

A person with a backpack is walking away from the camera on a mountain trail. The scene is set at sunset or sunrise, with a warm orange and pink sky and a mountain range in the background. The person is wearing a dark shirt and shorts, and their backpack is visible. The text 'Mission, Passion, Action' is written in a large, white, cursive font over the top right of the image.

# Mission, Passion, Action

CHRIST FOR THE CITY INTERNATIONAL  
TEAM MEMBERS MANUAL

## CHRIST FOR THE CITY INTERNATIONAL TEAM MEMBERS INFORMATION PACKET

### AN INTRODUCTION:

Short-term mission trips are wonderful experiences, both for your team and for the ministries and missionaries you bless and serve overseas.

However, at Christ For the City International, we want our trips to not just be once-and-done service projects, but mission experiences with the purpose of lasting development, discipleship, care, mentorship and building the global church.

By going on a mission trip with Christ For the City International, you become a working part of our greater vision, to see *no place without a witness, no church without a vision, and no person without hope*. We exist to *transform cities by transforming lives*, and we are excited to have you be a part of what God is doing around the world.

We want your team to have a lasting impact, both within your own hearts and lives, and in your host nations. We want this trip to be a lasting mentorship and discipleship opportunity.

We encourage this in a number of ways:

1. Support in the lead up to your mission trip (aligning our hearts with God's *mission*).
2. Quality processing while you are on the field, and debrief after you return.
3. Connecting you with a real global need that you can support long term.

**Please use the following contents pages to find the relevant sections of this packet that are useful to you.**

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# PART OF THE TEAM

## PART ONE



Being part of a short-term mission team is a big honor and responsibility. Going into another nation to share the Gospel and assist with practical needs is often a transformational time for you, the host nation and the people to whom you will be ministering.

Here are some helpful questions to answer before you commit to your missions team:

1. **Have you prayed about it?**
2. **Will you work well as a team member?**
3. **Will you submit to your leader and the leaders in your host nation?**
4. **Are you healthy enough to travel overseas?**
5. **Can you afford it, or are you willing to fundraise?**
6. **Can you afford the time off work or school?**
7. **What is your motive for coming on the mission trip?**
8. **How will you respond to different foods, dress, climates, customs and cultures?**
9. **Can you be flexible if plans change at the last minute?**

Talk to your team leader if you are unsure about honestly answering any of these questions. But, if you are sure you are committed to this team and to how God may want to use you on this trip, we are excited to have you along! Beginning this process is an exciting step, and we are sure that God is going to use you and your team mightily for building His Kingdom.

# PREPARATION MATERIAL (MISSION) PART TWO



Being a part of preparation sessions in the weeks and months leading up to your departure is very important. They are essential for planning the logistics of your mission trip, as well as bonding with your team, practicing whatever skills you will need, and preparing yourself spiritually, mentally and emotionally.

Make it a very high priority to be at every session that your leader schedules.

## GOD'S GREAT MISSION

Since the beginning of time on earth, God has been telling a story. He has been on a mission to redeem His people and call them back to Himself. He has been on a mission to restore the earth, to bring His Kingdom, and to spread the Good News to the entire world. Every short-term mission trip therefore is a small part of God's great mission. Your mission trip is about obeying and glorifying Jesus.

There are many benefits of going on a short-term mission trip, including:

1. ***It increases your sensitivity to those around you.*** On your trip, you will encounter issues of wealth and poverty, social estrangement, family violence, and governmental indifference that aren't part of your everyday life. Witnessing these problems will make you more sensitive to people in need around the world and in your own city.
2. ***It facilitates a better understanding of your own culture.*** While on the mission field, you will begin to see your home culture more clearly. It's easier to see the strengths and weaknesses in your own culture from a cross-cultural perspective.

3. ***It helps us accept new forms of spiritual expression.*** Missionaries and churches on the field may do things differently than your church at home. Being a part of their lives and ministry can teach you new things about God and how He often works in surprising and unexpected ways.
4. ***It helps people at home catch the vision.*** When you return home, you can spread the vision and passion God has given you for the place and people you met with your friends at home. You can also encourage your home church to get involved and help others catch the same vision you have been given.
5. ***It honors and affirms your hosts.*** Short-term missionaries do not always realize the impact they have on their host communities. Often what you receive seems greater than what you give. But your willingness to face cross cultural boundaries and give of your time and money to visit the people of the host community encourages them and demonstrates God's love in a real and practical way.

