

Mentoring Modules

A Handbook for New Missionary Training

Global Training and Development

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Getting Started

This mentoring manual provides experienced missionaries with activities and ideas to help new missionaries with gain ministry skills, adjust to the culture, and understand the context in which they work. New missionaries face a tremendous learning curve when they first arrive on the field. They often are beginning a new job, in a new culture, in a new city, in a new language. The exercises in this mentoring guide are designed to help reduce the learning curve and help new missionaries be more effective in ministry and more comfortable on the field.

Guiding Principles

Experiential Nearly all of the modules in this mentoring guide are designed to be experiential learning activities. The activities get new missionaries into the culture and experience it—walking through markets, talking with people, visiting new places. While internet resources, books and articles can be helpful tools in understanding culture, the emphasis here is on learning by doing.

Learner Driven In order to complete the activities in this mentoring guide, the new missionary will need to do most of the work. As a mentor, you will steer the new missionary in the right direction, provide a bit of coaching and encouragement and help the new missionary debrief his or her experience after the missionary has completed each module.

Open Flexibility Because ministry situations and cultures vary so widely around the world, this mentoring guide was written to be broad enough to be used in most situations. If an activity or project doesn't fit your context, feel free to modify it so that it is appropriate. Feel free to skip any modules that do not fit your context or develop modules that are specific to your situation.

We suggest that mentors meet once a week or once every other week to work through the exercises in this manual. For most activities, the mentor will need to do very little preparation; just read through the exercise before hand, do a bit of brainstorming and you will be ready to go.

The Mentoring Process

Generally speaking, the order in which these modules are completed is not important. However, we do suggest that you start with some of the orientation modules that will help new missionaries get to know important people, understand how life works, and begin to understand the ministry. The introduction modules include:

- History of MTW in the country
- Introduction to key leaders
- Personal disciplines
- Street smarts
- Team vision, values and goals
- Become a fan of a local team

Once you feel the new missionary is ready, the more advanced “Digging Deeper” modules may be completed. These modules are designed to help the new missionary understand some of the “below the surface” or “behind the scenes” dynamics of the culture and ministry. They include:

- Team timeline
- Religious backgrounds of non-believers
- Visiting other worship services
- Major life celebrations
- How nationals spend their free time

How to Use the Manual

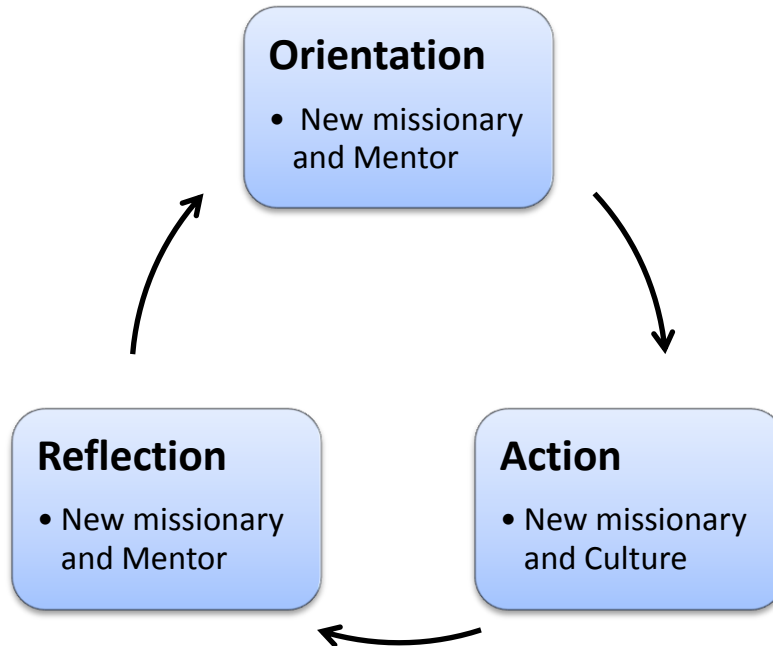
People don't learn from experience. They learn from reflecting on their experience.

The exercises in this manual are designed to get new missionaries to learn about their cultural context by interacting with it. New missionaries learn best by observing, interacting and reflecting on their experiences in their new culture.

Each module in this manual follows a similar pattern:

1. **Orientation**—During a mentoring meeting, the mentor will use the module activities to assign the new missionary activities that will help new missionaries learn about their cultural context.
2. **Activity**—The new missionary then works independently of the mentor to complete the tasks assigned during the orientation. This may include visiting a market, asking a *cultural informant*¹ some questions, or attending a religious ceremony.
3. **Reflection**—At the next meeting the mentor will meet with the new missionary to discuss how the activities went and what the new missionary learned.

¹ A cultural informant is a person with extensive knowledge of the culture (preferably someone who has grown up in the culture) who is willing to help a new missionary understand the values and practices of their culture. Ideally, a cultural informant is not an ex-patriot.



The exercises in this manual are designed to put most of the responsibility for learning on the shoulders of the new missionary. For each mentoring meeting, we suggest that mentors spend the following amount of time on these exercises.

- In the orientation phase, mentors will need to spend 15 to 20 minutes preparing and giving orientation to new missionaries.
- During the action phase the new missionary will need to spend approximately two to three hours completing the tasks.
- When the mentor meets again with the new missionary during the reflection phase, we suggest they spend 15 to 30 minutes discussing what the new missionary learned and experienced.

