

LEAD MISSIONS

PRE-TRIP & POST TRIP PACKET

Dear Leader,

We are so excited that you will be bringing your group to LEADMISSIONS. The purpose of LEADMISSIONS trips is to provide students with an opportunity to be about God's mission in the world and to grow as leaders in the process. Our desire is to see God use these times to stretch students, to inspire them to dream big kingdom dreams, and to challenge them to be influencers whom God will use to make those dreams reality.

In keeping with those goals, our commitment is to help you mentor and shepherd your team before, during, and after the trip. Enclosed you will find training materials that you can use before and after your trip. There are three sections:

Section 1: Team Dynamics – three independent team-building activities that will help your team get to know one another, talk about expectations, discover ways to encourage each other, and build unity.

Section 2: Cross-cultural Training – three independent teachings that will help your team learn about why we do missions, how a leader must be a learner in a new culture, and what it means to serve someone from a different culture.

Section 3: Post-trip – two connected sessions to help your team process what you experienced and learned, and to discern what could be next.

The sessions can be used in any order you'd like and are designed to be modified/adapted to your ministry context. Feel free to make any additions or subtractions you feel necessary. As well, you'll find that the *phrases in italics* are direct places where you can direct, teach, and guide your students.

We pray that as you mentor students, you will take seriously the task of preparing them for what they're about to experience and to help them process what they have learned. As we approach these mission trips with intentionality and focus, we believe that we will change youth ministry culture even in the way we take students on trips like these.

See you this summer!

TEAM DYNAMICS SESSIONS

Session 1: PERSONALITIES AND EXPECTATIONS

Main Point:

Each member of the team brings a different personality and background to the group. We also each have different expectations of the trip –what we want to have happen while we’re there and what we want to come away with in the end. Exploring these things beforehand can help us as a whole become more united and gain a clearer understanding of what we should be striving to achieve.

Total Time: 20-30 minutes

TEAM BUILDER: On the Line

Materials Needed: Tape or rope, list of questions

Directions: Use the tape or rope to create a line down the middle of the room. Tell the group that this line is a continuum with one end being one extreme and the other end the other extreme. Then ask a series of questions and get the group to answer by jumping onto the line at the place where their answer would be. Choose members to explain why they answered the way they did.

List of Possible Questions:

- Are you more like your mom or dad? (Example: one side of line dad, one mom)
- For one day, would you rather lose your ability to talk or your ability to see?
- Would you rather stay in or go out on a Friday night?
- Do you like the Humanities or Math/Science more?
- Are you an introvert or an extravert?
- How excited are you about the trip?

Think of other questions like this to gain a better understanding of the group dynamics, backgrounds, feelings about the trip, etc. Once comfortable, you can even ask team members to ask questions of their own.

TAKEAWAY:

Remember that in order to work as a team, you need to get to know your teammates. This is just the beginning of our time together, but if we can learn who we are as individuals in relation to the group and keep our goals and expectations in mind, then we will be able to accomplish what God has for us on the trip.

Encourage the students to keep thinking/praying about their individual goals and the group’s goals for the trip. What is it that we should work to accomplish? And remember God can use these goals, but He can also change them. We should expect the unexpected!

Session 2: UNITY AND ROLES

Main Point:

Now that everyone knows each other a bit better, it is important to talk about how personalities and different God-given gifts come into play. Christ's body is supposed to be unified, with each member of the team doing the tasks that God has called and equipped them to do, so that the whole team functions the way it should. But when conflict arises (which it will), dealing with it in a godly manner will make all the difference for the success of the team.

Total Time: 20-30 minutes

TEAM BUILDER: Problem Solving Puzzle

Materials Needed: 2 or 3 of the same jigsaw puzzles or brainteaser type puzzles, blindfolds, pens and paper (maybe)

Directions: Break the group into two or three teams and then assign a role to each of the members –

1. One person should be blindfolded,
2. One should be silent the whole game,
3. Another banned from using their hands.

Tell the teams that it's a race, but that everyone has to participate in helping with the puzzle in some way. Give each team the puzzle and let them work to solve it as a unified team. After the teams are finished talk about how they think it went.

Encourage them to discuss questions like:

- How did you work to get the puzzle solved?
- Did one main leader become obvious in the group?
- What was the hardest thing about having one of the weaknesses?
- What was your role on the team?
- Did everyone contribute?
- How could you do better the next time?
- What does this have to do with the trip?

TAKEAWAY:

Read 1 Corinthians 12. What does this passage have to say about unity and the body of Christ? What about individual roles? How would a unified team handle possible conflict?

Remind students that people will have different roles on the trip – some will do more upfront things, some will have behind the scenes roles – and sometimes you'll be asked to do something that doesn't seem very important or that you don't like. Do everything with the goal of unity in mind. Seemingly insignificant tasks are still important in order for the body to function the way it should, for the trip to go well, and for God to be glorified.

Encourage students to dig deeper into the passage on their own and to pray that the group can be unified throughout the trip and deal with conflict. You could also talk more about the specific roles needed on your trip and who has a passion for doing what.

