- Jesus spent time in prayer before ministering. (Mark 1:35-39)
- Jesus said, "I do nothing on my own." (John 8:28)
- Jesus spoke according to his Father's authority. (John 12:49)

### God wants to speak to us

- God came into our midst in the flesh of Jesus. (John 1:1,10-14)
- My sheep listen to my voice; they know me. (John 10:4, 16, 27)
- The Lord opens my understanding to his will/words. (Isaiah 50:4,5 NLT)
- The Lord will instruct, teach, and counsel you. (Psalm 32:8)
- If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him. (Revelations 3:20)
- If you need wisdom, ask God and he will give it to you. (James 1:5)
- When you hear his voice do not harden your heart. (Hebrews 3:7)

### Barriers to hearing God's voice

- Sin, a hard heart (Isaiah 59:1,2; Hebrews 3:7-13)
- Idolatry (Romans 1:18-23)
- Satan's lies, lack of deepening roots, life's worries and allures (Matthew 13:18-22)

### Learning to listen for God's voice

Story - The Cricket

A Native American and his friend were in New York City. It was noon and the streets were filled with people, cars were honking, sirens wailing. Suddenly the Native American said, "I hear a cricket." "That's crazy," said the friend. "You couldn't possibly hear a cricket in all this deafening noise." The Native American listened carefully for a moment and then walked across the street and looked into the bushes beneath the branches. Sure enough, he located the cricket. "That's incredible," said his friend. "You must have super-human ears." "No," said the Native American. "My ears are no different than yours. It all depends on what you're listening for and what is important to you." He then pulled out some coins and dropped them on the sidewalk. Many heads within 20 feet turned to see if the money that made a noise on the pavement was theirs.

## What are you tuned into?

### Activity 1

#### Exercise in physical listening

Blindfolded listeners are directed around objects (e.g. chairs) and across a room by listening to the voice of their coach from the other side of the room.

Can the listeners keep from being distracted by other voices?

### Activity 2

#### Exercise in spiritual listening

Invite participants to sit quietly for 2 minutes and notice what they hear in the silence.

Have the group listen as someone reads Matthew 9:9-13 or Psalm 63:1-8. (One passage is about ministry, the other is about intimacy with God.)

Have the participants silently reread whichever passage you chose to read audibly.

Invite the participants to enter into the passage with all of their senses and lead them aloud through the following reflective steps:

- Notice what words or phrases stuck out to you.
- What images, thoughts, feelings, or questions came?
- Write several thoughts on a sheet of paper.
- Find a partner and share what you felt led to write.
- As a pair, join with another pair, and share your partner's reflections with the group of four.

Invite the foursomes to come back together as a group and ask, "In your group of four what did God impress upon you?"

### Voices! Voices! Who is speaking?

#### 1. Satan's voice (the world)

- Satan is the father of lies; his voice opposes God's truth. (John 8:44)
- Satan is the tempter; his voice opposes God's directives. (Matthew 4:1)
- Satan is an accuser; his voice belittles your relationship with God. (Rev. 12:10,11a)
- Satan is an impostor; his voice undermines God. (Matthew 7:15-17)
- Satan's voice is oppressive; his voice brings darkness into your mind. (Luke 11:20-26)

Recognize and shut down Satan's voice.

- Resist the devil and he will flee from you. (James 4:7)
- Proclaim God's Word, "It is written." (Matthew 4: 4,7,10)
- Hide the Word in your heart to avoid sin. (Psalm 119:11)

#### 2. The voice of others

- Is the person of the same mind as Jesus? (1 John 4:2,3)
- Honor the wisdom of godly parents. (Ephesians 6:1-3)
- Is the voice asking you to disobey God? (Acts 4:18,19)
- Are the voices around you seeking God wholeheartedly? (Acts 4:32-35)
- God's voice can be heard through others in community. (Acts 15:6, 12, 22)

In the Anabaptist tradition, we believe one way God speaks to us is through each other as we seek God together. As we listen to each other we must keep ourselves aligned to Jesus and the Bible.

#### 3. My voice

- Quiet your voice and wait for God. (Psalm 46:10)
- Lean not [only] on your own understanding. (Prov. 3:5-6)
- Consider what is in your heart; what is your motivation? (Psalm 139:23,24)
- Keep a realistic view of yourself. (Romans 12:3)
- Align your thoughts with God. (Romans 8:5,6; Romans 12:2)

- Turn your anxieties over to God. (1 Peter 5:7)
- Recognize where your desires come from. (1 Peter 2:1, Psalm 37:4)

We need to pay attention to our own thoughts and feelings while at the same time scrutinizing them under the Lordship of Jesus.

#### 4. God's voice

- All Scripture is God's voice to us and a guide for living. Meditate on Scripture; use all your senses to enter into the passage. Invite God to speak through his Word. (2 Timothy 3:16-17, Psalm 119:105)
- God speaks through the church. (Acts 15)
- God Spirit speaks into our hearts through peace or a nudging. (Romans 8:16, John 14:16-17, Acts 8:29)
- God speaks through dreams and visions. (Acts 2:17, Acts 9:10-17, Acts 10:9-16)
- God speaks through circumstances (i.e. significant words, encounters, affirmations, or happenings that seem to be pointing in a specific direction). (Acts 16:6-10)

Circumstances, visions, dreams, and nudgings are not, in and of themselves, a reliable guide to God's will. They must be tested with God's Word in the Bible.

#### Listening to God is a lifestyle

1. Listening to God is a process that takes practice and discipline - like building spiritual muscle.
2. Listening to God requires slowing down and quieting ourselves inwardly and outwardly.
3. Listening to God grows out of a desire to know God and to be obedient to God rather than succumb to the world's voices or self-centered desires and emotions.
4. Listening to God does not give us the right to use spiritual language to control or manipulate people or situations. It is important to humbly express how you sense God may be speaking.
5. As we listen for God in community (as a team) there is opportunity for great blessing and harmony. (Psalm 133)

#### Conclusion

Invite the team to sit quietly with their hands, palms down, laying in their laps.

Invite individuals to turn over to God any concerns they have.

Invite them to relinquish troubling thoughts, frustrations, anxieties, or situations to God and to surrender themselves to the God who loves each one of them completely.

After several moments of silence, invite individuals to turn their palms upward.

Invite individuals to silently express their desire to receive from God his resolution to the things they have surrendered, his love, his words, and his peace.

Invite them to open their mind and hearts to the work of the Holy Spirit.

#### Prayer after several moments of silence:

*Lord, teach us to listen. The times are noisy and our ears struggle to hear your voice in the cacophony of voices and noises in our world. Give us the spirit of the boy Samuel when he said to you, "Speak, for your servant is listening." Let us hear you speak to our hearts. Let us become sensitive to the sound of your voice, so that it may become familiar. Free us from anxieties that shut you out, and fill us with your peace.*

Invite teammates to join hands or link arms.

Invite each to pray silently for the individuals on either side of them.

#### Closing Prayer:

*As individuals we seek you for the joy of knowing you.*

*As a team we seek an anointing from you to be your ambassadors in this world.*

*May our lives reflect your mercy and righteousness.*

*May our unity and love testify to your abundant grace and bring glory to your name.*

## Training session 2 - When and how to share your testimony

### Purpose

- To provide an opportunity for individuals on the team to get to know each other better
- To establish a strong level of connectedness between team members
- To learn concise ways of sharing a personal testimony
- To value God's leading of each team member to join this mission assignment

### Leader preparation

Prepare to share your testimony as an example for the group including:

- How and why you've come to trust in Christ and commit yourself to him.
- What your life was like before believing in Christ.
- Share a specific event of growth in your relationship with Christ.
- Explain how your life is different now.

Give the "sharing your story" questions (on following page) and ask them to write answers to the questions. Tell them how many minutes they will have to share their story.

### Materials needed

A timer/buzzer to keep testimonies to a predetermined length.

### Introduction

Session 1 correlates to loving the Lord your God which is the greatest commandment. This session correlates to loving our neighbor as ourselves, which is the second greatest commandment. The Bible is written as a narrative story; God came and lived among us on earth. God wants to have relationship with us in our stories. Therefore, storytelling is very important in relating the gospel to others – listening to their stories and telling our own. Ask persons about their lives and when appropriate, go deeper with questions about their spiritual journey. Try to discover their spiritual worldview so you can relate the person's story to God's great story.

Jesus was a good listener; after listening, he would respond with an appropriate word, touch, or question to take the conversation deeper. The way we listen to others can create safe spaces for story-sharing. When our agenda is to get the "gospel message" across at all costs, we violate the listener. The goal of ministry is to recognize how Jesus wants to be your voice or touch to others.

Our testimonies give credibility to our knowing Christ, and his work in our lives.

- Jesus gave John's disciples his testimony when they questioned on John's behalf, if Jesus was the Messiah. Matthew 11:2-6
- Paul gave his testimony many times. Acts 21:19, Acts 22:1-21, 1 Cor. 9:1-2
- John testified to his experience with Jesus as he began his letter. 1 John 1:1-3

### Lesson - Sharing our lives

1. Go over the four stated purposes for this session.
2. Establish the amount of time each individual will have to share and state how the end of an individual's time will be signaled.
3. Share your testimony by modeling the content and time constraints team members are to follow.
4. Have each member share his or her testimony.

### Praying for each other

1. Thank team members for sharing and give praise to God for his work in each individual's life.
2. Divide the team into pairs or triplets and ask them to pray for one another.

### Conclusion

Pray Numbers 6:24-26: *May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; May the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace.*

## “Sharing your story” worksheet

Write concise answers to these questions in preparation for sharing a three-minute testimony.

1. What led to your decision to follow Jesus, and when did you determine to take Jesus as your Savior and Lord?
2. How are you growing as a disciple of Jesus?
3. Tell of a specific time or event when you gained a deeper spiritual understanding or experienced new growth in your relationship with Jesus.
4. What faith challenges have you faced or lifestyle changes have you made as a disciple of Jesus? How have you experienced the help of the Holy Spirit during those challenges or changes?
5. Why are you a part of this mission team and assignment?
6. What concerns do you have about the mission assignment? How can your team pray for you?

## Training session 3 - God's work around the world

### Purpose

To glimpse the big picture of God's work around the world  
To see how the church has grown statistically over the years  
To understand how your part in missions fits into the big picture

### Leader preparation

Check out "resources" at [www.uscwm.org](http://www.uscwm.org) or at <http://yccglobaloutreach.com/12.html>

### Introduction

This session is to help us as a team understand the big picture of missions and our role in joining God's mission of redeeming the world.

Begin with these mission-related questions:

1. What is the approximate population of the world? (6 billion)
2. What nation has the largest population in the world? (China)
3. How many continents are in the world (by U.S. standards)? (7)
4. True or false? More Christians have been martyred for their faith in the 20th century than in all the previous 19 centuries. (True)
5. What percentage of people in the world call themselves Christians? (33%)
6. After Christianity, what is the second largest religious group in the world? (Islam)
7. What language is spoken more than any other in the world? (Chinese – Mandarin dialect)
8. What passage of Scripture is known as the "Great Commission"? (Matthew 28:18-20)
9. In what book of the Bible is the idea of mission first referenced? (Genesis 11 and 12)

If our world was represented by a village of one hundred people, this would be the breakdown of people groups:

- 60 Asians
- 12 Europeans
- 15 from the Western Hemisphere (9 Latin Americans, 5 North Americans, 1 Oceanian)
- 13 Africans

Source: UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, "World Population Prospects: The 2000 Revision."

### Lesson - The state of world evangelism

A reality check of facts and trends concerning global Christianity today from *World Christian Trends*, William Carey Library, David Barrett & Todd Johnson):

- At a steady rate over the last 20 centuries and in all 238 countries, 70 million Christians have been martyred – killed, executed, murdered – for Christ.
- Books primarily about Jesus in today's libraries number more than 175,000 different titles in 500 languages, increasing by 4 newly-published books every day.
- 14 million converted Hindus, Buddhists, and Muslims have opted to remain within those religious contexts in order to witness for Christ as active believers in Jesus.
- From only 3 million in A.D. 1500, evangelicals have grown to 648 million worldwide, 54% being other than Anglos.
- The country with the fastest Christian expansion ever is China, now at 10,000 new converts every day.
- 40% of the church's entire global foreign mission resources are being deployed to just 10 oversaturated countries already possessing strong citizen-run home ministries.
- Annual church embezzlements by top custodians exceed the entire cost of all foreign missions worldwide.

“Evangelical Christians are the fastest growing major religious group in the world today, and it is the only one growing rapidly by conversion.” Between 1990-2000, it is estimated that 100 million people were added to the church, and most of this growth was in evangelical and charismatic churches. Christians are growing at about twice the rate of the world’s population – almost entirely due to evangelical/charismatic growth. “The actual conversion of individuals and the timing of the breakthrough for the gospel is the work of the Holy Spirit in whom we must trust, and not in our grandiose planning or clever techniques.”

–Patrick Johnstone

God’s promise to bless all the “families of the earth” (Gen. 12:3) first given to Abraham 4000 years ago is becoming a reality at a pace “you would not believe.” Although some may dispute some of the details, the overall trend is indisputable. Biblical faith is growing and spreading to the ends of the earth as never before in history.

–From *Finishing the Task* by Ralph Winter and Bruce Koch

In 1974 approximately one half of the world’s population was beyond the reach of the Church, living in unreached peoples. Today, just one third of the world’s population live in unreached peoples beyond the reach of the Church. As of 2001, 11 percent of the world’s population (648 million people) considered themselves evangelical or Bible-believing Christians.

