



Helping Children Worldwide

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Have you ever wondered if you should go on a mission trip? Mission travel is not for everyone, so how do you decide if this type of trip is right for you? Here are some reasons to apply for a team.

Meet new people and forge new relationships.

Mission teams are made up of people from different churches and sometimes different areas of the country. Even if there are others from your home church, you will get to know them in ways that you haven't been able to before. Additionally, you will get to meet and enter into new relationships with the local staff and people on site where you are serving.

Grow in your trust and relationship in God.

When traveling on a mission team, you will have the opportunity to experience God's provision on a daily basis, participate in daily devotions and prayers with your teammates, and with the local staff on the project sites. Because you are outside of your comfortable daily routine be prepared to see God in new and different ways.

Grow in compassion and servanthood.

The whole idea of traveling on a mission team is to serve other people. You will serve in ways that you may not have imagined. Even though your time will be spent in service to others, you will find yourself served as well.

Increased global awareness and cultural appreciation

American culture is very task oriented, while other cultures are more relationship focused. By spending time in and learning from other cultures, we can broaden our appreciation of God's world and become more effective agents for change.

Get out of your comfort zone

Fear is a great immobilizer. If you let it stand in your way, it can keep you from some wonderful experiences. When we step out in faith and trust God - that is where we experience the greatest growth.

Experience worship in a new way

Worship in a new cultural setting is an amazing experience. Many of the worship elements are the same, but the difference in rhythms and context can bring a new appreciation to the services. Worshipping God together in a new place with new brothers and sisters can be an awe-inspiring experience.

Support the staff and leaders on the ground

It can be very draining to serve day to day in a resource poor environment without knowing that you are appreciated and supported. By working side by side with the staff and leaders at the programs, you will be encouraging and equipping them in their important work, making them feel cared for and valued.

While these are some wonderful reasons to join a team, there are some cautions. We must pay attention to our motives when applying for a travel team. If we are not careful, the attitudes we bring to mission service can be more harmful than helpful. We must temper our expectations, as a two week trip is not going to do much to change the underlying causes of poverty that you will see. But we can bring love, care, compassion, and support for the ministry partners that are already in the field. Mission trips aren't right for everyone, and there are some not-right reasons for joining a team. Here are some reasons not to join a mission team.

Evangelizing to the ungodly

Many people initially want to travel on a mission team to "take the Gospel to the world". God is already moving and working around the world. He invites us to go, see, and participate with Him in the work that is already being done.

Gain some skills and complete some projects

Many people sign up to travel on a mission team to get some work experience, or to complete some projects. Here again, we need to manage our expectations. If you would not be able to do a specific job in the US because you don't have the skills or qualifications, then you shouldn't expect to be able to do that job on the mission team. Also, we try to always hire local workmen to accomplish onsite work, as they have the knowledge and expertise to do things right within the environment and culture.

Mission is something you do "somewhere else"

Expect "mission" to become part of your lifestyle, not an "adventure" or "vacation" that interrupts your routine. You may try something for the first time on a mission trip, but don't go on mission to do what you would not do at home or pretend to be somebody you are not. And especially, don't go just to do something you could not do at home.

We know how to "fix" their problems

Too often, Americans think that we have the best answers to every problem, if only others would just listen to us. We arrive on site and present our solutions to problems that we do not fully understand. These solutions are often inconsistent with the cultural, political, or social environment, but we don't understand why they are reluctant to implement our amazing ideas. This attitude also ignores the real assets and local solutions that may be a better answer. Supporting those who live there to find and implement local solutions is much more sustainable.

I'm going to change the world

Be careful of high expectations. In the short time that you will be on your trip is it feasible that you will be able to learn the complexities of the underlying causes of poverty and deprivation that you see? And once you believe you understand, will you be able to implement projects and programs that will address those underlying causes? There are no quick fixes to the long-standing complex problems of poverty.

It will make me a better person

A mission trip experience often will spark spiritual, personal, and emotional growth. But don't expect that a change in environment will transform you. Actually, the stress of travel and cultural change can bring much of our messiness out into the open.

A spiritual whim

Joining a mission team is not something to be taken lightly. Training is important, and you will need to commit to attending team training meetings. Spiritual, emotional and cultural preparation has immense value. Don't be afraid to take some time to prayerfully consider joining a team. And if the deadline is too close for comfort, perhaps waiting for the next opportunity isn't a bad thing.