

Short-Term Mission Team
Team Leader's Guide

Watch for God at Work!
*An In-Country Devotional Guide
for Engaging in God's Mission
(Part 2)*

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Introduction

God has been working on and through your team from the moment you responded to the invitation to participate in a Short-Term Mission (STM) experience. We hope your team had an opportunity to study God's word and pray together as you brushed up on cross-cultural ministry skills, learned about your host country and about yourselves.

Now you are in the host country, ready to learn, serve and be challenged in new ways. This devotional and reflection guide is designed to help you get the most out of your STM experience as you continue to study the Word and reflect on what God is teaching you during this time.

The central theme of this devotional guide is to "Watch for God at Work." Help your team keep focused on the fact that this is God's mission. Your task is to find out what God is doing in this place through your brothers and sisters in Christ and to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit as you become part of this community. *GOD'S Principles for Successful STM Trips* may be a helpful reminder.



Your team will go through many changes during the course of your experience. This 10-day guide is designed to mirror the emotional and spiritual growth of both the individuals and the team in a cross-cultural setting.

Each team is different, so you will need to adapt the information in this guide to meet the specific needs of your particular group. The suggestions below may help you in that tailoring process.

1. Involve your team members in preparing and leading the worship time.
2. Start and end the day with prayer.
3. Gather the team for Devotional & Reflection time when everyone is rested and fresh. Many teams meet in the morning just after breakfast and before the work or excursion begins. Meeting in the

evening is great for reflecting on the days' events; however, you may discover that crankiness increases and patience decreases when people are exhausted at the end of a long day.

4. It would be a blessing to both your host and your team if you could involve people from your host church in some of your devotional times.
5. Consider setting aside different kinds of reflection times:
 - individual time alone with God
 - small group or large group worship and reflection times
 - silent reflection time where you ask each member to record thoughts in his/her journal in response to a specific question such as: "How is God stretching me during this experience?" or "What changes do I see in myself? Which ones would be pleasing to God?"

Notes for trips of less/more than 10 days:

The guide includes devotional ideas and reflection questions for a 10-day trip. If your trip is shorter than 10 days, just select the themes that are best suited for your particular group. We strongly recommend that every team cover the themes in Days 2, 4, 9 and 10.

If your trip is longer than 10 days, consider the following options for those days that are not covered in this guide:

1. Encourage team members to have individual devotional time on some days or time with their prayer partner.



2. Schedule a day just for praising God with personal testimonies and singing together.
3. Ask for a volunteer to prepare a team devotional under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

4. Ask a member to prepare an “On the Spot” devotional. For example, just after dinner and about 15 minutes before your team gathers, approach one person and ask them to share some thoughts on what God has been teaching them during this trip. Alternatively, ask them to share something from the Word that would be encouraging to the team.
5. Consider using other devotional guides for inspiration (e.g. Walk As He Walked, Abide in the Vine).

Please let us know:

How can we make this devotional and reflection guide even more helpful to STM teams? Please tell us what you liked about this guide and how we can make it more useful to you. Send your comments and suggestions to:

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boundaries to make disciples of Jesus Christ.*

GOD’S Principles for Successful STM Trips

God is the Head of the Mission Program

- You are not taking God to this place, rather God is taking you! (Gen. 12:1-3; Ps. 139:1-10; Matt. 28:18-20)
- God has been at work in this place long before you arrived. (Rom. 2:14-15; Rom. 5:8)
- God has a plan for this community, this people, this person. (Jer. 29:11; 1 Tim. 2:3-5, 2 Pet. 3:9)
- Follow God’s lead, not yours. (Ps. 25:1-5, Is. 42:16)
- God will always be with you. (Matt. 28:20b; Rom. 8:38-39; Heb. 13:5)

Open Heart, Open Hands

- An open heart is free to be filled by the Holy Spirit and overflow with love. (John 14:15-17; Acts 13:2-4; Rom. 5:3-5)
- An open heart is free to be broken by the injustice and poverty of the world. (Deut. 15:7-8; Ps. 9:18; Ps. 82:3-4; Gal. 2:10)
- An open hand is ready to receive.
- An open hand is a sign of good will and humility. (Gal. 5:22-23)
- An open hand cannot clutch a clock, a schedule, a shovel or a stereotype.

Doing is Less Important than Being

- Be like Jesus, walk as Jesus walked. (1 John 2:6; Matt. 5:1-16; John 15:1-14)
- Be human beings not human doings! (1 Thess. 5:11)
- Focus on people, not just on the task. (1 John 3:18)
- Work on building relationships, not monuments. (Rom. 12:9-15)
- Take a deep breath when things don’t start or end on time; there are more important things in life than sticking to a schedule.
- Be flexible – things will rarely go as you planned. (Phil. 4:4-7)

A Servant’s Heart

- Learn from your hosts; honor them and God by serving them (John 13:12-17).
- Find out what your host prays for and then commit to praying for it, too. (James 5:16)
- Accept the leadership of your hosts. You are not the one in charge.
- Practice humility! (Luke 22:24-27; James 4:10)
- There are many ways of doing things; yours is only one and it may not be right for this time or place.
- Be adaptable – try new things, set aside biases and work on fitting into the culture.
- Be a “trusted representative” of Jesus Christ in what you do and say (Matt. 24:45-46; Eph. 3:7-8; 2 Tim. 2:24; James 1:1)

Devotional & Reflection Schedule

Day	Theme
_____	Praise God for Bringing Us Here!
_____	Watch for God at Work!
_____	Loving One Another
_____	Humble Yourselves Before the Lord
_____	Served and Serving
_____	Prayer Power
_____	God is Our Refuge and Strength
_____	...in the Power of the Spirit
_____	I Thank My God Every Time I Remember You
_____	It's All About You Lord!





Day 1 – Praise God for Bringing Us Here!

Note: Ask team members to bring their Bible to each Devotional/Reflection session.

Worship

- Sing songs of praise together (I Will Enter His Gates, We've Come This Far by Faith, Thank You Lord, or other favorites).

Devotional – Thank you Lord!

- Introduce the devotional by asking the team to recall what Moses, Miriam, Aaron and all the Israelites did when they made it safely across the Red Sea. [Exodus 15 – they sang a song of praise and thanksgiving to God, recalling all that God had done to guide and deliver them].
- This is a great model! We need to celebrate God's faithfulness in bringing us to this place.
- Ask someone to read Lamentations 3:22-23 and 1 Corinthians 1:9.
- Lead a brief time of story telling about how you experienced God's care and protection on this journey.

Prayer

- Gather in a circle and do a "popcorn prayer." Ask team members to give one-sentence praises to God for bringing you to this place. You need not go around the circle; just pray as the Spirit leads.

Reflection – Action

- Ask the team to recall the *Cross Cultural Entry Skills* (from Session 5 of the Pre-Trip Preparation and Training guide):

Observe, Ask Why, Listen

Observe – in a spirit of openness, suspend judgment

Ask Why – be a learner. For example, you might say, “I’d like to learn about your culture. Please help me understand why you _____ (describe something you have observed).”

Listen – really, really listen!

- Encourage each other to practice these skills starting NOW.



Notes on keeping healthy

Be sure to drink lots of non-caffeinated fluids throughout the day. This will help with jet lag and prevent dehydration.

Make sure that water is boiled, bottled or treated before drinking.



Prayer

- Pray for a spirit of openness as you learn about what God is doing in this place.
- Pray that God would use each member of your team to be a blessing to someone in this place.