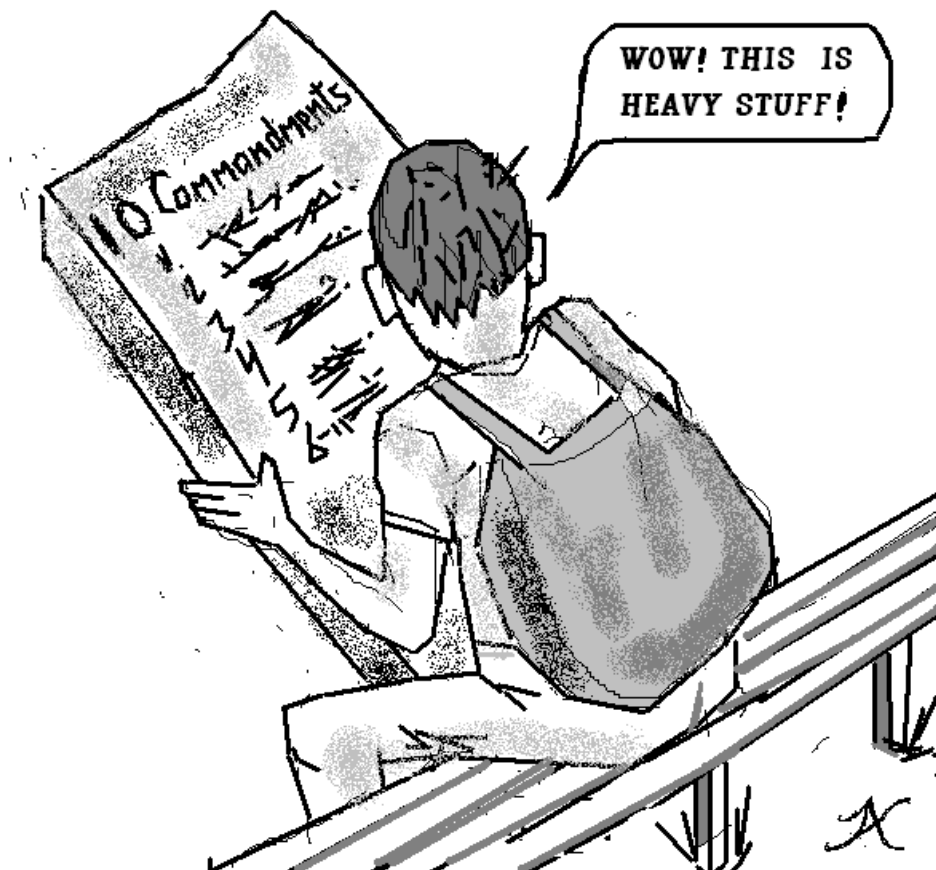


TEAM MEMBER INFORMATION & TRAINING MANUAL

Hawkwood Baptist Church



Leaders: Please be sure all this is covered in your Training Sessions.

**Please return the form at the end of this package, when completed, to the
Pastor or the Missions Committee Chairperson,
Hawkwood Baptist Church**

1. Introduction

God has a deep passion for the unreached and the lost. In the guiding missional prayer of Hawkwood Baptist Church, we pray...

O God, with all our hearts we long to be transformed by Christ, transforming Canada and the world.

Our mission statement at Hawkwood Baptist Church states that our mission is to introduce people to Jesus and together become His fully devoted followers.

Our Short Term Missions teams are an outworking of the NAB mission statement within Hawkwood Baptist Church. These trips are one way we follow the Great Commission Jesus gave to us when he said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you, and remember, I am with you always even to the end of the age."

(Matthew 28:19-20)

You have chosen to take a big step of faith and serve on a Hawkwood Baptist Church short term mission team. If this is your first opportunity to serve on a short term mission team or you have served previously, we can assure you that if you are prepared to go with a servant's heart and are willing to be stretched out of your comfort zone then you will be blessed, you will be a blessing, you will experience a life changing adventure, and most importantly, God will be glorified.

Pre and post trip preparations are imperative for an effective short term mission trip where you will participate in training, team building and debriefing. The following manual has been designed to guide you through your serving experience including the pre and post trip process.

God bless you as you,

"let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

(Matthew 5:16)

Signed by: _____

2. Spiritual Preparation

The spiritual component of a short-term mission trip is most important as you focus on serving others. You will have the opportunity to grow spiritually. Usually team members come intent on giving but go home knowing they have received in abundance.

Please note that attending team meetings will further prepare you in the following areas.

Before going on the trip it is important to take time to prepare yourself spiritually.

- ***Devotions***

Spend time with God every day. There aren't many activities that contribute to the strengthening of our walk with God that are as important as time spent alone with God in prayer and in His Word. Not only is this important while you are at home, it is equally essential while serving on the mission field. Spiritual discipline developed now will prepare you in advance and sustain you in service and will be one of the gifts of personal growth for the future.

- ***Prayer***

As you prepare for this short-term mission trip and certainly while you are serving on the mission field, prayer is extremely important. You will be faced with many challenges and prayer will strengthen, enrich and equip you as you serve. Please pray for your team leaders, your teammates, yourself and the people you have been called to serve.

Establish a prayer support team who are committed to praying for you as you prepare, serve and later as you integrate the learning from this trip into your life.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6)

- **Prepare a personal testimony**

One of the most powerful ways to share your faith is by sharing the story of how you met Jesus and how He changed your life. Each team member will be asked to prepare their story in advance and be ready to share it formally and/or informally during the mission trip. **Please write out your testimony and bring a copy for your interview.**

As you go on our mission, remember it is essential to:

- Go as a servant of Jesus Christ
- Go in the spirit of humility
- Be filled with the Holy Spirit
- Do nothing until you pray

- ***Team Covenant***

As a team we go with a desire to represent Christ in attitude, work and deed. We also desire to learn from, understand and respect those we will work with and serve. The Team Covenant includes reference to attitudes and actions which should characterize team members representing Christ. Each team member will review and make a commitment to abide by the terms of the team covenant.

3. General Behavior Policies

Policy concerning conduct with the people of the opposite sex

If you are dating a team member while serving on this mission, you must agree to the following conditions of conduct.

