



# Mission Leadership 101: During the Trip

## Final Preparations:

You have discerned a call to mission, selected a location, connected with mission partners, assembled a team, and are approaching the moment when the promise of a transformative cross-cultural mission encounter will become a reality. We have assembled a set of tried-and-true tips, tricks and best practices for mission leadership during a trip. These are not rules, but rather common-sense suggestions that may be adapted to the specific needs of your group and to the particular destination.

Good preparation by the leader(s) of any trip can contribute significantly to its success. Beyond that of other group members, a team leader typically has some additional responsibilities for the oversight and management of various aspects of the trip, such as:

- Team member documentation
- Logistics (travel, lodging, food, etc.)
- Financial disbursements for the group
- Communication protocols
- Emergency planning / safety
- Scheduling / itinerary
- Convening group meetings / setting norms / group process

While it is not possible to plan for every eventuality, there are a number of steps that can be taken just prior to and during a trip that will greatly increase the probability of success and avoid certain pitfalls. A good tool for advance planning is the use of a **Trip Coordination Notebook**. This notebook enables the leader(s) to keep track of necessary details and respond appropriately in situations when accurate information needs to be accessed quickly. This can help the group leader(s) to feel more confident, knowing that important details are always available.

It is a good idea for someone who is remaining at home, such as the church office or other responsible party, to have a duplicate copy of the contents of the notebook, in the event of an emergency. You can also photograph key information and keep it on your cellphone or tablet for easy reference.

## Team Member Documentation:

There are many details that can be gathered in advance of departure that will allow the team to be prepared for most situations that could arise. Many of these forms are available at [www.gemn.org](http://www.gemn.org) in the **Resources** section. Experienced leaders generally gather the following documentation during pre-trip meetings. If a notebook is being used, each team member's information can be stapled together and labeled for quick access:

- Create a team roster with a list of general contact information (phone and email) for all those involved in the trip planning (even if he or she will not be traveling). This may also include clergy, family members, church staff, or others who participate in the planning, fundraising and communications.



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- Obtain an emergency contact form for every team member, including the address, phone number, and email for a family member or friend who will NOT be traveling with the team.
- Obtain a confidential health form for every team member, detailing any health concerns, food or other allergies, medications that will be carried and/or taken on the trip, insurance policy numbers, copy of insurance card with member service phone number, phone number of primary care physician.
- Obtain a signed liability waiver for each participant, including a parental/guardian permission form for anyone under 18. Note that some countries have specific laws governing the transportation of minors across international borders without one or both parents, requiring a notarized permission form.
- Obtain a copy of the photo page of every participant's passport. Have each team member double-check that the passport expiration date is at least six months after the return date for the trip.
- Carry a copy of the team's travel insurance policy, policy number(s) and contact numbers.

### Travel Logistics:

This notebook section consists of the team's detailed travel plans, including flights or driving map/directions, detailed schedule, hotel or lodging information, host contact information, and contact number for each team member. The objective is to plan for and avoid any logistical problems in the first place (or to have the right information available in order to quickly work through them, if they do occur). Some suggested travel logistics tips include the following:

