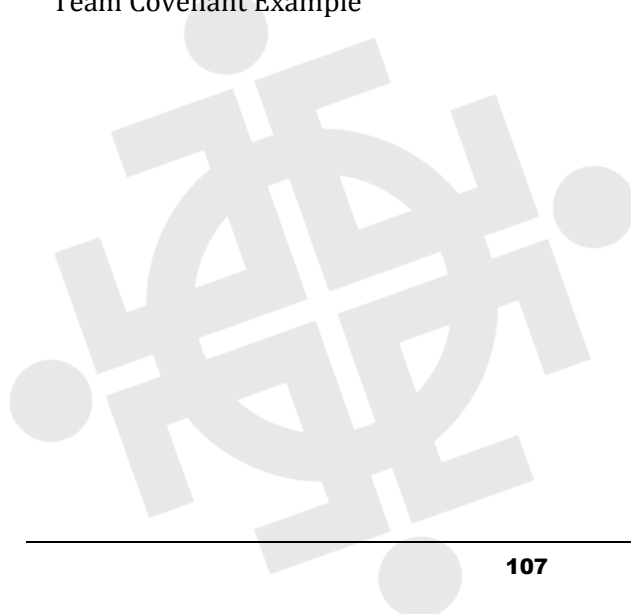




TEAM BUILDING

“TEAM!” ON THREE

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“Team!” on Three

Team building

The Bible talks about followers of Jesus as the body of Christ, each having its function and purpose in the body. God has gifted us all in unique and special ways. We need each other in order to serve more effectively. In order to be an effective team, we need to learn how to work with the other body parts! In this section, there are different team-building exercises, reflection activities and Bible studies to engage your group in how to work together more effectively and Christ-like. This section also includes “Characteristics of an Effective Team” and some sample Team Covenants.

ICON KEY	
	Exercises
	Journaling
	Forms
	Bible Study

If you want to go a bit deeper with self-reflection and team coordination conversations, take a look at David Kiersey and Marilyn Bates’ book, *Please Understand Me*.⁵⁹ It has an abbreviated version of the Meyers-Briggs Personality Indicator, along with descriptors. You may also use other personality-type tests such as Meyers-Briggs Personality Indicator or DISC.

⁵⁹ Kiersey, David and Marilyn Bates, *Please Understand Me*, (Del Mar, Calif.: Prometheus Nemesis Book Co, 1984).



Team Building Exercises

Local Service

Find opportunities for your team to serve locally before you travel to another part of the world. Coordinate a local project – i.e. work in soup kitchen, volunteer at local shelter.

Balloon Bop

Supplies—5-6 medium sized balloons.

Make sure the whole team is introduced before you begin the game. The point of this game is to help people learn names and work together. Stand in a circle. Toss a balloon in the air and call someone's name. That person must hit the balloon to keep it in the air. If the person succeeds he/she calls the next name. You can have more than one team, for competition, or have the whole group play together to see if the balloon can stay in the air long enough for each person to have a turn.

Variation—As well as calling out someone's name, also call out a body part, which that person has to use to keep the balloon in the air until he/she calls another person's name and body part.



Dealing with Crisis—Sharing a Meal

Begin a meeting with a meal... not an ordinary meal; it's a meal that comes with a lesson. Before you eat, be sure you pray.

Cook a meal together from the country where you will be traveling. Split the team into smaller groups, responsible for different parts of the dinner. Once the menu has been chosen, have some people shop, others cook, the rest set-up and clean up.

Variation—The Team Leader is to create a “lunch crisis” – (you may wonder what this has to do with team building, but it will make sense as the activity unfolds).

Options for creating the crisis:

- Pre-order food at a nearby restaurant. Send a designated group to pick it up and have them determine how the food will be divided among the whole team.
- Elect one person to purchase food for the entire team without any discussion or input from the team members (about \$3 per person).
- Give each person \$3 and send them to a grocery store to purchase lunch, then eat together.
- Pre-pack food and allow a chosen group to distribute it according to their determination.

