



MISSION TRIP CHECKLIST

- ✔ The complete list of timeline to dos for the most successful trips





**The world is waiting—
waiting for hope,
waiting for good news.**

The world is waiting for your church.

You're a steward of the world's most important message and have an opportunity to make a tangible difference in the lives of those who are the most vulnerable on the planet. There is no limit to what God can do through your church when you take a mission trip.

But every successful mission trip starts with a plan. This guide will help you develop the right plan for your next mission trip.

After reading this ministry guide, you'll know how to:

- ✓ **Set your team up for success**
- ✓ **Verify a vision for your mission**
- ✓ **Take the shock out of culture shock**
- ✓ **Finish fundraising**
- ✓ **Make the highest Kingdom impact possible.**

Jesus gave us the mission:

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

MATTHEW 28:18-20

**Now let us help you with the plan.
Together, let's make your next trip the best it can be.**



Up to Twelve Months Out: *Set up for success.*

We know. We know. You still have time. But there are so many things you can do this far out to make sure that you and your team are set up for success. As an organization who specializes in sending people on mission trips, you can trust us. We do this a lot. And, we want to ensure that you have the most impactful and as smooth of a trip as possible. Here are a few things you should start to do and think about:

To Do's:

- ✓ **Begin to have conversations with trip leaders, pastors, outreach directors, and anyone involved in the planning process.**
- ✓ **Check out your church or organization's website. Go through the systems and streamline as many processes as possible.**
- ✓ **Clarify trip needs and identify trip leaders.**
- ✓ **Set trip dates and estimate any costs that you can.**



TIP: *Start streamlining.*

If you're still sorting and storing files by hand for your trips, it's time to put down the paperwork and pick up a great trip management software. In a digital world, trip management software is going to save you and your staff tons of time while also keeping everything filed neatly, offering easy access to documents, and giving you better oversight to both individual and group fundraising, needs, and tasks.

The more time you save, the more time you can spend making an impact.



Five to Eight Months Out: *Gear up!*

Gear up! Before you get in the weeds and pressure of fundraising, take a step back and get organized. Establish a firm plan so that you can move forward and lead well.

To Do's:

- ✓ For the easiest access and best response, set up your trip registration online. Be sure to enter in all trip details on your event landing page and open up sign ups for participants to register.
- ✓ Promote your trip within your church or organization.
- ✓ Send all needs to trip leads (guides, lists, and policies).
- ✓ Send specific area information to leads about their trip (culture, background, host organization, and policies).
- ✓ Make sure to set up and verify all important trip requirements and information from everyone going on the trip. Some of these items include consent, liability forms, drivers licenses, passports, insurance cards, and trip surveys.
- ✓ Set up a leadership and team update and relationship meetings.
- ✓ Set up a fundraising plan that uses both peer-to-peer and social fundraising. Establish deadlines for you and participants.



TIP: *Use a travel agency and get insurance.*

As you're planning your travel logistics, consider having a travel agency book your trip. Fundraising is already a complicated process so leave the details to the experts. Simplify mission team travel by raising less and booking group flights.

In a dream world, we would be able to ensure that all the individuals on our trips are perfectly safe. However, there is a small chance that anything could happen. Especially while you're traveling. Insurance gives both the traveler and the church or organization security should something go wrong despite taking precautions and planning well. No one should be taking any mission trips without insurance.



Four to Five Months Out: *Verify a vision for your mission.*

Ask God to really give you a vision for what your team can accomplish on this trip. From there, schedule meetings and establish plans so that your team can be as productive at sharing the Love of Christ and serving others as possible on your trip.

To Do's:

- ✓ Ensure that trip leads have team meetings scheduled.
- ✓ Establish a trip schedule with the host organization or ministry.
- ✓ Share the trip vision, travel logistics, and review schedule.
- ✓ Begin to pray specifically over the trip
- ✓ Connect with the host ministry or organization to:
 - Go over all information
 - Develop a trip budget
 - Ask for the ministry or organizations direct needs
 - Begin to sign all paperwork
 - Continue to promote and raise funds



TIP: *How to write a vision statement for your trip.*

It can be helpful for you and your team to write a mission statement to help you all stay focused on your trip ahead. If we look at Colossians 1:28, Paul gives us a really good example.

