



## Sample group schedule for a 10-day trip

Leading a short-term mission trip requires thorough planning. As a leader, keep in mind that each team member will bring with them different gifts and challenges; past experiences in life and mission; unique personalities; different learning styles; and varied levels of energy and stamina. Crafting a meaningful mission trip schedule requires good communication with your mission partners. Together, strive to establish a thoughtful balance between times for work or other activities; for learning, reflection and faith-formation; and for relationship-building. The way that a trip is planned and carried out will impact the places and people you visit, and what team members take away from the experience.

### **Prior to leaving:**

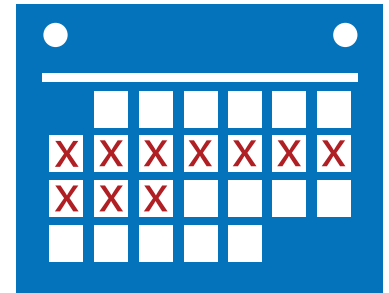
Discern the WHERE, WHO, WHEN and WHAT when planning your trip.

<b>Where?</b>	Consider the strengths, connections and interests of your congregation.
<b>Who?</b>	If the trip is international, contact a PC(USA) mission worker in that region to help plan your visit and connect you with a global partner (i.e., church, nonprofit or relief organization).
<b>When?</b>	Keep in mind the group’s schedule as well as the mission partner and related logistics, such as special holidays or the state of the roads at certain times of the year.
<b>What?</b>	Ask first what the mission partner needs from you and how they wish to engage with you. Then consider the temperament and physical ability of your group. Will this work best as a work trip, a partnership visit, a study tour or a combination of one or more of these models?

Plan the trip in conversation with the mission partner. If the trip is outside the U.S., include a PC(USA) mission worker when possible. Eight to 10 months before the trip, communicate with the mission partner or mission worker regarding the group’s make-up (ages, abilities, skills or interests) and expectations. Ask the mission partner what they need from you and expect from you, so they can begin to prepare to host you.

Determine who will be the group leader(s) for overall direction and guidance. During orientation, fill key roles for group members, such as musician, health person, photographer, journal writer, devotion team, etc.

### **Mission Toolkit: Short-Term Mission**



***“Our first task in approaching another people, another culture, another religion is to take off our shoes, for the place we are approaching is holy. Else we may find ourselves treading on another’s dreams.”***

*–Max Warren, an Anglican vicar and missionary who served as general secretary of the Anglican Church Missionary School for more than two decades.*



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## Day 1: Travel and arrival

<b>Settling in</b>	Review basic logistics, general rules and safety. Walk the team through the most up-to-date schedule and highlight any changes. Remind them of the need to be flexible.
<b>Expectations</b>	Review group expectations established during team orientation, including interaction with mission partners, participation in scheduled activities, and basic conduct and care within the group. Talk about self-care as well; mission trips can be intense.
<b>Roles</b>	Reiterate individual roles assigned to each group member during orientation.
<b>Orientation</b>	Time permitting, begin basic orientation with the group. See Day 2, “Orientation II,” for possible content.
<b>Devotions</b>	Close the day with prayer and reflection.

## Day 2: Orientation

<b>Devotions</b>	Open the day with prayer and reflection.
<b>Orientation I</b>	Welcome and orientation from the mission partner. Let them plan the content based on what they want you to learn. They may include an overview of the history, context and current events in the country, as well as the historical relationship(s) with the U.S. Ask them to tell you about their work and (when applicable), the PC(USA)’s work in the country. Invite mission partners ahead of time to lead this part of orientation.
<b>Orientation II</b>	Orientation within your group. Touch base regarding culture, language and etiquette. Share guidelines for health and safety. Reaffirm group expectations and individual roles. If you have not done much team-building, include activities toward that end.
<b>Rest time</b>	Provide time for team members to rest and absorb what they are learning and experiencing.
<b>Visit partners</b>	Time permitting, visit a program, church or community that is part of the work of the mission partner.
<b>Debrief</b>	Share what was learned and reflect on the day. Share “highs and lows” (highlights and low points of the day). Have group check-in physically and emotionally. Consider Eric H. F. Law’s method of mutual invitation from <i>The Wolf Shall Lie Down with the Lamb</i> .
<b>Devotions</b>	Close the day with prayer and reflection.

