



Prep & Training Manual

International Trips - Participant



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Who is Envision?

As a resource within the C&MA, Envision identifies and develops future missional leaders who innovate, establish, and strengthen communities of faith across Canada and around the world. We design intentional opportunities through trips, internships, apprenticeships and global careers that focus on gospel influence among least-reached peoples.

ENVISION SITES

Envision offers the opportunity to participate in what God is doing in over 12 sites both in Canada and around the world. You can be involved in ministry connecting local churches, bringing social justice, and seeing God's Kingdom transform major urban settings. You will also experience discipleship as Site leaders pour into you and give you opportunities to grow no matter where you find yourself on your faith journey.

Envision Trips (7-10 days)

Envision Internships (3 – 12 months)

Go Global (2 year Apprentices & 4 year Career commitments)

ENVISION LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Envision offers resources and experiences that shape your faith and develop leadership. Media explores the intersection of culture and faith, sharing stories that challenge paradigms and inspire movement. Summit provides young influencers with a week-long “soul and skill shaping” experience in an international or domestic city.

Envision Media

Envision Summit

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Packing Tips

Here are a few general tips to follow when it's time to pack:

1. MAKE SURE YOU CAN CARRY YOUR LUGGAGE.

Be sure to use a suitcase with wheels or a duffle bag that is easily carried. You may be required to carry or drag your luggage long distances. Your international workers and trip leaders will not be able to help you with carrying your luggage.

2. FOLLOW THE LUGGAGE REQUIREMENTS FOR YOUR AIRLINE.

Please check your airline's website for regulations on all checked and carry-on luggage. This is information that only your airline and travel agent are able to provide. Special note: If you are changing planes or using partnering airlines, be sure that the requirements are valid for all legs of your trip. Many smaller planes have tighter requirements for luggage.

3. USE ZIP-LOCK BAGS.

Packing in zip-locks is a win-win situation. It keeps spills from leaking onto your clothes and can prove useful during your trip.

4. POTENTIAL ITEMS (ASK FIRST)

Musical Instruments
Rain gear
Insect repellent
Bedding
Packet of blank cards for thank you notes

DO NOT BRING

Expensive Jewelry
Valuables that are irreplaceable
Traveler's Checks
Anything that would jeopardize security (if serving in a creative access country-Christian or 'missions' items)



Packing Tips (continued)

*Location-specific packing lists for your ministry location can be found in the Envision Site Handbook.

THOUGHTS ON PACKING CLOTHING

These are general guidelines. Please follow any instructions given to you by your overseas team. What you wear communicates nonverbally to the local people around you.

- Dress for success, look sharp and avoid wearing torn clothing, especially if teaching or performing.
- Dress very conservatively. No skin showing anywhere between your shoulders and knees. Try the “wave your arms above your head” test before you pack it. If you have a chance to go swimming, only wear a one piece and preferably still wear a shirt over.
- Pack light cotton or nylon clothing that dries quickly; jeans are bulky to pack and dry
- Body piercing, tattoos, facial hair, or long hair for men may be offensive. Consult your Site coordinator to find if these need to be addressed in advance.
- You may have the opportunity to buy clothes in-country for a reasonable price. That can be a fun cultural experience. It generally helps you blend in better too.



Paperwork

REQUIRED FORMS

All forms required for participants are to be completed at the time of registration. These include risk management policy, release of waiver and a medical form for each individual.

Criminal Record Checks: Your team leader will be running a background check on each team member over the age of 18 using **myBackcheck.com**.

Travel Insurance: Your trip leader will be printing insurance cards for each member to carry with them for the duration of the trip.

Visas and Passports: Depending on which Envision site your team is visiting, you may need a visa or passport for entry. Please refer to your Site Handbook, as well as <https://travel.gc.ca/to> learn what kind of documents you might need. They also offer services for getting a visa, as well as expediting a passport.



