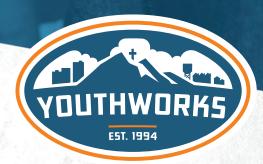
Student Leadership Opportunities

WITH YOUR MISSION TRIP



CHRIST-CENTERED MISSION TRIPS

1,000,000 LIVES IMPACTED | 25 YEARS AND COUNTING | 1 PURPOSE

INTRODUCTION

First of all, use this guidebook well before your next mission trip! Being intentional with leadership opportunities for your students takes preparation and planning. You can maximize the content of this resource by using it to make mission trip plans early. For example, if you wait until after your trip to schedule your team's after-trip meeting, you're probably too late! Instead, use this resource to make a cohesive plan from the beginning.

This guidebook is divided into three chapters focusing on before, during and after your mission trip. Each chapter includes ideas for student leadership, prep and processing questions for you, and a team guide for applying the ideas with your team.

There are a lot of ways you could use this resource, but here's our suggestion:

- Read each chapter on your own or with other adult leaders.
 - Each chapter is meant to spark your imagination for how best to create student leadership opportunities before, during, and after your trip. They are short and to the point, focused on really practical ideas to help you see what is possible.
- Reflect with the Prep and Processing Questions.
 - Spend a few minutes responding to the prep and processing questions to help think through the application for your ministry. Work through them on your own first, and then use them to create intentional conversations with your team.
- Rally your student leaders with the Team Guides.
 - This is where the processing meets practical application. Use the Team Guides to help your leaders think through the key elements of each chapter and how they can take even more ownership of the youth ministry.

Thanks for caring about the leadership potential of students. We hope this resource helps you deepen your upcoming mission trip and strengthen your youth ministry.



- CHAPTER 1 -

Creating Student Leadership Opportunities

If you were to invite a teenager on a canoe trip, here are two things you wouldn't do:

- 1. You wouldn't pull away from shore before the student got in the boat.
- 2. You wouldn't do all the paddling yourself.

Don't do those things before your next mission trip either! Invite students onboard early and give them something to do! Consider how you'll do the following three things to empower students well before it's time to load the van.

1. BUILD A LAUNCH TEAM

Bringing a few students onboard early communicates trust to students and lets them have ownership early on. By the time you announce to a broader audience, it isn't just you announcing, but you and your team of students. Plus, by the time the details are in place, you've opened up space for students to take significant leadership roles.

Here are four things you can do as you build your launch team:

- Invite key students to be part of the team. Think about your influencers, your developing leaders and those who would benefit from being involved early. Even if some students aren't certain they'll go on the trip, don't let that be a deterrent to involving them on the launch team.
- **Include** this group of students in planning details of the trip. Whether you're still deciding on the destination or simply picking pit stops along the way or anything in between, involve students in the decision-making process.
- Inform these students first on the details that are already in place. Give them insider information before the big announcement.
- Intercede with them. In other words, take time to pray for the trip during your meetings with the launch team. Prayer is important! Help them know that.



2. GIVE STUDENTS THE MICROPHONE

It's a win-win when our students are the ones communicating the vision and purpose of your mission trip. Whether it's in front of your church or on social media, when your student leaders are empowered to share, it helps win people over who are on the fence, and it gives those student leaders an opportunity to develop language for why service matters.

Here are a few times you can plan on giving students center stage:

- Youth Group Announcements Work with students to share about the mission trip with their peers. A memorable moment from a previous service experience might help other students understand why this trip is important.
- Church Announcements Take the extra time to prep students to share about their upcoming trip. Whether it's in print or from the front, a message straight from a teenager can communicate that students are ready for this experience and can use others' support.
- Meaningful Support Letters/Posts Coach students as they think about how they will share this trip with others. Encourage them to tell the bigger story of why this trip could be valuable in their own life as well as the lives of others.

In each of these communication opportunities, take the time to follow up with students after they've shared. Tell them what you loved about the way they communicated, and also watch for areas where a student doesn't get it quite yet. Pay attention to the underlying assumptions a student might have about why and how you serve, and offer some course correction if it would be helpful to the student.

3. CHALLENGE TEENAGERS WITH SOLID PREPARATION

Team meetings are a beginning. They provide space for learning and prayer, build camaraderie, and create shared expectations. Make sure you hold team meetings and expect everyone going on the trip to attend. In fact, put the dates of these team meetings on the application (and while you're at it, add the dates of required post-trip meetings).

