



Organize a Mission Team

Every mission trip is unique, but many of the steps to prepare for a successful journey are similar. Help your team accomplish its purpose with this list of mission trip planning tips and ideas.

Communication

1. **Ask People to Join the Team** - Begin talking to potential members at least a month before the first mission trip meeting to ask them to pray about joining you.
2. **Schedule a Trip Info Meeting** - Better yet, schedule multiple times for people to attend and follow up with reminders via phone, email, text or social media posts. Allow people to sign up for the info meeting date that works best for them.
3. **Set a Deadline for Applications** - This is your opportunity to collect info on each participant, like contact information, missions experience, spiritual gifts, testimony and personality traits.
4. **Create a Group Site for the Team** - This should be a place online where team members can post photos, ask questions, communicate with each other and save documents with trip info.
5. **Hold Team Prep Meetings** - Remember that people are busy and make sure to keep the meetings focused and purposeful to ensure that participants attend each one.
6. **Prepare a List of Important Contact Info** - Team members can leave the list with family members before they head out.

7. **Set Up a Blog or Email Newsletter** - This can be a place where team members can share updates and photos with sponsors and family members before, during and after the trip.
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Travel Logistics

8. **Reserve Tickets** - Secure tickets several months ahead of time to ensure the best prices and travel dates.
9. **Make a List of Travel Tips** - Include helpful info about appropriate dress, keeping valuables safe and unique cultural norms that the team should know about.
10. **Distribute Packing Lists** - Create a packing list for individuals and one for the group. If your group is taking donations of clothing, toiletries, school supplies or building materials, make a sign up to send out to friends who can supply the team with what's needed.
11. **Arrange Accommodations** - Consider costs, how far you'll be from work sites, security and any extras like towels, sheets and bed nets that team members might need to bring.
12. **Apply for Visas** - Again, allow plenty of extra time to deal with any delays that might arise. Send out a list of everything team members will need to include in their application (i.e. passport-sized photo, check or money order for the application fee, etc.)
13. **Research Baggage Restrictions** - Airlines vary in how many and what size bags they will allow each ticketed passenger without adding extra fees.
14. **Tag All Team Bags** - Give team members a sheet to include in each bag with contact info if the bag is lost as well as an easily identifiable tag to add to the outside of the bag so that the team can find all of the bags upon arrival.

Team Unity

15. **Get to Know Teammates** - Arrange for team building activities before the group travels together.
16. **Provide Multiple Ways to Communicate** - Supply phone numbers, a group site and emails and encourage team members to reach out to each other via their social media channels.
17. **Design the Trip Around the Team's Strengths** - If you have a team full of teachers, hold teacher training sessions for those you'll visit. If you have a group of entrepreneurs, make sure to arrange for business training or evaluation.
18. **Group People into Focus Areas** - Assign people to projects that match their strengths and have focus groups prep tasks together before leaving.
19. **Pray for Unity** - The success of any mission trip rests on prayer. If Jesus prayed for unity for His disciples, then mission teams should too.

Training

20. **Learn about the Culture** - Provide the names of videos, books and blogs that will help team members learn about the place where they will serve.
21. **Ask the Pros** - Have previous short-term mission team members share with the group about their experience. Email a sign up to previous trip alumni members asking them to sign up to share at one of your upcoming info meetings.
22. **Establish a Mission Statement** - Get creative and use a verse, song, and photo or t-shirt logo to communicate it.
23. **Plan a Cultural Meal** - Have team members sign up to bring a dish unique to your host country's culture to a working dinner meeting for the team.
24. **Provide Evaluations** - If you've traveled to the location with previous teams, supply the new team with evaluations from the last groups.

Coordinate mission trip fundraising dinner volunteers with a sign up.

Safety Measures

25. **Purchase Travel Insurance** - Make sure it includes medical evacuation if your team will be traveling to an area without medical facilities.
26. **Get Immunizations** - Research a good travel clinic in your area that can educate and provide your team with the immunizations and prophylaxes that are best for the region where you're traveling.
27. **Register with the State Department** - This informs the embassy where you are traveling if an emergency arises.
28. **Make a List of Team Rules** - It's best to review these with every team member, so they can agree to follow them before leaving. To save time, attach a list of important documents to read in a sign up and have people "sign up" when they've read all of them.
29. **Review Cultural Differences** - These differences may affect everything from how team members greet strangers, to where they are allowed to travel alone or in groups.

Scheduling

30. **Make a Schedule for the Trip** - Knowing what to expect from each day will help team members relax a bit, and it will give you the confidence that important tasks will get done.
31. **Plan a Day to Explore** - It will allow team members the opportunity to learn more about the culture they're serving in and setting aside time to rest or explore.
32. **Build in Daily Flex-time** - Remember that everyone is different and some will need time alone, extra time to sleep or time with others to process their experiences.
33. **Multitask** - Assign leaders and teams for each project to provide flexibility for the team to work on multiple projects at the same time.

Finances: Counting the Cost

34. **Provide All Costs to Team Members** - As early as possible, outline all expenses including travel, lodging, immunizations, insurance, souvenirs, passport and visa.
35. **Fundraise individually and as a Team** - Provide a list of tips and tricks of Fundraising.
36. **Send Funds in Advance** - Wire funds to the host organization for the team's stay.
37. **Give Donors Multiple Ways to Help** - Invite people to donate items needed for sign-up, hold fundraisers, and write letters to family and friends with details about the trip and anticipated costs.
38. **Send Thank You Notes to Donors** - Team members could even pick up small souvenirs to send with an update letter to supporters once they return.

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