

*Servant Life*

# FIELD MANUAL

Houston, TX  
LINC Houston





## Letter to Participant

Thank you for heeding the call of Christ on your life and participating in this life-changing experience. Experiencing how The Lord is working around the world can forever alter your world-view. Short-term mission experiences allow Americans to catch a glimpse of how the rest of the world lives, teaching us to view that culture through the eyes of Christ. We begin to see not just physical poverty or a lack of infrastructure, but a deep need for a Savior.

We at Servant Life desire for you to live a life worthy of the Gospel of Jesus Christ as Paul commands us in Philippians 1:27. We desire for you to live out the Great Commission, in which Jesus commands those who follow him to “make disciples” (Matthew 28:18-20). The purpose of this trip is to “make disciples”, but don’t let that cause anxiety or fear! After all, Jesus tells us clearly, “Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” That’s a promise to which you should cling.

***Disciple-making is about sharing life in Christ.*** It’s that simple. Share your ransomed life in Christ with everyone you encounter and allow the Spirit to do the work of changing hearts. It is God who works through you and God who gets all the glory; we are simply faithful instruments of his plans and purposes.

We have prepared this field manual to equip you for the task ahead and help you navigate the important questions you have about your experience. As always, we are available and willing to answer any questions you have, via email, phone, twitter, or any other means of communication. Thanks for partnering with us to change the world.

In Christ,

The Servant Life Team



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# Trip Information

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# The Week at a Glance

## Sample Daily Schedule

Your daily schedule will probably look similar to the following.

### **Friday**

Eat dinner before arriving at LINC facilities that evening. Orientation. Get settled in.

### **Saturday**

Ministry day. Potentially help with food distribution / community engagement.

### **Sunday**

Worship with local church. Afternoon: potential free time in Houston or possible ministry activities.

### **Monday - Wednesday**

Primary ministry days.

One of these mornings you will do the Nehemiah Vision Tour, an opportunity to see the spiritual condition of Houston and be exposed to other world religions. Long pants/skirts should be worn this day with shirt sleeves to the elbow, along with shoes that are easy to remove.

**Thursday** - morning departure

Please keep in mind that this is just a **sample** schedule. Your group might be asked to leave earlier in the morning, work later in the afternoon, and lunch and dinner likely won't be exactly at these times. Remember how important it is to **be flexible**.

## **Activities**

LINC is one of Servant Life's most unique partners in the sense that your activities and daily schedule will vary greatly from group to group. Instead of simply throwing your group into the midst of some pre-planned activities or work, LINC will customize activities for your group based on your group's interest (to an extent) and the setting of the local church you are partnered with. You will be partnered with a local church in Houston (in the LINC network) that primarily ministers to international populations. You will not only have the opportunity to worship with that church on Sunday morning, but will get to spend the rest of the week trying to help them engage their local community.

Some examples of activities are as follows:

- Hosting a VBS at the local church or in the community
- Hosting sports camps or Bible studies in local apartment complexes
- Hosting community events (barbecue, block party, etc.)
- Assisting with light construction
- Community evangelism / surveying
- Food distribution
- Teach english

## **Lodging**

Your group will be staying at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, a host church that serves as a "base camp" for short term teams. The facilities here are air-conditioned and include full-shower restrooms. Your group will be sleeping in bunk beds. Each individual will need to bring a sleeping bag (or linens) and their own towels / wash cloths. There are around 70 beds at the church, and your group might be staying there along with another group that is serving for the week.

# Trip Preparations

## Why Go?

What's the purpose of even going on a mission trip? Great question! The quick answer is this: as believers, we are commanded to go.

In his last words, Jesus 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, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always to the end of the age (Matthew 28:18-20)."

We are called and commissioned to take the Gospel to all nations. However, this command should not guide us only one week of the year. We should not only go on missions trips; but, we should lead missional lives. The same God who is with you in Houston is the same God who will be with you when you are at home, in the classroom, on the field, at work, or in your community. Seek to "go and make disciples" in whichever nation you find yourself.

Knowing that we are commanded to play an active role in global disciple-making, we at Servant Life have found that missionaries and ministries around the world have needs that short-term mission teams can easily and uniquely fill, thus helping to advance the kingdom of God in those countries. We also hope that participating in an international mission trip will leave such an impression on your life that you will become supporters of mission work for the rest of your lives, whether through prayer, financial support, church leadership, or even life service.

