



INTERNATIONAL
MISSION BOARD

GROUP LEADER HANDBOOK

Go Impact

imb.org/goimpact

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Let's make Jesus known among the nations

The greatest problem in the world is lostness. The only solution to this problem is the gospel. Together, Southern Baptists send IMB missionaries to be steadfastly present among people and places where Jesus is not named or known.

Today, hundreds of thousands of people will die without the hope of Jesus. The IMB exists to address this problem, the world's greatest problem — lostness. We send missionaries to the nations to share the good news of Jesus.

In partnership with churches, we seek to take the gospel to every nation, all tribes, peoples and languages. We give ourselves to this mission every day.

59% OF THE WORLD TODAY IS CONSIDERED **UNREACHED** —

MEANING JESUS IS LARGELY **UNKNOWN** AMONG 4.7 BILLION PEOPLE.

Your high school students and young adults can have an impact on lostness today and experience missions among unreached peoples in unreached places, working alongside IMB missionaries.



Go Impact Team

imb.org/goimpact
info@IMB.org

Are your young people ready to experience the nations and offer help and hope through the gospel to people around the world? IMB is ready to serve you and your church with packaged short-term missions opportunities through Go Impact.

Join us in making it a priority to involve your Next Gen in a mission that is in a mission that is focused on eternity. Let's invite them to a cause bigger than themselves and yes, bigger than their own plans for education, career, family and worldly measures of success. Let's join God in raising up future missionaries who, by His Spirit, make a great impact.

Welcome to Go Impact

As a program of the International Mission Board (IMB), Go Impact exists to equip and empower churches and networks of churches to adopt and conduct student trips with IMB missionaries for the purpose of making disciples and starting churches.

A PREPACKAGED APPROACH

Go Impact provides you and your group with a connection to IMB missionary teams, training resources, help in managing trip finances, a travel agent, and guidance to plan your trip and prepare your team.

OUR PROCESS

In simple form, here is what it means to lead a mission trip with Go Impact:

Consider and adopt a trip request

Register your group

Accept the leader agreement

Recruit and assess participants

Arrange air travel

Plan your ministry and logistical arrangements

Train and prepare participants

OUR VALUES

NEXTGEN-ORIENTED

Our field representatives see the rising generations as a valuable, even necessary component of their ministry.

CHURCH-EMPOWERING

We help churches and partners become self-reliant in conducting mission projects and effectively engaging students in the mission.

FIELD-DRIVEN STRATEGY

We seek to fulfill goals and strategies set by our long-term missionary hosts.

GOSPEL-FOCUSED

We emphasize gospel sharing and church planting and help participants to witness in culturally relevant ways.

WELL-PREPARED PARTICIPANTS

We provide high quality Bible-based curriculum to help student groups be ready to cross cultures and become disciple makers.

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP

We train partners in best practices, encourage shared leadership, and provide a guided experience of intensive planning between group leaders and missionary hosts.

LONG-TERM PARTNERSHIPS

We encourage churches and student ministries to build quality relationships with their missionary hosts and become a valuable part of their strategy.



STEP 1:

Adopt a trip request

imb.org/opportunity-finder/

SELECT THE PLACE, DATE, AND THE TASK IN WHICH TO ENGAGE



DOs AND DON'Ts IN CHOOSING AN ASSIGNMENT

Let's face it: it's quite possible to choose a project for less-than-ideal reasons. Here's some good advice:

DON'T

JUMP ON THE EASIEST OPPORTUNITY THAT COMES YOUR WAY.

Beware of convenience. It takes time and effort to research the options. Think of what really matters in the mission.

DO

GET OTHERS INVOLVED IN PICKING THE TRIP

A good biblical admonition is "in abundance of counselors there is victory" (Proverbs 11:14, NASB). In a church context, you need to consider your pastor's vision, the overall missional engagement of the church, and key leaders who can provide support and direction. In an associational or other multi-church context, involve others as co-leaders who can then buy into the trip and join you in the decision-making.

