



**WORLD ORPHANS**

TEAM MEMBER  
DISCIPLESHIP  
HANDBOOK

# WELCOME

Dear Friend of the Fatherless,

We pray this trip with World Orphans will be an integral part of your journey of lifelong advocacy on behalf of orphaned and vulnerable children. This trip experience begins with team discipleship that delves deep into Scriptures that explore God's heart for the orphan and issues surrounding the worldwide orphan crisis. We desire to equip you and your team for humble cross-cultural service and learning.

Until they all have homes,

The World Orphans  
Mobilization Team

## LET THE JOURNEY BEGIN!

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## PRE-TRIP DISCIPLESHIP

Making time to prepare your heart for your trip is one of the most important aspects of trip preparation. Whether it's your very first trip or you've gone many times before, we strongly encourage you to make time to pray, think, and talk through heart preparation.

## SESSION ONE

# THIS IS MY JOURNEY

If you're reading this, you've already made a great decision. Something got your attention, stirred your heart, and made you ask, "What can I do to help orphans?" We hope that over the next few weeks, we can help you explore the answer to that question and give you the tools and resources you need to be effective in your action.

You are a part of something both ancient and new. This is rooted in an idea set forth from the time of Moses and still being explored today. God is active. The more you are exposed to the orphan and the issues surrounding orphans, the more you will learn about how people are responding. What's amazing is that different people from different countries and organizations are starting to say the same things. You'll see that isolated pockets of people without any connection to each other are moving in the same direction.

This is a movement.

There is an undercurrent moving through the world, pointing churches, individuals, and organizations in the same direction. God is active and doing amazing things.

By joining this team, you have decided to become a part of this Spirit-led movement. On behalf of the World Orphans staff and the children we serve: **thank you!** Thank you for allowing your heart to be touched, for making a conscious decision to take the next step, and for being willing to commit your time and energy to what God is doing.

We see mission trips as change centers. Let's take steps together to help bring about God's Kingdom, as we experience what it's like to be transformed in the process.



## WHY YOU? WHY ME?

**Read John 6:1-14.** God is active, and he's called us to be active. We see this clearly in John 6. Prior to feeding the five thousand, Jesus asks the disciples to figure out a way to feed the hungry masses. Phillip quickly concludes that half a year's wages would only cover one bite per man, while the others scrounge for what they could find nearby, only to come up with five loaves and two fish. Naturally, they are discouraged. Faced with a daunting task and limited resources, who wouldn't be discouraged?

What's cool about the story is that Jesus seemed to be using the entire ordeal to develop his disciples. Clearly, he wanted them to see his power to provide for seemingly impossible needs. But, even more exciting, is the fact that Jesus incorporated the disciples into every step of the process. He had them analyze the problem, watch for his provision, and then **take part** in distributing and collecting the loaves and fish. The disciples had the opportunity to live out this miracle with their own hands and feet. Can you imagine that feeling?

At World Orphans, God has called us into a similar situation. The statistics are staggering and the resources feel so limited. Yet God wants us to take part in his plan and provision for orphans, churches, and desperate communities around the world. Behind every child we serve is a church family living in corporate obedience to God's Word, spurred on with the desire to share the love of Christ in their communities. It is our great privilege to advocate on behalf of these committed believers. God has led you, with your gifts, passions, and strengths, to be part of this team. We count it a great privilege to serve alongside you as God has chosen to include us in his work!

It's easy to ask, "Why the orphan?" The more difficult question to ask might be, "Why you?" Why do you care so much? While the majority of the world focuses on other things, why do you care about the orphaned and vulnerable child?



## WHAT'S YOUR MOTIVATION?

At some point, someone instilled in you a worldview that led to compassion for orphaned and vulnerable children. More than likely, it was not daunting statistics that drew you close to God's heart for this.

### It was probably a compelling story.

In his book, *Building Strategic Relationships*, Daniel Rickett recounts this story:

A man walking to his car saw a young boy hanging around it. Suspicious of the boy, the man asked, "What are you doing?"

"Studying this car," the boy replied.

"Yeah, sure," the man thought. So, he began to quiz the boy. "What kind of car is it?" he asked.

"A 1999 Mercedes-Benz," the boy said.

"What color?" the man asked.

"Metallic burgundy," said the boy.

After a few more questions, the man realized the little guy knew his stuff, and they began to chat.

The boy asked how much he paid for the car. The man replied, "Nothing. I had a need, and my brother gave it to me."

"Man, I wish ...," the boy started to say.

"... that you had a brother like that?" the man interrupted.

"No," said the boy, "I wish I could be a brother like that."

There are 140 million orphaned children worldwide, but **what is each child's story?** Movement and change start and end with stories because they start and end with people. Stories help people determine who they are and how they connect with other people. Stories give us common ground that leads to empathy and action. Read stories of hope on our blog and past newsletters at: [worldorphans.org/connect](http://worldorphans.org/connect)

**What's your story?** Why do you have a heart for orphan care? What initially motivated you and what keeps you going? Where are you in the larger narrative of orphan care and prevention? Your story is significant, so learn to tell it. Let God hold the pen and continue to write your story. It will be better than any story you could ever compose on your own!

## WHAT'S MY ROLE?

What have your friends and family said about this trip? What has your response been to them?

What are some practical ways you can become more informed concerning social justice on a daily basis?

What are three creative ways you might bring a greater awareness of these issues to your friends/ church?

Bob Pierce said, "Let my heart be broken by the things that break the heart of God." How is your heart being touched or broken by the things that touch or break God's heart?

## THIS SESSION'S ASSIGNMENT

Write about why you chose to participate in this trip. Questions to consider when writing:

- What has happened in your life to lead you to want to serve in this capacity?
- Was there a specific person or moment in your life that led you to having a heart for orphans?
- Why are you joining this team?
- Email your writing to your team leader or the World Orphans Mobilization Department (info@worldorphans.org)



## TEAM DISCUSSION

### (FOR CONFERENCE CALL)

Read these passages aloud as a team. Discover what each passage says about caring for orphans and discuss:

- Psalm 10:14-18
- Psalm 68:4-6
- Psalm 82:1-4
- Psalm 146:9
- Proverbs 23:10-11
- Isaiah 1:16-17
- Ezekiel 22:6-7
- Zechariah 7:8-14
- Micah 6:8

Why do you think God was so specific in His commands regarding the orphan? Why do you think orphans and widows are so important to Him?

What influences in your life (church, school, work) uplift those people? What aspects of life detract from those people?

Why do you think the church has become silent and inactive in regard to the orphan, the poor, oppressed, and needy?

What aspects of the current church culture are pleasing to Jesus and which aspects are making him unhappy?

## QUOTES FOR THOUGHT

**"Worship and justice are two sides of the very same coin. They are inseparable in the kingdom of heaven."** -Louie Giglio

**"Justice is our worship in action."** -Mark Reddy

**"Justice is what love looks like in public."** -Malcolm London

**"Justice and love are not identical, but they are indivisible."** -Dr. Cornel West

## LOOKING AHEAD

During the next session, you will study various issues that usually lead to orphaning. Part of Session Two involves researching one of these issues and writing a short response with your discoveries. You will have two weeks to do this assignment, so be sure to get started this week.



## SESSION TWO

# WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE ORPHAN CRISIS?

*Belnysh didn't want to do it. But she didn't have options. Her husband had died, and Beniyam needed what all growing boys need: food, medicine, education. Beniyam was four years old when he walked hand-in-hand with her to the door of the orphanage.*

*She promised she'd visit often. She believed this was his best chance for survival. After all, at least he would get meals and an education. She visited as frequently as possible, but, after two years, Beniyam did not recognize her face.*

*But, her story doesn't end there. When a local church learned about her circumstances, they provided Belnysh with a small business loan to start a tea shop and gave her the opportunity to connect with similar women in the savings program.*

*She went back to the orphanage, but this time, it wasn't to visit. She left that day with Beniyam by her side.*

## WHY THE ORPHAN?

A frequently asked question regarding our mission at World Orphans is, "Why the orphan?" With all the problems in the world—economic distress, natural disasters, war—why does World Orphans put so much emphasis on the orphan?