### Suggested group activities:

- Bible study
- Art activity
- Theological reflection (i.e., Where do you see creation, grace, hope, solidarity and/or salvation today?)
- Visit community centers, the market, churches, museums and playgrounds
- Guided outings (i.e., Visit the market and attempt to buy a “basic basket” of goods for the week. Consider: What does it take to feed a family of eight? Keep in mind the local cost of living).

When debriefing, consider Eric H. F. Law’s method of mutual invitation from ***The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb***.



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## Days 3–7: Partnership Building and Activity Days

<b>Devotions</b>	Open the day with prayer and reflection.
<b>Check-in</b>	Review the program and any group roles for the day (i.e., photographer, journaling).
<b>Program</b>	Orientation within your group. Touch base regarding culture, language and etiquette. Share guidelines for health and safety. Reaffirm group expectations and individual roles. If you have not done much team-building, include activities toward that end.
<b>Rest time</b>	Provide time for team members to rest and absorb what they are learning and experiencing.
<b>Debrief</b>	See above for a suggested format.
<b>Check-in</b>	One or more evenings during the trip, provide time to allow participants to share how they are feeling physically and emotionally. This kind of check-in may fit hand-in-glove with the “debrief,” or may be treated as a separate moment together as a group.
<b>Devotions</b>	Close the day with prayer and reflection.

## Day 8: Leisure day

<b>Devotions</b>	Open the day with prayer and reflection.
<b>Rest time</b>	Provide time for team members to rest and absorb what they are learning and experiencing.
<b>Debrief</b>	See previous day for a suggested format. Refer to the leader guide for more suggestions.
<b>Orientation</b>	Time permitting, begin basic orientation with the group. See Day 2, “Orientation II,” for possible content.
<b>Devotions</b>	Close the day with prayer and reflection.

*Plan the trip in conversation with the mission partner. If the trip is outside the U.S., include a PC(USA) mission worker when possible. Visit [pcusa.org/toolkits/short-term-mission/connect](https://pcusa.org/toolkits/short-term-mission/connect).*



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### Day 9: Debrief and Evaluation

<b>Devotions</b>	Open the day with prayer and reflection.
<b>Final debrief</b>	Evaluate the trip: logistics like lodging and transportation; the “content” of the trip; and the overall experience. Review the trip using different reflective exercises and questions. Think about what you learned, what you experienced, what you did and how you made connections with people. Consider how to “bring” the trip back home and how you will share your story with friends and family. Discuss reverse culture shock and “re-entry.” When possible, be intentional about including the final debrief and evaluation at the end of the trip, before your group heads to the airport.
<b>Closing celebration with mission partners</b>	If possible, hold a closing worship and/or celebration with mission partners.

*Find trip leadership resources, including ideas for team debriefing experiences at [pcusa.org/toolkits/short-term-mission/GO](http://pcusa.org/toolkits/short-term-mission/GO).*

### Day 10: Departure

#### After the trip:

- Meet at least once within a month of returning home to share memories and pictures, think together about how to share the story well and explore how the experience can continue to shape individual team members’ lives and the life of your home congregation.
- Find ways to share your experience with your family, friends and home congregation.
- When possible and appropriate, encourage adults on the mission trip to maintain personal connections with your mission partners through letters, Skype calls, WhatsApp, Facebook or email. Team members should be oriented on best practices when relating directly with new friends from the mission site. For example, they should communicate on a personal basis only, not in the name of your church. In general, mission trip groups are discouraged from giving material goods or money to people they meet on a mission trip, and equally discouraged from making promises of this nature.

#### For more information

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