



Prep & Training

Domestic Trips



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A Love Letter to Short-Term Missionaries

Dear friends, and I mean that. If you're going on a short term mission trip this year or any time in the future, then you're my kind of people.

I took my first trip when I was 15 and was completely unprepared. My cousin was 16 and we went on the journey to Asia by ourselves. We made every possible mistake known to man including offending the nationals and getting caught in a bathroom emergency sans toilet paper. In the past 17 years of mission experiences I've seen a bit of everything. So, from my heart to yours, here are some thoughts before you trek across the country for Jesus.

1. WHAT YOU ARE DOING IS GOOD AND VERY IMPORTANT

It costs a lot of money to take these trips, not to mention the fact that you're probably sacrificing valuable vacation or free-time to serve around the country. But, in spite of all the personal cost, the impact of this trip on the places you go (but maybe even more so on your soul) doesn't have a price tag.

Every conversation you have, every ministry you help with, has lasting impact in God's economy. Sure, you might not know the culture of the place or the people (yes, even in the U.S.), but your time as a missionary in this place is valuable and important.

2. KEEP EVERYTHING IN PERSPECTIVE

You can always tell what someone is really like as soon as you get them away from their home and culture. If this is your first trip, and even if it's your 30th, you might be in for a freak out or two when everyone around you is not playing by the rules of how the "world works" (for you, that is). It's ok, just try your best, take some deep breaths, pray a lot, and realize that your successes are great, but you're not the mission champion of the world. And, if you mess up, it's alright too.

3. YOU ARE NOT THE EXPERT

This is probably my strongest word of advice to you-we're so glad you're going, we're pumped to have you serve alongside us, but just do us all a favor and follow. You can take risks and do some great things, but that guy, even the weird one wearing the Petra t-shirt who has been living there for years, knows this culture, this context way better than you, that's why it's his job. So, even if you have a second cousin from the area, just wait for your time to shine and don't assume that you are interpreting the events around you correctly.

4. YOU'RE ABOUT TO GET TIRED

Mission trips are exhausting because you don't sleep very much and you output a ton of work and energy. Processing new cultures is tough too. But, they're super tiring especially because spiritual output is more draining than anything else. It's because the spiritual component combines emotional, physical, mental, and the invisible "extra" energy that connects soul to God. And afterwards, you're beat tired. Expect this and you won't be surprised. Try to build some time in your day for a nap and if you can't, get ready to sleep on that plane or car ride home.

5. YOU JUST NEVER KNOW... YOU MIGHT CHANGE THE WORLD.

Every once in a while these experiences turn into something more. In 2005 my wife and I led a group of knucklehead teenagers to Taiwan. They were between the ages of 14-17 and most of them were pretty high maintenance (not all of them, and if you're reading this, you know who you are). I was only 24 and I was leading this trip from NJ to Asia. We stayed up way too late, did some potentially dangerous things, and made a whole lot of memories. We laughed a lot, we prayed a ton, we sang and we cried. And then one day it seemed like the Kingdom of God just exploded around us.

In a two day period we saw over 10 people give their hearts to follow Jesus. There had been no other response all summer and after these two days, nothing more. All over the city in cafés, in hotel rooms, and even in weird Karaoke bars, people who were hungry for God said "yes" to his work in their lives.

We currently have a church plant, a coffee shop, full-time missionaries and interns. That's not all because of that summer, but a lot of it is. And most of those annoying kids on the trip are now pastors, church planters, missionaries, and church leaders. These trips can form you more than you realize.

So, you just never know. Sure, be realistic about how much you can actually do but at the same time, if you're obsessed with God and hungry to see Him act, He will do it. And every once in a while he'll even surprise you.



Who is Envision?

Envision is a movement within the Christian and Missionary Alliance that specializes in missional engagement.

Envision empowers and equips followers of Jesus to live well in a post-everything world. The two branches, Sites & Labs, provide experiences that move people & shape culture.

ENVISION SITES

Envision Sites offer the opportunity to participate in what God is doing in over 20 cities both in the US and around the world. You can be involved in ministry connecting local churches, bringing social justice, and seeing God's Kingdom transform major urban settings. You will also experience discipleship as Site leaders pour into you and give you opportunities to grow no matter where you find yourself on your faith journey.

Envision Trips (7-10 days)

Envision Internships (1 month - 2 years)

Envision GiveBack (give time, money, & skills)

ENVISION LABS

Envision Labs is a branch of Envision offering experiences that shape your leadership and faith. Films explore

the intersection of culture and faith, sharing stories that challenge paradigms and inspire movement.

Campaigns offer a tangible way to make a difference in issues of social justice globally. Summit provides young influencers with a week-long leadership experience in an international city.

Envision Films

Envision Campaigns

Envision Summit



Choosing Your Team

The most successful missions teams have been vetted to make sure your team will work well together and be a blessing to the ministry you will be serving. You will want to have everyone fill out an application (see our template in this handbook).

You may also want to conduct interviews with interested people to help ensure they will positively contribute to your trip.

The ideal team member has a heart to serve and is flexible, in good health, has the endurance to withstand heat and difficult conditions. Many short-term trips will require manual labor or walking long distances. Many of our sites are located in places where they will experience more extreme heat than they are used to.

When the applicant commits to serving on your team, we suggest you ask them to make a non-refundable deposit to hold their spot. This will help you separate out serious team members from those who are just looking. This will help to cover the nonrefundable deposit required by Envision based on your estimated team size.

Suggested amount: \$100-\$150.