# Training Sessions Outline

The following Training Sessions are of optional use to you but our hope is regardless of the material you choose to use that you are guiding your team even in the preparation months leading to your trip. These sessions are just one way to use the content in the Field Manual. The training session document is available for download on the Prep Center.

Here is an outline of what the document covers:

## Training Session 1:

- "No Greater Satisfaction" by John Piper
- Discuss Trip Expectations
- Prayer Guide
- Scripture Review: Matthew 28:18-20
- Prayer

## Training Session 2:

- "Extravagant Daily Time with Jesus" by Dick Brogden
- "Abiding Leads to Fruit" by Dick Brogden
- How to Share Your Faith / Build Your Testimony
- Scripture Review: Acts 1:6-8
- Prayer

## Training Session 3:

- "Cross Cultural Servanthood" by Duane Elmer
- Customs and Cultural Guidelines
- Witness Well to Anybody, Anywhere, Anytime
- 7 Ways to Make a Fool of Yourself
- Scripture Review: John 20:21-22
- Prayer

## Training Session 4:

- Servant Life Mission Principles
- Packing List / Airfare Tips
- How to Ruin a Short-Term Trip
- Culture Shock
- Scripture Review: Revelation 7:9-10
- Prayer



## *Preparing Our Hearts and Minds*

When planning for a mission trip, it is important to prepare yourself spiritually for what you will experience on the mission field. Begin praying now for the people you will be serving with throughout the week and the ways God is going to use you all to serve Him most effectively. Also be in prayer for those you will be ministering to in Houston, keeping in mind scripture passages about God's heart for missions and His desire for all nations to know Him. Here are a few ideas to help you even more as you begin to prepare spiritually for your time in Houston.

### Build a Prayer Network

As the Lord prepares you for this journey, He is also preparing the hearts of those who will pray for you. Believe it or not, there are probably many who are already lifting you up without you even knowing it. In an effort to join the body of Christ together in commissioning you on this journey, it is important that you have a group of committed prayer partners who will bathe you in prayer before, during, and after your trip. Begin now to recruit a team of prayer partners who will commit to pray for you as you share this journey with them. Keep them updated with requests and how your journey is going so that they can know how to pray specifically for what the Lord is doing in and through you.

- Make prayer cards containing specific prayer requests and hand them out to church members, family or friends.
- Create a blog to keep friends and family updated on your trip.

# Trip Expectations

What are your expectations for this missions experience?

By now you have probably spent some time imagining what your mission trip will be like. You have thought about what the culture will look like, how the food will taste, what type of work you will be doing, and many other aspects of your trip.

There is nothing wrong with having expectations, but we have to hold on to them loosely. Mission trips never go exactly as planned and foreigners often have a difficult time imagining what life in another country, or even a sub-culture in their own country, will be like before they experience it. There is a good chance that many of your expectations will not be a reality, especially if this is your first time serving in another context.

It is crucial to begin a mission trip with proper expectations. Consider this equation: if **(Expectations  $\neq$  Reality); then (Reality = Frustration)**. Don't spend the first few days of your trip unlearning what you expected to be true prior to the trip and getting frustrated as a result. But even worse, you could miss the point of the trip altogether.

The purpose of missions is to glorify God by making disciples of Jesus Christ. Therefore, you should expect:

## To serve missionaries and the local church

- Making disciples takes longer than a week, therefore, Servant Life partners with missionaries and the local churches to create long-term ministry strategies. Making-disciples is about sharing life in Christ with others. A short-term team can establish great initial connections or even deepen the faith of the local church, but the ministry must extend past the 7-10 days your team is on the ground. In order to make disciples, we support the missionaries and the local church in their mission.
- In Matthew 20:28, Jesus tells us that, *"the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."* This is what we are called to do as those who follow Christ. We are not heroes coming to save the world in a week. We come humbly with a heart to serve the Church in the way that will best help them in their ministry.

This heart of service may lead you to cleaning toilets, washing clothes, or mopping floors, but

know that, *"whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ."* (Colossians 3:23-24)

## **To share your faith**

- As we "go and make disciples" we must proclaim the Good News.
  - For *"everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."* How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, *"How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"* (Romans 10:13-15)
- We must be sent and preach so the nations will believe and call on the name of The Lord for salvation.

## **To experience difficulty**

- In John 16:33 Jesus says, *"I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."* We are promised difficulty in this world. Since the fall of man this world has been warring against man. When we take mission trips, we do not escape the the sin of this world. In fact, when the Church is proclaiming the Gospel we often enter dark places and Satan is working much harder to distract us. Go into this trip expecting to experience difficulty, but know that our God is bigger than delayed flights, broken down vehicles, the weather, or any other obstacle that you may encounter.