The time commitment for both the new missionary and the mentor will be approximately:

- Mentor: 30 to 50 minutes per week (Orientation and Reflection)
- New Missionary: 3 to 4 hours per week (Orientation, Action, and Reflection)

Part 1: Orientation Modules

The activities in the orientation modules are designed to help new missionaries gain the basic living skills and cultural understanding that will help them:

- Become comfortable living in the city (or their context)
- Get to know their teammates and team history
- Begin to develop relationships with neighbors and people in the church

The orientation modules may be completed in any order. Before beginning to work on the mentoring modules in this section, please skim through all of the modules in this section to get an idea of the kinds of activities that your mentee will be working on. The modules have been arranged to progress from logistics and orientation (survival skills) to building relationships and understanding the ministry context of the team.

If you are working in a context which requires conversational fluency in a local language, you may want to adjust the order or difficulty of the mentoring exercises based on the language abilities of the new missionaries.

Most importantly, we hope you enjoy guiding the new missionary you are working with through the process of adjusting to your context and gaining the skills needed to be effective in ministry.

Shopping and Markets

This module is designed to help your mentee explore new aspects of the culture and gain practical daily living skills. Your mentee will need to engage with people in the community in order to complete this assignment.

Step 1 Identify five foods that are popular and (preferably unique) in your country. They could include special breads or pastries, fruits and vegetables, or meats and cheeses.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Step 2 Tell your mentee that his/her job this week is to find the five items you have selected and eat or sample all of them. It is preferable that your mentee would need to go to two or more different places (i.e., open air market, bakery, grocery store, restaurant, street vendor, etc.) to sample all these items. (OPTIONAL: Do not provide detailed instructions as to where the items can be purchased and ask your mentee to ask neighbors or friends for help in finding where they can be purchased.)

Step 3 Ask your mentee to identify at least 3 cultural practices related to shopping that are different in your country than those of the U.S. (This could include the way people stand in lines, negotiate prices, transport their purchases, interact with shop keepers, etc.)

Debrief

Ask your mentee about their experience.

- Where did you find each item? How did you get there?
- What did you enjoy most about your experience?
- How did the people in the markets or stores act? Did they form lines? Bargain for cheaper prices? Linger to exchange pleasantries? Etc.
- What do your observations suggest about cultural values such as orderliness, interpersonal relationships, enjoyment of food or willingness to help others?

Street Smarts

This module is designed to help your mentee establish points of connection with nationals by understanding the nuances of safety in your area or safety. Your mentee will need to engage with people in the community in order to complete this assignment.

Step 1 Identify three people who know the area where you are living. These could be nationals, missionaries, or other ex-patriots.

Step 2 Ask the mentee to interview each of the people who you have identified as experts. Some of the questions the mentee may want to ask could include:

1. Are there areas of the city, town, or region that are especially dangerous?
2. Are these areas dangerous all of the time or just at night?
3. Is it safe to go to these areas if I am with a group? Are the rules for safety different for men and women?
4. For women, are there behaviors or dress that should be avoided while on the streets?
5. If I am walking the streets, what should I do to make sure that I am not an easy target for criminals? (wallet in front pocket, don't carry much cash, be aware of people following you, etc.)
6. Are there any special dangers for someone using public transportation? Taxis? Driving in private cars?
7. What are some ways that people might try to deceive me to try to get money? (Con Games)

Step 3 (Optional) Have a person with street smarts accompany the mentee through an area that is moderately dangerous. Ask the "street smarts" person to help identify people or situations that might be risky and which situations are "safer". Try to identify people and situations that the new missionary might feel to be dangerous but are not and vice versa.

Step 4 Discuss strategies a new missionary should take in the event of the following:

1. An attempt to steal a wallet or purse while walking on the street (bump and run)
2. How to respond when confronted with a robbery attempt
3. An attempt to distract the victim while ganged up by one or more accomplices.
4. A public demonstration
5. What to do in case of being involved in a traffic accident.

Debrief

Ask your mentee about what they learned.

- Is there agreement about which areas are dangerous? Disagreement?
- Do you feel that you have enough information to identify dangerous areas or situations?
- Can you respond to danger with confidence in God's protection of you and your family?
- If this situation is more dangerous than the new missionary is used to, what does it mean for the new missionary to walk in faith in spite of facing challenges and dangers?

Transportation

This module is designed to help your mentee learn ways of getting around in the new location of ministry. Meeting neighbors and others in the community will be important in this assignment.

Step 1 Tell your mentee that his/her job this week is to practice using different modes of transportation to get from their home to church, shopping, and other important areas. With your mentee, identify two or three different places that he or she will need to travel to on a regular basis. Your mentee should talk with locals to determine:

1. How to find the route to your destination
2. The fare for each type of transportation.
3. The speed and convenience of each type of transportation.

Step 2 Ask your mentee to travel to different destinations on different modes of transportation such as bus, train, taxi, etc. (You may want to have someone accompany your mentee on their early trips.)

Debrief

Ask your mentee about their experience.

- What are the advantages and disadvantages of the different types of transportation you used?
- What did you enjoy most about your experience?
- Did you feel safe? Did you have any frightening or uncomfortable experience?
- What do your observations suggest about cultural values such as orderliness, interpersonal relationships, and personal space?
- What modes of transportation enabled you to engage with the culture more effectively?

