

Quick Guide for How to Offer a Successful Mission Trip

Excerpted from "Mission Manifesto: How to Offer a Successful Mission Trip" by Katie Covey

Use this, share this! It is my intention to help each U.U. congregation offer a successful multigenerational mission trip and not have to reinvent the wheel! This Guide outlines an 18 month Fundraising Schedule and Mission Trip. If you'd like to learn more, visit WWW.UURE.COM for the entire "Mission Manifesto."

First Summer: Choose the Trip

- 1) Create a Task Force of representatives from Youth Group, Religious Education Committee, Social Justice Action Committee, Committee on Ministry, and related staff.
- 2) Brainstorm and research ideas which meet your criteria for a mission trip. Will your congregation alternate international and local projects? Can the project accommodate a multigenerational group of volunteers? Does the cause further U.U. values?
- 3) Choose a Mission Trip to propose to the Board of Trustees and/or congregation.
- 4) Choose a leader or staff member who will guide the Mission Trip until the participants are chosen.

First Fall: Congregational Buy-In

- 1) Board of Trustees (or your own Congregational Governance structure) votes on and accepts the proposed Mission Trip.
- 2) Announcement (and/or vote by the congregation) and publicity about the Trip.
- 3) Applications open for participants. Task Force reviews and accepts participants.
- 4) Schedule a Sunday service within 3 months to educate the congregation and begin fundraising.

First Fall/Winter until the Trip: Mission Trip Fundraising and Group Building

- 1) Participants begin researching and planning fundraising projects and group building (1xmo/meetings)
- 2) Participants and Task Force choose leadership.
 - Consider youth/adult paired leadership roles for mentoring.
 - One adult financial/congregational contact (perhaps a staff person.)
 - One adult group leader from participants.
 - Participants each choose fundraisers to lead, as a small group, a family or as an individual.
- 3) Youth participants each choose a Mission Trip theme or issue to present at a monthly meeting as a PowerPoint presentation, as part of the education about the chosen project, i.e. the language, flora, history or food of the region.

First Winter: Sunday Service Introduction to the Mission Trip

- 1) Once the date for the Sunday Service is chosen, participants, Worship Leaders, Minister and Task Force leaders begin planning the service.
- 2) Consider inviting a representative from your chosen project to speak, if they are willing and able to travel.
- 3) Plan a fundraiser, such as a bake sale, for after the service.
- 4) Request permission for the offering to go to the Mission Trip. Our congregation has instituted Half-Plate Offerings, so one Offering goes to the Mission Trip.
- 5) Begin intensive publicity such as a dedicated webpage on your church site, a PayPal donation button, a fundraising thermometer both on the webpage and in your facility, and a newsletter/bulletin presence each time it is published.
- 6) Make the Mission Trip presence and fundraising goal known!

First Spring: Fundraising Tempo

- 1) After the service, continue with a few small fundraisers so that the entire group can practice how to organize and offer them.
- 2) After the service kick-off and once the participants learn to organize and catch the enthusiasm, begin with the Personal Letters campaign.
- 3) Once the Personal Letters Campaign is on-track to friends and family, schedule and offer other fundraisers throughout the next 6-8 months depending on your Mission Trip schedule.
 - Be sensitive to the congregational seasons and calendar. Do not schedule Mission Trip fundraisers to conflict with the Pledge Drive or other major congregational fundraisers.
 - Consider offering to help with refreshments or babysitting for congregational activities with proceeds going to the Mission Trip.
- 4) Update your webpage and thermometer with results.
- 5) Evaluate your fundraising efforts and adjust accordingly.
 - Do you need an Angels Ask to complete the fundraising?

Second Fall/Winter: Fundraising Finale and Trip Logistics

- 1) Finalize the last fundraising efforts.
- 2) Celebrate the success of the efforts with the congregation!
- 3) Continue with monthly meetings of the participants.
- 4) Begin Trip logistical planning: immunizations, passports, transportation, emergency information.

Second Spring/One month out: Logistics

- 1) Participants work on logistics, congregation works on the welcome home.
 - Congregation and family members meet and welcome them upon their return.
 - Schedule a culminating Sunday Service within 2 months of the return.
- 2) Create a blog for daily reporting and pictures from the Mission Trip.

- 3) Check and double check on dates, times, and other logistical information to and from the participants.
- 4) Make sure youth participants have medical releases, travel releases and an adult advisor, if not accompanied by a parent.

Second Spring/One Month after and more: Return and re-entry

- 1) After meeting with balloons and signs at the airport or after their travels, schedule a re-entry and release potluck for participants and families. Offer a release ceremony to share final thoughts and a celebration.
- 2) Offer a final Sunday Service to report on the Mission Trip and share with the congregation.
- 3) Consider making a photo book, using an online photo services site like Shutterfly. Be sure to make one for the congregational archives!
- 4) Savor your accomplishment!
- 5) Return to start!