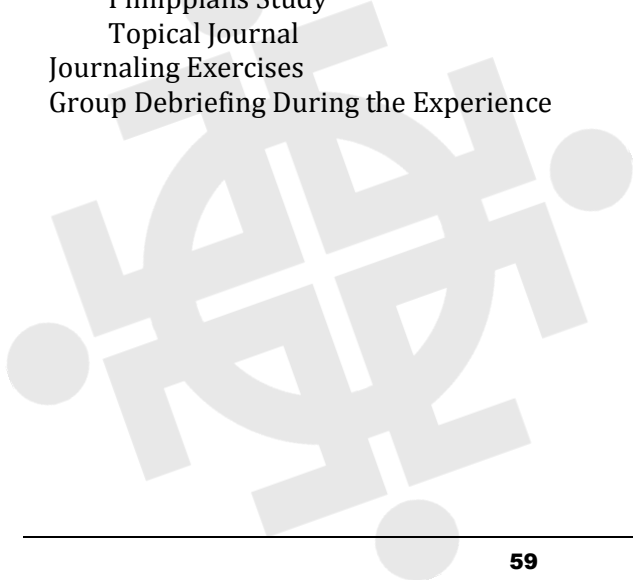




SPIRITUAL PREPAREDNESS

“SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING”

Keys to Spiritual Growth	61
Journaling Exercise	62
Group Lesson #1—Spiritual Concerns	63
Translation Boobos...	64
Group Lesson #2—Getting Ready to Tell Your Story	65
A Testimony in 3 Easy Steps	66
Another Approach to Telling the Salvation Story	67
Journaling My Testimony	69
Group Lesson #3—Paul, “Barney” or “Tim” ...Which one am I?	70
Personal Preparation	71
📖 Devotions/Quiet Times/Bible Study	71
✍️ Journaling	71
👏 Encouragement	71
Devotional Resources	72
Philippians Study	73
Topical Journal	77
Journaling Exercises	82
Group Debriefing During the Experience	85











Spiritually Speaking

Spiritual Preparedness is foundational, not additional.

Spiritual preparation of the team and of individuals is foundational to the mission experience. As you consider what God is going to do through your team in the “tasks” of the mission, what Jesus will do in your team members’ cannot be assumed or neglected.

ICON KEY	
	Exercises
	Journaling
	Forms
	Bible Study

Keys to Spiritual Growth

*Have a healthy prayer life. Pray for all aspects and people involved in your trip.

*Be open to the Holy Spirit and to what God may be saying.

*Be open and responsive to God’s blessings.

*Be willing to learn, to grow and to expand your own horizons.

*Ask your local church for prayers of encouragement and support of the mission.

*Keep a journal about the mission. Note how you saw God at work each day. Tell the story of the mission when you return home.

Call the team to personal reflection – through solitude time with God, Bible reading, prayer, journaling, and practice of other spiritual disciplines. In each training session, there is opportunity to take time for corporate spiritual preparation and conversation. While the team is on the mission, encourage team members to continue personal devotional times (you may want to provide guided sheets) and lead the team in devotions and debriefing. The spiritual aspect is not to make the trip “all about your team,” but serves to help the team focus on the reason for and the goal of the mission. Jesus calls us to follow him; Jesus sustains and strengthens, as we seek to build the Kingdom of God throughout this world.

There are suggestions for Journaling/Personal Reflection and Team Devotions. You know your group and what they need... use these if they're helpful, modify them or find other resources. Be careful not to compromise the spiritual aspect of the trip out of busyness, the stress of deadlines, exhaustion or tasks.



Journaling Exercise

(to do before your first meeting together)

Assignment: Get a journal – one you can use for your trip prep and take with you when you go. When you are writing your thoughts down, let the words flow. Don't worry, no one is going to see what you write, unless you show them. No one is going to judge your thoughts or edit what you have to say. Let the discipline of journaling be a way to process what Jesus is teaching you about God, yourself, the team, the experience of traveling to another country to participate in what God is doing there.

Before the next group meeting, take some time to think about your expectations for the mission trip. Write down your thoughts about:

- Why do you want to go on this particular mission opportunity?
- What do you hope for, as a result of the experience?
- What are you excited about?
- What makes you nervous?