But go a step further and empower students to personally prepare for this experience. Here are a few areas you might challenge them in:

- Mental Learn something about the place you'll serve or the type of service you'll be doing. Look up the community online, read a book about the people group, or learn some words in another language.
- Physical Change eating habits if that food or drink won't be available on your mission trip. Get on the same sleep schedule you'll be on during the trip. If you're out of shape, walk a few miles each day to get used to being on your feet.
- Spiritual Take time to strengthen your devotion and prayer life. Pray especially for this trip each day. If something is hurting your relationship with God, talk to a leader you trust and ask advice.
- Team Reach out to one or two people on your mission trip team who you don't know well and get to know them. Commit to praying for team members before the trip. Together with your team, create a team goal to accomplish before you leave.

What priority will you place on bringing students onboard early and giving them ownership of the mission trip? Take some time to consider how these three ideas for developing student leaders before the trip can be applied to your next service experience.



- ADULT LEADER -PREP & PROCESSING

Use the following prompts to think through how this chapter applies directly to your ministry and what your next steps should be to empower your student leaders.

1. Which students should I invite onto our Mission Trip Launch Team?
2. What decisions for this trip can I include students in making?
3. What already-decided-upon details can I share with the launch team?
4. List all the places where people (students, leaders, church attenders, others) will hear about this mission trip.
Put a star next to each place where a student could help share. Tentatively add the name of a student who could share next to each opportunity. 5. What do you want to accomplish during team meetings before your trip?
On what dates will you hold team meetings?
6. Using two copies of the worksheet on the next page Fill it out for yourself. How would you like to shallong a yourself in each of the ways listed?

- Fill it out for yourself. How would you like to challenge yourself in each of the ways listed?
- Fill it out with your students in mind. What are your hopes for how teenagers will challenge themselves before the trip?



- STUDENT LEADER TEAM GUIDE -PREPARE FOR THE MISSION TRIP

In each of the following areas, how will you get prepared for the mission trip. Write down one or two ways you want to challenge yourself as we prepare for the trip!

Mental - Learn something about the place you'll serve or the type of service you'll be doing. Maybe you'll look up the community online, read a book about the people group, or learn some words in another language.

Physical - Think about a physical habit you can start or stop to be more ready for the trip. Maybe you'll change an eating habits (especially if that food or drink won't be available during the trip), get on a better sleep schedule, or walk a few miles each day to get used to being on your feet.

Spiritual - Think of how you might get closer with Jesus before the trip. Maybe you'll strengthen your devotion and prayer life, pray especially for our trip each day, or talk to a trusted leader or friend about a struggle in your life.

Team - Consider how you can help strengthen our team before the trip. Maybe you'll get to know someone on our team better, commit to praying for a team member each day, or find a way to help teammate get ready for the trip.



- CHAPTER 2 -

Creating Student Leadership Opportunities

There are a lot of built-in aspects of service experiences that help students become leaders. But with intentionality, we as leaders can take an already-meaningful experience to the next level.

Here are three simple things you can do to empower your students to deepen their leadership during your next mission trip.

HAND OFF

From navigating the route to leading small group time, there are tons of little tasks that you could hand off to teenagers. Of course, having a student lead discussion will probably take more prep than simply doing it yourself, but something amazing happens when we let students take charge. What could have been another ordinary task becomes a building block in a student's journey toward leadership. On top of that, students get to take ownership of the experience, and other students are more likely to buy in when they see a peer leading.

On YouthWorks trips, a good deal of this student leadership is built in, including encouragement for students to take ownership of specific responsibilities in the kitchen, on work projects sites and at Kids Club.

But there are plenty of other opportunities. For example: making sure team members are staying hydrated, helping enforce lights out, leading a devotion, facilitating games in the van, leading various elements of team time, leading prayer each day... The possibilities are endless!

Make the extra effort to incorporate students into leadership positions, especially those teenagers who might be slow to step forward on their own.



STEP BACK

Handing off responsibility is great... in theory. But if you've done it much, you probably know that the outcome isn't always as good as if you'd just done it yourself. It's easy for adults to want to hover and make sure everything is just right, but sometimes the best thing you can do is step back.