Promoting Your Trip

Advertise your trip with the dates and cost in your church community. Make sure you have your budget in place before you announce the trip.

To start your advertising we suggest you talk with your senior pastor, communications director, or whoever is in charge of communications at your church. Inform them of your need to promote this missions trip. Depending on the communications guidelines at your church, consider some of the following options:

- Bulletin announcements
- Direct mailers
- Verbal announcements during Sunday morning worship services
- Verbal announcements at small groups or Sunday school classes
- Video announcement
- Your church's website
- Ask your pastor to include your trip it as a sermon illustration

Once you have promoted the general information about your trip, host an interest meeting for anyone thinking about joining the team. They are not committing to the trip by coming to the meeting. It's simply a way for them to hear more, pick up an application, and ask any questions they may have.

Set a deadline for trip applications and explain how to apply. Not all applicants may be accepted to the team, so be clear how the process works at the interest meeting.



Budgeting

You will want to consider the following additional expenses as you determine your final trip cost for your team:

- Airfare (or gas/vehicle expenses)
- Envision registration cost
- Workbooks and journals
- Team t-shirts
- Extra luggage fees (if applicable)
- Transportation to/from the airports
(gas, toll, rental vans, meals for drivers, etc.)
- Emergency medical needs
- Vacation Bible School supplies (if applicable)
- Other ministry supplies
- Tips
- Leader costs



Fundraising

Advertise your trip with the dates and cost in your church community. Make sure you have your budget in place before you announce the trip.

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Recommended Tool: TeamSend

TeamSend is one of our partners here at Envision. TeamSend offers an online tool created to help you and your team simplify funding and increase communication before, during, and after your short-term trip. It's similar to tools like Indiegogo and Kickstarter, but is designed exclusively to assist churches and nonprofits.

SETTING UP A TEAMSEND PAGE HELPS YOU:

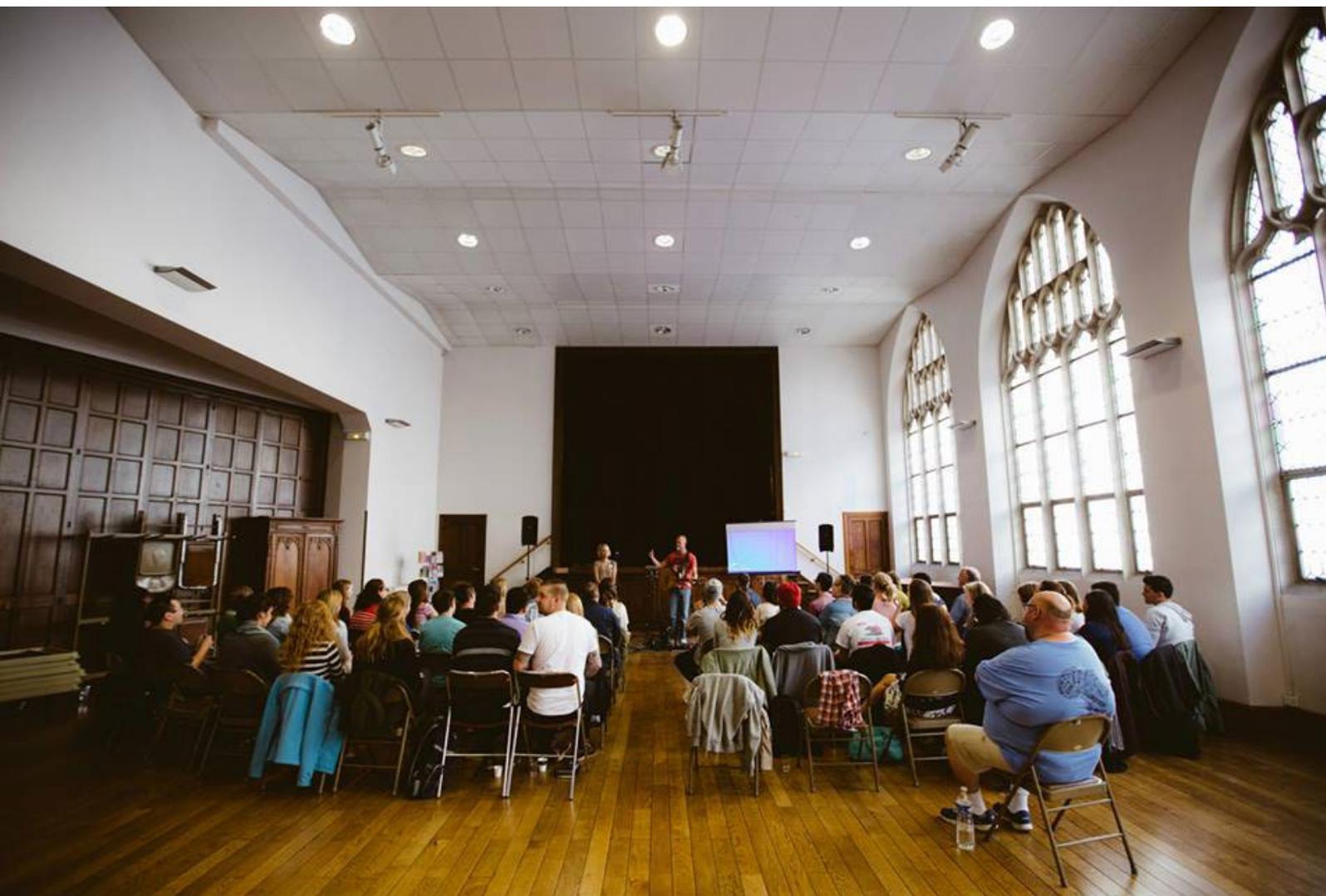
- Introduce your team, share the story of your trip, and announce your fundraising goal
- Serve supporters with simple and secure online giving, and tax-deductible benefits
- Keep everyone updated on fundraising events and team preparations
- Stay connected to your support team throughout the trip by posting blogs and photos
- Blog your final report and express appreciation to all of your supporters

WHAT DOES IT COST?