- To facilitate logistics, have a cell phone contact number for every team member, to be used on the day of travel in the event of travel delays to the airport or departure point. Designate a "Logistics Coordinator" on the team to be the primary contact for fielding any calls on the day of travel, along with a backup person. Have the trip leaders (and participants, if possible) put all of these numbers into their phones in advance.
- If the team is large, keep a copy of the team roster available at all times for tracking team member headcount and determining whether anyone is missing. Large teams may want to employ a 'buddy system' as well.
- Designate a meeting location and time on the day of departure. Build in extra time for stragglers, for last minute delays, and for moving a group through check-in or security lines. If traveling by vehicle, build in extra time for loading luggage and for unexpected traffic. Have an agreed-upon plan for handling the possibility that someone does not show up on time.
- If the departure flight is extremely early, consider having the team stay in a hotel near the airport (preferably with an airport shuttle) on the night prior to the trip. If the airport is at a distance, you may want to transport the team together using a van or shuttle service to ensure that everyone arrives on time for their flight.
- If flying, have a printed copy of the flight information and itinerary, including flight numbers, departure and arrival times, terminal numbers, gates (if available). If there will be a tight connection, consider checking the gates and consulting a terminal map to plan the connection. Obtain confirmation receipts and itinerary numbers for each team member, if they booked separately. Know the airline customer service number to call, in the event of a problem with a flight cancellation, a missed connection, or weather-related delays.
- In some cases, you may be able to request expedited group check-in by contacting the airline in advance.
- If driving, have a written sheet with the address, phone number, and website (if applicable) for the destination. Preplan the route that will be used. Bring or rent a GPS. Plan for how gas and tolls will be paid.
- Bring copies of reservations, receipts, and Collision Damage Waiver for any car rentals.
- Bring copies of any hotel or lodging reservations and receipts.
- Bring copies of any contracts or agreements with the hosting organization (if applicable).
- Have a detailed plan for arrival: Who is the local contact at the destination and what is the procedure for connecting with them? If the team will be met, where will they be met, and by whom? Whom should be contacted in the event of a flight delay, failure to connect, or other problem? If the team is organizing its own transportation upon arrival, have the plan in place and be sure that the team is fully briefed on the transportation details at the destination, including phone numbers, address, payment procedure, maps, and other information that might be needed.

### Team Finances:

Handling team finances is frequently an area of responsibility for mission leaders. This role may vary greatly, depending on the nature of the trip, the fundraising parameters, agreements with the local hosts, pre-payments, the age of the participants, the ability to use credit cards, and other variables. In addition, depending upon the destination and its currency, there may or may not be the need to carry cash or to obtain it at the start of the trip. These general guidelines can be tailored to the particular needs of your team:

- Go over the team itinerary carefully, in advance, to estimate the probable budget for disbursements prior to and during the trip. Create a budget for the entire trip and share it with the team leadership. If you have financial responsibility, utilize this budget and careful financial tracking as tools for transparency and accountability. This serves to protect all parties in the event of questions.
- If the host at the destination is providing services, such as food, local transportation, lodging, etc., determine with them the best way to pay for this. If it can be paid up front by credit card or by bank transfer, this should ideally be done prior to the trip. Some hosts prefer being paid directly in local currency in order to avoid bank charges. Determine whether this is the case and always obtain a receipt when paying cash.
- In general, participants can be expected to bring their own spending money for small items such as snacks, souvenirs, quick meals, and other minor purchases.
- Some common team-based needs for cash may include:
  - Daily water (and possibly snacks) for the team
  - Gas and tolls, if driving
  - Group tips
  - Group meals, if they cannot be paid by credit card
  - Group entrance fees, if they cannot be paid by credit card
  - Some airport entry or exit taxes, depending on the destination
  - Unexpected local purchases (ex. tools, etc.)
  - Emergencies
- A common practice is to get a cash advance from the trip funds in the appropriate currency. Foreign currencies can generally be ordered from a bank prior to departure at a good exchange rate. Cash and receipts can be stored in an envelope, with a ledger sheet stapled on the front to record every disbursement or deposit (date, purpose, amount). The sheet can be used to verify and reconcile the trip finances.
- If large amounts of cash will need to be carried, it is a good idea to split this between two or three responsible group members.
- Where airport entry or exit taxes are required in local currency, some trip leaders keep an envelope for each team member and hand this to him or her at the appropriate time. This will avoid a scramble for cash if team members have forgotten to set it aside. Increasingly, these taxes are included in your airfare, but not always.
- Credit/debit cards: It is a good idea to have at least two credit cards and two debit cards that can be used as necessary, in case one is lost, stolen or cancelled. Be sure to inform the bank(s) of your travel plans. Debit cards can be used to obtain local cash at most major banks. It is advisable to use a bank ATM for local currency rather than airport or other exchange offices, which have notoriously poor exchange rates. Credit cards should not be used for cash advances, since the rates, fees and interest charges can be extremely high. Know the international number and procedure for calling the banks' customer service in the event of a problem.
- Donations: Teams should be extremely cautious about cash (or other) donations. Inappropriate donations can easily set up unhealthy expectations and competition in a local context, fuel conflict, and create problems for local churches, dioceses, non-profits or volunteers who come after you. It is virtually never OK to give cash donations or "tips" at local sites, to individual priests, to church employees or to non-profit workers, even when it is extremely tempting to do so. Every attempt should be made to donate funds through the sponsoring organization or diocese for transparency and for the protection of all involved with the transaction. A receipt should always be obtained for cash transactions.