Group Lesson #1 Spiritual Concerns

Team members may face issues of spiritual pride and struggle to reintegrate back into the life of the church when the experience is over. Being prepared for this before you go is key to dealing with new and possibly heightened feelings. They may have had an enriched spiritual experience and are aware of the “apparently mediocre” commitments of Christians around them. It’s important not to look down on others who haven’t experienced this trip.²⁹ There may also be a crisis of faith for the team members during the mission experience. They may have seen or experienced things that may have shaken their faith. This should be handled with compassion and understanding.

What does the Bible have to say?

Split your mission team into groups of three. Have them read and discuss **Matthew 6:25-34** and talk about how these words from Jesus encourage them as they look ahead to the mission experience.

Now it is time to pray. Ask each individual to share a personal concern they’d like their small group to pray about. In the prayer time, invite the groups to pray for the individual concerns discussed; for the team as a whole – cultural sensitivity, wisdom in relationships, unity; for those you are going to work with and serve.



“The Storyteller”

A Group Discussion

We need to consider the culture we come from and the culture we are traveling to as we think about how to best communicate our story and The Story of God. Part of any mission experience is to share with people what God has done in our own life and what he wants to do for others. Have the group discuss the following questions:

- Describe a “good” story – what’s it like? what makes it interesting?
- Do you think of yourself as a storyteller? Why, or why not?
- There are some elements important to telling a good story. Good stories include a setting, plot, characters, conflict and resolution. As we tell stories, words, obviously, matter. In cross-cultural settings, we need to choose our words carefully. Use the skit **Translation Boobos** (next page), with 2 actors (a speaker and a translator) to illustrate how a translator may actually translate phrases, which would create some communication difficulties.

²⁹ Romans 12:3



Translation Boobos...

Choose someone to be the speaker and one to be the translator. Read on...

The speaker

1. Tell them I'm very pleased to be here.
2. When you asked me at lunch to speak to today, I had butterflies in my stomach.
3. I'd like to talk with you today about the contextualization of theology in the the third world.
4. But first let me share with you my testimony.
5. My past is a very dark one and divided into two parts.
6. When I was just a kid...
7. I didn't understand why Christ died on the cross.
8. But then He convicted me of sin through His Holy Ghost.
9. He set me free.
10. He made me a new creature.
11. (faster and more excited) ~ Now I have a new life. I am part of the body of Christ. They are my family. I'm so excited. I want to tell you about it.

The Translator

1. She says to tell you she's very happy to be here today.
2. At lunch I ate some flies that got into my stomach before speaking today.
3. I'd like to talk to you about a text from another world.
4. First I want to share my ????
5. My behind is dark and divided into two parts.
6. When I was a small goat...
7. I did not understand what happened when Christ died at the intersection.
8. But a ghost arrested me for it.
9. I was let go.
10. I was made into a new animal.
11. She's very happy. Please clap for her.



Group Lesson #2

Getting Ready to Tell Your Story

People love to hear a good story... and they love to tell theirs. It's important we listen to people's stories and think about (even **prepare** for) how to tell ours. When you go someplace to visit people, to listen to their stories, work in their midst, you'll likely be asked "why you've come". How will you respond?

What does the Bible have to say?

Break into small groups and read the following passages and answer the questions:

1. 1 Peter 3:15-16a: What is Paul's encouragement in these verses? What words does he use to describe our stories?
2. 1 Timothy 4:12-16: in what ways does Paul challenge Timothy? In what ways does Paul challenge you as you seek to follow Jesus Christ in your daily life and serve him through this mission?
3. As you think about telling your story, what gets you excited? What makes you nervous? How might our team pray for you as you prepare?
4. Take some time to pray for each other.

Put it into practice

- For some, telling our personal story can feel overwhelming or challenging; for others, it can seem so simple, that we don't think through it ahead of time; for all, it's actually important to prepare how we would say what we want to say. Oftentimes, we only have a couple minutes to tell people about what Jesus has done in our lives – either that's the amount of time given in a "formal service" or that's the maximum time of a person's attention span. So, we want to communicate effectively in the time we are given.
- When asked to bring a greeting in a church service, find out from the host church if that means saying "hello" on behalf of the team or if an individual is expected to share his/her story. A casual question in a conversation with a local about why you've come to their town, may be an open door to talk about spiritual matters. So, it's important for each team member to do some preparation to tell his/her story.
- In considering where your team is going and who you will be serving, walk through how to prepare and share a testimony with the team. Resources for this preparation are found at the end of this section.