### **Conclusion**

Discuss how your mission trip fits into the bigger picture of what God is doing in the region of the world where you are going.

End with prayers of thanksgiving for what God has been doing through history and intercede for the people of the country where you are going.

## Training session 4 - Cross-cultural understanding

### Purpose

- To understand the differences between hot and cold climate cultures
- To prepare the team to transition as smoothly as possible into a new culture with cultural sensitivity
- To understand the value of learning the language of one's geographic location
- To prepare for and understand the stages of culture shock

### Leader preparation

- Read the story of the Samaritan woman from John 4:4-42
- Become familiar with the book, *Foreign to Familiar* by Sarah A. Lanier
- Ask someone to prepare an ethnic meal for your team

### Materials needed

- Bible
- A meal ready to be served following the session
- Team member handouts on hot climate vs. cold climate from *Foreign to Familiar*

### Introduction

Jesus commanded his followers to “Go into all the world and make disciples.” Jesus also requires his followers to be countercultural to the secular cultures around them. Each of us is responding to the command “to go.” As missionaries we want to prepare ourselves in ways that limit stress and distress to ourselves and to those we hope to serve. By preparing ourselves for an unfamiliar culture we aim to honor the people we are going to serve and keep from bringing offense to Jesus and his mission.

### Lesson

Jesus, in relating to the Samaritan woman in John 4, deviated from the cultural norm of a Jewish teacher.

Have a narrator read John 4:4-42 while team members act out the various roles or have team members be the different characters and read what they say from the passage.

Reflect as a group:

- What did you notice about how Jesus approached the woman?
- What did Jesus do or not do during this encounter?
- How did the Samaritan woman respond to Jesus?
- What lessons can we learn from this story about relating cross-culturally?

### Learning from book, *Foreign to Familiar*

Pass out handouts to team members entitled “*Hot Climate vs. Cold Climate*” found in the team member handouts section.

### Summarize the preface in *Foreign to Familiar* pages 7-10

#### Locations of hot and cold climate cultures

- Hot climates: Asia, Pacific Islands, South America, Africa, Mediterranean countries, Middle East (except Jewish population of Israel).
- Cold climates: Canada, U.S., Northern Europe (Switzerland and above) Israel (the Jewish population that came from Europe), and the white population of New Zealand, Australia, southern Brazil, and South Africa.

#### Relationship-based versus task-oriented

- Hot climates are relationship-based. Let's establish a friendship before attending to the task before us.
- Cold climates are task-oriented. Get the job done and then if there is time and desire, we will build a relationship.

**Communication must create a “feel-good” atmosphere versus communication must provide accurate information.**

- Hot climates will answer in ways that promote good feelings even if not completely honest. You protect each other's feelings.
- Cold climates want accurate information aside from feelings.

Example: “Do you like this new dress on me?”

Warm climate: “Yes, it's lovely.” (Even if it's not!)

Cold climate: “Not really, it makes you look wide at the hips.”

**A “yes” may, or may not be, an answer to your question.**

- Hot climates are concerned about relationship; a person does not want to disappoint another or feel shame for not having an answer.
- Cold climates are task-oriented and want accuracy and a direct answer because that is what will accomplish the task.

Example: “How do I get to the post office?”

Warm climate: The person asked may not know but will still give directions.

Cold climate: The person asked might say, “I don't know, ask someone else.”

**A person's behavior reflects on the whole group versus a person's behavior reflects on himself or herself.**

- Hot climate individuals are taught they are part of the group. They must behave in ways that honor their family or community. They are community, everyone shares everything.
- Cold climates prize independence. Individuals are taught to take care of themselves and to defend their rights.

**Team members expect direction from their leaders versus one must know how to make one's own decisions.**

- Hot climates will depend on a leader to speak up and give the opinion of the group.
- Cold climates expect each individual to speak for him or herself.

**The group provides for me and protects me versus I am a self-standing person.**

- Hot climates believe everyone is a part of the family and helps each other.
- Cold climates believe each person should take care of him or herself.

**Group-oriented versus privacy-oriented**

- Hot climates include everyone in everything. You would never have a conversation in your own language in front of someone who can't speak it unless a translator was present. If a guest arrives at meal time they are included in the meal.
- Cold climates are more selective. Individuals will choose who to include.

**Possessions are freely used by all versus requiring permission when borrowing.**

- Hot climates say, “If I have it and you need it, take it.”
- Cold climates say, “You must ask before using my things, and I have the right to say ‘no.’”

**It is not desirable to be alone versus people enjoy time alone.**

- Hot climates are group-oriented; they would never expect someone to want to be by themselves.
- Cold climates like privacy and the opportunity to be alone.

**Hospitality is spontaneous versus hospitality is planned.**

- Hot climates expect people to stop in anytime.
- Cold climates expect people to show up when invited.

**Host fully cares for the needs of guests and guests pay for nothing versus guests pay their way.**

- Hot climates completely care for all needs of their guests. They will serve them their best and expect nothing in return.
- Cold climates often expect guests to provide for themselves.

**A gift is usually expected and unexpected guests just fit in versus hospitality is a planned occasion requiring the host's full attention.**

- Hot climate members usually take a gift and stop in unannounced.
- Cold climate hosts don't expect a gift; hospitality tends to happen on special occasions.

**Event-oriented versus time-oriented outlooks.**

- Hot climates enjoy the event and focus on relationships.
- Cold climates are careful to watch the clock and keep the event on track.

**Saving time is not as important as experiencing the moment versus wanting to use time efficiently.**

- Hot climates cherish relationships and savor the moment.
- Cold climates plan a schedule which often takes precedence over a relationship.

**Spontaneous and flexible versus starting on time and visiting happens before or after an event.**

- Hot climates go with the flow; let happen what happens.
- Cold climates take control and keep a time perspective.

## **Stages of culture shock**

### **Stage 1 - Honeymoon**

Everything is great, exciting, interesting. "This is fun!" Strange or different is appealing.

### **Stage 2 - In the pit**

Everything is the pits!

Everything is done differently and it is confusing. Why can't they do it the right way?

Emotions may include anger, irritation, or loneliness.

A critical spirit may dominate your thoughts.

This is culture shock!

Physical symptoms may include intense homesickness, fatigue, chest pains, headaches, depression, guilt, or withdrawal from the group.

### **Stage 3 - Back in the saddle**

Things begin to make sense.

You begin to get oriented and understand the reason behind the customs.

You begin to learn the language.

Self confidence along with a sense of humor returns.

### **Stage 4 - At home again**

You feel at home in your new culture.

You are able to function in the culture and enjoy the differences.

You begin to feel a sense of belonging and think about leaving with sadness and grief.

### **Stage 5 - Language learning**

Learning even a few words in the language of your hosts is an act of love and respect.

Before you arrive learn a few basic phrases such as "Good morning." "How are you?" "Thank You!"

On location use the language as much as possible. Don't be afraid to make mistakes.

## **Conclusion**

In Genesis 11 we have the story of God dispersing people through a variety of languages. It is important to celebrate the diversity of culture and language, not to conform other cultures to our own.

God's love transcends all cultures and we have the privilege of being ambassadors of his love in the ways we serve and share cross-culturally.

We look forward to the day when Revelation 7:9-10 comes true: “I saw a vast crowd, too great to count, from every nation and every tribe and people and language, standing before the throne and before the lamb...and they were shouting with a mighty shout, ‘Salvation comes from our God who sits on the throne and from the lamb!’”

**Invite the group to a time of prayer for the people of the culture they will be entering.**

### **Cross-cultural meal experience**

At the end of the cross-cultural understanding session, give these instructions:

- We will now have a meal together.
- When we enter the room where the meal is served, we will enter another culture.
- The host will speak limited English.
- As we enter the host’s culture and home, let’s conduct ourselves according to the things we have learned in this session.

### **Prearrange:**

- A host in native costume, if possible
- A meal ethnically different than typical American food
- Have the host interact with the group using a language other than English.
- The host may ask the group to sing, quote Scripture, etc.

### **Debriefing from the meal**

1. What feelings did you experience during the meal?
2. How did the cross-cultural teaching session help you during the meal?
3. In what ways did you as a team do well in this cross-cultural setting?
4. What could you have done better?
5. What could have better prepared you?

## Training session 5 - Contextualized faith sharing

### Purpose

To understand what it means to contextualize faith sharing  
To understand how the “good news” of Christ differs between cultures  
To understand the basics of worldview layers using the “cultural onion”  
To learn how to share a personal testimony in a culturally relevant way

### Leader preparation

Read the resource section called “Religion and culture preparation” for background on the people group where you are going.

### Introduction

Give the team time to discuss the following questions:

- When/where is it appropriate to wear a bathing suit? Why?
- When/where is it acceptable to call an older adult by his/her first name? Why?
- When/where is it acceptable to sing loud enough for others to hear? Why?

These questions help us get at the idea of context.

**Definition of context:** *The collective circumstances and particularities that guide perspective to a conclusion.*

The conclusion can be different based on the context.

So a bathing suit is okay at the beach but not in church.

Your culture, age, and relationship with an individual will determine how you address an older adult.

Singing in church is acceptable, but it is not acceptable during the pastor’s sermon.

### Lesson - Contextualized faith sharing

During this session we will look at “contextualized faith sharing”; how to present the gospel in terms that people understand within their culture.

**Francis Schaeffer says:** “If I had only one hour to share the gospel with a person, I would spend the first 45 minutes finding out what they believe about God and the last 15 minutes presenting Christ from that basis.”

Starting where people are at is contextualization. The first task in entering a new culture is to be a student of its ways; remember that their ways are not necessarily wrong, just different.

### Zimbabwe

“When the British preachers evangelized the Zanaki people of what is now called Zimbabwe, they did so by quoting Revelation 3:20, ‘Behold I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.’ In polite and proper British culture, when one visited someone else’s home, the door would be closed and probably locked, and the inhabitants would be inside. Therefore you knocked loudly on the front door to gain entry. In Zanaki culture, homes have no doors. To enter the home of a friend in your village you would call out loudly at the doorway. In a small community your voice would be immediately recognized and you would be invited to enter. The only people who knocked were thieves. They did not wish to be identified. Having knocked, if the thieves heard stirring inside the house, they would sneak away. If you know this about Zanaki culture when you came to preach Rev. 3:20, in which Jesus talks of himself both knocking and calling out, which would you emphasize? Because the British missionaries had no knowledge of Zanaki customs they preached that Jesus was knocking on your door – and by doing so had inadvertently made him out to be a sneaky thief. In London perhaps the idea of Jesus knocking on your door presented him a respectable, polite young man. In Zimbabwe it meant something else altogether. The message is still true; Jesus desires to have relationship with you if you would only open your life to him. The context in which that truth was presented meant a different use of metaphor and language needed to be employed to make it sensible.” (Frost)

## **Culture and worldview**

### **Example illustration:**

“On entering an auditorium to listen to a musical performance, an American looks until he finds a chair - a platform on which to perch himself. If all these platforms are occupied, he leaves because the auditorium is ‘full.’ Obviously, there are a great many places on the floor where he can sit, but this is not culturally acceptable, at least not at the performance of a symphony orchestra.

At home Americans have different kinds of platforms for sitting in the living room, at the dining table, at a desk and on the lawn. They have large platforms on which they sleep at night. When they travel abroad, their greatest fear is being caught at night without a platform in a private room, so they make hotel reservations well ahead of time and pay hundreds of dollars for a single night’s sleep. People from many parts of the world know that all one needs at night is a blanket to keep clean and warm, and a flat space – and the world is full of flat places. At the airport at three in the morning, American travelers are draped uncomfortably over chairs because they would rather be dignified than comfortable. Travelers from other parts of the world sleep soundly stretched out on the floor. Not only do Americans sit and sleep on platforms, they build their houses on them, hang them on their walls, and put fences around them to hold their children.

Why this obsession with platforms? Behind all these behavior patterns are a basic worldview assumption that floors are dirty. This explains their obsession for getting off the floor. It also explains why they keep their shoes on when they enter the house, and why the mother scolds the child when it picks a potato chip off the floor and eats it, even though the floor has just been washed.

In Japan, people believe floors are clean. They take their shoes off at the door and sleep and sit on mats on the floor. When we walk into their home with our shoes on, they feel much like we do when someone walks on our couch with their shoes on.” (Paul Hiebert)

### **Definition of culture:**

The more or less integrated systems of beliefs, feelings, and values, and their associated symbols, patterns of behavior, and products shared by a group of people. (Paul Hiebert)

**Example:** “When I moved to Wales, UK, I walked my sons to the local school. I was appalled by all the trash on the ground. So, being a conscientious American, I began to carry a bag with me and we picked up litter as we walked. A neighbor lady told me, ‘People will think you are dirty if you pick litter off the ground. We don’t do that here.’ Sometime later when we tried to have a litter pick-up event for our youth group, some parents refused to let their teens participate.

We also discovered there were American English words that didn’t crossover into the British English speaking context. For example - pants meant underwear, chips were french fries, and a theater was an operating room! A term like ‘fanny-pack’ was vulgar and completely inappropriate as I discovered one night during youth club when I asked loudly who had lost the fanny pack I found. In Britain we discovered ‘toilet’ was the correct word to use when asking for a bathroom or restroom even though it felt awkward for us to use.”