Become a Fan

This module is designed to help your mentee establish points of connection with nationals by getting involved in popular culture. Your mentee will need to engage with people in the community in order to complete this assignment.

Step 1 Identify a sport that is popular in your country (soccer, rugby, cricket, cycling, etc.) preferably one which is a topic of everyday conversations.

Step 2 Select three different teams that have a significant following in your country. (For example, in the U.S. we might select, the Atlanta Braves, New York Yankees, and Los Angeles Dodgers.)

Step 3 Tell your mentee that the assignment for the next week is to become a fan of one of the teams that you have selected. In order to become a fan, your mentee must tell three different people, “I am new to your country and want to learn about your sports teams. I am thinking of becoming a fan of the _____, or the _____, or the _____. Which team do you think I should choose? What kind of people are the fans of each team?”

Step 4 Tell your mentee that after talking with at least 3 people, he or she should become a fan of the team they think they will like the most.

Step 5 To complete the assignment, your mentee must buy some sort of souvenir (jersey, hat, banner, etc).

Step 6 Finally, your mentee must learn three interesting facts about the team by talking with people in the community. These could include their star player, the last time they won a championship, their style of play, when they were founded, etc.

Debrief

Ask your mentee about their experience.

- What kinds of reactions did you get when you asked people about sports teams?
- Did you learn anything about the fan base of different teams? (i.e., are some teams “working class” while others are more “elitist”? Are some teams dominant? Are there teams that are underdogs, but people love?)
- What did you learn about your ability to interact with nationals through this experience?
- How do you think this process will help you engage with your community and neighbors as you go about ministry?

Attend a Sporting Event

This module is designed to help your mentee establish points of connection with nationals by getting involved in popular culture. Your mentee will need to engage with people in the community in order to complete this assignment. This module should be completed after the “Become a Fan” module.

Step 1 Now that the new missionary has become a fan of one of the sports teams in your country, the task now is to attend a local sporting event with a national friend. Depending on the circumstances, it may be best for the new missionary to offer to pay for the entrance to the game.

Step 2 Ask the new missionary to invite a national friend to a match or game that will take place in the near future. The new missionary should gather the following information from the national friend:

- How much do tickets/entrance to the game cost?
- Are there parts of the stadium or field that are dangerous?
- Can tickets be purchased on the day of the game or do they need to be purchased ahead of time?
- What types of people usually go to the game? Men only? Families? Young people?

Debrief

- Was it enjoyable?
- Was there anything that you found surprising?
- How did people behave at sporting event?
- Did people who are normally quiet and reserved become loud and boisterous?
- Do crowds behave in an orderly fashion or are things chaotic? How do people cheer differently?
- Did you learn anything about the culture through this experience?
- Was there anything that you didn't understand or seemed strange?

Paying Bills

This module is designed to help your mentee learn needed practical daily living skills. Your mentee will need to engage with people in the community in order to complete this assignment.

Step 1 The mentee should interview/visit with a neighbor and ask the following questions

1. What utility bills need to be paid in order to live in this neighborhood/building/apartment?
2. How do I pay the bill? Where do you go to pay the bill?
3. How does the bill arrive? In the mail? Dropped off at the home/apartment? Via e-mail?
4. Are there any meters or monitoring stations at your home that I should be looking for in my home?
5. What would you do if you had reason to dispute a bill?

Step 2 Identify 4 – 5 regular bills that your mentee will need to pay while living in their house or apartment. They could include water, internet, electric, garbage, and others.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Step 3 Depending on the complexity of paying the bill, tell your mentee that his/her job this week is to either

- go to the location to pay the bills
- accompany someone who is paying their bills.

Debrief

Ask your mentee about their experience.

- Who did you speak with to obtain your information? Were they helpful?
- How was the process of paying bills different from what you are used to? Did anything surprise you?
- What did you enjoy most about your experience?
- Did you have to wait in long lines at the offices/payment stations?
- What do your observations suggest about cultural values such as orderliness, customer service, interpersonal relationships, attitudes about infrastructure and services?

Introduction to Key Leaders

This module is designed to help your mentee understand who the key ministry leaders in the country are. These leaders may be within the MTW team, the MTW authority structure, the national denomination, or other partnering organizations.

Step 1 Complete the following chart of key leaders that new missionaries should either know personally or be aware of. (Depending on the number of relationships that the team has, you may want to divide this task into smaller parts, taking one section at a time.)

Within MTW	Team Mates	
	Team Leader	
	Country Director	
	Regional Director	
	International Director	
Local Churches	Local Pastor(s)	
	Deacons at Church	
	Elders at church	
	Denominational or country leaders	
	Teachers or Professors	

Partner Organizations	Local Denominations	
	Missionaries with other organizations	
	Independent missionaries	
	Leaders of local NGO's or mercy ministries	
PCA Churches	Pastoral Associate for team	
	Churches in partnership with team	
	Leaders of short term teams	
	Individuals with special interest in team's ministry	

Step 2 Ask the missionary to gather the following information on these people:

1. How long they have worked with or for MTW
2. An interesting fact or bit of background that provides context for the person or relationship

Debrief

- Based on your conversations with others, are there any gaps in your understanding of who is important to the team?
- If there are sensitive matters or difficult relationships, provide some background or advice for how to handle interactions with those people.
- Identify the people who the new missionary needs to develop a strong relationship with in order to have a successful ministry.