## **To grow**

- I have never known a person to leave a mission experience the same as they began it. Mission trips can forever alter your world-view as you become aware of the physical, spiritual, and social needs of the world. Expect to grow in your knowledge of the world you live in. Expect to grow in your love for The Lord and His people. Expect to be changed.

Pray that God will give you proper expectations for your missions experience. Pray daily throughout the trip that He will give you wisdom and discernment to handle everything that comes your way. Trust that He will never leave you, nor forsake you.

**"Be still and know that I am God"**  
**(Psalm 46:10)**

# Servant Life Mission Principles

Servant Life seeks to equip and encourage trip participants as you prepare for your experience. Outlined below you will find a list of character traits along with Scripture references. As you begin to process the attitude and posture of your heart and prepare for the trip, pray the Lord will supply you with these Christ-like traits.

## 1. Humility

- Go with a humble heart attuned to the Lord's plans for the trip, not your own agenda. You are not going to "fix" anything, but rather to selflessly serve alongside the long-term missionary partners. Fervently pray against pride creeping into your heart.
  - *Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. {Philippians 2:3-4}*
  - *When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with the humble is wisdom. {Proverbs 11:2}*

## 2. Flexibility

- A mission experience exposes you to different cultures, which often times means the schedule isn't always predictable. Having a "go with the flow" attitude is crucial, as plans may change from day to day. Flexibility allows you to continually find joy in each circumstance.
  - *I desire to do your will, my God; your law is within my heart. {Psalm 40:8}*
  - *Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. {1 Thessalonians 5:16-18}*

## 3. Patience

- Patience is key as you encounter new people, places and cultures. Things may not always go as planned, and communication with locals may not always be as easy. Pray for the Lord to equip you with an attitude that is slow to speak and quick to listen.
  - *Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger. {James 1:19}*
  - *May God who gives patience, steadiness, and encouragement help you to live in complete harmony with each other – each with the attitude of Christ toward the other. {Romans 15:5}*

#### 4. Perseverance

- You may experience unfamiliar or difficult situations while serving; therefore perseverance is important. The Lord will supply you with the strength to make it through each and every circumstance.
  - *Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. {Galatians 6:9}*
  - *Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. {James 1:12}*

#### 5. Love

- Love is central to each and every character trait that a Christ-follower embodies through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Love always, often, deeply, sacrificially, selflessly, and unconditionally.
  - *Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. {1 Corinthians 13:4-5}*
  - *And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. {Colossians 3:14}*

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **How will my airfare be handled?**

Servant Life will book all airfare through our travel agency. If you're traveling in a group, everyone on your team must travel together. We book group airline tickets and cannot accommodate special requests for different individual flights. Due to commitments to our missionaries to have groups there on set dates, trip dates are not flexible. Once a ticket has been purchased in your name, it must be paid for regardless of circumstances. All tickets are non-refundable and non-transferable.

### **If I have a frequent flyer program, can I use those miles to cover my plane ticket?**

Possibly. We cannot guarantee which airline your team will use, as we are watching for competitive pricing and schedules. Please contact Servant Life if you are interested in learning more about using frequent flyer miles on a mission trip.

### **What activities will I be involved in while I'm there?**

Servant Life works with different missionary partners in each country/city. Your team will be working with a local church in Houston to help them engage their community with the hope and love of Christ.

**When do I need to get a passport?**

Obviously, you will not need a passport since you are traveling domestically. However, it is important to always keep a photo i.d. with you.

**What immunizations do I need to get?**

Seeing as you are staying in the United States, you should already be up to date on any immunizations specific to the U.S.

**Am I serving alone or as part of a team?**

You will be part of a Servant Life team, which can be made up of groups and/or individual participants. If you are registering alone, you will join the team at an airport and stay and work with them for the remainder of the trip.

**Is there any supervision?**

Servant Life trips are led by our missionary partners. This partner serves as the host and leader for your team from the time you land at the airport until you depart at the end of the mission experience.

**How safe are these trips?**

Servant Life makes every effort to keep you safe during your entire experience with us. We visit every location before sending a group, and work with partners who are familiar with the area in which you will be staying and working. We research and plan the safest places for you to eat, stay, work and play.

**Who will my team work with?**

All teams work with established missionary partners in the Servant Life network. These are either missionaries or ministry leaders who have a history of service in the country and programs that fit with the mission of Servant Life. To read more about the mission partners in our network, visit [servantlife.com/partners](http://servantlife.com/partners).

