



Short Term Mission Trip Participant Handbook

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Introduction

Welcome to the Short-Term Missions Handbook! As a member of a short-term missions trip team, you are about to embark on one of the greatest adventures of your life!

This handbook is a guide to making your short term mission trip as meaningful as possible. Going on a short term trip is a great adventure, and a great learning experience. You will learn a lot about yourself, about your teammates, about your hosts and mostly about God. But to do that, there needs to be preparation beyond getting your passport and packing your suitcase!

As your team meets together, you will explore what it means to be a team, what your motivations and expectations are, what God is doing in your destination already, and how you can arrive there ready to humbly serve others and watch God work through your team in amazing ways.

You may find some of the material in this handbook hard to think about. Or you may think you already know what is contained here. Either way, please use it with an open mind and open heart to learn. Begin with prayer and ask God to teach you - and watch for Him to do it!

Your team may go through this book during team meetings. If so, it's helpful to complete the Think About It section ahead of the meeting, and the Action section afterwards. If you go through it on your own or during a large group orientation, please take the time to read it through more carefully, doing the Think About It and Action sections as you go. This will help you get more out of the handbook.

May God bless you through this journey that will have eternal ramifications!

Section 1

Motivation, Commitment and Team Covenant

Think About It:

Why am I going?

I am participating on this missions trip because I (check all that apply)...

- a) Want to travel.
- b) Want to be a part of this group.
- c) Want to grow in my faith
- d) Want to learn more about being a servant
- e) Believe God has called me to do so.
- f) Want to learn more about other cultures and people.
- g) Other reason: _____

What's my commitment going to cost me? Time? Money?
Opportunity to do other things?

Physical Prep:

Are you physically ready for this trip? Are there any changes to your diet, sleep habits or exercise routine that could help you be ready for the challenges you'll face while overseas?

Discussion:

Commitment (noun): *a promise or pledge to do something.*

We live in a low-commitment culture. You can see this in our divorce rates and how often people switch churches. We move on to the next thing very quickly and break our promises without a second thought.

We're asking you to be radically different. We're asking you to make promises that you intend to keep, even when it's tough to do so. We're asking you to stick with something, even if you'd rather move on to something else. We're asking you to act counter-culturally.

There are some big commitments up front, and smaller ones that'll come along the way. The purpose of this meeting is to make the commitment expectations clear, so everyone is on the same page.

Sometimes commitment means complying with something even when you don't know why you should...

Before his short-term trip to Austria, Jamie committed to follow the rules of the team he was visiting. One of these rules was never to go in the refugee camp after hours. But why was that important? Jamie wanted to visit a new refugee friend now. So he hopped the fence and went to see his friend. When the camp managers caught him they threw him out - and promptly banned all missionaries from entering the camp without special permission.

Team Covenant

Below is a generic team covenant – a list of promises we are asking you to make for the duration of your participation on the trip. Your team may add to this list or alter it. Whatever your specific team covenant entails, it is not just rules for the sake of rules, but policies that ensure that everyone – team members, nationals, long-term missionaries – has a positive experience. The first step of working together as a team is agreeing to uphold these items. Your covenant is not so much with the leadership as it is with each other.

Be sure you understand these policies, and ask your leaders about any you are unsure about.

I realize that the following elements are crucial to the effectiveness, quality, and safety of our trip together. As a member of this Short-term Mission Team, I agree to:

1. Be consistent in my pursuit of God in my life. I will choose to walk by the Spirit as described in Gal. 5:22-25 - “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.... Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.”
2. Remember that I am a guest working at the invitation of a local missionary, pastor, etc. I will strive to not offend them in my behavior or words.
3. Remember that we have come to learn, not to teach. I may feel that some procedures are inefficient, or attitudes close-minded. I'll be open to learning other people's methods and ideas.
4. Respect the host's view of Christianity. I recognize that Christianity has many faces throughout the world, and that the purpose of this trip is to witness and experience faith lived out in a new setting.
5. Develop and maintain a servant attitude toward all nationals and my teammates. I will strive to put them first and encourage them, not gossip or criticize. I commit to pray for our team and our trip.
6. Respect and submit to my team leader(s) and his/her decisions. If I have any disagreement I will approach the leadership in private to discuss the issue.

7. Refrain from complaining. I know that travel can present numerous unexpected circumstances, but the rewards of conquering such circumstances are many. Instead of whining and complaining, I'll be creative and supportive.
8. Respect the work that is going on in the country with the particular church, agency, or person(s) that we are working with. I realize that our team is here for just a short time, but the missionary/pastor/local church are here for the long run. I will respect their knowledge, insights, rules and instructions.
9. Refrain from negative comments or hostile discussions concerning our host country's politics or culture.
10. Remember not to be exclusive in my relationships. If my best friend or sweetheart is on the team, we will make every effort to interact with all members of the team. If I am attracted to a teammate, I will not attempt to pursue an exclusive relationship until after we return home.
11. Refrain from any activity that could be construed as romantic interest toward a national. I realize certain activities that seem innocuous in my own culture may seem inappropriate in others.
12. Participate fully in the team preparation meetings.
13. Refrain from gambling, smoking or drinking alcohol on this trip. If I am a minor, I will refrain from these before the trip as well.
14. Raise the needed funds for the trip. I understand that the cost is my responsibility and will do my part to raise the needed funds. I will participate in any team fundraisers if I want to benefit from those fundraisers.

Signed _____

Date _____

For Minors

Parent's Signature _____

Date _____

Action:

Think of a few commitments you've made in the past: (example: I attend a weekly Bible study group)

How successful have you been in keeping the commitment?

What lessons from previous successes and failures can you apply to this trip that'll help you keep this commitment?

Between now and when your trip begins you may have moments when you think, "This is dumb. Why did I sign up for this?" This is when your original commitments must kick in and pull you through.

Use the space below to tell God three things you intend to do to ensure that you'll be able to live up to your commitments: (example: make yourself accountable to another person and meet with him/her regularly)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Section 2

Serving as a Team

Think About It:

Do you expect this trip to fix any existing problems in your life or provide an escape from something that's troubling you? If so, what is it you hope to fix or escape from?

When do you experience relational conflict and how do you typically react to it?

Think about teams you've been on in the past. What role did you play? How well did you work together with your teammates?

Discussion:

The Team Factor

What are the components of a good team and what does a team player look like? Here are ten words that spell out TEAM FACTOR, the traits exhibited by those who are pitching in to do their part for the good of the team.

T is for Teachable

A teachable spirit helps create a noncompetitive environment in which learning and sharing come naturally. Teachability gives all the members the freedom to make mistakes as they learn.

E is for Enduring

The team member that endures hardship is an inspiration to those around her – whether the “hardship” is physical illness, a lumpy mattress or unfamiliar foods.