- In some cultures, touching between members of the opposite sex creates a negative impression. So as not to compromise your testimony or cause cultural offence, please refrain at all times and in all places, from hand holding, kissing and prolonged hugs. The only exception would be during days off when the team is away from the people we're serving – common decency and discretion will be expected at these times. Married couples are encouraged to be discretionary in the display of their affections as well.
- If the relationship between two members of the opposite sex distracts from the team and its ministry, the team leaders will take disciplinary action.
- Team members should not spend any exclusive, one-on-one time with a national of the opposite sex. Holding hands, prolonged hugs, or unaccompanied walks are strictly prohibited. Because of the intricacies of culture, it is very important not to give a national any false impressions about your interest in him/her. In many cultures, even spending time alone together constitutes a commitment to one another.

The bottom line is for all members to be careful about the kind of messages you are giving and/or receiving from members of the opposite sex, be they nationals or team members.

Policy concerning alcohol, narcotics, smoking and pornographic material

- *Alcohol* – Because Hawkwood Baptist Church has chosen to work with a variety of churches and mission organizations who hold differing views regarding the consumption of alcoholic beverages, our policy is to refrain from the consumption of alcohol at all times while serving as a member of a Hawkwood Baptist Church team. This includes days off and travel days.
- *Drugs* – The use of illegal drugs of any description is prohibited.
- *Tobacco* – The use of tobacco while on the team is also prohibited. If you are a smoker, and don't believe you can handle the withdrawal while on the mission; it would be advisable not to participate.
- *Pornographic material* – Pornographic material is strictly prohibited.



4. Financial Requirements

Each participant will be provided with an approximate trip cost and budget for the short-term mission trip. A deposit of \$250 and a copy of your passport will be due with your application, only refunded if you are not accepted.

Please understand that you are personally responsible to fulfill this obligation as a participating member.

Apart from the deposit, there is opportunity for those who regularly attend Hawkwood Baptist Church to apply for funding up to 25% of the total cost as funds are available.

Support raising strategies will be explored during team building meetings.

All support and donations received on your behalf will be non-refundable. In the event that donations exceeding your trip cost are raised, the excess will be put towards the trip or missions ministry.

5. Team Building

Short-term teams are not to be several individuals doing their own thing. They are to be a united group of persons who combine their efforts to achieve common short-term mission goals. A healthy team will be characterized by a group that is learning to:

- Get to know each other
- Appreciate each other's differences
- Forgive in place of judging
- Give more than take
- Serve one another
- Be ruled by love
- Be humble in the sight of the Lord
- **And most important – pray for one another.**

Your leaders have been called by God and chosen to give oversight to your team. Like you, they are not perfect, so please do not expect perfection from them. They have a lot of responsibilities and face many challenges. Please support their direction with respect and prayer. They will do everything in their power to ensure your safety and well-being and that your experience will help you grow closer to and bring God glory.

Several team meetings will be called by your leaders to help the team prepare for all aspects of the trip. Each team member will be required to attend these meetings. Debriefing team meetings will also take place subsequent to the mission trip.

6. Travel Tips

The following are some guidelines for your travel days to help insure safety and ease throughout the process.

Passport

- Passport must be current valid for six months after your expected date of return.
- Guard your passport by carrying it in a passport holder-money belt style or around your neck. You can purchase these at most luggage stores.
- Team leader will have copy of your passport to use in case of emergency.

Packing/Luggage and Carry-on Restrictions

- Pack lightly and try to only bring what you need.
- Pack at least two days essentials in your carry-on bag in case your luggage is delayed.
- Be sure to bring all prescription medicines in their original containers in your carry-on bag in case your luggage is delayed.
- Check with the airline regarding size and weight allowances. Pack lightly and try to bring only what you need.

Suggestions for a Comfortable Flight

- Be well rested before beginning the mission trip.
- Wear loose fitting comfortable clothing for travel days.
- Bring a sweater along for the flights.
- Be prepared for travel sickness and bring necessary remedies. You may wish to discuss this with your doctor.

Travel in Pairs and Threes

- Follow your team leader's guidelines for walking away from the group whether in the airports or in the country. You will need to be either in pairs or threes at all times. Please help make this easy.

Vaccinations

- Be sure to visit a recognized travel clinic at least three months prior to your trip to discuss vaccinations.

Travel Insurance

- All participants are required to have medical travel insurance as instructed by Hawkwood Baptist Church.

Cross-cultural Realities

- Being flexible is essential to survive cross-culturally. Many things may seem wrong to you but they are just different.
- Part of your team building sessions will deal with cultural issues. These are very important to observe in order to not offend. Improper behavior towards cultural sensitivities can create a lot of harm.
- Basic language training may be approached during team meetings as well.

Suggestions for further reading to assist you:

When Helping Hurts – by Steve Corbett & Brian Fikkert

Serving with Eyes Wide Open - by David A. Livermore

Bruchko – by Bruce Olson

Re-entry - Coming Back Physically and Spiritually

The short-term missionary experience is like being uprooted from everything that is familiar back home and being transplanted to another part of the world. God plants you in another country. Your roots expand. Your faith grows. And then, you return home.

- You will return home as a different you. It is important to process what God has done in your life.

- You are now looking at the world through a different set of eyes. Your perspective has been transformed through your mission experience.
- You will come back with a new set of questions to ask. God has changed your world view and this change will impact how you live.
- Because you have been changed you have great potential to influence others. Be intentional about sharing what God has done in and through you so that the impact of this trip can have maximum Kingdom impact in your church, family and others around you.
- Be open to God's continuing work in your life as you process what you have experienced and integrate all you have learned into your current life situation.

It is important to acknowledge your feelings and realize that God can impact you in a variety of ways as a result of this short-term mission experience. Be open to His leading in all aspects of your life.

Ask yourself:

- How am I changing?
- How can I integrate what God has taught me and how He has changed me in my day to day life?
- How can I share my experiences with others who may not understand what has just occurred around and in me?

When you come home, find links between your short-term experience and your life now.

- You may find that things bother you when you come home - things such as affluence.
- You may have witnessed much poverty. And as you return to our affluent society God may be calling you to take action. Listen for His voice.
- Hold off on making drastic changes immediately...Listen to God's voice and speak to trusted Christian friends.
- Do not be judgmental of others. God has done a work in your heart and God has a unique agenda and timetable for each of his followers.