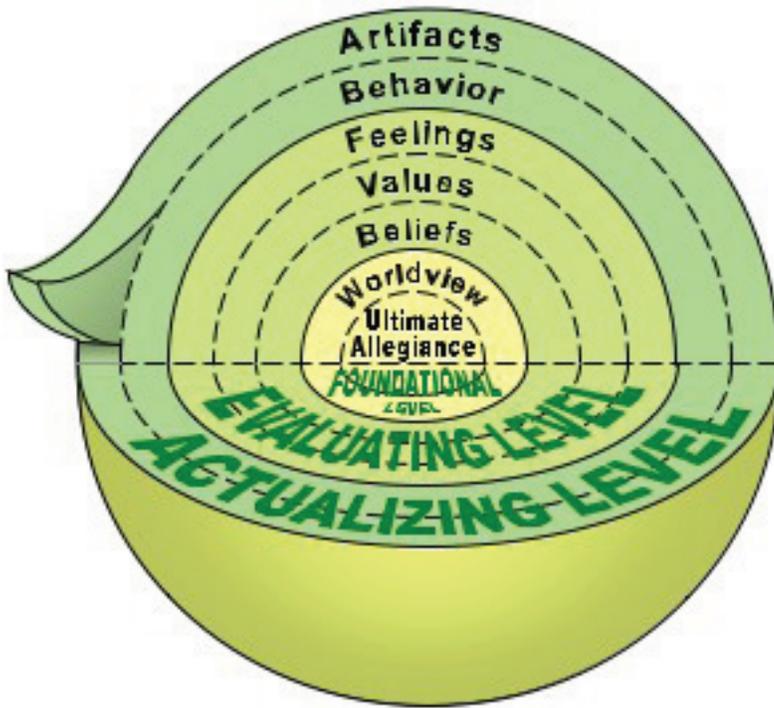
- Cheryl Hollinger, former EMM missionary

### **Question**

Ask what cultural differences others in the group may have experienced.

**Definition of worldview:** A philosophy of life; our attempt to make sense out of our existence. It contains our answers to the fundamental questions concerning the meaning of our lives. (Nicholi)

**Examples of an American worldview:** Many Americans live with the worldview that life is meant to give them happiness - so their life is about seeking pleasure. The American value of individualism has become part of our worldview and has influenced American evangelism in the way we look at salvation and God’s purpose for each individual.



**The Cultural Onion** by Eugene W. Bunkowske

According to this model, seven physical, mental, and spiritual layers organize a person's reality and life. The seven layers, from outer to inner include:

1. Artifacts (what a person collects) - physical characteristics of a person, the things or objects connected with that person.
2. Behavior (what a person does)
3. Feelings (what a person enjoys) - the emotional reactions to the experiences of everyday life (calm, angry, happy, sad, love, hate).
4. Values (what a person sees as good) - mental evaluations and conclusions about the experiences of everyday life on a scale of good to bad.
5. Beliefs (what a person believes is true) - mental evaluations and conclusions about the experiences of everyday life on a scale of true or false.
6. Worldview (what a person believes is real) - a person's basic mental perspective on what is real.
7. Ultimate allegiance (a person's grounding reality) - the beating heart, the starting point, the trigger, and grounding reality that gives basic direction to the underlying perspectives in a person's worldview.

Basic Islamic worldview assumptions:

- Allah is the all-powerful God who has great mercy for us, and therefore he has revealed his perfect will to us in the form of rules and practices that are just and right.
- God is transcendent and sovereign, so what we do does not affect God.
- God is one. Therefore it is impossible for God to have a son or to think of God as a Trinity.
- Muhammad is honored as Allah's final messenger and prophet. He is a perfect example of what it means to live in submission to the will of God as revealed in all the books of revelation.
- The Qur'an is the final revelation that clarifies all the previous revelations. Christians and Jews are the people of the former scriptures and are therefore the closest to Muslims in faith. They are to be honored and protected as long as they live in a respectful relationship to the Muslims.
- Family and community solidarity are all-important and are based on a common Islamic faith.

With this set of assumptions, it is not surprising the Muslims highly value the Qur'an, Muhammad, the Five Pillars of the Faith, and community solidarity. Their allegiance is focused on these assumptions and any perceived threat against them is considered extremely dangerous and must be destroyed at all cost.

**Contextualization within the mission context** takes on specific dynamics because it requires the presenter of the message not only to understand the original message as it came from God, but to present the message in a way that is understood in the cultural framework of the receiver.

### **The model of Jesus**

#### **Read Philippians 2:5-11**

Jesus was God, but was born into this world into a culture where he lived as a human. He learned to think and speak, experienced temptations and emotions, and followed the cultural practices of that time in order to present God's message of love and forgiveness. That message culminated in Jesus presenting himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all humanity.

In presenting the gospel we must also submit ourselves to the host culture and become one with the people we hope to reach.

### **Remember**

- Everyone does not hold to the same values.
- Often what we value cannot be tagged right or wrong, just different than another.
- We need the help of the Holy Spirit as we determine how to share the good news of Jesus in other cultures. What about God's character will be especially meaningful and connect with the host culture's values?

### **Biblical examples of contextualization**

It could be argued that the whole Bible is an example of divine contextualization. An eternal, omnipotent Spirit-God, who is above all human culture, has spoken to us in human language, using human imagery, tapping into human longings and fears. (Frost)

Paul's gospel presentation met the people where they were.

Read Acts 13:14-41; 14:11; 17:22-25

To the Jews, Paul preached about the "God of the Covenant" and used Scripture as the basis. The Gentiles were not familiar with the Scriptures. However, they still had a witness to God. They were the "Children of Creation." Paul preached to them the God of Creation, who made everything around them and wants a relationship with them.

### **Illustrated stories**

#### **Puguli people of Burkina Faso**

As people have attempted to evangelize the Puguli people, they have repeatedly encountered a reaction of detached interest – along the lines of 'What you say sounds good, but that isn't our way of doing things.' This response implies the question, 'Why should I give up the ways of my ancestors to follow a new way, even if it seems like a good way?' The bottom line is that these people are looking for a compelling reason to switch their allegiance to a new god.

Many, if not all, of the ethnic groups in Burkina Faso have one or more other ethnic groups with whom they are allowed to kid around or joke. They can make fun of the other person or of their ethnic group in general and none of this is taken seriously or personally. It is part of the way that individuals from these two ethnic groups interact; it is expected and considered normal. In fact, if one of them were to interpret something that the other says as an insult rather than as a joke, that would be abnormal! To react in anger or frustration to something said by an individual from an ethnic group with which a person has a joking relationship is believed to bring bad luck on that person (the one reacting in anger). No matter what the other says, there is an ironclad obligation to accept it all in good humor.

Members of certain clans can say pretty much anything they want to each other, knowing full well that the other person has to take it, without reacting violently or in anger. This is useful sometimes, when certain truths about an individual or a family need to be stated openly to that person or someone in his family. Someone from the

clan with whom he has a joking relationship can be found, and this person can come and “tell it to him like it is” without mincing words and there is no fear of reprisal.

There is a whole other level to this “joking” relationship that comes in under the heading of “conflict resolution.” When there is a disagreement between two Puguli people that they are unable to resolve, they can appeal to the clan with whom they have a joking relationship. The leaders of this clan will delegate someone to hear both sides of the story, and function as arbitrator or mediator between the two parties. Since this person comes as a representative of the clan with whom there is a joking relationship, anything he says is binding. Due to the simple fact that those for whom he is mediating are not allowed to react in any negative way to what he has to say, there is absolutely no discussion of his verdict. It is simply accepted, or one of the parties runs the risk of something going seriously wrong in his life.

So how does this apply to the gospel message? If Jesus could be portrayed as the representative of the joking partner who was sent to mediate in order to resolve the “dispute” between God and humanity. Humankind sinned against God, creating an irreparable rift. Nothing humankind could do was able to resolve the problem, so a mediator was brought in – Jesus Christ. He taught humankind what was necessary for him to do in order to repair the damage that was done so many thousands of years ago. From the Puguli perspective, to spurn the counsel given by this mediator would be unthinkable; he would be compelled to accept Jesus’ claim that the only way to God is through himself (Jesus).

### **Equipped to share the gospel**

*“Do not bring us the gospel as a potted plant. Bring us the seed of the gospel and plant it in our soil.” - Mr. Murthi (Heibert)*

Understand your own worldview

- What are your starting points of belief?
- What is the good news to you?
- Identify values you hold that may be different to the culture you will go to.
- Identify the character traits of God that you most identify with and then consider which ones will connect to the people you are going to serve.
- What about your testimony is likely to connect with people in your host culture?

### **Learn the culture**

People who have worked in host countries for years continuously learn new aspects of their host culture’s worldview. No one can completely understand a new culture during a short-term mission assignment, but do what you can. Research mission websites, talk to people who have been there, or find other ways to gain information about the country and its people.

### **Be ready to de-Westernize the gospel**

In every culture, Jesus has provided something that points the way to him. Every culture has been prepared by God to receive the good news of Jesus.

### **Pray and trust the Holy Spirit’s insights and leadings**

The Holy Spirit is at work before a team arrives in a host culture and will continue after the team leaves. As you pray, trust the Spirit to give words and insights for this particular time of ministry.

### **Conclusion**

Invite the team to sit in silence.

Read Psalm 19:1-4 (NLT):

*The heavens declare the glory of God. The skies display his craftsmanship.*

*Day after day they continue to speak; night after night they make him known.*

*They speak without sound or word; their voice is never heard.*

*Yet their message had gone throughout the earth, and their words to all the world.*

Pray for the team as they commit themselves to be learners throughout this mission experience. Ask for guidance and insight as the team prepares to share the good news within the host culture, that they would discover what parts of God's character are especially meaningful for people in their culture. Ask the Holy Spirit to prepare hearts to receive the gospel as good news.

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## Training session 6 - Cultural awareness and logistics

### Purpose

- To gain more understanding about the team's specific ministry
- To provide the team with understanding of local culture/context
- To go over final details of preparation
- To provide a time for questions

### Leader preparation

- Know information about the culture, country, and context where your team will be serving.
- Read the resource section called "World religion information" for background on the people group where you are going.
- If possible, line up someone with first-hand experience in the culture who can spend this session with your team. Check with EMM for contacts if needed.

Have available travel information, packing details, and a financial update.

Web resources:

- Country information and entry visa information: [www.embassyworld.com](http://www.embassyworld.com) and [www.traveldocs.com](http://www.traveldocs.com)
- Passport information and applications: <http://travel.state.gov/>
- Immunizations: [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel)

### Materials needed

A guest speaker who knows the region where you will be serving  
"Packing and travel tips" document which is found in the team members' handouts  
Information specific to your team's travel

### Introduction

As a team we cannot know up front everything we will face. But it is in our best interest and the interest of our mission to prepare for this mission experience to the best of our ability. During this session we will work on practical aspects of traveling and being in another culture.

### Lesson - Cultural awareness

(30 minutes - resource person)

Statistics of region (population, geography, religions)

Cultural understanding (religion, culture, male/female interaction)

Cultural taboos

Culture adaptation – in a location where there are hostilities towards Christians, is there a need to speak in "code" and adapt activities to protect local long-term workers? (example: "father" instead of "God," "worker" instead of "missionary," "company" instead of "church," etc.)

### Specific involvements of team

Discuss specific expectations for involvement, schedule, ministry opportunities, etc.

### Crisis contingency plan

See template at end of this session's notes and fill in according to location and information.  
Discuss what to do in an emergency situation.

### Logistics update

Passports (if international location) – make sure everyone has a passport or is in the process of getting a passport.

Immunizations – check that everyone has gotten needed immunizations.

Prayer support – remind each team member to ask persons to commit to regular prayer; names and addresses should be given to the team leader.

Fundraising update – let the team know how much money is still needed, and announce or plan any additional fund-raisers.

Travel plans:

Go over “Packing and Travel Tips” in team members’ handouts

Airline restrictions – weight and size allowances for baggage and carry-on

Items needed for outreach

Dress guidelines

## **Conclusion**

Allow plenty of time for questions.

Invite the team to consider the variety of ways they have prepared individually and as a team for this trip.

Remind them of the people who have committed to this mission through their finances and prayers.

And remind them that it is God who ultimately will lead the team and oversee the outcome of this time of mission.

Read Psalm 32:8 (NIV):

*“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you.”*

I Corinthians 3:7-9a (NIV):

*“So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes all things grow. The person who plants and the person who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor. For we are God’s fellow workers...”*

Spend time in prayers of thanksgiving and intercession.

**CONTINGENCY PLAN** for (country, location within a country):

Date:

**Description of team** (including names, addresses, phone numbers, birthdays, blood types, and passport numbers):

### **Communication system before and during a crisis**

Names and numbers of persons as contacts outside the region:

What defines a missing person? (How many hours will you reasonably wait before going into action?)

Names and numbers of all who need to be notified about what is happening and in what order:

List the communication options cell phone, radio, e-mail, etc.:

In the case of a death, names and numbers of persons/agencies that must be notified on the field:

**How a decision will be made about an evacuation for political unrest or other reasons:**

Names and numbers of persons to get counsel from in the decision (local leaders, other expatriates serving with NGOs, national newspapers, international news, embassy recommendations, supervisors in U.S.):

Who is responsible to gather information on an on going basis in unstable environments and will provide information regarding the decision:

**Plan of evacuation**

Evacuation routes to a safe location:

Safe locations to be considered:

Means of transportation and destination (car, plane, train, taxi, etc):

Air route options:

Land route options:

Persons who are open to evacuation by military means:

Priority will be given to whom if choices need to be made:

If team or family member gets separated from the rest, what is the agreed-upon meeting place with pertinent information:

## Training session 7 - Christlike relationships

### Purpose

- To learn how to maintain Christlike relationships within our team and beyond
- To identify the 4 pillars of a relationship
- To identify 5 pressure points within relationship
- To identify 5 action steps to take to work through pressure points
- To identify 4 decision-making styles

### Leader preparation

Reflect on what you've learned about your own relationships

### Materials needed

Bible

### Introduction

God wills that our lives reflect Christ's character in all of our relationships. To reflect Christ, we need to be aware of potential pressure points in relationships and how to deal with pressure when it arises. We also need to be aware of decision-making styles and how they impact relationships.