A testimony in 3 easy steps

We don't want to elevate or glamorize ourselves when telling our story. Sometimes we can feel pressure to make our stories dramatic—and we end up embellishing on past experiences or dwelling on all our sin. The point of our testimony is to lift up Jesus Christ and what he has done in our lives. So, consider this:

1. **What was your life like before you met Jesus Christ?** (This should be less than a minute).
 - If you can't point to a specific time/date, but your choice to follow Jesus was a process over time, describe your life as you were growing up – family, friends, and activities. Generally describe the things you struggled with, since we all deal with sin in some way.
2. **How did you meet Jesus Christ?** (This should be less than a minute).
 - If you can point to a specific time you chose to follow Jesus, talk about the experience. What happened? What led you to the decision?
 - If you can't point to a specific time/date, at what point did your faith become your own? There are transitions every person goes through which become markers as we go deeper in our relationship with Jesus Christ. Talk about a significant marker.
3. **What is Jesus Christ doing in your life now?** (Less than a minute).
 - Describe how you are doing currently in relationship to Jesus Christ. How is Jesus making a difference in your life? Where are you growing?

Things to Remember

- Be sure to **include a verse** from Scripture somewhere in your story... connecting your story to God's Story.
- **Your story is your story.** Don't evaluate how good or bad it happens to be, based on the drama of your conversion experience. Jesus Christ speaks through all of our stories to reach people in ways we might not realize.
- **Think through themes** in your life as you look at each question. Consider what may best connect with the people whom you are serving. Stay away from churchy language – as you heard in the skit. Keep it simple. Keep it short.

- **Practice your story** and ask people around you for feedback. What makes sense? What is unclear? When you give your testimony, remember to speak in short phrases to give the translator time to translate.

Another Approach to Telling the Salvation Story ³⁰

Some Christians find it hard to give a clear, concise presentation of the gospel, especially when telling it with their personal testimony. Billy Graham Evangelistic Association has a tract called “Steps to Peace with God” which explains the gospel in five steps using Scripture.

In preparing a 3-minute testimony for one-to-one contact or creating a longer version for speaking with larger groups, it is important to give witness to and help people understand:

1. That God loves them and wants them to experience peace and life – abundant and eternal.
 - We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ³¹
 - For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ³²
2. That God made us in His own image but also gave us free will so we could choose to love Him. We make choices to disobey and go our own way and this separates us from God.
 - For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.³³
 - For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.³⁴
3. That people try their own ways to bridge the gap between themselves and God.
 - There is a way that seems right, but in the end it leads to death.³⁵

³⁰ Adapted from the *STEM Team Member Training Manual* (Minneapolis, Minn.: STEM Press, 2006).

³¹ Romans 5:1, *The Bible*, The New International Version (TNIV), (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2006).

³² John 3:16, *The Bible*, The New International Version (TNIV), (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2006).

³³ Romans 3:23, *The Bible*, The New International Version (TNIV), (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2006).

³⁴ Romans 6:23, *The Bible*, The New International Version (TNIV), (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2006).

- Your sins are the roadblock between you and your God.³⁶
4. That Jesus Christ died on the cross and rose from the grave. His death paid the penalty for our sins and it's only by His blood that we can be saved.
- For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.³⁷
 - But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.³⁸
5. That we must believe and personally invite Jesus Christ to be our Lord and Savior.
- Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.³⁹
 - That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.⁴⁰
 - If the person/people you are talking with desires to begin a relationship with Jesus Christ, you may lead the person in a prayer confessing his/her sin, repenting, believing that Jesus died for his/her sins and committing to follow Jesus as Savior and Lord.
 - Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.⁴¹

³⁵ Proverbs 14:12, *The Bible*, The New International Version (TNIV), (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2006).

³⁶ Isaiah 59:2, *The Bible*, The New International Version (TNIV), (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2006).

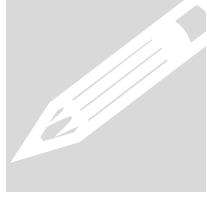
³⁷ 1 Peter 3:18, *The Bible*, The New International Version (TNIV), (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2006).

