

Short Term Ministry Trip Leader's Team Training Manual

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Training Topics

Preparation is the key to a successful trip. Schedule enough meetings to cover team training and trip logistics adequately. If this is a youth trip, invite parents to the first and last meetings; many of their questions can be answered in a group setting. You may want to schedule a team retreat for the team to “get away” and bond.

Introductory Team Meeting

- Invite Worldwide Pastor to kick off meeting

- Meet the team members
- Explain purpose of trip
- Discuss pre-trip, on-trip, and post-trip expectations
- Talk through support raising, forms, etc.

Team Dynamics: Shared Vision Key to Success

A shared vision guides the team to success and unity. Talk to your in-country contacts and the Worldwide staff about the vision for your trip. It is your job to communicate this vision with your team. All other goals, personal and collective, come from/out of the shared group vision.

- Read Phil 2:1-4

Growing in Love for One Another (John 13:35)

The world cries out for genuine love. True love is your team's greatest witness.

Team unity rests on:

1. Unity in the Holy Spirit
2. Shared Vision
3. Knowing each other's story
4. Knowing each other's gifts
5. Trusting each other

Action Steps:

- Pray for a spirit of unity and love to cover your team
- Relate goals to the shared team vision
- Pray together for your trip
- Have 2 or 3 team members share their faith story each meeting
- Take personality tests, discuss gifts and interests—be creative!

Social Media

Create a closed group on a social media site for your team to ask questions, post prayer requests, and stay updated on logistic deadlines.

*This is to supplement team meetings, not a replacement

Culture & Language

Learning about your destination's culture helps you adopt a humble, Christ-like attitude that will honor your national contacts. Go as a servant, ready to learn and make mistakes. Live out the Apostle Paul's example of "becoming all things to all people" with the hope that in so doing, so might be saved (1 Cor. 9:22-23),

Have team members pick a research topic to present at team meetings.

Suggested Research Areas:

Religious Background—Basic religious beliefs, differences to Christianity, identity and practice of the people, creative ways of sharing Christ in this context

Political Background—primary political system, length of time under system, major differences from home political system

Social Background—social structures, family make-up, male and female roles and interaction, ways for your team to honor the social structure

Geography Background—basic geography and climate, affect of climate on daily life (For example: Taking siestas mid-day because of the heat), weather and geography your team will probably encounter

Historical Background—national and people group historical overview, internal and external wars, political stability, the affect of history on how nationals view themselves

Economic Background—economic driving force, industry, agriculture, tourism, standard of living, average income, expected living conditions for your team

Cultural background—cultural celebrations, holidays, arts, drama, music, ties between culture and religious belief

Statistics and Other Facts—population, racial mix, etc.

Spiritual Preparation

“If I had eight hours to chop down a tree, I’d spend the first six sharpening the axe.”
-Abraham Lincoln

Experience has shown us that God will likely use your upcoming trip to grow you spiritually, socially, and emotionally in ways you might never expect.

Prayer

Prayer changes everything. Jesus modeled a lifestyle of prayer. And if Jesus did it, we want to do it too. Pray that God will grow in you a teachable heart and a desire to be a servant to all. Ask God to increase the love of His son in you. Pray that you will focus on what God is doing so that your heart is continually encouraged as you look to Him.

Along with those who support you financially, find individuals and families that will pray for you as you undertake this ministry journey.

Some Prayer Points:

- That you choose to celebrate what God is doing and to focus on Him in all circumstances—and that your attitude would remain consistently good.
- That the Holy Spirit will move in the hearts of the people you're ministering
- That your team partners with what God is already doing
- For team unity
- That your team models Christ's love among yourselves, national believers and to every person you meet
- Ask God to highlight something specific about the people, nation, or culture for you to pray about

Prayer Activities

Here are some different prayer activities to keep prayer time fresh and exciting. They may take you out of your comfort zone—but so will your trip. Come to these with expectancy and check to make sure you're asking God what *he* wants to do on the trip instead of praying your own objective.