### Lesson

#### Four pillars of a relationship

(10 minutes)

Read John 13:34-35. *Jesus said, "A new command I give you; love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."*

What happens to a table with only three legs? Discuss what would make the table more stable and useful.

Relationships have four pillars...and all pillars are necessary for a sturdy relationship, just as four legs are necessary for a table to be strong.

#### Love

- Have the team read 1 Corinthians 13.
- Humans have a basic need for safety, security, support, sense of belonging, care, and acceptance.

#### Trust

- Some people find it easy to trust, and others find it difficult.
- Trust involves taking a risk.

#### Respect

- Respect is recognizing and acknowledging the other person's worth or value.
- This also requires that you honor and respect yourself. We are "God's workmanship." Read Ephesians 2:10.

#### Understanding

- You understand others by seeing life from their perspective.
- Involves a tremendous amount of communication, which includes asking, sharing, and listening.

### Relationship pressure points and action steps

#### Personality conflicts

Remember: You chose to be part of this team... However, you didn't choose the other people on the team.

Example: It is easy to get along with people who value what we value and think like we think, but what happens when we get on teams with someone whose outlook and expressions are different than ours? God has a way of bringing challenging personality types into our lives. Is God trying to teach us something?

Story: At age 18, Jenny thought she could get along with everyone. But one day she ended up on a team with a guy she couldn't seem to understand. He said things just to get a reaction from Jenny. He knew the topics Jenny had strong opinions about, and then he would take the opposing side just to irritate her. If Jenny said "left" - he said, "right." It seemed like they could not agree on anything. After four months Jenny was grateful to be "rid" of this guy. Two years later, Jenny ended up on another team with different people, but one teammate had the same personality as the annoying guy on the first team. Throughout her life Jenny continued to meet up with this challenging personality type. Jenny never learned to be best friends with him or her, but she learned how to get along with that personality. She came to accept that these individuals were not bad, just different from her. She stopped trying to challenge and change their personalities.

Action: Ask God to help you to appreciate the personalities that affect you in a negative way.

### **Projection**

Projection is when an individual's words or actions remind us of another person we struggled with in the past or present. We unconsciously begin to "project" this on the person which can build unnecessary walls.

Story: Nineteen-year-old Kayla was delighted to finally be away from her overbearing father. For 19 years she had put up with his demands, his never allowing her to be herself. Kayla felt the creative side of her was pushed down by her father's unrealistic expectations of her. Then an opportunity arose for her to go overseas with a missions team for an entire year. Kayla jumped at the chance for freedom. She joined the team and was excited to finally be able to do whatever she wanted in whatever way she wanted to do it.

Jordan was a bit apprehensive about leading a team overseas for one year but decided that he would give it a try. His home life had been rough, especially with his older sister. She was always trying to do her own thing and wanted Jordan to be like her. She constantly challenged his life and decisions. The older sister's behavior made Jordan resistive to her, so he often chose to do the opposite of what she wanted.

Jordan and Kayla ended up on the same team. Within days Jordan was totally frustrated. Every time he told his team what to do, Kayla would challenge him, making it clear she thought it should be done a different way. Kayla reminded Jordan so much of his sister. And Jordan reminded Kayla of her father. The two could not get past their projections. Every situation that arose was difficult for them because they were never able to look at each other as people different from Kayla's father or Jordan's sister. Their team had to terminate early due to their inability to love and accept each other as Kayla and Jordan, rather than who they reminded each other of.

Action: Look at your relationships, especially ones you are struggling with, and ask yourself the question, "Does this person remind me of someone else?" If so, commit yourself to love and accept the person as he or she is.

### **Irritating habits/mannerisms**

Individuals on your team may have a habit or mannerism that bugs you. This could be how he or she talks, eats, dresses, cares for him or herself, etc.

Story: Rachel and Jenna shared a room during a short-term missions stint. They also had to share a bed. Rachel was "messy" and Jenna was "tidy." Rachel spread her stuff all over the room while Jenna tried to keep things neat and orderly. When Jenna had enough of Rachel's mess, she would pile all of Rachel's stuff on her half of the bed hoping Rachel would get the point. Rachel would simply throw all the stuff on the floor and crawl in which infuriated Jenna. When the short-term missions stint was over, Jenna didn't care if she ever saw Rachel again. But sometime later they ended up at the same college and started hanging out together. Jenna discovered that Rachel was a lot of fun. This was something Jenna hadn't realized during the missions stint because she had been so consumed with Rachel's irritating habit of being messy.

Action: Ask God to help you differentiate between a habit and a person. Don't let an irritating habit/mannerism stand in the way of being friends.

## Expectations

When one person has a certain expectation in mind and another person has a different expectation, and they don't talk about the discomfort being felt, relationships begin to get stressed.

Example: You think you know what you will be doing on outreach. You have high expectations of yourself and your team. But the reality is that when you arrive, you might not do anything you thought you were going to do. How will you respond?

Action: Ask yourself: "Are my expectations different from reality?" Release those unmet expectations and disappointments to Jesus and ask him to replace it with peace.

## Receiving offenses

One of the greatest obstacles to relationships and Christian growth is receiving offenses and holding onto them.

Story: Steve and Nate were good friends in high school. In their senior year Nate began to notice their friendship was changing. Steve no longer seemed to care about Nate. In fact, Steve began spreading untrue rumors about Nate that cost Nate a number of friends. Nate could never figure out why Steve had suddenly turned on him. After graduation, Steve and Nate parted ways without even a goodbye. Their friendship no longer existed. Nate went off to a Bible college. In a class one day he learned about the importance of forgiveness and the need to forgive when you feel wronged. Nate had been hurt by Steve and had nursed those offenses. Bitterness had grown. Although Nate couldn't put his finger on what had caused the relationship to go bad, he was able to admit that he had played a part in it. So Nate contacted Steve and simply accepted responsibility for his part in their relationship going sour. He asked Steve to forgive him. Steve never asked Nate for forgiveness and never told him why he spread rumors, but Nate was able to live with a new freedom because he had released the offense.

Action:

- Identify the offense.
- Is it an issue I need to personally deal with and settle in my own heart without speaking to another person?
- Is it an issue that merits confronting another person? If so, follow the order as outlined in Matthew 18:15-17.
- Any confrontations must be done in love.
- Be willing to accept responsibility for your part in the matter.
- Don't be defensive.
- Be willing to release forgiveness to the person and pray a blessing upon them. Commit to moving on in God's grace.

## Decision-making styles

(taken from Mervin Charles' *Decision Making Styles*)

There are different ways to make a decision. The team leader will hopefully use all of these styles during outreach. As a team, you need to understand the different styles so that you can recognize the style being used and work alongside the leader. Understanding these styles will hopefully help to dissipate some potential pressure points within your relationships.

### Telling

- Leader makes a decision.
- Leader instructs and informs others about the decision he or she has made.

Reasons for using this style:

Time is of the essence

Priorities and non-negotiable values must be communicated

Example: You are on outreach and the church service is starting in 5 minutes. The pastor just informed your leader that your team is responsible for leading worship. Your leader will quickly assign someone to get the guitar, another person to pick three songs, another person to lead in prayer, and another to pick a Scripture to read. The leader simply tells the team what to do because there isn't time to do it any other way.

### Seeking counsel

- Leader seeks counsel from others before a decision is made.
- Leader makes the decision.
- Leader informs and instructs others about the decision that has been made.

Reasons for using this style:

Need for high quality calls for the wisdom of counsel

Time is a factor, but with less urgency

The leader wants advice before deciding

Example: Your team has been given a day off to go sightseeing. The leader asks each team member what he or she would like to do on the day off. The leader also asks the local pastor where he would suggest the team spends the day. The team leader then takes all information into consideration before making a final decision. The team leader then tells the team what he/she decided.

### Seeking consensus

- Leader extends his or her realm of authority for decision making to include specific others, committing to a corporate rather than an individual decision.
- This group prays together and communicates information with each other.
- They reach a consensus.
- Leader informs and instructs others about the decision that has been made.

Reason for using this style:

Commitment of others is essential to carry out the decision

Wisdom and creativity from an interactive process is desired

Time will not dictate a premature decision

Example: Your team has been asked to teach vacation Bible school for a week. The leader gathers the team, and you spend time praying about VBS. As a team you decide who will teach the lesson, who will do the craft, who will teach the memory verse. Each team member indicates which skill he/she feels most qualified to contribute. The meeting continues until everyone agrees with the VBS plan. The leader then goes back to the pastor and tells him who will be leading each part of VBS. All team members feel some ownership in VBS because they were part of the process of deciding their involvement.

### Conclusion

- Challenge participants to ask the Lord to show them any areas where they have been hurt or need to take action in regard to decision making in their own lives.
- Break into pairs - have members within each pair share any area of healing they would like to receive prayer for, and spend time in prayer.
- Also encourage each pair to pray for the team leader(s) and any leader(s) they will relate to in their place of service.

Close with Ephesians 4:1b-5 NLT

*“Lead a life worthy of your calling for you have been called by God. Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowances for each other's faults because of your love. Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father, who is over all and in all and living through all.*”

## Training session 8 - Walking in the Spirit

### Purpose

To understand the role, ministry, and nature of the Holy Spirit in order to walk in the fullness of God's plan and purposes.

To learn how to walk in the Spirit and be empowered in gifts of ministry to do all that God calls us to.

### Leader preparation

Mennonite Confession of Faith Summary on the Holy Spirit, downloadable for free at [www.mennolink.org/doc/cof/art.3.html](http://www.mennolink.org/doc/cof/art.3.html) (cannot photocopy without permission).

### Materials needed

Bible

### Lesson - The Holy Spirit's activity in the Old and New Testaments

Have someone read Genesis 1:1-2; I Samuel 16:13; and Zechariah 4:6.

Discuss the role of the Holy Spirit seen in the OT through these and other passages. What is the Holy Spirit doing?

Have volunteers read these New Testament passages. Have the group list the different words used to describe how the Holy Spirit is active in these passages and what accompanied the Holy Spirit's action:

Luke 2:25-27; 3:16, 21-22; 4:1, 14, 18-21

### The role, ministry, and nature of the Holy Spirit

The role and ministry of the Holy Spirit

Read John 14:16-17a, 26; John 16:7-15; Romans 15:13

Observe the role of the Holy Spirit (Counselor, Teacher, Reminder of what Jesus said, Comforter, Guide, Sanctifier).

Observe the ministry of the Holy Spirit (leads us into truth, convicts of sin, empowers us for ministry, endows us with spiritual gifts, and draws persons to the Father).

### Four tests for walking in the Spirit

"As I consider this [attitude, decision, action, etc.]..."

- Does it reflect the character of the Father? (Exodus 34:5-7)
- Compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, forgiving of wickedness, rebellion and sin
- Does it demonstrate the nature of the Son? (Philippians 2:5-11)
- No grasping or controlling, Jesus emptied himself, He was servant of all, he humbled himself, and was obedient to the point of death
- Does it bear the fruit of the Spirit? (Galatians 5:22,23)
- Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control
- Does it embody the wisdom from above? (James 3:17)
- Pure, peace-loving, considerate, submissive (willing to yield to reason), full of mercy and good fruits, impartial, and sincere

### Walking in the Spirit: Empowered for ministry and mission

Special abilities given - The first parts of both 1 Corinthians 12 and 1 Corinthians 14 describes "the special abilities the Holy Spirit gives to each of us." These are imparted to us by the Holy Spirit. They are different for different people. These are what we commonly know as "spiritual gifts."

- Spiritual gifts are given to us as a means of helping the entire church. (1 Cor. 12:7)
- The nine gifts in 1 Cor. 12 include: word of wisdom, word of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, miraculous powers, prophecy, discerning spirits, tongues, interpretation of tongues.
- We are told to desire the spiritual gifts while recognizing that love is the greatest. (1 Cor. 12:31, 13:1-13, 14:1)

- The gift of prophecy receives special emphasis: the ability to speak the words of God by the power of the Spirit to help others grow in the Lord and to build them up. (1 Cor. 14:1-5)

## Conclusion

As we open ourselves to the Holy Spirit and are given spiritual gifts, God works through us to enable others to come to know him! The Spirit working through us can do so much more than what we can do of our own strength.

[Note: we also have a choice in how we yield ourselves to the Holy Spirit. It goes back to the nature of the Holy Spirit as gentle. The Spirit never forces but is ready to flow through to the extent that we are willing to yield.]

Example: Analogy of the caterpillar. We try so hard to develop our own character, like the caterpillar with his many legs moving along, trying to eat and grow. But when the caterpillar actually spins a cocoon and “lets go” of control and submits himself to the Creator, transformation happens. When we yield a part of ourselves to the Holy Spirit’s control, it’s no longer a chore of walking with many legs: it’s like the freedom of flying.

Being filled with the Spirit is more about...

