



# GO-SERVE

Mission Trip Participant's Guide



PUTTING LOVE WHERE LOVE IS NOT

## YOU & MISSION

Going on an overseas mission trip requires commitment, flexibility, spiritual maturity, resilience, reliability, and cultural sensitivity. We have put together this guide in order to assist you to effectively serve others and be positively impacted by the visit.

It is possible that you believe that the most important aspect of the trip is the successful completion of the projects, and activities planned. While these are important nothing replaces nor outlasts the building of significant relationships with the people you encounter. Your investment in people rather than projects and activities will serve to transform your own life, the lives of those within your team, and the ones you serve. We are all called to “put love where love is not.”

Entering another culture also requires that you are sensitive to defer to their cultural standards. At times this will mean that you put your own desires and rights aside in order to serve with integrity without causing cultural offense. You may be surprised; other cultures have much to teach us about the many priorities we have and the assumptions we hold about how we should live. Depending on where you are from, many cultures tend to put production and efficiency as more important than relationships and community. In the places you visit you may find the reverse.

When people come from their home country and arrive in another country, they can be tempted to believe that they know best. Going into such a context requires a large measure of humility. You are entering this experience in order to work and partner with, rather than to trying to bring answers or take over. Seek to come alongside the people with a heart that wants to learn and offer as equals, and your experience will be rewarding, positive and successful.



## THE MISSION TRIP

The Go-Serve mission trips will take place in various locations worldwide under the hosting and organisation arrangements of each country. Go-Serve will:

- Work with the local host in organising the mission program
- Ensure trusted local leadership and accommodation in host countries
- Facilitate the orientation, preparation, and training before and during the trip

Each participant is responsible to:

- Book their own flight to and from the mission trip location and to arrive and depart at the indicated dates and times
- Apply and pay for the appropriate Tourist Visa for the country being visited
- Register for the Go-Serve mission trip of choice online - [www.go-serve.net](http://www.go-serve.net)

## YOUR PREPERATION

### Orientation

The mission teams will gather together for orientation:

1. Online before the mission trip with team leaders
2. Face to Face upon arrival at your mission trip location

### Personal Requirements

Fitness – Be able to endure the challenges (physical, mental, emotional)

Attitude – Be able and eager to experience a different culture

Flexibility – Be willing to adapt to different cultural standards

Relational – Be a team player

Financial – Be able to pay all mission trip costs

Insurance – You must have purchased your own travel insurance

You must also sign the following documents:

1. Application Form - online at [www.go-serve.net](http://www.go-serve.net)
2. Team Covenant (p. 10)
3. Commitment, Waiver & Release Form (p. 11)



## Spiritual

**Be a Christian** – You must be a committed follower of Christ and be in good standing with your church community.

**Be Open** - Your mission trip will be a spiritual experience—a time to feel God's presence, see God at work, and get to know God better. Be open to everything that God has in mind for you and the people you are serving. God often works through mission trips in different ways than we expect. With God expect anything.

**Be Praying** - There are many areas of a mission trip to lift up in prayer: health, flexibility, relationships within the team, relationships with people you'll meet on the trip, boldness to share the gospel, homesickness, safety, and cultural adjustment, just to name a few. Before, during, and after, be in a constant attitude of prayerful communication with God.

**Be Sharing** – Mission is about sharing your life and your life with God with others. You will often be required to share a devotion (see Appendix B) or your testimony (See Appendix C). So be ready. Sharing your testimony (a story of how God has been faithful to you) may be an important part of what God has called you to do during your mission trip. It can be helpful to prepare in advance for this so that you will feel ready to share when the time comes. Sharing testimonies together during pre-trip meetings is a good way to encourage each other and prepare spiritually for your trip.

## Health

**Physical** – make sure you are in good physical health before commencing your mission trip. You do not want any unexpected health events on your mission trip if they can be avoided. If you have any concerns, please see your doctor or dentist prior to departure.

**Medical** – Every overseas destination may pose possible health risks. It is advisable to see your doctor for advice on whether any vaccinations or other precautions need to be taken to prepare for the country or region being visited.





## **Packing**

**Limits** – If flying the weight limit is usually 20kg for check-in baggage, and 7kg for hand luggage. Excess luggage is expensive to purchase and difficult to carry around. Ideally bring one suitcase and a backpack to take on the plane and for daily use. The lighter you travel, the happier you will be. See Appendix A for a suggested packing list.

**Liquids** - Pack all liquids in plastic bags. Remember not to put any liquids, gels or aerosols of more than 100ml in your hand luggage, put it in your checked in luggage.