“He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ.” - Colossians 1:28, NIV

His purpose is clearly to share the Gospel and teach it. He mentions “everyone” twice so we know that his audience is anyone who he comes into contact with. His goal is that people will mature in their faith in Jesus. Boom! Mission statement complete.

Start with a brainstorm. What is your greatest purpose on your trip? What tangible and spiritual needs can you meet? Who are the people you are going to impact? What's a goal that you'd like for God to help you and your team to accomplish for the benefit of others?

Get specific on your purpose, audience, and goal setting. The more specific you are, the more tangibly you'll see God come through on your hopes and prayers.

When you start to feel sidetracked or if you begin to lose your sense of purpose on your trip, come back to this mission statement. Get laser-focused on what God has called your team to do.



Three Months Out: *Take the shock out of culture shock.*

Culture shock is real. The more you can inform your team about where you're going and what to expect, the smoother the transition will be into your trip. Gain all the information that you can and begin to offer training concepts to your team so that they enjoy their experience and are focused on faith over fear.

To Do's:

- ✓ Notify the U.S. Embassy of the country your team is traveling to.
- ✓ Communicate flight schedule with trip participants, church or organizational leaders, and host organization.
 - Make sure your team's first financial deadlines cover the cost of flights.
- ✓ Check each team member's fundraising status.
- ✓ Share medical policies and required immunizations for your area of travel.
- ✓ Review all emergency, disaster, and quarantine plans with your organization and the host organization.
 - If you don't have any plans, set them.
- ✓ At the next team meeting, introduce members to the culture of the country you'll be traveling to. Teach them any facts and share any information.
- ✓ Make sure all needed forms are signed and properly logged and saved for all individuals.



TIP: *Awareness of culture shock can lessen its impact.*

Culture shock happens to everyone who travels anywhere for any amount of time. It's not a bad thing. We just don't want you to be shocked by culture shock.

Here are the 4 phases of culture shock as proposed by world traveler Kalevro Oberg:

- 1. Honeymoon** - A new place or country seems awesome and exciting.
- 2. Negotiation** - A person becomes keenly aware of the differences in the culture they are used to and the culture they are currently in. It may cause some to be homesick or create anxiety.
- 3. Adjustment** - The culture becomes more normal and the person has a more positive outlook on the new place they are living in.
- 4. Adaptation** - The person begins to feel comfortable and starts to participate in cultural practices.*

Whether you're traveling to a different part of town or across the world, you will experience some form of all of these phases of culture shock. They may be drawn out over a week trip or for a year. If you can recognize it for what it is, you can embrace it and learn to find contentment in your circumstances while offering encouragement to your teammates when they are having an off day.



Two Months Out: *Finish Fundraising*

Fundraising is hard. Asking for money seems weird. However, you'll be shocked about the way that God wants to provide for your team and how many people want to support people who are doing good in the world. So, unashamedly ask for what you need and encourage your team to do the same. It's time to lock down the trip funds.

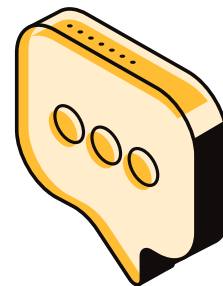
To Do's:

- ✓ Confirm all dates and times with your organization and the host ministry/organization and purchase all airline tickets.
- ✓ Encourage your team to focus on fundraising and aim to be fully funded as soon as possible.
- ✓ Create an intentional team prayer list.
- ✓ Communicate weekly with your team via text message, meeting, or phone calls. It's important to build relationships and trust before the trip.
- ✓ Check the fundraising status of the team and make sure all paperwork is completed.