Session 3: ENCOURAGEMENT

Main Point:

One way to prevent conflict and create unity is by cultivating a positive and encouraging atmosphere. Servant leaders are constantly looking for ways to see the praiseworthy and beautiful qualities of the people they serve. Look for ways to build each other up and motivate each other even before the trip. Encouragement strengthens the team and is one way that God can clearly be glorified throughout the mission trip.

Total Time: 20-30 minutes

TEAM BUILDER: Encouragement Challenge

Materials Needed: paper, art supplies, team survey (included on next page)

Directions: Get the students to take a minute and think about what really encourages them and how the teammates can help them while on the trip. Have everyone fill out the team survey and turn them in. Make copies for the team of everyone's survey answers. Use these to encourage each other throughout and even before the trip. Then have everyone make cards and write notes to encourage someone else on the team. Save the cards to give to each other at an unexpected moment.

TAKEAWAY:

Read Hebrews 10:24-25. We want to be people and teammates who "spur one another on toward love and good deeds." What would it look like if people actually lived their lives with this in mind? What will it look like on the trip specifically?

You each have unique abilities and personalities that make a difference on the team. Your smiles, words, and actions can effect others in major ways. While we are on the trip to serve others outside of our team, we should also be very intentional about serving each other within the team.

Be praying and thinking about opportunities that you have to encourage the group. Use the surveys we took today as inspiration.

ENCOURAGEMENT SURVEY

Name: _____

What do you expect will be hard for you about the trip?

What can your teammates do to make it easier?

What kinds of compliments do you appreciate the most?

What types of jobs relating to the trip do you like to do? What types of jobs don't you like?

What is the best surprise gift you've ever received?

List your favorite kinds of candy/snacks:

Favorite colors:

Favorite music:

Favorite games:

Favorite thing to do when traveling:

What else should the team know to help encourage you?

CROSS-CULTURAL SESSIONS

Session 1: WHY MISSIONS?

Main Point:

It's easy to get excited about LEADMISSIONS trips just because of the people you're going with and the places you're going to. If you haven't already, you will hear a lot of talk about being missional. But have you ever paused to consider WHY MISSIONS? Why does the church do missions? Why does God command it? Missions is about more than going out and helping people less fortunate than us. Missions is motivated by God's plan to extend his glory to all the earth, and to use human vessels to do it.

Method:

- We will use a Triangle to help students remember the point of missions.
- The leader will give a survey of the Scriptures at various points - students will participate inductively by searching the Scriptures to see how the triangle is filled in by various human vessels.

Total Time: 20-30 minutes (depending on how much group activity time you choose)

OPENING:



Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt with humanitarian workers in Namibia, Africa.

It seems that lately a lot of celebrities are interested in helping the poor and vulnerable. From Madonna to Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt to Bono, people with all kinds of influence are starting to get on board with caring for their fellow man.

Have you ever stopped to think for a moment – how is what we're about to do on our mission trip similar, but also different from what these folks are doing (especially if the 'do-gooders' are not Christian)? In short, what makes a Christian mission trip, *Christian*?

Invite students to respond:

1. *What are the differences between a Christian mission trip and a humanitarian aid trip?*
2. *What are the similarities?*

A common difference will be that our intention is to just share the Gospel and tell people how to get saved whereas these non-Christians don't believe that. But there's got to be more to it than that or else why not just go and preach the Gospel? Why do we serve, work, and care for needs?

On the surface, we may be involved in similar projects, similar kinds of work, and even have similar concerns. But underneath the work we do, our motivations are very different because we are motivated by what God has already begun to do in the world.



Student mission trip to Louisiana

The point of missions is to carry out God's purposes for the world that He began all the way back in Genesis.

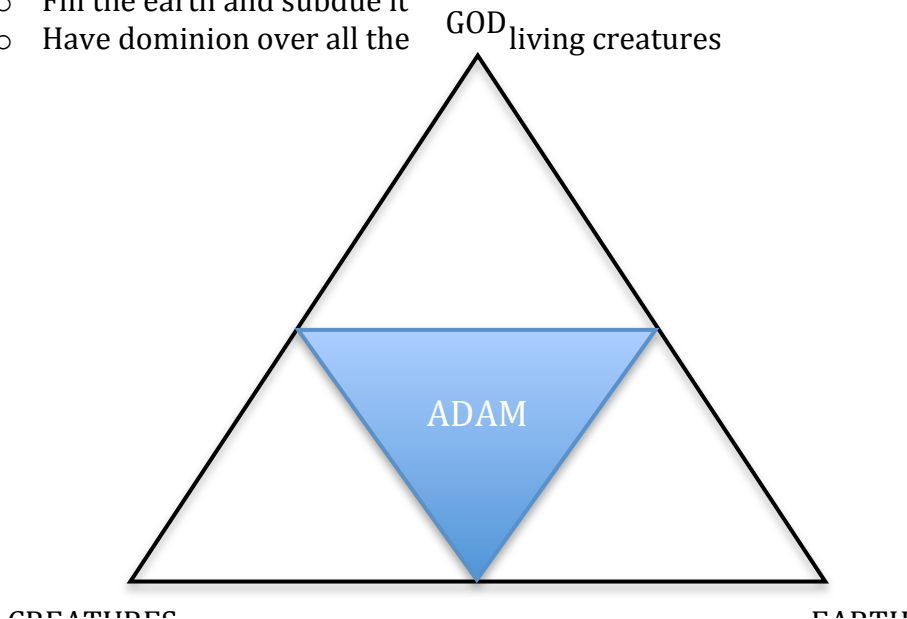
LESSON:

In order to introduce you to this idea, I want to have you remember a simple diagram.