**Who do my parents call in case of an emergency?**

All Servant Life participants will be given a list with emergency contact information and numbers. This list includes the contact information for Servant Life, as well as our ministry partner serving on the field with you. If an emergency arises where your parent needs to reach you, please have them contact Servant Life first, and we will work closely with them to reach you.

**Will I be able to call home and email while on the field?**

Access to phone calls and email may be limited, and varies from location to location. See page 22 for more information about internet access. In the event of an emergency, Servant Life will contact parents immediately. So remember that no news is good news!

**Is a visa required for my trip?**

No.

**Will I receive any training?**

Aside from this manual, any other training will take place with the ministry partner once your team arrives at your destination.

**Is there anything not covered in my trip cost?**

The only expenses not covered in your trip cost are meals in airports on travel days and any souvenirs that you may wish to purchase.

# How To Share Your Faith

Before you go, we at Servant Life feel like it is not only important but also our responsibility to make sure that you have a clear understanding of the gospel and how to share it. After all, if we are going to make disciples, we need to be able to tell others what that means. Obviously, we don't feel that your ability to share the gospel and your testimony should only be important for your trip, but as believers we are called to be prepared in and out of season (2 Tim 4:2). Are you prepared to share your faith?

Below is a guide to help you prepare how to share your testimony with the essential elements of the gospel. On a mission trip you may or may not have extended time to fully layout the story of salvation with those you encounter. It is important that you are able to share the Gospel in short and extended versions. We ask that you take the needed time to seriously work through the following questions. We know that it is the work of the Holy Spirit that brings about new life through Christ, but we have the responsibility to share God's good news and make disciples (Mt 28:18-20, Acts 1:8-9 & Luke 24:44-49). Our hope is that this exercise will not only prepare you, but also remind you of the goodness of God's grace through the work of Christ (Eph. 1:18-21 & 2:4-10). We look forward to serving with you this summer as we strive together to make much of Christ!



PART ONE: THE GOSPEL

Use these five elements of God's story to write the Gospel in your own words:

The Character of God  
(1 John 1:5-10, Ephesians 2:1-10)

Write the Biblical truth about the character of God found in this passage:

The Sinfulness of Man  
(1 John 1:5-10, Ephesians 2:1-10, Romans 3:23, 6:23)

Write the Biblical truth found in these passages:

The Sufficiency of Christ  
(1 John 1:5-10, Ephesians 2:1-10)

Write the Biblical truth found in these passages

The Necessity of Faith  
(1 John 1:5-10, Ephesians 2:1-10, Romans 10:9-13)  
Write the Biblical truth found in these passages:

The Urgency of Eternity  
(Ephesians 2:1-3, Romans 6:23)  
Write the Biblical truth found in this passage:

Write in your own words (100 words or less) the five biblical truths studied above:

## PART TWO: SHARING MY STORY

Work through the following questions to help you simply and clearly share your story.

I was awakened to my need for a Savior by (people,  
circumstances, books, etc.):

I realized that God is:

I realized that I was separated from  
God because:

I came to understand that Christ:

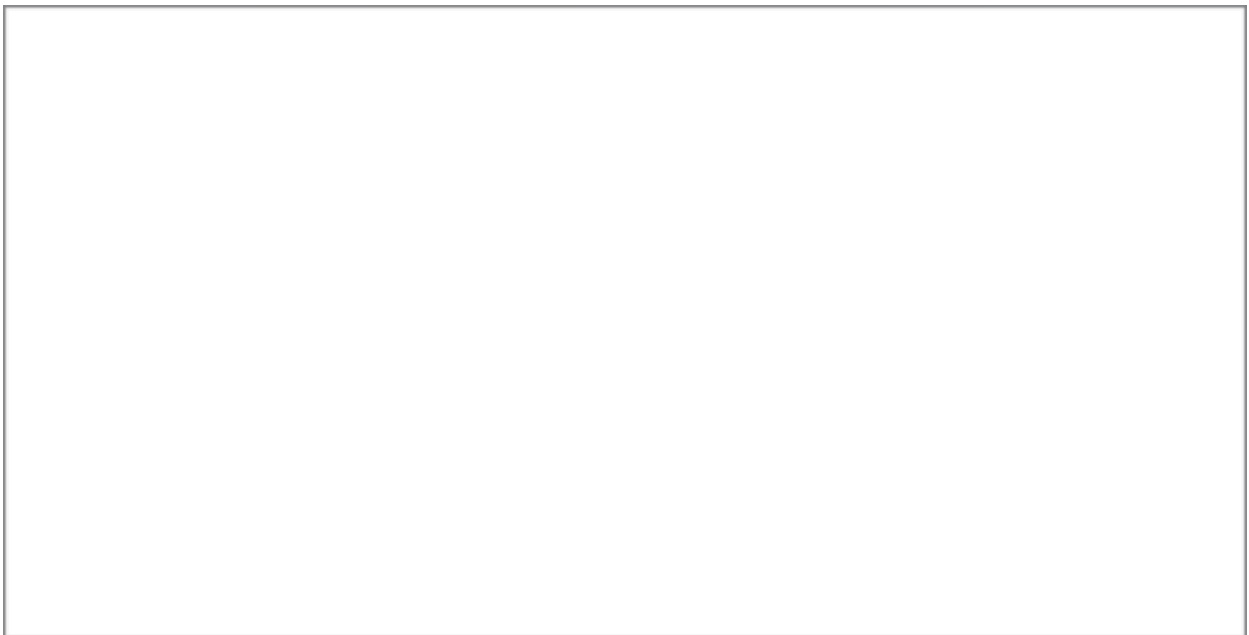


I responded to the good news of  
Christ's death and resurrection by:



### PART THREE: PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Using the five elements of the Gospel and the previous questions just answered, use the following space to share your story and the gospel. The goal is to be able to clearly articulate the Gospel and your story within 60 seconds.



# Packing

## Clothing Overview

The most important thing to keep in mind as you decide what clothes to pack is to be appropriate and modest. While you're out working during the day, cotton t-shirts and appropriate length shorts are great! Make sure to pack nicer clothes for church and worship times. Here are a few packing tips as you begin preparing for your trip.

- Pack lightly! Airlines have restrictions on how much your checked luggage can weigh. Make sure you pack what is necessary without too much excess. Plus, who wants to carry around that much stuff in another country?
- Leave room in your suitcase for any souvenirs you may want to bring back.
- Consider packing items like shampoo, conditioner, etc in plastic bags. In case these things leak during travel, your clothes and other items will be protected.
- It's a good idea to pack a change of clothes, toothbrush, important travel documents, and any irreplaceable items in your carry on bag in the event that your checked luggage is lost.
- To save space, you can roll your clothes instead of folding them.
- It's best not to pack any flashy or expensive jewelry to wear while you're in country.

## Airline Restrictions/Tips

### **Arrive early for check-in at the airport.**

Because you are flying, we strongly suggest arriving at least three hours before your flight is scheduled to depart. This allows time for parking, shuttle transportation, check-in, and security checks.

### **Label all of your luggage.**

Servant Life provides each trip participant with two luggage tags that we strongly recommend your group using. This will help when collecting luggage from baggage claim. Due to the similar look of most luggage, you may also want to set your bag apart in another way by adding a ribbon, luggage strap, or sticker in a visible location.

### **Always have your photo i.d. with you.**

While traveling through airports, it is important to always have your i.d. with you. Do not pack it in your checked luggage, and do not put it in the pocket of your airplane seat. It is best to keep it in a secure section of your carry on luggage.

### **Checked Baggage**

We recommend that everyone travel with one checked bag. It is helpful if everyone can manage their own luggage while traveling. Remember that luggage with wheels will make life much easier as you maneuver through airports! Also, be sure to put a copy of your passport information page in every piece of your luggage.

### **Carry-On Bags**

It is always a good idea to keep a change of clothes as well as a small toiletries kit (toothbrush, deodorant, etc.) with you in your carry-on in the event of flight delays or cancellations. Your passport counts as your form of identification and you must keep this on you at all times in the airports. You may not carry-on liquids of any kind larger than 3 oz. Any liquids 3 oz. or smaller must be in their original container and in a quart-sized Ziplock bag.

