

WHILE *you are* TRAVELING

By the time you depart, your experience should be fully and completely grounded in the core values outlined in the Introduction. In doing so this trip is transformed from any other type of travel or service work to a mission of building relationships through the love and grace of God.

Before you leave for the mission experience or pilgrimage, review the goals you have established with your team and work through the theological shape of the experience, incorporating these daily opportunities for spiritual practices and conversations.

When You Arrive

After you arrive at your destination, be careful to note how your Team is responding to the new environment. Process any strong reactions carefully and pastorally. In addition, make time to cover any culturally sensitive behaviors and language that you need to reinforce with the young people. On this first day, you might consider inviting a member of the community, neighborhood, or a local expert to discuss cultural and physical specifics.

Establishing Group Norms

The first few days of your mission experience will set the tone for the remainder of the trip. Be especially mindful of your pattern of travel, eating, sleeping, worship, working, and

processing to ensure that it is predictable. Daily worship, group check-ins, rest periods, and 8 hours of sleep should be non-negotiables.

Here is an example for a daily routine:

7 am	Wake Up
7:30 am	Breakfast and pack lunches
8:30 am	Morning Worship and Group meeting
9 am	Leave for the worksite
9:30 am	Begin work
12 noon	Lunch
1 pm	Return to work
4 pm	Finish work and return to lodging
4:30 pm	Rest
5:30 pm	Begin dinner preparation
6:30 pm	Dinner
8 pm	Evening Group meeting, daily processing, prep for tomorrow, and worship
11 pm	Lights out

In addition to group check-ins, it is important for each adult leader to touch base with youth participants on a daily basis. Simply asking, “How are you doing?” or noticing something the youth said or did and reflecting on it with them can give the young person the opportunity to share their individual experience and any emotional response they may be having.

Team Gatherings or Meetings

You will want to meet at least twice daily — morning and evening meetings. These give you an opportunity to review the schedule, address any concerns and join in prayer and reflection. Encourage youth leadership of these gatherings and use them to create a space where participants feel safe to share their feelings, their concerns, and their prayers.

Of course, as with all youth ministry, inspiration in the moment can and should overrule anything prepared in advance. Notice how the Team is responding to particular experiences and develop theologically relevant reflections that allow for young people to consider what they are experiencing in sacred ways.

For example:

- New cultural experiences can inspire conversations around embracing difference, loving your neighbor, tolerance, and the Christian belief that we are all members of the body of Christ

- Witnessing difficult living situations can inspire conversations around personal responsibility, justice, and charity
- Interacting with the natural environment can inspire conversations around our responsibility to the earth and ourselves

Trip Materials and Processing Time

Mission experience leaders often prepare materials that include possible liturgies for worship as well as reflection materials with space for journaling, and questions that get to individual highs/lows, opportunities/challenges or where did you experience God/where did God feel absent. Prepare relevant quotes, Scripture, music, worship, and meditations that can guide your mission experience and conversation.

Worship

If you are traveling over a Sunday, find a local Episcopal faith community to join in worship. Let them know the group will be visiting so they can extend hospitality and welcome the group during the service.

Be sure to involve the host community in these plans — and if there is no local Episcopal church, consider inviting them to join you in planning and participating in Sunday worship.