## PRACTICAL STEPS

- Are you 100% committed to coming on this mission trip?
- Have you filled out your application form? (And if applicable, your minor release form?)
- Have you got, or applied for a passport?
- Who could you ask to be a prayer partner or mission mentor?

## QUESTIONS:

What is God's mission for the world?

What is a mission trip?

How do short-term mission trips benefit the following people:

-The team members

-The team's church

-The missionaries on the field

-The local people being served

What skills do you have that God can use on this missions trip?

Read Matthew 28: 16 – 20. What is God's mission for all people?

What other things does God call all people to do? (Matthew 25: 34 – 40, Luke 4: 16 – 24 and Luke 1: 52 – 53)

How do you measure the success of a mission trip?

What do you think God is calling you to, in your life?

How does this mission trip fit into God's mission?

What three people can you ask to pray for you during your trip?

Who could you ask to be your mission mentor?

## **HOMEWORK**

## WHERE ARE WE GOING AND WHAT ARE WE DOING?

It's time to start thinking about the specifics of your mission trip. Ask yourself the following questions: What will your team be doing? What skills or practical steps do you need to take to be fully prepared? What do you need to know to be most prepared to go into your host nation? What do you hope to gain from your mission trip, both as an individual and as a group? What is the difference between your culture and the culture you will be visiting? What is culture shock, and how will you deal with it?

### PRACTICAL STEPS

- Do you need to fundraise?
- What steps are you taking to make sure that happens?

### SHARING YOUR TESTIMONY

What is your 'God' story? Being able to tell and express your testimony in a precise and God-glorifying manner is a skill that can take practice. Take the time to think about, and write out, how God has moved in your life.

During your mission trip, you may be asked to share your testimony on short notice, either in a long (10 minute) or short (1-2 minute) version. Therefore, it is important to be ready to share the story of how God has worked in your life.

You can start by asking the following questions:

What was your life like before you met Jesus?

What has your life been like since you met Him?

### QUESTIONS

Write down everything you know about the country you are going to:

What do you need to do, to prepare for your trip?

What questions do you want answered before you leave?

What is your testimony? Spend some time writing and sharing your testimony.

### HOMEWORK:

## PRAYER AND EXPECTATIONS

This is a time to pray for your trip, and think about your individual and group expectations. Pray for one another, for the team, for the nation, for the ministries, for the missionaries.

## PRACTICAL STEPS

- How are you going with raising the funds you need?
- Have you written a prayer letter or engaged with people who will pray for you?
- Do you need to get any vaccinations?

## QUESTIONS

What are your expectations about what you will be doing? How it will affect you?

What do you think God will do?

What are you most looking forward to?

What are you least looking forward to?

What are your expectations of your leader?

What are your expectations of your other team members?

## HOMEWORK

## MISSION STATEMENT

This session is focused on bonding your team by creating a unified goal and vision.

### MISSION STATEMENTS

It is always a good idea to create a 'mission statement' as a team.

#### ***What is a mission statement?***

A mission statement is usually a few sentences which summarize the purpose and passion behind a short-term mission trip. It answers the questions of who, where, when, why and how for the team.

#### ***Why are mission statements important?***

Mission statements provide unity, focus, bonding, action and direction for all team members. They allow the team to agree on the vision of the trip.

#### ***How do we create a missions statement?***

1. Pray.

This may sound silly, but prayer has to be the center of any mission statement. Ultimately, any mission trip you take should be for the purpose of glorifying God and fitting into His great mission. Ask God what He wants to do through your team. Write down any words, thoughts, pictures or ideas that come to mind through prayer.

2. Collect words and ideas

Discuss what everyone received in prayer.

Try and include some action words: praying, doing, blessing, serving, going, cooperating, preparing, loving, etc.

Try and include a purpose: to glorify God, to bless the base, to love people, to build a house, to feed the hungry, to share the Gospel, to strengthen relationships, etc.

