

Short-Term Mission Guidelines

First United Methodist Church Carrollton

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First Church Sponsored and Supported Short-Term Missions

Sponsored Mission

A trip organized to locations where we believe God has given us a focus at this time as a means of involving the entire congregation in praying, giving and participating.

Supported Mission

We in no way seek to limit short-term mission involvement to First Church sponsored trips. We understand that our particular areas of focus are not all that God is doing. We encourage members to participate in other trips not directly organized by the church and to share their experiences.

Team Leader

The team leader must meet all the requirements for participation in the trip. In addition he/she must be able to:

1. Organize the logistics for the trip including travel/orientation/coordination with host ministry.
2. Participate in the review/approval of participants.
3. Provide spiritual and practical leadership for the mission.
4. Coordinate activities with church staff liaison responsible for Missions.

Note: This may be divided between more than one person.

Sponsored short-term missions and leaders will be approved and supported by the staff liaison and Missions Chair.

Timeline and Checklist

12 Months Out

- Select location, date and project activities (big picture)
- Contact Embassy of host country and discuss with host ministry visa/entrance requirements
- Confirm date with host
- Identify site coordinator
- Determine minimum/maximum number of participants
- Identify team leader(s)
- Calendar pre-trip meetings and activities
- Establish preliminary budget
- Check the Centers for Disease Control regarding immunizations needed - <http://www.cdc.gov/>
- Check with the State Department regarding any significant security issues
- Publicity – see below

9 Months Out

- Prepare general information sheet regarding the trip including:
 - General information on the country/culture
 - Information regarding the ministry hosting the trip
 - Preliminary cost estimate
 - Passport process (passports must expire no less than 6 months after the trip ends)
 - Inoculations needed
 - Pre-trip meeting dates/times/locations
 - Visa information
- Prepare/make available application forms - <http://firstchurch.net/GO>
- Publicity – see below

6 Months Out

- Collect registration forms and deposits
- Determine and announce payment schedule
- Make group reservations
- Finalize budget
- Start the Visa process
- Inform host of participants
- Determine ministry supplies needed
- Begin getting inoculations
- Begin monthly meetings for prayer/orientation
 - The Missions Team recommends that each team participate in a 6-week study of *Helping Without Hurting in Short-Term Missions* by Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert. The last session takes place after the trip to help team members process and give feedback.
- Publicity – see below
- Insurance

4 Months Out

- ½ of trip costs due

3 Months Out

- Collect copies of passports
- Purchase/confirm airline tickets
- Secure emergency phone numbers for all team members
- Prepare list of host contact information for family/church members
- Begin team orientation
- Confirm all team members' passports/visas/inoculations
- Transfer funds for materials/fees to host country
- Prepare prayer partner list
- Determine "blessing" for host ministry
- Begin weekly prayer/orientation meetings
- Begin ministry preparations – i.e. music/drama/testimonies
- Assign photographer – *it is best to have one assigned photographer and for others to leave cameras/phones behind or in suitcases, for reasons discussed later*
- Insurance

2 Months Out

- Final payments due for the trip

1 Month Out

- Get tickets/e-tickets from airline or travel agent
- Confirm airport transport means and times for departure/arrival
- Provide a packing list
- Assemble First Aid kit
- Purchase ministry materials
- Confirm luggage requirements
- Obtain tentative schedule from host and distribute to team
- If cash is required from the church make a check request with the Business Manager

1 Week Out

- Final meeting with staff
- Pack/distribute ministry suitcases
- Get cash needed for trip
- Team roster with passport numbers to US Embassy in host country if required
- Finalize prayer partner list and distribute to team
- Prayer for departing team

Short-Term Mission Publicity

9 Months Prior to Trip

Fill out the entire Communications Form at <http://firstchurch.net/announce/>
Request that announcement runs for 3 weeks in the Bulletin and Sunday School Announcements
Schedule a meeting for interested people to get more information or sign up to go
If available, provide a short video for social media or possibly for Sunday morning service
If trip is open to youth, make sure announcements are included in their announcements

