



Short-Term Mission Trips

Resources

Fundraising

Fundraising. It can be hard, right? We can feel like we're not supposed to ask for money, or we think that people won't give. These are normal feelings, but we must push them to see what God has for us. If we don't ask, we could be denying others the chance to serve alongside us, to use *their* gift of giving. So, be bold and ask! Send the letter. Have a coffee with someone to share about the trip. Give someone a chance to support you in your mission because giving could be their mission.

Here are a few ways you can raise support in both money AND prayer for your trip:

- Share at your small group or Rooted group about your trip. The people in your small group care about you and want to see you succeed in the areas God is calling you in. Ask them to come alongside you in prayer and ask if they would consider supporting you financially.
- Make a post on your social media platform about your trip. Share what you will be doing and ask people to come alongside you in prayer and financial support.
- Meet with your family, friends, co-workers, fellow students, or even teachers. Share about the trip and the exciting ways you will be serving. People are interested in what you are doing and want to support. Don't be afraid to share, and don't be afraid to ask!

Travel Essentials

Tips:

- Keep an eye on the US Embassy website for updated Covid and travel advisories for your location.
- Check out this [article](#) from the CDC for helpful tips concerning safe eating and drinking while traveling.
- [U.S. Department of State: Passports](#): Visit this link for everything you need to know about how and where to get a U.S. passport. This website includes downloadable applications as well as information on how to obtain a copy of your birth certificate.
- Check out this [website](#) to see the current exchange rate for the country you're visiting.
- Download the Bible via the Bible app to your phone so you can use it even if you don't have reception.
- Download the Google Translate app and then download the language of the country you are visiting. This way you can try and communicate even without cell reception.
- Learn a few words and phrases in the language of the country you will be going to. People always appreciate you trying to speak to them in their language, even if it's just a few phrases.

Supplies:

- A portable phone charger is a great thing to have, especially on long travel days. You can find these on Amazon.
- A water bottle with a built-in water filter is a great resource to have, especially if you are in a country where water could be contaminated. [Uzima](#) and [LifeStraw](#) make great ones.
- Packing cubes are a great way to organize your luggage.
- Quick dry towels. These are small, yet powerful!
- Cotton sleep sacks rather than sheets will save you space.
- Ask a friend or family member who is travel or camping savvy to see if they have some of these items already!

CONTINUE READING »

Travel Essentials (ctd)

Packing:

- **Ziplock bag Outfits:** Pack each day's outfit in a different Ziplock bag. It keeps your fresh clothes away from the funky ones and simplifies your daily routine while traveling.
- **Save space:** Roll clothes and sort them by category in packing cubes to save space and stay organized.
- **Do a pre-pack:** Lay out everything you're packing and go item by item asking yourself if you really need it. Leave non-essentials (like blow dryers, luxury products, etc.) at home. A good rule of thumb is to look at everything you'd like to pack and then purposefully cut down by a quarter.
- **Know yourself:** Regular packing lists tend to consider every situation possible. If you see a hat on the packing list but never wear hats, don't bring it! Cut out things that you know you just won't use, even if others do.
- **Carry-on must haves:** A change of clothes, any necessary medication, toothbrush and toothpaste, and deodorant are a must in your carry-on. On the off chance something happens to your luggage, you'll be thankful to have your essentials.
- **Power to share:** Bring a power strip. These are helpful to have at an airport, as well as in your room. It's nice to share with your fellow travelers, so all can charge their phones. Also check to see if you'll need any adapters to convert to different outlets internationally.
- **Think small:** Instead of bringing large shampoos, bring travel size toiletries. It saves weight and space!
- **[Travel first aid kit packing list:](#)** Check out this practical list which covers the essentials of what to bring in your personal first aid kit when traveling.

Culture

Whether you are serving in your home country or abroad, you are stepping into a community that is culturally different from the neighborhood you call home. God created a diverse world with different people groups all made in His image and loved by Him. Take time to learn as much as you can about the culture, traditions, and predominant religion where you will be serving. Here are a few things to note about cultural sensitivity.

- **Learn the language:** Try to learn a few words or phrases of the language of the country you are visiting. Doing so will really show your care to the new people you will meet.
- **Try new food:** Consider it a rule to always eat what's on your plate. If you don't like it, that's okay, but keep that opinion to yourself. Be thankful that you have food to eat, and don't be wasteful. Someone likely worked hard to prepare your food, and there are others in the world who would be grateful to have the plate of food sitting in front of you.
- **Smile, wave and be friendly:** As you are traveling and interacting with others, be aware of the signals your body language can give off. Even if you are feeling happy, a scowl on your face will tell others something different. Focus on smiling often, relaxing your facial muscles, waving to strangers, and greeting them with a simple "Hello." Chances are, even if they don't speak the same language as you, they understand the greeting of a universal smile.
- **Keep negativity to yourself:** No one likes negativity, and no one likes a complainer. This is doubly true when pertaining to personal issues like culture, daily lifestyle, clothing, food, or politics. You are a guest in the state or country you are serving in—remember, you are the foreigner! So, if you have negative opinions, it's best to keep them to yourself.
- **Don't judge others:** To put it simply, judging is one of the most divisive things we can do to other people. When you judge someone due to their dress, culture, way of life, money, or material possessions, you put yourself above them. You create a divide between yourself and them. Worse than that, it is easy to judge someone before you really get to know them. Keep an open mind about the new experiences you are having and the amazing people you are meeting and who knows, maybe they'll teach you a thing or two!
- **[This](#)** list offers all kinds of resources and different ways to look at and learn about other cultures.