Dealing with Emergencies

While we don't expect to encounter any emergency situations, we need to be prepared for the unexpected, to the best of our ability.

Medical Emergency for a Team Member

If a nurse or doctor serves on the team he or she will be the first responder to assess a medical need. If it is deemed necessary, the team will utilize outside medical support through

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a doctor, clinic or hospital. The family and Hawkwood Baptist Church will be contacted if any team member has a medical emergency

Family Emergency Back Home

In case of a family emergency in Canada, the family should contact HBC or the designated liaison. The names and numbers for contact will be part of the information package given to each team member before departure. The team leader will then communicate the message received from the family. In consultation between the family, team members and team leaders, appropriate action will be taken.

Loss of Passport

If a passport is lost the loss or theft will be reported to the nearest Government of Canada office abroad and to the local police. Once a Canadian passport is reported lost or stolen, it is no longer valid and cannot be used again for travel. The team leader will go to the nearest Canada office to apply for a new passport.

Lost Team Member

Prior to each activity a designated gathering point will be communicated to all team members. Each team member will carry an emergency contact card and a copy of their personal passport.

If a member is lost, the team leader along with local mission authority will determine if police assistance is needed. If so, the local police will be contacted. If a member has been lost for an extended period of time and it is deemed necessary by the team leader and local leaders, they will contact the nearest Embassy or Consulate in country.

In the Event of Natural Disaster, Political Unrest, Kidnapping or Other Emergency

In the case of any of the above situations, the team leader or mission representative will contact the Canadian Embassy as well as HBC.

The HBC liaison will communicate with families of team members. The Short-Term Mission Team will follow the advice of the embassy and the host mission.

7. Hawkwood Baptist Church Short Term Mission Forms

Please see that all forms in the application package are filled out:

Exceptions:

1. Parental Consent form need not be submitted if applicant is over 18.
(But if under 18 both parents must sign a completed Consent Form)

2. If the applicant already has the total necessary supporting funds, he/she will not fill out the form for Financial Grants.

8. One-Verse Evangelism

Here's an uncomplicated way to present the "Bridge" illustration using only one verse.

We sat in the busy hamburger stand explaining to Jeff how he could have a close, eternal relationship with God. Suddenly tears welled up in his eyes. As he realized how he had been rejecting Christ's love, years of resistance cracked and dissolved. We offered to find a more private place where he could pray if he wanted to turn his life over to Christ. "No, let's pray right here," he said. And so Jeff became Christian that afternoon.

What was it that had helped Jeff to understand Christ's love for him and his own need to surrender to that love? A simple illustration drawn on a piece of paper clearly communicated how a person who has chosen to live a life apart from Christ can be forgiven and become a child of God.

On another occasion, I had watched in dismay as a friend attempted to explain his faith to an unbeliever. As he jumped back and forth from Old Testament to New Testament he used a multitude of verses but never explained clearly how to become a Christian. Since then I have made a commitment that whatever I do in evangelism, I will never be fuzzy or unclear. I don't have the right to take a simple message and make it difficult. As a result, I've found a simple way to communicate the Gospel using just one Bible verse and the "Bridge" illustration.

Often, when conversation turns to spiritual topics, I will ask the other person if he would like to understand the basic theme of the Bible. I tell him that if he is interested I can draw him a picture that will explain all sixty-six books of the Bible in a practical way that he can easily understand. I assure him that it will take only ten to fifteen minutes. People seldom resist the curiosity this approach arouses – few have ever had someone explain the whole Bible to them, let alone in ten minutes! If he agrees, I proceed with the following illustration.

Wages

Open your Bible to Romans 6:23 and ask the person to read the verse aloud to you while you write it at the top of a piece of paper.

Draw a box around the word "WAGES," then write it midway down the left side of the page and box it there also.

"How would you define the term wages?" (Wages are the reward we receive for what we have done.)

"How would you feel if your boss refused to pay you the right wages that were due to you?"

Deep down, we all know it is only right that a person gets what he deserves. We earn wages from God for how we have lived our lives."

Sin

Draw a box around "SIN" in the verse and then write below "WAGES". Draw a box around it there.

"What do you think when you hear the word 'sin'?"

"How would a person have to live in order to get to heaven? Have you always lived a life like you just described? (This should help him to see that even by his own definition he falls short of living a good and perfect life.)"

"Sin is more an attitude than an action- it can be hostile or apathetic response to God. At any point in your life, has God seemed far away?"

When he answers "yes" draw in the lines of the cliff on both sides and explain that sin has separated everyone from God.

"Imagine that you agreed with your roommate on rules regarding how to use your stereo. What would happen if your roommate ignored the rules and broke your stereo? Would that create a separation or problem in your relationship?" Our sin creates a distance between us and God."

FOR THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH
 BUT THE GIFT OF GOD IS ETERNAL LIFE
 IN CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD

WAGES
SIN

Death

Draw a box around the word "Death." Write it down on the illustration and box it there.

"What thoughts come to mind when you think of death? Death often means separation- when we die our soul is separated from our body. If a person chooses to reject God while he is alive that separation will extend into eternity, the separation will ultimately result in eternal torment in hell. Not only will he experience separation from God today, but also forever".

But

Draw a box around "BUT" in the verse and write it in a box between the boxes of the cliffs.

"This is the most important word in the verse because it indicates that there is hope for all of us. What we have talked about so far is bad news, but God has good news. What we're going to talk about now is a contrast to what we just discussed."

Gift

Draw a box around "GIFT" in the verse and write it on the right side of the cliff. Box it there.

"What is the difference between gift and wages?"

(From now on, be sure to point back and forth to each side of the cliff to emphasize that the words contrast with each other.)

"A gift is not earned by a person who receives it, but someone else pays for it. How do you feel towards someone who gives you an expensive gift?"

"Some people try to earn God's favor by doing good deeds, living moral lives or taking part in religious activities. But it is impossible to earn something that has already been bought."

"Say you wanted to buy a special gift for a close friend to show how much that person means to you. How would you feel if the friend refused to accept it without first paying you for it?"

Of God

Draw a line around "OF GOD" in the verse and write it on the right side of the cliff, across from "SIN". Box it. Point to "SIN" on the left side and then back to "GOD" on the right and explain that all of us have sinned but God is perfect and has not.