Discussion

After the team is done eating, unpack the experience a bit. Ask:

- How did the “task” of feeding the team get accomplished?
- Did everyone get to eat (and have enough)?
- How were decisions made?
- How did the team feel? Was everyone happy? Why or why not?
- Did we learn anything about how we function from this exercise?
- What might this have to do with the mission experience?

Building Communication—Lego Mania

Supplies: Lots of Legos

Here is a chance to see how groups work together, how they communicate, who rises to the top as a leader. This activity includes a discussion time at the end to help the team process their experience.

- Divide the Legos into four identical piles (same amount ~ color, shape and size). Before the activity, take one of the four piles of Legos and make a fairly complex object. Don't let the team members see this model (hide it someplace).
- Create three teams for the activity. The goal of the game is be the first team to duplicate the model you've made.
- At the start of the game, each team sends one representative out of the room to study the model for 10 seconds. That person then returns to the team and describes how to assemble the Legos. But the person who looked at the model cannot touch the Legos.
- Every 30 seconds, another person from each team gets 10 seconds to look at the model.
- As the game develops, there will be confusion and conflict in terms of whose descriptions are correct and whose are not correct. How each group handles the process will yield valuable insights as to how the participants will work together under stress.
- End the game in 5-10 minutes, or when a team successfully completes their model, whichever comes first.

- Debrief questions:

1. How did team members communicate in ways that were helpful?
Not helpful?
2. What can we all learn about communication from this activity?

Raging River

This bridge-building activity is an interactive way to learn about team and communication. For this bridge-building exercise you will need to create a river (piece of tape to mark the borders of the river) and for each team, which people can stand on. Divide your mission team into 2 or more groups of 8 people. The goal of the activity is for each group to get across the river. The objects used by each team must always be touching someone...if they set the object in the river and take their hand/foot off of it...it is gone and the team only has four objects now...and so on. Add some more challenges for the group to deal with: choose one team member to be blind, another to only use one leg, another who cannot speak. If any one touches the river, they must start all over. It is fun to see who leads, who follows, who encourages, etc...

Bring the groups together and ask the following questions:

1. What did you find out about yourselves as you tried to work together?
2. Who became the group leader? Why? How did the rest of you feel about your leader?
3. Did everyone in your group participate? If not, why not?
4. What new skills did you discover in your teammates?

Cohesiveness—Relay Races

Relay Races are a great way to laugh and encourage teamwork. There are a myriad of ideas for teams competing against each other to get objects or people from one place to another. The point of this activity is to have fun, develop relationships, and see how your group functions together (or not). Split your mission team into at least two groups and let the races begin.

Take video of your mission team doing relay races. They can be quite entertaining to watch later! Here are a few ideas:

Cotton Ball Relay

Needed: Cotton balls and spoons for each team. Two bowls for each team.

Rules: Determine a starting line and a turn back line about 15 feet apart. Divide the group into even teams and have them line up at the start line. Put cotton balls for each player in a bowl at the start line. Place the empty bowls at the turn back line.

Say Go!. Each player uses the spoon to scoop a cotton ball from the bowl and then walk (or run) to the other bowl and drops it in. If they drop it along the way they don't pick it up. Instead they return to the bowl and get another cotton ball (you'll want to have at least 2 cotton balls for each player just in case they all drop a few). After they've completed the task successfully, they race back to the line and hand the spoon to the next person. The race continues until one team wins.

Old Clothes Relay

Needed: Box of old clothes for each team.

Rules: Divide players into equal teams. For each team have a suitcase or box containing a large shirt, shorts, boots and hat. In turn each player must put on old clothes and run to a certain point where they take the old clothes off, put them back in the box, and run back to start where the next player repeats the process etc. until one team finishes and wins.