Read Gen 1:26-28.

God creates Adam and Eve, and gives them a job.

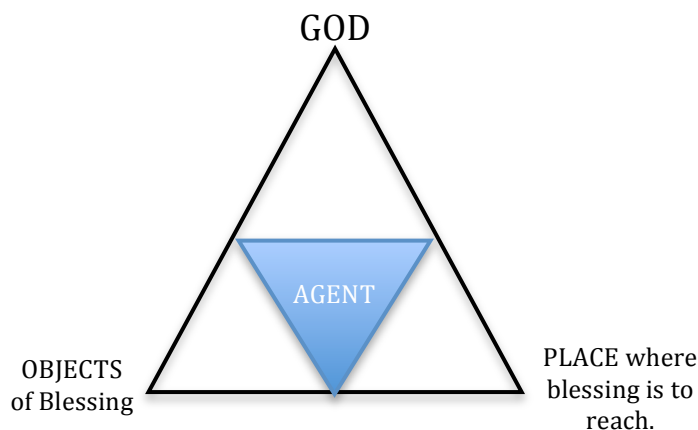
- Be fruitful and multiply
- Fill the earth and subdue it
- Have dominion over all the living creatures



Adam was the **agent** who was to secure the peace of the cosmos ON BEHALF OF GOD by ruling it and multiplying in it. He was supposed to fill the entire earth with God’s blessing! He was supposed to secure the well-being of the land and its creatures as well as the earth itself! He was to tend it and care for it. *But we all know how Adam’s mission turned out, don’t we? EPIC FAIL.*

Even with the failure, God does not abort his mission. Rather, he assigns the mission to a new agent.

This triangle is an easy way to remember what God’s original intention for the entire cosmos was. We’ll see this triangle over and over again throughout the Bible.



Break up the students into smaller groups. Assign one of the following passages to each group and have them draw a triangle like the one above, filling in the AGENT (person who will hopefully carry the blessing; the OBJECTS (people/things that will receive the blessing); and the PLACE where the blessing is to reach.

Here are the answers in table form:

	AGENT	OBJECTS	PLACE
Genesis 9:1-2	Noah	Creatures	Earth
Genesis 12:1-3	Abraham	Descendants/peoples	Nations/Earth
Exodus 19:1-6; Deuteronomy 4:5-8	Israel	Nations	Land
1 Sam 10:1	King	Israel	Land
2 Sam 7:8-16*	David	Israel	Land/Earth
1 Kings 4:20-21, 29-34	Solomon	Israel	Nations/Earth
Romans 5:12-17*	Jesus Christ (2 nd Adam)	Redeemed	Life
Ephesians 2:14-21*	Jesus Christ	Jews and Gentiles	Dwelling place
Revelation 21:1-6, 22-26	Jesus Christ	Redeemed Humanity	New Heavens & New Earth

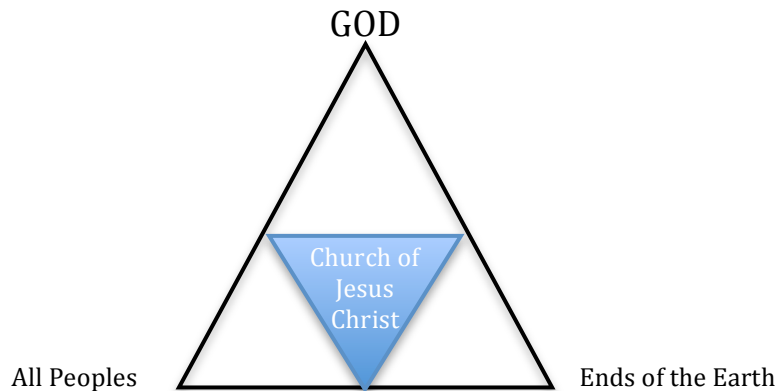
** indicates a little more difficulty*

A couple of follow-up questions:

- 1. Think about the agent you looked up. How did their assignment turn out? Did they accomplish it or did they fail?*
- 2. As we look at all of our triangles together, what are some things that seem to repeat (other than God being at the top)?*
- 3. Who finally fulfills the mission?*

So how does this fit with what we are doing?

Jesus fulfilled the mission of God – the same mission that Adam, Abraham, Israel, David (and so many other kings) left incomplete. *Read Matt. 28:18-20 and Acts 1:8.* Jesus sends his disciples to the ends of the earth to bear witness to who Jesus is and what he has done. **We are going out in Jesus' name to care for people, we are continuing the work that he has already completed!** He is using us to bring it to full completion. We are part of the triangle because we are part of God's mission that began all the way back in Genesis.



TAKEAWAY:

Remember this triangle! Remember why we're going. We are continuing the work of Jesus in bringing God's blessing to all peoples to the ends of the earth.



(Make a triangle with your hands). There will be times during this trip where it will be hard. The work, our relationships, ourselves – we need to remind each other with a simple sign, this triangle. We'll give each other this sign, and we'll know that we're not here for us.