It may also be a good idea to include or use a Bible verse that fits the team.

3. Write the statement

## PRACTICAL STEPS

As your team creates a mission statement, and as you prepare for your mission trip in your own prayer and quiet times, think and meditate on the following points. Can you agree to:

- **The Lordship of Jesus Christ:** What He says is the most important thing, and His people need to act in obedience.
- **Teamwork:** You need to work as a team, can you do this effectively? Humbly, and with grace?
- **Participation:** If there is an activity, food or cultural experience on the mission field that is new, different, or even gross or weird for you, are you willing to participate with the rest of your team?
- **Forgiveness:** If somebody hurts or offends you, are you willing to forgive and move past it for the sake of team unity?
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Are you willing to lay aside your own cultural preferences while in your host country, and do your best to act respectfully and thoughtfully?
- **A teachable attitude:** Are you teachable? Are you willing to learn new things about God, yourself, your life, your host nation, etc?
- **Personal Bible and prayer time:** Are you spending enough time preparing for your trip personally, by reading and studying the Bible and spending time in prayer?
- **Being under leadership:** Even if you personally disagree, are you willing to listen to and obey your leaders, both from your home and your host nation?
- **Flexibility:** Are you willing to be flexible, if things don't go according to plan, or if you are asked to do or say something at the last minute?
- **Humble service:** Are you willing to serve those around you on your team and in your host nation?
- **Female/male boundaries:** Are you willing to stick to the appropriate cultural boundaries between you and people of the opposite gender on your team, and in your host countries?
- **Your mission statement:** Do you agree with the mission statement of your team?
- **A good work ethic:** Are you willing to work hard on this mission trip?
- **God centeredness:** Are you willing to keep God at the center of everything you do, say and think, while on the mission field?

- **Positive attitudes and language:** Do you agree to keep a positive attitude no matter what the circumstances, and only use language that encourages your teammates and all those within your host nation?
- **Accountability:** Do you agree to be accountable for your actions, words and thoughts?

## DETAILS TALK AND WHAT TO DO UPON RETURN

This is a great time to iron out the final details of your trip.

Make sure you are clear about all the following points:

1. Emergency information: Have you given your team leader your emergency contact details?
2. Medical information: Does your team leader know about all your medical information?
3. Itinerary: Do you know specifics about what you will be doing as a team, and what part you have to play?
4. Passports: Do you have a valid passport, and have you given a copy of your passport to your team leader?
5. Visas: Do you need a visa?
6. Extra travel costs: How much extra travel money should you bring? How should you bring it? Do you need to exchange money before you go?
7. Packing list: Do you know what to bring?
8. Luggage size and weight: How much baggage can you bring on the airplane? How much can your bag(s) weigh?
9. Immunizations: Have you got all the vaccinations you need for your trip?
10. Electrical Outlet adaptors, etc: is there anything else you need to buy to live in the host country?

In addition, it's a great time to talk about how to have a lasting impact with this mission trip after you return. This is the 'action' part of the program, and is made possible through identifying a need when on the field.

By identifying a need, and how you can meet it, it not only keeps the relationship alive between your team and those to whom you minister, but it allows your group to make a real difference in an impoverished community, even after you return.

Your chosen need should be something that you can raise funds for and plan an event around when you come home. This preparation session is a good chance to set a date, and brainstorm ideas about how to do that.

This need should be unique to your team, something, or someone who especially touches the hearts of your team members.

We recommend that this 'need' is one of three options:

1. Child Sponsorship - Consider sponsoring a child as a group. For just \$39 per month, you can provide for their education, health care and food.
2. Sponsoring a program or missionary that you serve with.
3. A physical need, such as soccer balls, musical instruments, books or buildings.

We encourage every team to listen to where God is leading, pick a need while on the field, and meet it upon return.

## QUESTIONS

Where are you at physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, logistically?

Are we organized?

What do you have left to do?

What kind of needs are you expecting to see in the host country?

How can we make sure we make a long-term difference as a team?

What dates are we free, after we return, to set up debrief sessions and host a fundraising, advocacy and report-back time?

## HOMEWORK

## MISSION ASSIGNMENTS AND FINAL PREPARATION

During this session your team leader will give you a mission assignment. This is a specific role that you are to play during the mission trip, to ensure that the team works well together.