DON'T

CHOOSE THE CHEAPEST OPTION TO GET THE MOST "BANG FOR YOUR BUCK"

You and your student group are not consumers looking for the best experience, but ambassadors for Christ seeking to join Him in His work. Finances matter, yes, but be driven by the Great Commission and a biblical sense of mission.

DO

COUNT THE COST IN TERMS OF TIME AND EXPENSES

The flip side of going with the cheapest option is to pay no heed to costs and the work involved in planning. It is not spiritual maturity to presume God will provide no matter what you decide. Expensive trips need not be out of the question, but they will involve more time and effort to pull together the resources.

MATCH YOUR GROUP WITH THE NEED

Go Impact offers trips for adoption that are requested by long-term IMB missionaries, who we call field hosts. These workers serve first and foremost as church planters and disciplers. Their requests can vary from “help us break up the hard ground and plant some seeds” to “come and join the harvest.” Both are very legitimate reasons for trips.

We invite you to adopt one of these trips because they represent an important part of the strategy of our missionaries and a way for your students to get directly involved in the mission.

MAKE THE CHOICE!

If possible, please choose a trip from the list of available requests. We want to honor the efforts of missionary hosts who have already put forth the effort to plan for you to come. If necessary, you can also contact us for other possibilities. Adoption of trips is open to churches, campus ministries, associations, conventions, and other networks of churches. Some trip requests may be limited to Southern Baptist entities only.

If your church or organization has an existing relationship with an IMB missionary who is willing to host your student group, we can work with you to incorporate this as a request with Go Impact.

We can connect you to your field host so you can discuss:

1. What will be our exact in-country dates for the project?

Keep in mind that most outbound international flights are overnight and will take a day or so. In many cases you can begin the return home and arrive in the U.S. on the same day.

2. How many participants can we bring?

We require a minimum of five people for your group, but with more people, you are more likely to get the best arrangements for airfare. Agree with the host on a target number of participants including students and adult sponsors.

3. What are the expected ministries and goals for our trip?

Seek a basic description until the Go Impact Training Call in January, when it can be worked out in greater detail. What would

the host describe as a “win” for the trip? For now, learn enough so you will know what to tell prospective participants and how to promote the project.

4. As we prepare, how can we pray for the missionary team and their people group?

The essential ingredient of missions is prayer. Try to come away with at least three requests so you and the group you enlist can begin the work of intercession.

5. How can we promote this trip in a secure fashion?

For security reasons, most missionaries do not want their names and exact locations communicated in a public manner. For example, you might need to advertise your project as East Asia or Northern Africa. Similarly, it may not be a good idea to post on a website the exact dates of your trip.



STEP 2:

Register your group

USE IMB'S GO METHOD SYSTEM TO ADOPT A TRIP AND MANAGE YOUR TEAM

GO METHOD ALLOWS YOU TO:

Provide the contact info of your group to IMB to ensure compliance with safety and prevention requirements and support crisis intervention if needed.

Provide a required checklist for your participants as they prepare for the project.

Give participants access to basic information about the trip.

Collect and store copies of participants' passports for you and the travel agent.

Pay the trip fees (ground costs) for your group. Fees include a deposit of \$75 per participant and a balance due at least 60 days before the start of the project.

Support efforts for you and IMB to follow up with participants after the trip for their future missions engagement.

WHAT REGISTRATION REQUIRES

As a Group Leader, you will take the first steps to register your church for the Go Impact trip.

1. If you are new in the IMB registration process, first create an account.
2. Complete a trip application and then follow a process to meet our compliance requirements, which include:

- Answering all questions in the application.
- Submitting the request for a background check (required for all volunteers over 18 years of age).
- Submitting three references.
- Signing the Commitment to Confidentiality agreement.

Be aware that all volunteer applications, background checks, and three references must be cleared by IMB's Prevention and Response Review (PARR) Team.