**Tags** - Put luggage tags on all baggage, including carry-on, portfolios, musical instruments, etc.

**What To Wear** - The first impression that people have of us is formed when they see what we look like. Our dress gives them an idea of what and who we are. Do not wear clothes that draw attention to you or set you apart, seek to always dress according to their culture. Your team leader will advise you in this regard.

## **Understanding Culture**

Culture is the term used to describe those things which a national, ethnic, or social group does naturally, often without thinking about those things. Every culture will have its own customs, manners, and ways of living. They may be very different from your own culture. You will need to be sensitive to the culture into which you are invited. It is much better to have a desire to learn about a culture than to constantly compare it to yours or try and fix it. Enter the mission experience with a sense of wonder so that you begin to see the world through the eyes of those you are called to serve. Some helpful guidelines are provided below:



1. Conduct in public

Public display of affection between males and females differs in each context. This includes holding hands, hugging or kissing. Be aware of your association with the opposite gender, making sure you are never alone with them or are being over friendly. Be mindful of cultural differences, as their interpretation of a situation might be different to yours.

2. Bargaining

In many cultures bargaining is the rule of thumb in the markets and street stalls. Generally speaking, be sure you want to purchase a product before you commence bargaining for it. You may want to ask a local to help you bargain for an item, this way you will get a better price.

3. Dress

Many cultures have a conservative dress code and this needs to be respected. Please consult your team leaders regarding the appropriate dress code. As a general rule for both men and women, shoulders and knees should be covered in ministry and formal settings.

4. Face

In many Asian cultures, it is important to keep ones "face", which is equivalent to keeping ones self-respect intact. People will try hard not to embarrass themselves or cause someone else to be embarrassed. People will often answer 'yes' to questions when really they mean 'no' or they don't understand. For instance, when doing street evangelism, there is questionable value in asking for on the spot decisions for Christ because people will probably say yes (whether they understand or not) so that you won't lose face.

5. Religion

In countries dominated by a different religion many of our concepts of God are difficult for the people to understand, especially our Christian clichés. One must be careful to explain the meanings of our terminology otherwise the people may reinterpret what we are saying in terms of their religion and therefore totally misunderstand what we are trying to convey.



# THE JOURNEY TOGETHER

## Team Identity

1. We are ambassadors—We represent the Lord, our family, church and countries.
2. We are a team—We follow the team leader and work to preserve team unity.
3. We are servants—We don't impose our agenda, but rather fit into theirs.

## Team values

1. Flexibility
2. Learning
3. Openness
4. Commitment

## Team Covenant

The purpose of a team covenant is to promote a healthy mission team environment that benefits all members of the team, protects harmony, and allows the best possible context for growth of each individual and those we will serve. Please read and sign the Team Covenant.

## Conflict

Because cross-cultural experiences are physically, mentally, and emotionally demanding, interpersonal conflict on trips such as these is almost inevitable. Be prepared to show extra grace to your fellow-team members and to our hosts. When you feel like an issue must be addressed, be intentional to resolve the conflict on your own. If you cannot, resort to the Team Leader. The Team Leader's decision is final.

## Mission Issues

Giving - You will be tempted to want to give to children and families that you work with. You must under no circumstances give directly to anyone that is part of your ministry work. Any desire to give must be directed to the team leader and then to the church leaders in the country. Money rarely solves the real problems.





Photos - Ask your leader what the policy is for taking photos in your mission setting. In some settings taking photos may be prohibited or discouraged. If you are taking photos of people, it is best to politely ask permission before taking them. Also be very careful not to take close-up photos of naked children.

Phone Use - While on mission as much as possible try phone fasting so that you remain present with the team and with the ministry at hand. The mission leader may set aside certain times for personal phone and computer usage.

Social Media - Avoid connecting with those you encounter on social media. This may result in unrealistic relational and financial expectations.

### Tips for Translating

1. Speak slowly and clearly, using simple words.
2. If possible, give the translator a script beforehand to help the translator see where you are going. You will have greater flexibility to make changes when the translator understands your overall direction.
3. Avoid acronyms and alliteration. They will not have the same effect in another language.
4. Speak in full, short sentences. Make sure your sentences are complete thoughts.
5. Look at the audience rather than your translator. Don't bow your head or look intently at your notes. Keep your eyes on the people.
6. Pause frequently for the interpreter to speak.
7. It is often not necessary to read Bible texts in English. Get a national in the audience or your translator to read.
8. Pronounce your words well, being careful about your accent.
9. Check through your message that all words are really English, that there are no puns or slang, etc.
10. Minimize or eliminate illustrations from western life and culture.
11. Limit jokes as they often do not translate.
12. Treat and handle the Bible reverently.