Personal Disciplines

This module is designed to help your mentee plan how to maintain their spiritual health and growth while adjusting to life in another culture. This exercise is designed to help the new missionary think broadly about spiritual health and growth. While it emphasizes “traditional” means of spiritual growth, it also encourages the new missionary to think about how physical health, relationships, and cultural adaptation affect spiritual growth.

Step 1 Ask the new mentee to think about a time when he or she experienced real spiritual growth. Have the mentee jot down some observations about what was going on during this time of growth. Use the following categories as a framework to think about factors which affect spiritual growth.

- Bible reading and study
- Prayer
- Relationships
- Accountability
- Dealing with sin
- Ministry

Step 2 Identify three or four things that the new missionary could do to maintain a healthy spiritual life. (Note: it is important that the new missionary have appropriate expectations about spiritual disciplines, ministry duties, relationships, and other factors which affect spiritual health.)

Step 3 With the new missionary identify some ways to measure steps that the new missionary can take to maintain spiritual health. Develop some measurable goals for involvement in these areas. For example,

- I will have a regular time of Bible reading for 10 minutes 5 days a week.
- I will attend the weekly prayer meeting at church and pray regularly for the requests shared during the meeting.
- I will spend at least two hours a week in activities which focus on developing friendships with people in the church or community.

Debrief

Three or four weeks after developing goals and activities designed to maintain spiritual health, review the goals the new missionary developed and ask what is going well and what is not going well. If something is not going well, discuss why things are not going well and develop steps to address roadblocks.

Day Trip

In this module, the new missionary will learn how people like to spend their non-structured time. In order to complete this activity, the new missionary will need to spend a free day outside of their normal context, enjoying activities that many nationals enjoy.

Step 1 Tell the new missionary that their job is to find out how people get a change of scenery for the day. The goal is to find a place or activity within an hour's drive or bus ride from where they live where they can relax and have fun with their family or friends.

Step 2 Identify a recreation area that is fairly close to where the missionary lives. This could be a park, beach, lake, hiking area in the hills or mountains, a cultural festival, amusement park, etc. The area should be a popular place that local people enjoy visiting on the weekends.

Step 3 Have the new missionary plan a day-long excursion to the recreation area. The missionary should talk with cultural informants to find out:

- The best way to get there (car, bus, train, etc.)
- The kinds of activities that are available at the recreation area (picnic tables, playground equipment for children, bathrooms, etc.)
- Anything that should be brought (or not brought) to the recreation area (food, drinks, picnic blankets, towels, toilet paper, etc.)
- The costs associated with the day off activities (transportation, entrance fees, purchasing food, etc.)

Debrief Discuss how the new missionary did on the day off activity.

- If the whole family went, did everyone enjoy the activity equally?
- Did the nationals that were at the recreation area seem to be enjoying themselves?
- If the new missionary were to go back to the same area, would they do anything differently?
- Are there any other day off activities that the new missionary would like to experience?

History of MTW in Country

This module is designed to help your mentee understand the ministry context in which they work. By learning about the history of MTW's ministry in your country, they will gain a better understanding of ministry highlights, key events in the ministry, and how it might impact their ministry.

Step 1 Identify two or three people who have been with the mission for a long time who are nationals, team members, or missionaries.

Step 2 Ask the missionary to interview the people you have identified and attempt to find the answers to some or all of these questions:

1. When did MTW first come to this country to begin ministry?
2. Who were the first people who started the ministry?
3. What are some of the highlights of the ministry? (Beginning of new churches? New ministries begun? Cooperative agreements with other organizations?)
4. What are some challenges that the team has faced?
5. Who are the people that are most respected because of their work in the country?

Step 3 Ask the missionary to summarize what they have learned in a time line showing the people and events that have influenced where the team currently is.

Debrief

Ask your mentee about what they learned.

- Do you have any questions about the history of MTW in our country?
- How do you think that the events and the people who have preceded your arrival here influence how others perceive you?
- Does understanding the history of MTW's work in this country influence how you will approach starting new ministries or the ongoing work of your ministry?

Team Vision, Values, and Goals

This module is designed to help your mentee understand how your team works, what it is working toward, and how the new missionary's ministry fits into the big picture of the team's ministry.

Step 1

If your team has written vision, value, and goals statements in place, review these documents with the new missionary. As you review these documents with the new missionary, you may want to discuss how the team has decided to get involved in certain ministries or to stop investing in certain areas of ministry.

If your team does not have written vision, value, and goals encourage the new missionary to interview people who are familiar with the team's ministry. (Feel free to direct the new missionary to speak with specific people who will help provide a balanced and healthy perspective to these questions.)

Step 2 Ask some of the following questions:

- What is the main focus of your ministry?
- Describe a time when you had to decide between two different competing ministry needs and you couldn't do both. How did you decide what you would do and what you wouldn't do?
- Describe a problem or challenge that you are trying to work on right now.
- If you had all the resources you needed and God were working powerfully in your ministry, what would be happening? How would things be different? What would you be focusing on?
- What is the biggest need the ministry faces right now?
- What do you spend most of your time and energy focusing on?

Debrief

Review the results of the conversations that the new missionary had with teammates and national colleagues.