Imagine a world faced with catastrophic issues such as extreme poverty, disease, starvation, human trafficking, and the exploitation of child soldiers. At the core of these issues is one common link—the orphan. There are approximately 140 million orphans in the world . . . abandoned, neglected, and vulnerable. James 1:27 tells us how we should be responding:

*"Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after the orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world."*

Let's look at Scripture to see God's heart for the orphan. You'll see how orphans are connected to the tragic issues surrounding social justice. But most importantly, you'll be challenged to live up to the call of Christ to defend the cause of the orphan.

## CONNECTING THE LINK

- Globally, there are approximately **140 million children** who have lost a mother or a father; **15.1 million** of them have lost both parents.
- The number of children under the age of 18 who have been coerced or induced to take up arms as child soldiers is generally thought to be in the range of **300,000**.
- Since 2010, child soldier **use by 20 states has been reported** either directly in government armed forces or indirectly in armed groups which they support or are allied to. In addition, more than **22 states still have a minimum voluntary recruitment age that is less than 18 years of age**.
- As of 2013, an estimated **17 million children** worldwide have lost one or both parents to AIDS, and 9% of these children live in sub-Saharan Africa. Many millions were orphaned for other reasons. Worldwide an estimated **300 million children** are subjected to violence,

exploitation, and abuse, including the worst forms of child labor in communities, schools, and institutions, armed conflict, and harmful practices such as female genital mutilation/cutting and child marriage.

As you gaze across the globe, it's hard to ignore the atrocities of HIV/AIDS, extreme poverty, the exploitation of children, war, and the devaluation of women. **Unfortunately, stuck in the aftermath of all that tragedy is the single greatest burden of our time—orphans and abandoned children.**



**Over forty times in Scripture, God speaks of his love for orphans.** The fact that God gave his Son for us in order to place us in his family is startling evidence of his burning passion to connect marginalized people to his saving grace and an eternity of belonging. So, what better way to tap into the heart of God than to care for the needs of the downtrodden by defending the cause of the orphaned and vulnerable child?

Tragically, you don't have to go far or look hard to find the complexity of the orphan crisis. However, no matter how you are wired or how you have been touched by personal tragedy, the care of orphans embraces a multitude of specific passions.

*"When you are harvesting in your field and you overlook a sheaf, do not go back to get it. Leave it for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow, so that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands." Deuteronomy 24:19*

All these sub-issues below will be addressed as we focus on wholistically caring for orphans. The abandoned and orphaned children of the world are directly related to, involved in, and susceptible to desperate poverty, female degradation, illiteracy, disease, sexual maltreatment, prostitution, unfair child labor practices, drug peddling, and all manner of petty crime and addictions. These children are also at risk for being kidnapped and abused through extremism, slavery, and war. To address the orphan problem is to address a host of societal plagues.

## GOD'S HEART FOR THE FATHERLESS

At World Orphans, we strongly believe in the guidance of God's Word in leading our pursuit to care for the needs of orphaned and vulnerable children. Therefore, in this session, you'll journey through the pages of Scripture to find God's solution to the orphan crisis. What does the Bible say about orphan care? What role does the church play in all of this? What does Christ-centered orphan care look like when rolled out on the streets of Haiti or in the mountains of Iraq?

Do you want to combat HIV/AIDS and other heinous diseases?

Do you hope to prevent pedophiles from abusing young children?

Do you aspire to eliminate child labor?

Do you seek to eradicate the recruitment of child soldiers?

Do you yearn for the end of drug addiction?

CARE FOR ORPHANS

Do you desire to assist the poor and crush poverty?

Do you long to stop violent extremism and the placement of children into radical schools?

Do you crave to uphold the worth and significance of women?

Do you dream about crushing illiteracy?

Do you want to stamp out prostitution?



**Read Deuteronomy 14:28-29; 24:18-24.**  
The tithes given to God were used for what?

Why were the farmers called to leave sheaves that they missed behind? *Note: Notice how since the formation of Israel, God set up a foundation for society to care for the needs of the orphan.*

**Read Psalm 68:1-10.**  
What attributes are communicated about God in this passage?

**Read Isaiah 1:16-23.**  
Why were the people condemned by God?

How does God say they should cleanse themselves?

**Read Jeremiah 5:26-31.**  
What examples does Jeremiah give of their wickedness?

**Read Luke 4:16-19, Mark 10:13-16.**  
In a culture where children and poor people were not always valued, why does Jesus care so much for them?

**Read Matt 28:16-20.**  
If Christ chose the church to be his vehicle to “reach” the nations, and the orphans make up a large portion of those who are “unreached,” is it safe to conclude that the orphans are a part of God’s commandment to reach the unreached? Why or why not?

**Read James 1:27.**  
Why do you think caring for orphans is considered “pure and faultless”?

## VISITING ORPHANS

Arguably, over the last century, the church has had little to say about the rise of the orphan crisis. However, in recent years, we have seen a resurgence in missions that has seemingly coincided with the growth of secular, humanitarian organizations. As a result, many Christians have silenced themselves to the cause of the orphan, fearing they might be grouped into a secular, humanitarian movement.

Fortunately, the Bible is not silent on the issues surrounding the orphan. On the contrary, the Bible is clear that there is no room for lukewarm responses. Scripture denotes a sense of urgency, telling us that God’s people are commanded to care for those in need, especially the fatherless.

As you’re about to see, James 1:19-27 reflects the nature of discipleship by initially pointing out the quest for obedience, followed by the test of obedience.

## FROM QUEST TO TEST

Quest for Obedience: Caring for the Fatherless (James 1:19-25)

*Note on context: It should be pointed out that James led into this passage by describing how a person becomes a believer (vs. 18). Therefore, as we talk about obedience, it is important to understand that we are spotlighting it as a product of our salvation, not as a way to earn it.*

**Read James 1:19-25.** After reading each verse, stop and write the actions James listed in the passage. Jot down the actions below (i.e., be quick to listen; slow to speak; slow to anger; get rid of sin).

VS 19 \_\_\_\_\_

VS 20 \_\_\_\_\_

VS 21 \_\_\_\_\_

VS 22 \_\_\_\_\_

VS 23 \_\_\_\_\_

VS 24 \_\_\_\_\_

VS 25 \_\_\_\_\_

In order to consolidate this information into a list of ways that could better prepare your team, these answers have been classified into four actions:

1. **Attentive listening** (vs. 19-20): Many people have a tendency to talk and not listen (v. 19), or resist the Word out of anger (v. 20). The Christian's attitude toward the Word should be "Speak, Lord, for your servant hears" (1 Samuel 3:9).
2. **Thorough cleansing** (vs. 21a): A vital step into obedience is to cleanse yourself from anything that may hinder a proper reception of God's Word, such as anger, filthiness, or rampant wickedness. Therefore, we must confess our sins in order to be pure and unhindered before God. By studying God's Word daily, we look into a mirror that graciously reflects our flaws, leading us to repentance and restoration through God's grace.
3. **Eager learning** (vs. 21b). To become true disciples of Christ, it is important to receive the Word with humility and become teachable, eager to learn and grow.
4. **Practical doing** (vs. 22-25). The goal of all of this is transformation, not mere information. As we see the changes that we need to make in our lives, we should make them immediately. Anything that takes us away from the will of God is sin, and we need to run from it.

## GLIMPSES OF THIS IN ACTION

### Early Church Example:

*Under the Influence* by Alvin Schmidt describes the role of the early church and how they attracted so many people to Christianity. One thing they did was rescue the orphans—the babies the Romans were sacrificing to pagan gods. Poor people would sell their babies to the rich, and the rich would cut the babies' throats and throw them on the ground to die. It was a sport to them. The

early Christians bought the babies from the poor and cared for them as their own, marking the very first cases of Christian adoption!