Using TeamSend is free. There are small credit card and processing fees, but these are covered by donations so that the team does not pay anything for the service.

HOW DO I START?

Go to www.teamsend.org to create a user account and start setting up your team page! (If you'd like to check out an example, go [here](#)).



Your Church Support

It is important that your short-term missions trip is supported by your church leadership and the congregation as a whole. Here are some ways your church can support you:

- Give official blessing or sanction to the trip.
- Provide letters of endorsement on church stationery.
- Let individuals share with the congregation in services.
- Host informational meetings about the trip.
- Publicize the trip.
- Place information in the congregation's monthly newsletter.
- Put inserts in the weekly church bulletin.
- Provide partial funding from the church budget.
- Help in getting out a support-raising letter.
- Organize prayer support.
- Organize fundraising events within the church.



Packing Tips

Here are a few general tips to follow when it's time to pack:

1. MAKE SURE YOU CAN CARRY YOUR LUGGAGE.

Be sure to use a suitcase with wheels or a duffel bag that is easily carried. You may be required to carry or drag your luggage long distances. Your missionary hosts and trip leaders will not be able to help you with carrying your luggage.

2. FOLLOW THE LUGGAGE REQUIREMENTS FOR YOUR AIRLINE.

Please check your airline's website for regulations on all checked and carry-on luggage. This is information that only your airline and travel agent are able to provide. Special note: If you are changing planes or using partnering airlines, be sure that the requirements are valid for all legs of your trip. Many smaller planes have tighter requirements for luggage.

3. USE ZIP-LOCK BAGS.

Packing in zip-locks is a win-win situation. It keeps spills from leaking onto your clothes and can prove useful during your trip.

4. THE TRIP LEADER WILL NEED TO PACK A FEW EXTRA THINGS.

Each of your team members will receive a comprehensive packing list from the Site Handbook. As the leader you have the responsibility of packing those items that the whole team might use or those extra safety items that everyone does not need to bring. Some of the things we recommend you consider packing as the leader:

- Copies of everyone's emergency forms
- Insurance cards
- First-aid kit (including Benadryl, cold medicine)
- Worship booklets with lyrics to songs (if applicable)
- Zip-lock bags
- Team snacks – Gum, Twizzlers, Hershey's Mini's, Trail Mix etc.
- Any supplies you need for debriefs and team devotions



Packing Tips (continued)

POTENTIAL ITEMS (ASK FIRST)

Bedding
Musical instruments
Rain gear
Insect repellent

DO NOT BRING

Expensive jewelry
Valuables that are irreplaceable
Traveler's checks

THANKING YOUR TEAM

Bring a packet of blank cards so you can write lots of thank you notes.

THOUGHTS ON PACKING CLOTHING

These are general guidelines. Please follow any instructions given to you by your team. What you wear communicates nonverbally to the local people around you. Dress for success. Look sharp, especially if teaching or performing. No torn clothing.

Dress very conservatively. No skin showing anywhere between your shoulders and knees. Try the “wave your arms above your head” test before you pack it. If you have a chance to go swimming, only wear a one piece and preferably still wear a shirt over.

Pack light cotton or nylon clothing that dries quickly; jeans are bulky to pack and dry slowly.



Packing List

GENERAL PACKING LIST:

Flashlight	Soap
Watch	Deodorant
Zip-lock bags	Shaving supplies
Reusable water bottle	Flashlight
Jacket	Sunglasses
Comfortable clothes	Hand sanitizer
Dress clothes	Imodium AB
Swimsuit (one piece)	Pepto Bismol
Underwear	Pain reliever
Socks	Bug spray
Shoes (1-3 pairs)	Bible
Shower Sandals	Journal, pen
Towel	Alarm clock
Toiletries	Vitamins
Toothbrush, toothpaste	Photos of family, friends
Shampoo, conditioner	

PACK IN CARRY-ON BAG:

Insurance information	Snacks
Emergency numbers	Jacket or sweatshirt
Cash (newer bills)	Glasses (if applicable)
One change of clothes	Eye mask/ear plugs
Camera	
Prescription medications	

*Location-specific packing lists for your ministry location can be found in the Site Handbook.

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Praying for Your Team

Choose one or two days during your trip to ask each person how he or she is doing and how you can pray. Privately pray for them right there. This can occur during normal work and ministry time. If you have a co-leader of the opposite gender, split the men and women up between you.

Pray for your teammates during your own time alone with God. Tell them they can always pull you aside to pray with them. If you sense that a team member needs extra prayer, either from you or from the team, do not hesitate to offer this. It could be just what that individual needs.

Give team members a chance to share their highs and lows from the day. Encourage them to be vulnerable, and that anything they share will be confidential. Ask specific questions about the day's events as they relate their growth journey. Listen carefully! Do not feel the need to interject your thoughts after everyone's comments. Let team members talk and relate to one other. Shepherd a teachable moment when a team member shares something that opens up a door for the whole team to grow and learn. Affirm—Take time to encourage each other.

