

Servant Preparation

“Give preference to one another in honor” - Romans 12:10

“Let each of you regard one another as more important than himself” - Philippians 2:3

“Through Love serve one another” - Galatians 5:13

“Whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave” - Matthew 20:26-27

As you prepare your heart through prayer, prepare to become a servant to the Lord by remembering some key points to be aware of during this mission trip.

1. Flexibility

The number one word in doing mission trips is “FLEX”! No matter how much we plan, we will still be in another culture and their concept of time is usually not the same as ours.

On one mission trip I had just completed the week long trip and saw the bus full of volunteers off to go to the airport earlier that morning. I had made plans to take the children I sponsor in Russia to see the movie “The Passion of the Christ”. I had planned to take them to the 10am showing as it was less expensive. I met my translator at 9am and called their home. No answer. I called at 9:30am. No answer. I kept calling and finally at 11:00am their was an answer. They were in the habit of sleeping in on Saturday mornings. We finally went to the movie at 2:00pm! I had to adjust my planned schedule to meet their needs, even though I felt like I was wasting time according to my culture!

Be prepared and plan, but be prepared to be flexible and go with the flow as it’s presented. God is in control and He has a reason!

2. Time / Punctuality

It’s so important for everyone to be on time to breakfast, our meetings, and meeting to depart. We have to travel in groups as there will be only one translator/guide per group to take us to our ministry location.

I had heard a story from another ministry who had taken a large group to Russia. Each morning the group was expected to be on the bus at an appointed time. The bus couldn’t leave until everyone was on the bus. One 14 year old teenage boy was

perpetually late every morning. First it was 20 minutes late, then 30 minutes late then one morning everyone was sitting on the bus for an hour before he showed up. The next morning the same boy was late again. After waiting 30 minutes, they discovered he hadn't even woken up. The group leader said it was not fair to the rest of the group and the bus would have to leave. The father protested and said his 14 year old son should not stay in his room by himself in the hotel for an entire day. Despite the protest the bus left, leaving the boy in the hotel and missing the day's mission trip activities. After returning home the father wrote a letter to the head of this ministry organization protesting. The organization head wrote back something to the effect that the father was to blame and the group leader made the right decision not to wait.

The person who is late delays the entire group and either prevents them from doing the ministry assignment for that day or reduces the time spent in ministry or touring. This is not fair to the other group members. If trip participants can not be on time, the group may choose to leave someone in the hotel all day long without a translator. It's so important to be on time. Our time in Russia is precious and short, and no one wants to waste it. Please ensure you are on time to all activities.

3. Enthusiasm

Show enthusiasm in everything you do! Smile! It will catch on with the other members and the children you minister to. Have fun and show it! It's a great witness inside the orphanages, shelters, and transition homes!

At the same time, we must control our enthusiasm in public while walking on the streets and in the subways. Many Russians are offended by seeing happy Americans laughing and being boisterous. Russians have a history of having difficult lives and many people walk in unhappiness and sadness.

We are here to bring the light of Jesus, but we must temper our enthusiasm in a way that does not offend or break down a relationship in our witness for Him. So be happy in the orphanages, shelters, and transition homes and show great enthusiasm! However, on the streets walking, riding in the subway, or breakfast in the hotel in the morning, be more subdued so we don't offend the folks who need witnessing to!

4. Patience

As we travel, lose sleep, work hard, and walk a lot, our patience will be tested. Some of you will say, no... this won't happen to me. It's only a week and I can afford to lose a little sleep and I'm used to working hard.

I've seen it during many trips before. Trip participants stay up until 2am talking and sharing about their experiences that day. Then wake up at 6:30am to start another day. By mid week, tempers are short and patience is thin. Trip participants react quickly to shortcomings in others without thinking due to loss of patience. Then our group becomes a poor witness for Strategic Angel Care, Americans, and Jesus Christ.

Our translators are the first to notice, but even some of the kids we are there to witness to notice this behavior in Christians they have come to adore.

Remember to get enough rest so your patience won't be tested and used by Satan to unravel the good news we have come to proclaim!

5. Endurance

Towards the end of our mission trip, participants often become tired. Again, this usually relates to getting enough rest at night before working in ministry all day long. By Wednesday, most of you will be tired and will begin to feel more relaxed with your surroundings as you get used to your daily routine. However, this is the day folks begin to lose energy.

On past mission trips I could tell the difference in the group that was ready to go explore and go do on Monday, were showing signs of slowing down on Wednesday. They would walk slower to their destinations, complain a little bit more, and feel tired. Much like running a race or walking in a long distance community fund raiser, individual participants need to pace themselves for the long haul. It doesn't help you or the group if you are running hard the first part of the trip and then run out of steam during the last part.

As a recommendation, trip participants who are not use to walking a lot should prepare for this trip by walking 30 minutes each day a month or two before the trip to build up their endurance.

On this mission trip, remember to pace yourself, get rest, drink lots of water, and wear comfortable shoes. These are all factors in helping to keep your endurance up at the beginning of the mission trip the same as the last part of the mission trip. Pace yourself, don't be too energetic in the beginning and not enough in the end! Show your endurance all through your mission trip.

6. Prepare for your assigned responsibility

Each of you has committed to go on this mission trip that will last a little over a week. That week will be exciting and full of joy as you minister to the children in orphanages, shelters, and transition homes. They will love all the activities that you have prepared for them and appreciate spending time with them. Each person needs to be prepared before they go. Mission trips like these are not geared to studying the material the night before. All activities, Bible studies, arts and crafts, games and theme activities must be prepared BEFORE going on the mission trip. Certainly, it's good to review the night before, but this should not be your preparation time. Trip participants need to be fully familiar with what they are going to do before going. They should know how to put together the arts and crafts, or prepare for questions

that might be asked during the Bible study. This preparation is expected by the others working with you and the kids you work with will expect you to be prepared.

Job assignments have been assigned to give everyone ownership in the mission trip. If you don't prepare your part, no one else will and your effectiveness on this mission will be diminished. Come fully prepared for everything. IF there are questions or you need help in preparing some area, please let the SAC leadership know. It's so important to the kids and everyone else that we all come prepared!

7. Prepare as a Servant

Go with the heart of being a servant. Nationals easily recognize and resist an outsider who has his own agenda. In contrast, the servant heart is unmistakable to all, and opens the door to effective communication and ministry.

When I first went to Russia in 1999, I had written a schedule of everything that would be done and at what times. I had fully prepared for all the activities, arts and crafts, and games and was ready to implement MY schedule when I arrived at this orphanage camp two hours North of St. Petersburg. That first day the kids had to go eat when the bell was rung at 12:30. That wasn't in my plan. Children 12 and under had to take a nap from 2-4pm each day. That wasn't in my plan. Snack time was at 4:15 and the bell was rung in the middle of our Bible study. I could see the looks on the faces of the kids of wanting to go get their snack and at the same time not wanting to be rude to their guests. That wasn't in my plan! I had to adjust quickly the next day to THEIR schedule. By the third day, the children didn't have to take naps and we adjusted around the rest of their scheduled items. The nationals resisted at first to our agenda, but changed after they saw our willingness to be flexible and become servants to them!

On one of our trips, a few of our members were doing ministry at Child in Danger. While some took a break from preparations, a couple stayed and helped clean the toilets, wash windows, mop or whatever was needed. This servant's heart attitude *significantly* changed the outlook by the workers and staff at this shelter! Trip participants are warmly greeted when SAC arrives and relationships for Christ are tightly woven!