The church relentlessly cared for the needs of orphaned and vulnerable children. Why did that serve as such a powerful witness to the teachings of Christ?

Are you aware of churches today that are rising up to care for the needs of orphaned and vulnerable children the way the early church did? How does that affect the way the Gospel is spread? Are there differences you see between the church in America and the global church in this regard?





## CARING FOR THE FATHERLESS

Read James 1:26-27 (preferably from the NASB translation). Jot down the three ways Christians must obey the Word.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

James was very specific about the kind of ministry that he meant for us to have with orphans. In the NASB translation, the word “visit” is used, meaning “to attend to or to look after.” Interestingly, it is also the root word in the New Testament from which we get the words “pastor” or “bishop.” Therefore, in the same way that pastors are called by God to look after their churches, **all Christians are called to look after all orphans.** As we’ve already studied together, the Bible has much more to say about orphans. God has maintained a clear and consistent heart for orphans throughout all of history. Throughout Scripture, God gives very specific instruction and very swift judgment for his people regarding their treatment of orphans.

- How do you think some have misunderstood James’ emphasis on both faith and works?
  
- When considered in totality, what do these passages teach us about our responsibility in caring for orphans?

- Why do you think God was so specific in his instructions about caring for orphans?

We never want to think or live like God saves us because of our actions. **We are saved by grace through faith**, which is a “gift of God” (Eph 2:8). With that said, Scripture is clear that our acts of love, justice, compassion, faith, and proclamation are **representative of our faith in Jesus**. Our actions are proof of our faith. We are called to follow Jesus and to live obedient lives because Christ’s love has compelled us (2 Cor. 5:14). Because of what Christ did for us, we are **compelled and equipped to love others well**. The question each one of us and every church must answer is Jeremiah’s question in Jeremiah 5:31: **“What will you do in the end?”**

## THIS SESSION'S ASSIGNMENT

Select a specific orphan-related issue as discussed in this session, i.e. disease, child labor, child soldiers, poverty. Research the issue during the week and write about what you discover. Include quotes, statistics, pictures, videos, etc. The goal is to show your reader how these various issues affect the orphan. Email your written document to the Mobilization Department ([info@worldorphans.org](mailto:info@worldorphans.org)).

*Note: See the featured articles at [www.worldorphans.org/featured-articles](http://www.worldorphans.org/featured-articles) that discuss various orphan-related issues. These articles are provided as a resource for you for this project.*

## TEAM DISCUSSION (FOR CONFERENCE CALL)

In reference to the “Why Orphans” video on Vimeo that you watched:

- What is your initial reaction to the plight of the orphan? Did the video bring insight into how the orphan can fall into the traps of exploitation, prostitution, and trafficking?
- How important is it to examine the overall system of life for the orphan rather than the surface of their problems? Why?

**Read Isaiah 1:17, 30:18, and 61:8 as a team.  
Discuss the following questions together:**

- How would you define “justice?”
- When you think of God being a just God, what usually comes to mind first?
- When you look at the world around you, do you see evidence of God’s justice? Why or why not?
- How do you think believers could develop a greater understanding of the need for justice in the world?
- Most of us are busy. Is there any room in your schedule to pursue justice? If not, how does your schedule need to change?

**The word has gotten around. Your lives are echoing the Master’s Word . . . The news of your faith in God is out. We don’t even have to say anything anymore—you’re the message! 1 Thes. 1:8 MSG**





### SESSION THREE

## GRACE-FILLED, WHOLISTIC CARE

It is breathtaking to realize that transformation in every aspect of life is accomplished through the limitless power of the Gospel. The bright light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the hope of full redemption shines against the darkness of hunger, disease, poverty, injustice, abandonment, and sin.

As we seek to encourage and communicate love to the children who are being cared for through the church, we desire to grow in our understanding of the grace we have received from God and rely upon the power of the Holy Spirit to minister his grace to others. Our continued growth in the truth of Jesus Christ and reliance upon the Holy Spirit are essential, specifically as we care for children.

World Orphans approach to orphan care is wholistic in that we are caring for the needs of the whole child, with our ultimate goal being spiritual transformation and healing.

As a ministry:

- We care for children through the grace of Jesus Christ.
- We take an approach that seeks to care for the whole child: spiritually, physically, emotionally, and mentally.
- We strategically identify and meet the specific needs of each child.

Before we move on, we want to seek to understand the meaning of grace. How would you define it in your own words?

“Grace” is derived from the Greek “charis,” and is defined as “good will, loving-kindness, favor; of the merciful kindness by which God, exerting his holy influence upon souls, turns them to Christ, keeps, strengthens, increases them in Christian faith, knowledge, affection, and kindles them to the exercise of the Christian virtues.” In the New Testament, “grace” (used 156 times) takes on a special redemptive purpose in which God makes available his favor on behalf of sinners who do not deserve it. Our salvation, our adoption as sons and daughters of God, and our blessings in Christ are all a result of God’s unmerited grace and favor through the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Read these Scripture passages below and write down the truths that you discover about grace.

- John 1:17
- Ephesians 1:5-6a
- Ephesians 2:8-9
- Ephesians 3:7
- 2 Corinthians 8:7

We are saved by grace to do good works. Love comes from God and his grace empowers us to love others. The greatest commandments are to love God and to love our neighbors. **As an extension of this love for God and others, we should feel compelled to live out the Great Commission by making disciples.** If we truly love others, we will want them to know and follow Jesus. Caring for orphans is an opportunity to share Christ's love and spread the Gospel.

**What does Christ tell us in John 14:18?**

God has graciously chosen to use us in amazing ways. One way is through the expression of his love through our love of his children. Caring for vulnerable children is a privilege. Making disciples and visiting orphans and widows are expressions of our love for God and our neighbors. They are expressions of God's grace.

**It is important, however, that we minister out of God's strength rather than our own.**

*If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.*  
(1 Peter 4:11)

Sometimes our involvement in ministry can come from a misguided motivation. We may be motivated from a sense of legalism or it may simply be a "job." We may misunderstand

and try to earn God's favor and grace. **We must remember that our involvement in ministry should be a response to the grace that has already been given to us through the Gospel of Jesus Christ.** We are involved in ministry because he loves us, not so that he will love us.

Because God loves us and because he has shown us such amazing grace, we visit and care for orphaned and vulnerable children. Our love for children is a reflection of God's love and an expression of his care. In caring for orphans, we seek to meet their wholistic needs (spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical).



## EXAMINING VARIOUS ORPHAN CARE MODELS

There are many models of orphan care that exist in our world today. All of these models are highlighted in our church circles because people naturally think that any form of orphan care is acceptable and honorable. You've probably heard statements such as, "Sally is giving up her summer to spend time working at an orphanage in India. What an amazing thing she is doing!" Our culture promotes orphanages and other similar models of orphan care, but studies show that institutionalization is detrimental to the development and growth of a child. Additionally, we have to remember that God has created individuals to be in families, not in institutions (Ps. 68:6). Our desire as believers is to care for orphans in their distress and to exercise wisdom and discernment in how to **best** care for those in need.

How can you and others around the world do this? As you are exposed to orphanages or other models of orphan care, it is important to routinely ask these questions:

- Are the children happy?
- Are they well-fed?
- Do their caregivers love them?
- Is the facility/home overcrowded?
- Are the children safe?
- Are they receiving adequate medical care?
- Are they being provided an education and learning life skills? Are they developing?
- And most of all, is Christ the center of everything they are experiencing?

**Orphanages are not the best vehicle for caring for orphaned children around the world. We believe that God has called the church to care for orphaned and vulnerable children and to provide loving, permanent homes for the fatherless.** God has ordained the church as the light of the Gospel and the instrument of love and compassion to the world.