"God wants to give you a gift. I can't give it to you; a church can't give it to you; no one can give you this gift but God alone. Why do you think God would want to give you a gift? Why does anyone want to give someone a precious gift?"

Eternal Life

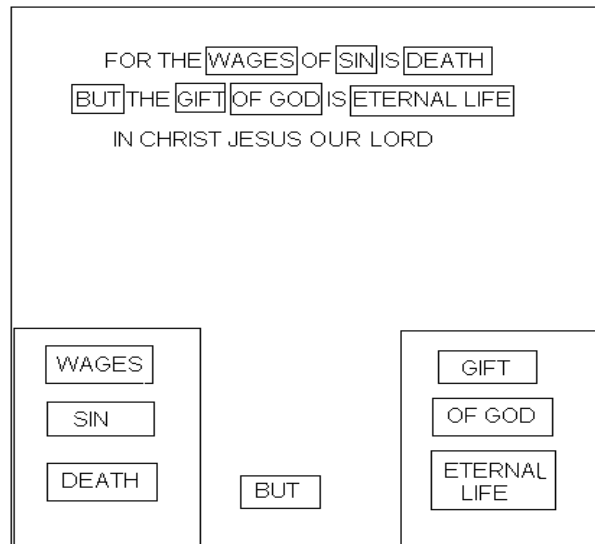
Draw a box around "ETERNAL LIFE" and write it on the right side of the cliff with a box around it.

"What do you think eternal life is?"

Point to "DEATH" on the left side and show that "ETERNAL LIFE" is not "Eternal life means a relationship with God in blissful harmony forever. Just a separation from God starts in this life and extends into eternity; eternal life starts now and goes on forever. No sin can end it."

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(Ask if there is any part that you have explained so far that he does not understand or if he has any questions. Be sure that each point is clear before you proceed any further. If necessary, go back and explain each point that is not clear.)



Christ Jesus

Draw a cross between the cliffs as a bridge. Box the words “CHRIST JESUS” in the verse. Write “CHRIST JESUS” inside the cross.”

Jesus is the means we can obtain the gift of eternal life. No one can offer a gift except the one who purchased it. He purchased it by paying for it with His life.”

“Imagine that a police officer writes you a ticket for speeding and you go to court and the judge finds you guilty. But to your surprise the policeman pays your fine out of his own pocket. In the same way, Jesus paid the fine for you – death”.

Hold out a pen to the person, and ask him/ her to imagine that someone had bought it for him as a present. As you hand it to him, ask him at what point the pen becomes his (when he accepts it). Tell him that he can accept God’s gift to him by following two steps.

“A person is dying because his heart is diseased. Someone volunteers to donate his heart for a transplant knowing that he will have to die in order to give it up. But first, in order to save his own life, the recipient must agree to accept the heart. It cannot be forced on him. In order to accept God’s gift, you must do two things.”

Lord

Box "LORD" in the verse and write it inside the cross on the illustration.

"This gift is offered to everyone who makes Jesus Lord. For Jesus to be Lord, He has to have total control of a person's life. He gains that control, or becomes Lord, when a person does two things."

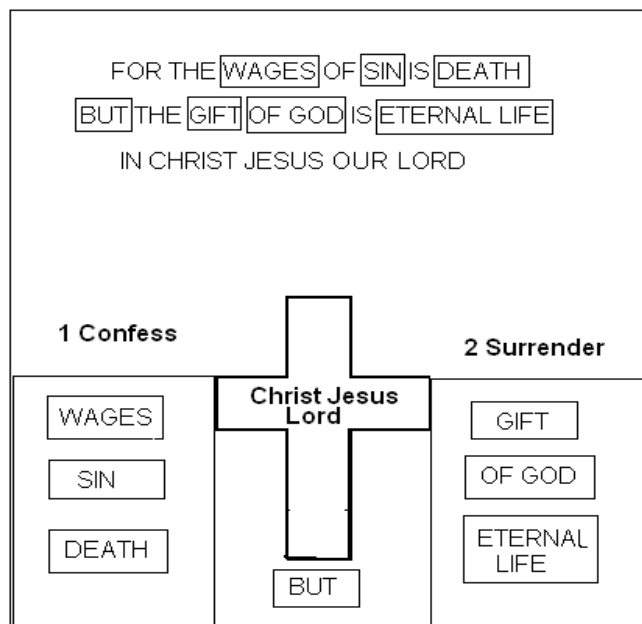
Confess and Surrender

Write, "CONFESS" across the top of the cross on the left side and number it with a "1."

"Confessing means to agree with God that we are not perfect, that there are things in our lives that are wrong, and that we want Christ to forgive us as we turn away from our sin."

Write, "SURRENDER" across the top of the cross on the right side and number it "2."

"To surrender means to allow Christ to be the final authority in our lives and to live in order to please Him and not ourselves. It doesn't mean that we have to be perfect, but that we will try our best to please Christ."



Draw a man on the left side of the bridge.

"As a person confesses and surrenders, he passes across the bridge. He begins a relationship with God and starts to experience a new and eternal life."

Draw an arrow across the bridge.

“On the basis of what I have just explained, what must a person do to have a relationship with God and eternal life?” (If he does not say, “confess and surrender” and understand what that means, go back and explain it until it is clear.)

“If you were to place yourself on the bridge, where would you be? Are you far off to the left, far away from God, or close to the bridge and eager to learn more about God?”

“What two things does a person have to do to cross over the bridge in order to begin a relationship with God and have eternal life?”

If the person is ready to repent of his sin and trust Christ for salvation, help him to pray, confessing his need for Christ and surrendering his life to Him. You may want to repeat a simple prayer similar to the one you prayed when you accepted Christ and ask him to repeat it after you, one phrase at a time.

Naturally, you will want to put the questions and explanations into your own words. You might want to practice giving it to a Christian friend before you share it with an unbeliever.

After you become familiar with this method, be sure to personalize it – use your own stories or analogies so that the presentation becomes a natural part of you. It is also a good idea to know at least one verse that backs up each step in the illustration in case the hearer needs further explanation.

Be sure to listen carefully as the person you are talking with answers and questions. Try to understand where he stands in relation to the Gospel and adjust your presentation to suit his personality and needs. Be alert to signs of confusion as you explain.