### PRACTICAL STEPS

Make sure you find out these details from your team leader:

- Airport details - When and where are you going to meet?
- The schedule
- Contact information - How can family/friends contact you in case of an emergency?
- Confirm debrief times and report-back sessions

### QUESTIONS

What mission assignment did each person on your team receive?

Are you happy?

Can you identify any gaps that haven't been covered?

How are we going to work as a team?

How are you feeling about the trip?

Do you feel prepared mentally, physically, spiritually and emotionally?

What else needs to happen, before we leave?

How would you summarize your preparation and feelings for the trip in one word?

# FUNDRAISING

## PART THREE



### HAVING A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

Before you begin talking about fundraising, read through the following passage as a team: 1 Corinthians 9:1-18.

What are your thoughts on this passage?

What does the Bible say about raising support?

What principles from the passage apply to your situation as you raise funds for your trip?

### MEETING A NEED

From experience, we know that when teams come back from the field they are often 'itchy', rocked and changed by the needs they see and the people that they meet. They have changed, but their world at home has not. This creates an odd feeling known as reverse culture shock.

You come home hungry for more and wanting to make a difference. This is why we strongly encourage your team to continue the relationship between yourself and the country and base you are going to visit.

While on the field, we encourage your team to 'identify a need' that especially impacts you, and then 'spotlight' that need when you return. More often than not, part of this process will be meeting some kind of financial need.

In addition to your own personal fundraising, we also strongly encourage you to go above and beyond, in order to identify and meet a need while on the field, and when you return.

The potential of your story telling in this process is phenomenal. By sharing your stories with your network, Christ For the City International, and the world, it allows others to consider, pray through and discover mission opportunities for themselves and for their teams. This ensures new people are discovering missions, blessing the bases, and being active in their faith. The power of your stories to move and engage others is hugely important and limitless.

Please send all stories, blog posts, details of events and photos to:

**Angie Busch**

Mission Teams Department Director

angieb@cfc.org

## FUNDRAISING EVENTS

### 40 HOURS

For youth teams especially, we recommend a fundraising program called “40 hours on the ground”.

*What is it?*

‘40 hours on the ground’ has two components.

1. Before departure, your team picks a 40 hour period within three weeks of your departure to live ‘on the ground’, literally – going without furniture such as beds, chairs, tables, etc.

The purpose of this is to ‘go without’, while raising personal support and sponsorship from your family and friends for the chosen need your team decides on.

You are giving up something to raise funds for a cause that your team is passionate about, therefore linking your team and your host community in a lasting way.

2. The second part of being ‘on the ground’ is to report back what it was like ‘on the ground’, as in - on the mission field. The purpose of this element is to effectively debrief you and your team members, and to share with others in a fun and interesting way what happened and what you experienced. It’s to continue the conversation with your established community.

This component is very flexible. What your groups decides to do during those 40 hours is very open. You could have your team debrief, run a church-wide sharing night, host an event, pray through the night, have a sleepover, etc.

Before the event, you need to gather ‘sponsors’ as a means of fundraising. You can be sponsored for the entire event as a whole, or per hour. For example, \$1 for every hour.

#### **OTHER ‘40 HOUR’ FUNDRAISING IDEAS:**

- 40 hours of fettuccine - The whole team only eats fettuccine for forty hours, and is sponsored for it.
- 40 hours of figs - Same concept as above.
- 40 hours of fungus - You can only eat things that technically contain fungus, like mushrooms, blue cheese, tofu and yeast based products.
- 40 hours of photos - Every hour somebody posts a photo of the team on Facebook with a story attached.
- 40 hours on the fence - One member of the team has to be sitting on a fence for 40 hours straight, taking shifts.
- 40 hours of continuous prayer

#### **OTHER FUNDRAISING IDEAS**

Here is a list of other fundraising ideas:

**FAMILY:** Babysit, Father–Daughter Dance, Easter Egg Hunt, Mother’s Day Flowers, Spa Night, Trivia Night.

**FOOD:** Bake Sale, Cook-off, Coffee Bar, Cookie Dough Sale, Cooking Class, Dinner and a Movie, Ethnic Dinner, Fasting Fast Food, LemonAID Stand, Pancake Breakfast, Taco Bar, Tea Party

**SALES:** Business Sponsorship, Discount Cards, Garage Sale, Grant Writing, Matching Gifts, Raffle, T-Shirt Sale, Silent Auction, Spare Change Collection, Support Letters, ‘Rent a Team Member’ (to do yard work, babysitting, moving house, etc.)