***\*\*Baggage policies are based on airline regulations and change often. Please visit your airline's website before you leave for their latest baggage policies. Any costs associated with checking bags or overweight bags are solely the responsibility of the participant.\*\****

## General Packing List

*Baggage policies are based on airline regulations and subject to change. Please visit your airline's website for their latest baggage policies.*

### **Clothing**

- ☐ Lightweight clothing for hot weather, such as athletic shorts and t-shirts
- ☐ Pants and shorts that you do not mind getting dirty
- ☐ One outfit that can and should be reused for activities that will cause you to get extremely dirty/muddy
- ☐ Any shorts should be finger-tip length; please be modest and set a good example
- ☐ T-shirts – No tank tops
- ☐ Worship clothes can be casual.
- ☐ Comfortable shoes (an extra pair of tennis shoes that can be possibly thrown away at the end of the trip)
- ☐ Flip flops for use in the showers
- ☐ Bathing suit (use discretion)
- ☐ Hat or cap
- ☐ Raincoat/Poncho

### **Toiletries**

- ☐ Basic Personal toiletries – toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, shampoo, feminine items, etc.
- ☐ Insect repellent
- ☐ Sunscreen
- ☐ Disinfectant hand gel
- ☐ Dramamine/Gas X/Antacids/Imodium/Tylenol (as needed)
- ☐ Baby Wipes/Kleenex
- ☐ Chapstick with Sunscreen
- ☐ Aloe vera – for sunburn relief

### **Other**

- ☐ Photo i.d. (place in your carry-on bag and have a copy in your checked bag)
- ☐ Bedding, pillow (sleeping bag or sheets for bunk beds)
- ☐ Towels
- ☐ Bible, Journal and Pens
- ☐ Camera, Batteries and Film (hard to find and expensive in other countries)
- ☐ Flashlight
- ☐ Work gloves
- ☐ Sunglasses
- ☐ Binoculars
- ☐ Snacks
- ☐ Water bottle
- ☐ Alarm Clock
- ☐ Phone card – internet is not readily available, so don't depend on it as a source of communication
- ☐ Small desk/clip-on fan

**\*Keep in mind that there are no laundry facilities available for team use.**

## **Gifts for Children**

The people of Houston will value your time and your attention more than you may realize. Still, please feel free to bring gifts for the children you meet while you are there. Try to think simplistically when it comes to the gifts you bring. Here are some examples:

- Small toys and books (nothing violent, like toy guns)
- Clothes, especially socks and underwear
- Toiletry items like toothpaste, soap, and shampoo - keep in mind to bring enough for the whole family
- photos of you and your family
- coloring books and crayons
- stickers
- small decorative items for the home
- bubbles
- hair bows, headbands, and other hair accessories for little girls
- Hard candy that won't melt in your luggage

## ***Culture Shock***

It may not seem like it, but culture shock is a big deal. Any time you experience another country, culture, people group, and way of living, it takes some adjusting. Not everyone experiences culture shock, but it's still important to recognize it and know how to deal with it.

Culture shock is characterized by an anxious feeling from being surrounded by completely new things. You are so accustomed to life where you are that it may overwhelm you to all of a sudden find yourself in a culture that you know nothing about.

The best thing you can do when it comes to culture shock is to keep an open mind about your new experiences. Remember that people around the world think and act differently than you. Keep an understanding mind about others' opinions. The worst thing you can do is to think that you are superior to someone of a different culture or people group.



Along with keeping an open mind, it's important to be flexible as well. You will be experiencing a new culture and things may not always go your way. In fact, you probably already know that things will rarely go your way. Remember to be easy going when new plans arise. This also includes maintaining a positive attitude instead of complaining.

If you're feeling some culture shock, communicate that with the people on your team. Chances are good that someone else may be feeling the same way or can at least help you through it. Being able to identify with others about your thoughts can help you not be overcome with culture shock.

Keep in mind that if you experience culture shock, that does not mean you are a failure. Everyone adjusts differently to a new setting. You may not even identify with culture shock. However, if you do, it's important to be aware of what to do so that it does not become a problem. Note: even though you're still in America, it's still possible to experience culture shock from being in a new place.

## ***How To Ruin Your Short Term Mission Trip***

1. *Have an "It's all about me" attitude.* The best way to ruin your mission trip is to act as if everything revolves around your comfort and your wants and needs. Even if you are sacrificing time and resources to go and serve, don't expect others to worship the ground you walk on. Read Philippians 2:3-8 and consider the humble attitude of Christ.

2. *By all means, don't be flexible.* If you don't live out the words of Philippians 2:14 to "do all things without grumbling or questioning," then you are guaranteed to have a trip full of complaints. There is not a formula to mission trips; you should expect a high degree of flexibility when you are serving real people and meeting real needs. Please be a blessing to work with and a joy to be around, not the person complaining that your expectations aren't being met.

3. *Don't devote yourself to prayer or time in the Word.* Spending time talking to the Lord and studying His word only ensures that your heart will be aligned with His will. Failure to draw near to the Lord will set you up to have the wrong attitude, and possibly the wrong actions. Furthermore, in order to tell others about the spiritual disciplines of prayer and Bible study, we ourselves must practice those disciplines.