ASK:

How have you seen Jesus in your teammates today?

Did they take a step of faith?

Did they go out of their way to serve?

Did they encourage you with something?

Did you see the fruit of the Spirit working in their life?

Did they grow in a new way?

Did they sacrifice something for you or another teammate?

Be specific, and ask team members to encourage their teammates, face to face, with how they noticed God using them. Have team members talk **TO** the person they are affirming, and not **ABOUT** them. Use “you” statements, not “he/she” statements.

Keep affirmations specific, short, and meaningful. Not everyone needs to be affirmed each night. This is not a competition to see who gets the most affirmation. This is all about how Jesus is working through each of you.



Buying Airline Tickets

Envision (and the C&MA) have been working with Raptim Travel for 20+ years. Raptim Humanitarian Travel provides travel support for those serving worldwide, and has for over 66 years. They partner with over 50 worldwide airlines to offer needed benefits. These benefits include (depending on the airline):

- Discounted fares
- Additional luggage allowances
- Relaxed restrictions/refunds/itinerary changes
- Extended booking window

Raptim Humanitarian Travel supplements these airline agreements with international expertise and a variety of extra services to serve those who serve the world.

- Free quotes
- Group specialists
- 24/7 emergency service
- Visa/passport assistance
- Destination information and travel alerts

To get a quote on your trip, group or individual, please contact your Raptim Humanitarian Travel expert. Email serveteam2.us@raptim.org or call 844-882-3233.



Paperwork

REQUIRED FORMS

All forms required for participants will be completed by the participant at the time of registration. If for some reason these forms are incomplete, these will appear in your account under “Manage Roster.” These include Terms & Conditions and a medical form for each individual.

FOR TEAM LEADERS

Background Checks: You are responsible for running a background check on each of your team members over the age of 18. If needed, we recommend using Protect My Ministry. Please include a National Criminal check and a National Sex Offender check. We do not need the completed background checks, just to know that these have been completed (see Team Leader Checklist below).

Child Safety Video: You will receive a link to this video in your welcome email. Please schedule a time with your team to watch this video together, and make space for questions afterwards. Please note that the video contains some sensitive material, so consider screening the video before watching it with your team.

Team Leader Checklist: After making sure that all of your criteria are complete, please scan and email your completed Team Leader Checklist to our Trips Coordinator.



Cross Cultural Sensitivity

Even though you're not leaving the country, You are still entering a culture that is different than what you're used to. Don't assume that because you're in the U.S., that you will be able to engage in the same way you do at home. Tips for engaging cross-cultural, especially in an urban setting, are found below.

ENTER AS A LEARNER AND LISTENER

As you go into an unfamiliar culture, listen and learn. When Jesus “moved into the neighborhood” he spent the first 30 years of his life listening, learning, observing. Take time to listen to people's stories. Ask good questions. Listening is one of the best ways to show someone that they are important.

LOOK TO BUILD TRUST

Before you do or say something, pause and ask “What will build trust between me and the person I am trying to communicate with?” Often by asking the prior question of trust you can catch yourself before you blunder into a situation by imposing your cultural standards on another. Will what I say or do build trust or destroy it?

CHOOSE 'BRIDGES' OVER 'BOMBS'

The way you phrase things is important. Even asking questions and starting conversation can be done in a proper way. For example, questions like, “Why do (ethnicity label) people always...?” or phrases like “You don't even seem (ethnicity) or “Some of my best friends are (ethnicity)” will tear down trust in a relationship.

Questions that lead off with “Help me understanding what I'm seeing...” or “Tell me more about what happened, and why you feel the way you do...” help to build trust in a relationship.



REFLECT ON YOUR OWN EXPERIENCE

You may not be aware of the context you bring to the situation and new interactions. Ask questions and process your own experience with topics of race, ethnicity:

What attitudes or actions have I inherited/adopted from my own culture?

What prevents me from asking for or extending forgiveness when race has been a factor in the hurt I or someone else is feeling?

How confident would I be at this moment if I had to demonstrate the specific ways the Bible deals with race, ethnicity, racial tensions, or reconciliation?

Where in my life am I actively seeking to learn about other cultures?

*Questions taken from InterVarsity Urban Projects

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Sample Budget

This is a sample budget. The budget below is for a team of 10 going to Cleveland

DESCRIPTION	\$ PER PERSON	# OF TEAM MEMBERS	TOTAL
Airfare/luggage	\$400	10	\$4,000
Envision Registration	\$450	10	\$4,500
Transportation	\$15	10	\$150
Team meal during travel	\$10	10	\$100
Ministry resources	\$40	10	\$400
Meeting drinks and snacks	\$5	10	\$50
T-shirts	\$12	10	\$120
Workbooks and journals	\$10	10	\$100
Final meeting dinner	\$5	10	\$50
Miscellaneous	\$10	10	\$100
Leader cost	\$50	10	\$500
TOTAL COST	\$1,007		\$10,070



TEAM MEMBER APPLICATION

Name: _____

**Please write your name as it appears on your passport*

Address: _____

Phone: (____) ____ - ____

Gender (circle one): Male Female

Email Address: _____

Date of Birth: __/__/__ (mo/day/year)

T-shirt size (circle one): S M L XL XXL XXXL

Please check one of the following statements:

I have never been on a missions trip

I have been on a previous missions trip with this church to _____ (location) in _____ (year)

I have been on a missions trip with another church/organization

Who did you go with? _____

What types of things did you do on your trip? _____

What languages do you speak besides English and how fluently? _____

To which trip are you applying? _____

Why do you want to go on this trip?