3. At this point, you can register your team with or without their names and information. You can "reserve seats" and return later to add participant details. When you provide the details of your participants, the system will invite them to complete their own application.

4. Registration requires a deposit of \$75 per person, payable by the group leader. Until the deposit is paid, adoption of the trip is not confirmed. Payment of deposit and balance requires the use of a credit card, debit card, or electronic check.

5. Add the specific information for your group members (name, birthdate, email address), and the system will send them an invitation to apply for the trip. Your group participants must complete their registration. We also ask that you conduct an interview with each person as part of the screening process (see next section).

6. Once team members have been approved, they will be placed on the trip, and you can track their progress as well as their completion of other requirements, such as Safe and Secure Training and passport upload, in the system.



STEP 3:

Agree to our trip requirements

PLAN TO DO THINGS WELL AND BUILD TRUST

Mission trips involve a significant amount of trust between the missionary host and the group coming to serve.

For the hosts, every group they receive is an investment of their time as well as their credibility with local churches and leaders. A well-planned and conducted trip can advance the gospel strategy of the missionary team and even open new doors for their outreach and ministry. Conversely, a poorly prepared group is a great discouragement and could harm the witness and relationships of the missionary team with the people they seek to reach.

For the group leader and team, a mission trip is also a significant investment of time, finances, and other resources of the church. Trip participants usually come with high expectations to engage in the missionary task and make a difference where they serve.

Too much is at stake to not be intentional and diligent at every step of the process. IMB asks you to covenant with Go Impact, your missionary host, and your team to accept and follow a list of requirements for your trip.





THE GO IMPACT GROUP LEADER AGREEMENT

Plan to sign a copy of this agreement as part of the Go Impact registration process.

1. I agree to the proper enlistment of trip participants.

- a. Participants must be professing believers in Jesus Christ and members of the church.
- b. Participants must be at least 15 years of age or have completed the ninth grade prior to the project.
- c. All participants must be registered in IMB's Go Method system no later than 90 days before the start of the project.

2. I agree to the proper enlistment of adult sponsors.

- a. At least one adult sponsor must be enlisted for every five students (one adult male for every five males or fewer; one adult female for every five females or fewer).
- b. Adult sponsors must be at least 21 years of age or older and are expected to work alongside the students.
- c. The minimum is two adults in a group and one same-sex adult for each sex of youth participating.

3. I agree to the payment of trip costs.

- a. A deposit of \$75 per person is required to register for the trip. The deposit is non-refundable.
- b. The balance due for the group should be paid no later than 60 days before the start of the project. Balances are non-refundable 45 days before the project.
- c. Airfare, passports, emergency insurance, and visas (if needed) are separate and additional costs to the Go Impact trip fee.

4. I agree to the process for arrangement of travel.

- a. Groups must use an approved travel agent to arrange international air travel.
- b. Groups can make their own arrangements to the U.S. gateway city if desired.
- c. Airfare and in some cases, visas, are billed separately by the travel agent. Emergency insurance is also a separate cost paid directly to the insurance company.

5. I agree to purchase IMB-approved emergency insurance.

- a. All trip participants must purchase insurance for their protection. Gallagher Charitable International Insurance has been used by most IMB volunteer teams.
- b. The checklist in Go Method will provide you with details about purchasing this insurance for your group.

6. I agree to fulfill IMB's compliance measures for child protection and security.

- a. Compliance requirements include registration of participants, a background check for all volunteers over 18 years of age, references, a Volunteer Release, completion of IMB's Child Safety Training, and a signed Commitment to Confidentiality.

7. I agree to complete the Go Impact training process.

- a. Group leader training includes an online course (2 hours), the Group Leader's Guide, and an online Trip Planning Call (2 hours).
- b. Participant training includes an individual online course (2 hours) and a six session group study (in-person) provided by IMB to be led by the Group leader.



