



SIMMER
MISSIONLAB 2017

LEARN. DO. BE.
PREPARING FOR YOUR MISSIONS EXPERIENCE

a guide for LEADERS

Group Leaders,

We are excited that you have chosen to bring your team to New Orleans. New Orleans is known for so many different things: music, food, and a culture that's truly one of a kind. In that uniqueness and beauty, however, this city has a lot of brokenness and a lot of pain.

This year, our theme is **Simmer**. Much of New Orleans food is full of flavors that take time, patience, and a little finesse to cultivate. The Christian walk can be the same way—abiding in the Lord through prayer and time in the Word, understanding what it truly means to live in community, and following through to obey Him through faith. Like a good New Orleans gumbo, all of those things take some work and a willingness to roll up your sleeves and get messy.

As a ministry of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, we at MissionLab see solid ministry training as very important. To help you and your team prepare for MissionLab, we have put together the following curriculum for you to go through with your team. This curriculum is meant to help equip and prepare your team with some tools that may be useful as you come to serve in New Orleans and any other place that the Lord leads you over the years. We also pray that this material will help your team grow closer to the Lord and closer together.

In the packet, you will find a guide for each session that includes a description of that session, a list of the materials needed, suggestions for preparing yourself for that particular week, and a roadmap for leading the team through each session. This Leader Guide corresponds with the Learner Guide as well as the videos that can be found on our website (www.missionlab.com) and our Vimeo site (<https://vimeo.com/channels/511237>).

It is our prayer that as your group prepares to come to Missionlab, they would find that they aren't just preparing for the trip but that they are preparing to live a life on mission for Christ.

In Him,

The MissionLab Staff

Session 1: What is Missions?

QUESTION:

What is “missions”? Why do we do it?

POINT:

We want to help you as you seek to create a heart for missions and serving the Lord in your group. In this session, you will walk through a few Bible passages that show us why we do missions and how we glorify God by serving others.

SUPPLIES (you'll want to have the following items for each person):

- Bibles
- Pens or pencils
- Notecards or blank paper
- Poster paper
- Markers
- A copy of Session #1 Worksheet for each team member and yourself
- Video – *Simmer Training Session 1* and a way to show it

PREP:

For this session, we will look at Matthew 25:35-40, Deuteronomy 31:8, and Ephesians 3:20-21. Through these verses, we hope your team recognizes the importance of joining God in His mission and following Christ through serving others sacrificially in your hometown, New Orleans, and around the world.

Spend some time reading these passages and praying for your time together. Ask God to reveal any distorted or inadequate views of missions. Ask God to show you and your team any preconceived notions that you may have about why you serve. Pray that God will prepare your heart and your team's heart to serve Him.

LEAD:

Before the session starts, put several pieces of poster board up on the walls around the room. As you start your meeting with the team, open in prayer. Pray for openness in your own hearts and in those who you will encounter. Pray that you are open to what God is calling each of you to do. Ask your group to think about the following questions: *Why do we as Christians do missions? How do we know that serving others is doing any good?* Let them think about these questions for a few minutes. Then, ask some of them to come write their thoughts on the poster board you have on the walls.

VIDEOS: Play for your group the following video: *Simmer Training Session 1*. When the video is finished, walk through the worksheet for this session. You can have the team work through it as individuals, small groups, or as a large group—whatever is best for you.

For the **CONSIDER** section, have your team answer those questions on notecards or blank paper to bring back with them the next time you meet. Let them begin to think through some of their excitement and concerns about coming to New Orleans. Remind them that God can use them no matter how they are feeling about the trip.

Ask your group to list out some tangible ways they can follow through on the **LIVE** section of the worksheet. Close the session with prayer for the team. Lift up concerns about the trip, praise Him for the excitement, and ask the Lord to prepare your group even while you are at home.

Session 2: Why New Orleans?

QUESTION:

Why should we go to New Orleans to serve? We can do the same things in our neighborhoods. Why should we go?

POINT:

While New Orleans is unique and truly unlike any other city in the world in a lot of ways, it is the same in one very specific, very important way—the people of New Orleans have a need for Christ. You have an opportunity to come here for a week and join God in what He is doing in this city. Use this session to help your team begin to understand New Orleans. Help them talk through some preconceived notions, concern, and excitement they might have about coming to New Orleans.

SUPPLIES:

You will want to have the following items for each person as you lead this session:

- Bibles
- Pens or pencils
- Poster paper
- Markers
- A copy of Session #2 Worksheet for each team member and yourself
- Video – *Simmer Training Session 2* and a way to show it

PREP:

This week your team will be looking at the call that every Christian has to share the Gospel with those around them. You will also start to prepare for some of the uniqueness that comes with a city like New Orleans.

As you prepare to lead your team down to New Orleans, be ready to talk with them about some of their fears, excitement, and preconceived notions about serving in an urban area like New Orleans. Their concerns are important, so it's important to provide an opportunity to share them. At the same time, it is very important that you help your team understand that there are similarities between the people of this city and the people of your city. We all need Jesus no matter where we live, and it's crucial that you help them see this similarity rather than only focusing on the differences.

As you get ready to lead this session, take some time to read 1 Corinthians 3:5-9 and the story of Jonah. Pray that God would begin to work in your heart and your team's heart as you are preparing for the trip. Also, ask God to guard you against getting so caught up in prepping your team that you forget to prep your own heart.

LEAD:

Before the session starts, put several pieces of poster board up on the walls around the room. Label them: "Excitement," "Fears," and "Why we are going?"