How would you describe your current relationship with Christ?

What talents/gifts has God given you to minister to others? (Drama, singing, teaching, youth, etc.)

What are your strengths and challenges in the areas of personal relationships and meeting new people?



TEAM MEMBER APPLICATION (page 2)

What do you expect to learn on this trip? How do you hope to be changed?

CHURCH INVOLVEMENT

Have you committed to church membership? (circle one)	Yes	No	I plan to before the trip!
Are you committed to other church programs? (circle one) (Sunday school, small groups, etc.)	Yes	No	I plan to before the trip!
Are you currently serving in a ministry? (circle one) before the trip!		Yes	No I plan to

If 'no' please explain:

Additional comments:

REFERENCES

Name _____ Phone # _____

Relationship to you _____

Name _____ Phone # _____

Relationship to you _____

Name _____ Phone # _____

Relationship to you _____

HEALTH INFORMATION

Present health condition (circle one): Excellent Good Fair Poor

Explain, if needed: _____

Are you presently covered by health insurance? (circle one) Yes No

Does your health insurance cover you outside the United States? (circle one) Yes No



TEAM MEMBER APPLICATION (page 3)

Check all of the following that apply to you and provide a concise explanation:

- Physical disability _____
- Allergies (meds, food, pets, etc.) _____
- Illness or condition for which you are being treated _____
- List all current medications you are taking _____
- Date of late Tetanus shot ___/___/___
- Other _____

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Name _____ Relationship: _____
 Home ph: _____ Work ph: _____ Cell ph: _____

Name _____ Relationship: _____
 Home ph: _____ Work ph: _____ Cell ph: _____

Name _____ Relationship: _____
 Home ph: _____ Work ph: _____ Cell ph: _____

I have read the guidelines for short-term missions. I understand my responsibilities as outlined there in terms of financial commitment, attendance at team meetings, and other areas of preparation.

 Signature Date

(If applicant is under the age of 18, a parent or legal guardian must also sign)
 I, the parent/legal guardian of the above applicant, have read and understand the guidelines for short-term missions. I understand the responsibilities as outlined in terms of financial commitment, attendance at team meetings, and other areas of preparation. I hereby give my child permission to participate.

 Signature Date

Please include your \$100 non-refundable, non-transferable deposit made out to the church with this application.

Guidelines for Short-Term Missions

These are some example guidelines that you may wish to adapt as you prepare your team. Feel free to use these at your discretion.

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Individuals who feel called by God to participate in a short-term mission trip are responsible for raising the necessary funds to cover expenses for their own missions trip. When you make a deposit on a trip, or when you begin to receive support, accounting will begin to track your contributions. You and others may make periodic contributions at any time. Checks for missions trips should be made out to (your church name). Please be aware that any excess contributions or funds will be pooled and applied to other missions team expenses, or to other areas of need for your missions trip. Excess funds may not be refunded or re-designated by you for other purposes within the church.

POLICIES AND GUIDELINES FOR RAISING SUPPORT

1. Even more important than raising financial support is raising a personal prayer team. Each team member is asked to recruit five individuals who will pray for you personally and your team while you are preparing to go, while you are there, and when you return from your trip. Begin recruiting these people right away so they can be praying for you as you raise funds and complete other trip preparations. From time to time, your trip leader will provide you with information and requests to share with your prayer team.
2. Participants are encouraged to write a support letter, though this is not required. A sample letter example will be given to you to use. This letter should be sent to family and friends and should be sent as soon as you know you have been accepted by the team. This will allow you to raise awareness for your trip, recruit prayer and financial support, and give others the opportunity to join you in understanding how God is working around the world.

Important Note: All letters written to solicit financial support for short-term trips must contain the following statement:

“Contributions to short-term mission trips are tax deductible; however, in accordance with IRS regulations, these designated offerings are subject to the governing board’s control and discretion. When contributions for a particular individual exceed trip expenses, the governing board may redirect contributions to other mission team expenses or to another activity within the missions department.”

Guidelines for Short-Term Missions

(continued)

POLICIES AND GUIDELINES FOR RAISING SUPPORT (CONTINUED)

3. Participants should look for a variety of ways to add to their account balances. How each individual does this will depend on age, job status, etc. You may consider regularly contributing part of your allowance, or asking for monetary birthday gifts for your trip (if the giver wants tax credit, he/she should make checks payable to the church, not you). Contributing from your savings, taking on a part-time job or a variety of small jobs, and designating a portion of your income tax refund are other possibilities. Ask God for creative ways to add to your account.

4. The following is a sample schedule of payment dates and reimbursement guidelines:

DUE DATE	PAYMENT	FINANCIAL COMMITMENT
With Application	Deposit	\$100.00
95 Days Prior to Leave Date	Payment #1	1/3 of Total Trip Cost
65 Days Prior to Leave Date	Payment #2	1/3 of Total Trip Cost
35 Days Prior to Leave Date	Payment #3	1/3 of Total Trip Cost

ATTENDANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

Training for a missions trip and getting to know your team is a vital part of your overall missions trip experience. Therefore, we place a very high value on attendance at each team meeting. You are required to be at all missions trip training meetings. Dates have been listed for you on the interest meeting handout. You will also receive the list of dates at your first meeting. If you are unable to attend a team meeting, you must let your team leader know one week in advance that you will be absent. If you know in advance that you are going to miss two or more training meetings, we would like to meet with you to discuss if this is your best year to go on a short-term mission trip.

