

PLAN – Leading a Mission Trip (Pre-Trip)

When planning a trip, the leader must take into account that they are actually planning for 3 separate parts of the trip: pre-trip planning, the trip itself, and post-trip follow-up and storytelling. Each component of the planning process is important to complete in order to ensure that the missions experience is beneficial and mutually transformational for everyone who is a part of the partnership.

Pre-Trip planning is very important to the team – logistically, physically, and spiritually. When embarking on a mission trip, you will be entering into a new cultural setting, and it is important to be prepared for what you will experience while on the mission field. Additionally, pre-trip meetings allow team members to get to know one another prior to departure. We have included some helpful tips, guidelines, and questions, below, for your pre-trip planning. One of the biggest components is being in good communication with your fellow leaders and team members throughout the process in order to ensure that everyone is on the same page when you arrive on location.

The Team:

- How many people will be on the team?
- Who will the team be comprised of?
- How will team members be selected?
- Who will be the leader of the team? Will there be co-/student leaders?

Team Planning:

- How often will the team meet prior to departure?
- Will you use a missions curriculum?
- Where will you meet? Make sure it's in a time & location that is convenient for as many people as possible.
- If you need Visas, it's helpful to fill them out together, with plenty of time for the process.

Logistics:

- Does everyone have a valid passport? (If traveling international, check with the State Department to see how long your passport needs to be valid after arrival in country. For example, some countries require your passport to still be valid 6 months after your departure from the visiting country.)
- If vaccines are needed, consider getting them together.
- How will everyone get to the airport?
- How many personal bags does each person get?
- Will allotted baggage limits from the airline include ministry supply bags?
- Will team members be responsible for providing ministry supplies?
- What about money exchange and cell phones?

Cultural Intelligence:

- How will the team be prepared for the new culture?
- How will the team prepare for culture shock/stress and reverse culture shock/stress?
- What basic phrases does the team need to learn in the native language?
- What is culturally “taboo” that the team needs to be aware of?
- How can the Global Ministry Partner be of assistance to the team in culture preparation?

Spiritual Preparation:

- How can the team prepare, spiritually, for their experience, together?
- Will there be designated prayer times for the trip? Or prayer walks?
- Will the team preparation include Bible study?
- How will team members be prepared for potential evangelization?

Physical Preparation:

- How will the team need to be prepared, physically?
- Will the ministry work include physical labor?
- If not, how can the team prepare for their ministry work?
- How can the team best support the ministry/work of their Global Ministry Partner?

Resources:

- *Stuff You Need to Know About Doing Missions in Your Church Handbook* by David Mays
- *The Open Secret* by Leslie Newbigin
- *When Helping Hurts: Alleviating the Poverty Without Hurting the Poor...and Ourselves* by Fikkert & Corbett
- *Deep Justice Journeys* by Powell & Griffin
- *Cross-Cultural Partnerships* by Lederleitner
- *Help! We're Going on a Short-Term Trip* (Team Leader's & Team Member's Manual) by CultureLink
- *A Guide to Short-Term Missions* by Greene
- *Equipped for Adventure: A Practical Guide to Short-Term Mission Trips* by Kirby
- *Stop, Check, Go* by Townsend
- *Culture Shock!* Series by Cramer
- *Basic Training for Mission Teams* by Rankin & Tadlock (LifeWay)