- the Giver than the gifts
- mission than personal pleasure
- ministry than emotion

When the Holy Spirit fills us, we become:

- People-centered – move from an inward self-focus to an “others-centered” focus
- Action-oriented – we resist the urge to get stuck at theory and instead move toward practice
- Transformational – Isaiah 61:1-3

## Ministry time

Perhaps play a CD of Christian music or have someone quietly play on a guitar.

Can we now open our hearts now to receive the Holy Spirit afresh for the mission and ministry he is calling us to? Let’s open our hearts to receive the Holy Spirit in whatever way God knows we need.

Ideas: Praying in small groups, a few leaders praying for and laying hands on the participants, corporate prayer asking for God to move afresh among you, openness to prophetic words God may want to speak. Enable people to sit and be still in the presence of God and to allow the Holy Spirit to move and prepare them for their mission and ministry ahead.

## End notes

Credit for material on “Four tests”: Don Riker, from YES training on “Walking in the Spirit” and “Holy Spirit Empowerment.” July 2003, mail@ttwm.org.

Credit for material on “When the Holy Spirit fills us, we become”: from message by Pastor Dave Engbrecht.

## Training session 9 - Biblical perspective on missions

### Purpose

To catch a vision of God's heart for the nations

To understand the good news of the gospel through Jesus Christ and that God is a God of relationship who desires to have representatives around his throne "from every nation, tribe, people, and language." (Rev. 7:9)

To see the Bible as one book that reveals God's global purpose to bring all peoples into a relationship with his Son, Jesus Christ

To understand that we are blessed to be a blessing

### Introduction

You may want to read Psalm 96 or Psalm 67 together at the beginning of this session.

### Lesson

What is the good news?

Two central themes in Scripture:

**That Jesus died for our sins...** sometimes called "The top line theme/blessing"

Romans 4:25

*He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.*

**That Jesus will bless ALL nations...** sometimes called "The bottom line theme/blessing"

Luke 24:46-47

*He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name TO ALL NATIONS, beginning in Jerusalem."*

Galatians 3:8

*The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you."*

### Outline of the Bible

Introduction - Genesis 1-11

Story of the missionary God - Genesis 12 - Jude

Conclusion - Revelation

Genesis 12:1-3 (NIV)

*The Lord had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you.*

*"I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."*

Genesis 12 is the hinge point of the Bible. The end of Genesis 11 lists what? NATIONS. How many? 70 (a significant number later in Jesus' ministry). God refers to these nations in Genesis 12 when he calls out Abraham with his new name, "the father of many." God repeatedly told Abraham and his descendants, that "through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed. . ." (Gen. 18:18, 22:18, 26:4, 28:14; Psalm 72:17)

The Covenant (Promise of Gen.12)

God's desire to bless Abraham (Israel)

"I will bless you..."

God's desire to bless all nations

"You will be a blessing...and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

Read Psalm 46:10. We all know well the first part, “Be still and know that I am God” but what about the rest of the verse “I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.” The mathematical formula is God’s desire to bless Israel is equal to God’s desire to bless all nations.

When God chose Abraham and the nation of Israel, it was so that they would be a witness and testimony to the other nations of the awesome universal God, whose longing is for all people to come into relationship with him.

Matthew 5:14-16

*“You are the light of the world. A city 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 glorify your Father in heaven.”*

The same is true in the New Testament. We are to let our light so shine before others that they see our good deeds and praise our Father in heaven. This greatly affects our lives – how we live, what we think about our own country, and how we pray.

Illustration:

During the time of the Iranian hostage crisis back in 1980, Greg Livingstone was asked to give a “missions minute” at a large evangelical church. Since he had only one minute to speak, he decided to ask them only two questions. The first one was, “How many of you are praying for the 52 Americans hostages being held in Iran?” Four thousand people immediately raised their hands. And then he said, “Wow, that’s great! Now, let me ask you another question... How many of you are praying for the 42 million Iranians held hostage to Islam?” Four hands slowly went up. He said, “Only four people? What, are you Americans first and Christians second? I thought this was a Bible-believing church!” And then he sat down. (Story from Bob Sjogren, *Cat and Dog Theology*, p.62.)

Let’s look into some more Scriptures to see what is on God’s heart.

Psalm 22:27-28

*All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations will bow down before him, for dominion belongs to the Lord and he rules over the nations.*

Malachi 1:11 (NIV)

*My name will be great among the nations, from the rising to the setting of the sun...In every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to my Name, because my Name will be great among the nations,” says the Lord Almighty.*

Matthew 16:18b (NIV)

*Jesus said, “...I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.”*

Matthew 24:14 (NIV)

*And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.*

Matthew 28:18-20

*Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

Colossians 1:6 (NLT)

*This same good news that came to you is going out all over the world. It is changing lives everywhere, just as it changed yours that very first day you heard and understood the truth about God’s great kindness to sinners.*

Revelation 5:9

*And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation."*

Revelation 7:9

*After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.*

## **Conclusion**

Habakkuk 2:14 (NIV)

*For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.*

## Training session 10 - Prayer in missions

### Purpose

To encourage development of personal prayer life  
To lay a foundation for effective intercession specifically for outreach location  
To explain prayer walking and its benefits for advancing the kingdom

### Leader preparation

Reflection on own prayer life

### Materials needed

Bible  
Music for prayer time

### Lesson

#### Prayer begins with relationship

Have people read the following verses (one right after the other): John 3:16-17, 1:12-13; Romans 8:15-17; 1 John 3:1-3; Ephesians 1:3-8; Hebrews 12:22-24, 10:19-23

Briefly explain the progression of events shown by these verses, which enables us to come to prayer with great confidence, as sons and daughters of our loving Father.

Example: God looked down on the world, loved us (John 3:16) so much that he gave what was most precious to him, his Son, to die for us, pay our penalty, so we could draw near to God without fear. As we receive his Son (John 1:12-13), we get to become sons and daughters of our loving heavenly Father. We don't have to be slaves (Rom. 8:15) anymore – we're beloved members of his family! (1 John 3:1-3) We're blessed (Eph. 1:3-8) and invited to enter fully into this amazing God covenant (Heb. 12:22-24) with confidence in our Lord, who knows us and understands us (Heb. 4:15-16). We are invited to draw near to God in an ever-deepening, loving relationship for all eternity because of Christ shedding his blood in our place (Heb. 10:19-23). What an awesome God! What an awesome love!

Share personal testimony if that will help to explain it.

Give a brief illustration of how children come to their earthly father (when there's a warm and loving relationship between them).

The foundation and launching point of prayer is a living, vital relationship with our Father in heaven through his son Jesus Christ as we are helped by the Holy Spirit.

#### Intercession/prayer for outreach

First, focus on the Lord and worship him through song or Scripture, keeping Jesus at the center and resisting distractions. Open your heart to the Holy Spirit, and listen as to whether you need to confess and repent of any sin. Then, ask God to show you how to pray (Romans 8:26-27). Believe that God has a heart for every person (2 Peter 3:9).

Pray specifically (ex. Paul's prayer in Colossians 1:9-14); pray using Scripture that comes to mind (Hebrews 4:12); pray in faith, surrendering your will to God's will (Mark 14:36); and pray with understanding of the spiritual battle (Ephesians 6:10-18).

Additional verses addressing this topic: John 17:6-26, Galatians 6:2, and Ephesians 6:18.

#### Spend time in intercession for outreach location

- Refresh your memory on what you know of the outreach location.
- Spend time purposely putting on the spiritual armor as described in Ephesians 6:10-18.

- Explain that this is not something that is to be ritualistic, but that in the prayerful “putting on” of the spiritual armor, we’re reminded that we have a real enemy even as we have a wonderful “commander-in-chief” who is also our loving heavenly Father.
- Begin prayer by exalting the Lord and asking for the Spirit’s guidance.
- Encourage everyone to pray.
- Give some space for quiet listening, either throughout or just at the end.
- Close the time of prayer.

Feedback: Do I need more information about the outreach location to pray more effectively? What did I sense the Lord was doing in this time of intercession?

### **Introduce prayer walking**

Praying onsite with insight. Introduce this as one way of interceding:

#### **1. For a specific location**

- Particular street or neighborhood
- Capital of a nation (symbolically prayer walking on behalf of whole nation)

#### **2. Intentional and strategic**

- Example 1: Prayer walking around an area that is known for heavy drug trafficking. Praying God would break strongholds of addiction and abuse and bring freedom for captives.
- Example 2: Praying throughout the city streets of the capital of a nation that has been closed to the gospel. “God, open the spiritual eyes of this nation. Bless the government with leaders who are open to knowing you.”

### **Conclusion**

Encourage team members to continue to be in prayer for the mission trip and for the Holy Spirit to be preparing those whom they will encounter.

## Section 6: Team leader devotional guide

### Introduction to onsite devotional guide

This leader's guide is designed to help you lead team devotional sessions onsite and debriefing sessions. The purpose is for your team to get the most possible out of their short-term mission experience as they continue to study the Word and reflect together on what God is teaching them during this time. Outlined on the following pages are ten devotional sessions and three debrief/reflection sessions. (We recommend that the first debrief session be done at the end of your time on-field.)

The central theme of the onsite sessions is to "Watch for God at work." Help your team keep focused on the fact that this is God's mission. Your task is to find out what God is doing in your host country, through your brothers and sisters in Christ, and to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit as you become part of the community.

We suggest that your team meet once each day for approximately 30 minutes. Ten days' worth of devotionals, reflection, and journaling are included.

If your trip is shorter than 10 days, and you will not have time to do each of the devotional sessions, you'll need to adapt to meet the needs of your group. [We strongly recommend that every team cover sessions 2, 4, 9, 10, and the first debrief session while on outreach.]

#### **Tips/suggestions for leading team sessions:**

- Involve your team members in preparing and leading the worship time.
- Start and end the day with prayer.
- Gather the team for devotional and reflection time when they are rested and fresh. Many teams meet in the morning just after breakfast, and before the work or excursion begins. Meeting in the evening is great for reflecting on the day's events but keep in mind that crankiness increases and patience decreases when folks are exhausted at the end of a long day.
- It is helpful for your host and for your team if you can involve people from your host church in some of your devotional times.
- Consider setting aside different kinds of reflection times: individual time alone with God, small group or large group worship and reflection times, and silent reflection.

## Team session schedule

The guide includes ten devotional sessions and three debriefing sessions. If your trip is shorter than 10 days, select the themes that are best suited for your particular group. \*We strongly recommend that every team cover the themes in Days 2, 4, 9, and 10, and well as the first debrief session, while on outreach.

Day	Theme
1.	Praise God for bringing us here!
2.	*Watch for God at work!
3.	Loving one another
4.	*Humble thyself in the sight of the Lord
5.	Served and serving
6.	Prayer power
7.	God is our refuge and strength
8.	In the power of the Spirit
9.	*I thank my God every time I remember you
10.	*It's all about you, Lord!
Debriefing sessions	
1. (on field)	*Debriefing and "de-griefing"
2.	Sharing our story
3.	Putting feet on our faith

## Devotional guide session 1 - Praise God for bringing us here

Note: Ask team members to bring their Bibles to each devotional/reflection session.

### Worship

Sing songs of praise together.

### Devotional – Thank you, Lord

- Introduce the devotional by asking the team to recall what Moses, Miriam, Aaron, and all the other Israelites did when they made it safely across the Red Sea. [Genesis 15 – they sang a song of praise and thanksgiving to God, recalling all that God had done to guide and deliver them.]
- What a great model! We need to celebrate God’s faithfulness in bringing us to this place.
- Ask someone to read Lamentations 3:22-23 and 1 Corinthians 1:9.
- Lead a brief time of storytelling about how you experienced God’s care and protection on this journey.

### Prayer

Gather in a circle and do “popcorn prayer.” Ask team members to give one-sentence praises to God for bringing you to this place. You need not go around the circle; just pray as the Spirit leads.

### Reflect and take action

- Ask the team to observe the new culture, ask why they do things, and listen as they enter the new culture.
- Observe – in a spirit of openness; suspend judgment.
- Ask why – be a learner. For example, you might say, “I’d like to learn about your culture. Please help me understand why you \_\_\_\_\_.”
- Listen – really, really listen.

### Notes on keeping healthy

Be sure to drink lots of non-caffeinated fluids throughout the day. This will help with jet lag and prevent dehydration. Check to make sure that water is boiled, bottled, or treated before drinking.

### Prayer

Pray for a spirit of openness as you learn about what God is doing in this place.

Pray that God would use each member of your team to bless someone in this place.

## Devotional guide session 2 - Watch for God at work

### Worship

Sing together. If possible, sing a song in the language of the country. Ask your hosts if they could come and teach you another song in their language.

### Prayer

Our Father in heaven, reveal who you are.

Set the world right; Do what's best – as above, so below.

Keep us alive with three square meals.

Keep us forgiven with you and forgiving others.

Keep us safe from ourselves and the Devil.

You're in charge! You can do anything you want!

You're ablaze in beauty! Yes. Yes. Yes.

(The Lord's Prayer from *The Message*)

### Devotional – Jesus debriefs with his disciples

Read Mark 6:6b –13

- Note that Jesus spent time with the disciples and they had time to learn from him. Then he sent them out among the people to proclaim the kingly reign of God. Perhaps we could think of this as the very first short-term mission trip!
- What might Jesus have been thinking as he watched them walk down the road? [Example: “Blessings on you, dear friends. I wonder if you will do as I instructed or will just do your own thing and forget why you were sent?”]
- What might the disciples have been thinking and feeling? [Example: “Wow! This is exciting!” or “Wow! This is scary!”]

