



Mustard Seed Communities

CARING FOR THE MOST VULNERABLE

Mission Leader Packet



Planning Calendar

Now that you've booked your mission trip, you can start to build your team and fundraise!

18 to 12 Months before Your Mission Trip

Schedule your first general information meeting

1. Clearly state trip date and country, expectations of missionaries, and costs - **Minimum donation to MSC is \$950** per person excluding airfare. Some groups choose to fundraise together for airline ticket costs and some groups request the mission volunteer pay for their own flight. As the trip leader, this is your call. For transportation purposes, all mission groups must travel on the same flight.
2. Take **sign-ups of those interested**. Once volunteers are committed, they will register to join your team online. The online registration process requires a \$15 deposit which is applied to their minimum fundraising goal of \$950. If the mission volunteer cannot participate for some reason, donations will be added to the group funds. MSC donations are non-refundable.
3. Give them an idea of **what the trip will be like**. While at MSC, you will spend time playing with and caring for the children. You'll also complete various work projects involving painting, landscaping and light construction. All of this takes place in the community along with MSC staff and children. Utilize the information on our website to explain the mission of MSC and show the populations that we serve.

Market your mission trip

Utilize the internet to spread the word about the trip. We have included [information and a sample email](#) for you to use as a starting point. Word of mouth has always been effective for MSC – tell others what you are doing! Our [FAQ page](#) also has helpful information for first-time mission volunteers.

Research important country information

Flights:

- Sign up for trip alerts that can send you emails when ticket prices fall (tripadvisor.com, kayak.com)
- Call airlines directly and inquire about group sales and payment options
- Look for the least expensive flights for a Saturday to Saturday trip
- Book tickets online or use a non-profit travel agency – just remember that you may have as many as 22 missionaries so every dollar counts! An agent can reserve dates for you without requiring payment up front. Keep in mind, all mission team volunteers must arrive and depart together.

Passports:

Every team member will need a valid passport. The passport should be valid for six months after you return from your mission trip. It may take several weeks to apply for a new passport immediately. www.travel.state.gov/passport.

Traveler's Health & Immunizations:

Specific immunizations depend on the country where you're serving. Visit the CDC website for the most up-to-date information on traveler's health <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list.htm>. Talk to your family physician to seek advice about immunizations – why they are needed, where to go for them, prescriptions needed, any and other medical issues related to your travel. Some immunizations may require a series of vaccines over the course of a few months so please be sure to research this early in your trip preparation.

12 to 6 Months before Your Mission Trip

If you are still gathering mission volunteers:

Keep marketing your trip! Be sure to utilize information and videos available on our [website](#).

If your team is confirmed:

Schedule first official team meeting

- Explain the Pre-Trip Planning Groups, have volunteers select a group and get them started on tasks. (Section 6)
- Have all mission volunteers join your team online. You also have the option to register them on their behalf.
- Confirm a Priest or spiritual leader to accompany the trip.

Kick off your fundraising!

- Brainstorm your potential supporters – parish members, friends, family, sports teams, etc. Create an email list to promote your fundraising pages and events!
- Present the team page and allow group to contribute to content.
- Encourage the team to set up their personal pages as soon as possible!

Research airline tickets

Research different websites, travel agencies, and airlines to see which agency will give you the best price. This can take some time but it is well worth it if you are able to reserve a good ticket for a reasonable price. Factor in the different fees and taxes applied to the cost. Remember that the price of your ticket can make a big difference in the amount your mission team will need to fundraise.

6 to 3 Months before Your Mission Trip

Fundraising

- Get your information out and recruit last-minute participants if you have any spots remaining.
- Stay in close contact with the leaders of each of your Pre-Trip Planning Groups to check on their progress and assist where you can.
- Check that the T-shirt design and order are coming together.
- Confirm that all volunteers have created their fundraising page.
- Continue motivating your missionaries to raise funds and prayer partners.
- Check in with each of your participants individually to see how they are coming with their financial and spiritual support. They will look to you for encouragement and support if they are struggling. Remind your team that they've already done the most difficult part- saying yes to going on the mission trip! Encourage them to use the tools they've been given- the sample letter and the website - and leave the rest up to God!