### Communication:

A mission or other cross-cultural trip can be an ideal opportunity to unplug from work or home responsibilities and become fully immersed in a different culture, with a focus on relationship-building and being present to the experience of seeking Christ in others. Frequent communication with friends and family back home by text, email or phone can pull us away from the transformative experience that brought us on the trip in the first place. Mission leaders should particularly discourage the use of technology during cross-cultural encounters or when a group activity is under way.

On the other hand, mission leaders need to have a practical communication strategy and the necessary technology to be able handle coordination, itinerary changes and emergency situations, if they arise. If the communications will be complex, you may wish to specifically designate a “Communications Officer” for the team. Since communication technology changes rapidly, it is always best to thoroughly research the options for your destination prior to the trip and have the plan ready on departure day. Fortunately, the options are more numerous than ever before, and many more countries have reasonably good cell and internet coverage available. In addition, it is now possible to bring a smaller, more flexible set of technology that will meet virtually all of the needs that could arise, such as a cell phone and a tablet, rather than a separate laptop, phone, camera, e-reader, music and/or entertainment devices.

- **Cell phone communication:**

- The most likely situations in which you would need a working cell phone independent of WiFi are:
  - Coordinating team members getting to the departure point
  - In country arrival, pickup
  - In country coordination with hosts, transportation, schedule changes, meal or lodging reservations
  - Emergencies
- It is important that the team have at least one cell phone with service in the target country in case of emergencies.
- **International cell phone service:** It is not possible to cover all options on this topic, but doing some research should point you in the right direction:
  - WiFi can often be used to call US numbers, if it is available. However, you should not assume that you will have international cell service on your cell phone in places where you do not have a good wireless signal or for non-US numbers, unless you utilize a service such as Skype, Google Voice or Facebook Messenger. WhatsApp and other texting apps can usually be used for texting where WiFi is available.
  - If you use a major service provider such as Verizon or AT&T, see whether international service is available for a fee, generally about \$10 a day. This may be a reasonable option for shorter trips. Be sure to determine what will happen if you exceed your data or other limits accidentally so as not to risk large, unintended roaming charges. T-Mobile has good international service plans as well.
  - Another option is to purchase an “unlocked GSM international version” cell phone (or have your provider unlock your phone, if possible) and to obtain a local SIM card upon arrival in the country. Prior to purchasing a phone, double check the frequency bands and wireless standards (e.g. GSM, CDMA, UMTS, LTE or a combination of cellular technologies) used in that country. Note that CDMA standard is generally limited only to US carriers, while GSM is the international standard. To help further ensure that the phone will work with no problem, a good source of frequency information can be found here: [www.worldtimezone.com/gsm.html](http://www.worldtimezone.com/gsm.html). Check that your cell phone utilizes the appropriate frequencies.
  - It may be possible to purchase an inexpensive phone in the target country with a pay-as-you-go card (although this can be time-consuming at the start of a trip). This could be a great option if you or team members will be making repeated trips.
  - There are a number of sites that offer rental cell phones with international service. These may or may not be more economical than purchasing a phone.
  - If you will be spending a lot of time in a remote area outside of reliable cell phone coverage, consider having the team rent or purchase a satellite phone with international coverage.

