

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH UPPER MARLBORO

ACTS ONE 8 MINISTRIES

Mission Field Code of Conduct

Introduction

A mission trip is the opportunity to serve the Lord Jesus Christ for a specific period of time in a specific place. No two mission trips are alike. Do not try to recreate past experiences. Go with the flow and seek God's guidance moment by moment. The participant should pray for God's will to be done. Remember the definition of JOY: Jesus, others, you. You are about to embark on a life changing missions endeavor. This is not a vacation. If you want to see the world, call your travel agent.

The following topics are intended to help you to have a positive experience and a positive impact for the kingdom of God. Please read them prayerfully and attentively. They are arranged by category, not by importance. ALL are important. This is a first draft. Bible references will be added into the text to support the points where applicable.

LEADERSHIP AND TEAM UNITY

TEAM STRUCTURE: as Christians we all serve under the Lordship of our Savior Jesus Christ. We should seek to daily die to self and seek to do His will. God also appoints and raises up leaders, both in the sending church and in the fellowship where you will be serving. There may be a team leader and then task or subgroup leaders. Follow your leaders.

TEAM UNITY AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION: It is important that the team remain unified. Jesus wants us to be as one. Respect for one another should be maintained at all times. In the event that there is a conflict, it should be dealt with in private and only with the relevant people involved. Involve the team leader when necessary.

THE THREE RULES for mission trips: 1. Be flexible 2. Be flexible 3. Be flexible

PEOPLE AND RELATIONSHIPS

HOST/GROUP INTERACTION: Get to know your host(s) and their family. Your presence can be a great ministry to them. They are serving daily on their field. You just might be the fresh energy that they need for continued ministry. Laugh together and have fun together. Follow their lead and remember to respect them.

HELP THAT HURTS: many times on a mission trip you can be overwhelmed with the needs that you see around you. It is normal to want to help. Be careful however not to overreact. The

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first response should be prayer for divine guidance. Speak with the team and or consult the local missionary or leadership. Do not act alone. Do not give away cash.

This sets up a dangerous precedent for teams that follow you. Sometimes a team meeting on the field may be in order to make sure that everyone is on the same page and that the appropriate response is being taken.

RELATIONSHIP TO LONG TERM MISSIONARY: Team members should look to and follow the example of the local missionary that you are going to serve with. He or she has the big picture. You are there for a short time and only see a snapshot of the situation. The missionary will be there after you depart and will have to live with your actions, whether positive or negative. So have a positive impact.

SPIRITUAL AND THEOLOGICAL

GRATITUDE: maintain an attitude of gratitude during the trip. Be grateful for your food, lodging transportation. Remember, by the world's standard most Americans are rich! It will build your character and make you a better person to do without. Count it a privilege to suffer for Christ. The more that you are grateful, the less that you will complain and be critical. (Tip: this applies to your everyday life too)

PERSONAL TESTIMONY – what is your personal salvation testimony? You cannot be a witness if you did not witness anything. Think about this. If you need help or have questions, talk with a leader in your church. Prepare your testimony. Write it out. Focus on Christ not the devil. Practice sharing it with a friend or fellow team member. Then share it with those you meet on the trip.

CULTURAL RELEVANCE IN TESTIMONY – The gospel of Jesus Christ is for all people, everywhere. How it is presented however can vary based on the local culture. For example, illustrations about golf or snow may not translate in cultures where these are non-existent. Focus your testimony on the work of Christ in your heart and life.

NO EXCESS BAGGAGE: travel light both literally and figuratively. Ask yourself, “Do I really need this?” It all adds up and can be an extra burden to you as well as taking up valuable space. Word to the wise, pack a change of clothes and personal toiletry items in your carryon bag, you never know.

PREPARATION: proper preparation involves focus on these three areas: spiritual, mental, emotional and yes physical.

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TIME: remember that time is relative. Generally, Americans are time oriented and we like to “get things done”. Many places in the world are “event oriented”. What matters are people and relationships. Slow yourself down long enough to realize this.

SELF-CONTROL: One who is self-controlled in all things is a blessing to others. We must be self-controlled in all of our behavior, especially as we reflect on Christ to others.

PRACTICAL AND LOGISITCAL HELPS

DRESS CODE: the word to remember here is conservative. What is ok to you may not be ok to others. Do not cause your brother/sister to stumble. You should dress for work, service and comfort – not fashion or to impress. Look nice but do not waste time primping when you could be serving. Your clothing should not draw attention to yourself. . If in doubt, consult your team leader for specifics to the culture. If you receive correction, acknowledge it humbly, it is not meant to distress you, but to further the mission. You are there to serve and point people to Jesus. Comfortable walking shoes are a must. You will be on your feet all day.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES: do have their place in our modern world. However, on a mission trip they can be a hindrance and prevent group unity and interaction. Specific guidelines will be issued related to cell phone usage. No texting, talk to the people around you!

GIFTS: for your hosts and others. Gifts are very appropriate. Check with your team leader for specifics. The team leader can check with the local missionaries to see if they have special requests. Individuals can take gifts. Also the group as a whole will develop a list of gifts and give aways that will be taken. This creates an opportunity for the entire church to be involved in the mission trip by donating necessary items. The team leader must monitor this to make sure that unnecessary items are not donated or collected thus wasting valuable luggage space. (See separate handout on this)

HEALTH AND HYGIENE – don’t drink the water, maybe. Drink bottled water. You will be given specific orientation on foods and beverages when necessary.

ITINERARY: Make copies of your travel itinerary. Include on this page emergency contact info. Place a copy in each piece of luggage, including carry on. Also keep a copy with you at all times. Leave a copy with a family member at home.

INCLEMENT WEATHER: Preparation is key here. Search internet websites for your destination and plan accordingly. Prepare to do this differently than normal. For example: wear a hat, wear a rain coat, use an umbrella. “Cool” is out, practical is in! Better to have it and not need it than to need it and not have it. Pack items such as hat, rain gear, sunglasses, sunscreen, insect repellent etc.

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PERSONAL HYGIENE: Do your best to stay well and prevent problems. Your participation will be diminished if you are not well. See separate handout for details and specifics.

SAFETY: be safe at all times. This is not the time to train or learn new skills. Focus on what you know how to do and are comfortable in doing. Do not let pride get in your way. If you are not able or comfortable in doing something, do not do it. Also remember the “buddy system” do not go it alone or go off alone. Let others know where you are going and what you will be doing.

VALUABLES AND PERSONAL BELONGINGS: As a rule if you cannot stand to lose it, do not take it. This goes for expensive jewelry, watches, etc. Leave your good wallet at home. Develop a mission trip “basic wallet”. Put in it only the important things that you will need while on the trip. Make 2 copies of what is in the wallet. Leave one copy with a family member back home. Have one copy with you but separate from the wallet. That way if anything is lost you can easily contact the proper authorities. (This is a good idea to do at all times anyway)

Personal Conduct

MALE/FEMALE appearances on the field – This is a mission trip and not a time to explore romance with team members or locals on the field of service. This is an area that can be a distraction and a foothold for the devil. To avoid any problems or appearance of evil the following rule will be observed: one man and one woman will never be alone unless they are a married couple. There should be three or more people together when working on your assignment. Living quarters will be kept strictly separate.

MEDICATIONS: fill them before you leave home with more than enough for the duration of the trip. This is a must. Do not plan to fill them while on the field.