³⁸ Romans 5:8, *The Bible*, The New International Version (TNIV), (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2006).

³⁹ John 1:12, *The Bible*, The New International Version (TNIV), (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2006).

⁴⁰ Romans 10:9, *The Bible*, The New International Version (TNIV), (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2006).

⁴¹ Romans 10:13, *The Bible*, The New International Version (TNIV), (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2006).



Journaling My Testimony ⁴²

As 1 Peter 3:15 instructs, we must always be prepared to explain the reason for our hope. That answer is found and expressed through our personal testimony. Testimonies can consist of where you used to be, where you are now, and most importantly, how you got here. The following points will help you prepare.

1. Write your testimony to organize your thoughts. Use it while speaking.
2. Keep your testimony brief (3-5 minutes).
3. Avoid speaking “Christianese” – using words that only church people understand (for example: saved, sanctified, cleansed, blessed). Assume the audience knows nothing about Christianity.
4. Be personal by mentioning specific places and people who have touched your life. Avoid gory details.
5. Adapt your testimony to fit the culture and the audience. (You may need to adjust it after you arrive. Talk to the missionary/pastor on-site about cultural cues.)
6. Present the plan of salvation clearly.
7. Be sure the bulk of your testimony describes the saving grace of Jesus.
8. Express why you chose to follow Jesus and why you still choose to follow Him. How is Jesus at work in your life today?
9. Be flexible – be prepared to tell your story in three minutes or thirty. Your testimony could be a few words at the beginning of a sermon, or you may be asked to turn your testimony into a short teaching on grace or forgiveness.
10. Your story is unique and profound. Be confident in your story. Be authentic, honest, and real! Give all the credit to God by emphasizing what He has done in you, not what you have done.

Jesus loves to hear you talk about how you first met Him and about your life together. Remember, as followers of Jesus we have overcome the enemy by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of our testimony.⁴³

So, let your preparation be one of devotion. Allow God’s Holy Spirit to guide you so that others may be encouraged by your story. Pray as you prepare, write down ideas, think about whom you’ll be speaking to. Write it out, practice it, reflect on it, ask others for feedback, and revise it.

⁴² Adapted from the *STEM Team Member Training Manual* (Minneapolis, Minn.: STEM Press, 2006).

⁴³ Revelation 12:11



Group Lesson #3

Paul, “Barney” or “Tim”...Which one am I?

Break the team up into two groups: one group to study the passages relating to Paul and Barnabas’ relationship; the other to discuss the relationship between Paul and Timothy.

Group One: Study the relationship between Paul and Barnabas:

- 1 Corinthians 9:6
- Galatians 2:1-10
- Acts 11:25-30; 12:24–15:39

Group Two: Study the relationship between Paul and Timothy:

- 1 Timothy
- 2 Timothy

Have the groups read their passages and discuss:

1. What are the characteristics of each individual
2. What are the characteristics between each relationship?

As a large group, discuss their findings and the following:

1. Paul, Barnabas or Timothy? Which one do you think you are the most like?
2. Can we be all 3?
 - In our lives, it is possible (and healthy!) to be mentored by another and to be mentoring another. In this model, there is an acknowledgement that we aren’t always the one who “knows everything.” We have a lot to learn from our sisters and brothers in Christ.
3. How can we model these relationships in our daily lives? Who has God put in your life to be mentored by and to mentor?
4. How will we show we are teachable to our hosts on the mission field? What are some practical ways we will establish time to be taught and to teach?

Personal Preparation

Ministry is the integration of your faith with action. It is reaching out in love and sharing the truth of the gospel in any and every way to draw all people to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Ministry preparedness is one of the most important parts of your missions training.

Ministry preparedness is one of the most important parts of your mission training. Because you will be serving in a cross-cultural setting for a short period of time, the more prepared you are, the more effective you will be.

No matter what kind of ministry your team will participate in, pay attention to the Biblical principles shared along the way.

Attitudes and actions will communicate to those you come alongside, so be aware of the message your group is sending. As the team prepares, focus on Biblical priorities you long to share with people you encounter – love, humility, grace, and respect. These priorities will influence how the team members respond to people and circumstances during the trip, and you will discover that your lives will be a blessing to those you seek to serve.