***Prayer is an essential part of your team preparation and an essential element of EVERY meeting.**

Praying with Maps:

Maps are visual tools that help you focus on area needs, and ministry and global partners based there. Take what you've learned about that area and pray about it (e.g. over the capital pray for justice and wise government).

The Lord's Prayer:

Type out the Lord's Prayer leaving space between the lines. Print off one for each team member. Write in a trip specific prayer following the pattern of the Lord's prayer. (E.g. under "on earth as it is in heaven" you could write something like, "may the people of ____ know the full measure of your love as it is revealed in heaven.")

Lectio Divina:

A prayer form followed by early church fathers who wanted "eat" the scripture as the bread of life. Begin by being still before the Lord, then slowly read a selected scripture passage several times. Narrow your focus from general to more specific, each time the passage is read.

1. Listen to the passage as a whole
 2. Pay attention to a specific word or phrase that stands out
 3. Ask God to apply this to your life
- (Check online for more detailed descriptions).

Spirit-led Prayer time:

The Bible says that Jesus intercedes on our behalf (Romans 8:34) and the Holy Spirit groans on our behalf (Romans 8:26). This activity is about joining with God in what he is *already* praying. Sit as a group, pen and paper ready. Ask God to

show you what he is praying. Then record the verse, word, phrase, idea, or picture that comes to mind. Share as a group, noting similar themes/ideas. Pray as a group about concepts most frequently mentioned.

Biblical Declarations:

His promises, not our circumstances, are the truth in every situation. Have each team member sit with the Bible and ask God to share his promises. As you read scripture, hunt for God's promises and write a corresponding declaration (e.g. the promises of 2 Timothy 1:7 and Romans 8:11 could be written as, "I am bold and fearless. The same power that raised Christ Jesus from the dead lives in me"). This powerful activity builds expectations for what God will do and helps us recognize when he does it. It also can be turned into a unifying team prayer time while on the trip—print off a list of all the declarations and say them together each morning.

Prayer Walking (on-site)

This is a great activity to claim every place on which you set your foot for the kingdom. (Jos 1:3)

WHY

- Opens our eyes and hearts to know how to pray
- Heightens our sensitivity to the culture that is hosting us
- Prepares the hearts of people to receive the gospel
- Helps us know how to present the gospel
- Effects a change in the spiritual climate of the place
- We invite and welcome the Lord and his Kingdom to that place

WHERE

- Work sites, government sites, schools, hospitals, homes
- Consecrated sites
- High places or overlooks
- Sites of harmony or tragedy
- City gates
- Sites of past or ongoing sin
- Spiritual power points
- Land for sale (claim it for God)

HOW

- In groups of two or three
- Specifically
- Fervently
- Discreetly and quietly
- Observe and stay alert
- By the Holy Spirit's direction
- Feel the spiritual climate
- Pray visions, words of knowledge and wisdom, discernment

WHAT TO PRAY

- Before you leave pray for protection by claiming the blood of Jesus that covers you
- Speak blessings (and only blessings, we have no need to curse anything!)
- Pray scripture
- Any specific prayer requests from workers or nationals
- Pray for salvations, transformations
- Pray for miracles
- Ask God what is on His heart and pray it
- That God's perfect will would dominate the lives of people
- That they would respond to His will and not be overcome by evil forces
- That people would be drawn to Jesus (John 6:44)
- Loose the spirit of adoption (Romans 8:15)
- That believers will cross unbelievers paths and enter into positive relationships with them (Mt. 9:38)
- That the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored (2 Thess. 3:1)
- That the name of the Lord Jesus be held in high honor (Acts 19:17)
- The earth is the Lord's and everything in it (Psalm 24:1)
- Now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation (2 Cor. 6:2)

WORSHIP

- Welcome and invite His presence and power
- Commune with God
- God dwells in, inhabits and is enthroned on our praises. (Psalm 22:3)
- Worship confuses, distracts, and frustrates the enemy. (2 Chron. 20:22)
- Sing praise songs as the Holy Spirit leads (quietly)

DEBRIEF AND PRAY TOGETHER WHEN YOU'RE FINISHED

Spiritual Victory

Often when we join God in his sovereign work around the globe, our eyes are opened to the spiritual realm like never before. Christ's blood bought us complete victory. Prepare your team to walk in Christ's victory by focusing on our big God instead of worrying about the (incredibly small) devil. The global partners will direct you further as necessary. Listen to and heed their advice.