**SPORTS:** Basketball Tournament, Dodge Ball Tournament, Video Game Competition, Golf Outing, Host a 5K Race, Super Bowl Party, Walk-a-thon

**THE ARTS:** Art Show, Ball Room Dancing Lessons, Battle of the Bands, Concert, Craft Show, Recycled Fashion Show, Poetry Reading

**WORK:** Can Collection, Dog Wash, Mow-athon, Service Auction, Car Wash, Work Day

## WRITING A FUNDRAISING SUPPORT LETTER

### TIPS

The purpose of writing a fundraising support letter is not just to raise financial support, but to create a community who will pray for you and your team, and invite others to be invested in what God is doing through you, through the team, and throughout the world.

Here are some tips and guidelines for writing and giving out a support letter:

- **Pray.** Pray about whom to ask for support, pray for softened hearts, pray for the words to ask, and pray for the response.
- **Make a list of people to whom you want to send letters.** Think about family, friends, church community and other social groups you are a part of.
- **Make sure you know exactly how much you need to raise,** and what it’s going towards. Break that down into manageable chunks. For example, if you need to raise \$1,000, communicate the fact that it can be made up of 10 donations of \$100, 20 donations of \$50, 40 donations of \$25, etc. Do not be afraid to give suggestions on donation amounts.
- **Be personable.** It may be a good idea to call, text or talk to people before you give them your letter. Let them know that it’s coming, or even ask them if it would be okay if you sent it to them. Give out as many as you can in person.
- **Include a response card.** Send a form which provides people with the basic details of the trip and how to donate.

- Make sure you ***thank everybody who donates***, both directly after their donation, and after the trip is over. It's a great idea to take a team photo while on the field with a sign that says 'thank you' so that everybody can send it to their donors.
- Here are some tips about how to structure your letter:

Greeting

Details about your current life situation

Why you are writing to them

Trip details (where you are going, what you will be doing, when you are going)

Your hopes and expectations about the trip (your personal vision)

What your financial needs are

How people can give

How people can track with you/ your team (blog, social media etc)

Prayer Points

Contact Details

## TEMPLATE

Dear **NAME**,

I hope this letter finds you well!

As you may or may not know I am currently **(DETAILS ABOUT CURRENT LIFE SITUATION, i.e.: in my last year of High School, finishing up my college degree, leading youth group at my church...)**

... I have been given the amazing opportunity to go on a short-term mission trip with Christ For the City International to **(CITY, COUNTRY)**. My team **(DETAILS, e.g.: of 15 other youth from Faith Bible Church)** will be **(DETAILS OF MINISTRY OPPORTUNITY AND DATES, e.g.: serving for a week at RENACER, a rehabilitation home for drug addicted street girls, between June 4 – 11<sup>th</sup>. RENACER is the only facility in all of Costa Rica where girls under the age of 18, who are addicted to drugs and alcohol, can come to receive love, healing and the Good News of Jesus Christ. My team and I will be going to pray for these girls, love them with practical gifts of clothes and products, and to help 12 of them prepare for their graduation.**

I am writing to ask for your prayers and support. God has given me such excitement for this trip because **(DETAILS, e.g.: I have a huge heart for working with children/ it's always been my passion to serve Him in every opportunity/I am inspired by what Jesus said in the Great commission, etc.)**

In order to go on this mission trip, I need to raise **(AMOUNT)** by **(DATE)**. Would you prayerfully consider sponsoring me financially? **(BREAK DOWN FINANCES, e.g.: If 20 people donate \$50, or 40 people donate \$25, I will meet my financial needs).**

You can donate by **(DONATION DETAILS)**.