8 Months Prior to Trip

Repeat all of 9 month activities replacing “general interest” with a “serious interest” meeting –
have costs and registration sheets available

6 Months Prior to Trip

Repeat all of 9 month activities replacing “general/serious interest” with “planning to go” meeting
– bring applications and deposit

6-3 Weeks Prior to Trip

Fill out a new Communications Form online making prayer partner lists available
Put a sign-up list at the Welcome Desk 2-3 weeks in advance of departure

1 Week Prior to Trip

Pray for team going on trip. You might plan a packing evening for ministry bags and invite family
and prayer partners to join for prayer at the end of the time

Short-Term Mission Budget Guide

Airline Ticket Total	_____
Visa Costs (required in some countries)	_____
Arrival and/or Departure Taxes	_____
(you can usually research online or your host organization should know)	
Local Transportation	_____
Food on site	_____
Food in transit	_____
Lodging	_____
Host Country Coordination Fees	_____
Insurance	_____
Team Fees (ministry materials, leader, first aid)	_____
Project Costs	_____
Sightseeing	_____
Total Cost of Trip	_____

Individual Cost Determination and Timeline for Payment

Airline Tickets	_____
Visa Costs (required in some countries)	_____
Arrival and/or Departure Taxes	_____
(you can usually research online or your host organization should know)	
Local Transportation	_____
Food on site	_____
Food in transit	_____
Lodging	_____
Host Country Coordination Fees	_____
Insurance	_____
Team Fees (ministry materials, leader, first aid)	_____
Project Costs	_____
Sightseeing	_____
Amount of fund raising	(_____)
Amount from sponsors	(_____)
Deposit	(_____)
Payment #2 (=airfare)	(_____)
Payment #3	(_____)

Payment schedule

- \$100 due with application
- Balance of airfare at approx. 3 months (when the church has to pay for the tickets)
- Total due 1 month prior to departure

Requirements for Participation in a Short-Term Mission

While it is our desire that everyone would participate in a short-term mission we must not neglect our ultimate goal, which is to glorify God and spread His kingdom first and foremost. Certain things are expected of all participants.

1. Everyone participating in a First Church Short-Term Mission must have professed their faith in Jesus Christ and agree with the beliefs as held by our church which can be found at <http://firstchurch.net/about/what-we-believe/>
2. Any participant should and most likely will be asked to provide a written testimony of when and how they came to a relationship with Christ.
3. Have a healthy prayer life.
4. Approach the trip with an attitude of service.
5. Seek to lift up God in all that they do on the trip; radiate Christ's love by actions, attitude and words.
6. Be willing to follow the guidance of the team leader.
7. Be flexible and open to other cultures and ways of worship.
8. Be in prayer for and be willing to work alongside the host and the host church or ministry.
9. Be open to the Holy Spirit and what God may be saying and wanting to do in their life while on the mission.
10. Be willing to share what God did in their life while on the trip.
11. Keep a written or photo journal about the mission. Note how you saw God move each day.
12. Seek to bond in fellowship and prayer with other team members by attending the assigned meetings to prepare for the trip (absences will be allowed if previously discussed with team leader).

Forms

Short-Term Mission Applications

Applications can be submitted online or printed and submitted on paper or via email.
(<http://firstchurch.net/go>)

Emergency Forms

Forms must be submitted by every participant and carried by the leader at all times during travel.

Passports, Visas, Legal Issues

Contact the embassy of the host country as well as the host ministry to define

Visa requirements

- Get necessary forms

- Define timeline for applications

- Define necessity of notarizing forms and/or State Department varication of notary

Special requirements for minors entering the country – with or without parents

Other legal issues regarding U.S. citizens entering the country

Are there any non-U.S. citizens on your team? If so, verify with the embassy whether there are any unique requirements for them. Sometimes problems will arise re-entering the U.S. which did not arise during departure, so make sure they carry all necessary papers or forms.