TIP: *Communicate your trip needs with congregants.*

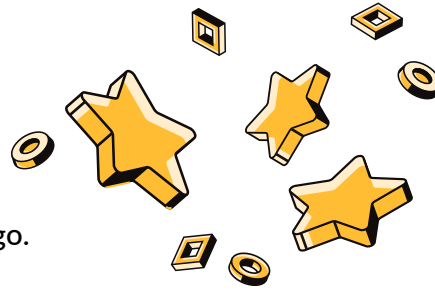
Did you know that there is a **3-10% increase** in giving when congregants are communicated to effectively? So, if your team isn't fully funded by now, it could be because you're not sharing clearly what you need to get out on the mission field. Try sharing with your church exactly what resources your team needs to go and be the hands and feet of Jesus.





One Month Out: *Almost go time!*

Finalize everything and get ready to go.
Oh, and don't forget to party!



To Do's:

- ✓ Touch base frequently with your team and begin any training.
- ✓ Have a team Zoom call with the host ministry/organization to learn more about the culture, trip, needs, and what to expect.
- ✓ Finalize all finances, fundraising and paperwork.
- ✓ Think through a communication plan for the families and guardians of all trip participants.
- ✓ Review packing list and dress code.
- ✓ Throw a packing party!



TIP: *How to throw a packing party.*

Throwing a packing party is a fun way to allow your group to bond before the trip while also knocking out several big ticket to-do's before your trip. Have a potluck or order dinner. Put together a checklist of items everyone needs and invite the team to show up with their suitcases. Many mission trips involve traveling with supplies such as food, medical supplies or extra clothing to donate. Bring extra suitcases and all of these items to pack as well. Turn on some fun music, eat together and then get to packing! Go over any necessary information and pray over the trip together to close out the night.





During the Trip: *Let's go!*



You did it! You made it! While your boots are on the ground, here are a few ways to make sure you're aligning your team to take their best steps forward as they share the Gospel.

To Do's:

- ✓ Continue to meet with your team for daily group discussions, reflective time, and prayer.
- ✓ Be intentional about checking in with team members.
- ✓ Save all receipts.
- ✓ Email safe arrival and updates to families and guardians of team members and prayer partners.
- ✓ Send one to two emails or texts per week during the trip to families and guardians of team members and prayer partners.



TIP: *Make sure you're helping, not hurting.*

We can have the best of intentions and still hurt people.

This typically happens when we assume we know what will help without actually asking the other person what they need.

It's super important that you and your team do not go into another community or culture assuming you have all the answers. Meet people where they are at, get to know them, respect their way of life, and find out how you can bless what they already have going on.

Jesus did this so well. Let's take the story of Zacchaeus for example. Zacchaeus was a tax collector. People called him a "sinner" and he cheated people out of their money. Let's just say he wasn't particularly well liked. Jesus didn't come at him with all the answers to his problems. He didn't offer Zacchaeus any kind of pamphlet or hand out. He simply ate dinner with him.

By getting in close proximity to Zacchaeus, Jesus changed his life. In Luke 19: 8, Zacchaeus shouts, *"Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."* That is a total life turn around in a matter of a few verses.

If you want to really make a difference on your mission trip, put yourself in close proximity to the people you encounter. Get to know them, their culture, and find out their needs. Then, take action out of love and respect.



One Week Post Trip: *Welcome Home.*

Though your trip is over, there are a thousand ways the memories and moments are still lingering over your group. Make sure everyone is processing the process. Reentry can be exciting, hard, and everything in between. Gather back up as a team and celebrate the trip together.

To Do's:

- ✓ Meet for a debrief and check in on all team members.
- ✓ Create a trip highlight report and email to all families and guardians of trip members and prayer partners.
- ✓ Debrief the trip with church or organizational leadership.
- ✓ Share the exciting trip experiences with your church with as many people as possible.



TIP: *Reentry can be hard, here's how to make conversations simple.*



“How was your trip?” is the most common question your team is going to get asked now that you're home. At first glance, it feels impossible to answer. How do you tell about all the moments you just witnessed? What words are there really to explain all that God was up to in a foreign place?