*Remember, the most frequently commanded thing in scripture is to not fear.

Preparation:

- Nothing can fake intimacy with Christ—knowing him deeply and truly is the best preparation
- Memorize and meditate on scripture—particularly passages about who God is (all powerful, without comparison) and who you are (a child of God—Romans 8)
- Forgive everyone who has wronged you regardless if they deserve it or not (Matthew 18:21-35)
- Make a list of declarations of God's truth (see prayer activities)

While on your trip:

- Begin each day by reminding yourself of Biblical promises
- Worship! (God inhabits the praise of His people—Psalm 22:3)
- Journal what happened that day and where you saw God move
- Focus on what God is doing (not on what he isn't doing)
- Claim the blood of Jesus
- Above all else, keep your eyes focused on Jesus

Sharing your story

Sharing your journey with God helps open the door for spiritual discussions. Sharing your story is a simple, practical and effective testimony to God's existence and Christ's power of change lives. It is quite common to have nationals ask you to share your faith story when talking with them or at a church meeting.

The purpose of sharing your story is:

- In a **3-5 minute** story, express how you came to know God personally and how this changed your life. Do not focus solely on you –it's really a story **about God**
- Communicate the basis of the Christian faith in the context of your **personal experience**
- Open the door for a more extensive conversation on spiritual matters
- Explain to others the reason why you believe certain things or act in certain ways

Here are some guidelines to assist you in preparing and sharing your Faith Story

**Begin with prayer, asking God to help you in this process.

- a. **Be authentic – be you!**
 - Tell your story the way it happened – be real!
 - Resist the temptation to compare your story with others
 - Don't embellish your story or dwell excessively on past sins
- b. **Be intentional.**
 - Identify one main idea or theme you want to communicate
- c. **Be concise.**
 - Avoid clichés and language that sound overly religious, i.e. “salvation” or “scripture”
 - Make it interesting
 - Don't ramble—fewer words leave a greater impact

- Think in chapters or blocks and bridge them together. The blocks can be: 1) What my life was like before I became a Christian 2) How I became a Christian 3) How Jesus has changed my life. The three sections do not all have to be equal in length and content
- Remember this is your Faith Story, not your life story!
- Remember you are telling a story, not teaching

Finally:

- Write out your faith story
- Circle all words that might be strange or confusing to others (Christianeze)
- Rewrite it with more familiar words to the culture of the person

Sharing Through an Interpreter/Translator

When speaking through a translator:

- Pray not only for yourself in a sharing situation but also for your interpreter.
- Talk with your interpreter prior to your sharing time. Through the conversation get a feeling for how well your interpreter is able to understand and translate for you.
- **Look at the audience and speak normally.** Don't look at the translator while speaking.
- Speak slowly and succinctly. Wait for the translator to finish speaking before you say your next sentence.
- Don't use American slang or colloquialisms.
- Don't say too much at one time.
- Get feedback from your audience to see if they comprehend what is being translated.
- If you are going to use any type of "group discussion", ask the translator to explain it all at once (if you have prepared him/her.) You don't need to say this kind of thing line by line.

Reentry

What is Reentry Stress?

Reentry stress is returning to a familiar setting and finding that you've changed and that things no longer seem the same. Suddenly we can feel out of place in our own culture.

