

MISSION TRIP

THE TOP

10  
*Ten*

BEST PRACTICES

**Short-Term Missions Trips, especially during the summer, are a popular way for churches to get their congregations involved in missions and outreach projects without requiring a long-term commitment.**

Teams commit to a couple of weeks to serve at home or abroad in a variety of ways ranging from construction projects to Vacation Bible Schools to pastors' conferences to medical camps. Short-Term Mission Trips might involve individuals going overseas for a few months, or larger group teams that serve for a shorter amount of time right in their own backyard. Teams often embark on these trips with honorable intentions, seeking to better the church in the developing nations of the Global South. They seek partnerships, relationships with international believers, and ultimately the growth of the Church at home and around the world.

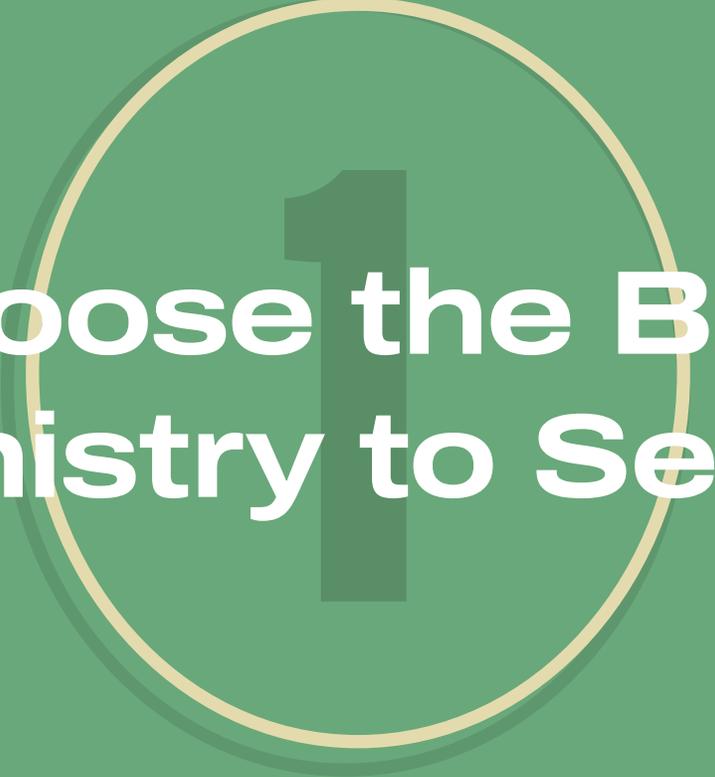
How do we ensure these Summer Missions Trips are as successful and effective as they can be for both the people being served and the people doing the serving? Here are Ten Best Practices to help you make your Summer Missions Trip the best it can be.



10  
*Ten*

**BEST PRACTICES  
FOR SUMMER  
MISSIONS TRIPS**





# Choose the Best Ministry to Serve

Summer Missions Trips are catalysts to  
creating long-term partnerships with  
ministries at home and abroad.





# Choose the Best Trip Participants

Creating a Summer Missions Trip Team is an important and challenging task that takes pastoral skill and divine guidance.





Along with the application, be sure to collect the non-refundable deposit, without which candidates will not be considered for team participation. Applications can be reviewed by the Missions Pastor and Team leader for participant suitability. Contacting each candidate personally is essential to let them know whether they've been chosen to participate on the trip. For those who have not been chosen, outline clear steps that will help make them eligible for future trips.

**Conduct background checks, interview potential trip participants; determine age limits, determine maximum headcount.**

Before finalizing the team members for the trip, it is essential to conduct Criminal Records Background Checks on all applicants. Include an Authorization and Request for Criminal Records Check release form to be signed in the Application Form. Plus, it will be beneficial to interview potential trip participants, especially those who have never participated on any missions trip in the past. Determining age limits for trip members (i.e., no one under 18) will be helpful in ensuring that the trip is appropriate for all members and will not be emotionally challenging for younger members. Finally, determine a maximum headcount and stick to it. A team that is too big can quickly get out of hand and may cause problems for the ministry the team intends to serve.