PLEASE COMPLETE AND SIGN THE FOLLOWING  
TEAR OUT AND GIVE IT TO YOUR MISSION LEADER



# TEAM COVENANT

As a member of this team I purpose to adhere to the following team covenant:

1. I will serve the overall purpose of the team.
2. I will respect and submit myself to the mission team.
3. I will preserve and protect the unity of the team.
4. I will use complete discretion when relating to members of the opposite sex.
5. I will avoid public criticism of the culture and way of life in the country.
6. I will give 100% of my energy to the team when in the country.
7. I will not pursue personal interest during the team stay in the country.
8. I will be punctual to all team events unless excused by a team leader.
9. I will strive to be a person of integrity in my actions and attitudes.
10. If at any time while on mission my behaviour constitutes a problem, the team leader has the authority to ask me to return home. Any additional costs incurred, as a result of this action will be at my expense.

## Team Covenant Commitment

As a member of the mission team, I agree to abide by this covenant during my mission team trip.

Date Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Team Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Team Member



## COMMITMENT, WAIVER, AND RELEASE FORM

I, \_\_\_\_\_ the undersigned, being of lawful age, for the sole consideration of being allowed and permitted to be a member of the Go-Serve mission teams hereby and for my heirs, executors, administrators, successors and assignees, waive all rights, demands and claims whatsoever and release, acquit and forever discharge, the Go-Serve mission team leaders, IBCM Network, the churches and local leaders of the mission teams in the receiving country, and their agents, employees, partners, associates, servants and successors of all claims, actions, causes of action, demands, rights, damages, costs, loss of service, expenses and compensation whatsoever, which may hereafter accrue out of all the outreach activities.

1. I recognize that the conditions in some places to which I will travel are not the same standard as the conditions to which I am accustomed (i.e. political environments and judicial systems).
2. I realize further that there are certain health and detainment risks as well as other risks to my property, and me and I enter into participation in this trip with knowledge of those risks.
3. I understand that this document constitutes a full and complete waiver of all possible claims, including claims for negligence in personal injury or property damage, arising out of my participation in this trip.
4. I further declare and represent that no promise, inducement or agreement not herein expressed has been made to the undersigned, and that this Waiver and Release is contractual and not a mere recital.
5. I further undertake to pay all monetary requirements to cover the expenses of the ministry trip that I am committing myself to by signing this agreement.

### **Waiver and Release Commitment**

The undersigned has read the foregoing commitment, waiver and release and fully understands it.

Date Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Team Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Team Member







## AFTER THE JOURNEY

### Preparing for Re-Entry

Culture Shock is a real thing. Coming back home you may experience Reverse Culture Shock. So take time to recover. Your body will need to adjust to the new time zone, and your mind and heart will need to adjust to the new realities of life back home.

At the conclusion of the mission trip your team leaders will take you through a debrief session to help you manage aspects of reverse culture shock that you may experience (see Appendix D).

### Share the Experience

Don't keep the mission trip experience to yourself. Upon returning home take the time to share your experiences with others. Here are some ways you can do that:

1. Share the stories about your trip to your family, friends, and your church
2. Write a report about your trip for your church magazine
3. Share your pictures with the rest of the team
4. Pray for the people you met
5. Inspire others with what you learned that God is doing

### Celebrate

If possible, get together with those who were on mission with you. Share your stories and also how you are dealing with any aspects of reverse culture shock. Celebrate together what God has done in each of your lives.



## APPENDIX A – PACKING LIST

### Checked In Luggage

normally 20kgs, one case/bag only

Antiseptic hand wipes & Soap  
Bible & Journal  
Casual Clothes  
Dress Shoes  
Electrical converter  
First Aid kit  
Hat  
Insect Repellent  
More formal clothes for Church  
Personal items  
Plastic bag for laundry  
Sandals/Thongs  
Sleepwear  
Socks  
Sunglasses  
Sunscreen  
Swimming gear  
Toiletries  
Towel  
Travel Flashlight  
Underwear  
Walking Shoes  
Water bottle

(Normally clothing must cover shoulders  
and knees and be modest in appearance)