- What did the new missionary get "right" about the team's vision, values and goals?
- What did the new missionary get "wrong" about the team's vision, values, and goals?
- Are there areas of tension or disagreement about the team's directions, vision, values, or goals?

Discuss with the new missionary how his or her specific ministry fits into the team's direction. Identify two or three things that the new missionary could do in the next three to six months that will help advance the team's goals.

Part 2: Digging Deeper

The following modules are designed to help new missionaries gain deeper insights into the culture and ministry of your team. They require greater language skills and relationships marked by trust as some of the topics explored may be a bit sensitive.

Just as the Orientation Modules required the new missionaries to do most of the work to complete the modules, the modules in this section require the mentee to drive the learning process. As a mentor, you probably have a great deal on insight into many of these topics. However, please resist the temptation to share all of your insights **before** the new missionary has completed the activities. Missionaries learn best when they work to gain information and experiences rather than receiving them passively.

After the new missionary has completed the modules, discuss what they learned. Ask questions about their experiences and help the new missionary understand what he or she observed. Feel free to contribute your insights and experience as you work through the debrief questions for each module.

Team Time Line

This module is designed to help your mentee understand and appreciate the history of MTW's work in your area. Your mentee will research how the MTW team was formed, the key players in the development of the ministry, and any relevant events that impact present ministry.

Step 1 Select the most relevant questions about your team from the list of possible questions below.

1. When did the first protestant missionaries arrive in your country?
2. When did the first MTW missionaries arrive in your country? Your city? Your team?
3. List all of the MTW missionaries with their years of service who have worked in your country for more than 1 year over the last decade.
4. When the first MTW team arrived in your area, who was part of the team? What was their vision for ministry?
5. What national leaders have emerged as a result of the ministry?
6. What are the high points in the ministry?
7. What have been the challenges, conflicts, or difficulties that the team has experienced?
8. List all of the teammates, their children, and national partners currently working on the team.
9. How does the team see God at work right now in the team's ministry?

Step 2 Give your mentee the questions that you feel are most important and relevant to their situation. Ask him/her to interview at least 3 people to gather information about the team. If appropriate, ask him/her to interview a national worker or church member.

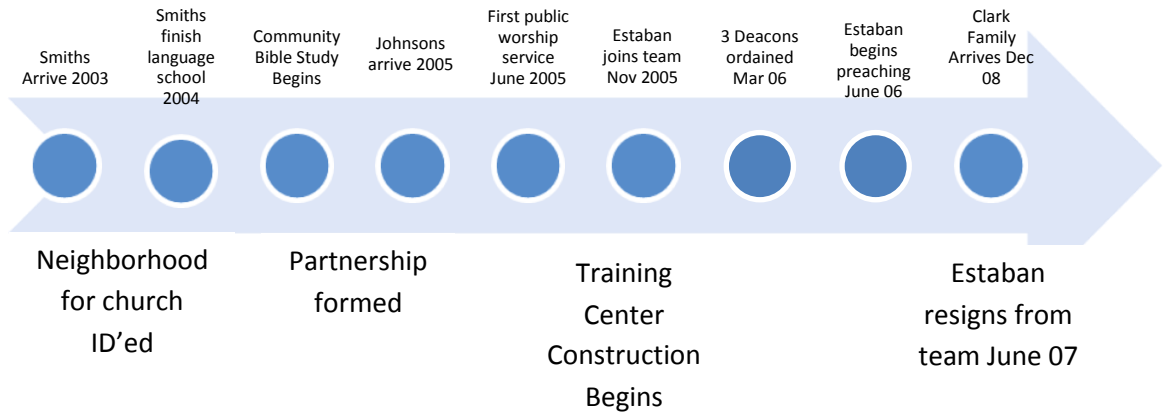
Step 3 Ask you mentee to write up a timeline for the last 10 years (or since the beginning of the ministry). Above the line, your mentee should list key people's arrival and departure dates. Below the line, note key events such as starting new ministries, leadership responsibilities given to nationals, conflicts, or milestones in life of the team or church. (See next page for example.)

Debrief

Ask your mentee about his/her experience.

- Review the timeline and summarize the contributions that each team member has made over the years.
- Ask the mentee, "Are there any themes you see in the timeline?"
- Ask the mentee, "How do you see God at work in this ministry over the course of time?"
- Ask the mentee, "Did anything surprise you as you spoke with others about our team's history?"
- Review components of the ministry that the mentee is involved in. Ask the mentee, "How does the history of the team impact current ministry plans?"

Timeline Example



Team “Culture”

This module is designed to help your mentee understand the team “culture”, that is to say, the way the team works, how people on the team relate to one another, and what is important to the team. The new missionary will gather this information by talking with teammates and national colleagues.

Step 1 Ask the new missionary to talk with each member of the team and ask them to “rate” the team on the following scales. Focus on how the team actually behaves, not on how you feel it should work.

Our team prefers to:

	Completely	Partially	Completely	
Be structured				Be open
Plan ahead				Go with the flow
Be intentional				Adjust to the environment
Be thoroughly reformed				Be broadly evangelical
Focus on theology				Focus on relationships
Maintain purity of the church				Build relationships with others
Work before we play				Play before we work
Deal with every conflict				Overlook minor disagreements
Follow directions of team leader				Make decisions by consensus
Do ministry together				Function independently
Think carefully, then act				Take risks and fail boldly
Train others fully				Give people responsibility early

Debrief

After the new missionary has interviewed all of the team members, talk through what he or she learned.

