

World Orphans Best Practices for Traveling with Minors

In the process of building Church Partnership trip teams, we rely heavily on the discernment of the US church partner leader. As accredited members of the Standards of Excellence in Short-Term Missions (SOE), we ask our church partners to take both extra measures of thought when selecting minors to travel and extra measures of caution when traveling with minors.

Purpose

Recognize the increased responsibility of international travel with minors and ensure that World Orphans and affiliated church partners are working together as well and as clearly as possible to make the best decisions regarding travel with minors.

World Orphans recommends at least one parent travel when a minor travels on a Church Partnership or Vision trip but will consider a minor traveling with neither parent on a case-by-case basis.

See also [World Orphans Best Practices for Selecting Your Team](#)

Application, Selection, and Preparation Best Practices when considering minors traveling without a parent for Church Partnership trips:

- Consider all potential team members and trip itinerary. Is a minor the best fit for a spot on the team with all factors considered?
- Have an in-depth discussion with parents regarding:
 - Trip destination and the published travel warnings (the US State Department has country-specific information: <https://travel.state.gov>). Please note that World Orphans registers all teams with the State Department and purchases trip insurance.
 - The challenging issues and factors that will be encountered on the trip and the minor's maturity to process.
 - World Orphans Child Protection Policy.
- Have team discussions regarding:
 - World Orphans Child Protection Policy.
 - The responsibility of adults to see the valuable and important role minors/students will play on the team.
 - The responsibility of the minor/student to have a posture of learning and serving alongside the team.

Travel Best Practices

- Travel with a notarized permission letter if a minor is traveling with neither or only one parent. World Orphans will provide the form and direction for this. While this letter is not always needed, there will be serious travel interruptions if this letter is requested and is unavailable. (Only time letter is not needed is if both parents are traveling.)
- The team leader should make time to intentionally process/debrief with minors in addition to team debrief time.
- Minors should always be supervised, but should not be alone with an unrelated adult. As a best practice, maintain the rule of three. At least three individuals should be together when minors are on a team. (Ex: when visiting a church, a minor shouldn't be out of sight of at least one adult on the team and two adults in total.)