

SHORT-TERM MISSION TRIP TEAM COVENANT

The one place you can't wing-it is building a successful short-term mission team. The operative word is **team**. While people on the team will undoubtedly come from different ethnic, social, and vocational backgrounds, they must function as a single unit with a pre-determined purpose. Each person on the team will be assigned different tasks and bring unique skills to the ministry, team unity is non-negotiable. Each person must be intentional about their attitude and behavior toward others and this needs to be addressed prior to going to the mission field. We've found what works best is for short-term team members, trip leaders, and receiving missionary hosts commit to each other in a Team Covenant prior to departure to the field.

Everything listed in the following Team Covenant is filtered through the two scriptures below which focus on putting others ahead of yourself. Putting others first doesn't come naturally. Some do it better than others, but mission trips stretch people to their spiritual limits.

Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and compassionate? Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose. Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. —Philippians 2:1-5

So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples. —John 13:34-35

PURPOSE STATEMENT:

The purpose is to allow God to work through the team to glorify Himself, and demonstrate His love to others.

FLEXIBILITY:

As a team member, I agree to be flexible in my attitude, actions and circumstances as I participate in Christ's purposes being carried out through the team.

ACCOUNTABILITY:

In all my actions on this mission trip, I am individually accountable to God first of all. I agree to be accountable to the team leaders and other members of the team. I also agree to encourage and acknowledge others as faithful servants of God. Hebrews 10:24 states, "*But encourage one another day after day...*"

RESPONSIBILITY:

I pledge to carry out tasks in a responsible and timely manner. I will handle all ministry equipment and assignments as tools and gifts in which God has entrusted to me.

TIME/PUNCTUALITY:

I agree to exhibit respect to team members and others by arriving on time. If a situation arises which causes me to be late, I agree to inform leaders and/or team members right away.

CULTURE:

As a team, we realize that we are entering other cultures as guests. I will, to the best of my ability, refrain from passing judgment on customs foreign to me because they are different. As a team, we will strive to show respect to nationals in our host country by assuming the posture of students and learning their customs and culture, and, when/if necessary, live as they do. The goal is to gain credibility as people with genuine love for them as we labor to present the news of Christ to them.

ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO:

In order to reflect the best possible image of Christ, I will abstain from drinking alcoholic beverages and using narcotics. I will also abstain from using tobacco products.

TRAVEL:

Before planning any trips outside of our pre-scheduled group itinerary, I will discuss it with the team leader. I will not travel anywhere without another team member. I agree to stay together with the group wherever we go, unless given permission to be apart from the group.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION:

I agree that if/when conflict arises, I will commit to pray, take a personal inventory, and examine myself for selfish motives and unrealistic expectations of another. I will take responsibility to approach the other person if appropriate. I will do this in love and go the extra mile to restore unity. I will not discuss the matter with other members of the team or cause others to choose sides. I will be quick to pray with and for others and quick to forgive and give grace.

TEAM UNITY:

Each team member is vital and has something unique to contribute. I commit to work in community providing an environment where others are encouraged and given opportunity to discover, develop, and utilize their spiritual gifts. Romans 12:4-6 states, *"For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. And since we have gifts that differ, according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly."*

GOSSIP:

I agree to only speak words that build up and encourage. I will refrain from remarks that hurt, tear down, or undermine others. *"With the tongue we will praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be. Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring?"* —James 3:9-11.

EMERGENCY OR CONTINGENCY PLAN:

If an emergency or crisis develops, the team will follow these principles:

1. Whatever action is taken, the TEAM STAYS TOGETHER. There is no room for individual action. If a team member is away from the group at the time of the event, he or she will immediately return to the group and contact the group leader.
2. Once the team leader is contacted, he will assess the situation and make further contingency plans. There will be a pre-assigned point of contact who will serve as a communication link to families back home.
3. A decision to leave an area will be made in conjunction with the team leader and/or national leaders in country. The team leader or team members will not seek to make a decision without consultation with local national leaders. Local hosts are more familiar with situations in their country and know the best way to leave an area.

RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD:

Luke 10:27 states *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and love your neighbor as yourself."* I agree to nurture dependence and a deeper relationship with God on the trip and set personal devotional time as a priority. I will be humble in communication and circumstances.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS:

I will place other team members needs ahead of my own. Ephesians 5:21 says, *"...and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ."* This includes listening to each other's opinions, ideas and needs, and respecting time, property, and sleep.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH NATIONALS:

Among the community, educational leaders and interpreters, I will respect any cultural differences I encounter. I will support their endeavors by coming alongside them with a servant heart and teachable spirit. I Peter 4:8-10 states, *"Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaint. As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."*

RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE OPPOSITE SEX:

I will maintain non-romantic relationships with team members as brothers or sisters in Christ. I will not engage in dating relationships with team members or nationals. I will also respect host-country cultural values of relationships with the opposite sex.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH TEAM LEADERS:

I will respect leaders by understanding their responsibility, accepting their decisions, and praying before I approach them with disagreements. While submitting to and obeying their authority, I will treat them as friends and give them privacy at the proper times.

As a short-term missionary, I am an ambassador of the Lord Jesus Christ. As I minister, I will also keep in mind that I represent the United States as well as my local church. This is a tremendous responsibility; consequently I confess my dependence on the Holy Spirit that, to the best of my ability, I will be above reproach in my actions and attitudes as stated in this Team Covenant.

AGREEMENT TO TEAM COVENANT

I, _____, as a team member of this short term mission trip, have read this Team Covenant and promise before God and this team to abide by all of the policies and statements contained therein by the grace of God.

If at any time in my service on this short-term mission, my behavior constitutes a problem, team leaders and/or missionary hosts reserve the right and authority to return me home. Any additional costs incurred as a result of this action will be at my expense.

Signature: _____

Date: _____