



# CHRISTIAN & MISSIONARY ALLIANCE OF PANAMA

## NORTH AMERICA SHORT-TERM MISSION TEAM

### Guidelines for the Short-term Mission Member

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#### **Fundamentals:**

1. Focus on prayer and sharing the Gospel; do not have a mindset of going for a “sacred tour”.
2. Maintain a regular quiet time with God; be sensitive to the Holy Spirit’s prompting; and remain committed to Christ.
3. You are not there to boost your qualifications, to fulfil your own success and desire to work, but to learn through observation and experience.
4. Be humble and diligent, identify with the locals and learn to serve with others by yielding your rights.

#### **1. Team Member and the Home Church**

This mission agency requires that team members be recommended, approved and supported by their home church, the reasons being:

- (a) Team members are not participating on their own, but represent their home church; and
- (b) This short-term mission trip not only provide personal short-term mission experience, but also seek to benefit the home church, enabling the church’s role in sending, caring and supplicating for her team members. Accordingly, it is necessary for team members to maintain regular contact and send regular prayer requests to their home church either by email or by telephone during the mission trip.

#### **2. Between Team Members**

Team members should learn from one another and serve together as the Body of Christ. Therefore, they should:

- (a) Get to know and understand one another on a deeper level;
- (b) Pray unceasingly for one another;
- (c) Accept one another, bearing with one another in love; and
- (d) Learn to appreciate one another’s spiritual gifts, complementing one another.

#### **3. Team Member and the Mission Agency**

**Pre-trip:** Equip and prepare yourself according to the mission agency’s guidelines and procedures (e.g. read or listen to CDs, have passport/visa ready, purchase plane tickets and travel insurance, etc.) Team member must be well prepared, as there is often a gap between pre-trip preparation and personal experiences during the trip.

**During the trip:** Update the home church with actual report on members’ situations. The mission agency may publish some of these information and reports.

**Post-trip:** Attend debriefing session:

Submit a report within two weeks upon your return, which may include personal sharing and recommendations on how to systematically promote the vision and mission.

#### **4. Team Member and the Mission Field**

Missionaries are teachers in the mission field and every team member should make good use of this learning opportunity and observe the following:

- (a) Willingly accept and submit to instructions from the missionary and your team leader and to carefully obtain approval from the missionary before taking any action;
- (b) Observe the day-to-day life, attitude and inter-personal skills of the missionary, which will enable you to understand the mission field and to serve more effectively;
- (c) Voluntarily assist the missionary in every way and with regular chores;
- (d) Abide by the administrative structure and conduct yourself in accordance with the strategies and management schemes of the mission field. Therefore, it is imperative to have a good testimony, exercising self-control so that you would not leave a bad impression and have a negative impact on future ministries; and
- (e) Under all circumstances: try and have understanding and bear one another with love. DO NOT JUDGE!

#### **5. Team Member, the Local Church and People**

Please note that you are the helper in the mission field and not the “host”. Therefore, you should strive to work in unity in Christ with the local brothers and sisters. Even if there maybe a striking difference between our culture or methods and theirs, we are one in Christ. Refrain from passing judgment and debate.

For the above reasons, team members should learn to accept other cultures and approaches:

- (a) The single biggest mistake is to disrespect other cultures, especially toward people whose standards of living are inferior to ours. Refrain from comparing cultures;
- (b) Do not judge;
- (c) Must not be conceited and condescending; and
- (d) Observe and gain knowledge of: religious background, ideology, verbal communication, family ethics and ways, value system, attitude and approach in inter-personal relationships, social structure, and local way of life.

#### **What else should I be aware of?**

#### **What to pack (make a list, so nothing’s missed)**

1. Passport and visa: ensure that the expiry date is more than six months away. Bring your driver’s license as extra photo ID.
2. Clothing:
  - (a) Simple clothes. One to two long sleeved shirts/pants (some areas may have cooler temperatures in the evening).
  - (b) Multiple sets of underwear (there are laundry facilities in the hotel). Shorts are only allowed in the hotel or residences. Spaghetti strap or halter/tank tops should not be worn during visitations, evening programs and VBS class time. Cool and breathable clothes are recommended as the temperature is in the mid 30s and humidity is between 60-90%.