Individual and Team Spiritual Exercises

Devotions/Quiet Times/Bible Study

It is essential that each team member spend time alone with God before, during, and after the mission experience. During the trip, life will be busy and you will be tired, but **time should be set aside to spend with God each day.** Spending time with God, reading His Word, is vital. There are so many messages competing for our attention in this world, and we need to make time to listen to what God has to say. Reading the Bible and spending time thinking about what it says shapes the way we look at God, the world around us, ourselves. There are different options listed next, which describe ways to connect with God and His Word, specifically for a mission experience.

Journaling

Journaling is an individual's collection of memories from an experience...joyful, painful, frustrating, challenging memories and stories of God's faithfulness in the midst of it all! **If you have never kept a journal...now is a good time to start!** You are about to set out on an experience that will remain with you for the rest of your life. You will forget many details even after they occur as vivid, meaningful experiences. Those who journal will be able to process experiences more completely, communicate with others about this experience more effectively and recall all that God has done through what has been written!!

Encouragement

How can you intentionally encourage each other while in this experience together? Encouragement is a powerful thing and will improve team unity and effectiveness on the field. The challenge for you is this: find creative ways to practice giving and encouragement.

Devotional Resources

Purpose: To provide team members with structured Bible studies and personal reflection during the mission trip.

Format: As a team leader, it is important to provide the team members with structure and modeling of time in the word each day. There are several ways, which you can provide the team members with structure. Plan to utilize some model – one suggested below – or one of your own.

Option One: Choose a book to read through. Do a chapter each day and discuss. Suggestions:

- *Knowing God* by J.I. Packer⁴⁴
- *Through the Gates of Splendor* by Elisabeth Elliott⁴⁵
- *Orphan Girl* by Cornerstone⁴⁶
- *Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Secret* by Hudson Taylor⁴⁷
- *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger* by Ronald Sider⁴⁸
- *The Success Fantasy* by Tony Campolo⁴⁹

Option Two: Choose a book of the Bible to read through and discuss portions daily. A sample devotional book using the book of Philippians has been included at the end of this section.

Option Three: Address topics pertinent to your experience, using various Scripture through the Bible. A sample “random” journal following this format is at the end of this section.

Option Four: Depending on the maturity level, you may ask members of the team to lead a devotional time on an assigned morning during the trip. This would allow them the freedom to study on their own in the Word as well as enable them to lead and encourage fellow teammates.

⁴⁴ Packer, J.I., *Knowing God* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Books; 20th Anniversary ed. Edition, June 24, 1993).

⁴⁵ Elliott, Elizabeth, *Through the Gates of Splendor* (Carol Stream, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.; Rev Edition, June 3, 1981).

⁴⁶ Marie James as told to Jane Hertenstein, *Orphan Girl: the memoir of a Chicago bag lady* (Chicago, Ill.: Cornerstone Press Chicago, 1998).

⁴⁷ Taylor, Dr. and Mrs. Howard, *Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Secret* (Chicago, Ill.: Moody Publishers, September 30, 1955).

⁴⁸ Sider, Ronald J., *Rich Christians in the Age of Hunger: Moving from Affluence to Generosity* (Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson, April 12, 2005).

⁴⁹ Campolo, Tony, *The Successful Fantasy* (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, October 1993).

Option Five: Provide a journaling guide for participants to use before, during, and after the trip to help them think about expectations, process the experience and relationships as they serve, and reflect on the trip when they return home. A sample for this journal is found at the end of this section.



Philippians Study

Day One

Read Philippians 1:1-6

Consider:

When Paul thinks of the Philippians, what is he led to do?

What is it that he is confident of?

Apply:

What do you do when think of others?

How could you pray for them?

Ponder:

What were some of the prayers you said for others today?

Day Two

Read Philippians 1:7-11

Consider:

In what ways does Paul desire for their love to abound?

What does he want them to be able to do?

Apply:

What things in life have caused your love to grow?

What new ways can it grow today?

Ponder:

In what ways did your love abound today?

How was the fruit of righteousness displayed in your life today?

Day Three

Read Philippians 1:12-20

Consider:

How did Paul feel about the others that were preaching the gospel?

In what did Paul declare he would rejoice?

What was Paul's eager expectation?

Apply:

What are some of your motives for serving today?

How is Christ exalted in your life?