A is for Appreciative

What things can we appreciate in others on the team? How can we show our appreciation in a practical way?

M is for Motivated

Take initiative! Don't be lazy or wait for others to jump in before you will. Do all things as unto the Lord (Col. 3: 17, 23).

F is for Flexible

Anything can change from day to day. A flexible team member will learn to accept the unexpected as the norm.

A is for Agreeable

Living together in close quarters, sharing crowded bathing facilities, and every other aspect of group travel requires everyone to be gracious.

C is for Contented

Paul said, “I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation” (Phil. 4: 12). The opposite of this is a malcontent – one who complains constantly. No matter your circumstances, strive to be pleasant and optimistic.

T is for Thoughtful

What can you do to make a teammate’s day a little easier?

O is for Obedient

There will be times when the team leader has to “pull rank” and make unpopular decisions. A team player will respect the leader’s authority and encourage others to do the same.

R is for Relational

Get to know others on your team. Go out of your way to ask them questions and show interest in who they are.

Get the picture? The “Team Factor” spells out the difference between a group of individuals and a team of interconnected members.

Being a servant

Human nature compels us to look out for ourselves first. On this trip you should practice being a servant instead.

What images come to mind when you think of a servant? How does this compare to being a helper? *Help* means “to give or provide assistance to; aid.” *Serve* means “to work for, especially as a servant; be in the service of.” What’s the difference? What do the definitions say about the relationship between you and the person you’re serving/helping?

Being a servant requires humility, because you’re willingly

giving over your freedom to another person and allowing them to give you direction. It's an attitude first, and action second. What does it look like to be a servant to the following people?

The Local People: *it's easy to fall into the mindset that you're superior to the people you're ministering to. It's also easy for them to tell when this is the case. Make a commitment to "consider others better than yourselves" (Phil. 2:3). They are the experts on the place they live, their culture and their lives. Respect them accordingly and submit to their leadership.*

Your Team Leader(s): *Your leaders have the same needs and struggles you have. They are doing their best to make the experience a positive and productive one for you. They often face difficulties that team members are unaware of. Team leaders really benefit from members who are willing to seek ways to be a servant to them.*

Fellow Team Members: *Being a servant toward one another is foundational to being a true team. Paul writes, "Each one should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others" (Phil. 2:4). If each member seeks to serve, rather than be served, there's no limit to what you can accomplish.*

Above are some tips on being a good team member and traits to exhibit if you want to be a force for good on your trip.

By contrast, on the next page are some time-tested methods for turning your trip into a miserable experience, for yourself and others.

Ten Ways To Wreck A Trip

1. Act like you are there alone. Stay to yourself. Avoid any unnecessary interaction with teammates or locals.
2. Refuse to do any task that is beneath you. Insist that all leaders show you respect when asking you to do something. If dish duty is allocated to you, weasel out of it.
3. Don't pray or study the Bible. Stay busy and constantly do stuff to avoid any opportunity for this.
4. Be well-organized and inflexible so nothing can interfere with your agenda.
5. Point out what your hosts are doing wrong. Help them improve. Help them be more like you.
6. If you are single, try to become romantically involved with someone on the team (or a local). Try to be near that person, even if it means that other team relationships suffer. PDAs are encouraged. If you're married, get away frequently to spend time together. When around singles, try to make them jealous of your relationship.
7. Don't bother trying to speak the language. Seek out English speakers, and communicate only with them.
8. Point out the faults of people on your team. Try not to be seen with the socially awkward people on the team.
9. Make sure you don't eat the local food. Ask for special meals to be made for you or see if the missionaries have familiar foods and eat that. If you are forced to eat the local cuisine, make a show of it.
10. Be generally disappointed in how things are going. Think and

Action:

Read Colossians 3:12-17.

What are you looking forward to most in serving on this team?

What do you expect your team to be like? What is your hope for the team? Is there a difference between your hope and your expectation? If yes, why?

Section 3

Discipleship and Spiritual Growth

Think About It:

What are you doing now to cultivate your relationship with God?

Are there any opportunities for growth in the areas of ...

Prayer?

Scripture reading?

Listening?

Obedience?

Elsewhere?

Discussion:

The Living Water of Ministry

Picture your soul as a cup. The cup is filled up with “living water” (John 7:38) as you encounter the Lord through Bible study, prayer, worship and other experiences. Your ministry is like giving some of that water to a thirsty person.

You will be most effective in ministry when you are full to overflowing because you’ll be giving out to others without a spiritual cost to yourself. When you minister despite not being full, it’s like taking a ladle, drawing water out of yourself and giving it away. If you continue to minister but don’t replace that water, you’ll soon run dry. When an engine runs dry of oil, the resulting friction causes the engine to overheat and seize up, and it’ll no longer run. When our soul runs dry a similar thing happens, which is why we call it “burning out”. To avoid burn-out and make your ministry as effective as possible, it’s important to refill the cup daily.

Following are some helpful spiritual practices that will keep your cup filled – on this trip and back home as well.

Bible Study/Devotions

Do you regularly set aside time to read the Bible and learn more about God? This is a foundational part of your relationship with Christ and a crucial way to grow in your faith.

If you don’t already set this time aside, you’ll want to start with 15-30 minutes a day. You can choose to study a particular book of the Bible, follow a reading plan (there are many that’ll take you through the whole Bible in a year) or use a devotional book (such as My Utmost For His Highest by Oswald Chambers). If you want help getting started, ask your leader for some suggestions.

Prayer

Every strong relationship is characterized by regular communication. Prayer is one of the key ways we communicate with God. We talk to him, and often times he responds to us.

If your prayer life lacks direction, try praying through ACTS. ACTS is an acrostic that'll give us a form to follow and prevent us from making prayer into a "to-do" list for God.

A is for Adoration – start your prayer by praising God. Think about the good things he's done for you and ways in which you've seen him work in the past week.

C is for Confession – be honest with God about the ways in which you fallen short of his standard. Be specific.

T is for Thanksgiving – rejoice because you're forgiven (1 John 1:9)! Thank him for his grace and mercy. Thank him for all that he's provided for you and all his many blessings.

S is for Supplication – now's the time to ask him for what's on your heart. Do you have a special request to make for yourself or someone else?

Journaling

Keeping a record of each day's adventures, challenges and lessons is a great way, in the short-term, to assess the day and, in the long term, to keep track of God's faithfulness and your own growth. It's a good idea to journal all the time, but especially on this trip you'll want to make some observations at the end of each day, to keep track of things you did, people you met and lessons you learned. We've included space in this book for you to keep a journal while on your trip. It'll be a great little memoir for years to come.