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- **Arrival and Host Communication:**

- Have a list in advance of all important in-country contact numbers to connect with your hosting organization.
- Be sure to know the exact dialing instructions, including country code, that will be necessary to dial each number. If possible, put them into your phone contacts with the correct dialing sequence.
- In the event that you do not connect, have one or two backup numbers for people who can make the connection or who can advise you.

- **Family Communication:**

- Families are naturally concerned to know whether things are going OK, particularly if there are youth on the trip. However, it is occasionally impossible to communicate back home in a timely manner or at all. Therefore, it is often a good practice to set the expectation that the team may NOT be able to communicate at all during the trip and that this is not a cause for worry, unless the leaders are very certain that communication absolutely WILL be possible for status updates.
- Families can also be assured that in any emergency situation, every attempt will be made to contact them.
- An in-country emergency contact number can be provided to the home-based church office or other responsible person, with the provision that this be used only in a true emergency and not merely to receive status updates. Families can be advised to contact the home office first, if there is a problem.
- A good practice prior to departure is to set up a phone or email chain to team family members with a single point of contact. Status updates, when possible, can be phoned or emailed to one individual, family or church office back home, who can then be responsible for passing the information to the rest of the chain.
- If at all possible on the first day especially, it is reassuring to relay the information by email or by phone contact that the team has arrived safely, since this is typically the most important concern for families, but again it should be emphasized that “no news is good news” when communication is difficult.

### Emergency Planning and Safety:

The vast majority of trips go off without a hitch and have no significant safety issues or emergencies. It is always advisable, however, to do some advance planning in order to be as prepared as possible in the unlikely event of a problem. Prior to the trip, you may want to spend a bit of time thinking through a team **Emergency Plan** for handling various situations, and put together the following reference list:

- Emergency number(s) for local police, fire, ambulance
- Number and directions to the local embassy
- Emergency number(s) for the local hosting organization, diocesan office and/or nonprofit office
- Local international operator number to make collect calls to the US
- International emergency numbers for your credit cards and banks
- Emergency number and policy number for travel insurance and health insurance providers

This information can be put on a laminated card and/or entered into your phone or mobile device for easy reference and so that even under stress, you could quickly access it. In addition, as with any group travel, frequently emphasizing common-sense safety precautions will reduce the likelihood of emergencies arising in the first place.

- **Illness and Medical Emergencies:**

- When possible, it is very helpful to have one team member, preferably with some first aid experience, to serve as the “Medical Officer” for the team. This person can carry a first aid kit for the team, including common over-the-counter medications to handle stomach ailments, cuts and scrapes, minor burns, blisters, dehydration, motion sickness, colds and minor illnesses, etc. It is also a good idea for each participant to carry an antibiotic (prescribed by their own physician) such as Cipro, in case of a bacterial stomach illness.
- Focus on prevention. Having bottled water available at all times should be a priority for the team, including for brushing teeth. Protective clothing for sun (or cold), rehydration drinks or powder, hand sanitizer, bug-spray and sunscreen can prevent a lot of problems. Avoid uncooked foods and fruit that can’t be peeled.
- Although team members may be reluctant or feel embarrassed to discuss medical issues, particularly gastrointestinal ones, they should be strongly advised to go immediately to the “Medical Officer” at the first

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sign of trouble and to begin treatment. This can shorten an illness by days, as well as alert the team to any general patterns of illness that may be arising.