# Design an Excellent and Beneficial Trip

It is the job of the Missions Pastor and the team leader to work together to design a trip that has multi-dimensional benefits.





# Planning Travel

The travel for a Summer Missions Trip can be one of the most challenging and frustrating parts of the entire experience.





# Create a Leadership Team

On any Summer Missions Team, there will be the need for qualified, experienced leadership on several levels.







# Conduct Comprehensive Team Training

Training the team prior to the trip is essential, not only for the information that will be communicated during the sessions, but also for the teambuilding that will occur along the way.

A Summer Missions Trip is a serious undertaking and requires serious training. Therefore, multiple sessions will be required. Best practice dictates beginning team training sessions 6 months in advance. Generally, team trainings occur at least once per month on Saturdays or Sundays for three to four hours per session until the trip departure date. Team training encompasses a multitude of topics depending on the location of the trip, the purpose of the trip, the needs of the partner ministry, and the experience of the team members. Team training sessions should be required for all team members. Agreement for attendance should be included in the team covenant team members sign in their trip application.

### **Here are some important topics to be sure to cover.**

- Cross-cultural awareness; cultural information specific to trip location
- Teambuilding exercises
- Fundraising training
- How to apply for a passport and visa (if required)
- Stateside cultural experiences (visits to mosques, temples, ethnic restaurants)
- Health advice, vaccination requirements
- Trip logistics, trip schedule
- Setting expectations
- Completing and collecting needed paperwork, waivers, emergency contacts
- Distribution of books to read on cultural awareness or specialty team topics

Creating and distributing a trip binder that has all relevant information and forms can be helpful for participants to keep important paperwork in one place. This information could also be put into a cloud-based online directory for easy access to participants. Plus, recordings of Team Training Sessions can be put in the same online directory for those who must miss the sessions or who need to review important information a second time.



# Fundraising

The cost of a Summer Missions Trip is substantial. Because of the nature of the trip, it costs more than a personal vacation or more than a discounted trip across the nation.

There is funding required for safe and healthy lodging, group transportation, ministry supplies, assistance for ministry partners, and contingency accounts. For many people, funding the cost of the trip out-of-pocket is simply not possible. Therefore, most churches recommend giving friends, family, and church members the opportunity to partner in God's work through the Summer Missions Trip by making financial support contributions in response to individuals' request for trip funding.

**Most trip participants will need significant training regarding fundraising. That training should most definitely include:**

- Theology of fundraising
- Defining your personal trip vision statement
- Gathering a prayer team
- The art of writing fundraising letters
- Creating a list of possible supporters
- Sending letters and following up personally
- Having small group meetings to communicate vision and make the ask
- Thanking Donors and reporting progress





# Packing Party!

Summer Missions Trips require  
an abundance of special supplies  
and equipment.