Emergency Contact Information

In case of emergency contact the following:

Name _____ Relationship to participant _____

Address _____ Home Phone _____

_____ Work Phone _____

Cell Phone _____

Secondary emergency contact:

Name _____ Relationship to participant _____

Address _____ Home Phone _____

_____ Work Phone _____

Cell Phone _____

Other information team leader should know in case of emergency:

Medical Information

Name _____

Date of last physical examination _____

List any physical disabilities or health problems you have, and indicate whether you have special needs regarding sleeping accommodations, meals, etc.

List all medications you take on a regular basis, with exact dosages. Please carry all medications in original packaging when you travel.

List any allergies.

Travel Arrangements

1. All travel arrangements are to be determined and made by the team leader working with the Missions Chair and Global Missions Coordinator. (While many people have airline miles an important part of the trip and chemistry of the team are wrapped up in the traveling between point A and point B together. First Church will seek the least expensive option every time and sometimes that may mean that earned airline miles will not be able to be used.)
2. Tickets should be blocked 3-6 months in advance, if possible.
3. All tickets should be bought through the leader with the exception of air miles tickets or plans to depart or return at a different time. Personal ticket purchases must be approved by the leader of the trip and individual plans should coordinate with the larger group and in-country transportation provided by host ministries.
4. Tickets must be fully paid 1-2 months before trip departure, at the point when the church has to pay for the tickets. Additional trip costs can be collected closer to departure.
5. Late decisions must be approved by trip leader. If airfare is costlier than the rest of the group, the latecomer must pay the difference. The trip leader will assist with purchasing tickets.

Fundraising Guidelines

Any team fundraising activities must be approved by the Finance Commission.

Participants are encouraged to do everything they can to work and/or sell personal items to finance their trip. Do the possible and expect God to do the impossible.

Fundraising letters to family and friends are encouraged.

Letters should be approved by team leader prior to distribution.

Scholarship requests can be made to the Missions Team for assistance when needed.

Scholarship Application/Approval Process

Write a brief request to the Missions Team requesting a scholarship with specific information regarding current funds available and what is needed. Please include how the fundraising guidelines have been implemented in your specific situation. The Missions Team does not have designated scholarship funds to be used for short-term missions, but will consider each need.

Team Orientation

1. The Missions Team recommends that each team participate in a 6-week study of *Helping Without Hurting in Short-Term Missions* by Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert. The last session takes place after the trip to help team members process and give feedback.
2. Develop exercises to help the team members learn each other's names and share personal stories about how God has led them to participate in this trip.
3. Talk about objectives of the trip.
 - a. The team goes at the invitation of the host, and the host will be in charge.
 - b. The team members go as servants. Discuss what this means.
 - c. Work goals matter, but relationship building comes first.
 - d. Discuss the importance of flexibility and going as a learner.
4. Explore culture.
 - a. Consider assigning team members to do research and report to the group on the history, geography, government, spiritual life, customs, lifestyle and the political/economic climate of the area.
 - b. Discuss and prepare for culture shock, including personal reactions to poverty, pain, begging, etc. Team members will need to adapt to different living conditions: schedule, noise, food, work and concepts of time and space. It may help to remember that many people in other countries eat only one or two meals daily, often without meat. The hosts sometimes sacrifice to provide the team with the best that they have. Please realize and appreciate the differences and eat what is placed before you by the hosts unless limited by medical reasons.
 - c. Discuss with the team the topic of North American ethnocentrism. It is as important to know ourselves and be aware of our own cultural baggage as it is to know that of our hosts. Christians visiting another country must be sensitive to the fact that life in other countries may not be what they are used to. It is not wrong, just different. All cultures are valid. Team members must learn to avoid making assumptions about their hosts' situation based on their own situation.
 - d. Where another language is primary, memorize a few phrases such as greetings, requests for basic needs and "thank you."

Cultural Topics to Consider

Greetings: Know how to greet and how to react properly when greeted. Our North American handshake is generally accepted, but sometimes not between a man and a woman. Practice the local greetings.

Gestures: Be cautious when talking with your hands. For instance, a simple "ok" sign in the U.S. may be obscene in another country.