Contributing Factors:

- 1) Surprise
 - Not anticipating that there will be changes is the first mistake
 - Before you leave, **expect changes**

- Spend time as a group journaling things you expect will happen on the trip and areas of personal growth, but also how things may be different upon your return
- 2) Value Conflict
- Values once taken for granted can seem less significant or unimportant
 - Often these changes are not apparent until returning to your own culture

Common Symptoms and Effects of Reentry Stress

- Disorientation — a feeling that you are out of place, do not fit in, feeling like a guest in a foreign land
- Feelings of loneliness or isolation
- Restlessness — a desire to "get away" or to return as soon as possible to the area where you served
- Feeling tired, immobile
- Feeling that nobody understands your experience or that nobody cares
- Critical attitude toward home — waste, extravagance, wrong way of doing things, etc.
- Loss of identity — just another person in a group
- Out of ordinary emotional responses
- Inability to communicate new ideas, concepts freely
- Feeling of superiority
- Feeling of dissatisfaction
- Defensive in responses
- Retreat, withdrawal, lack of concern, apathy
- Confusion over inwardly conflicting attitudes and responses
- Rejection of your mission experience, desire to forget or not talk about it

Hints on Making Reentry a Smooth Process for Your Team

- Ask the Holy Spirit to rule over every situation, over all attitudes and responses
- Anticipate that the reentry process will be a positive and fruitful experience
- Realize that some stress during reentry is normal. It is an indication that the mind, body, and emotions are attempting to readjust
- Expect the effects of reentry stress to be only temporary
- Not everyone will experience reentry stress to the same degree or in the same way—those who have made previous returns may notice less effect

Towards Growthful Reentry

Linda Edwards Olson, Student Missionary Project Debriefing, (Wheaton, IL: SMP, 1992). Adapted with permission.

How do people handle this reentry time?

The Assimilators seem to slide right back into their home culture with little to no problem and almost appear to have forgotten their experience. These people may seem to have adjusted well but may have missed out on the greatest growth opportunity, for they do not seem to integrate the things they saw, learned and questioned into a new view of life and the world.

The Alienators seem to reject the home culture, although for short termers this may not last very long. They may become very pessimistic and critical of their home culture realizing that they too have been a part of it. They seem limited in their ability to see the range of social structures and their appropriateness and are "stuck" in their ability to create personal alternatives for life values. They may finally succumb to the home culture out of a need to belong somewhere. Again, this reaction does not afford a growthful reentry time.

The Integrator is the one who expects the dissonance he or she is experiencing, although maybe not in each 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 means that they will grapple with how to integrate the things they saw, learned and questioned into creative alternative choices.

Helping Your Team Experience Growthful Reentry

Upon initial reentry, you and others on your team may experience many physical changes: tiredness, apathy, sleep disturbances, loss of appetite, etc. These are normal. Balanced diet, balanced sleep and balanced exercise should not be taken lightly. This will help to bring the body back in balance! (It will also help emotionally.)

Unmet expectations — since this is the major problem for the returnee, it is best discussed before the short termer even goes out. Orientation has prepared them the "other" culture, not their own. So they do not "expect" the return to be a problem. After all, they grew up in this culture! However, if the team can anticipate the changes as they come back they will be one step ahead. Try to identify what the sources of dissonance might be upon returning.

What values and attitudes are changing?

Debrief with others who will listen and ask questions:

- ≡ What did you do?
- ≡ Who did you meet?
- ≡ How did you live?
- ≡ What was the easiest?
- ≡ What was the most difficult?
- ≡ What was funny?
- ≡ What did you learn about yourself?
- ≡ What did you learn about the other culture?
- ≡ What did you learn about the church?
- ≡ About God?

Find one person who will spend time with you in this way.

If you kept a journal, go over one entry a day and ask God to teach you something new or remind you of something out of that entry. Continue to write in a journal with thoughts, feelings, insights, and prayers. Pray alone, with others, with a prayer partner; pray for the people you met, the church, yourself, the people with whom you want to share.

Give yourself a spiritual checkup: Do I feel closer or more distant from God? What will help my love for Christ grow? A new quiet time? A few long prayer walks? A day with the Lord?

Recall the successes and accomplishments of the short term mission experience and develop a list of gifts and strengths that God gave and affirmed. Become a storyteller. Learn to tell short stories from your short term experience that will speak to those with whom you want to share.

Learn how to answer, not despise the question, "How was your trip?" Use a few descriptive words and ask if you can spend more time together sharing about your experience.