Most importantly, remember that the power to change lives is not in having an effective, smooth-flowing illustration. It is the Spirit of God who opens people’s hearts to hear the message of salvation (John 6:63-65). But what a privilege we have in being able to co-labor with God Himself in reaching out to others! Let us sharpen our tools and be ready always to give the answer that every person needs to hear with clarity and simplicity.

9. One-Another People

The key to love and unity being experienced within our group is the practicing of the “**One-Another Principles.**” (See chart on the following page.)

The “**One-Another Principles**” are 36 relationship teachings from the New Testament, which include the words “one another” (NASB). “**One-Another People**” are believers who have committed themselves to and are practicing these principles.

Two basic teachings (upper left corner of chart) under which we find the other 34 principles are “we **belong to one another**” and “**love one another**”.

How should people who belong to one another relate? The chart presents 36 specific expressions of love.

Love is a general concept. How can we love each other? The chart presents 36 specific expressions of love.

1. Read aloud the 36 “**one-another**” principles from the chart.
2. Read and think through/discuss these thoughts:
 - a. These principles are THEOLOGICAL. They are from God and are GOD-LIKE.
 - b. These principles are RELATIONAL. They apply to relationships with people, especially other Christians.
 - c. These principles are PRACTICAL. They are relevant to daily living.
 - d. These principles are UNIVERSAL. They are for all, no matter what your race.
 - e. These principles are PERPETUAL. They must be worked on our entire life.
 - f. These principles are VITAL. They dramatically affect our walk with God, our unity, our growth, our ministry, our testimony etc.



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ONE ANOTHER PRINCIPLES

<p>We belong to One Another</p> <p><i>Rom 12:5</i> <i>Eph 4:2</i></p>	<p>Care for One Another</p> <p><i>1 Cor 12:25</i></p>	<p>Serve One Another in humility</p> <p><i>1 Peter 5:5</i></p>	<p>Make allowances for One Another's faults</p> <p><i>Eph 4:2</i> <i>Col 3:13</i></p>	<p>Forgive One Another</p> <p><i>Eph 4:32</i> <i>Col 3:13</i></p>	<p>Encourage & comfort One Another</p> <p><i>2 Cor 1:4</i> <i>1 Thess 4:18</i></p>
<p>Love One Another as Jesus loved us</p> <p><i>John 13:34</i></p>	<p>Serve One Another in love</p> <p><i>Gal 5:26</i></p>	<p>Do not be jealous of One Another</p> <p><i>Gal 5:26</i></p>	<p>Do not irritate One Another</p> <p><i>Gal 5:26</i></p>	<p>Be hospitable to One Another</p> <p><i>1 Peter 4:9</i></p>	<p>Encourage and build up One Another</p> <p><i>Rom 14:19</i> <i>1 Thess 5:11</i></p>
<p>Take delight in honoring One Another</p> <p><i>Rom 12:10</i></p>	<p>Submit to One Another</p> <p><i>Eph 5:21</i></p>	<p>Have sympathy toward One Another</p> <p><i>1 Peter 3:8</i></p>	<p>Use gifts in ministering to One Another</p> <p><i>1 Peter 4:10-11</i></p>	<p>Pray for One Another</p> <p><i>James 5:16</i></p>	<p>Remain faithful to One Another</p> <p><i>Heb 13:4</i></p>
<p>Accept One Another</p> <p><i>Rom 15:7</i></p>	<p>Think of One Another as better than yourself</p> <p><i>Phil 2:3-4</i></p>	<p>Be kind to One Another</p> <p><i>Eph 4:32</i></p>	<p>Share One Another's troubles & problems</p> <p><i>Gal 6:2</i></p>	<p>Confess your sins to One Another</p> <p><i>James 5:16</i></p>	<p>Encourage One Another to outbursts of love & good deeds</p> <p><i>Heb 10:24</i></p>
<p>Wash One Another's feet</p> <p><i>John 13:14</i></p>	<p>Do not lie to One Another</p> <p><i>Col 3:9</i></p>	<p>Do not grumble about One Another</p> <p><i>James 5:9</i></p>	<p>Teach and counsel One Another</p> <p><i>Rom 15:14</i> <i>Col 3:16</i></p>	<p>Do not bite and devour One Another</p> <p><i>Gal 5:15</i></p>	<p>Do good to One Another</p> <p><i>1 Thess 5:15</i></p>
<p>Do not speak evil against One Another</p> <p><i>James 4:11</i></p>	<p>Do not condemn One Another</p> <p><i>Rom. 14:13</i></p>	<p>Fellowship with One Another</p> <p><i>1 John 1:7</i></p>	<p>Live in harmony with One Another</p> <p><i>Rom 15:5</i></p>	<p>Love One Another with genuine affection</p> <p><i>Rom 12:10</i></p>	<p>Greet One Another in Christian love</p> <p><i>Rom 16:16</i></p>

10. Helps for Sharing Your Testimony

HOW TO SHARE YOUR TESTIMONY

“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.” | Peter 3:15

One of the most effective tools you have for sharing your faith is the story of how Jesus Christ gave you eternal life and how He has enriched your life. The Apostle John wrote, “We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard” (I John 1:3) testifying about his relationship to Jesus Christ.

When the Apostle Paul stood before King Agrippa (Acts 26), he spoke simply, logically and clearly about his life before salvation, how he met Christ and what his life was like after conversion. Paul’s testimony takes three or four minutes to read aloud in a conversational manner.

By following the steps outlined in this article, you will learn how to tell others in the same manner about how you came to know Christ. The choice of the right words, the flow of your story, and knowing how to begin and how to end are all important.

Testimonies can be prepared on many subjects and tailored to various audiences. The kind of testimony outlined here is designed to give to a non-Christian. It will be best suited for sharing one-on-one or in a small group.

The purpose of preparing a testimony is not to memorize it and give it verbatim, but to help you put into words some of the important and interesting details of your conversion. A testimony serves primarily as a “door-opener”, not a “convincing” tool. Many people are not ready to be convinced that they need Christ, but one can often be led to talk about the gospel after hearing a personal testimony.