*“ . . . so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.” (Eph. 3:10)*

God has equipped the church with every resource and gift needed to meet the physical and spiritual needs of his people. God shows us a model for the church in the book of Acts. The early church gathered together for teaching, preaching, worship, prayer, fellowship, and to meet each other's needs.

*And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. (Acts 2:42-47)*

In no way do we judge or belittle the places we visit; however, our goal is to serve, observe, and then humbly identify the **best** way to care for and defend the needs of orphaned children throughout the world. Then, after your trip is over, it is your responsibility to partner with and serve alongside organizations, ministries, and/or individuals who are meeting the needs of orphaned and vulnerable children in a healthy and wholistic way.

As you continue to prepare for your trip, we want to encourage you to ask the deep questions, empower you to make wise decisions, and provide you with the proper insight on what your involvement could look like following this trip.



## HOME BASED CARE

One of our main programs that we help to implement at our church partner locations is called Home Based Care (HBC). This program empowers the local church to provide physical, spiritual, mental, and emotional care for orphaned, abandoned, and vulnerable children in their community. The care is provided, not by an institution such as an orphanage, but by single mothers, extended relatives, neighbors, friends, or church members. An HBC team member visits each child in the program in their home twice a month for encouragement, emotional and spiritual development, and accountability.

Each church establishes a ministry plan detailing how the funds will be allocated and how wholistic care will be addressed. The program is designed to ensure that the children receive:

- Physical care: Food, access to clean drinking water, access to medical care
- Spiritual care: Discipleship during home visitations and participation in a weekly children's program at the church
- Mental care: Ensuring access to and support of education
- Emotional care: Ongoing counseling, group activities, and home visitations

While these program descriptions are the basis for the implementation of this HBC program, this is only the beginning. As the program develops, the church is encouraged to meet additional needs through creative and unique ways designed to meet the particular needs of orphaned and vulnerable children in their community. As part of this partnership, World Orphans and other partnered ministries will provide ongoing training in both individual and group settings to HBC team members in areas of wholistic care. Every effort will be made to focus on the individual needs of each child, while providing structure to the overall HBC

Program. Additionally, as the HBC team develops relationships with the children's primary caregivers, they will look for opportunities to help the families become self-sustainable through education, vocational training, microfinance, and vocational networking efforts.

During your trip, your team may have the opportunity to serve the local church by assisting with the HBC Program. We want to take some time to discuss this ministry with you to effectively prepare you for this opportunity.

## HOME BASED CARE VISITATION

### The goals of visitation are:

- To promote a sense of compassion, love, and belonging
- To demonstrate loving care and allow for ongoing conversations about who the children and their families are in Christ
- To make meaningful connections with people in deeper, relational ways with the hope that they will be drawn closer to one another and closer to Christ

Home visitations are of utmost importance, and our local church partners value these programs because of the significance of the outreach platform. The church has the opportunity to be involved in evangelism, mentorship, and discipleship as they care for orphaned and vulnerable children. Our goal as a team is to serve alongside them and support them however we can.

Believers and non-believers alike see the church being the hands and feet of Christ as church members and families are meeting tangible needs of those in their community and *beyond their own church walls*. Not only are orphans being cared for, but the church is reflecting the light of Christ in the community, is experiencing growth, and is being strengthened as its members minister together.

### Visitations are opportunities to:

- Encourage regular church attendance
- Share the Gospel with non-believers (many of the families in the HBC program aren't Christians and do not attend church)
- Seek active discipleship and promote the growth of children (and caregivers) in their understanding of trust in and love for God

- Share the Gospel with children in a clear way
- Encourage families to teach the whole Bible with daily application and foster reliance upon God through regular prayer

Additionally, visitations are a wonderful ministry to involve other groups from within the church.

- Men's ministry can organize outreach events aimed at serving vulnerable families. For example, the men's ministry could go repair the roof or meet other practical needs around the house.
- Women's ministry can plan discipleship events geared towards engaging single mothers. For example, the women's ministry or individual families in the church can fix a meal or help around the house for the sick widow/single mother.
- Youth ministry can participate in visits, giving them an opportunity to learn and grow as they serve others.
- Children's ministry workers can go to encourage the children and fellowship with the family.
- An evangelist can go with a visitation team to look for specific opportunities to share the Gospel.
- Prayer ministry can have times of prayer for the specific orphans, families, and those in their community.
- Special offerings can be gathered for those who are most needy in the community and congregation.



## CONSIDERATIONS AND PREPARATIONS BEFORE SPENDING TIME WITH PEOPLE

Discover basic information about the child in the program as well as the family who is caring for him/her.

- How many children are in the home?
- Information about the child's story. It is not appropriate to ask the child how he/she lost his/her parents.
- How the child is adjusting spiritually, physically, emotionally, and mentally.

Consider whether photographs and videos are beneficial or harmful (a good consideration for any picture you may take on your trip). During a visit, always ask permission before taking pictures.

- The negative perception is that western organizations come into indigenous homelands and randomly take pictures for their own personal and financial gain, resulting in the exploitation of their children.
- Picture taking is viewed negatively when it is outside the context of relationship, friendship, and purpose.
- When taking a picture, think about if it were you or your children being photographed. Would you feel comfortable and honored?

Any inquiry about school fees, rent, and personal financial concerns need to be discussed privately with the team leader. Financial questions communicate to a family that a promise is being made. Even well-meaning questions about the financial needs of a family can set up the expectation that the pastor or partnership will provide for this particular need.

## CONSIDERATIONS DURING A VISIT

Introduce yourself (group) and briefly explain your reason for visiting.

- Feel comfortable and relaxed. Your goal is for people to know they are valued.
- Do not use hand sanitizer. This can be offensive in any context to our friends. Please remember to sanitize your hands discreetly when necessary.
- Ask open-ended questions instead of yes/no questions. This will help you learn more about the child.

*Example: "What is your favorite subject, color, or sports activity?"*

- Listen more than you talk.
- All team members should formulate appropriate questions to avoid having team leaders be the only ones asking questions.
- Everyone should be engaged in the conversation and focused on who is speaking.
- Avoid side conversations, as that may imply that you are talking about those you are visiting.
- Seek to build a relationship or at least rapport for future visits. As your hosts share about themselves, also share about yourself.
- It is meaningful for the family and child to see a picture of your family. Remember to bring a family picture from home.
- Be mindful of comments such as: "I would like to pack this child up and put him in my suitcase." These comments may be well-intended and motivated out of compassion, but do not communicate to the caregivers the sufficiency of their own home and ability to care for their children.
- If the pastor has given you permission to take pictures, it will still be important for you to ask the caregivers for their permission beforehand.
- Do not give money directly to anyone. Always process the needs of the family and child through the pastor and team leader. It is best

that financial needs be met through the local church with specific discernment from the pastor.

- Do not give out your email address, phone number, Facebook account, etc., so that there are no misleading cues regarding future contact or financial assistance.
- Offer to say a prayer.
- Ask if there is anything specific to pray about and pray for a blessing over the family.
- Thank the host for allowing you to visit.





## THIS SESSION'S ASSIGNMENT

Complete one of the following and be prepared to share with the team on our next call:

- Read "Beyond the Orphanage." This article can be found on the World Orphans blog at: <https://www.worldorphans.org/blog/beyond-the-orphanage>
- Watch the video "A World Without Orphans" at: <http://orphancareresources.org/resource/a-world-without-orphans>
- Watch "Why We Need to End the Era of Orphanages" by Tara Winkler: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L3nPMWkhhMI&feature=share>

## TEAM DISCUSSION (FOR CONFERENCE CALL)

- Why is it better for children to be placed in families even if their standard of living seems lower than living in an institution?
- What are some of the things that you learned after reading the assigned article this week?
- What do you think about the tools presented in this session?
- How could Home Based Care visits be mutually beneficial for you and the family?
- What anxieties or concerns do you have about participating in Home Based Care visits during your trip?