Healthy Missions

Short term missions can get a bad rap, right? It seemed like for many years that missions were all about going and fixing something, saving someone, or telling the locals that our way was better. So, how do we combat this? Here are a few ideas:

- **Mindset:** Don't go on your trip thinking that you are there to save anybody. That isn't your job. Your job is to learn and love others the way that Christ loves us. We aren't called to be the saviors; that's Jesus's job and He's the best at it.
- **You don't need to fix anything:** Our job isn't to go in and tell people what they are doing wrong. We are stepping into their territory, their community. They know their community better than we ever could. We are there to come alongside the ministry that is happening and to help and encourage.
- **Learn:** Take the time to learn about the new culture you will be experiencing. It doesn't matter if it's the next town over, or halfway across the world, there is always something to learn. Have an open mind when you go on your trip. Take the time to sit and listen to people's stories and see how you can learn from them. Have an open mind about where God is sending you and why. He has something to teach you!

We also recommend checking out a few podcasts, articles, or books before you go:

- [When Helping Hurts](#)
- [Bridges for Missions Podcast](#)
- [Global Missions Podcast](#)
- ["Short-Term Mission Trips Aren't for 'Fixing' People"](#)

Relational Training

We live in a society where people are talking less and less in person and more and more online or through text. Humans crave contact, and they want to feel valued and cared for. While on your mission trip, you will have plenty of opportunities to speak face to face with people. Maybe you feel totally comfortable doing that, or maybe it makes you nervous. Both feelings are ok! Remember that Moses wasn't a perfect speaker, and God still used him to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. God doesn't need us to be perfect; He just wants us to show up and allow Him to use us.

Below we are some helpful tips and training to prepare you. This is a valued skill, not only on the ground, but also once you come home. These tips will help you not only talk to new people from another culture, but also help you when you come home and want to share about your trip, or even share your testimony with a friend, family member, co-worker or fellow student!

- If you have never shared your testimony, a great way to start is to write it down. Take a moment to think about your life journey so far. (It doesn't matter how young or old you are!) Read it over and think about how you can share your story in 5-7 minutes, maybe even less depending on who you are speaking to. Always be prepared to share your story while on a trip. It's great to write it down so you have it with you, especially if you get nervous.
- A practical way to practice your testimony is during one of your mission team meetings.
 - Break into groups of 3.
 - One person keeps time, and one person shares their story in 7 minutes.
 - After the 7 minutes is up, the other two then give the person who shared an affirmation. Repeat so each person has a chance to share.
- Finally, remember that it's okay to not share everything. Be aware of who you are speaking to. Maybe there is a specific part of your story that you need to share with someone without sharing the whole thing. A good thing to remember is to gage your audience.

Relational Training (ctd)

- Starting a conversation can be hard! There are two key areas that can really help you have a conversation with someone you may not know.
 - Be a good listener! Charles Stanley said, “God gave us two ears and one mouth so you think we’d get the point.” He goes on to say that being a good listener means loving them. We spell love **LVV**:
 - Look at them. Give visual approval and verbal approval.
 - Build your conversation around these areas. These objects are good things to remember as they will help you ask questions and maybe even find some things you have in common!

Object	Meaning
Nameplate	What is their Name?
House	Where do they live?
People	Who is their family? Siblings? Friends?
Work Glove	What do they do? Or go to school?
Soccer Ball	What sports or hobbies do they enjoy?
Airplane	Do they travel, where have they been?

- When you come home from your trip, you are excited and ready to tell every single person you meet about what amazing things God did! That’s great and you should feel that way! But you should also realize that some people only want to hear little snippets. It may bum you out, but remember, that they didn’t have the same experience as you and your team. There will be some people close to you who want to hear every detail, but the truth is most people only want a few minutes. It’s best to write down some highlights while you’re on the trip that you can share with those people when you get home, or even with those that supported you. When someone asks about your trip, gage the person, and then share what you think they might enjoy hearing.

Prayer

Prayer is the most important thing you can do and ask for. Without it, we fail to hear God’s calling or His voice. The mission field is a battle ground, and prayer is our most powerful weapon. It’s how we equip ourselves, how we fight in the spiritual realm, how we lift others up, and how we can feel God’s presence.

There are many different aspects to prayer, especially on a mission trip. Sometimes, we may encounter someone who has never received prayer. It’s a powerful thing to be the one that can guide that person before the throne of God. You never know how prayer can change a person’s day, or even life. Be bold in asking for prayer, giving prayer, and allowing yourself to receive prayer.

Prayer (ctd)

Here are a few ideas on prayer:

- Be intentional about setting aside a few minutes each day before your trip to pray for your team, the mission partners, the location, the people, and even for yourself. Let God fill you as you seek Him before your trip.
- God desires for His children to come to Him. He wants us to talk to Him, and He wants us to be bold when we do so. (Hebrews 4:14-16)
- Prayer walking at home is a great way to not only see the needs in your own neighborhood, but also to get comfortable praying for things you may not normally pray for. Your prayer may help break chains over a person or family, and you may even get the chance to pray with a neighbor! It's good practice for your trip!
- If prayer is hard for you or you aren't sure what to say, a great place to start is the Lord's Prayer. You can go line by line and rewrite each in your own voice speaking directly to God. (Matthew 6:9-13)
- Romans 8:26 is a great reminder when we don't know what to pray. "And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words."

Finally, prayer goes hand in hand with the Armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-18). The enemy likes to derail us when we are taking ground for the Kingdom, and we need to be able to stand when he attacks. Prayer before, during, and after your trip can help you stand against any attack that will come.