4. *Start thinking your mission trip is terrible because you didn't see much fruit.* It is likely that you might not see hundreds of people come to know Christ while you are there, but that does not mean your trip was a bust. 1 Corinthians 3:6 reminds us that there are stages of planting seeds, watering, and seeing growth. As a short term team, you are largely helping to plant and water seeds-- and ultimately God gets the glory in their growth!

(We want you to have the best mission trip possible. So please do the opposite of these 4 things. Always keep the Lord and the gospel in the forefront of your mind!)

# Country Information

## Houston

### Population

Estimated to be 2.1 million people

### Capital City

Austin is the capital city of Texas. It is located on the eastern edge of the American Southwest and is the fourth-largest city in Texas. Austin has a population of 790,390 according to the 2010 U.S. Census.

### Language

English

### Primary Religion

Christianity

### Time Zone

Central Time Zone (CST)

### Currency

Dollars

### Safety

Servant Life makes every effort to keep you safe during your entire experience with us. We visit every location before sending a group and work with partners in the country who are familiar with the area we will be staying in and working in. We research and plan the safest places for you to eat, stay, work and play. In general, you should always be cautious and aware of your surroundings when you are traveling in a different context.

### Food

All meals, except for those while traveling, will be provided for you while you're on the trip.

### Weather

During the summer months, it is common for the temperature to reach over 90 F, with an average of 99 days per year above 90 F. The humidity of Houston results in a heat index higher than the actual temperature. Summer mornings average over 90% relative humidity and approximately 60% in the afternoon. There are only light winds in the summer that offer little relief from the heat and humidity. Scattered afternoon showers and thunderstorms are common in the summer.



## Partner Information



LINC Houston is a network of local churches that have joined together in a common mission to impact the city of Houston with the love of Christ.

In May 2001, a group of pastors and lay leaders came together to discuss the great opportunities and challenges our church faces in reaching the urban, multi-cultural and ethnic diversity of our city. Out of this meeting a strategic partnership of local congregations was born, the purpose of which was to be a catalyst for creating new ministries in urban Houston and to support urban ministry in existing congregations.

# *Houston Do's & Don'ts*

As those seeking to honor Christ, it should be our desire is to build each other up and encourage one another in love at all times. The staff of LINC want their church networks in Houston to be one of the most encouraging places on earth! They desire to walk in a way that is pleasing to the Lord throughout the year. The staff will positively encourage one another in both word and deed, treating the opposite sex with the utmost respect! As such, they expect both their visiting leaders and their mission team to possess similar character and lifestyle qualities.

## **DON'TS**

- DON'T be a loud/obnoxious tourist that needs to be toned down.
- DON'T give out your personal information
- DON'T give directly to an individual.
- DON'T make yourself stick out by wearing inappropriate clothing.
- DON'T make fun of differences in culture. You never know who might understand English. It is safer to just assume someone in the crowd understands you.
- DON'T encourage begging by rewarding the effort. (work with a leader if you encounter this!)
- DON'T go out after dark.
- DON'T bring anything that you aren't willing to give up if someone asks for it.
- DON'T go without sunscreen!

## **DO'S**

- DO feel free to give gifts, but please ask the missionary before doing so.
- DO label any medicines you are taking with you.
- DO remember that you are representing a ministry that has been around longer than you've been in the city and will still minister there after you have left.
- DO use the "buddy system."
- DO bring any medicines that you may need (pepto bismol, ibuprofen, allergy, etc.)
- DO be prepared to smell body odor. Stifle your reaction (facial expressions are bilingual)!
- DO sanitize your hands before eating. But do it discreetly, not blatantly just after holding a child or shaking a national's hand.



# Servant Life

Since its inception in 1999, Servant Life has been a mission-mobilizing ministry providing dynamic mission experiences for students and church groups. Our aim is to connect students' love for God to the nations through His Word and by His Spirit. Currently, Servant Life sends short-term mission teams to a global network of partners in eleven countries, including two locations in the United States.

## Core Values

Servant Life strives to focus on four aspects, or values, of ministry that are central to our philosophy and practice.