Ponder:

Thinking back on the day, how was Christ exalted in all you did and said?

Day Four

Read Philippians 1:21-29

Consider:

How does Paul tell the Philippians to conduct themselves?
What does Paul wish to hear of them?

Apply:

What are some ways in which you will conduct yourself following these guidelines today?
What are some ways in which you do not conduct yourself in this manner?
Do you find yourself having “one spirit, one mind, striving together”?
If Paul made a sketch of your team, what would it look like?

Ponder:

How did you see your conduct improve today?
In what ways did you seek to “strive together” today?

Day Five

Read Philippians 2:1-11

Consider:

What is the attitude Paul wishes the Philippians to have?
What did God do for Jesus as a result of his humility?

Apply:

By your actions and words, how will you show others they are more important than you?
In what ways do you tend to seek to exalt yourself?
How can you avoid doing that today?

Ponder:

Who are people on your team that live with the attitude of others being better than themselves?
What are ways you displayed this attitude today?

Day Six

Read Philippians 2:12-15

Consider:

How are we to act according to these verses?
How does Paul desire those in Philippi to appear to the world?
To what are the Philippians instructed to hold fast?

Apply:

What might cause you to grumble today?
How will you stop yourself?

Ponder:

In what circumstances did you choose not to grumble today?

Day Seven

Read Philippians 2:16-25

Consider:

What are the character qualities that Paul points out in Epaphroditus?

Apply:

Which of these character qualities do you feel is your highest strength?
weakest?

If Paul were to write about you, what would his verse read?

Ponder:

How did you display the qualities you wish to be descriptive of you?
How would you re-write verse 25 to be descriptive of your host leader?

Day Eight

Read Philippians 3:1-6

Consider:

What are the things Paul lists in which he could place confidence?

Apply:

In what skills or strength do you place your confidence?

Ponder:

What were the ways that you relied upon your own strength or skills today?
How did you rely upon the Lord today?

Day Nine

Read Philippians 3:7-11

Consider:

How does Paul regard those things that the world highly regards?
What does Paul count all things loss in regard to? Why?

Apply:

Describe the attitude of someone whose highest priority is knowing Christ.
What things do you count as more important than knowing Christ?
How will you display that attitude today?

Ponder:

How did you show others around you that the highest gain for you today is
knowing Christ Jesus?

Day Ten

Read Philippians 3:12- 16

Consider:

Paul states that he has not already obtained full knowledge of
Christ Jesus. What is his response to this?
What three actions does Paul do in order to “press on”?

Apply:

How do you respond when you realize you have not achieved that which
you want?
What do you want to “forget” that lies behind?
What are you “reaching ahead” for?

Ponder:

In what ways did you choose to “press on” today?
Draw a picture of forgetting, reaching, and pressing on.

Day Eleven

Read Philippians 4:1-7

Consider:

What does Paul command the Philippians to do here repeatedly?
What instructions are given regarding requests?

Apply:

What does it mean to rejoice?
What are you anxious about today?

Ponder:

In what situations would rejoicing have been a better response?
How did you see God answer prayers regarding those things you were anxious about today?

Day Twelve

Read Philippians 4:8-9

Consider:

What things does Paul instruct the Philippians to think about?

Apply:

What are you tempted to think about that is contrary to Paul’s instruction?
What could distract you from Paul’s kind of focus today?
How will you keep centered on this instruction?

Ponder:

What did you dwell on today?
Draw out your thought process when a thought contrary to Paul’s instruction came to mind.

Day Thirteen

Read Philippians 4:10-14

Consider:

What attitude has Paul learned?
From where does Paul find strength to do what is instructed of him?

Apply:

How have you learned to be content?
In what areas could you have more contentment?
What things has God asked you to do that you were unsure you could do?

Ponder:

In what circumstances did you choose to be content today?
What did God ask you to do today that you could not have accomplished without him?

Day Fourteen

Read Philippians 4:15-20

Consider:

For what does Paul seek the gift from the Philippians?

What is Paul's perspective on the true nature of gifts?

Apply

List needs in your life. Which ones should be considered as wants instead of needs?

How has the Lord met needs in your life thus far?

Ponder:

In what ways were you amply supplied today?



Topical Journal

Day 1

AM: Read Acts 10:1-35

What's the main point of these verses?