Things Every Team Should Know About Traveling in a Group

1. **VISIBLE PASSPORT CHECK.** Leader: Ask to actually SEE every teammate's passport, don't assume they have it because they said they do. This should be done at every major change (arriving at the airport, getting off the plane, through customs, etc.).
2. **YOUR PASSPORT SHOULD NEVER LEAVE YOUR SIGHT.** If someone asks to take it for ANY reason, it is acceptable to ask to go with them.
3. **BE YOUR OWN LUGGAGE SECURITY.** Don't leave your luggage unattended for any reason. Always assign at least two people to stay behind with luggage should you need to split up to buy food, use the restroom, etc.
4. **PACK ONLY WHAT YOU CAN CARRY.** Be mindful of how long you'll be traveling and how far you might need to walk! Pack light!
5. **STICK TOGETHER.** There is no reason to have a student be separated at any time. Use the buddy system when you do have to be separated (restrooms, purchasing food, being pulled aside, through all airport checks, etc.) It is perfectly legal for an adult to ask if they can go with a student if they are pulled aside or detained for any reason.
6. **ENGINE AND CABOOSE.** One team leader should be at the front of every line and the other should be at the back. The front leads the way; the back looks out for any mishaps.
7. **NOT EVERYONE IS OUT TO GET YOU.** Most airport employees are just trying to do their jobs. It is not their secret desire to take you and your team down. Be polite and give people the benefit of the doubt. Follow all instructions, even if you don't understand.



Things Every Team Should Know About Traveling in a Group

“Are you a Christian?” Take time as a team to decide what the answers to each of these questions should be and make sure you are all on the same page. Consistency is key!

9. **CITIZENS ARE NOT GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES.** There is a difference between an immigration agent asking you questions and someone you met out in the city asking what you are doing. Keep security in the forefront of your mind, but don't feel like you have to fear the citizens of the country. They probably just want to learn more about “the Foreigners.” A word of caution: You can be friendly without giving concrete answers to people who ask (duration, location, etc.).

10. **DO AS THE LOCALS DO!** Not everything you learn about a culture is taught in a classroom or read in a book. Observe the culture around you and adapt to it. YOU are the guest so you do things their way! Are the locals chatty or quiet? Are all the women wearing long skirts or pants? Do they greet each other differently than we would?

11. **TEAM ROLES.** Talk about how everyone responds to stress, excitement, confusion, lots of noise, being tired or hungry. Take into consideration who can handle certain aspects of travel better and put them in charge of various things.

12. **GO WITH THE FLOW.** If something “goes wrong,” adapt and move on!



Am I Prepared?

Preparation is a key ingredient to your having a successful and life-changing short-term missions experience. The leaders are able to help prepare you to a certain degree, but much of the preparation falls upon your shoulders! Hopefully, the following issues and questions will be ones that stimulate you to think through how prepared you are and in what areas you might need to become better prepared prior to your trip. We invite you to take a quiet time and review the landscape of your life. Reflect, journal and pray through these different areas. Remember that you don't have to be perfect: we are all in the process of being formed into the likeness of Christ!

As you come across areas in your life that need to be changed, take this as an opportunity to make growth steps as you prepare to travel. We minister to others out of what we have inside of us. Being always precedes doing! Our inner lives provide fuel for ministry!

Please see the questions on the following page as you prayerfully think about preparing for your trip!

Am I Prepared?

AM I PREPARED PHYSICALLY?

Am I in shape? What exercises could I be doing to increase my fitness level for this mission?
Am I in good health? What areas of my self-care could be improved prior to departure for this mission? Have I had a physical exam within the last year?

AM I PREPARED EMOTIONALLY?

Do I have any unresolved issues in my relationships?
Am I dealing with depression, doubt, or deep discouragement that I need to figure out prior to departure?
Would it be wise to talk anything out with a pastor, counselor or friend?
By participating in this mission, am I 'escaping' from personal problems or difficult situations?

AM I PREPARED SPIRITUALLY?

Where am I in my journey with God? Am I cultivating some spiritual disciplines (prayer, meditation, fasting, Bible study, silence, worship and solitude) on a regular basis?
Am I listening to God's Spirit and his promptings?
Am I downshifting my life enough so that there is quiet in my day to reflect on what God is teaching me? Am I spending time reading and digesting God's word? How consistent am I?
Am I striving to be obedient in the little things? Applying what God is teaching me?
Do I have a heart that is enlarging with God's love and grace? Is it getting softer or harder?

AM I PREPARED MENTALLY?

Is my thought life honoring to God? Am I dealing with inappropriate thoughts?
Am I harboring sinful thoughts that need to be confessed to God or another person?
Are there racist thoughts about people from other cultures or different skin colors lingering in my mind? Do I consider myself superior to other nationalities?
Is the magnitude of God's grace permeating my thinking more and more?

AM I PREPARED RELATIONALLY?