Logistics

- **Passports:** Make sure that any participant without a passport has successfully applied for one already.
- **Immunizations:** Encourage people to get their immunizations early.
- Send in any offline donations to MSC (include trip code)

3 Months before Your Mission Trip

Fundraising

- Continually track individual fundraising. Give encouragement and help when you see someone struggling.
- Check progress on:
 - Online fundraising
 - Journals

- T-shirts
- Donations

Logistics

- Purchase flights
- Update Flight Information online as well as other important team information (i.e. emergency contact)
- Submit itemized list to MSC if you are donating medical supplies or medications.
- Confirm all missionaries have passports and immunizations

Media

With the trip fast approaching, you may think about contacting your local television, radio stations and newspapers and sending them a one-page “press release” that identifies the who, what, where, when, and why of your trip. Be sure to include a contact person name and phone number as well. Do not forget your local interfaith newspapers, radio stations and public broadcasting networks. Your local Catholic diocese will have a weekly newspaper in most cases and other religious organizations in your area may also be interested in hearing about your trip.

Donations

At this stage, you should begin your collection of the various items and supplies that you will be bringing to Mustard Seed. If you are planning a clothing, food, diaper, or toy drive, please make sure you begin advertising at this point and begin careful organization of the event itself. Your group may have many questions about donations at this time, so you may want to limit the number of items you are collecting to your top ten. This will help to avoid collecting things that will not really be useful to the people you will be serving. Make sure that you have established a designated place for collection and storage of these items.

2 Months before Your Mission Trip

- Individual fundraising – are people reaching their goals? Does someone need help?
- Check progress on:
 - o Journal
 - o T-shirts
 - o Collection of donations

1 Month before Your Mission Trip

- **Final Funds due one month prior to departure!**
- Paper work for YOU to take to MSC:
 - o Schedule
 - o Insurance Information
 - o Consent for Minor Travel (if traveling with unaccompanied minors)
 - o Passports
- Plan Packing Party & Implement **NO LATER THAN** two weeks before your trip
 - o Since there are fees for checked bags, we recommend scrutinizing the donations you accept. Ask yourself, “Does the value of the donations packed in this luggage exceed the cost we will be paying to bring it to MSC?” Check Baggage Requirements for your airline, specifically dimensions, weight and cost for checked and carry-on bags for international flights.
 - o Collect things you’ll need for the packing party (scale, labels, brightly colored ribbon)
 - o For many groups, this gathering will be the last time everyone sees each other before meeting at the airport. Make this a celebration of all your hard work in preparing for this mission trip! Share a meal, spend time in prayer, and pack all of the generously donated items together!

- Make labels for your luggage tags ahead of time so that your group won't have to fill them out at the airport. Bring these to the airport. Also, mark the mission trip bags by tying brightly colored string to the handles so that they are easy to retrieve.
- **How to Pack Donations:** Donated items will be checked as your luggage. The donated items should be packed in duffle bags or suitcases separate from personal items. Do not pack your donations in bins. Take the donated items out of their package to free up much needed luggage space for additional items. Again, encourage missionaries to try and pack personal items in a carry-on luggage and assign two donation bags as their check-in luggage. Each bag or luggage should be packed and have a list describing the contents. When the bags are assigned to a mission volunteer, he/she should receive the index card listing all the contents. When the mission volunteer checks in at the airport, he/she will be checking their own luggage and will need to know what is in the bag and be able answer questions regarding its contents. The mission volunteer should hold this card until they have cleared customs at their destination. The group leader should have a master list of all checked bags and their contents. The Value in Kind list of all donated items needs to be turned into the Mission Program Coordinator at least two weeks prior to departure. We realize this process can be tedious, but as an organization, we need to have a record of these valuable donations.
- Confirm with your airlines any requirements for excess baggage fees, sizes, weights, labeling, etc.