- Generally, your in-country hosts are the best source of information when a true medical emergency arises. Consult with them for the best way to handle a particular situation, including bringing a doctor to examine a team member, obtaining medication, or transportation to a clinic or hospital.
- If it becomes necessary for a team member to go to a clinic or hospital, designate a responsible adult to accompany him or her and to maintain communication. This may not be the primary team leader, especially in a situation where the remaining team members would be left without leadership. If language is an issue, it is a good idea to find someone with language skills or to locate an interpreter. The responsible person should bring a cell phone in order to relay information.
- Consult the sick or injured team member's **Medical Information Sheet** to determine whether there is any information that might be relevant to the cause or treatment of the medical situation, such as what medications they are currently taking. A copy of this sheet should go with him or her during treatment.
- If appropriate, begin working on contacting the team member's family to update them on the situation.
- Be willing to be flexible about plans for the team when an illness or injury occurs, but if a safe place can be found for the affected person to recuperate, it should rarely be necessary to make major changes for the entire team. Part of the leadership challenge in a medical situation is to reassure the remaining team members and to help them to move forward in a positive way.
- **Security and Personal Safety:**
  - Security and personal safety should be emphasized with team members throughout the trip, especially if there are youth on the team. Typical rules are that team members do not go out at night, that team members always travel in groups of three or more, and that team members must inform others of their whereabouts.
  - Be aware that two of the more common causes of missionary injury and/or death are vehicle accidents and swimming in unguarded rivers or ocean waters.
  - Always be aware of your surroundings. Do not physically resist any robbery attempt. Leave valuables at home, and do not display signs of wealth, such as wearing expensive watches or jewelry. Follow the advice of your local hosts regarding local safety and security concerns. Trust your instincts as well.
  - If any team member is the victim of a theft or other crime, contact the local embassy for assistance.
  - Prior to the trip, check for country-specific travel advisories from the US State Department: [travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel.html](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel.html). This can help you to be aware of any specific hazards or common scams. Realize that while the State Department is required to advise of all risks, many of the same risks would be found in most US cities or common international destinations. Unless the risk is very high, it need not affect your travel plans. It is always a good idea to enroll your trip with the State Department's '[Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#)' to receive advisories and safety/security updates.
- **Natural Disasters or Political Upheaval:**
  - In the event of any natural disaster, crime, theft, passport loss, or major political change, get in contact with the local embassy and be sure to enroll in the '[Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#)'.
  - In natural disasters or times of significant political crisis, follow instructions from local authorities about security and evacuation. Monitor local radio, television, and other sources for updates. Keep in touch with your local partners, hotel staff, airline, and local officials for evacuation instructions. Evacuate if advised to do so.
  - Monitor the State Department advisory page for the country to get up-to-the-minute alerts, such as demonstration and security alerts, as well as their Facebook (travelgov) and Twitter (@TravelGov) accounts.
  - Stay away from political protests, even peaceful ones.
  - After any disaster, upheaval or major incident that has made the news, it is a good idea to have all group members attempt to contact their family and friends by text, phone, or email, and/or post on social media. This helps to get the word out that the group is OK.

### Scheduling and Itinerary:

Most teams will have at least the outline of a schedule for how the team will be spending its time while in-country. The team leader(s) typically have the responsibility to guide and often to adapt the projected schedule to accommodate the “facts on the ground” while traveling. More than any other leadership skill, this requires flexibility and perspective to balance the various needs of the team. Some itinerary tips and guidelines are:

- Before even leaving home, reiterate again and again that the primary objective of engaging in global mission is: ...**Relationship. Relationship. Relationship**... This can be a difficult message to get across to some team members, especially those who are very goal-driven regarding a particular project or service effort being undertaken. You can make it clear in advance, however, that opportunities for relationship-building may take precedence over other goals.
- Encourage the local hosts to have some input into the schedule. This will frequently result in a much more powerful experience than if the team makes all of these decisions.
- Be intentional about seeking out opportunities each day to engage with local people, accept invitations for meals, activities, sports or parties, attend churches, tour communities, listen to stories, ask questions, use local guides. Obtain translation, when necessary, for more in-depth understanding, and seek out various perspectives on issues that are important to the community.
- Be flexible, and encourage the team’s flexibility, especially when anticipated schedules cannot be met or inevitable transportation and communication failures occur. These are opportunities for creativity, not necessarily obstacles, and they can sometimes produce the most interesting experiences of the trip.
- Help your team to understand that local people frequently prefer to talk about their dreams for the future and to show off local ministries that they are proud of, rather than focus on social or economic problems. This may, in fact, be more important to them than any work or service that the team is providing. Time spent on these discussions can give the team invaluable insights into issues that are important to the local community and the ministries that they are already doing on behalf of **others** in their own community.
- One common itinerary choice is to plan a day or so the end of the trip for tourism or (especially in the case of a youth team) a fun, physical activity such as a beach day. This serves the purpose of reminding the team of the beauty of the local culture and country, as well as ending on an upbeat note.