Dress: Generally conservative dress is best. Dressing inappropriately is the easiest way to offend your local hosts. North Americans tend to dress too casually. Shorts may be especially offensive in some places. Leave all expensive jewelry at home. Ask your host contact about what is acceptable and follow his/her advice.

Eating Habits: Food, table manners and mealtimes vary from country to country. Team members should be prepared to enjoy something new. Hosts prepare their very best for us.

Conversation: North Americans are quick to “get to the point” and are often perceived as being too direct and open. Diplomacy and tact are required to avoid giving offense. As a general rule of thumb, political issues should be avoided.

Team Gifts: It is appropriate to take the host families gifts, but know the taboos for the country. Avoid extravagant gifts.

Gifts from Individuals: Advise team members against indiscriminate giving of clothing and other articles during and at the end of the mission experience. Give them instead to your host or church group for distribution within the community. We must remember to give with integrity.

Public Behavior: In many countries, people stand closer together when conversing. In others, men may walk arm-in-arm along the street. Women especially must be sensitive to local standards of behavior in order to avoid appearing immodest. When discussing cultural sensitivity, role=play by team members is an excellent training vehicle. Some scenarios may include arrival in the country, daily travel to a lodging site, a workday experience involving construction, and sitting down to a typical meal prepared by the hosts. Have the role players dramatize what should not be done.

Other Areas of Cultural Sensitivity:

- Expect simple accommodations. There may be no potable water, bugs or lack of privacy.
- Expect differences in sanitation and personal hygiene.
- Know that there may be times with no water or electricity. Team members must be conservative with their personal water and power use.
- In many countries, there will be a basket next to the toilet for used toilet tissue. Use it – paper will clog the plumbing.
- Know the appropriate local etiquette for tipping.
- There is probably no more offensive item than a camera. Always ask permission before taking someone’s picture. Be sensitive to people’s feelings when taking pictures. Private moments deserve to be kept private.
- Know the name of the leader of the country.
- Know the dominant religion.
- Be able to recognize the national flag.
- Be punctual but don’t demand it of your hosts. Many people will not own a watch. A mission volunteer quotes someone from another country as saying, “In the USA everyone has a watch but no one has time. Here we don’t have watches, but we have time.”

Spiritual Growth

- a. Keep a personal journal. Journaling is one way to cope with experiences that may be overwhelming at first. The journal will also help you be a better communicator of your mission. It helps you remember what you saw, how you felt and what you learned. More vivid stories will come from your journal as you reread it weeks after your trip has ended. Be yourself in what you write. Be honest with God and with yourself. Record your observations, feelings and experiences. Reflect on how you have seen God at work during the mission.
- b. Keep a Team journal This will be an invaluable treasure after your trip. You could assign 1 team member to keep it or pass it around each day. Don't try to record every event but memorable ones. Make copies after the trip for each team member.
- c. Pray.
- d. Be open to the Holy Spirit and to what God may be saying.
- e. Take the posture of a learner.
- f. Pray for and support the team leader in his or her decisions.
- g. Tell the story of the mission when you return home.

Group Discussion Questions

What kind of poverty did you see today?

When did you experience failure or when were you discouraged today?

What sign of hope did you see today?

What is the visual image of today that will always stay with you?

What would Jesus have done today?

How does it feel not to have an answer to all of the questions?

What have we learned from the people we have served?

What can these two communities do together as a result of our time together?

What does this Scripture say to us about who God is and who we are?

What does this Scripture say about our relationship with God and each other?

What has this experience meant to you?

How is it going to change the way you live when you return home?

Post Mission Communications

Team leader is responsible for preparing a report for the church. Include team journal and photos.

Each individual is to write a personal testimony from the trip and an informal evaluation or any suggestions for improvement or commendations for things that went well.

Try to have 2 follow-up meetings after the trip.

Debriefing session (*Helping Without Hurting in Short-Term Missions* has a session for this purpose).

You might want to have another trip about a month after the trip to share testimonies.

Pray for the host ministry and your fellow team members.