Accountability

You'll be more successful at each of the above if you have someone you trust and respect that asks you regularly how you're doing with them. This person will encourage you when you've been faithful to keep these habits and exhort you to do better when you haven't. It's important that your accountability partner be someone you respect and that you give him or her permission ahead of time to be stern with you if you start to neglect your spiritual disciplines.

Action:

Reach out to your prayer partner this week. Share how your preparation for the trip is going and give him/her specific prayer requests for yourself. Find out how you can pray for him/her as well.

Section 4

Missions and Cultural Differences

Think About It:

What do you know about the place you're traveling to. What are the people like? What do they do? What do they eat?

Where did these ideas come from?

What do foreigners know about Americans?

Where do you suppose their ideas came from?

Discussion:

What is Missions?

Mission (n.) – the act of sending or the state of being sent, as on some errand.

Missionary (n.) – a person sent on a mission; a messenger, ambassador.

Missions is about being sent. It is derived from the Latin verb “to send”. To use the definitions above, a missionary is one sent on a divinely-mandated errand, and the errand is to share the message of the Gospel. An ambassador is one who represents a country inside the borders of another country. The missionary is an ambassador of Christ – a representative of the kingdom of God here on earth.

Missions in the Bible

Many people think missions appears for the first time in the Bible in Matthew 28 – the Great Commission. In fact, the thread of missions runs from Genesis all the way through Revelation and is a unifying theme of the whole Bible. Our God is a missionary God whose desire it is to bring all nations back into fellowship with him. Here are some key verses related to missions:

Genesis 11:1-9 – The Tower of Babel. World evangelization gets more complicated with the beginning of new languages and cultural distinctions.

Genesis 12:1-5 – God calls Abram to leave his people in order to become a blessing to all nations. God’s desire to bless the nations is repeated throughout the Old Testament.

Psalms 67 – the Psalmist reflects God’s heart for the nations.

The Old Testament stories of Joseph (Genesis 37-47), Isaiah (6:1-8), Daniel (esp. 3:29) and Jonah (the whole book) also reveal God's use of individuals to impact other nations.

Matthew 28:19-20 – the Great Commission. (See also Mark 16:15 and Luke 24:45-49 for similar messages from Jesus).

Acts 1:8 – Shortly before his ascension Jesus says the disciples will be witnesses in “Jerusalem, in all Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth.” This verse is often used today to determine what our missional priorities should be.

Acts 2:4 – Pentecost. A temporary reversal of what happened at Babel, and a foreshadowing of heaven.

Acts 9 – Saul's conversion. Paul, as he'd later be called, became the prototype for modern missions and his experiences make up much of Acts. His letters make up much of the New Testament.

Revelation 5:9 and 7:9 – the fulfillment of the missionary endeavor. All nations will be present in heaven, worshipping the Lord together.

God's call to us is to do what we can with what time we have to hasten the day when the two passages in Revelation can be fulfilled. Because the fact is, right now, there are still nations on earth in which there are no believers. Those nations are unrepresented in heaven at this point.

The Distribution of the Gospel

When the word “nation” appears in Scripture, it doesn't mean a country like the United States, Brazil or Italy. The word means a people group, or an ethnic group. Where there are only around 200 countries in the world, the number of people

groups is closer to 10,000! Many of these people groups are considered “unreached”, which means there are very, very few Christians among them – or none at all.

There are over two and a half billion people who are part of an unreached people group. Most of them live in the northern half of Africa, Central Asia, the Middle East and East Asia, including countries like China, India, Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Egypt and Morocco. They are usually Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists or Animistic.

Unfortunately, most missionaries do not work in these areas and with these people groups. Most missionaries work with people who are already Christians or in areas where there are already a lot of churches and other Christians. This is a key challenge for churches in the 21st Century.

Methods

What specifically do missionaries do? Well, missionary activities tend to fall into three main categories:

Evangelism – preaching of the Gospel for the purpose of winning converts.

Disciple-making – goes a step beyond evangelism. The goal is not only to see a decision to trust in Jesus for salvation, but also to see the new believer grow deeper in his faith and become a true follower of Jesus – not just a believer in him.

Church-planting – the goal is not one convert here or there, but a whole community of new believers who meet together and establish a church. When the new church has a goal of multiplication and seeks to plant new churches itself, that begins a *church-planting movement*.

Cultural Differences

When we have never experienced life outside of our own culture, an unfortunate thing happens: the way things are done in *our* culture forms the basis for the way we believe things should be done in the rest of the world. Our practice is normative, and when we encounter a different practice, our inclination may be to regard it as inferior. Instead of seeing it as something neutral (for now), we see it immediately as something less.

The fact is, only in rare cases is it right for us to attach a value to something that is done differently than in our culture (and that discernment usually requires a lot of time). And even in those cases God wants us to focus our attention on one thing: he loves them, and he's calling us to love them too.

The first step in accepting cultural differences and not judging them is to understand our own culture better. Here are some things to remember as you get started:

- Our own cultural values are invisible until they come into conflict with the values of a different culture. When we first become aware of the conflict, it usually makes us feel uncomfortable. (Example: timeliness is a value in the U.S., but not so much in Africa. It's perfectly OK to show up an hour or two after a set meeting time).
- How you respond is the critical thing. You may feel frustrated, impatient or confused. Will you act on those feelings or think it through first? (Will you be angry with your African friend if she shows up at 1pm for a noon meeting)?
- The more you understand your own culture, the better equipped you'll be to respond intelligently and graciously to a new culture. (If you recognize that being on time is an

American value and not a matter of basic human decency, you'll be better able to give grace to your African friend).

- As was alluded to above, don't forget that much of culture is neutral when viewed from the vantage point of Christianity. The way people eat has no moral implications. It is therefore important that we not be judgmental.
- Worship practices may reflect cultural differences as well. For instance, in some churches men and women sit apart from one another on opposite sides of the aisle.

It's always helpful to examine common stereotypes prior to arriving on the field. Some of them may have an element of truth, but others have grown out of myths or false perceptions. See which of these ring true to you:

Stereotypes Americans have about people in the Third World	
Negative	Positive
Lazy	Interdependent with family
Inefficient	Relational
Over-emotional	Living in harmony with life
Slow	Very spiritual
Indifferent	Content
Corrupt	Servant attitude
Poor	Humble
Uneducated	Kind
Needy	
Controlled by customs	

Don't get caught in the trap of believing that these things are true of everyone who is a part of that group. Treat people as individuals, uniquely created by God and loved by him.

To help with this, look at the next set of stereotypes. Are these things true of you? They are true of many Americans, but probably not all of them apply to you. If you'd rather not be treated as the personification of all that's good and bad about America, treat the people you meet the same way.

