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CHURCH LEADER AND TEAM TRAINING

Before You Train

This training guide contains suggestions for ways you and your team may prepare to serve and is customizable for your church. It includes three sessions that can be used in a single day or divided into three separate training sessions. It covers topics from context and calling to sharing the gospel and the heart of a missionary. Use this guide to train your team in the weeks leading up to the start of Serve Tour. It will assist your team in ensuring that you have the information necessary to serve your chosen city and group well. To assist you with your planning, you may want to consider reading the Send Relief ministry guide *How to Put Together Short-Term Mission Trips*.

How much you prepare your team for your trip directly correlates to the impact your team has on the people and city you serve. As you prepare, consider the following:

- > **Location of training:** Choose a place that best fits the needs of your team. If you need to offer childcare for volunteers, choose a place that accommodates that.
- > **Length of training:** Choose the time slot that accommodates the most people on your team. Stress the importance of attending team trainings.
- > **Number of training sessions:** Choose the best option for your team. If you need to complete your team training in one day, do so. If it works best to break it into multiple sessions, choose that option.
- > **Training materials needed:** Prepare your training materials ahead of time and print any forms, prayer guides or other training materials you intend to use. Consider making the training materials available electronically through your church website, too.
- > **Communicate participant total cost:** Before the first training session, communicate the total cost of the trip to participants.

You should also spend time praying for your team and the training sessions. Never underestimate the importance of prayer in your preparation for serving God. Ask God to prepare the hearts of each team member and to help you equip them to serve with His compassion while on mission with Serve Tour.

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SESSION ONE

Begin this session by communicating project information to your team. Answering these questions will help prepare your team to serve.

PROJECT INFORMATION

- > **What will we do?** You may only know the overview of your project at this point, so for context about how this project helps reach a city, consider viewing the Send Relief ministry guide *How Can We Serve*.
- > **Where will we stay?** Many teams will commute, but some will choose to stay in hotels or host churches. A list of possible hotels and host churches will be provided when you register for a specific project. Discuss and share with your team where your team will stay during Serve Tour.
- > **When will we depart and return?** At this session, discuss departure and return times with your team. Make sure your team understands how they will get to and from the city your team is serving.
- > **How will we get to the ministry site?** After you determine your housing, you can decide how your team will travel to and from the project site each day. Communicate this information to your team.
- > **Do I have everyone's participant information?** Collect participant information forms, including Send Relief participants' Statement of Faith and Code of Conduct forms.
- > **What is the total trip cost?** The Send Relief participant cost is free. Any additional costs should have been determined by your church and communicated to each team member in advance. Remind the team of this cost and any deadlines for submission at the first training session.

PROJECT TRAINING

Understanding the Context and God's Calling

Begin this first training session discussing God's calling to compassion ministry and the city you are serving, as well as the context of your specific city. Prepare information about the city and ministry context prior to this session to share with your team.

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- > **Where and whom are we serving?** Spend time learning about the demographics, religious affiliations and people you will serve.
- > **What long-term impact will our ministry project have on the city?** Discuss with your team the impact you can have on the city and the importance of leaving a lasting gospel impression.
- > **What preconceived ideas or stereotypes do we have about the people?** Preconceived ideas and stereotypes can hinder gospel advancement. Discuss any that your team may have and discuss how your team can keep the gospel at the center of all that you do this week.
- > **Why are we serving this city and people?** Examining God's call to compassion ministry helps your team prepare their hearts to serve with the right motives. Discuss:
 - > Why does God call us to serve?
 - > There are hurting individuals who desperately need Jesus.
 - > Christ has called us to demonstrate His love to a hurting and broken world by meeting needs.
 - > Meeting needs often opens the door for gospel conversations.
 - > When we join God in His mission, nothing is insignificant.
 - > The gospel changes everything.
 - > Consider the implications of some of these passages in answering the "why" of compassion ministry:
 - > Matthew 22:37-39
 - > Matthew 25:31-46
 - > Acts 1:8
 - > Acts 3:1-10

Sharing Your Personal Testimony

Someone else may have a similar story to ours, but they don't yet know of the hope found in Jesus. Sharing our story can serve as a connection point and serve as a bridge to the gospel. Help your team prepare to share their testimonies by first writing them down. To help them prepare to do this, discuss the three basic parts of a personal testimony.