How does it relate to what I am about to experience?

What can I learn from this passage about what my attitude and behavior should be?

PM:

What are my first impressions of the people? of the country? of my place here?

How could I describe my reactions and feelings?

What expectations do I have for this venture?

How do my first reactions relate to the Bible study of this morning?

Day 2

AM: Read Psalm 91

Sketch the verse/phrase that jumps out to you as you reflect on the Psalm.

What is one thing for which I feel a need of God's protection?

Tell God about it.

PM:

One incident of the day during which I felt uncomfortable or "out of my element" was...

How did I see or sense God's protection or care today?



Day 3

AM: Read John 13:34-35

What is Jesus saying?

What does he mean?

What would that look like in my life today?

What is one thing I will do to show that “discipleship” today?

PM:

What was different about today?

What significant thing happened? How did it impact me?

How was my “discipleship” (see this morning)?

Day 4

AM: Read 2 Corinthians 5:18-20

Jesus is all about relationship. What do these verses say about that?

What do they say my job is?

What makes me nervous about my job?

How will I be an “ambassador” today?

PM:

With whom did I have conversations today?

What was significant about the conversation(s)?

Was I an “ambassador”? How so?

Day 5

AM: Read Philippians 2:14-15

Has the newness of this mission experience worn off?

How would I rate my attitude?

What am I most likely to grumble about?

What specific things could I do/say today to “shine like a star”? Will I?

PM:

What observations do I have about today’s activities?

How was my attitude?

How did I “shine” today?



Day 6

AM: Read Psalm 92:1-4

What does this say about God?

What's my role?

What will I do today if I believe this?

PM:

What was today like?

What new experiences did I have?

Did my life today reflect my study this morning? How so?

Is there anything from today I would like to become a part of my life at home?

Day 7

AM: Read 2 Corinthians 4:1, 7-11, 16-18

How would you summarize Paul's point in one sentence?

How does it apply to me? To our situation here?

If here, what words of encouragement would Paul give our group?

PM:

How is the work going?

Is it how I expected it to go? How do I feel about that?

How did I encourage my teammates today?

Day 8

AM: Read Philippians 2:3-8

Paul says to have the "same mind" as Jesus... the same attitude. What was Jesus' attitude?

What would I look like to others if I had that attitude?

What's one thing I will do to express that attitude today?

PM:

How has my attitude been today?

What opinions do I find changing – for better or worse?

Why are they changing?

Day 9

AM: Read James 2:14-17

What needs do I observe in my teammates?

What needs do I observe in the local people with whom I am working?

Put a star beside the one I could meet.

Here's what I plan to do today to put my faith into action...

PM:

Where did I see Jesus at work today?

Did I do my "faith in action" plan from this morning?



How did it go?

Day 10

AM: Read 1 Corinthians 3:6-8

How will I feel if we don't finish our project the way we intended?

What was Paul's perspective on teamwork?

How do I feel about building on someone else's work, or someone building on mine?

What does this mean for me? For our team?

PM:

Diagram how your team works during the day.

How does my contribution to our day interact with others?

Did I view our work today any differently?

How would the work have gone differently if we had been at home?

Day 11

AM: Read Colossians 3:23-24

It's getting close to the end and everyone is getting weary.

If there's one task I would like to get out of, or do halfway, it would be...

What is Paul's perspective on how we do the things we have to do?

How will I remind myself (and others) today that what we do, we do for Jesus?

PM:

What is the average hourly salary in your hometown for the kind of work you are doing here?

What is the average hourly salary here where you are today?

How do you feel about the discrepancy?

What value does Jesus place on your participation (including your attitude) today?

Day 12

AM: Read 1 John 3:16-18

Now that you are thinking about leaving here, what do these verses mean to you?

What does it look like for me to love in truth and action?

How has my perspective changed from the reflections I had on Day 3?

PM:

If I were a member of this community in which we have worked, what would I be thinking as I saw this group leave?

What would I think of Jesus, if they were the only picture I had of Him?



Day 13

AM: Read Job 42:1-5

Job saw God differently through a difficult and challenging situation.

Who has shown me Jesus in this place?

How do I see God differently now?

What image of God do I want to carry from this place?

PM:

Looking back to Day 1, what expectations have been met? Unmet?

Were my first impressions right?

What can I learn from this?