Read Mark 6:30-31

- What did Jesus do with the disciples when they returned? [He helped them to debrief their experience!]
- Each day you will have an opportunity to gather together just like the disciples, taking time to report and reflect on what has happened. It will also be a brief time of retreat and rest, especially on days where your heart is wounded or your spirit is overwhelmed.

### Reflect and take action

Team assignment: “Watch for God at work” each day. Look for ways that you see God's hand in what is happening around the world or in you, and be prepared to share it with the rest of the team.

- Did you see evidence of God's protection or care?
- How did God answer prayer today?
- What is God doing in the lives of your hosts?
- Did you see evidence of God's blessing, guidance, or strength?

### Notes on courtesy and keeping healthy

- Graciously accept the hospitality of your hosts. Try food prepared for you – even if it looks unappetizing to your eyes. Remember, they aren't offering you anything that they wouldn't eat.
- If you buy cooked food from street vendors, be sure that you buy it “fresh from the fire,” not after it has been sitting in the hot sun for an hour.

### Prayer

## Devotional guide session 3 - Loving one another

### Worship

#### Devotional – Be one in spirit

Read Philippians 2:1-4.

- Divide the verses into the number of people on the team. Write each phrase on a separate piece of paper and let team members draw them from a hat. Then ask the team to put together the verses in the right order by arranging themselves in a circle holding their slip of paper.
- Ask the group to briefly share how they plan to apply these verses in practical ways during the trip.

### Prayer

Sing a song of unity as your prayer. (Examples: “Bind us together,” “We are one in the Spirit.”)

### Reflect and take action

We’ve been “watching for God at work.” Take time to share with one another about how you’ve seen God’s hand in what is happening around and in you.

- How did you see God working through your hosts?
- How did God use another team member to encourage you?
- How has God used this experience to challenge you or break your heart?

### Notes on courtesy and grace

- Your team may be deeply moved by the hospitality offered by your hosts. Encourage each other to accept such gifts of love with grace.
- Ask permission before taking pictures.
- When taking pictures of your hosts and others, try to include team members in the photo. This helps reduce the feeling of being “on parade.”

### Prayer

- Pray for a spirit of unity, so that others will see Christ as they observe your team.
- Pray for open eyes and an open heart as you look for evidence of God at work.
- Close with a prayer-song. (“Open Our Eyes, Lord,” “Our God is an Awesome God.”)

## Devotional guide session 4 - Humble thyself in the sight of the Lord

### Worship

Sing together. (Suggestions: “Spirit of the Living God,” “Humble Thyself in the Sight of the Lord,” “Father, I adore You.”)

### Prayer

Praise God for the gift of this day.

Tell God about how your heart has been broken or filled with joy.

### Devotional – Walk humbly with thy God

- Ask volunteers to read Philippians 2:5-7; James 4:10; and Micah 6:8.
- Ask team members to share stories of how they have seen their hosts demonstrate a humble spirit.

### Reflect and take action

- Review your team covenant. In what ways is your team doing well? What practical suggestions does the team have for improvement? You may want to divide your team into smaller groups to discuss this, and report back to the group in a “6 o’clock news” format.
- Attitude check: If our hosts could describe our team’s attitude in one word, which one would it most likely be? (Demanding, joyful, grumpy, humble, bossy, flexible, caring, friendly, rude, etc.)
- Is there anything we need to do differently as far as our attitude is concerned?
- There’s nothing like cultural or language bloopers to teach you humility! Ask one or two members to share: “My most embarrassing/funny moment.”

### Notes on courtesy and grace

- How is your team doing with regard to respecting local customs and taboos? Are team members dressing appropriately?
- Are you all referring to people with proper honor/respect such as “Senor, Senora, Brother, Sister,” or whatever is expected in the culture?

### Prayer

## Devotional guide session 5 - Serving and being served

### Worship

#### Devotional – Be a servant

- Read Mark 9:35 and Luke 22:24-26.
- What lessons can we learn from these Scripture passages about being a servant?
- When is it most difficult for you to have the attitude of a servant? [Example: when I am sure that I am right; when I am tired or hungry.]
- Jesus asks all believers to be servants. That means sometimes your hosts will serve you. Will this be difficult for you? How will you react to such an honor?

#### Reflect

We've been watching for God at work!

- How has God been blessing our team?
- How is God using us to serve and bless others?

#### Note on courtesy and grace

- Talking in a louder voice generally does not help people understand you. Avoid using derogatory terms even among yourselves (e.g. referring to the local currency as “funny money,” etc.).

### Prayer

## Devotional guide session 6 - Prayer power

Note: Before this session, ask your hosts (national partners/missionaries) how you can best pray for them.

### Worship

Learn another song in the language of your host country. Sing other praise and worship songs.

### Devotional – Keep on praying

- Depending on the size of your group, divide into small groups. Pass out slips of paper with the following Scripture passages on them: Matthew 7:7, Luke 18:1-8, Ephesians 6:18, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, James 5:13-16
- Have the team do “Scripture charades.” Ask each person or small group to identify the main point(s) from their passage about prayer and be ready to act it out for the larger group.
- As the small groups present their charades, record the main points about prayer on a blackboard or piece of paper so the whole group can see.

Main points might include:

- Ask, seek, and knock – God is in the prayer-answering business.
- Always pray, don’t give up – God will bring about justice.
- Pray for each other in the Spirit in all kinds of circumstances.
- Pray always; give thanks in all circumstances.
- Pray when you are hurting, or sick, or full of joy, and God will make you whole again.
- What is the overall message about prayer in these passages? God wants us to pray. God listens and speaks to us when we pray! There is power in prayer!

### Reflect and take action

- How have we seen God answering prayer?
- What evidence do we see of God’s mercy and justice in this place?
- How can we walk alongside our sisters and brothers so that justice is done? What do we need to pray for? [Share the prayer requests from your hosts.]

### Notes on courtesy and grace

- Save jokes and comments like, “You wouldn’t believe what I just saw” for private team meetings. Even someone who doesn’t speak English fluently could [mis]understand enough to be offended or hurt.
- A comment that might be construed as ridicule is inappropriate even during private team meetings.

### Prayer

Gather in small groups and pray for your hosts. Thank God for hearing and answering your prayers.

## Devotional guide session 7 - God is our refuge and strength

### Worship

#### Prayer/devotional – Strength for the weary

- Allow God to speak these Scripture promises to your present situation.
- Read Psalm 46:1-2, then read it again, allowing God to speak directly to you:  
*God is our refuge and strength  
An ever-present help in \_\_\_\_\_ [country]  
Therefore we will not fear  
Our faith will not be shaken  
Even when \_\_\_\_\_*
- By this point in your trip, some team members may be getting worn out or someone may be sick and feeling miserable. Read this rephrasing of Isaiah 40:29-31 and allow God to speak words of encouragement to you:  
*God gives strength to the weary and the  
worn out like \_\_\_\_\_ [names]  
and increase the power of the weak.  
Even youths like \_\_\_\_\_ [name] grow tired and weary,  
and young folks like \_\_\_\_\_ [names] stumble and fall.  
But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.  
God will lift their spirits and heal their bodies.  
Then they will soar on wings like eagles, they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.*

#### Prayer

Praise God for the promise of strength and healing.

Pray specifically for team members and hosts who may be feeling discouraged.

#### Reflect and take action

We've been watching God at work!

- Are there some situations where we don't seem to see God at work? [extreme poverty, suffering, or injustice]
- How do you think God feels about those situations? [deep grief, sadness, righteous anger]
- What might God expect of us with regard to those situations? [grief, sadness, godly anger, prayer, works of compassion and mercy, advocacy on behalf of those who suffer]

#### Notes on ministering to others

- Who might need a word of encouragement today? Your host pastor, church worker, missionary, or team member?
- Encourage team members to find a simple way to bless someone else today through a secret act of kindness.

#### Prayer

## Devotional guide session 8 - In the power of the Spirit

Note: You will need to have enough paper, pens, and envelopes during this gathering so that each team member can write a letter to themselves which you will collect and give to them at home. (If you prefer to mail the letters to team members rather than hand deliver them, don't forget stamps.)

### Worship

Sing songs about the Holy Spirit ("Spirit of the Living God," etc.). Invite your hosts, national partners, and/or missionaries to worship with you.

### Prayer

#### Devotional – You will receive power

- Ask for two volunteers, one to be the narrator, and one to be Jesus. Have them read Luke 4:14-19 and Acts 1:8.
- Ask the team: In Luke, what did the Holy Spirit do through Jesus? [The Spirit gave him power, authority to preach, and sent Jesus to minister to the deepest needs of the people.]
- What did Jesus promise to his followers in Acts 1:8? [Power to share the good news to all people in the whole world.]
- What evidence have you seen of the Holy Spirit during this trip?

### Prayer

Praise God for the promise of strength and healing.

Pray specifically for team members and hosts who may be feeling discouraged.

### Reflect and take action

We've been watching for God at work! Write a letter to yourself reflecting on what God is teaching you through the Holy Spirit. Seal it in an envelope with your name on it, and give it to the team leader. (Team leader, you should return these letters to your team members several weeks after you return home.)

Here are some ideas for the letter:

- Note how you have seen God and the Holy Spirit at work in your life, in your team relationships, and in the lives of those around you.
- Describe some changes that you have already noticed in your life.
- Record ideas, decisions, or resolutions you have made about what you might do differently when you return home.
- Include a description of one of your most embarrassing or funny moments.

### Note on keeping healthy

- Has your team had time "off" to just relax, play, and reflect together?

### Prayer

## Devotional guide session 9 - I thank my God every time I remember you

### Worship

Sing together songs of thankfulness.

### Devotional – Jesus said excellent goodbyes

Ask someone to read Matthew 26:26-30 and Luke 24:50-53. As the team identifies them, jot down some of the things Jesus and his disciples did to say goodbye to one another in these two short passages.

- They had fellowship around a meal.
- Jesus spoke words of instruction, encouragement, and blessings.
- They sang together.
- The disciples accompanied Jesus to the Mount of Olives.
- The disciples stayed with Jesus right up to the point when he ascended into heaven.
- The disciples were filled with great joy; they worshipped together.

What can we learn from these passages about how we might say goodbye to our hosts (and then to one another)?

- Take time to celebrate together.
- Share a meal together.
- Sing and worship together.

### Prayer

Praise God for the promise of strength and healing.

Pray specifically for team members and hosts who may be feeling discouraged.

### Reflect and take action

Divide into groups of three and four to discuss the following:

- How do you feel about saying goodbye to our friends here?
- What happens to people when we avoid saying goodbye?
- Who will be the hardest person for you to say farewell to?

Saying excellent “goodbyes”: Paul and his companions were masters at saying goodbyes. Read Acts 21:5-6 and note how they took leave of their friends.

What are some practical ways our team can say goodbye individually and as a group?

- Invite your hosts to a special “thank you” celebration meal; tell them what you have learned from them.
- Give small mementos such as a team or individual photograph, T-shirt, or something from your home church (mug, pen, calendar).
- Prepare a team thank you card or poster.

### Communion and fellowship

Healing team relationships: You are coming to the end of this intense experience of living, working, learning, and serving together. Are there wounded relationships among team members? Is there a need for repentance or forgiveness? What praises need to be spoken?

- Set time aside when the team can gather together alone for communion without other distractions.
- Before the meal is served, have everyone stand, and encourage them to approach each other one-on-one. They may either: ask for forgiveness for something they have done, lovingly confront the person who has offended them, or tell the person a specific way they have been encouraged or blessed by having them as a team member.
- *Everyone* should have something to say during this time. When everyone has finished, call the group together and serve communion to one another.

### Note on making promises

As your trip draws to a close, remind team members to avoid promising to write or send pictures to their new friends unless they really will do so.

## Devotional guide session 10 - It's all about you, Lord!

Include your hosts (national partner and missionaries) in this gathering if possible. Adjust the exercises as needed, depending on whether the group includes more than just your team members.

### Worship

Sing the songs you have learned in your host country.

### Praise and reflection

- In a circle, ask the team (and your hosts) to fill in the blanks:  
I praise God for \_\_\_\_\_.  
God has used this experience to teach or remind me that \_\_\_\_\_.
- As team leader, take brief notes on what each team member shares. Include that information in a personal note that you write to each person, noting how God used him or her to make a positive difference in the team and/or with your hosts. Give personal notes to team members 2-3 weeks after returning home.
- “I thank God for you” exercise: Give each person the same number of slips of paper as the number of people on your team (including hosts who are present). Ask them to pass their Bible to the person sitting next to them on their left. Everyone then writes a note to the owner of that Bible saying, “I thank God for you because \_\_\_\_\_.” When they have finished, have them insert the note into the Bible, and pass the Bible to the next person. Repeat the process until each Bible has notes from everyone on the team, including your hosts.
- Riding the re-entry roller coaster: As the time for leaving draws nearer, the team may begin to feel a jumble of emotions: grief, joy, guilt, excitement, dread, emotional fatigue, emotional numbness. These are all part of the re-entry “roller coaster.”
- To help people deal with these normal feelings, ask them to briefly fill in these statements:  
The hardest thing for me about going home will be \_\_\_\_\_.  
The thing I will no longer complain about at home is \_\_\_\_\_.
- Ask team members to consider ways they can support their teammates as they adjust to life back home.

### Notes on returning home

Returning home may be even more of a “culture shock” than coming to this country. Remind team members to pray for one another during this transition.

People may be a little crankier as they try to sort out the jumble of feelings going on inside their hearts. Ask team members to make a special effort to be patient and understanding with each other.