BEFORE, HOW AND AFTER

Paul’s testimony in Acts 26 is a biblical model you can follow in writing your own personal testimony. Paul’s format in Acts 26 is:

- Lead-In Verses 2-3
- Before Verses 4-11
- How Verses 12-20
- After Verses 21-23
- Close Verses 24-29

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Here are practical suggestions for developing the before, how and after sections in your personal testimony:

1. **BEFORE**

- a. Many people's actions spring out of their unsatisfied deep inner needs. What were one or two of your unsatisfied deep inner needs before you came to know Jesus Christ? Some examples of inner need are:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| * Lack of Peace | *Fear of Death |
| *Something missing | *No meaning in life |
| *Desire for control | *Loneliness |
| *Lack of security | *Lack of purpose |
| *Lack of significance | *No real friends |
| *No motivation | |

- b. Non-Christians are usually trying to satisfy their deep inner needs through unsatisfactory solutions. In the past, what unsatisfactory solutions did you use to attempt to meet those deep inner needs? As you develop your testimony, list positive as well as negative solutions you may have tried. Some examples are:

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------|
| *Marriage/family | *Work |
| *Drugs/alcohol | *Sports fitness |
| *Money | *Education |
| *Hobbies/entertainment | *Sex |
| *Wrong friends | |

2. **HOW**

- a. Describe the circumstances that caused you to consider Christ as the solution to your deep inner needs. Identify the events that led to your conversion. In some cases this may have taken place over a period of time.
- b. State specifically the steps you took to become a Christian. If there is a particular passage of Scripture that applies here, you may want to use it. Usually you will simply paraphrase it.
- c. Include the gospel clearly and briefly. The gospel includes:
- | | |
|------------------|--------------------------|
| *All have sinned | *Christ paid the penalty |
| *Sin's penalty | *Must receive Christ |

3. **AFTER**

- a. State how Christ filled or is filling your deep inner needs. In the before, you expressed your needs and how you tried unsuccessfully to meet them. You now want briefly to show the difference that Christ has made in your life.
- b. Conclude with the statement like: "But the greatest benefit is that I know for certain that I have eternal life." The person you talk to will tend to comment on the last thing you say. Often it is natural to move from the testimony into a clear presentation of the gospel.

CHOOSE YOUR TESTIMONY FORMAT

Read the sample testimonies that follow. Find the format that best fits your own story. You will use the Testimony Worksheet (at the end of this article that corresponds to this format.)

Format 1: *Adult Conversion*

You trusted Christ as an adult. You have a distinct before, how and after.

Format 2: *Early Conversion, Adult full commitment.*

You made a decision to follow Christ as a child, but your life was characterized by spiritual immaturity – a lifestyle similar to that of a non-Christian – until you reached a point of crisis and recommitted your life to Christ. Evaluate whether your early experience was genuine. If you conclude it was not genuine, then use Format 1 as your mode.

Format 3: *Early Conversion, Consistent Growth*

You grew up with Christian parents and have a strong church background. You may have very little before.

Write Out Your Testimony

The testimony worksheets provide questions that will help you get started in writing out your testimony. Select the appropriate worksheet and jot down thoughts for each question on a separate sheet of paper. This will give you a basis from which to write sentences and paragraphs about your experience.

As you write your first draft, refer again to the sample testimony that is most like your own story. Note how the person began the testimony and how he or she made the transitions between the main points. In addition, follow these guidelines:

- **Make it sound conversational.** Avoid literary sounding statements. Use informal language.
- **Share about what happened to you; don't preach about what should happen to them.** Say "I" and "me", not "you." This helps keep the testimony personal.
- **Avoid religious words, phrases and jargon.** Don't assume the listener knows what you mean by terms such as sin, accepted Christ, or even Christian.
- **Generalize so more people can identify with your story.** Don't name specific churches, denominations, or groups. Avoid using dates and ages.
- **Include some humor and human interest.** When a person smiles or laughs, it reduces tension. Humor is disarming and increases attention.
- **One or two word pictures increase interest.** Don't just say, "Bill shared the gospel with me." You might briefly describe the setting so a person listening can visualize it.
- **Explain how Christ met or is meeting your deep inner needs.** Do not communicate that all your struggles and problems ended at conversion.
- **Sound adult, not juvenile.** Reflect an adult point of view even if you were converted at an early age.

- **Avoid dogmatic and mystical statements that skeptics can question**, such as “I prayed and God gave me a job” or “God said to me.”
- **Simplify, reduce “clutter.”** Mention a limited number of people and use only their first or last names. Combine information when you can.

PRACTICING YOUR TESTIMONY

After you have written out your testimony, you may want to have another Christian read it and make suggestions for improvement. Ask them to point out any area that you need to explain further and to make sure that the gospel is presented clearly. Then, when you have a final draft that you like, outline your testimony on a 3x5 card. Practice giving your testimony to a friend in four minutes or less. Sharing your testimony with your small group would also be an excellent opportunity to practice and receive feedback.

LEADING INTO YOUR TESTIMONY

After you feel comfortable giving your testimony, you may begin to wonder, “When do I share it with a non-Christian? How do I direct the conversation so it will lead to presenting my testimony?” You may find the following suggestions helpful:

1. Include some “small talk” before discussing spiritual matters. Discuss family, job, hobbies, interests etc.
2. Be alert for expressed needs such as family problems or stress on the job. You can use these to show how Christ has helped you through some of the same areas.
3. Discuss past concerns and needs in your life. “We used to struggle in our marriage relationship” or “I used to allow the pressures at work to get to me. Then I discovered something that made a tremendous difference in my life.”
4. Discuss contemporary situations in the news or in your areas. “I saw on TV that drugs are epidemic in our country. It seems that people are trying to find something that satisfies, so they are turning to drugs. These same people are saying it does not work.”
5. Build relationships with them. It may take 10 minutes or 10 days or ten months – but build relationships.
6. Don’t condemn them for living like non-Christians. They are non-Christians. Your objective is to share how they can have a better life in Christ.
7. Avoid dogmatic “religious” statements. “Jesus is the answer to all your problems.” He is, but they don’t even know *who* He is, much less what He can *do* in their lives.
8. Avoid arguments on moral issues. You can expect non-Christians to have conflicts with clear biblical teaching. Remember they do not have a valid base from which to make correct moral decisions.