- (c) Swimwear and bath towels.
- 3. Medication
  - (a) For each team: Gravol, cold/flu medicine, Imodium, painkillers, stomach pills, fever reducers, anti-biotics, anti-histamine, Band-Aids, bandages, ointment, Tiger Balm, throat lozenges, anti-itch cream, etc.
  - (b) Personal: personal medications taken regularly
- 4. Personal Items: plastic bags for wet clothes, knick-knacks or food items, flashlight, Swiss Army knife, alarm clock, water bottle, raingear, safety pins, scotch tape, hangers, clothes pins, elastic bands, comb, shower cap, whistle, face towel, shower gel (do not bring bar soap), shampoo, toothbrush, toothpaste, lotion etc. Pen, small notebook, bible, waist pouch (for money, IDs), male or female specific items: shaver, feminine pads, etc.
- 5. Small electronics such as camera, charger, extra batteries.
- 6. Skin protection and other useful items: cap, sunglasses, sunscreen, fan, small towel, insect repellent and simple cosmetics.
- 7. Food items (small amount): dried goods, instant noodles, crackers, etc.

### **Better be Safe than Sorry**

- 1. Passport/Visa (bring a photocopy and keep it in a separate place), airline/bus tickets should be kept in a safe place with you and not left in the hotel room: do not give them to another person even if something happens unexpectedly;
- 2. While lining up to go through customs, avoid lining up behind children, as they usually take longer to fill out forms;
- 3. Do not bring valuables;
- 4. If bringing a large amount of cash, try and distribute into at least four shares. Avoid keeping a large sum of cash in one place. Do not show your money in public places;
- 5. Keep a close eye on your luggage: try and look after your own. Even the person who has been entrusted with the bags should have them within close reach, and in so doing will greatly reduce the chance for others to steal the bags by using diversionary tactics;
- 6. Always wait for the team leader's instructions before breaking into small groups and going off to do the assigned tasks. This will enable an overall picture for the entire team and allow everyone to prepare accordingly. Never act on your own unless it is absolutely necessary. Always listen to your team leader;
- 7. Common expenses: costs of food, beverages and materials related to the entire group should be shared and disbursed by the team treasurer from the funds that are pooled; and
- 8. In all public areas: if you're napping in areas such as airports, bus stations, hotel and restaurants, it is best to secure your bags and make sure that they're tied to you.

### **Local Currency and Spending Money**

- 1. Only bring enough cash for your own use; do not bring a large amount of cash.
- 2. Foreign exchange: should be done prior to the trip at a bank or foreign exchange places. If more is needed during the trip, ask the local Christians to do the exchange for you so as to avoid scams. Some Central and South American countries accept U.S. funds or will exchange U.S. funds into local currency (traveler's cheques not suitable). It is best to have denominations of \$20 and under. For more information, please visit the official websites. Have some \$1 bills on hand for tips. Credit card use is not recommended (except for car rentals or hotel accommodations).
- 3. Most bank cards can be used locally. Please check with your banks.

## **Local Weather and Vaccination**

Weather: Rainy season is generally from May to January, with average temperatures of 35°C to 40°C. Dry season is from January to May, with average temperatures of 30°C to 35°C.

Vaccination: the need to get vaccinated depends upon the specific mission field, individual health conditions and special circumstances. Please visit the official website for more details.

## **Others**

1. Books, materials and gifts that have been assigned for you to bring should be redistributed at a suitable time and place once you arrive at your destination;
2. Handbooks, song sheets and itineraries;
3. Gifts: the team member who is responsible should make sure that the team bring enough gifts for the day and remind the team leader to present these gifts to related parties; and
4. Please bring some pictures (such as family or work related ones); it can be a useful icebreaking tool when striking a conversation or introducing yourself.