- What were the areas in which there was agreement and what areas where there was disagreement?
- Have the new missionary identify (1) where he or she would put their personal preferences and (2) any areas that were surprising.
- Discuss any areas in which the team feels that they would like to adjust (become more intentional about planning, having more fun together, training more intentionally, etc.)

Bribes

This module is designed to help the new missionary understand the cultural practices and assumptions related to corruption and bribery. In addition, it helps the new missionary develop strategies for dealing with bribery attempts.

Step 1 In order for the new missionary to get an idea of how prevalent bribery and corruption is in your society, ask the new missionary to interview three nationals with the following questions:

1. Have you ever been asked for a bribe? What happened?
2. Who asked you?
3. What did you do?
4. Could you have done something differently (not paid the bribe, complained to the supervisor, etc.)?
5. If so, what would have happened?

Debrief

Review the stories that the new missionary collected. What common themes did you find in your conversations? Are there a specific areas in society in which bribery is more common than others?

Often new missionaries do not recognize when bribes are being solicited. Review what someone might say if he or she is asking for a bribe. This might include, “We really have a big problem here. What should we do?” or “The police department hasn’t gotten paid from the federal government. We need fuel for a vehicle. Can you make a contribution?”

Missionaries can sometimes find themselves in situations in which the ethical issues related to bribery are confusing. Review the following scenarios and discuss how your team might handle them.

- *You have done nothing wrong, but are unjustly accused of a minor offense by a police officer.* Suppose you are walking down the street and a police officer stops you and asks to see your identification. He claims that your visa does not have all of the correct stamps, but that he would be willing to overlook it this time if you gave him a small bill to help him buy school supplies for his son.
- *A police officer is very helpful to you and asks for money after going above and beyond his duties to help you.* A police officer escorts you out of a dangerous neighborhood, points you in the right direction, and waits with you until a bus comes. He tells you that his wife is sick and he can’t afford medicine for her treatment. He asks for money to pay for the medicine.
- *You have done something wrong, and are asked to pay money to avoid a long and expensive hassle.* While driving, you have a “fender bender” with another car. You know you should exchange insurance information with the other driver, but he asks you to settle on the spot for damages before the police arrive.

Discuss how you and the team have decided to handle issues related to corruption and bribery. Share strategies for dealing with officials who ask for bribes.

Giving and Receiving Gifts

This module is designed to help the new missionary understand the cultural expectations related to giving and receiving gifts.

Step 1 Ask the new missionary to interview three cultural informants about when and how gifts are given to others. Think of five different situations in which gifts might be exchanged. The situations for gift giving might include: attending a child's birthday party, attending a wedding, a graduation, a goodbye party, going to someone's house for a meal, etc.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Ask the missionary to ask three different people to find out:

- What type of gift might be appropriate
- How much one usually spends on such a gift
- Any special instructions such as how the gift is wrapped, or presented, or if any words are exchanged during the gift giving

Debrief

Review the results of the interview.

- Does the new missionary sense that gift giving is an important part of the culture or is it a thoughtful, but not critical thing to do?
- Are foreigners expected to participate equally in the gift giving?
- If a gift is not reciprocated, how does that affect the relationship?

Beggars

This module is designed to help the new missionary understand how beggars are viewed in the culture and how Christians should respond to them, especially in places where there is great poverty.

Step 1 Ask the new missionary to pay special attention to the types of beggars that he or she encounters for one week. The observations should include

- Gender
- Age
- Alone or in a group
- Passive or aggressive
- Method (simply asking for money, displaying a disability, sharing a need, etc.)

Step 2 Ask the new missionary to interview three cultural informants on their view of people who are begging. Ask specific questions about the types of people you see begging and how they are viewed. (For example, are people who are sick or have a disability viewed more compassionately than children, or young mothers?)

Ask the cultural guides if there are certain types of people or individuals that they give to on a regular basis. Why do they give to some people and not others? Do they give money? Food? Clothing?

Debrief

Discuss several scenarios in which the new missionary might be approached by a beggar. These might include:

- Someone sitting on the sidewalk with a cup in their hand
- A beggar walking up to them in a crowd because they are a foreigner
- Someone coming to the house and saying they need money for medicine or bus fare to get back home
- A young boy or girl singing a song on the bus and asking for tips afterward

Is there a standard approach to how a Christian should handle these situations?

Are there common scams that are used on the street to deceive people into giving money when they really shouldn't?

Holidays

This module is designed to help your mentee engage in new social interactions within the culture and learn what kind and how people celebrate holidays.

Step 1 Identify and list four or five local or national holidays that people in your culture celebrate. (i.e. New Year's, Independence Day, Mother's Day, religious holidays, or other historical events)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Step 2 Ask your mentee to interview two or three people to get answers to the following questions:

- How did the holiday start?
- What does the holiday mean? What does it celebrate?
- What do people do to celebrate? Does this differ depending on the type of person (i.e. parents, children, teens, rich, poor, religious, etc.)?
- What specific traditions are associated with this holiday?