Of course, sometimes stepping back is a slow process. If a student has never used a lawnmower, hovering around a little and making sure they understand how it works is probably a good idea. Eventually, though, look for the ways you can release students to own the leadership opportunity in front of them.

It's true. You might sacrifice a little quality in the short-term, but by stepping back and letting students lead, you'll have the long view of discipleship in sight.

LEAN IN

Experience is only half the process! Once students have experienced leadership, you can help them solidify that experience by talking about it with them. Look for moments when you can catch a teenager in a conversation. Talk only a little. Listen a lot! And come prepared with questions.

Here are a few great questions to ask teenagers who are leading on a mission trip:

- What stands out to you from this experience as most meaningful?
- How did it feel to lead in that way?
- Is there anything you'd do differently next time?
- What did you learn from leading?
- How can you apply what you learned back home in your everyday life?

In addition to asking and listening, be affirming! Tell students how you've seen them take leadership and what unique gifts you see in them. And don't forget to thank them for their leadership.

Your upcoming mission trip will undoubtedly be a great opportunity for students to deepen their faith, step out in service, and grow together—but when you hand off, step back, and lean in, your next service experience can become part of the way you help students become leaders.



- ADULT LEADER - PREP & PROCESSING

1. What are your feelings about giving up responsibilities to students? What excites you about that?		
What scares you?		
2. In each of the following categories, what are some mand off to students?	responsibilities during the mission trip that you could	
THESE COULD EASILY BE STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:	THESE WOULD BE A STRETCH, BUT MAYBE STUDENTS COULD HANDLE THEM:	
Imagine to which students you might give which resp	onsibilities. Add a few names to the above lists.	
3. What shared vision do you want other adult leaders on the trip to have when it comes to processing with and encouraging students?		



4. During the trip, what are 5 specific ways you want to help students process what's happening?
Put a star next to each place where a student could be the one to share. Tentatively add the name of a student who could share next to each opportunity.
5. The following Team Guide addresses some of the same topics discussed in this chapter, but from a student perspective. You might use this Team Guide with students, then make yourself a copy of each student's guide to help you understand how teenagers are entering this trip. Before you invite students to complete this guide, take some time to fill it out for yourself. Share your answers with another leader on the trip.

- STUDENT LEADER TEAM GUIDE -

What do you want out of **OUR MISSION TRIP?**

Think about our upcoming mission trip. Write a few answers for each of the following questions.

As you look ahead to our mission trip, what are three things you hope God will do in each of the following categories?

THE COMMUNITY WE'RE SERVING	OUR TEAM	YOUR OWN LIFE
Mission trips can push you to step ou	t of your comfort zone. How will y	ou respond when things don't go as
planned or there are unexpected cha		ou respond when things don't go as
Mission trips can also give you a new responsibilities? What scares you?	level of responsibility. What excite	es you about having new
During your trip, you and your team vare 3 good questions you could ask a		

- CHAPTER 3

Creating Student Leadership Opportunities



If you want teenagers to continue to develop the leadership skills they learned during their trip, there are ways you can help them bring the experience back home. Here are three ways you can challenge teenager to continue growing after the trip is over.

PROCESS AND SHARE THEIR STORY.

What teenagers just experienced on their mission trip is important! When big stuff happens in life, we don't just leave it alone. We ask questions. We find connections. We think about what's next. Most of all, we share about it—especially if we saw God at work! We want others to know about the good things God is doing in and through his people.

Ask your students how they will process their mission trip experience and share their story back home. Here are two ways they could do that:

Invite students to find someone who is a great question-asker and listener. Grab coffee or good food and spend some quality time talking about their trip. Think about the ways it connects with life back home and what next steps God is inviting as a result of this experience.

For your student leaders, this is a great opportunity for them to set the example and invite anyone along who might be nervous to share their story with others. If they have a mutual friend that both would feel comfortable processing their experience with, then they can plan to meet up and have the conversation altogether. If they don't, then your student leader can take on the role of a great listener to create an environment where everyone is comfortable sharing.



2. Encourage your students to find creative ways to share about their trip. They could write it out as a poem or song, they could retell it through a painting or an Instagram story, or they could find some other creative expression. The important thing is to give them an opportunity to share it, either one-on-one or in front of a group. However they decide to do it, make sure they are careful to avoid going on a PR campaign telling people how great they are. Instead, help them focus on sharing the great things God is doing in the community they served as well as in the student's life back home after the mission trip.

