



WORLD MISSIONS CENTER

Short-Term Mission Trip Guide

[Student Edition]

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World Missions Center Mission Trips

The World Missions Center (WMC) exists to inform, inspire, equip, network, and engage students at Southwestern Seminary and Texas Baptist College to obey the Great Commission given by Jesus Christ. In simpler terms, the WMC offers practical resources and opportunities for students to obey the Great Commission and **go** on mission. One way the WMC gives opportunities to students to go on mission is to serve on a short-term mission trip through the WMC. During the school breaks of Fall, Winter, Spring, and Summer, there are a variety of opportunities to serve domestically (North America) and internationally (overseas). Every believer is called to “make disciples of all nations” under the authority of Jesus Christ’s command in Matthew 28:19 so stop by the WMC in Mathena Hall 108 for a fresh, hot cup of coffee and find out how you can be involved in the mission of God in His world. The only question that will be left to answer is: *When will I go?*

Connect with us:

World Missions Center

Mathena Hall (Suite 108)

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Fort Worth, TX 76115

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Application Process

The application process is an easy 3-step process:

- 1) Apply**
- 2) Interview**
- 3) Go**

Apply

There is a two-part application. The first part of the application is the WMC Mission Trip Participant form, which you can pick up at the WMC office. The second part of the application is the Team Member form for the particular mission trip you seek to go on (for example, Zambia Mission Trip Team Member form). The Professor or Team Leader coordinating the trip will have this secondary form. Note: *Priority will be given to Southwestern Seminary and Texas Baptist College students.*

- WMC Mission Trip Participant form → Turn in to the WMC
- Decide whether or not you will also take this trip for class credit (3 hours)→ Inform Professor/Team Leader
- <Country> Mission Trip Team Member form → Turn in to the Professor/Team Leader

Interview

The Professor/Team Leader, upon receiving your Team Member form, will contact you to schedule a team member interview. Once you have been interviewed, if you have been selected to join the mission trip team, then you will be notified. At this point, you are now on the mission trip team!

Go

All that is left is to prepare to ***go!*** See the “Logistics & Going” section below for more information on next steps.

Logistics & Going

Need to know what to do next? When payments are due? Who you pay them to? What you need to pack? Passport information? Look no further.

Deadlines

120 days before departure, the following is due:

- \$300 non-refundable, non-transferable deposit
 - Please pay by check at the WMC. Be sure to inform the Administrative Assistant regarding what mission trip you are going on, and who you are (Student ID). Once this deposit has been received, you are officially on the team. Please inform your Church, and your Professor/Team Leader once this deposit has been made.
- Team member paperwork
 - Fill out the following paperwork. You can get these forms from the WMC Administrative Assistant. When you are done filling them out, please turn them in to the Professor/Team Leader of your trip.
 - Release Hold & Harmless Agreement
 - This form needs to be notarized.
 - Medical Power of Attorney
 - Mission Trip Guide Agreement
 - This is located at the bottom of this guide. Please read this guide carefully and then sign it at the bottom in agreement with the mission trip guide.
- Passport
 - All travel outside the U.S. requires a valid passport.
 - **If you do not have a passport**, you should apply for one as soon as possible, as the process can take several weeks. You can apply for a passport at most post offices or online at travel.state.gov/passport.
 - **If you do have a passport**, please check the expiration date to make sure it will be valid for at least six months after your return date. If your passport is scheduled to expire within six months following your return date, you will need to renew it prior to the trip.

- In addition, make sure your passport is in good condition and has empty pages for passport stamps (two empty pages are needed for most trips requiring visas). To find out more about the country of destination's specific requirements, please visit [the U.S. Government Travel website](#).
- Make two copies of your passport. One for you to turn into your Professor/Team Leader and one to have on you while on the mission trip (in addition to your passport). It is also a good idea to keep a .pdf accessible via the internet (in an email or in cloud storage like OneNote).

60 days out from departure, the following is due:

- Half of your support should be raised. Or, the cost of the airline ticket (if more than 50%). Whichever is the higher amount, this is what is due at this point in the fundraising process.
- Immunizations
 - For vaccination requirements/suggestions for the country you are traveling to, please visit [the U.S. Government Travel website](#) or the [CDC Travelers' Health website](#).
 - It is expected that most countries to which we travel will have COVID vaccination requirements. In addition our international partner (IMB), requires vaccination. In many cases, airlines will require you to upload vaccination and applicable COVID testing evidence via their "Safe Travel" portals before you are able to check into your flight. Additionally if the destination requires additional vaccinations before entry into the country, it is your responsibility to get these.
- Course credit
 - College/seminary class credit is available for every mission trip. Please inform your Professor/Team Leader that you would like to take the course(s). They will register you for the course. You will not have to do this through Registrar.