STEP 4:

Recruit participants

WHO YOU ENLIST IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN HOW MANY YOU ENLIST

IMB missionaries are sharply focused on unreached peoples and places, so they value volunteers who can join them in sharing the gospel, testifying about Jesus, and demonstrating a life of faith and trust in God. We encourage you to identify this project as a partnership with the IMB, recognizing, when necessary, the need for obscurity if the project is in a secure setting.

IMB is also committed to high standards for the prevention of child abuse and sexual harassment and requires you to adopt clear qualifications for your participants and follow a screening process.

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

Go Impact trips are for high school and college students and their adult leaders. Young adults can also participate. All participants should:

- Have completed the ninth grade or be at least 15 years old prior to the start of the project.
- Have an ongoing personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- Be baptized as a believer in Christ.
- Be actively involved in a Great Commission church or campus ministry.
- Complete the IMB application process (in Go Method) for approval.
- Complete the Go Impact preparation study.

In some rare IMB trip requests, the requirement may be for Southern Baptist participants only. Please check with our office for clarification if needed.



Go Impact trips require proper adult supervision, with at least one adult sponsor for every five students (one adult male for every five males or fewer and one adult female for every five females or fewer). Adult sponsors must be at least 21 years of age or older and are expected to work alongside the students. The minimum is two adults in a group and one same-sex adult for each sex of youth participating.

ENLIST PARENTAL AND CHURCH SUPPORT

Parents can be your greatest supporters in missions, especially those who have seen their student positively impacted by a missions experience. Parents can also be your strongest adversaries, with concerns and objections about high costs, poor planning, and risks overseas.

- Recognize that cost and safety are the two biggest parental concerns. Address cost as best you can with good planning and church support. Absolute safety cannot be guaranteed, but again, good planning and precautions go a long way toward making a mission trip no more dangerous overseas than in the U.S. Above all, deal with the heart of these issues: God calls us to be on mission.
- Show the NextGen's video <https://vimeo.com/511361676> to inspire parents and help them see that students are a valuable part of the mission.
- Tell some of the powerful stories from past mission projects your church has led.
- Develop your own Bible-based answers to the question, "Why Go?"



See some of our articles about students in missions:

Almost Missional: What Keeps Students from Engaging in Missions

6 Reasons Our Mission Force Needs Students

How to Disciple Students Toward a Lifetime of Global Engagement





Church-wide support helps your participants and their families know that missions is bigger than just the student ministry.

- Always begin with the approval and support of your pastor. A pastor who frequently and passionately addresses the church's role in missions from the pulpit is usually the biggest factor in gaining support for student missions.
- Avoid planning a trip that is separated from what the rest of the church is doing in missions. Even if the location is a new one for the church, seek integration with your church's mission emphases, promotion, funding, and reporting.
- Engage in serious prayer for your mission project. Avoid the scenario of "plan now and ask God to bless later." Recruit others to pray with you.
- Weave missions into all you do in ministry. The time is past for missions to be just a mission trip. Incorporate missions awareness into every worship service. Engage students in missions giving. Lead your group to adopt a people group, a missionary, or a specific need overseas.



PLAN AND CONDUCT A DISCOVERY MEETING

One of the greatest tools you can use to recruit participants for your team is an informative and inspirational discovery meeting for students, prospective adult sponsors, and parents. The intent is to cast a vision for the project and communicate the important details people will need to consider going. Before conducting the meeting, secure as much information as you can and plan out a calendar of preparation, training, and payments.

Some elements to consider as you plan the meeting:

- Offer light refreshments.
- Decorate the room in ways related to your trip destination (such as the national flag, travel posters, and cultural items).
- Prepare a handout with detailed information. Some things to include: dates of the trip, location, estimated costs, deadlines and due dates, support raising, trip requirements, passport and visa information, and a summary of the ministry assignment.
- If possible, prepare a presentation or video about your mission trip.
- Enlist people with missions experience to share a brief testimony.
- Prepare and present a short, biblical challenge answering the question, "Why go?"
- Be ready with a sign-up process and the deadline to register.

