

YOUR MISSION TRIP VS. LIFE BACK HOME



During your mission trip, you were probably asked a few times how you would take the experience home with you. Your mission of loving others and loving Jesus is not just a short experience with your youth group. It keeps going when you get home! But there are a few ways that following Jesus back home is different than following Jesus on a mission trip. As you read, think about how you can apply what you experienced in the community back at home.

PROVIDED COMMUNITY VS. PURPOSEFUL COMMUNITY

People were everywhere during your mission trip. You probably hardly had time to yourself! From the moment you got into the van to the time you reached home, you had lots of people around. Plus, you all united for a common cause – loving Jesus and others. It is awesome to have people nearby to talk to, serve beside and laugh with. God made us for relationships with others.

Most days, you probably won't wake up in a room of people sleeping on air mattresses. Even though you aren't constantly in a group of at least three people, you can still have awesome unity back home – but it won't just happen. You need to be purposeful about uniting with people who love Jesus and love you. In fact, service, faith and change all happen more when you're around others who are encouraging you toward Jesus. The group of people you went on your trip with is a great place to start.

STRUCTURED PROJECTS VS. LOTS OF POSSIBILITIES

When we invited you to serve, love and learn from a community, you showed up! We found people, places and projects, and you welcomed people in, hung out, cleaned up and served. We lined up projects, and you worked with whatever was put in front of you, even if it was a brand-new experience. It's pretty cool to make yourself available for whatever job needs done.

At home, you probably won't have everything planned out for you. If you want to love the people around you, like Jesus invites you to, you'll need to seek out ways to do it. So, if you thrive at physical work, you can look for neighbors who need help with their yard. Or if you love having conversations, you can visit someone who might be lonely. While it will take more initiative on your part, being able to choose how you'll serve enables you to find something you're passionate about.

SET-ASIDE TIME WITH GOD VS. YOUR BUSY SCHEDULE

YouthWorks trips can sometimes simplify things. The schedule is laid out with built-in times for Devos, worship music, processing and service. It's easier to follow Jesus when the pressure of everyday life is far away, and time with God is on the schedule each day.

Phones, games, homework, friends, social media, parents, practices, school... Did we miss anything? Of course we did! Because your life is probably pretty busy back home. So busy that it could be easy to let what you learned on your mission trip slip into the background. Amid all the important things, don't forget the one most important thing – your devotion to a totally loving all-powerful, completely good God. Consider how you will continue taking time out of your day to get to know God better.

TEMPORARY OUTREACH VS. LONG-LASTING LIFESTYLE

During your mission trip, you were a visitor in someone else's community. You had a limited time to love, serve and learn, and you probably got to do that in some pretty incredible ways. But continuing to serve this community will be challenging. You are leaving this setting behind, and you could easily forget the people and relationships here. But you don't have to! We hope you find ways to continue the relationships you've made, like coming back to serve in this community again.

Think about the people you served during trip: kids, elderly people, homeowners, those in need... Imagine they live down the street from your house or just across town. Well...they do! At least, people who face some of the same struggles do. And they need the love of Jesus, too. You live in a community full of people who have needs you can help meet. Just as there is a reason God sent you to serve in a different community for a week, God also has a purpose and plan for you in your own community.

SETTING OUT VS. KEEPING ON

We hope something began for you this week. We hope you have set out on a new adventure... or are continuing your same adventure with new perspective and passion. Take some time to think about what new thing might be starting in you. Tell a friend or leader your story about what's beginning. We'd love to hear your story too! You can share it at youthworks.com/story.

Ever heard of a "mountaintop experience"? You feel like everything is awesome and change is happening... and then "real life" hits you, and everything goes back to normal. Often, mission trips can be a spiritual high point, then the day-to-day schedule of "real life" sends us tumbling off the mountaintop. Jesus is in those mountaintop experiences, and those experiences can create real, lasting change in you. But Jesus is in the boring, hard, stressful and painful experiences. As you move forward from this mountaintop experience, how will you continue to look for Jesus in every moment?