30 days out from departure, the following is due:

- The full cost of the trip should be raised.
- Visa
 - If a visa is required to enter the country (special application process), then you are responsible for getting this visa before departure. Without obtaining this visa, you are unable, legally, to enter the country. ([Click here](#) for an example for Japan). It is the student's responsibility to find out what is needed to obtain a visa.
 - You should try to obtain a visa as soon as possible, however, some governments advise you to apply later, others will supply visa upon landing. This will depend on the country's government and their instructions to you; however, you should attempt to apply as soon as possible to find out all the information you need. Many times, documents are required to turn into the country's foreign affairs department before they can grant you a visa. It is good to get an idea of what they will require so you can begin to obtain those documents from your Professor/Team Leader.
- Other requirements
 - The International Mission Board (IMB) or the North American Mission Board (NAMB) may require extra forms, training, and background information from you before you can go on the trip. Some of these may include:

- Child Protection Training
- Background Check
- Reference and Personal Interview forms

Travel Insurance

Travel insurance will be covered through Southwestern Seminary's insurance policy. Unless otherwise mentioned, you do not need to purchase your own travel insurance or raise support to cover travel insurance expenses. However, it should be noted that if you are not vaccinated, our travel insurance may not cover you (should you get exposed to COVID on your trip).

Fundraising

General Guidelines

All incoming funds must go directly to the World Mission Center, or the donor may mail a check to the World Mission Center at this address:

World Mission Center
 PO BOX 22418
 Fort Worth, TX 76122

- Support Letters
 - You are encouraged to write and send out support letters to family and friends.
 - This is a means not only to raise money for you to go on mission, but also to raise prayer support for you, your team, and the people you will reach!
 - Letters should indicate the date by which contributions need to be sent to SWBTS.
 - Letters should include instructions to the donor to indicate a "preference" that the contribution be used toward an individual student.
 - For IRS purposes, in order for gifts to be tax deductible, letters must include the following statement: *"The Seminary will retain complete discretion and control over the use of all donated funds."*
 - Letters should enclose a Mission Trip Contribution form. Make sure that the student's name is in the "Preference for (Participant)" area on the form.
 - The student should indicate that the Mission Trip Contribution form must accompany each contribution and must be filled out completely.
 - The contribution along with the Mission Trip Contribution form should be returned to the address on the form, *not the student*.
 - A Sample Support letter – see below on pg. 8
 - If you would like more resources regarding support letters, please come by the WMC office (M-108).
 - Note: While it is permissible for you to individually approach or send letters to persons associated with Southwestern Seminary or Texas Baptist College who are close personal friends, appeals for funds should not be made to entire groups (such as a Department or Office), nor should any campus mailing list be used for fundraising.
- Other fundraising suggestions

- There is more than one way to raise support for a mission trip. Please stop by the WMC for more suggestions or consult your Professor/Team Leader.
- What *you must not* support raise for:
 - Passport and passport photos
 - Visas
 - Immunizations
 - Country entrance and exit fees
 - Personal items such as clothing, toiletries, prescriptions, etc.
(Contributions given through SWBTS with preference to a particular student may not be used for any of the above named personal items, except when the items are included in the announced cost of the trip.)
- Mission Trip Funds Raised (Contributions/donations which have been received)
 - Non-refundable
 - The deposit is non-refundable, and non-transferable.
 - Any amount raised over the deposit cannot be given back to the student. It must be used for a mission trip for that particular student OR the funds are released to the general missions fund, which will be used towards WMC mission trips. Either are determined at the discretion of the WMC on a case-by-case basis.
 - If the student has committed to a particular mission trip (made the deposit), he/she cannot change their mind once the deposit is made to go on a different mission trip “just because he/she wants to.” There must be a legitimate reason and this will be assessed on a case-by-case basis by the WMC.
 - If the student cancels, the student must pay any amount additional to the deposit for the flight ticket refund, *if the flight ticket has already been purchased*. (For example, if the flight refund fee is \$450, the student must pay the difference between that and the deposit, which is \$150.)
 - If the mission trip is cancelled or the student is prevented from going due to unforeseen circumstances, the student may use the raised funds towards another WMC mission trip.
 - Refunds
 - Refunds are only considered for mission trips cancelled by the school.
 - In the event a refund is issued, the money will go back to the original donors.
 - The student will not receive a refund unless he/she provided the funds for his/her own trip.