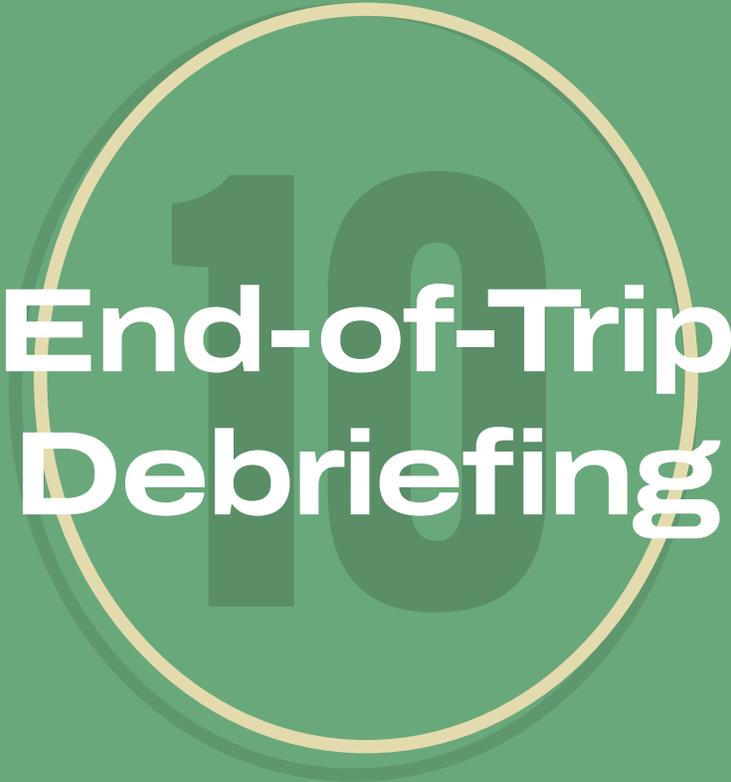




# Daily Team Meetings

During the daily course of the Summer Missions Trip, one of the most important responsibilities of the Team Leader is to communicate clearly with the team and be aware of their changing emotions and experiences.





# End-of-Trip Debriefing

After a week or two, everyone has worked hard and given it their all.



**Hopefully, by the time the team returns home, it will be with rejoicing, knowing that the Summer Missions Trip accomplished the team's goals, operated within the overall missions strategy of the church, and was an encouragement and true source of God's help to the ministry partner. Hopefully there has been an invitation to come back next year!**

The good times and the camaraderie don't have to end there. After everyone is united with their loved ones and has recovered from jet lag and lack of hydration and sleep, here are two things that can help team members continue to process their experiences, as well as draw in loved ones and church members to everything that God has done.

**Host a Report Night.**

Gather friends, family and church members together for a good, old-fashioned slide show, complete with photos, stories, anecdotes, testimonies of God's faithfulness and a whole lot of thanks for those who gave their prayers and support. Offer a tasty dessert and an opportunity for everyone to ask questions and interact with team members freely.

**Plan a team reunion.**

Team reunions offer team members the opportunity to discuss the trip and how life has changed for them since going on the trip. Ask people to share stories of how the lessons they learned during the trip have been integrated into their everyday lives. Discuss the challenges they've faced since returning home and how God has remained faithful. Talk about the clarity of vision for future ministry each team member may have. Make plans for future trips and ask for feedback.

*Overall?*

**PRAISE GOD  
FOR ALL THAT  
HE HAS DONE!**

# Choosing the Right Ministry Partner

## **The know-how you need from experts you trust.**

ACS Technologies is the original pioneer of Church Management Software (ChMS). We are firmly dedicated to serving local churches all over North America by providing the best-in-class ministry software and service solutions that help you fulfill Christ's mission for your Church.

## **Tools and support to strengthen churches.**

We build great software, but we don't stop there. We have a "service-first" approach that truly sets us apart. With hundreds of dedicated support and consulting personnel, your staff can reach our team 24/7. We're in your corner to help you with the ministry challenges you face every day.

## **Ideas and solutions powered by integrity.**

Integrity is real for us, and it means consistently being faithful stewards by doing the right thing for church success. We have earned the trust of pastors, church staff, congregants, our employees, and colleagues for over 40 years.

## **A plan to meet your needs and move your ministry.**

We're not just interested in satisfied customers. We see ourselves as your real ministry partner and will work with you to make disciples that will last for an eternity. We're excited to talk about your goals, create a plan together, and set you up with the software, service, and resources you need.

## **We believe in YOU!**

ACS Technologies believes in the local church. Over 75% of our team has experience serving in their local churches. We know firsthand that serving the Church means serving people, and we take seriously our commitment to helping ministries like yours achieve their God-given mandate - to make disciples in their communities, states, and across the world.

## Let's Talk

We know the challenges of switching or implementing new technology and how that can be intimidating. But we also know the unbelievable changes that have happened within churches that have partnered with us for their ministry needs. Let's connect and see how we can assist you in the greatest thing you do - grow God's Kingdom.

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