

YOUR TEAM: BURDEN OR BLESSING?

Personal Evangelism



Go Impact

The gospel is central to the work of IMB, and a group ready to work together with a missionary team and serve in the missionary task is essential for an effective mission trip. Missionaries know whether or not you have prepared your group spiritually. Will your group be a burden or a blessing? The number one concern we hear from the field about volunteer teams is "Are they ready to share their faith in Christ?"

We were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us.

1 Thessalonians 1:8 ESV

Come with love.

It may seem basic, but nothing can substitute for an authentic personal experience of God's love and salvation in your group members. Take the message of 1 Corinthians 13 very seriously: "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal" (ESV). While your group can experience God in new ways and grow in their faith on a mission trip, how can they be a witness to others if they are not motivated by their own encounter with Christ? Enlist your team carefully and prayerfully with this in mind. Include prayer experiences, Bible study, evangelism training, and local ministry in your plans for their preparation.

See the need.

A core conviction of IMB is that we are unapologetically evangelistic. As stated in our Foundations document, "The world is full of need, and people who are filled with the Spirit of Jesus Christ are drawn to meet needs wherever they find them. Because

the vastness of human suffering tugs us in so many directions, it is necessary for us to identify the greatest need of humanity, to keep that need in its proper place of priority. The greatest need of every human being is salvation from sin and eternal life with God." Your team will likely be involved in various ministries; help them understand that the goal will always be making disciples for Jesus.

Serve with humility.

It is a day when many in the world view missions and the missionary task as an effort to colonize and superimpose an unwanted and unneeded culture on others. Be reminded that while the gospel is superlative truth, it comes in the posture and character of servanthood. You and your team must resist the notion that you are the only ones who can make a difference. As one mission writer put it, "Remember, you are showing up late to a meeting. God has already been at work among these people long before you arrived." Learn from your missionary host how best to come ready to serve and share.

Prepare your testimony.

There are many ways to share the gospel, but essential to any presentation is personal testimony. Lead your team to be ready to

share examples of how God has worked in their past as well as their experience of Him in the present. Team members should develop a five-minute version of their testimony that includes how they: 1) came to understand their need for salvation, 2) became a follower of Christ, and 3) have experienced the impact of Christ on their life. Testimonies can be much more than this, but students often need a simple framework to help them gain confidence in talking about their faith.

Some other pointers you can share with the team about developing and sharing a testimony in cross cultural settings:

Incorporate a Bible verse that has been especially meaningful to you.

Refine your testimony until you are covering only the essentials. You should also avoid giving too much information about personal sins that highlight the sinner more than the Savior.

Avoid using familiar but often confusing religious expressions like "washed in the blood of the Lamb" and "I asked Jesus into my heart."

Recognize that a national may be translating your testimony. Use simple words and avoid phrases and expressions that may not be familiar in the culture.

Practice sharing your testimony often!

Learn and practice a gospel presentation.

Preparation for a mission trip is a great time to train team members in a specific method of presenting the gospel. Choose one and make it an essential element for your trip. It is likely that your missionary host will gladly offer guidance on the best method and resources for sharing the gospel where you will be serving. Seek to combine training with actual outreach opportunities.

Here are some good options to consider for evangelism training:

3 Circles Evangelism. 3 Circles is a very simple, very reproducible gospel sharing tool that anyone can learn and train others to use as well. You can download a free app (iOS/Android) on your phone to use this presentation. The North American Mission Board offers a free kit and other resources. The book, *Life on Mission* by Dustin Willis is a helpful guide as well.

Creation to Christ. This is a storying method that is used in many places in the world, especially with oral cultures. Download the outline at imb.org/goimpact. A video presentation of twelve stories in *Creation to Christ* is available here.

Dare to Share: Life in Six Words. The G.O.S.P.E.L is a creative gospel-sharing technique that is easy to memorize and can help teens hear and articulate the gospel message in a contemporary manner. A video and other resources are available at dare2share.org/resources/life-in-6-words.

Personal photo albums. On some trips it may be appropriate for participants to develop a digital photo album on their phones that they can use to introduce themselves to others, build a relationship, and bridge to gospel conversations. Here are some considerations:

- Introduce aspects of your story to which others can relate: family, friends, activities, school, church.
- Focus on people rather than possessions (pets are usually okay) and establish that relationships (not things) are important to you.
- Add pictures that help you tell a story related to your faith. (For example: "This is my family attending church together." "Here is me and my best friend serving in a food pantry.")
- Reciprocate and ask your new friend to tell you about friends, family members, and favorite things to do.