We're not even here for our church. We're here to be a part of what God has already begun, and what God himself will finish when Jesus returns (Rev 21).

Let's close our meeting by praying for one another, by laying hands on one another like this (make the triangle). We'll place our hands in the form of a triangle on each other as we pray that God will make each of us more aware of his mission and more aware of how He is working in us, through us, and around us.

Feel free to craft the prayer time in a manner that's comfortable for your team

Session 2: BECOMING A LEARNER

Main Point:

Leaders always begin by observing, listening, and assessing what is in front of them, and sometimes the process of learning is a difficult one. As we embark on this trip, we will have an opportunity to learn from the people we are going to serve. It takes intentional and careful servanthood to engage cultures with humility and openness – taking the posture of a learner.

Method:

- We will spend some time talking about what culture is. *Note: this will be related to the debrief exercise as well.*
- The leader will help students understand their own culture, and the idea that just because we do things a certain way doesn't mean that everyone must.

Total Time: 30 minutes

OPENING:

We're going to start our training today by defining American culture. Let's look at the following case study.

You have befriended an international student from China named Guan Ji Liang (let's just call him John). You notice over the course of a week that John looks really depressed, and is withdrawing more and more. At first, it seems like homesickness, but then you notice John starting to get really cynical and angry towards anything 'American'. He seems to be making a lot of judgments about Americans. You're worried about your friend and want to help him through this tough time. Think about these questions:

1. *What do you think he's going through?*
2. *How would you help him?*

It would be safe to say that John is going through culture shock. It's what happens when we are taken out of our home culture (where we're comfortable) and thrust into a new environment. When we begin to realize the differences in culture, we respond to these differences. **How we respond to differences in culture can make all the difference in how successful we are in our mission.**

LESSON:

But let's begin from the very beginning, *What is culture?*

Ask: What makes up a person's culture?

Possible answers:

- Surface - Clothing / Food / Language / Behavior

- Underlying - Beliefs / Feelings / Values

How do we bring all of these things together? We've listed a lot of **aspects** of culture, but what is culture? Let's look at the Bible to see perhaps where culture comes from, and then try to understand what it is.

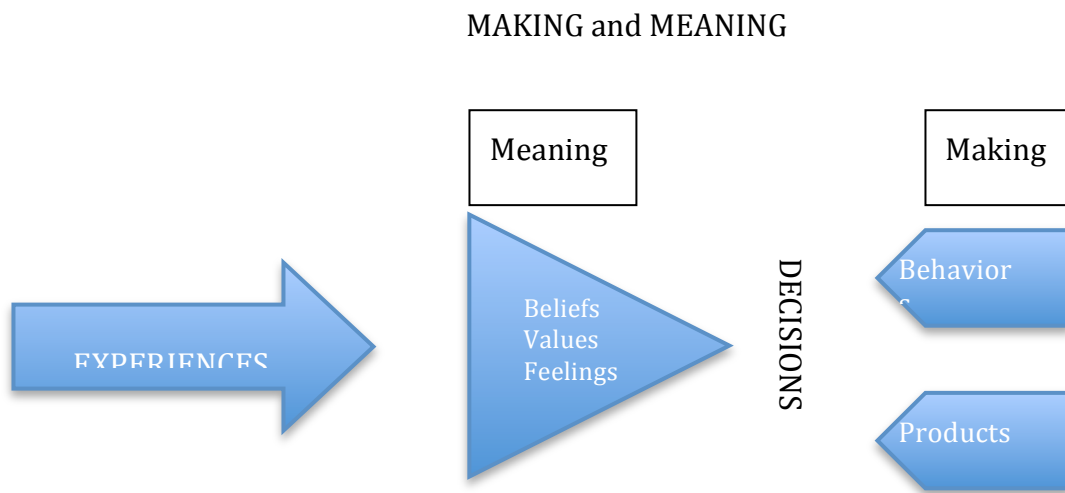
Read Genesis 1:28 together.

"God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." (ESV)

Andy Crouch points out that culture is a part of what it means to be human because it reflects the mandate God gave to us in Genesis 1:28.¹

In essence, man was given the responsibility to make something of this world, and **culture reflects our attempts to make something of this world.** It is the sum total of all of our creative attempts to make something more than what we were given.

But there's a second part to culture as well. There is a sense in which we 'make something of the world' by interpreting it or giving meaning to it. For example, you may watch a movie and ask, "what do you make of that?" We're asking someone to give us an interpretation, not necessarily to create something new. So culture consists of two things:



Adapted from Paul Hiebert, "Cultural Differences and the Communication of the Gospel"

So culture consists of making new things, but arises from a desire to give meaning to the things in our world. Culture reflects what we believe about our world, how we feel about our lives, and what we find valuable.

Example: What do the following pieces of our culture tell us about the meaning of our world?

¹ Andy Crouch, "Cuture Making." Downers Grove: IVP, 2008, 22-24.

• texting • Facebook • McDonald's • Justin Bieber • pornography • hybrid cars • feel free to add items

Every culture for every people is an attempt to interpret our world and to carry out the God-given desire to make something of it.

This does not mean, however, that every cultural item, belief, or practice is therefore good. Every culture, including our own, must be measured against the authority of God's Word. At the same time, it's important to recognize that as we evaluate a culture, we need to consider each aspect of culture in its own measure without making a generalization about the culture as a whole.