3 Weeks before Your Mission Trip

- Make sure that each mission volunteer has collected prayer partners
- Send a mass email to prayer partners and other supporters to keep them involved and informed about your trip- remember you'll need prayers during your trip, too!
- Establish a Contact Person at home to update family while you are away, if needed.
 - The Contact Person at home will receive daily updates from the group. He/she will be responsible for passing on information to family back home. We have found that a quick and simple text or email to concerned family is sufficient. If there is an emergency at home, this person will have the contact information for family to reach their mission volunteer in Jamaica. Recruit this person ONLY if your group feels that it is necessary to update family when you are on your mission trip.

2 Weeks before Your Mission Trip

- Schedule transportation for missionaries and donations to airport
- Turn in final donations to MSC USA (include trip code)

1 Day before Your Mission Trip

- Confirm your flight online. Remember to bring the airline tickets.

Departure Day!

- Pass out T-shirts & journals to group before they go through security
- Make sure each mission volunteer has a list of what is in their donation bag
- As Leader, remember to bring the PLANE TICKETS and to CHECK IN AS A GROUP.

At the Airport & On the Plane

- Meet group at airline ticket counter 3 hours before flight
- Getting Through Customs: All missionaries are responsible for their own luggage. Make sure that you find your particular luggage and transport them to the designated custom line. Only provide the list of items in your

luggage if asked. If the mission volunteer is informed as to what is in his/her luggage and lets the custom agent know, it will help with the credibility of the group. The Customs official may confiscate or charge you import taxes on some items. This rarely happens, but if it does, handle it the best you can. Now you are ready to go through your final line to leave the building. If there are luggage handlers outside, they may have a designated system for you to follow to get your luggage to your bus.

Lost Luggage

If the airline loses any luggage, then it is important to fill out the proper paperwork before you leave. Generally, they will “find” them the next day and someone can make arrangements to pick them up for you.

Welcome!

Once outside, you will be greeted by MSC staff who will lead you to the bus. Once your whole group is ready, you will be off to start your trip. Please feel free to ask them questions right away and throughout your trip. They will give your group an orientation once you have arrived to the home.

Your Home Away From Home

As a leader, enjoy your group and take in the experience! All your hard work will pay off now. Most importantly, go with the flow!

Orientation with MSC Staff

- Establish sleeping arrangements and expectations of your group.
- Explain procedures for drinking water and showers.
- Review security issues and collect passports and money to be locked up.
- Post individual jobs during the trip and ask each person to sign up.
- Unpack group supplies and donations and let MSC staff know what to take.

Last Day of Mission Trip

Turn in evaluation form to MSC and return phone and keys to MSC staff.

Post-Trip

Sharing Your Story

Your mission experience does not end when you get back home. The children of Mustard Seed Communities need you to be their voice. Tell their stories and share your mission experience with your community.

- Plan a picture party reunion for the group and their families & loved ones
- Turn in any remaining funds and supporters’ addresses to MSC (include trip code)

Staying Connected

Help Mustard Seed Communities share your stories on your behalf. Our office would love to hear about your experience. Connect with us via email and social media to let us know how you are spreading the word!

Leader Resources

Pre-trip Planning Groups & Responsibilities

Have each mission volunteer choose a group and let them work together to prepare different parts of the trip. This will give them a reason to communicate and develop a relationship prior to your trip. It will also take some of the burden off you, the Leader. Remember to trust the members of your group but give them guidance as well. Be sure to check-in with each group below occasionally to see what progress has been made.