Here's a way to share with your team to make it simple. Tell them to pick three highlights from their trip to share. Here are some category examples to help them get started:

1. A favorite memory (a meal, event, or personal interaction).
2. The most amazing thing they witnessed God do.
3. A before-and-after statement on how they have been impacted by the trip.

People cannot possibly understand everything your team just encountered. Sometimes that can make us frustrated or angry. However, if we'll give space to work this out, we'll realize that we now have a story to tell. It's not our job to make everyone understand, but it is our responsibility to continue to share about the greatness of our God.



One Month Post Trip: *The mission trip is just beginning.*

There's typically a renewed sense of urgency to share the love of Jesus after you come home. You've seen the world through a brand new lens. You've seen God do great things. Your team is no longer on a trip but you all are still on mission. Keep fulfilling the great commission in your own backyard and don't forget to stay in touch to encourage each other while you do it. Many even find some ways to volunteer and serve locally. Keep changing the world!

To Do's:

- ✓ Once everyone has had time to adjust and process, host one more meeting to unpack everything about the trip.
- ✓ If your team feels connected, organize a (monthly, quarterly, yearly) meetup to stay in touch.
- ✓ Find some local options for your team to continue to serve together.



TIP: *Keep reminding your team that the church is not a building.*

If your team learned anything on their trip it's probably this: The Church is not a building. Church is a community of people saved by Jesus serving God by unraveling His love upon the whole earth.

Church is serving at a soup kitchen, putting an encouraging letter in the mail, and bringing groceries to a couple who can't get out of their home. It's mission trips and backyard Bible studies. It's speaking up for the oppressed and adopting the homeless. It's long talks with friends over meals and early morning coffee beside an open Bible.

We tend to think of Church as a building or Sunday morning service. But, we want to encourage you to leave your team with this thought...

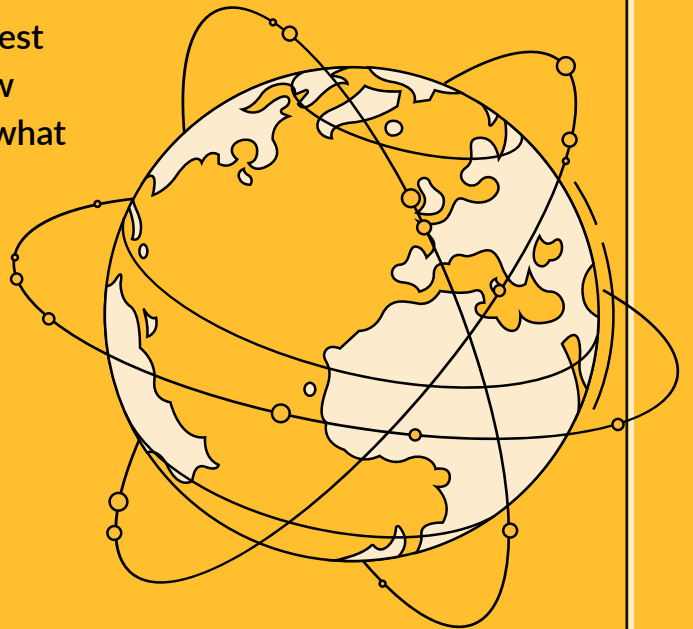
On and off the mission field, we are missionaries because we live lives that serve God and others. In and out of a Church building, we are the Church because we're still creating a life-changing community everywhere we go.



You're a leader.

We know you want to do the best job possible, care for all the members of your team, and still enjoy the trip. That's why we created this ministry guide. Now, by following this trip timeline you get to confidently set your team up for success, verify your mission's vision, minimize culture shock, get fully funded, serve successfully, and return home more connected to God and each other than ever.

We're confident that your church's greatest adventure lies ahead of you as you follow Jesus on mission. We can't wait to hear what God will do through your church!



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.

 1-844-467-3256

 solutions@acst.com

 180 Dunbarton Dr, Florence, SC 29501