For example: just because the Bamu people of Papua New Guinea practice ancestor worship (a practice that is idolatry according to the Bible) does NOT mean that the entire culture is therefore unbiblical.

It's therefore important to talk about how we ought to respond to culture.

Andy Crouch gives two general ways by which we can respond to culture – Gestures and Postures.

A POSTURE is a natural stance towards things in our culture (whether they are new or not). It's our default position. For instance, Christ followers should have a posture towards the increasing cultural practice of pre-marital sex. We should condemn the practice – that's our default position from the Bible. It's our posture.

A GESTURE is a timely response, and we may need any number of them to respond to the various cultural happenings of our day. There are four general gestures we can take towards any culture (or part of culture).

Condemning – protesting or rejecting something (boycotting a movie or show).

Critiquing – analyzing, discussing, and thinking about a cultural item (what does the popularity of the Iphone mean for our culture).

Consuming – buying into, participating in, a cultural practice or item (attending a concert, being a Twilight fan).

Copying – creating another 'brand' of the cultural piece (making a 'Christian Facebook' site or Christian 'YouTube').

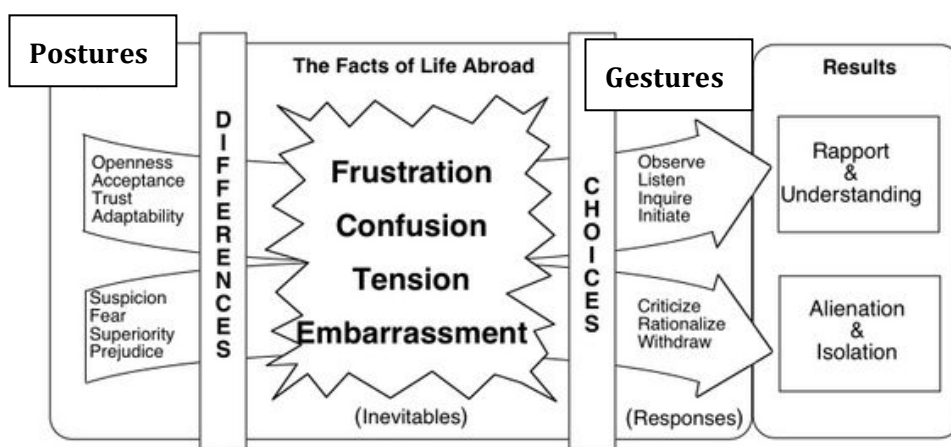
What is your gesture to (*NAME A MOVIE or A CULTURAL PRACTICE that your students will know, and that is not totally clear –eg, Harry Potter*)?

All of these are necessary gestures and necessary responses at different times. But over time, certain gestures can become postures. Especially when we come into contact with a culture different than the one we are used to. **Certain things that we take the posture of consuming or condemning may or may not be suitable gestures in another culture.**

For example, how do you view time? For many Americans, we condemn being overly late and inefficient with our time, but for many cultures, time is not a matter of efficiency for a task, but for relationships. Thus, we may find ourselves waiting for hours to do a project. We could end up frustrated and critical, interpreting the lack of respect for time as laziness or carelessness. Often, these differing cultural gestures can make us nervous, defensive, and critical of other cultures. Our responses can become postures if we are not careful!

Cultural differences will inevitably come, and so the posture we take as we enter the culture will make all the difference in the gestures we use to respond. Look at the following diagram.

Coping with Cultural Differences



Adapted from Duane Elmer, Cross-Cultural

Connections, IVP, 2002.

The posture we take affects the gesture we use, and the results we experience! The Alienation and Isolation we feel when we take the wrong postures and gestures (see the diagram) is what we call CULTURE SHOCK.

If we truly want to bring the love of Jesus to the people we serve, we must commit ourselves to the postures of Openness, Acceptance, Trust, and Adaptability.

Openness – to new customs, new foods, new practices

We must refrain from jumping to conclusions or passing judgment based on how our culture does things.

Acceptance – giving value to another person’s way of life, not rejecting, not being quick to evaluate something as right or wrong.

We must remember that God accepts us as we are in Christ Jesus, and that if we are to minister in his name, we must be willing to do the same.

Trust – building confidence in our relationships

We must be careful to build relationships with the people we serve – that means that they have something to pour into us as we do for them.

Adaptability – being flexible and being able to change with changing conditions and cultures

We must be willing to respond and adapt to the new information we learn about a person and his/her setting.

In essence, we must Become Learners! An easy way to become a learner is to remember three things:

Learn ABOUT

- Ask questions.
- Don't assume that they do things the way you do.
- Before you set out to 'fix' the problem, find out what the problem really is.

Learn FROM

- You are not the know-it-all.
- The people you serve actually live in this place. They know more about their circumstance, their climate, their culture, and their society than you do.
- You are the guest!

Learn WITH

- Don't just do FOR, but do WITH. Look for ways to include the people you are serving.
- What are some new things that God wants to show the both of you?
- The coming together of your culture plus their culture could result in some surprising revelations of who Jesus is to BOTH of you.
- Your faith will be enlarged as well as the faith of the person you are serving alongside.