If you have any questions about financial or attendance responsibilities for short-term missions trips, please contact _____ .



Sample Team Covenant

I WILL PROTECT THE UNITY OF MY TEAM

By acting in love toward other team members

By refusing to gossip

By submitting to leadership

By reconciling conflict

By keeping anything that is shared strictly confidential

(Romans 15:19, Romans 15:5, 1 Peter 1:22, Ephesians 4:29, Hebrews 13:17)

I WILL BUILD THE CHARACTER OF MY TEAM

By attending team meetings faithfully

By being prepared for team meetings

By actively participating in the meetings and being willing to grow together as a team

By being financially responsible for the cost of my trip

By living a godly life and doing my best to make God's choices for my life

By giving other team members permission to hold me accountable to goals I set for myself

(Hebrews 10:25, Philippians 1:27)

I WILL SERVE THE MINISTRY OF MY TEAM

By using my gifts and talents

By being equipped to serve

By developing a servant's heart

By sharing responsibilities

(1 Peter 4:10, Ephesians 4:11–12, Philippians 2:3–4)

As a mission team participant, I will do my best, with God's help, to honor this covenant.

Signature

Printed Name

Date



Support Letter Guidelines

You're going on a missions trip! Not only are YOU pumped, but your friends and family will be very excited to hear about your venture, too. They will be thrilled to hear from you, and a letter is a great way to let them know all the details. Below are some guidelines for writing your support letter.

NEVER WRITE MORE THAN ONE PAGE. The shorter your letter, the better!

Always start with a warm “hello” so that your friends and family know immediately who the letter is from. Feel free to take one sentence (no more than two!) to bring everyone “up to speed” on what's been going on in your life. This is very helpful for those people who have had no contact for a while. Then dive in! Be sure to let them know all of the details about your trip this summer:

- Where you are going
- When you are traveling
- Include the name of the mission agency sending you, and mention your church
- Include the types of ministry you will be doing (refer to interest meeting handout for ideas)
- MOST IMPORTANTLY, explain why you want to go on this missions trip
- Tell them that the most important way that they can “team” with you is by praying for you and list one or two specific prayer requests

When writing about your financial support, be as specific as possible:

- Include the total cost of your trip
- Tell them that they can support you by sending contributions to you made out to your church
- Contributions should be sent to YOUR address—and then give them your address
- All gifts made out to your church are tax-deductible
- Any gifts exceeding the total for your trip will be donated to othes still in need of funding
- Thank them for considering becoming a part of your support team

ALWAYS sign each letter personally and take a moment to write a special note that's just to them You may include a self-addressed envelope (not stamped) with your letter

Include a **CURRENT PICTURE** of yourself in your letter. Try to also include a picture of the people you will be serving. Everyone loves pictures, and it will add character to your letter. Make your letter as exciting and sincere as possible.



Sample Support Letter

Dear _____,

I hope this letter finds you well. I'm writing to share with you about an opportunity I have this summer! Together, with my small group, I will be traveling to inner city, Chicago, for a short-term missions trip!

The ministry we will be partnering with is called Envision Chicago. Affiliated with the Christian & Missionary Alliance, they serve in the inner city by putting on youth programs for at-risk youth, VBS programs, and other outreach events. I'm excited to learn more about what it looks like to serve in an inner-city context and learn from my brothers and sisters who serve there. I also love playing with kids, so I think this will be a great fit for me!

I'd love to invite you to minister alongside me this summer in a couple of ways. Most importantly, I'm looking for folks to pray. As Oswald Chambers says, "Prayer does not equip us for greater works - prayer is the greater work." Please pray alongside me for the people of Chicago, and specifically the people ministered to by Envision Chicago. Pray also for my time there - for my team as we prepare, serve, and also return back home to our own neighborhoods and communities. Pray for God to do a transformative work in us, and through us, and that we would join in what He is already doing in Chicago!

Along with prayer, I would invite those of you who feel so led to partner with me financially. The total cost for this trip, including the costs on site, as well as my preparation and travel there, are \$600. Would you consider joining me financially to help cover the cost of this trip? If so, please send your donations to (Church name here, address). Please make the checks payable to the church, and memo my name on the check.

As always, thanks for your support and encouragement! I'm blessed by your friendships and influence in my life, and am looking forward to sharing with you more when I get back from Chicago!

(Signature and contact info)



Team Building Activities

Team builders are a significant part of training meetings. Please do not sacrifice these. Teambuilding is one of the most important things that you will do together. Below are a couple of suggested types of activities to do with your team during your team meetings.

GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER ACTIVITIES

These kinds of activities are intended to help your teammates continue to get to know each other during training meetings. Please set a time on these activities in your meetings, and find activities appropriate for where you're at in preparation for your trip (just starting vs. right before you leave.) Be sure to choose the activity you are going to do prior to each meeting so that you are able to come prepared with any necessary materials. We have found that the closer to your trip you get, the less you will need these activities. However, even if the whole team already "knows" each other, do not pass these up! You may think you know each other, but there is always room to grow.

TEAMBUILDING ACTIVITIES

Team-building activities are intended for you to use so that your teammates learn how to problem-solve together. In the process, you will discover each other's gifts, personalities, strengths, and even frustrations. Please set a time on these activities in your meetings. Some are best for one of your first training meetings, and others will fit best as your trip nears. Be sure to choose which activity you are going to do, prior to each meeting so that you are able to come prepared with any necessary materials.