Stereotypes others have about Americans	
Negative	Positive
Wealthy and materialistic	Educated
Dominating	Reliable
Loud and obnoxious	Strong individuals
Promiscuous	Secured better lives
Competitive	Generous

Selfish/self-centered	Free of superstition
Attitude of national superiority	Confident
Preoccupied with efficiency	Organized
Tense	
Discontent	
Lonely	
Corrupt	

You cannot change the fact that you're an American. And it's important to recognize that you will be perceived stereotypically from time to time. Some of these stereotypes will be accurate and can help facilitate understanding, but remember that not every individual embodies all these characteristics. Work on becoming a *bridge builder* – someone who spans the cultural gap to bring about better understanding and deeper relationships.

Here are three keys to being an effective bridge builder:

1. Be a *guest* of the culture. Think about how you act when you're a guest in someone's home. How do you behave, react and interact? What is appropriate to do and what isn't? Conversely, think about your expectations of guests in your own home.
2. Be a *student* of the culture. Think of yourself as a person who is there to study and learn. How does a student earn a good grade? What behaviors contribute to success?
3. Be a *servant* within the culture. Think of being a person who serves everyone she encounters in the country. How does a waiter, for instance, approach those whom he is

serving? How does a batboy handle differences in others?

One of the great benefits of a cross-cultural experience is the opportunity to broaden our view of God and his world. We learn about ourselves and our own culture and can come to appreciate the richness of diversity in the world. We may even bring back some values that we find preferable to the ones we left home with! It's common to experience some frustration, especially if this is your first time traveling far from home. Be prepared to share your feelings with your leaders, prayer partners and teammates and commit your attitude to prayer. Actively work on being a bridge builder, playing the roles described above. Doing so will go a long way toward making your trip an educational and enjoyable one!

Action:

If you know a current missionary or a former missionary, find out more about what they did and what their experience was like. (Ask around, you might be surprised to find several ex-missionaries at Third).

What can you do to be a better guest, student and servant?

Section 5

Travel Info and Itinerary

Think About It:

Read about the country you're visiting at the State Department travel site and in the CIA World Factbook. They can be found here:

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1765.html

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>

What medical issues could you encounter there?

What language(s) do they speak?

How does the median income compare to the U.S.?

What else caught your attention?

Come prepared to share with the team something new you learned about the country.

Discussion:

Medical Guidelines

Your destination will determine what sort of medical precautions you need to take while on your trip. Your team leader will give you guidelines as to required vaccinations and other medical necessities for the country you're going to. Refer to the websites listed in the Think About It section for more information.

It is always a good idea to consult your local health department and/or your healthcare provider to determine what specific steps you need to take to be best prepared for your trip.

Following are some general principles that apply to most destinations:

1. Be sure the water you drink is safe. Drink bottled water if you are unsure, or purify tap water before drinking. Avoid ice cubes that are made from tap water. Boiling will kill most bacteria, but freezing does not.
2. Avoid uncooked vegetables, salads and fruit that cannot be peeled.
3. Do not eat raw eggs, uncooked meat, or unprocessed cheese.
4. Bring a container of hand sanitizer, since appropriate washing facilities are not always available.
5. Bring all necessary prescription medications with you, and be sure to bring enough for the duration of your trip. Check your destination's guidelines for bringing prescription meds into the country. Notify your host and team leader of any special medical needs well in advance of your departure.
6. Your team will have basic medical supplies available, but it's not a bad idea to have a couple staples (Tylenol/Aleve, Pepto Bismol, anti-diarrheals, etc.) with you.

7. Bring a spare pair of glasses or extra contact lenses if you wear either.
8. Wear sunscreen when in the tropics or outside for extended periods of time.
9. Avoid dehydration by pushing fluids.

Medical Insurance

Check with your health insurance provider to find out what coverage, if any, you have while traveling outside of the country. If you're covered, find out what is covered and how you use the benefit.

If your health insurance doesn't cover you outside of the U.S. you will be advised to purchase a temporary travel health insurance policy or one will be included in the cost of your trip. These policies are generally inexpensive. If your team leader doesn't direct you to a specific product you can compare options at www.insuremytrip.com.

Packing Lists/Tips

What you bring with you will depend on the length of your trip, your ministry plans, the time of year you go and the climate of your destination country. Here's a sample packing list that'll get you started:

- This book!
- Toothbrush/paste/floss
- Razor/shaving crème
- Feminine hygiene products
- Shampoo
- Comb/brush
- Soap
- Deodorant
- Contact lens solution
- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent
- Extra toilet paper
- Towel/washcloth
- Hand sanitizer
- Spending money
- Personal medications
- Pens/Pencils

- Camera
- Extra batteries (for camera)
- Flashlight
- Sturdy gloves
- Watch
- Bible
- Passport

- Snacks
- Sunglasses
- Small gifts to give away
- Adaptors for items that need to be plugged in
- Photos of your family, city, school (to show new friends and host families)

When packing, keep in mind the following tips:

- Pack light! It's unlikely a teammate will carry your suitcase for you.
- Tape items that may come open while traveling and put them in resealable plastic bags in case they leak or explode due to air pressure while flying.
- Instead of buying items you need for the trip but don't own, try borrowing them instead.
- Don't bring new shoes. If you buy new shoes for the trip break them in before you depart. It's hard to be a bridge builder with blisters.
- Take luggage you don't mind damaging. Between baggage handlers and unpaved streets, some wear and tear is to be expected.
- Bring a change of clothes and some toiletries in your carry-on in case checked luggage is lost or delayed.
- If laundry facilities are available you can bring less clothing. Be sure to bring detergent with you though.
- Take some items you don't mind leaving behind. They could be very valuable gifts to nationals and it'll make more room for souvenirs.
- Bring extra batteries and/or adaptors for items that need to be plugged in to recharge. Don't forget that electrical current varies from country to country.

Travel Tips

Keep the following in mind while preparing for your trip. Before you leave, consider where you will be, who you will meet, and what you will do. Plan ahead.

1. Make two photocopies of your passport. Give one to your leader and keep one yourself, stored separately from your actual passport.
2. Bring photos of your family and hometown, as the people you meet may want to see them.
3. Remember that your dress code will be dictated by the host culture, not your own tastes. Consider leaving jewelry behind; this prevents theft as well as the possibility of offending others.
4. Bring small, inexpensive gifts to share with your hosts.
5. Leave a complete itinerary with a friend or family member, and have one for yourself on the trip.
6. Check your mobile phone provider to see if your phone works overseas and if so, how much it'll cost to use it there.
7. Find out if you can recharge it (and other items that plug into outlets to charge) where you're going without frying it. (U.S. outlets are 110 volts; some countries' are 220 volts.)
8. Make sure the team leader and your church office have the name, address and phone number of a contact person for you.
9. Check your wallet and remove anything that won't be needed on the trip. Beware of potential pickpockets while traveling.
10. Stick with other team members while traveling to avoid being left behind or separated from the group.
11. Be aware of the image you are projecting. Be sensitive to those around you, especially in enclosed spaces like airplanes and trains.
12. Keep a low profile when in airports or outside the U.S.