Be sure to introduce the people group you will be serving and briefly talk about the culture of the country. Discuss the people's need for the gospel, their openness to ministry, and any cultural barriers you may know.

Discuss costs. It will be important to spell these out as much as possible. We strongly recommend that you require a deposit, interim payment, and a balance payment. Be ready to share any support-raising plans and/or requirements that may come with budgeted assistance from your church or ministry.

Allow time for questions. Make it a point to note any questions for which you do not have a firm answer. Research these (you may wish to contact your missionary host for assistance) and follow-up with those who wish to know.



ADD YOUR OWN SCREENING PROCESS

The Go Method registration platform provides some automation in the application process, but we ask that you also do your own assessment of each potential group member.

- Confirm church membership and appropriate involvement in the church for each participant.
- Conduct a personal interview with each participant that asks questions to evaluate whether there is anything in his or her character or behavior that suggests this person could pose a risk of danger to children.
- Secure parental permissions and release through the use of your own notarized participant information and release form.
- Enlist only known and trusted adults to serve with the group. Adults who have been members of your church for at least three years or more are the best candidates. Make sure the adults participate in every aspect of your group's preparation for the trip.
- Consider using a covenant to be signed by participants. This could spell out all proper completion of your trip requirements as well as a code of conduct for the trip.

CONDITIONS FOR DISQUALIFICATION

IMB's policy is that an individual will not be allowed to serve as a short-term mission trip participant engaged in work with the IMB where the background screening or any other information reveals any information demonstrating that the individual engaged in:

- any prior behavior constituting sexual abuse of a child,
- any crime of a sexual nature, or
- any other behavior that reasonably indicates that this individual would pose a risk of sexually abusing a child.

In addition, an individual shall not be allowed to serve on a short-term mission trip in collaboration with the IMB if that individual has engaged in any behavior that reasonably indicates that this individual would pose a risk of physically abusing a child.

CHILD PROTECTION TRAINING

Part of the training for your trip includes "Safe and Secure," a video and learner guide that addresses:

- The problem of child sexual abuse
- Critical components to reduce the risk of child abuse
- Signs of sexual abuse
- Responding to reports of child sexual abuse
- Ways to protect workers from false allegations

SAMPLE PARTICIPANT COVENANT

Note to partners: please customize this as you see fit. We recommend including parents of high school participants, so they know what they must do to help prepare their student(s).

As a member of our mission team, you will have a special opportunity to fulfill the Great Commission in a variety of ways: through going, praying, reaching the lost, and serving. To be a member of our mission team carries special responsibilities and expectations, as listed below:

Our mission team members must ...

- Be a maturing follower of Jesus Christ.
- Be an active and supportive church member.
- Be a supportive team player and work toward building genuine biblical community among our team.
- Be a person committed to fervent prayer for the people group we will serve, the missionaries with whom we will partner, and the other members of our team.
- Attend and participate faithfully in team preparation and training meetings.
- Be responsible to apply for a passport and other project documentation on time and make payments for the trip by the due dates.
- Guard the health of the team and the mission experience by limiting behaviors that are either culturally insensitive, divisive, or call into question the integrity of our Christian witness, including, but not limited to, the use of alcohol or tobacco, or engaging in inappropriate sexual behavior.
- Be willing to avoid exclusive or romantic relationships with other team members, locals, or ministry staff while part of the project.
- Be prepared on this trip to engage in long days of ministry, lots of walking, learning and respecting other cultures, forgoing the comforts of home, possible excessive heat or cold, and working alongside students from other groups.
- Be willing to comply with and support decisions made by our team leadership, our missionaries, the project staff, and other ministry leaders with whom we partner.

I agree to the above, and I covenant to faithfully serve as a member of the Go Impact mission team in accordance with the heart and passion of Jesus Christ and His Church.