### 1. Gospel Centered Ministry

Only the good news of Jesus ultimately has the power to save people from their sins and lead them to a life of hope and freedom. We select mission partners based on their commitment to Scripture, Gospel-centered ministry, and the opportunity for students to be able to share the good news of Jesus with those with whom they come into contact. *Romans 10:14-15, John 14:6*

### 2. Long Term Strategies

Short-term mission trips must happen within a long-term ministry strategy. In order to see true discipleship, the relationships that are formed during trips must continue past the 7-10 days that participants are on the ground. Therefore, we serve our long-term missionaries with our network in whatever way best fits their needs. We exist to support the work in which they have invested their lives in the same way the Philippians supported Paul in *Philippians 1:3-7*.

### 3. One-on-One Relationships

Ministry happens best within the context of relationships. Our goal is to provide mission experiences that allow students to have extensive, saturated time to build relationships with those they are serving. Whether it is serving as support staff at a camp, ministering to orphans, or teaching English to a refugee from an Unreached country, we want trip participants to form meaningful relationships as a platform to share the life-giving good news of Jesus Christ. *John 4:1-26, 2 Corinthians 5:11-21*

### 4. Youth and Children

Students don't need to wait to do ministry. The Lord has proven Himself faithful to use a simple conversation, a warm hug, or a game of tag to build a bridge to share the gospel of Christ with someone else. We believe that God has uniquely positioned teenagers and young adults to creatively and competently minister to their fellow peers and children in a dynamic way. *Matthew 18:1-5, 1 Timothy 4:12*





## Next Steps

As your time in Houston comes to an end, you've probably seen, touched, tasted, and felt things you never had before. You have seen God work in new and powerful ways, and your eyes have been opened to a whole new world. It can be a confusing, emotional experience to participate in a foreign mission trip and then be thrust back into "normal" life in the United States. As you complete your mission experience, it is very important to take time to reflect on all that God has done and taught you over the last few weeks, as well as how your view of missions might have changed. Spend some time journaling about your experience. The following questions will help get you started, and will also help you be prepared to answer family and friends who want to hear all about your mission trip. Hopefully there are a few ways that you have been changed forever.

1. What did you learn during your time in the Houston?
2. How did God stretch and use you?
3. List names of people you don't want to forget and why.
4. How will you share your experience with those back home?
5. How did your team work together as the body of Christ during your trip?
6. Describe at least one experience in which you felt or saw the power of the Holy Spirit as He worked among the people.
7. Explain at least one situation in which your prayers were answered.
8. What were you most thankful for?
9. How have you been changed?
10. How were the people you ministered to changed from you being there?
11. How will people at home be changed by you and the experiences you share with them?
12. How will you ask others to continue to pray for the people you ministered to during your trip?

## Sharing Your Experience

When you get home, you may become overwhelmed with the number of people who ask to hear your stories from your trip. If you had a dollar for every time someone will say “How was your trip?!” or “Tell me all about it!” than you could probably pay for a whole other mission trip.

When it comes to sharing your story, you’ll encounter different types of listeners. Some people will ask you about your trip in passing and will only want to hear one or 2 sentences about your experience. In the space below, go ahead and write down a few sentences that you can quickly share with people. The most important detail to include is something incredible that you saw the Lord do. Think of a great story you have and sum that up into a few words that will give the other person a feel for what happened on your trip.

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Others will want to have a detailed, but not lengthy conversation with you.

Imagine that you are grabbing coffee with a friend as you share your experiences. This person will likely spend a decent amount of time with you and will expect to hear several stories. Have a variety of stories ready to share with this person and be ready to answer any questions they might have. Also, it’s safe to assume that people who will sit and listen to you talk for an extended period of time are interested in missions as well. Don’t be afraid to encourage them to go on a mission trip!

Lastly, you will definitely have people in your life who will want to hear every single detail you are willing to share. These types of people will come to your house and spend hours sitting on your couch as you pour out your heart. In these instances, feel free to share any and every detail you would like. You might want to consider taking your journal along so that you don’t miss a beat.

One major thing to remember is this: people love pictures! Your stories will be better if they have pictures to accompany them. Have some printed out or saved to your phone/computer so that you can easily show your friends and family.

## We want to hear from you!

We are thrilled that you will be serving on a Servant Life mission trip! Know that we are here to help you in the process of preparing. Anyone on our team is available to answer questions. You can find that contact info at the beginning of this Field Manual. Feel free to contact us at any point.

On the same note, we love seeing pictures and hearing stories from your trip! If you have any photos, blogs, videos, etc. that you'd like to share, you can email those to us, or tag us on social media.

Know that we are praying for you with expectancy! We are confident that The Lord has great things in store for your mission trip!

In Christ,  
The Servant Life Team



/ServantLife



@servantlifemissions



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