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Three Basic Parts of a Personal Testimony

- 1. Life Before Christ:** What was important to you then? What was wrong with your life?
- 2. When You Became a Christian:** Share the specifics of how you became a Christian. Consider including Scripture—John 3:16, Romans 5:8, Titus 3:4, Romans 10:13, Romans 10:9 are some you could include.
- 3. Life After Christ:** Share how your life has changed since you became a Christian. Include specifics, such as the relationships you have with other Christians and the communities in which you now serve.

Sharing Your Personal Testimony

After your team's testimonies have been written, spend time preparing them to share their testimonies aloud by discussing the following:

- > Sharing your testimony should only take approximately 2-3 minutes.
- > Sharing your testimony serves as a bridge to the gospel. It is a way to move the conversation to the gospel, not to share your entire life story.
- > Avoid churchy words as you share your testimony. Spend time listing examples of some of the words or phrases that may seem foreign to unchurched people.

Ask your team to be prepared to share their testimonies with another team member at the next training session.

Prayer Together

Depending on how far in advance you are training, pass out the 30-Day Prayer Guide to help participants prepare their hearts for serving with this project. Spend time praying together as a team and praying for the people in the city you will serve.

Next Training Session

Communicate when and where your next training session will be. Remind your team to prepare their personal testimonies for the next training session.

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SESSION TWO

Use this time to give your team any project updates you may have related to the following.

PROJECT INFORMATION/UPDATE

- > **What will we do?** Give any ministry project updates you have, including any details about supplies needed.
- > **Where will we stay?** Communicate details about accommodations to your team if these have been finalized.
- > **When will we leave?** The dates of your trip should be finalized by this session. Make sure every team member is aware of your departure and return dates and times. Pass out itineraries if you choose to use one. The itinerary can list the departure and return dates, as well as the times and modes of travel.
- > **How will we get to the ministry site?** Work with the appropriate contact to finalize these details and communicate them to your team.
- > **Do I have everyone's participant information?** Collect any missing participant forms and Send Relief's Statement of Faith and Code of Conduct forms.

PROJECT TRAINING

Personal Testimony Assignment

Review the three basic parts of a personal testimony with your group.

1. Life Before Christ
2. When You Became a Christian
3. Life After Christ

Ask your team members to pair up and share their 2-3-minute testimonies with another team member. Have them pray together and ask God for opportunities to share your testimony during the trip.

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Sharing the Gospel

There are many different methods to share the gospel. The North American Mission Board provides free resources at namb.net/evangelism. The method isn't as important as the practice of sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with lost people! You may choose to train your team using your church's preferred method, or you can use the example below.

One-Verse Method

- > Ask your team to memorize John 3:16.
- > Talk through these elements of the verse:
 - > God loves you. (John 3:16)
 - > Jesus died for you. (1 Corinthians 15:3-4)
 - > Salvation is available for you. (Romans 10:9, 13)

(If you choose to use this method, Everyday Evangelism cards are available free of charge through whosyourone.com. We suggest ordering these ahead of time to have them available for your team.)

- > Discuss how to extend the invitation of salvation: You may say, "Do you believe what I shared with you is true? Do you believe Jesus paid your sin debt on the cross and rose again on the third day? Would you like to turn from your sin and trust in Jesus for salvation?"

Ask your team to memorize and familiarize themselves with sharing the gospel using whatever method you choose. Ask your team to be able to share the gospel with a partner at the next meeting.

Prayer Together

Pray for opportunities for gospel conversations and that God will allow your team to meet needs in a way that changes lives.

Next Training Session

Communicate when and where your next training session will be.

