



MAXIMIZING YOUR MISSION TRIP

Preparing for a mission trip takes lots of time and energy, and we believe it is well worth it! We want to help you make the most of your experience before, during and after the trip. The following are a few ways you can be intentional in your ministry to students and see worthwhile results.

MEET BEFORE THE TRIP

- There's a reason this is first on the list. Maximizing your trip begins now, as you bring students into planning and preparation ahead of time.
- And don't just meet; meet strategically and walk alongside your students as they prepare for what they are about to step into. Help students, Adult Leaders and even parents catch a vision for what this mission trip can be.
- YouthWorks has many helpful resources for these meetings posted online. Maximize your trip by utilizing these tools.

INVOLVE PARENTS

- No matter how effective you are as a youth leader, parents' influence in students' life is irreplaceable. Communicate clearly about the mission trip with parents throughout the process so parents are equipped to pray for, encourage and process with their students.
- A month or two before your trip, share our Parent Processing Guide – an online resource we create to help parents understand what's happening during the trip and to help them have meaningful conversations with their students afterward.

BE FULLY ENGAGED

- Enjoy a week away from your office, technology and the responsibilities of everyday life; focus wholeheartedly on being present in the community and with your youth.
- Set yourself up for success beforehand by eliminating distractions. Help others expect to not hear from you during your mission trip week by activating your out-of-office email alert and changing your voicemail message. Give yourself permission to take a break from your other responsibilities as much as possible.
- Participate alongside your youth. Be in the midst of their experience, whether that's painting next to them, sitting among them or diving elbows-deep into dishwashing. They will notice. They will follow your lead!

SERVE WHEREVER YOU'RE NEEDED

- Make sure that you and your group are ready to dive in, whether that means getting sweaty in the sun or having a quiet conversation in a nursing home. Be responsive to the needs within the community that you are presented with.
- As a leader, have that same "ready to serve" attitude with your students. Pay attention to their needs and seek ways to serve them even while they are learning to serve others.

UTILIZE CHURCH GROUP TIME WELL

- Church Group Time takes place each evening after The Gathering. We see this as the most important time of the YouthWorks day. This is your opportunity to be together with your whole group, hear about what they're experiencing and help them process.
- The Church Group Time Guide will be available online before your trip. This guide offers questions and discussion topics that tie in with our summer theme. We encourage you to read through it and use it to plan each night's Church Group Time. Share it with your Adult Leaders so they can be familiar with the content as well!

BE FLEXIBLE

- Even if things are not quite as you expected, be willing to adjust to what's happening. Again, your youth will follow your lead.
- We do our best to plan and prepare – even for the unexpected. We ask that you trust our leadership and knowledge of the community and be open to changing plans.

LISTEN TO PEOPLE'S STORIES

- Encourage your group to ask people to tell their stories and then listen well. Talk with your youth about the value of listening and learning from the people they meet.
- Have your youth think about good questions they can ask to begin conversations.

MAKE CONNECTIONS TO LIFE BACK HOME

- By definition, life-change has to carry on back home. So, whenever the opportunity comes, connect the experience youth are having on their mission trip with your community back home.
- Here are a few questions that might get the ball rolling on:
 - What are some of the hurts and struggles you've seen in this community that remind you of back home?
 - How could we serve in a similar way back in our own community?
 - What do you want to change about the way you live back home?

HELP YOUTH SHARE THEIR STORY

- Once the mission trip is over, give your youth the chance to share what God did in them and in the community they visited. Sharing testimonies of what God is doing is a powerful practice you can invite your youth into.
- These are just a few ways your youth might share:
 - Schedule a time to have youth share through pictures, video and testimony in church or at a house gathering.
 - Have a mission trip reunion after the trip and recount stories.
 - Have youth write about a meaningful experience on their mission trip. Share their writings in the church newsletter. We'd also love to hear them at youthworks.com/story.
 - Talk with students about how they can share a mission trip story with friends. Coach them on how to share stories that are short but meaningful.

KEEP PROCESSING AFTER THE TRIP

Take time to connect with students after the trip is over. Oftentimes processing a mission trip can take months – if not longer! Keep asking questions and help students continue to be impacted by their mission trip experience.

Visit youthworks.com/aftertrip for processing ideas for you and your students.

ASK QUESTIONS

- Asking good questions will help your youth process the trip as it's happening.
- Encourage your youth to ask questions of the YouthWorks staff and people you meet in the community. This will increase their understanding of what they're doing, who they're getting to know and why.

YOUTHWORKS RESOURCES

To maximize your trip, take full advantage of the following resources. These resources are for you, your students and your fellow Adult Leaders.

- **Adult Leader Guide** – a resource full of everything you'll need to know as an Adult Leader. Be sure your Adult Leaders read this resource!
- **YouthWorks Staff** – a team of trained leaders who are passionate about helping you and your youth have a meaningful missions experience.
- **Daily Adult Leader Meetings** – a time for Adult Leaders to connect, ask questions and process the day with the Site Director.
- **Trip Journals** – a booklet you and each student will receive to guide you through devotions and discussions each day.
- **Small Group Devotion Guide** – a resource you can use with students who might be unfamiliar with doing devotions on their own and would benefit from doing devotions in a small group context.
- **Church Group Time Guides** – a tool to help facilitate Church Group Time at the end of each day. This is often found inside of a resource called the Make You Look Good Book.
- **YouthWorks Resource Library** – As a Trip Leader, you have access to our whole library of resources for your trip (and beyond!). From pre-trip student meeting curriculum, to student recruitment resources, to guides on how to manage a crisis on your trip, we're eager to support you and your group.