Have I thought through my responsibilities and relationships at home in reference to this mission? I will be spending numerous hours with a team. How do I relate to others? How do I respond to authority? Am I prone to any types of interpersonal conflict that might hinder my ability to work with others?
Do I consider myself a good listener? How can I improve on this before going with the team?
Am I comfortable being transparent and sharing my failures with others? What obstacles do I have when it comes to being open and vulnerable?
Do group discussions or decisions frustrate me?
Am I open to receiving honest feedback about how other team members perceive me?



EXPECTATIONS & REALITY

Expectations. We all have preconceived notions of what an experience will be like beforehand. When it meets or exceeds our expectations, we're happy and pleased with how things turned out. And when it fails to meet our expectations, we sometimes have a bad taste in our mouths afterwards – whether we actually pinpoint it as unmet expectations or not.

Please use this worksheet to help you begin to think through some of your expectations for your trip. We want you to be able to develop realistic expectations after some discussion and research. By the way, it's okay to say "I don't know what to expect," in the first My Expectations box. After some research, you will have some concrete expectations, so please write them in. We left a few blank boxes for you to add any additional subjects that would be relevant to you.

| CATEGORY | MY EXPECTATIONS | EXPECTATIONS AFTER LEARNINGS | REALITY AS I SAW IT |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| Living Situation | | | |
| Personal Hygiene | | | |
| Relationship with Locals | | | |
| Teammate Relationships | | | |



EXPECTATIONS & REALITY

| CATEGORY | MY EXPECTATIONS | EXPECTATIONS AFTER LEARNINGS | REALITY AS I SAW IT |
|--|-----------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| How People Worship | | | |
| Your Reaction to Culture Shock | | | |
| What International Workers Are Like | | | |
| Relating to My Leaders | | | |
| Language Learning | | | |
| Food | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |



Cross Cultural Sensitivity

Being an effective cross-cultural learner is not easy.

Often times we hold false expectations and hidden assumptions about how things should 'work' – from what relationships should look like, how time should be spent, what importance should be placed on tasks, how conflict should happen, etc.

It's easy to assume that one's own cultural way of doing things is right or best, or even more biblical than others. The tension in short-term missions lies in the relationship of discerning between the absolutes of Scripture and the nuances of cultural differences.

As you go on your trip, would you consider asking yourself questions like the following:

1. What are my underlying cultural assumptions about relationships? Leadership? Tasks? Time?
2. What are the underlying assumptions of the people to whom I am ministering and ministering alongside?
3. What are Scriptural truths that can guide our interactions? When does the Bible allow for flexibility in how we operate within cultures?

The following are a list of terms that may help you to define and recognize different cultural values during your time at our Envision site. Keep in mind that one posture is not 'better' than the other, as each can be and have been supported by Scripture. Paul himself said, "I have become all things to all people, that by all possible means I might save some." Consider how you too might adopt these cultural postures during your time on the field, and be open to learning from your host culture.



Cross Cultural Terms & Definitions

HIGH POWER DISTANCE

Cultures who have a high power distance are okay with a large status gap between those who have power and those who don't. The gap is seen as natural and good, and the leader has a right to make unilateral decisions that are obeyed without question. Leaders often have special privileges. Challenging leadership directly is disrespectful and can bring shame. Group harmony is very important.

LOW POWER DISTANCE

Cultures who have a low power distance seek to minimize status symbols and inequalities. Power is often delegated to team members or subcommittees. There is a democratic decision-making style.

HIGH CONTEXT

Cultures who value high context communicate in such a way that very little information is transmitted verbally; the actual message is in the physical context or in nonverbal cues. Use of flowery language, body language is common. Value is placed on harmonious relationships and the group. Time is measured by quality, not quantity. Ambiguity is okay and expected. The present is the most important.

LOW CONTEXT

Cultures who value low context communicate very directly and clearly about ideas. What is said is most important and is often done using precise words. Accomplishing goals is more important than building relationships. Time is measured by quantity. Individualism and competition are valued as opposed to group harmony. Ambiguity causes stress and is minimized as much as possible by planning and scheduling.

COLLECTIVIST

Cultures who are collectivist see the group as the end, and improvements to individuals within the group are a means to the end, to benefit the group. The desires of the group are more important than the desires of the individual. Relationships are important.

INDIVIDUALIST

Cultures who are individualist see the individual as the end, and improvements to communal arrangements are a means to achieve this. Desires of the individual are most important.



Voluntourism: More Harm than Good

By Heather Ruiz

This is an excerpt. To read the full article, [click here](#).

In August, 2013, Heather Ruiz traveled through West Africa as a journalist for ADRA. After working in development for nine months, Ruiz moved to a village in the Western Sahara to find answers for her questions about responsible volunteering and empowering communities. The following highlights her insights on constructive service.

