



Trip Planning: Sample Meeting Schedule

Once a destination is selected, contact should be made with the host diocese, bishop, or agency to explore dates, costs, projects and overall logistics. Many dioceses have a designated liaison who will work with groups interested in doing short-term missions work in the diocese. Primary contact may often be made by contacting the bishop of the diocese by letter written in both the local language and English, expressing interest in bringing a group there.

Approximately 8-12 months prior to trip, it is a good idea to assemble a small leadership team of 2-3 people to do overall trip planning, although this may also be done by a single trip leader. It is generally easier to advertise and recruit for a trip if the destination and dates are pre-set and if a rough idea of the estimated cost can be calculated.

Recruitment can begin ideally at least 8 months prior to the trip. It is a good idea to set a deadline and include a non-refundable deposit in order to “secure” a place on the mission team. Once the team has met a few times, it is increasingly difficult to incorporate last-minute “stragglers” into the group.

To aid in team-building, it is useful to have between 6 and 8 team meetings prior to the trip, not including fundraising events. Teambuilding exercises are a great way to start forming relationships within the team.

Meeting 1: Introductory Meeting

Gather information from potential group members, present details of the trip as far as they are known, gather applications and deposits. Cover group norms, rules and expectations.

Meeting 2: Fundraising

Agree with the group on a plan for fundraising. All group members should participate in fundraising activities for the benefit of the entire group. One rule of thumb is that each member provides part of their own support, the church (eg. Mission Committee, Mission Fund, or Discretionary Fund) provides part, and parish-wide fundraising provides part.

Meeting 3: Practical Trip Preparation

Meeting should include passport and other documentation, immunization requirements, packing lists, legal issues such as liability waivers, insurance, flight information, etc.

Meeting 4: Health & Safety

Check progress on immunization, passports, etc. Go over health precautions as well as safety precautions. Obtain information on medical needs and emergency contacts for each group member.

Meeting 5: Cultural Education & Spiritual Preparation

Gather and discuss aspect of the target culture. If applicable, watch movies or read books as a group to help everyone prepare. Discuss spiritual preparation and support before, during and after the trip. Discuss how the group will bring the experience of the trip back to the parish, deanery or diocese. This may require more than one meeting.

Meeting 6: Last Minute Issues & Packing

Resolve any last-minute issues such as transportation to airport, packing of donations, gifts for hosts, money management while in the country, dress codes and communications protocols or phone chains within the team and with folks at home.