## SESSION FOUR

# WHO DID GOD CREATE ME TO BE?

From the beginning, God knew who he was creating you to be. Not only did he know the color of your hair and eyes, but he knew what personality to give you, what gifts (both spiritual and natural) to bless you with, and he knew what passions to develop in your heart. As you serve others, please keep this verse in mind, recognizing that both you and those you serve are made in his image. Right now we want to help you determine who God has created you to be. This knowledge can empower and equip you in ministry. God creates us each uniquely and has a purpose for us. Ultimately, that purpose is to glorify him in all we do, but we also need to know how he has specifically equipped us, that we may be good stewards of those talents, gifts, and abilities in order to glorify him with our lives.

Many times we are told to ask God, "What is your will for my life?" While this is a good question to ask, we often find ourselves so caught up in this question—looking for the big answer—that we lose sight of this present moment. We have been learning a lot about God's love for the orphan and his commands to the church regarding the care of the orphan and the widow. When you return home from your trip, you may begin asking, "Lord, how do you want me to specifically serve the orphan?" Your response to this trip should be twofold: serve wherever needed in whatever capacity possible and find your specific calling to serve the orphan in the unique way God has designed for you. Keep your eyes open for any capacity to serve and be an advocate for the orphan when you return!

For You formed my  
inward parts; You  
wove me in my  
mother's womb. I will  
give thanks to You,  
for I am fearfully and  
wonderfully made.  
Psalm 139:13-14a





God has given you unique characteristics in the following three categories: gifting (both spiritual and natural), personality, and passions. Let's look at these individually:

### GIFTING

God has given you both natural and spiritual gifts. Your natural gifts are those gifts that you've seemingly had since birth. You might call these abilities. These are natural gifts. You haven't taken a class to know how to do these things. No one taught you. These things come naturally to you. Look at the list below and circle those you naturally, comfortably enjoy (feeling free to add any you might not see below).

- |                |              |
|----------------|--------------|
| Adapting       | Landscaping  |
| Administrating | Leading      |
| Analyzing      | Learning     |
| Building       | Managing     |
| Coaching       | Mentoring    |
| Computing      | Motivating   |
| Competing      | Negotiating  |
| Communicating  | Operating    |
| Connecting     | Organizing   |
| Consulting     | Performing   |
| Cooking        | Pioneering   |
| Coordinating   | Planning     |
| Counseling     | Promoting    |
| Decorating     | Recruiting   |
| Designing      | Repairing    |
| Developing     | Researching  |
| Directing      | Resourcing   |
| Editing        | Serving      |
| Encouraging    | Strategizing |
| Engineering    | Teaching     |
| Facilitating   | Translating  |
| Forecasting    | Traveling    |
| Implementing   | Visualizing  |
| Improving      | Welcoming    |
| Influencing    | Writing      |

The second kind of gifts are spiritual gifts. When you accept Christ as your personal Savior, you are given a special set of gifts unique to you. God gives us these gifts in order to love and strengthen the Body of Christ. According to 1 Corinthians 13:1-3, our spiritual gifts are to be used in love. We have provided a wonderful study and assessment tool for you to discover your own spiritual gifts. Go to [worldorphans.org/resources](http://worldorphans.org/resources) and print out the file entitled "Know and Use Your Gifts for God's Glory" by Dr. Jim Denison. Read, fill out this handout, and have your unique set of gifts ready to discuss on your next conference call. It's not only exciting to learn about your own gifting, but we can work together even more effectively when we know the gifting of our fellow teammates.

## PERSONALITY

“Like stained glass, our different personalities reflect God’s light in many colors and patterns.”  
-Rick Warren

If we were all created the same, this would be a boring world. God has given you a unique personality. When you understand your personality, your eyes will be open to understanding some of the ways you do things.

We are sharing access to a personality test that will give you a little insight into who God has created you to be. We do, however, want to caution you when you take this test. This is not a definitive test. It is merely a tool to help you learn about yourself. Take this test through the lens of what you already know about yourself. If it says something that you know is not you, don’t try to force yourself to become someone you are not. Go to [worldorphans.org/resources](http://worldorphans.org/resources) to download and print “Gary Smalley’s Personality Test.” Complete the assessment and have it ready for your next conference call.

## PASSIONS

In *Living the Life You Were Meant to Live*, Tom Paterson wrote: “Heart is where you are centered, where you desire to serve, the altar upon which you wish to place your talents. Giftedness is what you are. Heart is where you will most likely apply what you are. Heart refers to empathy, attraction, or ‘draw’ towards a group of people, a field of expertise, or a particular type of service. Evaluating your heart helps you determine where you might best use your gifts, where you wish to serve, and whom you wish to serve.”

**Your heart can be discovered by answering the following questions:**

What drives you?

Who do you care about (i.e. demographic, age group, people group)?

What needs will you meet? (Spiritual? Physical? Relational? Emotional? Educational?)

What cause will you help conquer?

What dream will you fulfill? (Dream big, but be sure those dreams align with God’s Word!)





Now that we have a glimpse into the heart God has given us, let's spend a little time discussing our experiences. This part of discovering who we are is filled with joy and sadness. There may be some times in our lives that we would rather not discuss or remember, but in the midst of that heartache and pain, God desires to make something beautiful. Romans 8:28 says, "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." God uses these experiences, both good and bad, to shape us.

We will now walk through the exercise in *S.H.A.P.E.* by Eric Rees. As we said, this could include some joyful times and some difficult times, so we will ask you to walk through this on your own. We will only ask you to share what you are comfortable sharing with your teammates. Ultimately, this exercise is between you and God. Let Him guide your steps.

Picture yourself walking down a hallway. You see paintings on the walls from your life. You see positive, beautiful moments and you see painful, harrowing moments. Do you see the ways God was able to use these moments to mold you into who he wants you to be? Do you perhaps even see how he was able to take bad things and make something beautiful from them? He wants to shape you into the man or woman he desires to see you become. Begin looking closely at the pictures and notice how God has been shaping you all along.

Take several sheets of paper (or download and print the file entitled "Frames" from the resource page). Spend time drawing pictures or writing words to describe two positive experiences and two painful experiences that you know God has used to shape who you are today. These experiences

*"The purpose of giftedness is stewardship and service, not selfishness." -Os Guinness*

could be related to personal, vocational, relational, educational, and/or spiritual achievements or points of pain. Spend some time asking God to show you the lessons he desires for you to learn from these experiences. Write down the lessons you learned in the margins of the picture. On the next call, share what you feel comfortable sharing with your team.

Now that we see who God created us to be, what do we do with this information? Eric Rees gives us an acronym from *S.H.A.P.E.* to help us implement what we have learned. **GRASP**:

- **Get with God** - ". . . apart from God we can't achieve anything of lasting significance. So the first steps towards grasping your Kingdom Purpose is to make sure God is not just in your life, but at the center of it."
- **Realize Your Kingdom Dream** - "Once God has his rightful place as the pilot of your life, let your heart and mind start dreaming for his Kingdom. Let the quiet whispers of your heart ring loud for God's glory."
- **Activate Your Serving Sweet Spot** - "This is the optimal zone of your life where your [gifts, personality, and passions] are best expressed. It is at this step that you start to align your God-given uniqueness with your God-honoring dream, which leads to securing your unique Kingdom Purpose."
- **Seek Wisdom** - "The fourth step is all about confirmation and support . . . Ask for honest feedback before starting to alter your schedule to fulfill your purpose."
- **Plan your Test Drive** - "The final step to grasping your Kingdom Purpose is to try it out. All your time and energy now converges into an action plan. This is not a self-help plan, but a Spirit-guided map that keeps you on course with God's calling on your life."

Now go **GRASP** what God has for you and speak out on behalf of the fatherless!

## EXPECTATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

An **expectation** is something we're planning on, looking forward to, or regarding as likely to happen.