Step 3 Tell your mentee that his assignment is to find an event for an upcoming holiday and ask his friends and neighbors if he/she can attend the festivities. (OPTIONAL: If there is not an opportunity to attend a scheduled activity, ask your mentee to organize his/her own culturally appropriate holiday party to which he can invite friends and neighbors. Use the research to determine what activities, foods, and games to plan.)

Debrief

Ask your mentee about their experience.

- How did you learn about what kinds of holidays people celebrate?
- How did the people dress? What did they bring? What time did they show up or leave? Did they come all at once or one by one? Did they stay the whole time or just drop in?
- What kinds of games or activities are part of a celebration? Are they time-structured or do they happen organically?
- What do you learn about the culture from the holidays that they celebrate? Don't celebrate?
- What do your observations suggest about cultural values such as interpersonal relationships, enjoyment of food and drink, what they value about their lives or each other?

Important Historical Figures

This module is designed to help the new missionary learn about the important historical figures in the host culture. While it is possible to gather this information through books or the internet, please encourage the new missionary to gather this information by talking with people on the street, neighbors, and national colleagues.

Step 1 Identify five important historical figures from your country. For ideas of important historical figures, you may want to look at the people who are on the currency, historical monuments, statues, names of major boulevards, etc.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Step 2 Ask the new missionary to talk with cultural informants about these historical figures. They should gather at least the following information:

- When did this person live?
- What did this person do?
- Why is this person so famous?

Debrief

Ask the new missionary to identify any common themes regarding the reason why each person was famous. Were most of the people military figures? Poets or artists? Political figures? Scientists?

Did any of your conversations with people give you additional insights into the values of your host culture?

Do people seem to value their history and know a great deal about historical figures, or do most people view it as irrelevant to their daily lives?

Religious Practices

This module is designed to help your mentee understand the formal religious practices of the major religion of the culture in which you serve. Not only will this help the new missionary understand the religious and spiritual background of most people in the country, but it may help think through ways to make Christian worship contextualized to the culture.

Step 1 To the extent that it is appropriate, have the new missionary attend religious ceremonies that are practiced in the culture. This may entail visiting a mosque, cathedral, or temple during services. If there are special instructions that are important (wearing a head covering, taking off shoes, sitting in a certain area, etc.) be sure to cover this with the new missionary before sending him or her out to visit the services.

Ask the new missionary to pay attention to: (choose items which are appropriate to your context)

- Is the ceremony well attended?
- What kind of people were at the ceremony? (men, women, young, old, families, rich, poor, etc.)
- Are people expected to participate actively in the ceremony? In what way?
- Is music or chanting used as part of the religious ceremony? What is the music like?
- Do people seem to be personally engaged in the ceremony?
- Is there a sense of community with other believers during worship?

Debrief

Have the new missionary report back on what he or she observed during the ceremony.

- How would someone from that religion view the services of the local church?
- Would incorporating practices from other styles of worship (posture for prayer, music style, seating arrangements, etc.) make attending a Christian worship service more comfortable for people who are interested in learning more about Christianity?
- What aspects of Christianity might be particularly appealing or relevant to people coming from a non-Christian (Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, etc.) background?

Religious Demographics

This module is designed to help your mentee better understand the major religions of their new country. This will also include growth in understanding of their structure and local religious practices.

Step 1 Ask your mentee to gather the following information:

- What religions are practiced in your country and what percentage of the population practices each religion? (Feel free to use the internet or Operation World.)
- Who started the predominant religion and who are 2 or 3 major figures in that religion?

Step 2 Talk with three to five “average” people in your neighborhood questions such as:

- Do you think that religion is an important part of most people’s lives?
- What does one need to do or believe in order to be a good _____ (Muslim, Buddhist, Catholic, etc.)?
- What religious practices do you engage in on a regular basis? (prayers, public worship, offerings, fasting, festivals, etc.)

Step 3 (Optional) Identify a major worship location in your area. Visit the location and, if possible, observe their worship practices.

Debrief

Ask your mentee about their experience.

- What did you learn about religious practice in your country? Did anything surprise you?
- Into which religion has the Gospel penetrated the most?
- How is Christianity different than the religion you learned about?
- How does the Gospel address the concerns for the predominant religion?
- Which of the major religions has had the most cultural impact in your host country?
- How might you use what you learned as you do ministry?

Religious Figures

This module is designed to help your mentee understand the history and background of the majority religion in your context. The mentee will study the major personalities, deities, and events that are important to religious practice.

Step 1 If you are helping the new missionary understand a major world religion (Catholicism, the Orthodox church, Islam, Buddhism, etc.) ask the new missionary to draw a time line of the major events in the development of the religion. The timeline should include:

- The context in which the religion developed (for example, Christ was a Jew and built on Jewish law and tradition)
- Major events that are often referenced in the religion's teaching (for Christianity, this might include the creation, call of Abraham, the exodus of Israel, entering the promised land, birth of Christ, crucifixion, ascension, Paul's missionary journeys, etc.)
- Major branches or controversies in the development of the religion (for example, Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant branches of Christianity.)

Step 2 Examine local figures which impact current practice of the religion in your area. This might include saints from your country, shrines erected in honor of a particular holy man, or key events that took place near your area. If possible, visit these sites to see the shrines and locations of these events.

Debrief

- How do the key events in the predominant religion reflect what is important to the people who practice the religion? For example, the way that Christ interacted with the Pharisees highlights the importance that is placed on heart motivations over external conformity.
- What does the religion think about Christian doctrines such as the trinity, deity of Christ, the moral law, grace, etc.?
- What are some of the common objections that people have related to Christianity?