Shave the Balloon Relay

Needed: Balloons, shaving cream, and razors

Rules: Divide into equal teams. Blow up balloons for each player team and cover with shaving cream. Hang balloons from a string tied to an overhead pole etc. You can even draw faces on the balloons for fun. Each team sends one player at a time to shave their balloon.

Winning: Each completed balloon gets a point. Each popped balloon gets zero points. The most points wins!



Construction Skill Relay

Figure out a way to practice skills that need to be used on the mission site. Will you dig holes? Hammer? Nails? Saw wood... with an actual hand saw? Sounds like it's time for a Skills Relay.

This takes a little time to plan for materials/tools and it takes some space to allow people room to move around. Determine 6 essential skills that will be helpful to your work project – in addition to those mentioned above, what about sweeping (it's important to learn the correct way to do this), painting, measuring? There will be one station for each skill.

Preparation: Gather enough sample materials for up to 5 people to “practice” at a time. Assign a “knowledgeable/capable” leader to each skill station, which are set up around a room or a parking lot or someplace else you can get messy. Materials should be set up at each station, ready to use. The leader's job is to demonstrate the correct way to do the task; then, have each participant do the task – until they accomplish it well. The leader gives the final approval for the participants to move on to the next station.

Running the Relay: Divide your mission team into smaller groups (3-4 people is ideal). Assign each group a skill station at which to start. When all people in the group have the approval of the skill station leader, their small group may move to the next skill. Be sure the groups are rotating from station to station in the same direction... be sure all groups go to all stations... keep the groups together... this is NOT a race to finish first. The point is to finish well, help the team members develop skills and learn to work together to accomplish the tasks.

Relay Race Debrief

With your relay team, have group members answer the following questions:

- Share a past experience in which you were a member of a group or team (i.e. sports, music, planning committee). List the experiences shared on newsprint, visible to all.
- Share the benefits of being part of these teams? What were the challenges?
- What is the difference between a group experience and a team experience? Have your small group come up with a definition of a team... and write it on newsprint.



What does the Bible have to say about teamwork?

Have each small group look at one of the following passages:

- 1 Corinthians 3:6-9
- 1 Corinthians 12:12-19
- 1 Corinthians 12:20-27

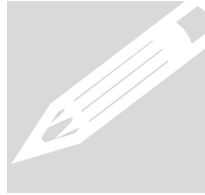
What does the passage have to say about being a part of a team? List your answers on newsprint.

- 1 Cor. 3:6-9 (different people have different roles; God causes growth; we're all in this together)
- 1 Cor. 12:12-19 (no room for inferiority; necessity of all parts; all one body)
- 1 Cor. 12:20-27 (no superiority; no division; one-for-all/all-for-one)

Essential qualities of effective team members are:

- A Christ-centered life.
- Commitment to the mission work of the church, exemplified by an enthusiastic and positive attitude.
- Willingness to follow guidance of the team leader.
- Flexibility and openness to other cultures and ways of worship.
- Willingness to serve in friendship and mutuality with the host and the host church.

- A cooperative and courteous way of relating to others.
- The Bible talks of the body being made up of many functions and desires that we function as one in spite of our differences.



Characteristics of an effective team

Divide into groups and discuss the following characteristics of being an effective team. Each group should record their reflections and share them with the larger group. When the exercise is over, it would be helpful to get the notes from each group to compile for future use in creating a Team Covenant.