TAKEAWAY:

More than a checklist of items, ask God to give you the heart of a learner, and the humility of a servant (which we'll cover next session). It'll guard you from culture shock and make your witness effective and relevant both for you and the people you'll serve.

Let's pray for each other (with the Triangle again, remember?). Asking God to cultivate within each of us the posture of a learner.

Optional Field Assignment:

This week, pick a sub-culture (skaters, goth, emo, jocks, etc.) and go ask some questions about their culture. Find out as much as you can about what they do, why they do it, etc. Be a learner!

Session 3: Becoming a Servant

Main Point:

Biblical leaders are servants. Instead of trying to be the greatest, they become the least. True servanthood is about relating to people in such a way that their dignity is affirmed and they are empowered to live a God-glorifying life.

Method:

- We will look at some of the assumptions we make about serving – namely that often times we serve people in the way that we would want to be served. This can cause problems especially when we are serving someone from a different culture.
- We will look at the way that Jesus came to serve – not on his terms, but meeting the needs of the people he was serving.

Total Time: 20 minutes

OPENING:

We're going to talk about servanthood today. How many of you have ever had the opportunity to serve someone?

Listen to what one person said about servanthood.

“Calling ourselves a servant doesn't necessarily mean that we will be seen as one by others.” – Duane Elmer

Do you agree with this statement? Why/why not?

Anyone ever try to serve someone and it wasn't received well? Maybe they misunderstood your motives? Actions? Would you be willing to share about what happened?

WHY do you think you were misunderstood or your serving was not well received?

How can we serve people in a way that is truly helpful to them?

LESSON:

Everyone on this team wants to serve. We are signed up to go on this trip, to raise money, to travel, and to give of our time and energy to serve people we do not know. With all of that investment, we want to make our time there purposeful and fruitful. All of us have the right motivation, but if it's not coupled with careful and respectful action, it could do more

harm than good. Serving is hard enough as it is, when we enter into another culture to serve, there are all sorts of new factors we have to consider.

Remember that just as cultures differ, so do the needs and the specific ways in which we can serve people. If we diagnose the problem wrong, our solutions will be ineffective and even potentially harmful.

For example: how would you define poverty? Make a list of words that come to mind you think of poverty.

Now, listen to some of what ‘the poor’ said about what it feels like to be poor.² *As I read these, write down some key words/phrases that you hear.*

For a poor person everything is terrible – illness, humiliation, shame. We are cripples; we are afraid of everything; we depend on everyone. No one needs us. We are like garbage that everyone wants to get rid of.

- Moldova

When I don’t have any [food to bring my family], I borrow, mainly from neighbors and friends. I feel ashamed standing before my children when I have nothing to help and feed the family.

- Guinea-Bissau

We cannot afford to invite anyone to our house and we feel uncomfortable visiting others without bringing a present. The lack of [relationships] leaves one depressed, creates a constant feeling of unhappiness, and a sense of low self-esteem.

- Latvia

I have a feeling of powerlessness and an inability to make myself heard.

- Cameroon

According to these four quotes, what are some key words or phrases that you heard? Do you see any differences between how you described poverty and the way they did? What surprises you?

Usually, most North Americans describe poverty as largely a lack of material goods – stuff. But a lot of what you just heard as to do with dignity/shame, power/weakness, fear, dependence, and a lack of worth! **If we try to serve by just meeting their material needs, we will totally miss an opportunity to really serve them.**

Servanthood always has the *person being served* in mind, not the server! True servanthood is about stepping outside of what is comfortable for me and caring for the **true needs** of the other person. Consider these points:

1. *Serving without understanding causes confusion or worse.*

It’s difficult to serve someone without understanding their context and what they really need. What we think is helpful may not be!

² Taken from Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert, *When Helping Hurts*, 52-53.

For example, when we meet some little kids, we may want to give them something – a pencil, some money, buy them some ice cream, etc. But what if in that culture, it causes jealousy, competition, or makes the parents feel powerless or poor?

The better we understand a person's culture, the more appropriately we can serve him/her!

2. *Servanthood takes different forms, depending on the situation.*

It's an attitude, more than a set of rules. If it isn't an expression of who we are, it will come across as artificial and false.

If you have the right attitude of humility in servanthood, you will take the time to...

WATCH: observe people's interactions, customs, look at what they value.

ASK: get to know the people – who are they? What do they want in life? What are their needs?

PRAY: ask God for supernatural insight to respond to the needs in a way that points to the saving grace of Jesus. What is God already up to?

COOPERATE: we are not the savior! Rather, we are coming to join in on what God is already doing through the local church. How can we learn from the local church?

If you come away from serving the people and have not learned anything about them, you may have not served as well as you thought!

3. *All of the different postures we take towards culture, position us to become effective servants in that culture.*³

Openness: we are willing to step out of our comfortable culture in order to initiate and sustain relationships.

Acceptance: you can't communicate value and worth to others unless they feel welcomed and safe.

Trust: you can't build trust with a person until they feel that they have been accepted by you – until they know that you value them as human beings.

Learning: you can't learn from another person until you have built trust with them. Learning demonstrates an attitude of humility and a willingness to identify with the people.

Understanding: you can't understand another person until you have learned *from* them and eventually *with* them.