Don't speak too loudly or be too demonstrative, as you could attract unwelcome attention to yourselves.

13. Upon arrival, hold all your bags tightly while in the crowded airport or while transitioning into the next mode of transportation.
14. Listen well to the team leaders and follow their instructions quickly.
15. In many areas, septic systems are not designed to handle toilet paper. If there is a waste receptacle next to the toilet, this is generally a clue that toilet paper is meant to be thrown away, not flushed.
16. If you suffer from any kind of travel sickness, bring proper medication. Remember, it may be difficult for the team to slow down or stop for you to recuperate. Taking these precautions is both helpful and thoughtful.

Action:

Make sure you have everything on your packing list or have a plan to obtain it.

Section 6

Ministry Training

Think About It:

Outline the major steps on the path that led you to becoming a Christian. How old were you? What led to the decision? What role did faith play in your growing up years?

Use the space below to jot down some notes.

Discussion:

You're going on this trip as a "minister of the gospel". What exactly does that mean, and what will it look like? Every trip is different, but there are a few common threads and a few things you can do to prepare ahead of time for the type of opportunities that might await you.

Preparing Your Testimony

This is one of the simplest evangelistic tools around and it requires very little memorization since it's your story! Think about the questions on the previous page. The answers form the basis for your testimony.

In addition to sharing about your own background and how you came to faith, you should talk about how your life has changed as a result of your faith, what you're learning about now, what your faith means to you and why other people need Jesus as well. In that way you make it current and invite others to experience him for themselves.

Determine what the key points in your story are and practice being able to describe them in a concise manner. Most people won't be able to give you 15 minutes to share your story. Try to keep it to five minutes or less. By the time you depart for your trip you should be prepared to give a clear, concise testimony with little or no warning. You never know when the opportunity might arise!

Working With Children (Vacation Bible School)

No matter where you go, there'll be kids there. So almost every short-term trip has some type of children's ministry. What you choose to do will vary from trip to trip, but here are some general tips for working with children:

- Flexibility is key. Go prepared, but be prepared for everything to change. Flexibility is important on any cross-cultural experience, but doubly important when kids are involved.
- Many children may not come from stable, nurturing homes and may not be used to much affection. You may be able to make a huge impression with the care you show them.
- You can show a child love in any language. Here are some tangible ways you can show that you care:
 - Spend time with the children; give them focused attention.
 - Show physical affection (as long as it is culturally appropriate). Give hugs. Pick up smaller children. Give piggy back rides, etc.
 - Listen to them talk about themselves.
 - Ask them follow up questions.
 - Share with them from your own life.
 - Give them eye contact.
 - Encourage them.
 - Get to know their families (if possible).
 - Accompany them to and from the VBS site.

Evangelism Pointers

Following are some tools you can use to witness to non-believers.

Key verses to memorize:

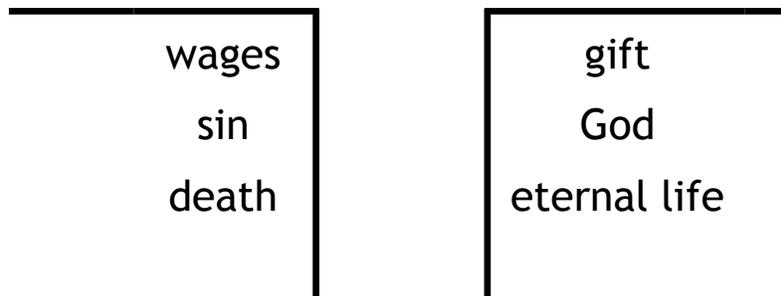
- John 3: 16
- John 14: 6
- 1 Corinthians 15: 3-4
- 1 John 1: 9

A series of verses in Romans are very helpful in clearly laying out the Gospel message. These verses are often referred to as

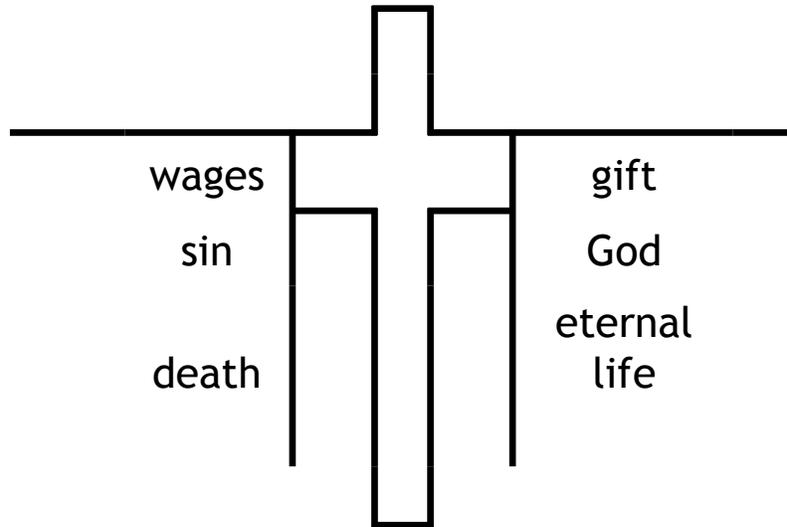
the “**Romans Road**”. They are:

- Romans 3: 23 – For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.
- Romans 5: 8 – But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
- Romans 6: 23 – For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- Romans 10: 9-10, 13 – That if you confess with your mouth “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. ... For, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

Another useful tool is the “**Bridge Illustration**” which uses Romans 6: 23. You start by drawing two cliffs. On one side you write “wages”, “sin” and “death” and on the other “gift”, “God” and “eternal life”.



You explain that, without Christ, we are on the left side. Our sin has earned us death. The gift of eternal life is on the other side with God, but we can’t get to it. The chasm in between is too wide for any sinful man to jump. Only a sinless man could bridge the gap. The cross of Christ makes the bridge and allows us entry into eternal life.



Tips on Relationship Building

- If you are doing a building project, get to know the people you are working with. The construction is important, but it's secondary to building relationships. Physical buildings only last for a time, but a relationship with Jesus lasts forever. Keep the eternal in mind when working on the temporary!
- Get to know others around the area.
- Try not to exclude non-English speakers. Find someone who can help translate and approach those who are not being engaged because of language barriers.

Working with Translators

The following principles are especially helpful when giving a formal talk or presentation.

- Try to use translators that are Christians. If none are available, find one who is regarded by others as reliable and trustworthy.
- Take time in advance to practice with the translator.
- Try to maintain a ratio of no more than four or five project

participants to every translator.