For your student leaders, give them a chance to think through how they can help create the kind of environment where everyone feels welcome to share. If you have a lot of musicians and artists, your student leaders could orchestrate a night of worship that includes opportunities for everyone to share. If you have a group that is really active on Instagram, your student leaders could coordinate a social media takeover where they celebrate everyone's stories by posting them on your youth ministry's account.

KEEP DEEPENING THEIR FAITH.

For many students, a mission trip experience is an opportunity to see God at work and experience faith in a new way. This is a prime time to come alongside teenagers and carry over some of the practices they began during the mission trip.

Here are two things you can do to help students keep deepening their faith after the mission trip:

- 1. Help them decide what habits they want to have around devotions and prayer. If they don't have a devotional, have a few ready for them to use. Encourage them to start small—even if it's just a few minutes each day. Remind them to "Do something doable."
 - For your student leaders, give them an opportunity to share the new habits they are going to make around their own devotions and prayer. They can be a great example for the rest of your crew, especially if anyone is having trouble thinking about the kinds of practices to which they might like to commit.
- 2. Help them find an encouraging community. Invite them to plan a meet-up with two or three others who will encourage their faith and all that God is doing in their lives.
 - For your student leaders, ask them if they'd be willing to help organize the meet-ups. Give them ideas of what to say during these times, what devotionals they could use to help spark conversations, and how they could pray for each other. And remind them to have fun together, too. Consistent community with other Jesus-followers is big!



CONTINUE SERVING.

Your students served others in some awesome ways during your mission trip! It probably felt pretty good to travel to a community and care for people there. Here's the thing: There are a lot of those same needs in your own community... in your own church... even in our your students' own homes! Jesus didn't invite us to only serve during our mission trip each year—Jesus invited us into a lifestyle of service.

So how do you think Jesus is inviting your students to make service part of their everyday reality? Here are two things that might help get them started:

- 1. Ask them to find a few little ways to serve people they're already around. At home, they can do the dishes, be generous and say thank you with little deeds. At church, they can volunteer with children, help clean something they didn't mess up, or have a conversation with someone who seems left out. Help students become aware of service opportunities all around them.
 - For your student leaders, remind them they can help lead by being the first to take initiative when an opportunity to serve someone comes up while they are with other students. Be sure to encourage them to invite others to help too, so they welcome other students who want to join them in the opportunity.
- 2. Help them look for service opportunities in their own community. Local food shelves, elderly care facilities or children's ministries are always looking for volunteers. Find a place your students can keep returning to again and again so they can provide steady service and build ongoing relationships.
 - For your student leaders, this is a great opportunity for them to help decide on the kinds of service your youth ministry can do. Task them with canvassing the community, finding the needs that they could meet, and organizing the times when your crew will go serve.

It takes intentionality to keep developing the leadership skills of your students after the mission trip, but it's important work! Mission trips are only life-changing when we help students bring the richness of relationships, service and learning back into their everyday lives.



- ADULT LEADER -PREP & PROCESSING

1. What stands out to you as the most important thing you can do with students after the trip? What are some reasons?
2. What are your plans for post-trip meetings with students?
3. What are a few things you'd like to do during post-trip meetings?
4. What are three ways you can help students process their trip once you're back?
5. What are three ways you can help students share about their mission trip back home?
6. What possibilities do you see for students' continued service in your community after the mission trip?



- STUDENT LEADER TEAM GUIDE -AFTER THE MISSION TRIP

How did God change your perspectives?

What shifted in you during the mission trip? What did you learn? What did you see for the first time? How did your viewpoint of a people group or issue change?

What fresh passions is God growing or igniting in you?

What new things did you realize about yourself? What is something you discovered you are good at? What gave you deep joy? What made you so sad you could cry?

What new possibilities is God exposing in your life?

What new friendships did you form? What new ways of service did you participate in? What did you imagine you could do back home? How did Jesus give new life to your relationship with him?

What will you pursue?

Looking at your answers to the above questions, what are a few things you can actually commit to? How will you serve others in a new way back home? What is something you can do to strengthen your relationship with God? What can you do to strengthen your relationship with others? Write 2 or 3 things you want to begin pursuing in the next few days and weeks.



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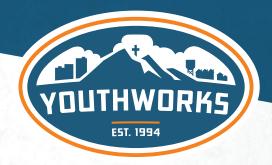
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