“How many volunteer groups do you get here?” I shouted over the din.

“Sometimes two a month,” he beamed proudly. “The volunteers cover almost all our staff.”

“You aren’t providing jobs for any local workers?” I repeated.

“Well, no.” He paused a moment, sensing the need to make it sound better. “We have so very many children here at Grace House. They need food and a home. They need help. Here, they get help.”

“Some of these children have lost their parents and are emotionally susceptible at this stage,” I gently said. “Isn’t it damaging to further their never-ending cycle of abandonment from a revolving door of volunteers?”

“This is just the way it is.”

“When I grow up, I’m going to America, because I want to buy things like what the volunteers have.”

He pointed a stubby thumb at his bare chest. “I’ll be a rich man, like in the movies”

This is the classic White Savior Complex, the worship of the land of the White Man. Somehow, despite hearing that Jesus loves him, the message of material goodness has swept him further in devotion, and he will worship the white saviors for the spectacular contributions to his development rather than the ostensible Jesus fellow.

The “mission trip model” has been praised for the individuals willing to sacrifice their time and money for impoverished communities, doing as Christ would. However, without knowledge of language, local culture, societal nuances, and the economic framework of the community, this type of “voluntourism” is sometimes wasteful at best, and possibly destructive to the community.



Support Letter Guidelines

You're going on a missions trip! Not only are YOU pumped, but your friends and family will be very excited to hear about your venture, too. They will be thrilled to hear from you, and a letter is a great way to let them know all the details. Below are some guidelines for writing your support letter.

NEVER WRITE MORE THAN ONE PAGE. The shorter your letter, the better!

Always start with a warm “hello” so that your friends and family know immediately who the letter is from. Feel free to take one sentence (no more than two!) to bring everyone “up to speed” on what's been going on in your life. This is very helpful for those people who have had no contact for a while. Then dive in! Be sure to let them know all of the details about your trip this summer:

- Where you are going
- When you are traveling
- Include the name of the mission agency sending you, and mention your church
- Include the types of ministry you will be doing (refer to your Site Handbook)
- MOST IMPORTANTLY, explain why you want to go on this missions trip
- Tell them that the most important way that they can “team” with you is by praying for you and list one or two specific prayer requests

When writing about your financial support, be as specific as possible:

- Include the total cost of your trip
- Tell them that they can support you by sending contributions to you made out to your church
- Contributions should be sent to YOUR church address—and then give them the church (include details for address)
- All gifts made out to your church are tax-deductible
- Any gifts exceeding the total for your trip will be donated to others still in need of funding
- Thank them for considering becoming a part of your support team

ALWAYS sign each letter personally and take a moment to write a special note that's just to them. You may include a self-addressed envelope (not stamped) with your letter.

Include a **CURRENT PICTURE** of yourself in your letter. Try to also include a picture of the people you will be serving. Everyone loves pictures, and it will add character to your letter.



Sample Support Letter

Dear _____,

Hi there, it's Mel! I'm so excited to be writing to you today because I have a very exciting opportunity coming up that I can't wait to tell you about! I am still working part-time at Daybreak Church as the Director of Missions, and John and I love working with the high school students here.

This summer I will be making my first-ever missions trip to Asia with a small team of adults from Daybreak. I will be traveling to Cambodia with Envision (a resource of the C&MA, my church's denomination). From June 25–July 9, our team will be partnering with a church in Phnom Penh to host an English camp for Cambodian students trying to learn conversational English. I will be a small group leader for a group of students who can practice their English skills on me! This will be perfect for me, as you know how much I like to talk! The church in Phnom Penh uses this as a means of serving the community, offering affordable classes to people who desperately want to learn English. They need us to fulfill this ministry in their community, and I am honored to be able to partner with them!

Would you consider teaming with me in my trip to Cambodia? I need people who will commit to praying for me daily. Pray that God will prepare me well, that He will protect me, give me patience and wisdom as I help to lead the English camp, and that ultimately my life will be forever changed through my experiences in Phnom Penh. You can also choose to partner with me by contributing to the cost of my trip. The total cost is \$2300; this includes airfare, lodging, food, training materials, and ground transportation. You can give toward my trip by sending a contribution, made out to Daybreak Church, to my home address: [include home address here].

Thank you for taking the time to read up on my life and to hear about my next step in missions. I am honored that you would consider partnering with me on this journey half-way across the world!