Note: *In certain circumstances, the WMC will reserve the right to reconsider these guidelines on a case-by-case basis.*
- Checks
 - All checks must be made out to SWBTS.
 - The student should never ask for checks to be made out directly to him/her. If a contribution check is made to the order of anyone but SWBTS, the contribution will not be accepted.

- In the event a donor hands their support check and Mission Trip Contribution Form directly to the student rather than mailing it, or the student is turning in personal funds to pay toward his/her own trip, the student should bring this contribution to the Business Office *as soon as it is received*. It should never be held. As always, a Mission Trip Contribution form should accompany each contribution.
- Note: A contribution for the mission trip cannot be split between trip costs and another purpose at SWBTS *unless clearly stated in writing by the donor at the time of the contribution*.
- Cash
 - When cash is submitted, it should be put in an envelope with a Mission Trip Contribution form enclosed. Each separate cash contribution requires its own form. Cash from different donors should never be commingled. Donor information must be filled in on the form.
- Excess Funds
 - Contributions with preference for a particular student
 - When a student raises more support than the announced cost for the trip, these funds are considered to be excess funds. Any excess funds raised by a student will go toward the group's mission trip, as well as general trip costs. First, it will be distributed evenly between other team members, and then if there is any excess beyond this, it will be used to offset any unforeseen expenses that may arise. They are not refundable. This is consistent with the Team Fund Agreement form.
 - General trip funds
 - When funds remain in the general trip account after a trip is completed and all expenses have been paid, these funds are considered excess funds. If the funds raised by the entire team exceed the amount needed for the trip, the Vice President of Business Administration, in conjunction with the Director of the WMC, will decide how the excess funds will be used, considering the donor restriction to support the sponsored mission's programs of SWBTS/Texas Baptist College. They are not refundable.
- Special circumstances
 - Married couples going on the same mission trip
 - Married couples who are participating on the same team can elect to either send individual fundraising letters or they can send joint letters requesting support for both individuals.
 - Contributions will be credited based on designated preference of the donor. If the preference is for both, the amount will be divided equally.
 - The account for each individual will be considered independently and all financial policies will apply to each individual.

Sample Support Letter

(Text in boxes are for explanatory purposes only.)

Current Date

Dear (Name):

This first paragraph confirms the trip is sponsored by the Seminary.

I have some exciting news to share with you! God has blessed me with the opportunity to be part of the _____ Mission Trip team from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. The trip will take place on _____ through _____.

(Write a paragraph about what God is doing in your life and how this relates to the mission trip.)

Being part of the _____ Mission Trip will give me the chance to experience many new ways of sharing God's love with others. Some of the avenues the team will be using to reach the people of _____ are _____.

This paragraph confirms the ministry that will be conducted on the trip.

This paragraph confirms the donor can indicate a preference for the use of their contribution.

Your prayers and financial support are needed. I will need to raise \$_____ to cover the announced cost of this trip. (Contributions to the Seminary can contain a preference to support my trip costs and will be considered tax deductible to the extent the law allows.) If you wish to support me, please fill out the enclosed **Mission Trip Contribution form**, make your check payable to SWBTS and return them to the address shown on the form. It is important to return your contribution with this form so that it can be credited correction to my _____ Mission Trip account. Funding for my portion of the mission trip needs to be at least 50% by _____. (Please note, SWBTS will retain complete discretion and control over the use of all donated funds. If I am unable to participate in the trip, your contribution will be used to support the sponsored mission programs of the Seminary.)

The last line of this paragraph confirms the Seminary will exercise discretion and control over the funds (as the IRS regulates).

Thank you for your consideration of this request. Your support of me, whether in prayer or finances, is deeply appreciated.