You may discover that some of your friends or family may not want to hear much more than about a one-minute report on your experience. This is normal; don't be offended.

Suggestions for helping people listen to your stories about the experience:

- Be sensitive to how much time your friend or family member has to listen to you.
- Tell stories about what God taught you.
- Find out what things this person really wants to hear.
- Be patient when he or she isn't able to identify with what happened to you.
- Show an interest in what has happened in his or her life while you were gone.

### Practical suggestion

Have in mind a couple of different responses to the questions “How was your trip?” or “How was \_\_\_\_\_ (country)?”

- One phrase: “It was awesome.”
- 30-second response: “It totally changed the way I look at the world. God taught me some great lessons about myself and other cultures. I also made some very special friends. It was hard to leave even after

knowing them only a couple of weeks.”

- Five-minute response: Share a story about something that really touched your heart; describe the most memorable image or moment of the experience.
- Longer than five minutes: Engage in discussion about some of the lessons God taught you; ask the questioner about what God is teaching them – compare notes.

When possible, avoid giving public testimonies about the trip during the first week back. Wait until the team is rested and has had time to evaluate the experience together before your presentation for your church.

## **Prayer**

### **FINAL ON-SITE SESSION: REFER TO “DEBRIEFING AND DEGRIEFING” SESSION.**

Also, inform your team of the tentative or confirmed dates to cover the information in remaining debriefing sessions. We suggest that you do the first debriefing session while still on-site, and then gather two additional times for continued debriefing and reflection. If your team is from different churches or regions, or would find it difficult to meet three times after the trip, you may combine the sessions.

## Section 7: Debriefing

### Transition resources

#### The transition process

You are about to transition back to your job, school, family, etc. Even though you were only gone a short time, you may find the transition back to “normal life” a challenge. Everyone experiences transition differently, but the following stages show the general progression that most people experience.

1. Closure to environment (relief, nostalgia, grief, etc.)
  - Sounds, smells, tastes, sights
  - Routines and cultural practices
  - Roles and responsibilities
2. Closure to relationships (pain, healing, sadness, remorse, joy, etc.)
  - local friends and acquaintances on outreach
  - church/ministry
  - team
3. Assess personal growth (gratitude, disappointment, frustration, inspiration, etc.)
  - spiritual, social, and emotional maturing
  - personal beliefs, values, and practices
  - life purpose, vision, and commitment
4. Reconnect with support systems (anxiety, joy, frustration, excitement, fear, etc.)
  - family and friends
  - young adult group, prayer group, and accountability partners
  - pastor and other mentors
  - classmates, coworkers, and neighbors
5. Vision for future (enthusiasm, uncertainty, focus, impatience, etc.)
  - personal call to ministry and mission
  - career and education
  - steps of equipping
  - the next step

#### Telling your story

As you return home, people will most likely ask you many questions about your trip, and you will hopefully have opportunities to share with your local church body, family, and friends. Here are a few things to remember when sharing about your experiences.

**Remember the big picture.** You are God’s witness to what he is doing – a role with great responsibility and great opportunity. Remember to see things through his eyes and to give him the glory.

**Share with a sense of awe.** You had the privilege of seeing first-hand what God is doing in another part of the world, and now you get to share. That’s exciting!

**Give people grace.** Those who were not there will not understand everything you experienced, and that’s okay. As you share, it is better to love people than to know all the answers.

**Choose to have a positive attitude.** You may not have enjoyed everything you experienced, but you can choose to be positive about the culture and people. Share the things that were hard, but in a way that is honoring to the people and culture.

**Share with humility.** Your job is to express what you experienced, not to impress people with your knowledge. It's okay not to have conclusions or all the answers. Leave room for the Lord! Be ready to say "I don't know" when the question is outside your experience.

**Think of specific stories (snapshots) you can share.** Share a few stories about specific people you met.

**Share how the trip impacted you, not just what you did.** People want to know how your heart was changed by the things you experienced.

**Say thank you!** Many people have supported you. Remember to sincerely thank them for their investment in your life and in God's purposes around the world.

**Share ideas for ongoing involvement.** Adopt the country for prayer, have a Sunday school class pray for a people group in the country, invite people to (better) support the long-term missionaries there, or consider another mission trip to the area.

### **Continuing your mission vision**

As people go out on mission teams, we desire that they become global Christians, men and women who are cultivating Christlike compassion for our needy world.

How can this happen? The "spiritual high" that many experience during an assignment can soon disappear, leaving a flat feeling. How can we grow as a result of this experience to develop an ongoing interest and commitment to worldwide mission? Here are a few practical suggestions:

**Read:** Mission biographies and histories, biblical studies of mission, mission websites ([www.needssalt.org](http://www.needssalt.org)), and even monthly newsletters and magazines generated by many mission organizations (e.g. *Missionary Messenger*) can start you reading in new directions. These topics will expand your vision of God's work in the world and help you to see where you fit in.

**Explore missions** through a personalized learning experience such as MAP, which EMM designed for persons who are processing a call to missions. This self-directed program will help you explore your gifts, passions, and options for cross-cultural missions as you lay the groundwork for future ministry. Your growth will be focused in three areas: self-awareness, God-awareness, and global awareness. Visit the MAP website at <http://map.emm.org>.

**Pray:** Maybe you don't enjoy reading, but you can pray. Get copies of missionary newsletters or form a prayer group with others. Make it a daily habit to pray for the missionaries and church leaders you worked with. Pray alone, or pray with others; pray for specific people groups (Hindus, Muslims, etc.); pray for specific countries.

**Learn:** Devote yourself to learning more about one or two missionaries in a foreign country. Go to Urbana, Evangel, EMM commissioning services, or EMM's Global Fair, held each summer. Ask a lot of questions. Find out why Christians believe in missionary service. Find out how some people are going into unreached areas as tentmakers, using their secular jobs to declare Christ.

**Listen:** Talk to missionaries, listen to teaching tapes on missions, and keep current on the world news. Hear about needs and commit them to prayer. Study world governments and commit them to prayer. Ask the hard questions and learn.

**Go:** Seek continued opportunities to serve. Perhaps you can develop an interest in other countries by working with international students or other internationals in your area. Perhaps God will lead you into overseas missionary service as you seek his will here and now, by being a "missionary" to the people around you.

Check the Eastern Mennonite Missions website ([www.emm.org](http://www.emm.org)) for long-term and short-term opportunities.

## Team leader debriefing guide

God has brought your team a long way from the first day you began preparing for this short-term mission experience, and God's not done with you yet.

"Preparing to return home is as important as preparing to leave" (Dearborn, p.67). The importance of preparing to return home cannot be overemphasized. Returning home is often harder than going to a new place. When we leave on a trip, it is with a great sense of adventure, community, and purpose. But when a team returns, the adventure is finished, the team community is disbanded, and our purpose at home does not seem as significant.

### Definition of debriefing

Debriefing is simply a matter of helping people reflect on their experiences and helping them incorporate those experiences into their daily lives. It can be done in a group setting or solo, both during the trip and after it. In fact, there is no one right way to debrief. But debriefing has a goal: to help people process what they've learned so that they can grow in Christ and become of greater value to his work in the world.

A re-entry program should address the mixed feelings of elation, triumph, confusion, and frustration, as well as the issues of change, grief, closure, reverse culture shock, and expectations.

### Debriefing is:

- not only a place and a time, it is an atmosphere
- emotional unpacking
- sorting out
- being heard
- making sense of the experience
- listening/identifying issues
- being aware and in touch with one's feelings
- empathizing with others
- reviewing and recalling God's work
- a time to look back and to look forward

### Why do debriefing?

(Adapted from Lisa Chinn, *Re-entry Guide for Short-term Mission Leaders*)

It's biblical. Jesus thoroughly briefed and prepared the 72 short-term followers for what they would do, say, and expect. They were well-prepared in what to expect going out and properly instructed on their return (Luke 10:1-24). Debriefing is an opportunity for faith to grow, self-discovery, values clarification, and life-changing decisions. Re-entry and follow-up allow for evaluation and utilization of what has been learned in another culture. Crossing cultures for the kingdom requires that we pay definite emotional and spiritual tolls. We need to acknowledge and assess these to ensure a healthy transition. A re-entry plan helps bring healthy closure to the foreign experience.

### The keys to a quality debriefing

(Adapted from [www.ShortTermMissions.com](http://www.ShortTermMissions.com))

Experienced short-term mission leaders know that what God does in the hearts of team members is just as important as what he does through them. Every team leader wants the members of the team to come home changed, to have a vision for the world, and to act out the next steps God has shown them. A quality debriefing experience is the key that unlocks the potential of long-term life change for most team members. As a team leader, planning and executing the debriefing sessions is like putting the key in the lock. It is up to the team members to "turn the key" as they engage in the process with you and open their hearts to God's next steps. Here are ten proven principles that will help you prepare for a quality debriefing experience.

1. **Make it a priority from the start.** You can't wait until your ministry is over, bags are packed, and the team is standing in the airport to think about debriefing and expect it to be productive. Decide in advance that you are going to provide your team with a designated time to process the whirlwind of events and activities they have experienced together.
2. **Plan to hold at least one of your debriefing sessions in your host country.** Most short-term team members have an internal switch that goes off as soon as your plane touches the ground back home (for some it's just being in our airspace that does it!). Team members tend to become preoccupied, focused on reconnecting with their friends, family members, and favorite fast food meal upon returning home. Your team has a measure of honesty, vulnerability, and team chemistry that is nearly impossible to recreate outside of your host country, so get started there!
3. **Schedule your debriefing sessions with your in-country contact during your logistical planning stage.** Your host contact will want to get every minute of ministry and service out of your team. And so will you. Make sure you tell your contact in your advance correspondence that you will need up to six hours of time for debriefing two days before you depart for home. It is always easier to carve out time for debriefing before you arrive in the host country than afterwards. If you wait until you arrive to bring it up, you may discover they have your team scheduled every minute until you depart. Don't take a chance with what you have determined is a non-negotiable.
4. **Emphasize the importance of debriefing throughout the trip.** Team members will develop their perspectives on debriefing by observing the way you as team leader profile it. If it seems important to you, it will be important to them. Seize opportunities during the trip to highlight the fact you will be addressing important issues during this strategic time.
5. **Select the location for your debriefing sessions carefully.** Often in-country contacts suggest you combine a visit to a tourist area with the debriefing sessions. If this seems to be the best use of time, make sure you go to a secluded area away from potential distractions to hold your debriefing sessions. Be sure to instruct your team members in advance that priority one is debriefing and priority two is free time at the tourist site.
6. **Be realistic with your time allotment.** Quality debriefing sessions cannot be rushed. This material will digest better if prepared in a relational "crock pot" than in a quick fryer. And every team member will add a unique flavoring of their own. Be inclusive. You may be surprised to discover some very sensitive issues surface as team members begin to process the experiences of the trip. Team members will be reluctant to open up and address more than superficial concerns if they know you have planned to do the entire debriefing in one hour. You should tell them to plan on four to six hours to be safe. Plan to make a day of it.
7. **Use the debriefing guides and the transition resources for team members to reflect and think about next steps beyond the trip.** Some team members simply will not verbalize issues they are facing.
8. **Emphasize the priority issues.** A good debriefing session goes beyond getting your team members to talk to you. You will need to direct their attention to priority subjects that go deeper than their felt needs. Most teams need to discuss issues such as misconceptions about missions, the danger of exaggerating team experiences, and disillusionment upon returning home. Team members should also be empowered to learn the priority lessons God has for them and how they can communicate these lessons with others.
9. **Meet one-on-one with each team member.** In addition to group debriefing sessions, you should plan to meet with every team member for a personal appointment before you return home. Review the evaluation form in preparation for your meeting and think through the ways the team member has contributed to the efforts of the group. Give them an opportunity to share issues they were uncomfortable sharing in front of the group. Speak words of affirmation, encouragement, and correction into each team member's life.

## Debriefing sessions

The debriefing sessions are designed to help your team walk through the normal phases of readjustment to life back home. It will also help them to reflect on their experience and apply what God has taught them during the trip. To some people, re-entry is just a “P. S.” at the end of a mission trip, but you may want to introduce the idea of re-entry early on in your team gatherings before your mission trip takes place. You can bring up the subject through questions like:

- Which do you think is easiest, adjusting to a new culture or readjusting to your home culture? Why?
- Most participants return home changed; in what areas are you expecting God to change you?
- In what ways will being flexible help you in your entry to another culture and your re-entry back to the United States?

We strongly encourage you to do these three debriefing sessions:

### **On-site experience/debriefing – Session 1**

We encourage you to do the first debriefing time with your team while you are still in the host country, just before returning home.

### **Post-field debriefing – Sessions 2 and 3**

Once you have returned home, gather the team to meet at least two more times to do post-field debriefing.

The debriefing sessions cover two main topics:

Re-entry to home culture

- Debriefing and “de-griefing” the trip
- Re-entry skills and reverse culture shock
- Sharing the story of your experience

Short-term mission to long-term commitment: reaching out with God’s love

- Minister at home in the neighborhood, community
- Address institutional racism, exploitation, violence
- Maintain a relationship with host country sisters and brothers
- Plan for the next cross-cultural mission experience

Schedule the dates of your debriefing sessions, and inform each team member.

Date/time/place

Team session

\_\_\_\_\_

1: Debriefing and “de-griefing”

\_\_\_\_\_

2: Sharing our story

\_\_\_\_\_

3: Putting feet on our faith

## Team leader debriefing guide session 1 - Debriefing and 'de-griefing'

We suggest that you hold this session on-field, a few days before you return home.