Clear purpose and vision

1. Why are we going?

Recognition of gifts, abilities and personalities in each other

2. What gifts do you see in others?

Agreement on the plan

3. We will adhere to the agenda of our hosts, not ours.

Environment of affirmation and appreciation

4. How can we do this?

Solid relationships

5. How will we accomplish this?

Trust

6. Are there any issues of trust we must address?

Able to manage mistakes

7. Know and follow Biblical guidelines for conflict. (Mathew 18)
8. How will we act WHEN others screw up?

Good communication

9. What's our model of communication?

Selfless contribution

10. What area is it going to be difficult to be selfless in?
11. How can you encourage others?

Respect for others

12. What will this look like?

Free flow of information and communication

13. Communication is key.

Develop positive attitudes

14. Culturally, how will this happen with a language barrier?

Commitment to learn. Never assume you know everything

15. What is one area you could stand to grow in?

Flexible

16. Is this an area you will have problems in?



Team Attitudes

Like Christ

Your attitude should reflect Christ at all times. Your words will often be validated or cancelled by your attitudes.

Attack the problem, not the person. James 4:11

Verbalize feelings. Don't act them out. Eph 4:25

Forgive, in place of judging. Mark 11:25

Give more than you take. Acts 20:35

Let love dominate. Luke 10:27

Humble yourself before the Lord. James 4:10

Actions will speak louder than words. John 13:35

Do not complain. James 5:9, 1 Thes. 5:16

Flexibility

Being flexible is essential to survive cross culturally. Many things may seem wrong to you but they are just different. Without flexibility, both cultures will seem wrong. Be open to learning what is important in other cultures and why it is important.

Toward Relationships

The way you interact with each other is what will make your teamwork possible. Be aware of the way you treat: team members vs. team leaders, best friends, cliques, nationals you will come into contact with, dating relationships on your team and/or in your host culture. Be intentional in developing relationships with many people you come in contact with—sometimes the places you least expect it.

Leadership

Attitudes of leaders, and attitudes toward leaders vary from place to place. It'd be helpful for your mission team to discuss expectations of team leaders as well as expectations of team members. Find out the accepted leadership structures in the place you are traveling. If you are from a context that is more collaborative in approach, inviting input from many people, it may be surprising to encounter cultures where there is clearly defined hierarchy. In all contexts, leaders ought to follow the example of Jesus Christ – who loved others deeply, used authority wisely, and was sacrificial in his responses to people.

Of Servanthood

Jesus Christ calls us to serve others; to love others. As team members interact with each other, remember the call to service. How will servanthood fit into your team? What does Phil 2:3-4 say and how can you apply it as a team?

Reminders for Healthy Teams

1. Work out problems one on one as often as possible
2. Involve team leadership if it cannot be worked out one on one.
3. Prayer times as individuals, small groups, and as a team are vital.
4. Build team unity. Work at it. Commit to it.
5. Realize conflict is not all bad. Sometimes, rightly handled conflict will bring you closer as a team.
6. In conflict focus on the issue, not the personality or person
7. Avoid blaming, anger and rage. Often these will cause deeper conflict.
8. Do not attack, gossip, or avoid the conflict.

Communication

Inevitably, there will be communication challenges within the mission team (with people who speak our “mother tongue”!). There will be times that someone is misunderstood, someone is hurt, and conflict will come. In order to work through these times, it is important to set some communication ground rules, and teach the team how to resolve conflict.

The art of relating

Respect other team members. Seek to understand what the person is saying, where they are coming from. Be careful not to jump to conclusion, but hear them out.

Participate in discussions

As an individual member of the team, your opinions, thoughts, facts, and feelings are important. Your silence may indicate agreement with a decision or opinion, whether or not that is true.

Address behavior, not personality—and be specific.

Keep from making generalizations like, “you’re always thinking of yourself,” or “you’re too sensitive.” Instead, give the person you are speaking with concrete examples like, “it is important for you to limit the time you spend in the bathroom so there is adequate time for each of us.”

Speak for yourself.

Share your own thoughts, feelings, and opinions. It is important not to disclose the feelings or thoughts of another person. Allow them to do so for themselves.

Use “I” messages.

This allows you to share your own feelings without making others feel defensive. For instance, “I was angry when you gave everyone but me a piece of candy” allows you to express your frustration and allows another person to hear it. Had you said,

“You make me angry,” the other would have felt attacked and had no specific behavior to address.