- Give translators an overview of your objectives prior to beginning the day's ministry (or the presentation you are giving).
- When speaking, pause frequently to give your translator time to convey your idea as you intend to communicate it. Ask the translator to do the same when translating to English.
- Avoid complicated logic, slang, complex idioms, pop culture references and "Christianese". Your translator may not understand them or may have to take extra time to explain them before moving on.
- Be patient if the translator is slow or stumbles.

Flexibility

We cannot emphasize enough the importance of flexibility. Do not think of your plans as equal to Scripture in infallibility or set them in stone like the Ten Commandments. Expect the unexpected. Roll with the punches. (Insert your own cliché here). Give the Holy Spirit room to work in his own timing, at his own pace and in his own way. You'll be glad that you did.

Action:

Practice sharing your testimony with someone – a non-believer if possible, a friend or family member otherwise.

Think about what might interrupt your plans? How would it make you feel? What's the end goal of the trip and how does the schedule fit into that?

Section 7

Before You Depart: Setting Expectations

Think About It:

Do I have any prior experiences on short-term missions trips or on trips overseas that will help prepare me for this trip?

My trip will have been a success if... (write down whatever comes to mind) ...

My trip will have been a disappointment if ...

Discussion:

Everyone has expectations for what their short-term trip will be like.

Do you agree or disagree? If you're like most people – particularly first-timers – you will disagree. Pride leads us to deny this, because we don't want to have expectations.

The proof comes on the trip though, and by then it may be too late for it not to affect your team. The proof of expectations is disappointment, because disappointment is the result of unmet expectations.

To head off this disappointment before it occurs, or to be best prepared for it when it does, it's crucial to identify and evaluate your expectations.

Categories of expectations

Think through some areas where you may have expectations and not realize it...

Relationships: Will I get along with my teammates? Will the local people like me? Will I like them? Will I be able to communicate with them? Will I forge any lasting friendships?

Ministry: Will anyone come to faith through our work? Will the locals be happy to see us when we arrive and sad when we leave? Will our VBS go off without a hitch?

Travel: Will our planes be on time? Will we miss any connections? Will I have to adjust to any time change? Will I be exhausted when I arrive?

Food: Will I eat familiar foods? Will I get sick from anything I eat? Will I get my daily coffee/soda to keep me going? Will I have to eat anything weird?

Accommodations: Will I be staying in a hotel? Will the bed be comfortable? Will I have my own bathroom? Will I have to use a squatty potty? Will I be able to use the tap water to brush my teeth? Will I my roommate snore or stay up to late?

Technology: Will I be able to get email or internet? Will I miss my favorite TV show or sporting event while I'm away? Will I be able to talk to my spouse/boyfriend/girlfriend/parents while I'm away? Will I be able to have music in my ears at all times while on the trip?

This is not an exhaustive list by any means, but it should help you identify your expectations. Simply put, your expectations are your answers to the above questions. Some of these cannot be predicted; others can, but nothing is guaranteed. You may be promised a comfortable hotel and arrive to find it was overbooked and now you're sleeping on the local pastor's couch. Will this wreck your trip? Think about that now, and be prepared for whatever may come.

That said, don't be a pessimist. Hope for the best, be prepared for the worst and trust God to use you to accomplish his purposes.

Action:

Revisit the “Think About It” questions on page 42 and spend time thinking through all the questions on pages 43-44. What could happen – or not happen – that would cause you disappointment?

What can you do now to be prepared if one of these should happen? (Consider Philippians 4:11-13.)

How can trusting in God’s sovereignty help you?

Section 8

Debriefing and Re-entry

While your trip may be drawing to a close, your experience is by no means at an end. Just as you spent time preparing in advance for the experience of going on the trip, you should spend time preparing for your return. It's important that you finish your time on the field well, process the experience fully and have a plan for what you're going to do when you get back home.

Assessing Your Trip

Your first step is to do an assessment of your trip. Start with the day you left your home and think through the various experiences you've had since that time. It may be helpful to read through your journal entries. Then go through and write answers to the following questions. It's best to set aside time on your last day to do this or to do it on the trip home. Avoid waiting until you're back home because you'll have other demands on your time and you might lose the clarity of your immediate impressions.

Assessing what I did ... the good, the bad and the ugly

In what ways has your trip met/not met your expectations?

What experiences were difficult, frustrating or disappointing?

What was the highlight of the trip?

What other positive memories will you take home with you?

What was the most significant thing you learned?

Assessing myself

How have you grown as a result of your time overseas? (in areas like self-image, interpersonal relationships, spiritual life, concept of missions)

What did you learn about yourself?

What did you learn about God?

Assessing my team

On a scale of 1-5 how would you rate your effectiveness as a team ... (5) being “awesome – we leap over tall buildings in a single bound” and (1) being “we fall over curbs”? Why did you choose this rating?

Give an example of a time we worked really well together.
...And a time when things could've gone better.

Give an example of a conflict you experienced. Are you satisfied with how you handled it?

Are there any conflicts that still need to be resolved?

Were there any team members that played a particular role on the team or that stepped up in a remarkable way?

Assessing the cultural experience

List three things you learned about...
the place you visited

the people you ministered to

the local believers and missionaries you worked alongside

the church in that country

your own culture

What is the biggest need there?

Reverse Culture Shock

It's not uncommon when you travel overseas to experience something called "culture shock". This is defined as "a sense of disorientation brought on by a new and unfamiliar environment". Usually the symptoms set in during longer stays, but it's possible you experienced this on your trip. It's probable that you were expecting something like this, especially if this was your first time overseas.

What tends to surprise people more than culture shock is something called "reverse culture shock". Reverse culture shock is an unexpected reaction to subtle changes in how you view and interact with your own culture. The "unexpected" part is what makes it tricky. You don't tend to see it coming and it doesn't discriminate – even seasoned travelers can get it. The "subtle" part also packs a punch because you may not know you have it until it's caused some problems.

Here are some symptoms to look out for:

1. Disorientation – a feeling that you are out of place, do not fit in, feeling like a guest in a foreign land.
2. Uncertainty in interpersonal relationships – unsure of how to relate to people anymore.

3. Feelings of loneliness or isolation.
4. Restlessness – a desire to “get away” or to return as soon as possible to the country where you served.
5. Feeling tired, lacking energy.
6. Feeling that nobody understands your experience, or that nobody cares.
7. Loss of identity – you’re no longer special; just another person in a group.
8. Feelings of superiority.
9. Feelings of dissatisfaction.
10. Retreat, withdrawal, lack of concern, apathy.

Ask yourself if any of these symptoms seem to fit and re-read the list periodically – once a week for the first month and then every month or so for the next three would be worthwhile.