³ For more info on the various postures, see Duane Elmer, *Cross-Cultural Servanthood*, 144-152.

**It's important to note that this is not just a linear process. You don't move from openness to acceptance and so on...so that servanthood is the end of the line. No, it's more circular and integrated.*

LEADMISSIONS is at its core RELATIONAL!

Projects don't serve people, and people don't serve projects.

People serve people.

Most of the time the thing that keeps us from serving in culturally relevant and appropriate ways is our own pride! We think that we know what is good for them or that our ways/ideas are better. We don't think to get out of our comfort zones because we don't think we need to get out of our cultures. Deep inside, we think that our culture is better than theirs, so they should accept our charity.

But that's not what Jesus did. He left the 'comfort' of heaven to become one of us (John 1:14; 2 Cor 8:9; Phil 2:5-11) . He walked in our shoes and experienced our life (Heb 4:15) . Jesus humbled himself and served us in order to save us (Mark 10:45) .

The ultimate picture of servant leadership is Jesus.

Read John 13:1-17

Notice that Jesus serves in a culturally appropriate, yet profound and life-changing way.

Culture: everyone at the table understood the custom of foot-washing.

Need: they all had dirty feet! Almost all travel was done by foot on dirt/dust roads, and most footwear was sandal-like. Thus, a person's feet would get very dirty.

Even more, they had a need to see an example of the greatest serving the least. Jesus was giving them an example of what it truly means to serve – to give up our power, our position, our privileges to be with and to care for people who may even end up betraying us!

Action: Jesus didn't just talk about being an example – he was one. He didn't just talk to them about how to serve one another, but rather he SHOWED them. He used a custom that everyone was familiar with, and he gave it a meaning that pointed to what God was doing in their lives through Jesus.

TAKEAWAY:

If we can remember the example of Jesus, while taking the time to humbly observe, ask questions, and learn about the culture we are entering, we will become the kind of servants that truly point to Jesus. Think about some of these questions.

- What do we know about the culture that we are going into?
- What can we take the time to learn beforehand? History? Demographics? Situations?
- What can we learn when we are there? Personal stories? Real-life examples?
- What is God *already* doing there?
- What can I learn from these people?

POST-TRIP SESSIONS

Every youth leader wants to see the mission trip (and the lessons learned) have a long-lasting impact on our students well into the school year. But often times, once the trip is over, it's impact lasts about two-three weeks. Sadly, it is often out of sight and out of mind.

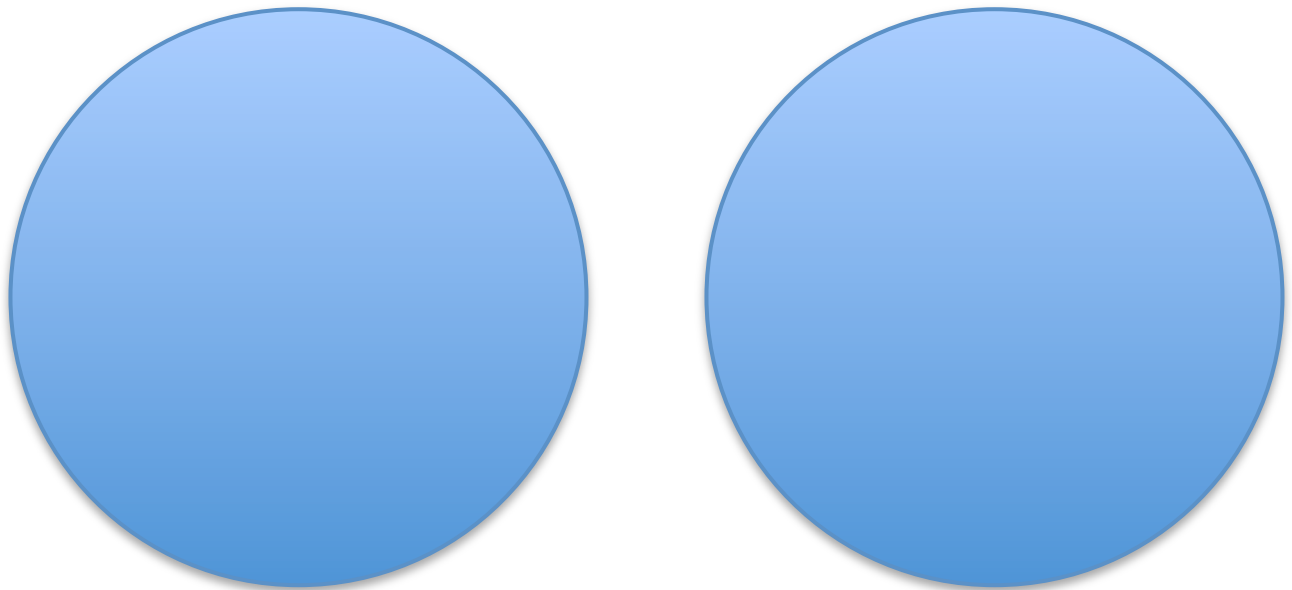
We want to encourage you to consider being intentional and focused about what happens post-trip. Consider scheduling (in advance) at least two post-trip debrief sessions where you will help students manage reentry back into their home culture as well as the application of leadership lessons and missional commitments they made during the trip. The first of these sessions should be as close to the end of the trip as possible.