Participant Name

Date

Participant Signature

Parent or Guardian Signature (for students under 18)

STEP 5:

Arrange international travel

WORK WITH THE TRAVEL AGENT TO ESTABLISH THE FLIGHT ITINERARY AND OTHER TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS FOR YOUR GROUP.



BEGIN THE ADVENTURE WITH A PASSPORT

It is likely that some, if not many, of your participants will have yet to apply for a passport. Start early in this process! The best international travel arrangements are meaningless without a passport, and waiting often results in participants paying high fees to rush their passport application.

Processing a new or renewal passport request can take eight weeks or more. Winter and spring are peak times for people to request passports, so passport processing can take even longer. Remind all participants to sign their passports — they are not valid without a signature.

U.S. Citizens can get information on obtaining or renewing a passport at the State Department's website: travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports.html. Non-U.S. Citizens will need a valid passport from their home country and, in some cases, a U.S. visa. It is likely they will also need the original copy of their Alien Registration Card (ARC or "Green Card") and any other documentation required by the countries on your itinerary.

In international travel terms, a visa is a stamp in your passport or receipt that allows you, as a foreigner, to enter a country. Most countries have a visa process that requires advance arrangements with the embassy or paying a fee online.

CONNECT WITH THE APPROVED TRAVEL AGENT

Go Impact will provide the initial connection to get you started in arranging your group's travel. Recognize that the travel agent has extensive experience in working with IMB, arranging itineraries for student groups, assisting you with obtaining the required emergency insurance, and providing emergency travel assistance.

Gather in advance all the information you will need to arrange flights. Many people have made serious mistakes at this point by not having clear confirmation on these details! You won't need passenger names at this point, but you will need:

Best U.S. departure airport for your group

Be open to alternatives. You may need to fly a domestic segment or drive to get to a gateway airport like Atlanta, Miami, Houston, New York, Los Angeles, or Washington D.C.

Best arrival airport in your project country

We have confirmed this with your field representative, but there may be options in locations with multiple airports. You may need additional travel options from the airport to your lodging.

Number of seats you will need

Be aware that a minimum of ten seats are required to reserve space on an airline without paying the full amount immediately. If you will be taking less than ten team members, recognize that you cannot book tickets until you are ready to pay for them.

Actual dates you need to be in the project country

Remember that most international flights from the U.S. are overnight, which means arriving the next day. Many return flights to the U.S. leave in the morning and arrive on the same day.





NEGOTIATE YOUR GROUP'S TRAVEL

1. Review options with the travel agent.

Use this checklist with any proposed itinerary you receive from your travel agent:

- a. Review airports, dates, and arrival and departure times to make sure they are accurate and acceptable.
- b. Check layovers (times between flights). For groups, we recommend at least a two-hour layover to give your group time to change gates and/or go through more security checkpoints.
- c. Does your itinerary involve “split tickets”—using two different airlines that are not “code sharing” and require separate check-ins along the way?

While a split ticket can be a cheaper option, it can create havoc if you are delayed on a flight.

- d. Find out if there is a visa (passport stamp) or entry fee required for your project country. This will usually be an additional cost above and beyond airfare.
- e. As a group leader, you will need to make the arrangements to purchase IMB-approved and required emergency insurance for your team. Please find the details about this requirement in your Go Method registration checklist.

2. Be prepared to pay the full price for tickets.

- a. Again if you have less than ten team members, be ready to pay for your tickets around 90 days before the trip. Tickets will likely be non-refundable, so be sure you understand your obligations.
- b. Tickets must be booked with passport names and birthdates. Be sure to get this right! Any typo or error will likely invalidate the ticket.

3. Again, start early to lead your participants to obtain or check their passports.

- a. Most countries require a passport to be valid for at least six months after the date of the project.
- b. You will need exact passport names to give to the travel agent when you pay your balance, which could be as early as 60 days before you travel.