You may not experience reverse culture shock at all, but most people get it to some degree. If you’ve been on short-term trips before you’ll probably be less susceptible. If you’ve adjusted really easily to your host culture you may actually be more susceptible. See the sidebar for a formula and some case studies.

Length of time in host culture
X
Degree of identity with host culture
X
Degree of change in own culture
=
Amount of reverse cultural adjustment
needed

Case Study #1 - Soviet Cosmonaut Sergei Krikalev

A funny thing happened while Krikalev was in space: his country ceased to exist. In the midst of the dissolution of the USSR, the national space agency didn’t really have time to bring him back to earth. He finally returned to earth after nearly a year in space. When he got home his muscles had atrophied from lack of use in zero gravity. He had to relearn how to walk. And he had a new flag.

Length of time in host culture (space):
almost a year
Degree of identity with host culture: high
(zero gravity)
Degree of change in own culture: high
(country no longer exists)
Amount of reverse cultural adjustment
needed: lots

Spiritual Warfare

In addition to reverse culture shock, you may also experience spiritual warfare. If, while on your trip, you prayed more, shared your faith more, felt God's presence more, saw him move more, felt like you were living with purpose more and you want that to continue now that you're going home ... well, you're dangerous – dangerous to our spiritual enemy. So he may just come after you a bit.

This can take many forms. The important thing is to be prepared for such a battle before it actually comes. Remember what you read in Ephesians 6 and use the defenses that are available to you. If you are really struggling with the symptoms above and sense that you're under attack, talk to your team leaders, prayer partner or another trusted friend or leader.

Re-entry Roles

Regardless of the level of re-entry stress you encounter when you return home, you have a choice to make regarding how you will handle it. What lessons will you apply from your time overseas? How will you let your experience shape you going forward? How will you share what you learned with others?

Most people fall into one of three categories:

Case Study #2 - Ed, missionary in Austria from 1979 to 1990.

Ed saw the movie "The Wedding Singer." Ed didn't get it, because Ed missed the 80s. Well, Ed experienced the 80s, but not the way most Americans did. What was popular in Austria was not at all the same as in the U.S. When it comes to 80s pop culture, Ed's clueless.

Length of time in host culture (Austria):

11 years

Degree of identity with host culture: pretty high

Degree of change in own culture: high (went straight from disco to grunge)

Amount of reverse cultural adjustment needed: nothing a week of VH1 Classic, the Back to the Future trilogy and Miami Vice reruns couldn't solve.

Assimilators

Assimilators cope with re-entry stress by “removing” the cause of the stress – the short-term trip. They determine that things were fine before the trip and are difficult now, so the trip must be the problem. The assimilator will either invalidate the experience (“Was that God I experienced, or just some bad guacamole?”), forget it altogether (“What missions trip? Did I go on a missions trip?”), or just intentionally fall back into line (“Yeah, I got all radical on that trip. Fortunately, it was just a phase.”) They appear to have readjusted well, but they may have missed out on the greatest growth opportunity for they fail to allow lessons learned while overseas to alter their view of the world, themselves and God.

Alienators

Alienators seem to reject the home culture, at least temporarily, but sometimes for a longer period of time. They may become very pessimistic and critical of their home culture, despite realizing that they too have been a part of it. Some of the easy targets include preoccupation with materialism, cultural naiveté, and emphasis on time-management and achieving goals. And you’re more apt to notice (and reject) these things because you’ve probably come out of an environment where possessions weren’t in abundance and the emphasis was on relationship, not accomplishment.

Such cultural criticism is healthy in many respects, because much of what we accept as normal isn’t actually Biblical or beneficial. It becomes a problem when the critical view becomes outright criticism or even condemnation. Be careful not to adopt such a holier-than-thou attitude. Ultimately, most alienators succumb to the home culture out of a need to belong somewhere.

Integrators

Integrators, by contrast, seem to expect the dissonance they are feeling, though maybe not in every form it appears. They are able to identify the changes they have undergone or are still experiencing and do not demand immediate closure on them. *They desire to see their short-term experience have a lasting impact on their life and the lives of others.*

This is the best-case scenario of course, the desired role for all returned missionaries, whether short-termers or long. The key to becoming an integrator is to do a thorough assessment of your trip, work through reverse culture shock and reentry stress with people who care about you and have some experience with it themselves, learn to effectively share about your trip with others and apply the lessons you've learned to your life back home. We turn our attention to the latter two now.

Sharing Your Trip

Now that you're home you can't wait to tell everyone about the experiences you had on your trip. So after the crowd dissipates at the airport and the parade in your honor is concluded, everyone will gather around your feet in rapt attention, hanging on your every word as you tell stories that'll make their hair stand on end.

Well, maybe not.

Your stories may be of the hair-raising variety, but chances are you're not going to have quite such an audience. What sort of response can you expect and how can you prepare your sharing so that people are encouraged, excited and moved to respond?

Consider the following exchanges...

Joe: Hey, how was your summer?

You: Hi Joe, it was great. I went on a missions trip to the Dominican Republic.

Joe: That sounds cool. Well, see you later.

Sarah: Hey! How was your summer?

You: Hi Sarah, it was great. I went on a missions trip to the Dominican Republic.

Sarah: Wow. Isn't that in the Caribbean? Did you go to the beach a lot? Did you work on your tan? Did you meet any cute boys?

You: Uh, no, we were in a poor area of the island, helping people.

Sarah: Oh. OK. Well, I'll see you later.

How would you have reacted to these situations? How does their reaction make you feel?

Remember also that others had experiences too that they'll want to share with you. You aren't the only one who had significant experiences.

Listener Apathy

Why might you encounter apathy when sharing about your missions experience? For most people, there are three reasons:

1. Information Overload – they are already overwhelmed by all the needs and opportunities in the world and just hearing about your experience will make them feel even more overwhelmed.
2. Difficulty relating to missionaries – they're not sure what to make of people who would give up vacation time and

summer breaks to go to a faraway place to help people. It's just too counter-cultural for them

3. Guilt – hearing about the ways in which you served during your break or vacation may make them feel guilty if they spent their time doing something frivolous or fun.

Presenting your stories

Now that your expectations are tempered a bit, think about how you're going to approach people and what you're going to share.

First of all, think about length. You'll want to prepare two different kinds of stories. The first is very short (one minute or less) and captures a particular highlight and what you learned from that. This is for the person who you run into while out and about and asks you about your trip. Here's an example:

It was a great trip. We went to one town that had no electricity or running water, and yet the people were so friendly. It made me realize how blessed I am to live where I do and it reminded me that how happy we are has less to do with our possessions or circumstances and more to do with the attitude we choose to have.