(Signature and contact info)



Our Missionary God

A 7-DAY BIBLE STUDY ON THE BIBLICAL BASIS FOR MISSIONS

DAY 1: GOD'S GLOBAL BLESSING AND PURPOSE

Read Genesis 12:1-3

1. What is God's blessing for Abram? What is God's purpose in the blessing?
2. How will all people's on earth be blessed through Abram?
3. How have you been blessed in order to be a blessing to the nations?

DAY 2: GOD'S GLORY AMONG THE ISRAELIST PEOPLE...FOR ALL PEOPLE

Read Joshua 4:23-24, 1 Samuel 17:45-47, Daniel 6:20-28

1. Why did God dry up the Jordan? Give victory to David? Rescue Daniel?
2. What did God want the surrounding nations to know about Him through His people?
3. What has God done in your own life so that He can show Himself to lost people around you?

DAY 3: FOR THE GLORY OF GOD, TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

Read Psalm 67, 96

1. Why did the Psalmist ask for God's blessing, and for His face to shine on him?
2. What is the Psalmist pleading for the nations to do? Why?
3. What is your "psalm" or prayer for the nations? How will you declare God's glory to the ends of the earth?

DAY 4: JESUS' REDEMPTION OF THE WORLD FORETOLD

Read Isaiah 9:1-7, 49:1-6

1. Why was it "too small a thing" for Jesus to save Israel only? How far was His salvation to extend?
2. What was God's solution for a world in darkness? Why did He send a person instead of money, or better politics, or wholistic education, etc.?

DAY 5: A SAVIOR FOR ALL NATIONS

Read Luke 4:14-30, John 12:20-36

1. When Jesus compared himself to Elijah, why did it make everyone angry? Why were they so surprised that He didn't only come to set them free?
2. What does Jesus state as "the very reason I came" (v. 28)? How did he bring glory to the father's name?
3. Luke 4:18-19 was Jesus' "mission statement." Is yours similar?

DAY 6: JESUS COMMISSIONS HIS CHURCH

Read Matthew 24:14, 28:18-20, and Acts 1:3-8

1. What must happen before Jesus returns? Why?
2. What are the key commands in Jesus' "last words?" What are His promises?
3. How does the disciple's question in Acts 1:6 reveal their confusion over why Jesus came? How does Jesus remind them of His true purpose (and theirs)?
4. "It is not the church of God that has a mission in the world, but the God of mission who has a church in the world." Why is the difference significant?

DAY 7: ALL NATIONS WORSHIPPING BEFORE THE THRONE

Read Revelation 5:9-10, 7:9-10, and Philippians 2:9-11

1. How does God ultimately accomplish His purpose? How should this encourage us as we join God in His mission for the nations?
2. What does "At the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, in heaven, and on earth and under the earth" mean? (Some bow in adoration, others in regret?)
3. How will you be strategically be involved in bringing about the day described in Revelation? Who will you be standing next to before the throne?



Let the Nations Be Glad

John Piper

Missions is not the ultimate goal of the Church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn't. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever.

Worship, therefore, is the fuel and goal of missions. It's the goal of missions because in missions we simply aim to bring the nations into the white hot enjoyment of God's glory. The goal of missions is the gladness of the peoples in the greatness of God... But worship is also the fuel of missions. Passion for God in worship precedes the offer of God in preaching. You can't commend what you don't cherish...

Missions begins and ends in worship. If the pursuit of God's glory is not ordered above the pursuit of man's good in the affections of the heart and the priorities of the church, man will not be well served and God will not be duly honored. I am not pleading for a diminishing of missions but for a magnifying of God.

When the flame of worship burns with the heat of God's true worth, the light of missions will shine to the darkest peoples on earth. And I long for that day to come! Where passion for God is weak, zeal for missions will be weak. Churches that are not centered on the exaltation of the majesty and beauty of God will scarcely kindle a fervent desire to "declare his glory among the nations" (Ps 96:3).

1. How is "worship" the main goal of "missions"?
2. Why does our worship need to come before our mission?
3. What happens when we make people the focus of missions instead of God?
4. What does a true understanding of "the glory of God" have to do with our passion for missions?



Resource Dropbox

Need more resources? Click on the icon below to access more tools to help you prepare for your trip. You can go through these on your own, or with your team.

Topics include:

1. Raising Support

2. Training Resources

- Communication
- Culture
- Self-Awareness
- Sharing the Gospel
- Team Building
- Why Missions?

3. Debrief

- How to tell your story
- Personal debriefing questions
- Next steps