To assist you in planning these post-trip, debrief/training sessions, we've included some light exercises you can do to help students process what God wants for them next. As David Livermore puts it, "what you do on a short-term mission trip is not nearly as important as what you will do here at home. But in order to fully carry out that mission at home, you need to go on a short-term trip." **These debriefing/training sessions should be focused on the mission that God has for you now, in your home context.**

Session 1: Evaluating Cultures

Opening

1. Draw two circles on a large sheet of paper.

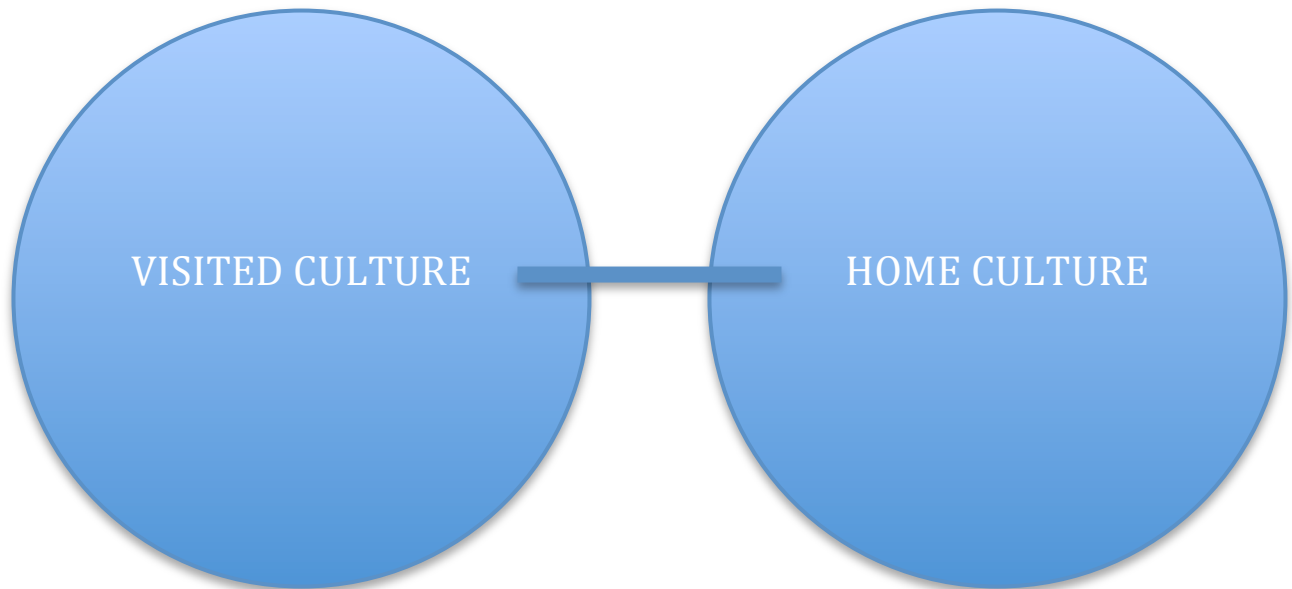


2. Ask the students to describe aspects of the culture that you just visited, and write those in the first circle.
3. Then ask students to describe aspects of your home culture, and write those in the second circle.

4. Compare the circles.

- Are the descriptions in one more positive or negative than the other?
- What patterns do you see?
- Take note of what aspects of culture stuck with students. For example, is there a theme of relational strength? Contentment? Joy? In one culture versus the other?

5. Draw bridging line between the circles.



*The bridging line is where we are as a team. We've seen things, experienced things, and learned things that have changed the way we view our own home culture. (Usually, the observations about home culture are a bit more negative than the ones about the visited culture. This is usually called **missional romanticism.**)*

How could what we have learned about the culture we were in shape how we interact with people in our own culture?

How will we exist in our own home culture differently? We can't reject everything about our own culture, but maybe God is opening up some opportunities for us to live missionally here?

Add some of your own questions and comments here as you tailor this session for your team's needs and your student ministry's culture/mission.

For the next session, make sure everyone brings their journals from the trip.

Session 2: Putting feet to the Dream

Opening:

1. Give everyone a highlighter to use. Have everyone take a few moments to scan through their journals and highlight significant lessons, commitments, or dreams they recorded.
2. Have students take a sheet of paper, make three columns and write thoughts from themes and learning during LEADMISSIONS:

LESSONS LEARNED

COMMITMENTS MADE

DREAMS

3. Allow students to ask each other by whatever things on the lists are curious to them or interest them.

- *Do you as a group notice any themes?*
- *In the area of dreams, are there any shared ones?*
- *Are there any that the entire group is particularly excited about?*

Lead your team into a discussion of what it would take for one or two of those dreams to come about.

- If that dream became reality, how would you know?
- Who does that dream affect?
- What will it cost to achieve that dream?
- How can we begin to pray and work now so that the dream can move towards reality?
- What in our culture could aid in making the dream a reality? What in our culture opposes the dream? (Tying back to last session).

Feel free to add or subtract more questions as is appropriate to your team and student ministry culture.

Make sure you come away with practical next steps (you don't need the whole plan, just the next step) to help keep the dream alive and moving towards reality.