4. Know before you go. Ask your travel agent to answer and clarify these questions:

- a. What are the current rules and restrictions for luggage for this itinerary? What can we expect with luggage fees?
- b. Does this country require a special letter of parental permission for minors?





OBTAIN THE IMB-APPROVED EMERGENCY INSURANCE

IMB policy requires all volunteers involved in an IMB trip to purchase insurance for their protection. Gallagher Charitable International Insurance is used by most IMB volunteer teams and provides medical, accidental death, medical evacuation, disability, and many other benefits. The group leader is responsible for obtaining this coverage for the group. You will find guidance in the Go Method registration system to register with Gallagher and qualify your group for the IMB coverage and rates. Gallagher will require a list of your participants with passport names, birthdates, beneficiary name, and beneficiary relationship.

STEP 6: **Plan the details of your trip**

LEARN MORE ABOUT YOUR ARRANGEMENTS AND MINISTRY ASSIGNMENT SO YOU CAN PREPARE YOUR TEAM.

GO IMPACT PLANNING CALL

You will be invited to participate in a scheduled planning call on Microsoft Teams about 5-6 months before your trip where you will meet with your missionary host and be guided to plan the following in detail:



MINISTRY ASSIGNMENT

You will discuss topics such as goals for the trip, activities the group will engage in, characteristics of the people group, and best ways to share the gospel. You will develop a clear plan for preparing your group to serve.

TRIP SCHEDULE

Flexibility is always essential with mission trips, but you and your missionary host will be led to outline a detailed schedule for your time in the country. Most of your time for the trip will be focused on ministry, but you will discuss times for daily worship/devotions, preparation for ministry, and opportunities to sightsee.

PHYSICAL ARRANGEMENTS

It is important to know what to expect with lodging, meals, and local transportation. You will discuss a “what to bring” list, rooming assignments, dietary needs and precautions, and accessibility and health requirements.

SAFETY AND CONTINGENCY

Part of planning a trip well involves careful thinking through potential problems and pitfalls, such as, “What do you do if it rains for several days?” and “If there is a medical need, where do you go?” You will discuss precautions for traveling, best practices for being in the country, and how to protect the identity and ministry of your hosts and local believers.



STEP 7:

Train and prepare your team

STUDY AND PRACTICE BEFORE YOU COME!

One of the main reasons Go Impact exists is to see your church help the rising generations become disciple-makers among the nations. Preparing and deploying your students on an international mission trip is one of the best ways to get them off the sidelines into the game.

GO IMPACT TRAINING ELEMENTS

Required:

- Go Impact Group Leader Course (2 hours)
Complete this online course right after you register for the trip.
- Go Impact Planning Call (2 hours)
Scheduled for group leaders and missionary hosts 5-6 months before the trip
- Go Impact Student Training Course (2 hours)
All trip participants must complete this course prior to the group study. This material addresses personal spiritual preparation, crossing cultures, serving with a team, and security.
- Go Impact Group Study (6 sessions)
The Group leader conducts this training in person with the participants at least one month before the trip. This material addresses the gospel and why we witness, disciple, serve, plant churches, and go to unreached peoples and places.

Optional but recommended:

- A discovery meeting (see page 13)
- Personal devotions for participants
- Local missions experience



BEST PRACTICES FOR PREPARING YOUR GROUP

Map out your training schedule.

Youth and families have busy schedules. Get your trip preparation events and deadlines on their calendars as early as possible.

Plan how to deliver the six-session missions study.

You may choose to conduct this as a retreat or a series of weekly meetings.

Conduct a discovery meeting to begin recruiting your team.

See page 12 in this guide.

Lead trip participants to sign and return your version of a participant covenant.

Be clear about your expectations for them in this project.

Lead participants to complete personal devotions as part of their preparation.

Go Impact can provide you with 10 days of online devotions that will support the group study as well as introduce youth to praying for missions.

Engage your group in prayer.