Do's & Don'ts for Communication

DO CHOOSE ONE TEAM LEADER to be the main communicator with the field. They get so many emails that they wouldn't be able to keep up with more than one person.

DO WRITE ONLY ONE EMAIL PER WEEK and limit your questions per email. You may write more often if they need a response, but be sensitive of their time.

DO READ ALL DOCUMENTS THOROUGHLY that you receive from them. You'll find that many of your questions are answered in there. Before you ask make sure they haven't already answered it.

DO COPY YOUR LEADERS ON EMAILS to the site that include important information and details.

DO SIGN UP FOR NEWSLETTERS and prayer updates from your site and forward these on to your team members or read them at your team meetings and pray over their requests. Also find them on Facebook or their blogs to follow them and keep up to date!

DO CONNECT ON SKYPE and try to have several 'face to face' talks between now and your trip.

DO SHARE YOUR HOPES & DREAMS for the trip, but remember to hold these loosely. Your team is there to serve, not to meet your own desires, even if they are good ones.

DON'T ask for too many details too quickly. They will probably not know your agenda until a week before you arrive, and even then it might change! You don't need to worry yet about what to pack, what food you'll eat, where you'll stay...be patient. Practice being flexible now and not needing to know every detail. Good preparation for the field and for leading your team!

DON'T use Facebook for communicating information about the trip. Please only use email to discuss travel, ministry, trip logistics. Use Facebook for casual conversation, encouragement, and prayer - not work!

DON'T be discouraged if they aren't in frequent communication with you. They lead very busy lives and we want to bless them, not to burden them.



Let the Nations Be Glad

John Piper

Missions is not the ultimate goal of the Church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn't. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever.

Worship, therefore, is the fuel and goal of missions. It's the goal of missions because in missions we simply aim to bring the nations into the white hot enjoyment of God's glory. The goal of missions is the gladness of the peoples in the greatness of God... But worship is also the fuel of missions. Passion for God in worship precedes the offer of God in preaching. You can't commend what you don't cherish...

Missions begins and ends in worship. If the pursuit of God's glory is not ordered above the pursuit of man's good in the affections of the heart and the priorities of the church, man will not be well served and God will not be duly honored. I am not pleading for a diminishing of missions but for a magnifying of God.

When the flame of worship burns with the heat of God's true worth, the light of missions will shine to the darkest peoples on earth. And I long for that day to come! Where passion for God is weak, zeal for missions will be weak. Churches that are not centered on the exaltation of the majesty and beauty of God will scarcely kindle a fervent desire to "declare his glory among the nations" (Ps 96:3).

1. How is "worship" the main goal of "missions"?
2. Why does our worship need to come before our mission?
3. What happens when we make people the focus of missions instead of God?
4. What does a true understanding of "the glory of God" have to do with our passion for missions?



Am I Prepared?

Preparation is a key ingredient to your having a successful and life-changing short-term missions experience. The leaders are able to help prepare you to a certain degree, but much of the preparation falls upon your shoulders! Hopefully, the following issues and questions will be ones that stimulate you to think through how prepared you are and in what areas you might need to become better prepared prior to your trip. We invite you to take a quiet time and review the landscape of your life. Reflect, journal and pray through these different areas. Remember that you don't have to be perfect: we are all in the process of being formed into the likeness of Christ!

How can you grow in the following areas?

As you come across areas in your life that need to be changed, take this as an opportunity to make growth steps as you prepare to travel. We minister to others out of what we have inside of us. Being always precedes doing! Our inner lives provide fuel for ministry!

Please see the questions on the following page as you prayerfully think about preparing for your trip!

Am I Prepared?

AM I PREPARED PHYSICALLY?

Am I in shape? What exercises could I be doing to increase my fitness level for this trip?

Am I in good health? What areas of my self-care could be improved prior to departure for this trip?

Have I had a physical exam within the last year?

AM I PREPARED EMOTIONALLY?

Do I have any unresolved issues in my relationships?

Am I dealing with depression, doubt, or deep discouragement that I need to figure out prior to departure?

Would it be wise to talk anything out with a pastor, counselor or friend?

By participating in this trip, am I 'escaping' from personal problems or difficult situations?

AM I PREPARED SPIRITUALLY?

Where am I in my journey with God? Am I cultivating some spiritual disciplines (prayer, meditation, fasting, Bible study, silence, worship and solitude) on a regular basis?

Am I listening to God's Spirit and his promptings?

Am I downshifting my life enough so that there is quiet in my day to reflect on what God is teaching me?

Am I spending time reading and digesting God's word? How consistent am I?

Am I striving to be obedient in the little things? Applying what God is teaching me?

Do I have a heart that is enlarging with God's love and grace? Is it getting softer or harder?

AM I PREPARED MENTALLY?

Is my thought life honoring to God? Am I dealing with inappropriate thoughts?

Am I harboring sinful thoughts that need to be confessed to God or another person?

Are there racist thoughts about people from other cultures or different skin colors lingering in my mind?

Do I consider myself superior to other nationalities?

Is the magnitude of God's grace permeating my thinking more and more?

AM I PREPARED RELATIONALLY?

Have I thought through my responsibilities and relationships at home in reference to this trip?

I will be spending lots of time with a team. How do I relate to others? How do I respond to authority?

Am I prone to any types of interpersonal conflict that might hinder my ability to work with others?

Do I consider myself a good listener? How can I improve on this before going with the team?

Am I comfortable being transparent and sharing my failures with others? What obstacles do I have when it comes to being open and vulnerable?

Do group discussions or decisions frustrate me?