Day 14

AM: Read Philippians 4:11-13

Rewrite the verses in terms of life here and life at home.

Have I been content here? Why/why not?

Will I be content at home? Why/why not?

What is the secret of contentment, according to Paul?

What does that mean for me?

PM:

What is the most significant thing that has happened to me this entire trip?

How is it significant?

How do I think it will change or affect my life?



Journaling Exercises

Before the Trip

What are your expectations of the culture? What are some of the fears you have about what you will be doing? What worries about the trip do you need to take before God? How do you hope He will change you?

How do you feel God is preparing you for your time of service? How do you see Him working in your life? How do you hope to see Him work through you as well as in you?

Upon Arrival

Describe your impression of the culture. What are you learning about your host country? What is their political situation like? How would you describe their family life?

What special events or activities have you participated in? What is the church service like? Write down things they do differently. Describe any interesting foods you eat. Try and capture as many details as possible.

Describe the ministry you are doing with people in country. How do you feel about what you are involved in? In what ways do you see God working as a result of this? Write about people you have met while ministering.

During the Trip

Through the team devotions, what are you learning? How has your way of life changed? Are there spiritual or relational issues, which need “taking care of”?

What are some qualities you value in your teammates? What are you looking forward to on this mission trip? Do you see your relationships with your teammates growing?

Write about your relationship with God. What new things have you learned about Him as a result of your trip? How do you view His purpose in the world? What are you learning in your times of study?

Write about your relationship with others. How are you relating to the team? The missionaries? The nationals? Who have you connected with? Who has made an impact on you? (Write down names, because with time you may find it hard to remember.)

What are you learning about yourself? Is God revealing imperfections in you? Are you learning more godly ways of responding to others? Are you learning about new gifts and abilities or improving upon old ones?

What are your questions and thoughts about future mission possibilities? What will your part be in the Great Commission?



Write down prayer needs and praises as well as those of your teammates.

Coming Home

Upon returning, what are some of the thoughts you have about the American society versus a foreign country? What strikes you as very much the same? What is different?

How are you relating to your friends and family? Are they interested to hear about your trip? Are there certain people you find easier to talk to than others about your experiences? Is it hard to engage in common conversations?

What are some of the things you remember most clearly about your trip?



Group Debriefing During the Experience

Initial Impressions

Use these questions upon first arriving in the country and during the first few days in your conversations with the team.

- What did you see today?
- What did you hear today?
- What did you taste today?
- What did you smell today?
- What is your first impression of the people?
- What apprehensions do you have about being here?
- What are you expecting to have happen to you during this trip?
- What strikes you as the same as home? Different than home?
- What questions do you have at this point?

Mid-Trip Evaluation

- What image comes to mind quickly from today/first few days?
- Draw what your heart looks like right now. Discuss.
- How do you perceive the team working together?
- How do you see God at work in the team?
- How do you see God at work in this country?
- What are the things you are learning about yourself that you desire to be permanent changes?
- How do my days differ here than my days at home? (time, attitude)
- What is one significant thing that has happened since we arrived?
- What is one thing you want to do before you leave?
- How have you seen God at work in yourself?
- How have you seen teammates serve well?
- How do you think the locals are perceiving this group?
- With whom have you established relationships?
- What ministries have you found that you enjoy? Ones that are more challenging?
- How well are we keeping our Covenant?
- What things are helping you to feel comfortable?
- What things are causing you to feel uncomfortable?
- How have some of your expectations been met or not met?

Ending Questions

These are appropriate questions for the end of the trip. Any previous questions can be reused at this time as well.

- How could you have felt more prepared?
- How will you convey what God has shown you or taught you to those at home?
- How have you grown?
- If you could take one image home and paint it on your bedroom wall, what would that be?
- How has God changed you?
- How has this experience changed you?
- How has your image of God changed?
- How has your image of the church changed?
- For what personal growth do you want to be held accountable for upon return?
- How has God surprised you?
- What specific ways have you learned to pray for the country? people? missionaries?
- What characteristics of the culture would you like to integrate into your own life?
- If you were a person of this culture, how would you describe our group to another person?
- What was the most rewarding experience?
- What was the most challenging experience?
- What were the strengths of this team?
- How could we have worked together better?
- Is there anything that you need to say to an individual or the entire team?