Sincerely,

Team Meetings

You will be required to attend all team meetings. Team meetings will be scheduled by your Professor/Team Leader, so consult with them on the team meeting schedule. If you miss a meeting, contact your Team Leader as soon as possible. The WMC and Team Leader reserve the right to dismiss from a trip any team member who misses a Team Meeting. Team meetings are held to orient you and prepare you for the mission trip. You will need to be prepared: spiritually, mentally, culturally, and logistically. If you miss a meeting, you will be missing vital information necessary to be the most effective short-term mission trip team member. Team meetings also foster team unity. Make new friends and get excited to serve side-by-side with your teammates in another part of the world that needs Jesus! An example of what you might expect at these team meetings:

- Team Meeting 1 – Fundraising & Spiritual preparation
- Team Meeting 2 – Logistics & Travel expectations
- Team Meeting 3 – Culture & Gospel presentation

Packing

Packing guidelines will be given by your Professor/Team Leader. Please keep the following in mind when packing:

- Cultural respect
 - When we are in another country or culture, we must keep in mind we are representing Christ and the school while there. We should not unnecessarily cause offense by the things we bring or wear. Consult with your Professor/Team Leader on cultural specifics of the destination you are traveling to.
- Modesty
 - As a general rule of thumb, follow Southwestern's dress code. However, exceptions can be made depending on place of service (such as wearing shorts or hats). Be sure that the clothes worn are modest and not revealing. This means longer shorts, no tank tops, etc. Again, keeping cultural sensitivities in mind, do not cause a reason for offense. Consult your Professor/Team Leader on specifics of dress code in country.
- Think light and small
 - In some countries, not as much space is available. It is always a good idea to pack light and small so you can move about the country comfortably. Try to only pack essentials.
- Plug adapters and power converters
 - Each country has its own way of providing electricity and power for digital devices and appliances. Please go to whatplug.info/from/usa to find out what kind of plug adapter you may need for the country you are going to. International adapters are readily available at travel or luggage stores.
- Luggage regulations and recommendations
 - Always consult with your airline about luggage regulations before departure, such as how many checked bags, weight of checked bag, carry-on(s), and other recommendations, such as what to pack and not pack. Consult TSA.gov for more information.

- If your destination requires that you have an additional domestic flight, be aware that domestic weight limits are generally lower (33 lbs. vs. the international standard of 50 lbs).
- If you exceed the allotted baggage amount or weight, you will be responsible for this fee.
- Baggage tags
 - It is always a good idea to properly tag your bag. Make sure your bag has your information, such as name and mailing address, so that it can be returned to you if it is lost.
 - You can also easily identify your luggage if you put a marker of some kind on it, like a handkerchief or sticker.
- Packing list
 - A packing list or recommendations will be provided by your Professor/Team Leader. You can also consider these helpful tips:
 - Bible & Journal
 - Clothing, shoes, accessories
 - Pack at least 1 church outfit
 - Keep culture and modesty in mind
 - Pack light
 - Pack only what you need (your Team Leader will let you know if you can wash clothes in country)
 - Pack comfortably (some places you might be walking a lot!)
 - Pack according to what the climate will be like in country (be sure to look up the weather before you go)
 - *Keep in mind some cultures require kinds of clothing. In these cases, the Team Leader will inform you, and you may purchase a few items in country.*
 - Travel size toiletries
 - Tissues/Kleenex is a good idea to pack in case there isn't any toilet paper available. This is common in [developing](#) countries.
 - Bring a print-out of your itineraries
 - Besides your passport, it's extremely helpful to have a print out of your itineraries. It can give you vital information, such as flight record locator, hotel destination, and other information needed for the Embarkation/Disembarkation card and the Declaration form when entering the country.
 - *In some creative-access countries, you may be instructed by Your Team Leader not to carry certain pieces of information. These instructions are for your safety as well as safety of partners on the ground, both local and cross-cultural workers, as well as the longevity of the work.*
 - Copies of key information (kept somewhere other than your main luggage)
 - In the event some of your key items are lost or stolen, it is good to have a backup copy of the following:
 - Passport

- Flight
- Hotel
- Credit card
- Contact information
- Directions
- Etc.
- Meal replacement bars/snacks
 - Travel might be hectic and long. It's good to have some way to nourish yourself in the travel shuffle.
- Over the counter medication
 - Some countries have restrictions on purchasing medication, even over-the-counter medication. It is a good idea to bring any you might think are essential.
 - If you think you might have difficulty beating jet lag, you can bring a sleep aid, such as Tylenol PM.
 - If you carry prescription medication, make sure to carry it in its original packaging with the prescription on the bottle. Improperly marked medication can be confiscated by customs and immigration in certain countries.
- Trash bag
 - You can use this in a variety of ways. One way is to use it for your dirty clothes!
- Gifts
 - Gifts for missionaries or for the people you will minister to (for example, in Japan, a gift-giving culture, it is always appropriate to give a gift to your new friend)
- Carry on
 - Make sure to pack an extra change of clothes and basic toiletry essentials in your carry on. This will help in the unforeseen and unfortunate event that your luggage gets lost or stolen.
- Electronics
 - Pack things like your phone, laptop or tablet, plugs, voltage converter, etc. Pack only what you *need*.
 - Keep in mind you'll have your smart phone on you. Avoid bringing large amounts of books with you. Want to bring a language guide? Some of these are available as an app!
- Ministry items
 - You may need to bring ministry supplies to the place you are going. These items range from evangelism tools, such as Soularium or tracts, to perishable food, such as mac and cheese (to cook an American dish for your people-group friends).