An **assumption** is a belief taken for granted.

Expectations are stabilizing and motivational factors when they are communicated and understood by the appropriate parties. They are dangerous and potentially deadly when they are assumed. Unrealistic expectations and assumptions are a major source of missionary stress and contribute to a host of problems and misunderstandings.

**The following is an exercise designed to help you and your team identify expectations and potentially dangerous assumptions. World Orphans highly recommends discussing this exercise as a group; it's a great team building exercise.**

- First, try to identify your expectations for as many of the areas on the following page as you can or as are appropriate for your short-term team. Write a brief statement that expresses either what you are planning on, looking forward to, and/or regarding as likely to happen.
- Second, read through them again and circle those that may be assumptions. What isn't based on facts or a shared understanding with those you intend to serve?
- Finally, note those you need to talk about with your team leader, team members, World Orphans Mobilization Department, or your in-country church partner.



## YOUR PERSONAL LIFE

What are you expecting in terms of:

- Your lodging accommodations (hotel, guesthouse, neighborhood, etc.)?
- Your itinerary?
- The demands of the daily schedule?
- How you will recharge/maintain your energy for the duration of the trip?
- The amount of free time you'll have and what you'll get to do with that free time?
- The biggest sources of stress?
- How the trip will affect you?

## YOUR PERSONAL MINISTRY

What do you expect:

- Will be your primary responsibility?
- In terms of what group of people you'll spend the majority of your time with (church/church leadership, children, people in the community, etc.)?
- You will succeed at?
- Your church's expectations are for you?
- Your supporters' expectations are for you?

## LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL LEARNING

What are your expectations in the following areas? (Please read thoroughly through this section before answering, as opportunities for language learning will likely be minimal during your short trip:

- To what extent do you intend (or do you expect to be able to) immerse yourself in the local culture?
- How do you anticipate dealing with parts of the culture that make you uncomfortable?
- What do you think will be uncomfortable (from what you know now)?
- How will you learn language and culture?
- How much language do you want to learn?
- How much, if any, language preparation do you plan to do before going, and how do you feel about that?
- How much structure or guidance do you think will be available for learning language and culture while you are on the field?
- How difficult will it be for you to learn some basics of the language and pick up cultural cues?
- How will you feel about your teammates having an easier time of learning language and culture and/or interacting with your host and/or those you are serving? What if it's harder for them?
- How do you think nationals will respond to your attempts to speak their language?
- How will you handle not being able to communicate or only being able to communicate at a pre-school level?

## THE WAY THE TEAM WILL FUNCTION

What are you expecting regarding:

- How your team will make decisions and on what kinds of issues?
- How much structure or guidance you think will be available from your team leader?
- How often you will meet as a whole team?
- How your leader will lead (what they will provide to you and expect from you)?
- The level of friendship you will develop on your team and how much time you will spend together?
- The degree and nature of interpersonal tensions and stress you will experience among your team?
- The role you will play on the team?
- What your teammates are expecting of you?
- How your team will take care of itself and its members in the midst of a different (and potentially difficult) cultural environment?

## WORLD ORPHANS, YOUR CHURCH, AND YOUR SUPPORTERS

What do you expect:

- The World Orphans Mobilization Department will provide for you?
- Your church will provide for you? Do you expect to be in touch with them while you are out of the US?
- Your supporters (financial and/or emotional; friends, family, etc.) will provide for you? Do you expect to be in touch with them while you are out of the US?

## MAJOR PERSONAL AND TEAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS BY THE END OF YOUR SHORT-TERM TRIP

- What do you expect to happen as a result of this short-term trip in your life, heart, and perspective?
- What do you expect to happen as a result of this short-term trip in the lives of those you meet (church partner, children, caregivers, community members, etc.)
- How will your team serve the long-term purposes of the HBC Program?
- What are your expectations concerning this short-term experience's connection to future long-term ministry in your life?
- What impact will this short-term experience have on you once you return?
- Who are the people you expect to share your experience with, and how do you expect to share it with them?



## THIS SESSION'S ASSIGNMENT

- Complete "Know and Use Your Gifts for God's Glory" (found on the Journey Trip Resource page online).
- Complete "Gary Smalley's Personality Test" (found on the Journey Trip Resource page online).
- Draw or write down two positive experiences and two painful experiences from your past (using instructions on previous page).

## TEAM DISCUSSION (FOR CONFERENCE CALL)

- Read 1 Peter 4:9-10 aloud and discuss how this passage should apply to your team and your individual giftings.
- Share your natural and spiritual gifts and give an example of how one of those can be used to edify your team.
- Share the outcome of your personality test. Do you agree or disagree with this assessment?
- Refer to page three of the personality test. How could knowing the individual personalities of your teammates prepare you for successful team dynamics while on the field? How does knowing the strengths and weaknesses of your personality prepare you to be a cooperative team player?
- Refer to "Expectations and Assumptions," and discuss how the lens of expectation rather than assumption will help you process and debrief as individuals on the field.



## SESSION FIVE

# BEING A BRIDGE BUILDER

As a short-term team member, you are plopped down in a culture quite different from your own. The behavior, values, and beliefs of the people may differ greatly from those familiar to you. With time, you may come to notice the common denominators between yourself and your hosts, but the differences will hit you first. Cultural differences might be pictured using the following demonstration. There are two cliffs: on one side is the North American way of life, and on the other is the way of life found in your host country. A large chasm looms in between. In order for the two cultures to meet and understand one another, a bridge connecting the two sides must be built.

Imagine your upcoming journey as an apprenticeship in bridge building. You can lay the beam, erect scaffolding, and forge cables that make communication between your worlds possible. Surprise your host community with your bridge building initiative and you will find their hands joining yours. Building the bridge involves a number of things you can think through before going, as well as others you can work on while you're there. Unfortunately, some people go on short-term trips and never work at building the bridge. They deprive themselves of some very important personal experiences, which tragically limits their understanding and restricts their growth.

Bridge building is an exciting challenge! In fact, we believe you will come to appreciate the rewards of it so much that you will continue to build bridges for the rest of your life.

When you arrive in the host country, you will be viewed in a certain way because you are a North American. Doesn't seem fair, does it? But is there

an element of truth in these views? Think about the stereotypes that follow and then answer the questions.

## EXAMPLES OF STEREOTYPES NORTH AMERICANS OFTEN HAVE ABOUT PEOPLE IN OTHER COUNTRIES

**Negative:** Inefficient, needing help, unclean, uneducated

**Positive:** Interdependent with family, spiritual

## EXAMPLES OF STEREOTYPES OTHERS OFTEN HAVE ABOUT NORTH AMERICANS

**Negative:** Aggressive, tense, discontent, lonely, corrupt, wealthy and materialistic, dominating, loud and obnoxious, overbearing, competitive, self-centered, attitude of national superiority, preoccupied with efficiency and practicality

**Positive:** Educated, reliable, strong individuals, secure in life, free of superstition, confident, organized

You cannot change the fact that you are a North American. You will be perceived stereotypically from time to time. That is not all bad. Stereotypes can have some merit and facilitate understanding. As you know from experience, not every individual embodies all the characteristics of a particular stereotype. To be a bridge builder, you need to understand the reasons behind stereotypes. We bomb the bridge when we judge people without attempting to understand or allow them a chance to explain themselves.

## BRIDGE BUILDING INVOLVES THE FOLLOWING APPLICATIONS:

- **Accepting:** Accept the fact that you will not completely understand the people in just one trip. This is just a beginning, so don't become too frustrated with yourself.
- **Awareness:** Be aware that at times you may feel your prejudices. You may become frustrated with the way things are or the way people behave. Don't deny your feelings; own them. Only then can you begin to understand the reasons behind them. Why are you frustrated? Being aware will help you grow in understanding the differences.
- **Listening:** Listen more than you talk. You are there to learn, not to instruct. The right to instruct is earned by demonstrating respect.
- **Giving:** Give of yourself. Take the initiative in group settings to reach out to the nationals. People tend to shy away from contact with nationals, especially if they aren't fluent in the language. Take a risk and try to speak the language. People will really appreciate the effort. And don't worry; they'll forgive you when you make mistakes. You may end up laughing with them about the mistakes!
- **Enjoying:** Enjoy the people, their culture, and their language. If you don't take yourself too seriously, you can have more fun. Help create an environment where they can enjoy you and your culture and language just as you aim to enjoy theirs.