In the second case, you'll want to go into more depth, sharing a couple of highlights, a couple of the challenges you faced, what you learned and how it'll impact your life. This would be appropriate for a more formal setting – with a small group, before the youth group, with a group of supporters that donated to your trip expenses.

When you prepare the longer set of stories, try to avoid being negative (it was so hot and sweaty and we basically worked all the time), condemning (the people over there were so much more spiritual than we are here. We're just so distracted by our wealth) or critical (we really don't do enough to help people less fortunate than ourselves). Instead, be grateful (thank you for praying for us during the trip), gentle (the nationals' devotion to

God and commitment to prayer – in spite of their poverty – really challenged me to take my own faith more seriously) and enthusiastic (this was a life-changing experience and I hope everyone has a chance to go on a similar trip).

Stewardship v. Ownership

Finally, think about being a steward of your short-term experience, rather than an owner. An owner possesses something and is free to use it for his own good. A steward is holding onto something on behalf of another person and is responsible for using it in a way that the owner would approve. God made it possible for you to go on this trip, so he's given you the experience. He wants you to use it to bless other people, not just for your own benefit. So do that – bless people with your experience. As John said, “We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you may have fellowship with us” (1 John 1:3).

Next Steps

So how does one become an “Integrator”? Here are some short- and long-term strategies:

Short-term strategies

1. Mind your health. Get a lot of sleep, watch your diet and get some exercise.
2. Commit your attitude to the Lord and ask for his help being positive.
3. Thank your supporters.
4. Prepare your stories.
5. Seek avenues to share. (Don't just wait for people to ask you.)

Long-term strategies

1. Continue to debrief your experience with someone who you have regular contact with (your team leaders, a friend or family member).
2. Re-read your journal.
3. Find ways to serve in your local church/community that best reflect the values you picked up on the field. The missions committee at Third has dozens of opportunities to get involved here in Richmond and in ministries that make an impact overseas. Whether your interest is in children, youth, homeless people, international students, refugees, praying for missionaries or helping get others involved in missions at Third, there's a way to get involved right here! Talk to someone on the team or one of the pastors to find out more.

Here's hoping your re-entry is as much a part of your experience as the trip itself was, and just as rewarding, challenging and life-changing!

Devotions & Journal

Take time out each day to spend some time in the Word, praying and journaling about the day's events. This will help you stay fresh and connected to the Lord. Journaling will help you process all that you've seen and experienced, and it'll help you remember significant events in the years to come.

There are fifteen devotionals included in this book. No matter what the length of your trip you should start with Day One and end with Day Fifteen. If your trip is only seven days, do Days One through Six and then end on Day Fifteen.

There's space on the back of each page to journal that day's events.

Day One

The Sending of the Seventy-Two

Luke 10: 1-16

Why did Jesus send out “the others” two by two?

In what way are they “lambs among wolves”?

In verse 16, Jesus states that it’s not really about you so much as it’s about him. Why is this important?

How does this apply to this trip?

Day One Journal

Day Two

Blessed is the One...

Psalm 1

What does the one who is blessed do?

... and not do?

What do you take away from the metaphor of a tree planted by streams of water?

How can you be like that tree while on this trip?

Day Two Journal

Day Three

God's Heart for the Poor

Luke 4: 14-19

This is Jesus' first public message. Is that significant?

Who was he aiming his ministry at?

Who are the poor, the prisoners, the blind and the oppressed?

Day Three Journal

Day Four

Humility

Philippians 2: 3-11

How did Jesus demonstrate humility?

In what ways can you humble yourself?

What impact could that have on your trip?

Day Four Journal

Day Five

Unity

Colossians 3: 12-17

At this point in the trip how are the relationships on the team going? Is there anyone you need to forgive or seek forgiveness from?

Is the peace of Christ ruling in your heart?

Can you look back on your actions thus far and say that they've been done "in the name of the Lord Jesus"?

Day Five Journal

Day Six

The Power of Prayer

James 5: 13-16

When we face trouble, what should our first move be?

Are our prayers powerful and effective? Why?

What role does confession play in prayer?

Day Six Journal

Day Seven

A Profound Act of Service

John 13: 1-17

You're seven days in now. What condition are your feet in? Would you want one of your teammates to wash them right now? How dirty and smelly do you think the disciples' feet were (remember they wore sandals everywhere)?

How can you "wash the feet" of your teammates during the remainder of your time together?

Day Seven Journal

Day Eight

Worship

Psalm 100

No questions today. Just read the Psalm (aloud if you can) and make it your own. Allow it to jumpstart a time of worship and journaling.

Day Eight Journal

Day Nine

Carrying a Burden

Galatians 6: 2-5

Compare verse two (carry each other's burdens) with verse five (each one should carry his own load). How are these admonitions not contradictory? What is the difference between a load and a burden? How does the context help us understand the difference?

What load are you carrying on this trip?

How can you help carry a teammate's burden?

Day Nine Journal

Day Ten

Spiritual Warfare

Ephesians 6: 10-18

Think about each piece of armor and how the spiritual concept acts as a form of protection. (e.g. how is faith like a shield?)

What is the only offensive weapon mentioned?

What pieces of the armor do you most need on this trip?

Day Ten Journal

Day Eleven

Disappointment and Perspective

Genesis 29: 1-35; 30: 17-21;

There's a common theme in Leah's rationale for her choice of names for her children. What is it?

Would Leah be justified if she were disappointed and bitter at the end of her life? Why or why not?

Now read Matthew 1: 2 and Revelation 5: 5.

Who was Judah's mother?

What do you think Leah would have thought when she got to heaven and saw that the Christ would be from her line, not Rachel's?

Day Eleven Journal

Day Twelve

Compassion

Luke 19: 41-44

Why did Jesus weep?

What do we learn about how he felt about the city and its inhabitants?

How do you feel when you meet the people of the country you're in?

Day Twelve Journal

Day Thirteen

Opposition

Psalm 27

In the face of trouble what does the psalmist do?

What is the basis for the psalmist's hope?

Have you experienced any opposition on the trip? If so, how have you handled it?

Day Thirteen Journal

Day Fourteen

Faith

Hebrews 11

What is the common “ingredient” in each of these stories?
(What is the source of their accomplishment?)

How does faith enable us to do monumental things?

What has the team done “by faith” on your trip thus far?

Day Fourteen Journal

Day Fifteen

The Source of our Joy

Luke 10:17-24

We looked at the first half of this chapter on Day One. Now the others have come back with reports of their success. Pay close attention to Jesus' response in verses 18-20. How do you think they would have reacted to that?

What were they rejoicing in? Was it an action or identity?

What is supposed to be the source of their joy? Is it an action or an identity?

What does this say about our successes and failures in our ministry ... particularly while on this trip?

Day Fifteen Journal

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