“Never” use “never” or “always.”

These are inflammatory phrases. “You never do your share,” will hurt feelings and is hardly ever true. Better phrasing of that would be, “It seems to me you were trying to avoid carrying as many blocks as some of the others today.” That allows for discussion of the perceptions and the realities, such as the person wasn’t feeling well or the viewer wasn’t there to see them at all times.



What does the Bible have to say?

Scripture lays out important principles for us in relating to one another. Take a moment to pray for your group and the hearing of God’s Word. Read **Mark 12:28-34** and discuss the passage:

What is the greatest commandment? What does loving God entail?

What is the second greatest commandment? How are we to love others?

How does loving God, loving others, loving ourselves keep us close to the Kingdom of God (vs. 34)?

How does this passage call the mission team to relate to one another? Would putting these verses into practice change how you responded to the “food crisis” at the beginning of this meeting? How?

Put it into practice

Time to talk about resolving conflict... it will enter into some part of the mission experience... when we encounter a time, place, relationship, experience where there’s conflict, what do we do?

Method of Conflict Resolution

- Check my attitude (Philippians 2:3). Ask, “am I being overly sensitive or is this an issue that needs to be dealt with?”
- Approach the other in love (1 Peter 4:8). Remember that others are out of their normal environment, just like you.
- Ask for clarification. Ask the person you are in conflict with, “did I understand you correctly?” or “what did you mean by...?”
- Listen (James 1:19). You have two ears and one mouth. Seek to understand, rather than to prove your own point.
- Own your own stuff. Acknowledge your responsibility in the conflict or misunderstanding.

- Work out a mutually acceptable understanding or solution. It's not about one person "winning" and the other "losing" but find middle ground, a compromise.

Styles of Conflict Resolution⁶⁰

Compromising

- The compromiser doesn't feel it's possible to satisfy everyone fully; the aim is to make all parties partially satisfied, preserve relations.
- The compromiser subordinates personal desires for the common good of all parties and/or the organization. This person seeks both creativity and effectiveness.
- "Win some; lose some". While giving up the "best", it often achieves the "good".
- The goals of all parties are valid; a compromiser does not believe the differences are worth fighting over. Time doesn't allow for deeper solutions.

Competing

- The competitor's goal is to win at all costs. S/he believes his/her ideas, values, and goals are supreme and cannot let people stand in his/her way.
- The competitor operates with the belief that their way is the only way. This person will make their way through assertion, domineering behavior with smooth diplomacy or raw power.
- "I win; you lose." In this mode there is possible short-term gain. But, the approach creates:
 - Polarization between the parties in conflict and fosters hostility.
 - Sometimes the competitor is needed when a quick or unpopular decision must be made.

Avoiding

- The avoider stays out of conflict; seek neutrality. This person doesn't care enough about the issue to suffer tension or discomfort over it.
- The avoider is unassertive, passive, does not cooperate in defining conflict or finding solutions. This person reacts with denial and withdrawal to tense situations.

⁶⁰ Adapted from World Servants, *Pre-Field Training* (Siloam Springs, Ariz.) 5-8.

- “You lose; I lose.” Avoidance is a non-productive strategy. This approach abdicates responsibility and produces great frustration.
- The avoider believes the problem is not their responsibility. The problem is viewed as relatively insignificant. Participants may be helpless, as they are too fragile or insecure. The differences are irreconcilable.

Accommodating

- The accommodator preserves relationships, within groups and opposing parties, at any cost. This person believes that the work and goals are less important than relationships.
- The accommodator tries to embrace everyone involved in the conflict. He/she will sacrifice self and accept blame to bring peace to relationships.
- “You win; I lose.” This person eventually feels like a doormat. S/he allows those who always get their way to believe their ideas are superior.
- This person thinks the problem is not too significant, when s/he is unsure about his/her own ideas or weak position. The accommodator considers other solutions.