Financial support aside, I also do humbly ask for your prayers, both in preparation and during my time on the field. Please pray **(PRAYER REQUESTS e.g.: for the health of our team, for the raising of all our financial support, for God to work in our hearts, etc).**

Thank you for your friendship and support. I look forward to sharing with you about my time in **(COUNTRY)** when I return home!

Abundant Blessings,

**(YOUR NAME)**.

# PROCESSING YOUR TRIP PART FOUR



Your mission trip can often be very fast-paced and full, and so it's important to take time out when on the field to talk about, discuss, process and pray about what is happening, what is going well, how you are feeling, and what needs to change.

## QUESTIONS TO ANSWER AT THE BEGINNING OF YOUR TRIP

How are you doing physically, spiritually and emotionally?

What are your personal goals for this mission trip?

What kind of a difference are you hoping to make?

What have you already learned about yourself?

If you had to rate yourself, how are you adapting to being in a different culture?

How can you be a blessing to this nation?

How can you be a blessing to the other members on your team?

What specific person, ministry, family or missionary has impacted you? Why?

How are you doing with your mission's assignment? How can you improve?

## QUESTIONS TO ANSWER IN THE MIDDLE

How are you doing physically, spiritually, emotionally?

What did you learn about God today?

What did you learn about your host country today?

How can you encourage the people on your team today?

What are the three greatest prayer requests of the ministries you have visited?

What is God showing you about suffering?

What are you thankful for at home?

What are you learning about yourself?

What are you learning about God's people?

What are you learning about the church?

What are you learning about the way the world works?

What is God doing in the lives of the missionaries here?

How is God answering prayer?

What are three words you could use to describe the attitude of your team so far?

How has God been blessing your team?

Draw on the back: what has been outside/ inside your comfort zone?

How are you doing with your mission assignment? How can you improve?

What specific person, ministry, family or missionary has impacted you? Why?

## QUESTIONS TO ANSWER NEAR THE END

What did you learn about how culture impacts the way people live and understand the gospel?

Being here, how do you view your own culture differently?

If you had grown up here, how might your life and your walk with Jesus be different?

What has been the highlight of your trip so far?

What has surprised you most about the trip?

What has God broken your heart for during this trip?

What is the biggest lesson that God has been teaching you?

Has God spoken anything to you about your future?

Look back at the goal you set for yourself at the beginning of the trip, did you meet it?

What kind of a difference have you made?

What did you learn about joy?

What did you learn about fear?

What did you learn about pain?

Did your expectations meet the reality of your trip?

Who are the people and what are the things that you are going to miss?

What have you seen here that you want to take back home?

How is God calling you to live differently than when you arrived?

How can you glorify God when answering the question, "How was your trip?"

What specific person, ministry, family or missionary has impacted you? Why?

Summarize all your feelings about the trip into one word:

## TEAM DEBRIEFING SESSION

### QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS:

1. How did you feel about other cultures?

BEFORE YOUR TRIP	DURING YOUR TRIP	AFTER YOUR TRIP
<p>Did you have any preconceived ideas about certain types of people?</p> <p>Were you afraid of anything?</p>	<p>What was different?</p> <p>What was the same?</p>	<p>Is the way you view your own culture the same or different?</p> <p>How has your perspective changed?</p>

2. When somebody asks you, "How was your trip?", what do you say? What would be a better way to answer this question?
3. How did your expectations before the trip match the realities of what you experienced?
4. What prayers did God answer?
5. How was God glorified during your trip?
6. What was the need (person, ministry, family, material possession) that most impacted you? What about your team?
7. What is the need that your team has decided on?
8. Now that you are home, how can you best work toward meeting that need?

## QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

1. What was the best part of the trip?
2. What was (or remains) your greatest disappointment?
3. What did God teach you?
4. As a group, what are you going to do about your identified need? What are you personally going to do?
5. In what ways can you share your story to inspire other people to go on a mission trip, or care about the issues that touched your heart?
6. Draw on the timeline. What has God done during your trip?

BEFORE

DURING

AFTER

7. Do you feel like there are any unresolved issues between you and any other member of the team?
8. Describe your whole experience in one word.
9. What is your three-word mission story?

BEFORE

DURING

AFTER

Write a short reflection of your trip based on these three words.