Am I open to receiving honest feedback about how other team members perceive me?



EXPECTATIONS & REALITY

Expectations. We all have preconceived notions of what an experience will be like beforehand. When it meets or exceeds our expectations, we're happy and pleased with how things turned out. And when it fails to meet our expectations, we sometimes have a bad taste in our mouths afterwards – whether we actually pinpoint it as unmet expectations or not.

Please use this worksheet to help you begin to think through some of your expectations for your trip. We want you to be able to develop realistic expectations after some discussion and research. By the way, it's okay to say "I don't know what to expect," in the first My Expectations box. After some research, you will have some concrete expectations, so please write them in.

CATEGORY	MY EXPECTATIONS	EXPECTATIONS AFTER RESEARCH	REALITY AS I SAW IT
Living Situation			
Tasks on Trip			
Personal Hygiene			
What U.S. Missionaries Are Like			
Teammate Relationships			



EXPECTATIONS & REALITY

CATEGORY	MY EXPECTATIONS	EXPECTATIONS AFTER RESEARCH	REALITY AS I SAW IT
Relating to My Leaders			
Food			

Adapted from p. 56 in Cross-Cultural Expectations: Stepping Out and Fitting In Around the World by Duane Elmer, Downers Grove, IVP, 2002.



Frequently Asked Questions

WHO CAN GO ON AN ENVISION TRIP?

Envision trips are designed for people of all ages - from high schoolers to older professionals. We love taking teams of all ages! You are required to be at least 13 years of age to travel overseas.

HOW MUCH ARE TRIPS?

The cost of the trip varies from place to place. There are two costs for each trip: First, the amount paid directly to Envision. This amount can be found on the Trips page. This cost that covers your room, board, on-ground transportation (most locations), and ministry experience at each location. It also covers required international insurance (if you are taking an international trip). The second expense is your cost to travel to the location. You are responsible to purchase your own airline tickets or cover travel costs to get to the site. If you are taking an international trip, you may also have visa costs, passport costs, and departure/airport taxes to pay as well. To learn about visa requirements for your destination, please refer to the Travel Document Systems website.

WHEN SHOULD I START PLANNING MY TRIP?

Planning trips often takes longer than you think. We encourage you to contact Envision 6-12 months before your desired departure date. This will give adequate time for you to raise funds, apply for passports or visas, turn in paperwork, and get all needed immunizations.

WHAT IS THE ADULT/STUDENT RATIO FOR THESE TRIPS?

Generally speaking, we like to have minimum 5:1 ratio of the same gender student to adult.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO AFTER WE HAVE PRAYED AND DECIDED TO GO ON A TRIP?

The first thing to do is gather your group leaders together and decide on an Envision site. Fill out an inquiry form online and request your desired dates. Once your dates are cleared with the site coordinator, register your team. Then, advertise and recruit your team! When you have recruited your team, register your full group online no later than 90 days before your trip. A \$100 deposit per person is due when you register. You can make payment by credit card, ACH, or check. The balance of your trip is due 60 days before your departure date. Late payments are subject to a fee.

DO YOU RECOMMEND ANY BOOKS FOR PREP OR TRAINING?

We recommend the *Short Term Missions Workbook* by Tim Dearborn, InterVarsity Press.

WHAT ABOUT IMMUNIZATIONS? HOW DO I KNOW IF I NEED SHOTS AND WHICH ONES?

The best place to find information on immunizations is on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website. This will give you a precise health outlook on the area you are traveling to.

DO YOU HAVE A PACKING LIST? WHAT SHOULD I BRING? WHAT SHOULD I NOT BRING?

Yes. A site-specific packing list is in the Site Handbook you will receive via email after you register.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I LAND IN A COUNTRY? WHERE DO I GO FROM THERE?

When your group arrives at your destination you will first need to go through immigration and customs. You will be given a form on the airplane that each team member must fill out. You will then follow through the immigration lines. Once you make it through customs your host or someone from the Envision site will be waiting for you. They will transport you to your housing accommodations.

WHEN IS OUR REGISTRATION PAYMENT DUE?

Your initial non-refundable deposit of \$100 per person is at the time of registration. Your trip balance is due 60 days from your departure date. If you miss the deadline, your group will be charged an extra \$100. Please communicate any delays to Envision Office as soon as possible.

WHEN SHOULD WE APPLY FOR PASSPORTS?

Immediately. Some groups have a problem getting their passports in time for their trip because they waited too long to apply. As soon as you know someone is going and they don't have a passport, have them apply immediately. To start the process, go to <http://travel.state.gov/passport/>.

DO I NEED TO OBTAIN ADDITIONAL INSURANCE?

If you are taking an international trip, you will receive trip insurance from Brotherhood Mutual as part of your registration. The C&MA requires that all mission trips carry this insurance. Trip Cancellation insurance is NOT included. You would need to purchase it on your own if it is desired.

ARE THERE OTHER FORMS THAT WILL NEED TO BE COMPLETED?

Everyone will complete the necessary forms during the online registration process. If these are incomplete, they will show up under "Manage Roster" in your account. The Trip Leader is responsible for filling out the Team Leader Checklist and returning it to the Envision Office.

HOW DO I ADD, CANCEL OR REPLACE PEOPLE AFTER WE HAVE REGISTERED AS A GROUP?

If you need to cancel a trip participant, please notify the Envision Office. You can add people yourself by logging back into your online registration through the original link and adding them. For instructions on how to do this, please contact the Envision Office. If you have any problems, please call the Trips Coordinator at 719-265-2122.