THE CLOSE

When you have shared your personal testimony, you may want to conclude with a statement that causes the person to reflect on what you have just shared. What you will say will depend on how this person has been responding to what you have shared. If their response seems positive, continue to ask leading questions like:

1. "Bill, has anything like this ever happened to you before?"
2. "Mary, do you know for certain whether you have eternal life?"
3. "Do you have an idea what eternal life is?"
4. "May I share with you someday how I know for certain that I have eternal life?"
5. "May I share an illustration with you that explains how a person can know for certain that he has eternal life?"

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**FORMAT ONE;
ADULT CONVERSION**

Before:

A few years ago I found myself lacking purpose in my life. Something was missing. Nothing seemed to fill the void. I majored in electrical engineering in college and got a great job when I graduated, I kept striving for one promotion after another, thinking that the next promotion would satisfy me. But it never did. I began working longer and longer hours, giving myself to my profession. This began to have a negative effect on my family. I kept telling my wife I was only doing it for her and the kids, but I knew otherwise. What started out as an "ideal" marriage was coming apart at the seams. I got to the point that I did not want to go home at night. "Happy Hour" was more fun than arguments.

How:

In my next job, I was asked to attend and engineering seminar with David and Jack at work. David seemed to have a certain something that was missing in my life, On the way home from the seminar David told me about how Christ had changed his life and had given him a whole new reason for living. Many of the things he said seemed to be directed right at me. He talked about having been successful in business but that he was always falling short of his goals and expectations. Then he said the answer to his frustration was to have personally committed his life to Jesus Christ. He admitted to God that he was living in disobedience and he turned over control of his life to God. He mentioned that the Bible said Christ had died on the cross so we could be forgiven for everything we had ever done wrong. I had heard this before but now it seemed to make a lot more sense.

A couple of days after I returned home. I took a walk down by the lake near our house. I prayed and confessed to God some of the things I had done that I knew had hurt and displeased Him. I asked Christ to come into my life and take over, because I wasn't doing a very good job with it myself.

After:

Well, there was no flash of light or earthquake, but I do know that I felt as if a large weight was lifted from my shoulders. Not everything is perfect now, but I do feel as if I have a whole new purpose for living. God has given me a whole new set of priorities to live by. But the greatest thing of all is that I know for certain that I have the gift of eternal life.

**FORMAT TWO:
EARLY CONVERSION,
ADULT FULL COMMITMENT**

Before Full Commitment:

Not too long ago you could have characterized my life as lacking any clear inner peace. Everything thing around me seemed to be in utter turmoil. Nothing I did would ease the tension in my life. It didn't seem as if anything could fill the longing that was growing in my heart. I thought I could fill that void by getting involved in activities, I joined the health spa, took tennis lessons, was involved in transporting our children to their various activities. I considered going back to work part-time. Then my husband received a promotion and we were transferred to another city. If I had felt the pressure before, the move just added to the intensity. It seemed that the only relief I could gain was taking tranquilizers, but that was only temporary and it scared me to realize that I was beginning to depend on them for relief.

How:

We had gotten out of the habit of attending church over the years, but the Johnsons invited us to go to church with them, so we started going. After we had attended for a couple of months, we decided to participate in a Bible Study discussion group. There we met people who were fun but took their Christianity seriously. They began to challenge us to really commit our lives to Christ.

We reviewed some things I had heard while growing up: that we were all breaking God's laws and deserved to be separated from Him, but that God had provided the way to restore that relationship with Him. That provision was the death of His only Son, Jesus Christ. What I needed to do about it was acknowledge my disobedience to God and turn from it and ask Christ to come into my life

After;

It wasn't until we god involved in that mid-week Bible Study that I really understood what it meant to be committed to Jesus Christ. It was there that I learned that I could not gain inner peace in my life if I was going to try to run my own life. As a result of the Bible Study I made a whole new commitment to Christ. The inner peace that I was striving for so desperately was finally there. But the greatest of all is that I know for certain that I have a personal relationship with God and have eternal life

**FORMAT THREE:
EARLY CONVERSION.
CONSISTENT GROWTH**

Before:

As I look around me I see people feverishly trying to fill voids in their lives. Men are giving themselves to their jobs, and in the process sacrificing their families. A number of my fellow workers seem to be trying to find meaning in their lives, but just when they think they have attained what they want, they realize these things are not meeting their deepest need. I find myself being involved in many of the same activities, but am finding satisfaction.

How:

I realize that I am not reacting to life the way many people do for a good reason. I have something in my life that has given me peace and purpose that many others do not have. I have discovered that a personal relationship with Christ fills the voids that many people are trying to fill with activities and things that just don't satisfy. As I was growing up, my parents were very active in church. Because they were active, they figured that I should be also. So every Sunday there we were. What was real to them was just a game to me. Then one summer I attended a church summer camp. This changed my whole view of "religion". I discovered at this camp that Christianity was more than a religion; it was a personal relationship with God through His Son, Jesus Christ. In the evenings our discussions centered around whom Jesus Christ was and what He did. They were interesting to me. One day after we had finished sports my counselor asked me if I had ever personally committed my life to Jesus Christ or if I was still thinking about it. We sat down and talked. He explained from the Bible what I would need to do to become a Christian. I saw that I had done many things wrong and the penalty was death! I saw that Christ had died on the cross to set me free from that penalty. I prayed with my counselor right there and committed my life to Jesus Christ.

After;

As I grew physically, I also grew spiritually. I find that when I try to do things my way and leave God out of the picture I have the same struggles as everyone else. But when I let Him be in control. I experience a peace that can only come from Him. But the greatest thing of all is that I know for certain I have eternal life.

TESTIMONY WORKSHEETS

Format 1: Adult Conversion

Before:

1. What was a deep inner need in you life before you met Christ?
2. State some examples of how you tried to meet or fulfill that need with unsatisfactory solutions.

How:

1. Describe the circumstances that caused you to consider Christ.
2. State how you trusted Christ (Briefly include the Gospel).

After:

1. Give an example of how Christ met or is currently meeting your deep inner needs.
2. End with a statement to the effect that you now know for certain that you have eternal life.

Format 2: Early Conversion, Adult Deeper Commitment

Before:

1. What was a deep inner need you were trying to fill?
2. Give some examples of how you tried to fill that inner need through unsatisfactory solutions.