## BRIDGE BUILDING INVOLVES REMEMBERING YOUR ROLES

There are three roles you will play that contribute to your ability as a bridge builder:

### 1. The role of being a *guest* of the culture

Think of being a guest in someone's home. How would you behave, react, interact, etc.? Or conversely, what expectations would you have of a guest in your home? What might please and/or irritate you?

### 2. The role of being a *student* of the culture

Think of yourself as a person who is there to study and learn. How does a student in school get an A? What behaviors contribute to success?

### 3. The role of being a *servant* within the culture

Think of being a person who serves everyone he or she encounters in the country. How does a servant approach those he or she serves? How does a servant handle differences in others?

## SOMETHING TO CONSIDER:

How do you think it's perceived when Americans are constantly taking pictures?





## THIS SESSION'S ASSIGNMENT

Read chapters 5-7 of *When Helping Hurts*. You can download this document on the Journey Trip Resource Page: [worldorphans.org/resources](http://worldorphans.org/resources).

## TEAM DISCUSSION (FOR CONFERENCE CALL)

"God created individuals who are uniquely different, and should be treated as such. Building the bridge begins with examining stereotypes: the ones you may hold and the ones the nationals may hold about you."<sup>1</sup>

- Do you feel that you hold some of the stereotypes listed in this session regarding people in your host country? Which ones are relatable to you? Why do you think you hold these stereotypes?
- How might these stereotypes hinder the bridge building process?
- What are some specific ways that we, as a team, can actively practice being a student and a servant within the culture?
- Steven Corbett, author of *When Helping Hurts*, points out that the typical western approach to poverty alleviation is to give money. Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?
- Has reading these chapters changed the way you personally view poverty alleviation? If so, how?
- What view do you think the author has on short-term mission trips? Do you agree? Why or why not?

"If a missionary experience makes you more sensitive to the need for the Gospel around the world, then the trip, in my opinion, is a success and ultimately was worth it."

—James Cecil

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.myhickorygrove.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Missions-Policy-Manual-Jan-2016.pdf>

## SESSION SIX

# CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

When we travel, we are, in a sense, ambassadors of our own country, and our behavior shapes observers' perspectives of our homeland. For those who are followers of Christ, Paul reminds us in his letter to the Corinthian church that we are also ambassadors for Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20). We have a high standard for our lives because we're called to represent Jesus and our citizenship in heaven trumps our citizenship here on earth.

As you prepare to visit another culture, these tips will help you and your team be more effective witnesses for the redeeming love of Jesus.

## LEARN BEFORE YOU LEAP

Giving the "thumbs up" is acceptable in our culture, but it is considered extremely offensive in Iran. Eating with your left hand is considered an ambidextrous skill in many American homes, but would be revolting to people from African countries. Serving finger foods at a party is what good hosts do in the US, but this would create an awkward situation for many Bolivians, since they rarely eat food with their hands. Each of these is considered a *faux pas* (literally meaning 'false step' in French) and has the potential of causing you (and your mission) to stumble. Don't let months of preparation and team training be undermined by a cultural *faux pas* that could have easily been researched prior to arrival. While you can search *faux pas* on wikipedia.com and find etiquette for most countries around the world, it would be ideal to have a conversation with your team leader to learn local customs and etiquette.

## CONSIDER YOUR CLOTHES

Americans often dress casually. Sweatpants, baseball caps, flip-flops, and T-shirts are all familiar words in our lexicon. But in many places around the world, our knack for the casual is frowned upon.

Are you unsure about what to wear? Your team leader or country host will give you more details based on where you are traveling to, but modesty and respect are two key issues. For both men and women, shorts, low-cut tops, and exposed shoulders are inappropriate. On ministry/sports days, capri pants or long shorts to the knees are acceptable. On Sundays, women should wear long skirts to church and men should wear nice pants and a collared shirt.

## SPEAK THEIR LANGUAGE (AT THEIR VOLUME)

Though many places around the world are familiar with English, people feel respected when you try to speak their language. Simple phrases like, "Hello," "What is your name?" and "Thank you," are crucial when traveling to a different country. Your willingness to engage in learning someone's language will more than make up for your lack of fluency and poor pronunciation.

The volume of your words is also important! Other cultures are very aware of their volume, making it a point to speak softer rather than more loudly. This can be tough, especially when you have a large group, but be aware of your volume when you are talking. Always try to match the nationals in your surrounding.

## EAT THEIR FOOD (WITH A SMILE)

This can be tough for many, especially when you are traveling to remote places. While staying with the Cabecar tribe in the jungles of Costa Rica, our team ate roasted pig for four days straight. It sounded exotic, until we found out that they didn't have refrigerators and re-cooked the maggots off each day. Though we were tempted to say we were vegetarians and just eat the rice, our indigenous missionary partner explained, "Killing the one pig they own and presenting it to you is the most generous gift offering this tribe can afford. If you were to refuse it, we would have to leave."



*Food etiquette needs to be researched before visiting a region.* While it would be considered rude to not finish the entire plate of rice and pig in Costa Rica, actually finishing your food in some parts of Asia communicates the opposite message (that the host did not offer you enough). You'll never know unless you do your homework.

## BE HUMBLE (BECAUSE YOUR COUNTRY ISN'T BETTER THAN THEIRS)

When you're tired and out of your comfort zone, it is easy to get frustrated with the driving, the trash on the streets, the lack of hot water (or any water) wherever you are staying, and the unpleasant smells. It is human nature to believe that we do things better than other people, and this belief is magnified when you visit other cultures.

You have a choice. *You can focus on your belief that the American way of doing things is best, or you can choose to enter into another culture in the same way that Jesus became incarnate—with great humility.* We sometimes forget that God left the comfort and splendor of heaven and became human, only to be mocked, tortured, and killed. Emulating Jesus' humility is not a recommendation; it is an imperative. In John 20:21, while they are locked behind closed doors, Jesus says to his disciples, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you."

Let's allow ourselves to be sent the same way that Jesus was sent. Let's enter into the uncomfortable realities of others' lives with great humility. When it gets tough and when we're in those uncomfortable moments in another culture, let's remember Luke's record of Jesus' words in Acts 1:8: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Thankfully, we're not sent out alone or ill-equipped.

Sams, Drew (11/24/2009) Round Trip Missions. *Christianity Today International*, RoundTripMissions.com. Used with permission.



## PHOTOGRAPHY

As we think about cultural sensitivity, we have to think about photography. Before taking a picture, please consider how you would feel if someone came to your home, yard, or community and started taking pictures of you without your permission. How would that make you feel?

### **World Orphans Photography Policy:**

- Be culturally sensitive. Ask World Orphans staff for clarity when needed.
- Respect the dignity and privacy of those photographed. Be respectful; don't assume you are entitled to take every photo. Conceal your camera as much as possible when not taking photos.
- Photograph others as you would want to be photographed. If in doubt, don't take the picture.
- Show the joy of the trip, not merely the devastation. Orphaned and vulnerable children are not without hope. Hope is found in Christ.
- Be aware of the negative stereotype of "poverty tourism" or "voluntourism" and avoid enforcing that stereotype.
- Keep in mind the focal points of World Orphans wholistic care model: physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional health.

## DEALING WITH CULTURE SHOCK

When entering a new environment, dealing with the unfamiliar can make some people very uncomfortable. The following section discusses the triggers, stages, symptoms, and means to overcome the effects of culture shock.