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Mother Teresa

No Greater Love

I have experienced many human weaknesses, human frailties, and I still experience them. But we need to use them. We need to work for Christ with a humble heart, with the humility of Christ. He comes and uses us to be His love and passion in the world in spite of our weaknesses and frailties.

One day I picked up a man from the gutter. His body was covered with worms. I brought him to our house, and what did this man say? He did not curse. He did not blame anyone. He just said, "I've lived like an animal in the street, but I'm going to die like an "angel, loved and cared for!" It took us three hours to clean him. Finally, the man looked up at the sister and said, "Sister, I'm going home to God." And then he died. I've never seen such a radiant smile on a human face as the one I saw on that man's face. He went home to God. See what love can do! It is possible that young sister did not think about it at the moment, but she was touching the body of Christ. Jesus said so when He said, "As often as you did it for one of my least brothers, you did it for me" (Matthew 25:40 RSY). And this is where you and I fit into God's plan.

“The Mexican Fisherman”

Author Unknown

The American investment banker was at the pier of a small coastal Mexican village when a small boat with just one fisherman docked.

Inside the small boat were several large yellow fin tuna. The American complimented the Mexican on the quality of his fish and asked how long it took to catch them.

The Mexican replied, "Only a little while."

The American then asked, "Why didn't you stay out longer and catch more fish?"

The Mexican said, "With this I have more than enough to support my family's needs."

The American then asked, "But what do you do with the rest of your time?"

The Mexican fisherman said, "I sleep late, fish a little, play with my children, take siesta with my wife, Maria, stroll into the village each evening where I sip wine and play guitar with my amigos, I have a full and busy life."

The American scoffed, "I am a Harvard MBA and could help you. You should spend more time fishing; and with the proceeds, buy a bigger boat. With the proceeds from the bigger boat you could buy several boats. Eventually you would have a fleet of fishing boats. Instead of selling your catch to a middleman you would sell directly to the

processor; eventually opening your own cannery. You would control the product, processing and distribution. You would need to leave this small coastal fishing village and move to Mexico City, then Los Angeles and eventually New York where you will run your ever-expanding enterprise."

The Mexican fisherman asked, "But, how long will this all take?"

To which the American replied, "15 to 20 years."

"But what then?" asked the Mexican.

The American laughed and said that's the best part. "When the time is right you would announce an IPO and sell your company stock to the public and become very rich, you would make millions."

"Millions?...Then what?"

The American said, "Then you would retire. Move to a small coastal fishing village where you would sleep late, fish a little, play with your kids, take siesta with your wife, stroll to the village in the evenings where you could sip wine and play your guitar with your amigos."

Hot vs. Cold Climate Culture Tips from *Foreign to Familiar*

Relationship vs. Task Orientation

Hot-Climate Cultures

- Are relationship based.
- Communication must create a "feel-good" atmosphere.
- Though the individuals may be otherwise, the society is feeling oriented.
- Efficiency and time do not take a priority over the person.
- It is inappropriate to "talk business" upon arriving at a business meeting or making a business phone call.

Cold-Climate Cultures

- Are task oriented.
- Communication must provide accurate information.
- Though individuals may be otherwise, the society is logic oriented.
- Efficiency and time are high priorities, and taking them seriously is a statement of respect for the other person.

Different Concepts of Time and Planning

Hot-Climate Cultures

- Are not as oriented toward the clock as cold-climate cultures.
- Are event oriented.
- Are spontaneous and flexible in their approach to life.
- Respond to what life brings.
- Consider that saving time is not as important as experiencing the moment.
- Recognize that structure is required in some areas of life (the military, for example).
- Have informal visiting as part of the event.

Cold-Climate Cultures

- Are time-oriented.
- Are structured in their approach to life.
- Enjoy using time efficiently.
- Try to plan their day, and saving time is a value.

Expecting the event (dinner, the arrival of a guest, or a meeting) to begin at the time announced. Visiting or informally chatting happens before or after the event

Articles Online:

Lots of great information and articles on many subjects relating to missions can be found at: <https://urbana.org/go-and-do/missional-life>