

APPENDIX 5 IBC MISSION TRIP DEVOTIONAL APPENDIX

As the devotional leader you will have the incredible blessing and privilege of being used of God to make a difference in the lives of the volunteers and other mission trip partners.

We want to provide you with guidelines as you prepare your devotional. This model has been developed from years of experience participating in Short Term Mission Trips and seeing what does and does not work. We pray it will be a helpful tool for you.

Purpose:

- **To Transform:** The purpose of a Mission Trip Devotional is personal transformation. It is a time for allowing God to focus our hearts and minds on Him and His purpose.
- **To Engage:** It should be an 'interactive' devotional, not a sermon or a lecture. Most volunteers have heard many sermons by the time they go on a mission trip and a lecture will only serve to put them to sleep after a long day of mission work.
- **To Lead:** A Devotional Leader has the privilege of encouraging their team members to grow in their walk with Christ. As with any devotion, the leader should be prepared to lead by example.
- You will want to include many questions that will stimulate conversation within the group. Make sure the questions are open-ended to encourage participation.
- It is best to assign different days to different volunteers. You must make insure:
 - The devotional leaders have the skills necessary to lead the devotional.
 - Each leader understands the guidelines.
 - An outline is submitted to you prior to trip.
 - You go over the outline with each devotional leader so that everyone is on the same page.
 - The devotional **theme** and expectations must flow smoothly and seamlessly from day to day.

Format:

- A Devotional Should be focused on scripture. Practical Experience is valuable only when it is evaluated and approved in accordance with scripture.
- Find a '**quiet**' place to hold your devotional time.
- The devotional should have a "**theme that will be easy to remember**" long after the mission trip is over. Titles like: "*Change*", "*Communicating with God*" and "*Forgive & Forget*" are just some examples.

- The following structure is based on a typical 8 day trip, and you should be followed:
 - Day 1: Orientation
 - Day 2, 3 and 4: Devotionals (more days for longer trips).
 - Day 5: Share Night

- Structure details:
 - **Day 1: Orientation:**
 - This is the first night that you have an opportunity to meet with the volunteer team get them to start building a team mentality.
 - A team building exercise is encouraged as an ice breaker.
 - Ask each volunteer to answer a thought-provoking question (a brief answer is should be strongly encouraged). Examples: ‘What are your expectations of this trip?’ or “Why are you here?”
 - If there are people in the group that need introducing this would be the time to do that.
 - Present the devotional outline for the week and give a short ‘Devotional Theme Presentation”

 - **Days 2-4: Devotionals**
 - These are the main devotional sessions.
 - Find a quiet place to hold the devotional.
 - Try to start the devotional always at the same time each day. This will take all of your leadership skills; Satan will work overtime to convince you to skip the day’s devotional. DO NOT YIELD TO THE TEMPTATION!
 - Duration should be NO MORE than **45-60** minutes.
 - Use handouts for each day’s devotional as much as possible. You can create a handout for the whole week if you desire. This aide will help keep the attention of the volunteers.
 - Use props and visuals, such as posters as much as possible.

 - **Day 5: Share Night**
 - This should occur on the last night of ministry before your free day. It can be held on your free day, if necessary...
 - Start the night with a question that will encourage volunteers to share. Examples:
 - *“What will you take home with you from this trip?”*
 - *‘How have you seen God work this week?’*

- *“What will you do different in your life when you return home?”*
- Pre-enlist team leaders to begin sharing if volunteers hesitate to share.
- Time should not be an issue. It may turn out to be a long night, but it will be well worth it. Many of the volunteers will be vulnerable and expressive at this point in the trip.
- Try to encourage each member to contribute, even those that seem reserved.
- Try to discourage the debriefing from becoming an exercise where each member wants to go around the room thanking fellow team members for their personal contributions. This takes up a lot of time, becomes redundant, has a tendency to focus on individuals versus the team and Christ, and distracts from the main focus of bringing forth transparency and personal experiences in each team member.
- Set some guidelines for sharing time and stay focused on the specific question(s) you want answered.
- Let the Holy Spirit work!

Other:

- The devotionals are meant for your team only. You can invite the local translators and partners to attend if there is not a language barrier. If there is a language barrier, translation of the devotional will be very distracting and you will lose the attention of the volunteers. If this cannot be avoided, let God take care of it.
- Always start your group devotionals with ‘Praise and Worship’ and spend time in prayer at the closing.