Walking off a plane to be greeted with kisses by five strange men. Squatty potties with no toilet paper. Being yelled at in strange languages. Getting lost in a village. Old men in Speedos. Sitting in a Swahili church service for two hours. Dinner at 9 pm. Slow internet connections. Two words encompass all of these wonderful and terrifying experiences: culture shock. It's a concept that is very difficult to define, describe, or explain. The stories about culture shock may incite laughter, shock, or pity. Culture shock, though, is the process of discovering another culture's social structure, sense of space, language, way of thinking, interaction with nature, rhythm, and priorities.

### WHAT IS CULTURE SHOCK?

It is the feeling of frustration and anxiety when familiar cultural cues are lost. When an individual enters a strange culture, all or most of these familiar cues are removed. He or she is like a fish out of water. No matter how broad-minded or full of good will he may be, a series of props have been knocked from under him. This is followed by a feeling of frustration and anxiety. People react to the frustration in a variety of similar ways.

## SYMPTOMS OF CULTURE SHOCK

Loss of environmental control:

- Excessive concern over food and drinking water
- Fits of anger over delays and other minor frustrations
- Fear of being cheated, robbed, or injured
- Obsession with minor pains

Loss of control over social support systems can lead to:

- Withdrawal
- Refusal to learn language
- Desire for dependence on long-term residents of one's own country
- Excessive sleeping
- Longing for home

## TRIGGERS OF CULTURE SHOCK

- Language barriers (verbal and nonverbal)
- Lack of personal space
- Time change
- Unusual foods and shopping experiences
- Discomfort
- Lack of cleanliness
- Seeing poverty
- Fatigue

## STAGES OF CULTURE SHOCK

### Stage 1: The Honeymoon:

- The newness is exciting. Everything is a new, interesting adventure.

### Stage 2: Culture Shock:

- The excitement is gone. Everything is just so different.
- Questions emerge about how to relate to everyone around you.
- Unresolved problems may surface. You may feel bored, frustrated, and isolated, or you may experience a temporary loss of control over emotions.
- Differences become apparent and irritating. Problems occur and frustration sets in.
- You may feel homesick, depressed, and helpless.

### Stage 3: Surface Adjustment:

- It's starting to make sense.
- You can communicate basic ideas and feelings.
- You make some friends and feel more comfortable with people.
- You develop strategies to cope with difficulties and feelings and learn to adapt to the host culture

### Stage 4: Feeling at Home:

- Accept new culture as just another way of living.
- You may not always approve of it, but you accept and understand differences.
- You have made real friends.
- You accept and embrace cultural differences.
- You see the host as your new home and don't wish to depart or leave new friends.



## REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK

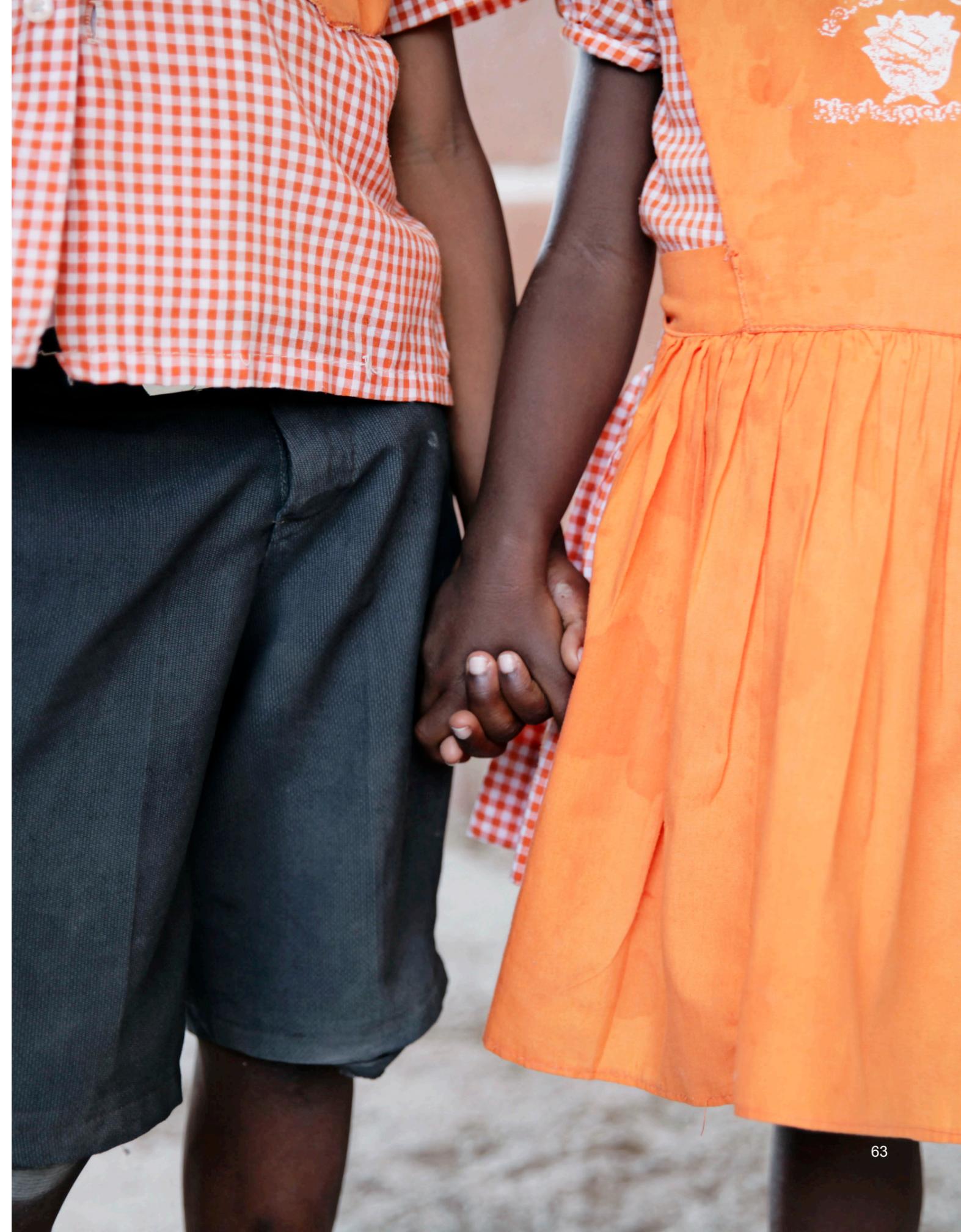
- Re-entry back into the home culture. (See “Debriefing Your Trip” for more details.)
- You are excited about returning home.
- You may feel frustrated, angry, or lonely because friends and family don’t understand what you experienced and how you changed.
- You miss the host culture and friends and may look for ways to return.
- You gradually adjust to life at home. Things start to seem more normal and routine again, although not exactly the same.
- You incorporate what you learned and experienced abroad into your new life and career.

## WAYS TO OVERCOME CULTURE SHOCK

- Keep a journal. It may help you keep some perspective on your experience. Focus on the good things that are happening as well as those that bring laughter and joy. Journals are an excellent way to not only help you prepare for a trip, but also to experience, and process the trip while on-field as well as process and debrief when the trip is over.
- Do not isolate yourself. Talk with others who have experience in this. Pray together.
- Talk to teammates and your team leader when you are having a difficult time. However, avoid hanging out with other people from your own culture who are disgruntled with the host culture and spend their time complaining.
- Remind yourself that rough and stressful times are part of the learning experience.
- Have an open mind and keep your sense of humor.
- Be prepared to accept whatever comes along.

## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- Have you ever experienced culture shock before? If so, how did you handle the emotions you were feeling?
- If you have not experienced culture shock, how do you normally respond when you are in a new environment, completely out of your comfort zone? How do you cope in that situation?
- What mental attitudes can you practice during your journey to help yourself get through the emotions associated with culture shock?



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