### Group Meetings:

Well-facilitated group meetings during the trip can turn a good mission encounter into a powerfully transformational one. The true goal of these types of meetings is to assist team members in processing what may be a very intense experience and identifying where and how God is at work in that place and in their own lives. Group meetings while on the trip provide an opportunity to build relationships within the team and to work through challenges. It is worth scheduling the time to bring the group together once a day, if possible, or at minimum every few days, to reflect upon the events and experiences of the trip. This is especially true when the team has had a rough or intense day.

It frequently occurs that someone on the team who appears to be doing well is actually struggling but has not had an opportunity to share that with other team members. Someone may have seen or experienced something on the trip that is deeply troubling (or inspiring) but may not have found a time to articulate it and benefit from a wider perspective and support from the group. Frequently, team members can gain new, transformative insights through hearing the stories of other team members’ experiences. Facilitated group meetings can build trust within the team and allow team members to support one another as a community, sharing both their joys and their sorrows.

It should be noted that, while daily worship and bible studies can also be very valuable aspects of the team groupwork, they do not serve the same purpose as group meetings, particularly when a liturgy or educational framework is used. In order for group meetings to provide a meaningful opportunity for an excited, tired or even overwhelmed team to process and discern its experiences, they must be far less structured, allowing each person to speak his or her mind in a safe, unrushed environment.

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One excellent group practice is to have an extremely brief **Morning Check-in** every day, generally around the breakfast table. This allows the leader(s) to gauge the overall status of the group each day and helps him or her to know quickly whether problems are developing that should be monitored. The check-in, once explained to the group, should take no more than 1-3 minutes and is virtually non-verbal, as follows:

- **Morning Check-in:**
  - Leader asks: **“How are each of you feeling physically?”**
  - Each member of the group responds with a thumbs-up, thumbs-down or anything in between.
  - Leader then asks: **“How are each of you feeling emotionally?”**
  - Again, each member of the group responds with a thumbs-up, thumbs-down or in between.
  - To protect privacy, no discussion or questioning should take place unless initiated by the team member, and if so, it should be extremely brief and only after all have checked in.
  - If anyone gives a big thumbs-down physically, do offer an opportunity for a rest day to take care of him or herself, if there is a safe and reasonably comfortable place to spend the day.
  - Group members who are struggling emotionally are generally best staying with the group rather than being allowed to isolate themselves.
  - If a significant portion of the team is showing physical thumbs-downs, investigate the reasons to determine whether there is a pattern of illness or fatigue that should be addressed with the entire team.

**Facilitated Group Meetings** are ideally planned after the main activities of the day are done. Most groups do this around dinner time or after dinner. If possible, seek out a room or space where team members can see and hear one another, with a minimum of distractions or discomforts, and out of earshot of non-group members. Local hosts should generally not sit in, as the group should feel free to have a frank discussion. It is good to allow as much uninterrupted time as possible, ideally with no scheduled activity afterwards. Very large groups may need to divide up into smaller groups of no more than 10-15. Some effective best practices are as follows:

- **Facilitated Group Meetings:**
  - Meetings can begin and end with prayer, scripture, lighting a candle, or singing, but this should be quite brief and spontaneous. The objective for this type of meeting is primarily to help people share and process their experiences from the past day or days.
  - The facilitator need not be a professional or clergy member and merely directs the discussion as a group peer. The facilitator and/or clergy should be intentional about not assuming any role as counsellor, but rather join in by talking about his or her own experiences, mindfully deferring to the wisdom of the group.
  - Generally, three discussion questions are enough to stimulate the conversation. Judge the energy level of the group and keep the questions very simple, ending the session when energy seems to ebb. Avoid theoretical, theological, or deeply reflective questions, unless every member of the group is eager to be challenged in that way.
  - An excellent question to begin with is: **“What was the best thing about today?”** or **“What went well for you today?”** This serves as a great ice breaker, allowing group members to sift back through their day and draw out an interesting, amusing or beautiful moment to share. It also serves as a reminder that there is always some blessing for which to be thankful, no matter how challenging the day.
  - Go in some predictable order around the group, allowing everyone an opportunity to think about the question and to speak without interruption. Every person should have the chance to share a single thought or story (but not review their entire day). Request that other group members listen actively without commentary, questions or analysis. Be sensitive to the fact that introverts may take some time to formulate their answer. Also be sensitive to the fact that some extroverts can have a lot to say and may need to be gently brought to a conclusion so that the next person can speak.

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- Once everyone has had an opportunity to answer, then the facilitator can ask a second question: **“What was the hardest thing about today?”** or **“What was challenging for you today?”**
- Again, each member of the group should have an opportunity to respond without any interruption, questions or other commentary. This question can potentially raise considerable emotions, since this may actually be the moment when a group member first understands that he or she is struggling with something. Even funny stories may carry some residual pain or fear generated by an experience. Do not allow other team members to “trouble-shoot” or comment on anyone else’s situation – this is all about just listening to and processing the experience, and not about “fixing” it. Tears, laughter, fear, guilt, helplessness, anger and frustration are all OK – we feel what we feel. Gestures of comfort, empathy and solidarity by other members can be very helpful, since these are a powerful function of the group process. Allow ample time for this question, and respect those who do not feel that they are able to share their thoughts or experience with the group.
- A good third and closing question is: **“Where did you find God at work today?”** or **“Where did you see the face of Christ today?”**
- Again, go around the group, allowing each person to think about the question and have an opportunity to answer. Some may not be able to think of an answer until others have offered theirs, and some may even need to think about this for a few days. It is OK to wrap up with this question and allow people to ponder it later on, especially if it has been a draining day.
- For exceptionally energetic, theologically-minded groups some additional discussion topics (or journaling prompts) during the trip might include African Bible Study and/or other questions:
  - **How is God calling me to respond to this experience?**
  - **From what I've heard and shared, what do I believe God wants me to do or be?**
  - **Is God inviting me to change in any way?**
  - **What is God calling me to do in my church? In my community? In the world?**
  - **How will I bring this experience back to my community at home?**
  - **How will I maintain the relationships that I have been making here?**
  - **How can I connect my own community at home with the community in this place?**
  - **Is God calling me to change my attitude or perspective on something, and if so, how?**
- The session can be ended with the Lord’s Prayer, group prayer, a familiar song, a Compline service, or even silence. Choose the way that best brings closure and fits with the dynamics and energy level of the group.

### Global Mission Leadership:

We hope that you have found a few hints and tips here that will assist you in the complex task of leading teams into global mission encounters. If you have additional tips of your own, be sure to let us know, so that we can share them. As you no doubt understand, a call to global mission leadership, despite its enormous rewards, can occasionally have its challenges, frustrations, and downright difficult days. No matter how things go, it is always good to keep in mind that when we go out into the world, we are truly participating in God’s mission. We serve God’s ultimate purpose of working toward reconciliation with God and our neighbor, sometimes in ways that we do not yet perceive. Good planning, logistics and group leadership can help to ensure the success of a trip, but the rest is up to God!

The Global Episcopal Mission Network (GEMN) thanks you for your global mission leadership, and we hope that every encounter in mission that you undertake will run smoothly and be powerfully transformative. As a global mission leader, you have a unique opportunity to enable others to venture out of their comfort zone, to cross cultural and national boundaries, and to encounter God in another part of the world. Leading others into mission experiences helps us all to remember that *“...it takes the whole world to know the whole Gospel...”* Every part of the world has a piece of the revelation of Christ, but it is only together that we fully understand and live that out. Thank you for your part in advancing the kingdom of God.