Folk Religion Analysis

This module is designed to help your mentee understand the traditional beliefs and practices of religion in your region. In many cases, cultures may have a formal religious system (Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, etc.) but the actual practices of the religion may differ from the formal system of doctrine and practice (witchcraft, ancestor worship, secular humanism or syncretism with pagan religions)

Step 1 Identify a few of the following questions that the new missionary can ask people in the community to identify how folk religion impacts daily life. (Some of these questions may not be appropriate to your context, so choose ones which you think will work in your context.)

- What happens to people when they die?
- Why do people get sick?
- What do people do when they face difficult situations (loss of work, crop failure, sickness in the family, etc.)?
- Why do natural disasters (earthquakes, floods, damaging storms) occur?
- What do good parents do to make sure that their baby is kept safe and healthy?
- How should a family remember a parent or grandparent who has died?
- Are there holidays that are not historical or political in nature which are celebrated in your country? What are they? What do they celebrate?

Step 2 Identify a missionary or national leader who has a great deal of experience with folk religion and its impact on the church. Suggest that he or she ask some of the following questions:

- When a non-believer comes to Christ, what are some of the religious practices that difficult to leave behind?
- Are there religious festivals or practices that believers will not participate in?
- Are there religious practices that Americans engage in (the scientific approach to health, or organizational manner of dealing with conflict) which nationals find unbiblical?

Debrief

Review the results of the conversations the new missionary had with people. Were there any surprises in what the new missionary learned? What did not make sense?

Major Life Celebrations

This module is designed to help your mentee engage in new social interactions within the culture and learn what kind and how people celebrate major life events.

Step 1 Identify and list five major life events that your local culture celebrates. (i.e. birthdays, weddings, graduations, childbirth, naming a baby, circumcision, etc.)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Step 2 Ask a cultural informant, friends or neighbors some of the following questions for each celebration:

- Why is it important to celebrate this milestone in a person's life?
- Who is invited to celebrate this event?
- What do people do to celebrate?
- What specific traditions are associated with this celebration? Does this vary by family? Socioeconomic status? Area of the country?
- What do guests bring to the celebration? Money? Food? Clothing?

Debrief

Ask your mentee about their experience.

- How did you learn about what kinds of life events people celebrate?
- What kinds of games or activities are part of the celebration? Are they time-structured or do they happen organically?
- What do you learn about the culture from the events that they celebrate? Don't celebrate?
- What kinds of cultural and personal values are evidenced by the type of events people celebrate?

Funerals

This module is designed to help your mentee prepare for and debrief an invitation to attend a local funeral.

Step 1 Schedule some time to speak with a local cultural mentor or a veteran missionary who is familiar with local customs. Ask your cultural mentor the following questions:

- What types of scheduled events take place after a death? A viewing? A meal? A funeral?
- What do people wear to these events? What is the color associated with mourning in this culture?
- Is there a particular greeting or condolence that I should say?
- Are there any traditional items that I should take with me? Flowers? Food? Money?
- What are local customs or traditions that I should be aware of? Based on gender roles?
- How will people express their grief? Wailing? Silence? Conversations?

Step 2 Attend the scheduled events related to the funeral. Be careful to watch the actions and behaviors of those in attendance.

Step 3 Ask your mentee to identify at least 5 cultural practices they observed. (This could include the way people dress, what they bring, what was present/missing in the surroundings, and specific gender roles of men, women, and children.)

Debrief

Ask your mentee about their experience.

- How is an invitation extended to attend a funeral? To whom is this invitation extended?
- What did the people wear? Bring with them?
- What were the specific roles of men? Women? Children?
- Where there any spiritual components? If so, what were they? What did these components, or lack of, tell you about the role of God in death and dying?
- How did the immediate family express their grief? Friends and neighbors?
- How long does the mourning period last for the immediate family? Are there traditions that are carried out during this time?

Free Time

In this module, the new missionary will try to understand how people like to spend their non-structured time. In some cultures, spending time in leisure is frowned upon while in other cultures, it is highly valued. Feel free to adjust these exercises to fit your cultural context.

Step 1 Tell the new missionary that their job is to find out how people enjoy spending their free time. The object is to understand how recreation is viewed in the culture. The new missionary must ask five nationals how they like to spend their free time. The following questions may help the new missionary get a conversation going.

- When you have a special day off (such as a national holiday) what do you like to do?
- If your boss gave you an extra day's wages because you were doing a good job and he told you to spend it doing something you enjoy, what would you do?
- If I wanted to really understand how people in your country like to have fun, what should I do?
- Tell me about the last holiday you had? What did you do? Where did you go? Who was there?

Debrief

Have the new missionary summarize their findings. Pay special attention to the following:

- Was it easy for most people to describe how they spend their free time? If not, what might that say about the culture?
- Were there any common themes to how people relaxed?
- Were the activities that people listed social in nature? Individual? Were they active (playing sports, hiking, gardening, etc.) or passive (watching movies, listening to music, etc.)?
- What cultural values are highlighted in the predominant leisure activities? For example, the emphasis on family, enjoying good food, having fun, or being adventurous.
- What are one or two culturally appropriate ways you would like to spend your free time here?