### TEAM EXERCISE

Write yourself a letter to open in 6 months time. Explain how you feel about your trip, what God did, and where you would like to be in 6 months time.

What would you like to remember? What would you like to have achieved?

Where do you want to be in your relationship with God?

## WHERE CAN YOU SHARE YOUR STORY?

Sharing your story is invaluable, for raising support and awareness for your chosen need, and inspiring others to go on a short-term mission trip. Here are some ideas about where you can share your short-term mission story:

- Christ For the City International
- Team blog
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Youth Group
- Church
- Sunday School
- Work Places

# UNDERSTANDING LATIN AMERICAN CULTURE PART FIVE



Culture affects everything, from how we view life, to the way we relate to one another.

The differences between our North American culture and the Latin American culture are vast and unique. It's important to do our best to understand both the culture we have come from and the one we are going to.

## **THE NORTH AMERICAN POINT OF VIEW**

The culture of North America, as it is today, began with people seeking freedom from religious persecution and oppression in Europe. The first European settlers of North America viewed their conquest and settlement of the New World as their destiny. This perspective of oppressed settlers finding their God-given destiny in a new land resulted in the optimism of today's North American culture. To the North American, life is what they decide it will be, and the power to create a good life for themselves is within their reach. In general, North Americans tend to have a sense of control over their lives. North Americans often feel they can depend on themselves and their resources, and believe that if they work hard, they will achieve success.

## **THE LATIN AMERICAN POINT OF VIEW**

The culture of today's Latin America is the result of a very different history. The first European visitors to Latin America were Spanish, who came to conquer and plunder the already advanced indigenous societies that existed at that time. Latin Americans were not just conquered, they were forced to assimilate into their cultures the blood and beliefs of their conquerors.

Ancient indigenous cultures were supplanted and Spanish culture imposed. Latins consider themselves 'the sons of the raped ones'. They were enslaved and the resources of their countries taken off to Europe or given

to their conquerors. This history led to a culture that is a blend of both Spanish and indigenous cultures, which is often a source of confusion and ambivalence for Latin Americans. They both love and hate Spanish culture, while having an equally mixed set of feelings toward their indigenous cultures. Being conquered and oppressed lends a sense of fatalism and distrust of outsiders to Latin American culture, but has also contributed to a more spiritual view of the world than many North Americans possess.

## KEYS TO A CULTURAL VIEW OF TRUTH

Latin cultures, perhaps because of the capricious way that they were governed by the conquistadors, view law as relative to who is in power. North Americans coming to establish a new land and fleeing religious persecution see law (and truth) as having absolute qualities.

**Spirituality:** Latin American cultures are very spirit-oriented and sensitive to the spiritual dimensions of how the world operates. North Americans, due to their cause and effect worldview, see the world in more materialistic terms.

**Time:** In Latin America, time is not as important as people. In North America time is more important than people. North American culture is event oriented. Latin American culture is people oriented.

## CONTRASTING VIEWS BETWEEN NORTH AMERICANS AND LATIN AMERICANS

*(The following information is the opinion of Mexican anthropologists and sociologists, and may not reflect the views of other countries. These are people with different perceptions and we need to be aware of them. Remember that a lot of the general population of Latins gets their idea of the North American culture from our TV programs.)*

North Americans are optimistic; Latin Americans are fatalistic.

North Americans are goal oriented; Latin Americans are people oriented.

North Americans spend their time earning money; Latin Americans spend their time building relationships.

North Americans believe in Democratic leadership; Latin Americans have experienced authoritarian leadership.

North Americans value success above people and relationships; Latin Americans focus on their families.

North Americans are materialistic; Latin Americans are spiritual.

North Americans are independent; Latin Americans are interdependent.

North Americans communicate directly; Latin Americans communicate indirectly.

## LIVING WITH A HOST FAMILY

When team members return home, most often the aspect of their mission trip that had the greatest impact was the time spent with their host family. With Christ For the City International, your days will begin and end with your host family. It is an amazing experience that allows you to see on a firsthand basis how the local people live in the country where you serve.

Here are some answers to commonly asked questions about host families:

### **How does CFCI select host families?**

CFCI host families are screened and chosen from partnering churches/ministries and then trained on receiving North Americans into their homes. These families are very excited for you to stay with them and often rearrange their home just to make space for you.