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SESSION THREE

Use this time to give your team any project updates you may have related to the following:

PROJECT INFORMATION/UPDATE:

- > **What will we do?** Update your team with any specific supplies or tools that may be needed for your project or trip.
- > **Where will we stay?** Your housing plans should be finalized and communicated to your team.
- > **When will we depart and return?** Hand out itineraries. Make sure everyone knows when your team will depart and when they will return.
- > **How will we get to the ministry site?** This plan should be finalized by this session. Communicate the plan for daily transportation to your team at this session.
- > **What is our daily schedule?** See the sample daily schedule. Stress the importance of attending the Friday Night Rally as a group.
- > **Do I have everyone's participant information?** Collect any participant forms and Send Relief's Statement of Faith and Code of Conduct forms you are missing.
- > **What should we pack?** See the suggested packing list.

PROJECT TRAINING

Review: Sharing the Gospel

Help your team practice sharing the gospel as they prepare for the trip by reviewing the information below with them.

Sometimes the hardest part of sharing the gospel is starting the conversation. Turning the conversation to the gospel or spiritual things can be challenging for a lot of people. Consider these helpful steps in transitioning conversations to gospel conversations:

- > **Consider asking these questions:**
 - > Did you grow up in church?
 - > Do you mind if we talk about spiritual things?
 - > What do you think happens when a person dies?

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- > **Consider the response someone is giving you in the conversation and think of it in terms of a stoplight:**
 - > **Red** – Stop! Their response and body language reveal they do not want to have a spiritual conversation yet.
 - > **Yellow** - Proceed with caution and sensitivity. Their response and body language reveal they are somewhat open to a spiritual conversation.
 - > **Green** – Proceed! Their response and body language reveal they are open to hearing the gospel. Share the gospel and extend the invitation to salvation.
- > **Use your testimony to build a bridge.**
 - > Ask your team to pair up and share the gospel using the method you have chosen.

The Heart of a Missionary

Leading and serving on mission brings with it many challenges and requires much flexibility. Schedule changes, weather difficulties and other unforeseen hindrances may occur. Use the following talking points to help your team “put on” a heart attitude that is Christlike.

- > **A first impression is a lasting impression.**
 - > We will leave lasting impressions in the community and impact how the people view Christ and Christians. Consider John 3:30, “He must increase, but I must decrease.”
- > **A humble and flexible heart most reflects Christ.**
 - > It is extremely important that we bring with us a humble spirit, flexibility and a heart ready to show Christ’s love to the community, other volunteers and event leadership. Consider James 4:6, “God opposes the proud but gives great grace to the humble.”

Commissioning Service

A commissioning service is a special time of prayer for your team held before or after a worship service prior to your team’s departure for the Serve Tour. It is an opportunity for the church body to join in praying for your team as you serve on mission. Discuss with your church leadership if a commissioning service will be held and communicate the details with your team at this session.

- > **Commission Service Date/Time:**

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Mission Trip Update

Sharing details about your trip with your church helps the work you do in the city continue long after you leave the city. Your church can continue praying for the people you impacted and hopefully, a lasting partnership will continue. Discuss how and when you will share with the church about the work that God did through Serve Tour. If you do plan to give an update when you return, assign a team member or members the role of collecting photos and stories from the trip to use during this update. Doing this before you leave makes this process easier when you return and ensures you gather the information you need for the update.

> Mission Trip Update Date/Time:

Prayer Together

Pray with your team as you make final preparations to leave. Pray for good weather and for God to move in ways your team cannot imagine in the lives of the people you will serve and in the hearts of your team members.

Before You Leave

The week before you leave for the Serve Tour, run through this checklist to ensure you have a successful departure and Serve Tour:

- > Make sure each team member understands the departure location and time.
- > Ensure you have the completed, necessary forms for every team member.
- > Double check to make sure you have confirmed transportation to and from the Serve Tour location.
- > Create a team member contact list and make copies. Leave a copy with church staff or a ministry liaison.
- > Pack tools and equipment if you are taking any.