Make this a fellowship time, and include a few simple snacks.

### Devotional – Remembering God's faithfulness: singing like Miriam and Moses

- Sing some of your team's favorite songs together. Pray that you will feel God's presence and comfort during this session.
- Ask the team to recall what Moses, Miriam, and Aaron and all the other Israelites did when they made it safely across the Red Sea. [They sang a song of praise and thanksgiving to God, recalling all that God had done to guide and deliver them. See Genesis 15.]
- Let's celebrate! Ask the team to remember the many ways they discovered to "watch God at work" in your host country.

### Suggested activity:

- Lay out a long piece of poster paper on a table or on the floor. Draw a line horizontally across the middle of the paper with an arrowhead at the far right and the name of your team at the top. This will be your team's timeline, beginning from your first meeting together. Ask team members to fill in the timeline with major events in the life of the team. After working for 5-10 minutes, pause for a moment and read Psalm 105:1-4. Now fill in specific "praise the Lord" situations on the timeline. These are the wonderful "acts of God" that you want to tell others about. For example:
  - The last \$103 we needed for the trip arrived on the day the deposit was due!
  - God used our flat tire detour so we could meet the Ramirez family.
  - Pastor Jo's message caused Yolanda to commit her life to mission work.
- Have fun with the timeline. Note funny or unusual events. When everyone is finished, have the team step back and appreciate what you have experienced.
- Ask "Why is there an open-ended arrow on the right?" [The story is not over. God wants to continue to use what we have learned to reach out to others with his love.]

### Team discussion: re-entry reflections

Introductory comments: Our team has traveled, worked, lived, eaten, played, and prayed with each other, and we may feel like a family in the Lord. The feeling of being part of a special community will probably be the most difficult and the most helpful part of your re-adjustment to life back home. It may be hard to go back to the "same old, same old" after such an intense adventure. Your teammates won't be with you every day and it may be hard to find time to pray and study the Word as you did on the trip. What was the best part of being together as a team?

At the same time, our teammates will be the ones who will continue to support us in prayer. If we feel depressed, guilty, or frustrated during our re-entry to home culture, it will feel good to talk to a teammate who understands exactly what we're going through. Together, with the help of the Holy Spirit, we will not only survive this transition, but we will continue to grow in faith and wisdom.

### Prayer

Pray for each member of the team.

Pray for God's help to walk through the stages of reverse culture shock with grace.

Ask God to guide the team as you begin to think about sharing your story.

**Assignment for next session: Ask the team members to take 20-30 minutes before the next session to go through the "Reflections on coming home" questionnaire in debriefing guide session 2 - Sharing our story.**

**Team leaders:**

- Take some time to rest and process your own feelings apart from the time you spend with your group.
- Find a person who is willing to help you debrief and reflect on your own experience as a leader.
- What did God teach you about your leadership gifts?
- What would you do differently next time?
- What unresolved issues are still lying heavy on your heart?
- How will you honor your need for rest for a couple of days?
- How can your friend pray for you during this time of transition?

## Team leader debriefing guide session 2 - Sharing our story

### Devotional – Seeing God at work in our lives

- Sing some of your team’s favorite songs together. Pray that you will feel God’s presence and comfort during this session.
- Ask the team to recall what Moses, Miriam, and Aaron and all the other Israelites did when they made it safely across the Red Sea. [They sang a song of praise and thanksgiving to God, recalling all that God had done to guide and deliver them. See Genesis 15.]
- Let’s celebrate! Ask the team to remember the many ways they discovered to “watch God at work” in your host country.

Have team members draw a picture of something that symbolizes the most important thing God taught them on the trip. In smaller groups ask them to explain the symbol to each other.

Gather together as a whole team and ask for volunteers to share their symbol of what God taught them and how they have grown in their faith.

### Reflections:

Give your teammates a few minutes to reflect on the questions in the “Reflections on coming home” and ask them to share some of their reflections with the group. You may want to divide the team into smaller groups for this activity. Ask each person to share a specific prayer request.

### Reflections on coming home

Describe the one or two images that stand out from your trip.

What part of this experience was the most challenging to you? What was the easiest?

What did you learn about God’s mission in the world? How did you see God at work?

How has your relationship with God changed as a result of this trip?

What did you learn about your team and about team ministry?

How would you describe your feelings right now? (Joyful, grief-stricken, exhausted, peaceful, grateful, heartbroken, hopeful, confused, resentful, etc.) Explain.

What do you miss most about your host country?

What are you thankful for now that you are back home?

Name some people who really touched your life during this experience. What did you learn from them?

What changes (if any) will you make in your life based on what God taught you?

Would you go on another mission trip? Explain.

### **Team discussion – Short-term to long-term commitment**

Maintaining connections with your new brothers and sisters: allow the team to brainstorm about suggestions for keeping in contact.

- Pen pals
- Sister church relationship
- A trip next year
- Regular prayer for them
- E-mail
- Exchange of pastors, youth, laypersons

Encourage those who may have promised to write to their friends in the host country to do so in the following week. Send thank you notes to your hosts if you haven't already. Encourage team members to send thank you notes to their supporters.

Pictures: Take some time to look at any photos the team may have brought along. If you have several really good pictures (close-up, candid shots of people), please e-mail them to EMM at [photos@emm.org](mailto:photos@emm.org).

### **Sharing our story**

Brainstorm ideas for sharing your story with your church family. Develop a testimony or program to fit within various time frames. For example, during a worship service you may only have 3-10 minutes. If you speak to your church during a special mission program, you may have as much as an hour to work with. In either case, seek God's guidance when preparing your presentation.

Ideas:

- Thank the congregation for their support.
- Share one or two two-minute testimonies/stories about how you saw God at work during the experience.
- Have the team sing a song from the host country.
- Avoid sharing negative comments about the host country. If there were trouble spots in the experience, save that discussion for your private team meetings.
- Invite people to the mission program where you will tell more stories and show slides/video, a maximum of 10-12 minutes long!
- Prepare a simple meal of the food of your host country.
- Pray for specific needs you saw in the host country.
- Invite people to go on the next mission trip.

Seek God's direction as you consider some possible ways to use what you have learned to share God's love with others.

## Team leader debriefing guide session 3 - Putting feet on our faith

### Worship

Sing songs of thanksgiving.

Take a few moments to reflect on any presentations or informal sharing of stories and testimonies so far. How have people responded? How have your feelings changed (if at all) from the first day you returned?

### Devotional – Putting feet on our faith

- Have 5 team members read James 2:14-18, one verse each.
- God has guided, protected, and blessed our team throughout our time together. We have learned and grown a lot as a result of this experience. What challenge does this passage from James present to us? (We need to put our faith into action; faith without action is dead.)

### Team discussion – Hearing God’s call

Brainstorm ideas for how to use what you have learned to reach out to others with God’s love. What needs in your church or community could God use you to meet? What happened during your trip experience that you want to have happen in your own community?

Possible ideas might include:

#### Church

- Continue with prayer partners on your team.
- Perform secret acts of kindness for church members.
- Set up a “parents’ night out” for your pastor and parents of young children in your church. Have parents drop off the kids at church for an evening of Bible fun, games, and crafts.
- Spend a Saturday helping to fix up a sister church.
- Identify people in your church whom God may be calling to mission service.
- Include news and prayer requests from your host country in your church bulletin.

#### Community

- Organize events: rake leaves, pick up trash in the neighborhood, have a car wash, or hand out cards with a message of God’s love.
- Schedule a Habitat for Humanity work day.
- Befriend international students or immigrants in your community. Invite them to your home and church events.
- Reach out to people from your host country living in your community. Invite them to church and a fellowship meal. Visit their church and share testimonies about your experience in their country.
- Volunteer at a homeless shelter.
- Schedule service projects on a regular basis.
- Plan a prayer walk in your community.

#### International

- Start a sister church relationship with a church in the host country.
- Sponsor someone from your host country to be a short-term missionary to your church or community.
- Write letters to congressional representatives about peace and justice issues in your host country.

**Keep a list of any suggestions, and anything your team wants to follow-up on.**

### Action – what next?

- Gather in a circle and pray for God’s guidance as you think about “what next?” Seek God’s direction for transforming your church community so that the whole church is moved to action.
- Identify 1 or 2 projects that the team would like to follow-up on.

### **Continuing your mission vision**

Review the “Continuing your mission vision” points that were included in the team member handout entitled “Transition resources” and think about ways they can continue to stay involved in missions.

- **Read** – mission biographies and histories, magazines, and newsletters. Expand your vision of God’s work in the world and see where you fit in.
- **Pray** – Make it a daily habit to pray for the missionaries and church leaders you worked with. Pray alone, or pray with others. Pray for specific people groups or countries.
- **Learn** – Devote yourself to learning more about one or two missionaries in a foreign country. Attend mission conferences. Ask lots of questions. Find out how people are going into unreached areas as tentmakers, using their secular jobs to declare Christ.
- **Listen** – Talk to missionaries, and keep current on world news. Hear about needs and commit them to prayer.
- **Go** – Seek continued opportunities to serve. Perhaps God will lead you into future service as you seek his will now, by being a missionary to the people around you.

### **Fellowship time**

Close the formal session with a prayer of thanksgiving and praise, and then enjoy a time of food and fellowship.

## Team member debriefing session 1 - Debriefing and “de-griefing”

### Devotional – Remembering God’s faithfulness

Recall what Moses, Miriam, Aaron, and all the other Israelites did when they made it safely across the Red Sea (see Genesis 15):

“Your love, O Lord, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies.” – Ps. 36:5

Major milestones for our team were:

### Reflect on Psalm 105:1-4

These are the “wonderful acts of God” (v. 2) that were part of our short-term mission experience (including funny or unusual events) that I want to tell others about:

The story is not over. God wants you to use what you have learned to reach out to others with his love. Your short-term mission experience has changed you forever. Your task now is to ask God, “What’s next?”

“Here I am, Lord. Send me!” – Isaiah 6:8b

### Team discussion – Re-entry reflections

Your team has traveled, worked, lived, eaten, played, and prayed with each other, and you may feel like a family in the Lord. That feeling of being part of a special community will probably be the most difficult and the most helpful part of your readjustment to life back home. It may be hard to go back to the “same old, same old” after such an intense adventure. Your teammates won’t be with you every day, and it may be hard to find time to pray and study the Word as you did on your trip.

The best part of being together as a team was/is:

Your teammates will be the ones who may best understand your experience and continue to support you in prayer, in addition to other friends, family members, and persons from your home church. If you feel depressed, guilty, or frustrated during re-entry to your home culture, it will feel good to talk to someone who understands what you’re going through. Together, with the help of the Holy Spirit, you will not only survive this transition, you will continue to grow in faith and wisdom.

Prayer requests from my teammates:

### Action – Seek God’s direction

- Pray for each member of the team.
- Ask God to guide the team as you begin to think about sharing your story.

### Assignment

Prior to Session 2, “Sharing our story,” take 20-30 minutes to answer the “Reflections on coming home” questions on the following page. Write your responses in your book, or on a separate piece of paper, and bring it with you to the next session.

## Team member debriefing session 2 - Sharing our story

“Reflections on coming home” – Prior to this session, write your answers below, or on a separate paper.

Describe one or two images from your trip that stand out.

What part of this experience was the most challenging to you? What was the easiest?

What did you learn about God’s mission in the world? How did you see God at work?

How has your relationship with God changed as a result of this trip?

What did you learn about your team and about team ministry?

How would you describe your feelings right now?

What do you miss most about your host country?

What are you thankful for now that you are back home?

Name some people who really touched your life during this experience. What did you learn from them?

What changes (if any) will you make in your life based on what God taught you?

Would you go on another mission trip? Why or why not?

Reflections on how I have grown in my faith as a result of this experience:

### Team discussion – Short-term to long-term commitment

Brainstorm ideas for maintaining connections with your new brothers and sisters. Some suggestions for keeping in contact:

- Pen pals
- Sister church relationship
- A trip next year
- Pray for them regularly
- E-mail correspondence
- Exchange of pastors, youth, laypersons

I plan to write to the following people in our host country:

I will write thank you notes to the following people who supported me through prayer or financial support:

Brainstorm ideas for sharing your story with your church family. Develop a testimony or program to fit within the time frame given. For example, during a worship service you may only have 3-10 minutes. If you speak to your church during a special mission program, you may have as much as an hour. In either case, seek God’s guidance for what and when to prepare your presentation.

### Pictures!

Do you have 2 or 3 really good pictures from your trip? (The best photos are close-up, candid shots of people.) Please e-mail your pictures to EMM at [photos@emm.org](mailto:photos@emm.org).

## Team member debriefing session 3 - Putting feet on our faith

### Devotional – Putting feet on our faith

So far, the best response to sharing my story has been from:

When I compare my emotions on the day we arrived home with how I feel right now, I see the following changes:

Faith without action is what?

Read and reflect on James 2:14-18. What challenge does this passage present to us?

### Team discussion – Hearing God's call

What is God calling us to do?

What needs in your church or community could God use you to meet? What happened during your trip experience that you want to happen in your own community?

These are some of the practical ideas I have for how to use what we have learned during this experience to reach out to others with God's love:

Projects our team would like to follow-up on:

### Continuing your mission vision

The “spiritual high” that many experience during an assignment can soon disappear, leaving a flat feeling. How can you grow as a result of this experience, developing an ongoing interest and commitment to worldwide missions?