1. Spiritual Activities

- Choose a novena or prayer for each day of your trip.
- Help plan the morning and/or nightly devotionals for your trip.
- Assist with para-liturgies while on the trip.
- Develop, print & complete the Mission Trip Journal for your group.
- Music - coordinate music with CDs or preferably plan live music (can be separate group depending on size).

2. Community Building & Communications

- Help distribute information to mission volunteers throughout pre-trip phase.
- Find creative ways for the group to get to know each other before trip.
- Plan and implement ice breakers before and during the trip.
- Design a t-shirt and find a sponsor to print it, if possible. Order 4 extra to leave with staff.
- Organize secret prayer partners during trip. A prayer partner generally leaves a secret note every day. Reveal prayer partners on the last day of the trip.
- Plan an informal social for a meeting & plan the picture party reunion (when your group returns).

3. Cultural Exchange & Donations

- Organize the collection and storage of your donations that your group will take with you.
- Organize the packing and tracking of inventory for all donations. Check with airlines about packing regulations. Submit list to MSC. Give each mission volunteer a list of the contents in their luggage.
- Develop a Staff appreciation idea for the MSC staff.
- Solicit donations that represent your hometown/group to take with you (sports teams, etc.
- Research facts about Jamaica and plan a presentation to present to the group at a meeting.

4. Publicity/Media & Fundraising

- Contact your local Catholic Newspaper or other Faith Denominations' Papers, TV/Cable, Radio Stations and other local media to let them know of the trip.
- Solicit publicity for the trip to draw attention to the organization you are serving.
- Collect the names/response cards from each donation and "prayer partner."
- This group creates a database of all support (prayers, funds, goods in kind) that will be essential for your trip.
- This is a huge job. Make sure that at least 2 or 3 people take the lead with this. With this list of names, the trip leader can email everyone that is supporting your trip.
- This is a great way to keep your supporters involved in your mission trip so that their involvement doesn't end with their donation.

5. Logistics

- Collects fundraising money, photocopies the checks, sends them to MSC.
- Confirms that mission volunteers have had their immunizations & make first aid kits
- Develop list of needed construction supplies -help with donation/purchase of these items

Individual Jobs for Your Group during the Trip

Each person should be assigned a job to take care of while on the trip. It is best to assign/pick them the first night of your trip. Print this out and hang it in the Common Area so that the group can choose their jobs.

_____, _____ **Historian** – coordinates group journal writing/blog entries

_____, _____ **Video/MC team** – takes video throughout trip

_____, _____ **Photographer** – eliminates taking 15 pictures with different cameras for those great group shots. Have one person designated as group photographer.

_____, _____ **Rosary leaders** – brings rosaries and “How to Say” handouts.

_____, _____ **Novena leaders** – reminds group to say novena each day

_____, _____ **Water team** – makes sure that water is brought to work sites and that people are staying hydrated.

_____, _____ **Work captains** – during work projects, leads a smaller group, keeps them focused, on track and motivated.

_____, _____ **Wake up crew** – wakes up the group each morning (need female and male)

_____, _____ **Lights out Crew**- lights out at 11pm in the dorm rooms (need female and male)

_____, _____ **Music Group** – responsible for bringing instruments and a player and providing music each day

_____, _____ **Cell Phone carrier**

_____, _____ **Key Holder** (need female and male)

_____, _____ **Prayer partner coordinator** – provides area to leave messages/gifts each night and distributes them

_____, _____ **1st aid kit and medical forms** - responsible for making sure it is with the group at all times

_____, _____ **Nametag person** (give this job to a shy person or someone who hasn't built community with the group yet) – makes nametags for the kids each day. This helps group bond with the children.

_____, _____ **Brawns and Muscles**

_____, _____ **People counter** (give this job to the person you think will always be last) – responsible for making sure everyone is accounted for on the bus or other places when group is ready to leave.

_____, _____ **Chores coordinator**- reminds the entire group of the chores that need to get done (meal prep, meal clean up, trash, dining area, kitchen, male dorm, female dorm, etc.)