- Space
 - It is a good idea to keep some empty space in your luggage. You want to leave room for expansion because you might come across some souvenirs and gifts to bring back to your supporters back home.

Returning Home

So you've gone. You've shared to Good News. You've loved with the love of Christ. Now what?

Reverse Culture Shock

Reverse culture shock, or sometimes referred to as "Re-entry stress," is the experience of culture stress when entering back into your home country. You have just experienced a different country for a length of time and have adapted to that culture. You have had some amazing highs, working for the Lord in that cultural context. You've seen the pros and cons of that country. However, now that you're back, you might be seeing all the negatives about your home country in comparison, feeling listless from not doing ministry activity nonstop and doing mundane things, disorientation, discouraged because people don't seem to care about your experience. All of this is the result of re-entry stress.

Common symptoms of re-entry stress:

- Disorientation: feeling out of place, not fitting in
- Feelings of loneliness, isolation, or being lost in the crowd
- Restlessness
- Feeling tired or listless
- Critical attitude toward home country
- Loss of identity
- Inability to communicate new ideas
- Feeling of superiority
- Feeling of dissatisfaction
- Defensiveness in response
- Retreat, withdrawal, lack of concern
- Unnatural, uncomfortable responses to "ordinary" situations
- Confusion and conflicting attitudes
- Rejection

Re-Entry Coping

Integrate and Be Proactive

- Accepts the reality of transitions between two cultures.
- Relates with the home culture in a way that does not compromise or negate new values or lessons learned from the short-term mission trip experience.
- Recognizes that changes have occurred through the short-term experience.
- Continues to learn lifestyle, incorporating the old and new.
- Is gracious and forgiving toward home culture and people, as Christ would be.

- This person seeks support from like-minded people.

The Re-entry stress section was taken from Summit Church's Short-Term Trip guide.

Debrief

Take the time to debrief with your team. Process about the mission trip. How did you see God move? How have you changed? What have you learned? What did you like about the trip? What did you not like or think could have been better? Your Professor/Team Leader should be scheduling a follow up debrief meeting (if you haven't already had one in country). Make sure to prioritize attending this meeting.

Share with Others

Sharing with others:

Many people will ask you how the trip went. Take time before you return to craft a three-minute answer. This way you'll be prepared to share the amazing things God did and some wonderful testimonies rather than just responding with, "It was great!" This is a good opportunity to encourage someone in the faith and also to pray for those people you ministered to.

Sharing with the WMC:

Please also be sure to share the following with the WMC:

- Share your experience
- Share testimonies and salvation stories
- Share pictures
- Share what you think was done great/could have done better

We'd love to hear about your mission trip experience and share it with others! Email us at wmc@swbt.edu or stop by the office in Mathena Hall (M-108).

Sharing with those that supported you:

Be sure to reach out to those who supported you. Send a follow-up letter letting them know all the good things the Lord did through you. They will be interested to hear from you because they financially supported you and prayed for you so that you could go in their place. This is another opportunity to share with others!

Sharing with the local church:

Lastly, share with other churches and church groups. If any of churches or church groups supported you, see if you can schedule a time for you to give a short presentation about the mission trip. It will encourage the local church and give them reason to praise the Lord for what He has done!

Welcome back, missionary! Praise the Lord!

Mission Trip Guide Agreement

(Please complete this agreement and turn it in to the WMC.)

I, _____, have read, agree to, and will abide by all the contents in the WMC Short-Term Mission Trip Guide. I understand that any violations of the SWBTS Code of Conduct, severe cultural offence, or repeated disregard for Team Leader instructions can result in the dismissal from the mission trip. In the event such a dismissal is required, I will be responsible for any costs associated with returning from the trip early and my conduct will be reported to the Dean of Students for disciplinary considerations.

Print Name

Signature

Date