### **Will I stay with another team member?**

Yes, team members stay with host families in pairs and often share a room.

### **Will my family have food and water that is safe to eat/drink?**

Your host family will prepare meals that you can safely eat and you will have safe drinking water available.

### **What can I expect?**

The areas where you will work and stay will be quite different than what you are used to in the U.S. You may not be accustomed to the extent of poverty in the areas where CFCI works in Latin America.

### **Here are some things you might see:**

- Throwing your toilet paper away in a trash can beside the toilet
- Doors may not seem as secure
- Cockroaches and other bugs in the house
- Homes may not be as clean due to open house construction.
- Bathing with a bucket or taking cold showers
- Using an outhouse
- Challenges with being able to communicate verbally with your host family
- Dietary adjustments
- Restricted water usage due to water rationing
- Frequent power outages
- Homes with dirt floors

### **What if I don't speak Spanish well... or at all?**

While staying with your host family, it's perfectly normal to initially feel overwhelmed by the language barrier. However, don't let those feelings hold you back! Practice the Spanish that you know and ask your family in Spanish or with actions about new words and phrases. Get out your Bible and share your favorite verses in English and Spanish. Your host family will appreciate your attempts to speak their language. Keep an open heart and mind, and your time with your host family will be one of the most rewarding experiences of your mission trip!

### **I know Spanish, what can I expect?**

Even though you've taken Spanish classes, it's best to prepare for some difficulties in communication. You may find that speaking Spanish with a native speaker is much different than your classes. Be aware reading/writing is much different than listening/speaking. In addition, the Spanish we learn in school is often different than the Spanish you will hear in the country you will be visiting. Each country and region has a different dialect and may use some words you don't know. Even though communication can be difficult, using your hands, face and other non-verbal communication can help you communicate with your host family. Above all else, love is the language we all speak and the one way that we can communicate the best.

### **What are some non-verbal activities I can do with my family?**

It's great to have a conversation in Spanish and understand every word, but sometimes that isn't possible. Here are some fun, non-verbal activities you can do with your family. (P.S. It's good to bring some of these things with you.)

- Paint nails
- Do hair
- Play a card game (UNO, Old Maid, Go Fish, NO POKER)
- Jenga, pick up sticks
- Create an art project
- Play hide-and-seek
- Share family pictures

# CHRIST FOR THE CITY INTERNATIONAL PART SIX



Christ For the City International was founded in 1995, as a mission's agency with the vision of reaching the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Our vision is to have *no place without a witness, no church without a vision and no person without hope*. Our mission is *helping people to transform cities by transforming lives*.

The huge amount of urban migration around the world in the past few decades has brought increased urban poverty and new challenges. It was predicted that by the year 2000, 80% of the world would live in mega cities, with 46% of those living in abject poverty. This prediction became a reality, as did the widening gap between the rich and the poor.

This gap increases conflict and the class divide, and causes issues such as illegal migration, job scarcity, inadequate housing and sanitation, human trafficking, exploitation and increased crime. It also provides the basis on which we reach out as Christ For the City International, to bring the Gospel and hope to people everywhere.

In July of 2000, Dr. Chip Anderson assumed the role as President and Chief Executive Officer of Christ For the City International, having served on the mission field in Costa Rica for 18 years. Currently and under his leadership, we work in 16 countries, operating over 90 different ministries, with 500 plus missionaries, most of whom are nationals. Each base operates ministries that meet the needs of the people and bring hope to their cities. We help local churches develop their relationship with Jesus Christ and mobilize their people into God's Great Commission.

In addition to supporting our bases, missionaries, and ministries, each year we send hundreds of people and dozens of teams into the mission field, both within the United States through our Urban Plunge program, and

abroad. We send adult teams, youth teams, mixed teams, micro teams, medical teams, teaching teams, specialty teams and short-term and long-term individuals. We do our best to provide people with the opportunity to serve and be a part of what God is doing around the world.

We are excited that you are joining us on this mission trip, and we welcome you into the Christ for the City International community. Our mission at the Central Office is to support and equip you as you journey with the Lord, and all He has to do through you, your team and your life.