Collaborating

- This individual works to achieve a “win” situation for all parties. Conflict is not to be avoided, but turned to a passive, problem-solving process.
- The collaborator is assertive but also flexible. He/she promotes mutual respect, open communication, and full participation by all in the process of managing a conflict.
- “You win; I win.” This approach benefits all. This person leads to honest clarification of issues, with shared decision-making and implementation.
- In most conflicts, especially those involving long-term goals and relationships, requires maturity and patience.



A Team Covenant

It’s almost time to go... the team has had a variety of experiences to this point in which to learn. There have been opportunities for self-understanding and group dynamics. The team has shared stories, studied Scripture, and prayed together. Now it’s time to commit to acting upon lessons learned. As a team, you will write and sign a team covenant.

On a large piece of butcher paper, list the team’s responses to the following questions:

1. What is the goal/vision of the mission trip? (Why is the group going?)
2. What kind of attitudes do we want to show to each other?
3. What kind of behavior do we want to practice on this trip?
4. What kind of traits do we want to characterize our group?
5. How will we help each other do the above?

After a thorough discussion, decide how you want to write your group's covenant. There is a "template" at the end of this section you may use as a place to start.

Once the Team Covenant is written up, have the entire team sign the paper. You may even want to photocopy the agreement, so every team member may have a copy to remember the commitment they have made to each other, to God, and the host ministry. You may want to bring the covenant with you to keep in a place your team will be reminded of their commitment to one another and to the mission.

Team Covenant Example⁶¹

We, the members of this mission team, believing that God has called us together to serve, agree to commit to the following: We desire to be a team of people characterized by Christ-like behavior exhibited through unconditional love, unselfish service and unified teamwork. Our ultimate purpose as a team and as individuals is in accordance with 1 Cor. 9:23.

We believe that we can fulfill this covenant through the following commitments:

- To maintain a servant attitude to my hosts, my team leaders and the team.
- To remember we are guests working at the invitation of local churches/ministries.
- To be a learner, not a judge.
- To ALWAYS try to be as adventurous as possible.
- To refrain from such comments as "at home we do it this way!" We realize that our team is here for just a short while, but the local church is here for the long term. We will respect their knowledge, insights and instructions.
- We will uphold our motto: Absolutely NOTHING can happen that can make me complain! Instead of whining we will be creative and supportive.
- We commit ourselves to resolve all team conflicts according to biblical principles. We will talk directly to those we have a problem with before we gossip to anyone else about it. Then, if necessary, we will get a leader involved. We also commit to pray through these situations.

⁶¹ A print version is available in the Logistics section

- We commit to not being exclusive in our relationships. If my boyfriend/girlfriend is on the mission experience, we will make every effort to interact with all members of the team. If attraction to another team member develops, I will not pursue an exclusive relationship until after I return home and my parents support it.
- We commit ourselves to personal quiet times with God knowing that growing individually is essential to growing as a team.
- We all commit ourselves to work to the best of our God-given ability every day. We will encourage each other to work hard and we will make the time as fun as possible. We know that our attitudes while working are a huge testimony to the local community!

We recognize that _____
 _____ are the official leaders of our team. In situations of team concern, these leaders will be the team guides. We also recognize that this short-term mission experience is an opportunity for us all to develop God-given leadership ability.

I, _____, as a member of this short-term team will commit myself to abide by this covenant to the best of my God-given ability.

Signed _____ Date _____

*“...I have voluntarily become a servant to any and all in order to reach a wide range of people: religious, nonreligious, meticulous moralists, loose-living immoralists, the defeated, the demoralized – whoever. I didn’t take on their way of life. I kept my bearings in Christ – but I entered their world and tried to experience things from their point of view. I’ve become just about every sort of servant there is in my attempts to lead those I meet into a God-saved life. I did all this because of the Message. I didn’t just want to talk about it; I wanted to be in on it!” 1 Cor. 9:23
 The Message*