



PLANNING A MISSION TRIP THAT LASTS YEAR-ROUND

Recognize it's a beginning, not an end

You can't KEEP that excitement, but you can channel it into mission at home. Mission trips are the pep rally – the lifetime of mission is the big game.



Prepare

Like it or not, the details can distract from the experience. Plan the details well ahead of time – remember the 5 W's? Answering those questions is essential.

When will you go? What fits the life of the church and your group? Other summer activities can make this a minefield. Sharing early gives people a chance to plan around it rather than the other way around.

Who/With Whom – who will go with you? You might need to know as early as January for vacation planning. With whom will you serve?

What will you do? Your partner in ministry might be best to help you decide this – something they already do or need help doing.

Where will you stay, serve, and go during free time?

But most importantly...

Focus on the Why

You want to spend at least as much time talking about WHY you're doing the trip. Dive deep into God's mission and your participants' part in it, how God might be calling them, and how the trip affects the way they see home.

What are some reasons why you are taking the mission trip?

Relational – deepening relationships with youth and adults, relationships in the community you serve, connecting to church members who can support from home (or when you return home)

Theological - explore God's mission in the world, understand how faith and scripture connect to action

Practical – trying hands-on ministry that you can replicate at home, learning from other groups and leaders, creative elements in worship and ministry



Tie Into the Church's Mission

Write out your church's mission statement (official or unofficial). The mission statement tells everyone what you exist to do. Here's a link to 50 church mission statements for ideas if your church hasn't adopted one: <https://www.churchrelevance.com/2013/03/28/50-examples-of-church-mission-statements/>

How does the mission trip connect your group to the overall life of the church?

Can you bring elements of what you do on the trip home? Can other members of your church join that kind of ministry? Can other groups within your church that maybe don't typically work together find a common cause through something you're doing on the trip? If your group serves families in a community on the trip, can you identify families with similar needs at home?

Lean In

If other people are responsible for leading your group, don't get comfortable – lean into relationships and spiritual growth of your kids.

List 3 ways you can engage your youth while on a mission trip that will help when you return home

- Something to talk about (faith practices at home, where they saw God today, etc)
- Something to do (team-building, pray together, “fun” activities)
- Something to dream about together (what could we accomplish back home, what can we do together)

Plan for Next Week and Month, Not Next Year

Before you leave, have a plan for how to engage youth when you return home. The weeks and months after the trip are much more important than where you go next summer.

List 3 opportunities to follow-up and capitalize on the experience of the trip

(something your church already does)

(something you've always wanted to do)

(someone you can work with or learn from)

Always Remember

It can be easy to objectify the people you serve or get the sense that you're “fixing” them. Mission is about partnership and seeing value in the person you serve.