How:

1. Briefly describe the situation in which you made a deeper commitment to Christ.
2. Refer to your conversion experience. State how you trusted Christ. Briefly include the gospel.

After:

1. State how Christ is currently meeting your deep inner needs.
2. End with a statement to the effect that you know for certain that you have eternal life.

Format 3: Early Conversion, Consistent Growth

Before:

1. State the deep inner needs you see people trying to fill.
2. Describe how you see people trying to satisfy those needs.

How:

1. Explain why you never experienced this problem.
2. Refer to your conversion experience. State how you trusted Christ. Briefly include the gospel.

After:

1. Illustrate how Christ met or is meeting your deep inner needs
2. End with a statement to the effect that you know for certain that you have eternal life.

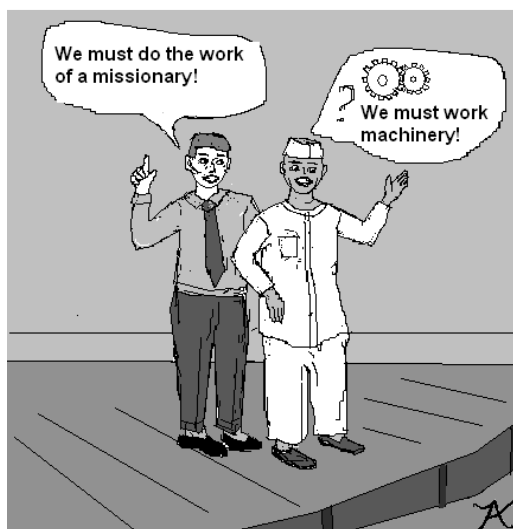
RELIGIOUS WORDS/ POSSIBLE SUBSTITUTES

- Believe/Accepted – Trust or relied on Christ
- Sin – Disobedience, breaking God’s laws, turned my back on God
- Went forward – Decided to turn my life over to God
- Under the blood – God forgave my wrongs I had done
- Saved/Born again – Became a real Christian
- Christian – Christ follower, committed believer

SHARING THROUGH AN INTERPRETER (Source – Culture Link)

Keep the following in mind as you speak using an interpreter:

- Speak slowly.
- Speak to the audience (look at them), not the interpreter.
- Speak using short, simple phrases. Stop after each phrase to allow the interpreter to translate.
- Speak loud enough for the interpreter to hear you clearly.
- Practice your story with someone and have him or her repeat what you say or rephrase what you say. This exercise helps you adjust to using short phrases.
- Avoid using colloquial phrases (slang).
- Visual gestures or aids can be useful. Make sure the gesture is appropriate for the culture.
- Beforehand, ask your interpreter to please let you know if he doesn’t understand what you say. Explain that you will rephrase the sentence. If, while interpreting, he or she still does not know what you said, move on to avoid embarrassing him or her.
- If you are addressing theological or technical information, ask if the audience understands or needs clarification. Or ask them a question about what you said. This assures you are communicating clearly.
- If possible give a copy of your testimony or message to the interpreter beforehand.



TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR SHORT-TERM WORKERS

- I. **Thou shalt not expect to find things as thou hast them at home for thou hast left thy home.**
Phillipians 4:11, "...I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am in."
- II. **Thou shalt not take anything too seriously, for a carefree mind is the beginning of a fulfilling trip.**
I Peter 5:7, "Casting all your care upon Him, because He cares for you."
- III. **Thou shalt not let other short-term workers get on thy nerves.**
Romans 12:19, "If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men."
- IV. **Remember thy passport, that thou knowest where it is at all times. For a man without a passport is a man without a country.**
Romans 13:5, "Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience."
- V. **Remember take half the clothes thou hast planned to pack and twice the amount of money.**
Matthew 6:31, "Don't be anxious then, saying, "What shall we eat? or What shall we drink? or With what shall we clothe ourselves?"
- VI. **Remember, if thou were expected to stay in one place, thou wouldest have been created roots.**
Matthew 4:19, "And He said to them, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men."
- VII. **Thou shalt not worry. He that worrieth hath no pleasure. Few things are ever fatal.**
Mark 9:23, "And Jesus said to him, "...All things are possible to him who believes."
- VIII. **Thou shalt not judge the people of a country by the one person with whom thou has had trouble.**
Matthew 7:1, "Do not judge, lest you be judged yourselves."
- IX. **Thou shalt not make yourself too obviously a Canadian "tourist" lest thou offend those with whom thou cometh in contact.**
I Corinthians 10:33, "Just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved."
- X. **Remember thou art a guest in every land. And he that treateth his host with respect shall be treated with respect.** *Romans 12:10, "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love, give preference to one another in honor."*

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TEAM COVENANT

We, the members of the _____, believing that God has brought us together for a reason, agree to commit to the following:

Our purpose as a team _____
_____.

Our key verses are: (*List one you have chosen for your team*)

e.g. Luke 9:23, Micah 6:8, Deuteronomy 31:6, Jeremiah 33:3, Philippians 4:13

We believe we can fulfill this vision through the following commitments:

- I will maintain a servant attitude towards our hosts, all nationals, and my team.
- I will remember that I am a guest working at the invitation of local international Workers and nationals. If they are offended by whatever I wear, I will change without question
- I am a learner, not a judge; I will respect differences in culture.
- Gift giving should be done only with the approval and through the channels of local leaders, International workers and/or national church.
- Instead of criticizing, I will be creative and supportive. I will make every effort to respond positively and avoid complaining.
- I commit myself to resolve all team conflicts as quickly as possible according to biblical principles. I will talk directly to those I have a problem with and not gossip to anyone else about it.
- I will abstain from spending time alone with the opposite sex or from public demonstrations of affection with the opposite sex.
- I commit to abstain from alcohol, narcotics, smoking and pornographic material.
- I commit myself to work to the best of my abilities every single day. I will encourage and have as much fun as possible as I work. I know that our attitudes will be a testimony to our hosts.
- As a member of the team, I will submit to the authority of the team leaders. Should a problem arise, I will allow final decisions to be made by my team leaders.
- I commit myself to personal quiet times with God, knowing that growing individually is essential to growing as a team.
- I commit to pray for our team leaders, the team and the ministry we are involved in.

I, _____, as a member of this Short Term Mission Team, commit myself to abide by this covenant to the best of my God-given ability.

Signed _____ Date _____