### Carry On Bag

normally 7kgs max, preferably a day pack

Camera  
Deodorant  
Earplugs  
Face Masks  
Hand-wipes  
Money, Debit Card, Money belt  
Passport  
Passport photos and copies of personal  
Passport pages.  
Pen  
Personal Medications  
Phone  
Snacks  
Team Project Supplies  
Tissues



## APPENDIX B - HOW TO PREPARE A DEVOTION

A carefully prepared devotion, led by the Holy Spirit, can impact and encourage others for Christ. Your devotion needs to combine three things:

1. The authority of God's Word
2. A personal investment in the message
3. The needs of the people

Any subject matter can be presented more effectively by careful organisation. Here is one possibility for structuring a devotion:

1. WHAT– What is the Bible passage you are basing the devotion on, what one important point did the text want to say, what do you want to communicate to others today.
2. WHY – Share personally why this passage is important to you. Share why you feel it is important for all.
3. HOW – Share how this passage and its message was designed to impact the original hearers. Share a personal story to illustrate the message and how it has affected you. Share how this passage and its message should affect and encourage the lives of those listening.

A good devotion will be based in the Bible, focusing on one main important point, be communicated with personal passion, and be relevant to the needs of the people you are talking to.





## APPENDIX C - HOW TO PREPARE A TESTIMONY

Any subject matter can be presented more effectively by careful organization. A carefully prepared testimony, empowered by the Holy Spirit, can be of immediate and effective use in nearly every witnessing situation. It should be our desire to present Christ in such a clear, attractive, yet simple way, that those who hear will not only want to know Him too, but they will also know “how to know Him personally”. Here are a few “Do’s” and “Don’ts”

### Do

1. Ask the Lord to give you wisdom and guidance as you write (James 1:5,6)
2. Follow a three – point outline: “My Life with Christ.”
  - a. Life before knowing Christ
  - b. How you came to know Christ (be specific)
  - c. Life after receiving Christ (changes He has made – what He means to you now)
3. Emphasize point “c” above if you became a Christian as a small child.
4. Begin with an interesting, attention-getting sentence and close with a good conclusion. Include relevant, thought-provoking, facts and experiences.
5. Give enough details to arouse interest.
6. Use at least one, but at the most two, scripture verses.

An important portion of your testimony will be what seems to you fairly simple, positive changes in your life, but these day-to-day things communicate to people.

### Don't

1. Use Christian jargon. Words such as “saved, convicted, converted, born again, and sin” do not communicate truth to the average non-Christian. Though these words and phrases are precious to us, they are so often misunderstood and consequently ridiculed by non-Christians.
2. Be too wordy, beat around the bush, or emphasize how bad you used to be
3. Mention church denominations
4. Give the impression that the Christian life is a “bed of roses”





## APPENDIX D – PREPARING FOR RE-ENTRY

As part of the final team debrief the following aspects of Reverse Culture Shock and re-entry should be considered.

### Anticipate the Following Feelings

1. Joy in being reunited with family and friends
2. Strong desire and need to communicate the international experience
3. Loss/sadness/grief
4. Discouragement, isolation, loneliness even depression
5. Superiority towards home country's values/lifestyle
6. Confusion of identity
7. Insecurity and uncertainty in interpersonal relationships
8. Impatience over a different perspective and pace of life
9. Anger towards home culture, institutions, church, or other people
10. Pride and spiritual superiority

### Attitudes to Embrace

1. Humility in heart, words and demeanour
2. Teachability – have a learner's posture
3. Acceptance of people and careful in making judgments and comparisons
4. Servanthood
5. Patience and tolerance for ambiguity



### Apply the Following

1. Give yourself time to readjust; be patient with yourself and others.
2. Recognize and accept that you are in transition and that “reverse culture shock” is a normal process of re-entry.
3. Consciously apply your theology of culture (seeing both the patterns of exploitation and idolatry and patterns of loveliness and kindness) to your home culture.
4. Find a support group of people who have been overseas and who are growing in their commitment to Christ.
5. When you want to talk about your international experience more than they want to hear, put your message in “I need” frames: “I need to work on my tendency to compare...” and often they will listen, not because they care about your information, but because they care about you.
6. Recognize that your family and friends may be under a great deal of stress themselves. Be prepared to counsel, comfort, pray and bless them, as much as to receive their attention, care, and counsel.
7. Appreciate and celebrate the “new” you. Keep in mind the importance of balancing between readjustment and maintaining new values.
8. Maintain a grateful heart and a good sense of humour.



# SERVE ONE ANOTHER HUMBLY IN LOVE

- GALATIANS 5:13 -







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PUTTING LOVE WHERE LOVE IS NOT