Pray for God to work in and through your participants now. Lead your team to enlist prayer partners. Organize a prayer walk for the group. Intentionally schedule time for prayer for the people you will encounter and for opportunities to share.

Lead your participants to share their faith and gain experience sharing the gospel.

Expect to share the gospel on your Go Impact trip. The context for this might be in a camp, sports activities, English clubs, coffee shops, door-to-door visits, or other. Evangelism training and experience are a must!



CROSSING CULTURES

Help your participants get ready to try new things, step outside their comfort zones, and make efforts to learn some of the language of the people you will serve.

Research the culture of the host country and people group.

- Go Impact can provide you with a country-specific resource known as Culturegrams to jumpstart this effort.
- Dialogue with your host missionary for specific information about what is appropriate, especially in terms of dress, conduct, and topics of conversation with locals.
- Find out about the religion or religious background of the people with whom you will minister. Peoplegroups.org is a good resource.

Plan a cross-cultural experience for your participants to introduce them to your host country.

- Stage an ethnic meal for your team or eat at an ethnic restaurant to gain some experience in the local cuisine.
- Watch a movie together that is set in your host country. (Preview this in advance for appropriateness.)
- Invite an immigrant family from your host country to visit and share with your team.

Introduce the host country's language to your team.

- Prepare a handout of basic and most-used words.
- As part of a session, practice speaking the words together.
- Encourage individuals to do some of their own language learning through the use of software, or even taking a class at school.





A PLEA FROM A MISSIONARY

When you go to another country to serve, it is extremely important that you come with a teachable spirit and without a sense of cultural superiority. Recognize that you and your group are the product of your Western culture. There are things that you believe are true, right, and normal that have nothing to do with your Christianity and everything to do with your cultural identity as a 21st-century American.

Looking through "American lenses," the sight of three Indian men sleeping side-by-side in the same bed is shocking. The men in the bed simply think of it as an efficient use of space. If you ask a woman in West Africa for directions to the neighborhood store, and she sticks her tongue out and uses it to point down the street, you might consider her gesture rude. From her point of view, she is simply being helpful in a culturally appropriate way.

It is very easy to conduct ministry totally unaware of cultural differences and go with what you know, but that approach can be disastrous for the mission. So, how can you avoid this?

Practice "stepping out" of your cultural mindset and take the viewpoint of an outsider. For instance, what do American television shows and movies, which have a worldwide audience, lead people to believe about Americans?

Challenge yourself with questions:

How does my standard of living compare to others in the world? Are all my Western comforts essential for a meaningful life? What are the ways I practice worship that are cultural but not necessarily prescribed by the Bible? What worship practices in the Bible do I not usually do?

Plan to bring a sense of humor when you visit another culture and be ready to laugh at yourself.

HONOR THE METHODS AND STRATEGIES OF THE MISSIONARY.

Confrontational evangelism does not work well in Wales. Similarly, a female witnessing to a male in a Muslim context can send inappropriate "sexually available" signals! Missionaries, for security reasons, are very familiar with ministry efforts that, at best, are cultural blunders and, at worst, offensive and insensitive.



HERE IS WHAT WE ASK OF YOU:

Remember that you and your group are visitors, and the field representative and local believers are residents. Trust that we have done our homework and know best how to reach our people group.

Realize that you are not bringing Jesus to our people group and country. Jesus is already here! You can join in the work that Jesus is already doing, whatever it is.

Let us, the field representatives, define what will make the project a success and make this your goal. You may do more good than you know by prayerwalking in a community or surveying a neighborhood. Your group's efforts may be to "prepare the soil" for what God will do later. Be humble enough to accept a seed planter's role instead of the harvester's when asked.

Pray about ways that cultural differences can be used as a witnessing tool. Casual and often amusing discussions about culture, customs, and traditions can naturally present an opportunity to share your faith. For instance, it is impossible to talk about the way we celebrate Christmas or Easter without mentioning the person of Jesus Christ.

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