Open the session in a word of prayer. Ask God to continue to draw your team closer together as you prepare for your trip. Ask everyone to think back to the notecards or blank paper that they had during the last session. Then, on the poster board around the room, have the students list or draw some of their excitements and fears about the trip, preconceived notions about New Orleans, and why they, personally, are going on the trip. After a few minutes, have a few people read some of the things listed on each poster. Keep this list so that you can come back to it at the end of the session.

VIDEO: Play for your group the following video: *Simmer Training Session 2*. When the video is finished, walk through the worksheet for this session. You can have the team work through it as individuals, small groups, or as a large group—whatever is best for you.

The final two sections, **PRAY** and **LIVE**, involve some group discussion. Go back and look at the lists and drawings that you made on the pieces of poster paper that you have around the room. Ask them if there is anything that they would change after finishing this session. Close with a time of prayer. Ask God to give each person on your team open eyes and a compassionate heart towards all people, both in your city and in New Orleans. Ask God to help you love like He loves.

Session 3: Do's and Do Not's of Serving

QUESTION:

How do we serve in a way that is helpful and not harmful?

POINT:

Have you ever come across someone on the side of the road looking for help? They might have a sign that says, "Anything helps," but is that true? In this session, your group will work through some ideas about how we as Christians can serve others with good intentions but they may not be the best intentions. As we serve, we want to be LEARNERS.

SUPPLIES:

You will want to have the following items for each person as you lead this session:

- Bibles
- Pens or pencils
- Poster board or poster paper
- Parable of the broken house* printed out
- A copy of Session #3 worksheet for each team member and yourself
- Video – *Simmer Training Session 3* and a way to show it

PREP:

For this session, we will look at a passage from the Old Testament and a passage from the New Testament for examples of how we are to serve. We will be using the passages of 2 Kings 4:1-7 and Mark 10:46-52.

As you prepare for this session, think through the following statement:

I cannot solve the problems of New Orleans in a week.
I can, however, create problems.

How does that statement make you feel? Are you offended in anyway? If you are, don't be alarmed. Even as full-time ministers here in this city, we at MissionLab must remind ourselves of this. We can't "fix" every problem that we see in the city, but we can prioritize our main objective. Our mission is to love the people of this city as Christ loves them. It's what we are called to do.

Pray and ask God to reveal and remove any attitudes that you may have about wanting to fix every problem. Ask Him to give you a teachable spirit as you serve Him and the people of New Orleans.

LEAD:

Get your team together and open in prayer. Ask that God would open everyone's eyes to how he wants you to help those around you.

Get your group to think about some of the following questions. What are some good ways to serve? What are some negative ways? Make a list of each on a piece of poster paper, and leave it up for the rest of the session. You can refer to them again at the end if you want.

***Parable of the Broken House**

Now have 3 people stand up and read each of the following parts of this story:

Reader 1

Once upon a time, three youth ministries decided to help a lady living in New Orleans tackle a major problem she was having. Over time, her house had become overrun with many issues. It was lacking proper flooring, sheet-rock on the walls, air-conditioning and heating, a secure door, a sidewalk to a side door, painting on the outside and inside of the house, and many other things. The lady had begun to stay in only one or two rooms of the house to avoid the worst parts of the house and to try to stay cool during the summer and warm in the winter.

To fix the lady's problem, the first youth group went to her house and came up with a few quick and easy solutions to some of the problems. Their plan was to put in a sidewalk to the side door of the house. They were also going to paint the outside of the house. The lady watched as the group came to her house and started to dig a path for the sidewalk. They also painted part of the outside of the house without checking to see if the siding on the house was rotting. The lady was very appreciative of all the work that they had done on her house. The outside of the house looked better for the moment, but it did not fix the major problems that she had with her flooring, heating and air-conditioning, or a feeling of safety in her home.

Reader 2

The second youth ministry came to the lady's house to see what the problems were. They came up with different things that needed to be done. They asked her what some of her more pressing needs were. She made suggestions and pointed out things that had never crossed the group's minds. The youth group and the lady worked together to try and solve some of the problems within her house. They decided to remove the rotten part of the siding and put up the sheet-rock on the inside of her house. However, the amount of time for both projects was not taken into consideration by the team. They ended up not having enough time to finish replacing the bad siding they had taken off and left some holes in her house. While the lady worked with them and was grateful for all that they did, some of her most urgent needs still had not been fixed. The door was still unsecure, and she still felt unsafe.

Reader 3

After hearing about the first two groups' well-intended, yet not completely helpful assistance, the third youth group took another approach. Like the others, this group spent some time with the lady and talked with her about her biggest needs for her house. They also heard about her fears of living in the house with its unsafe conditions. Wanting to avoid the same mistakes of the first two groups, they decided to have the lady make a list of the needs most important to her. Then, they would try to do as much as they could without starting something that they didn't have time

to finish. They decided to start by replacing the lady's front door with one that had a better lock so that the lady felt safe in her home at night. Then, they replaced all the bad siding on her house, ensuring that none would come off that they didn't have time to replace. After this, they prepped the siding to be repainted. They didn't have time to paint but they were confident in knowing that she had all her siding replaced, the sheet-rock up, and her door was secure. They had fixed the problems that she thought were the most urgent, without creating any new ones. She now felt safe in her own home.

After having read the three different parts, talk with your team about some of the ways that the first two groups could have better served the lady without hurting her. Then, talk about some of the good things that the third group did to help the lady.

VIDEO: Play for your group the following video: *Simmer Training Session 3*. When the video is finished, walk through the worksheet for this session. You can have the team work through it as individuals, small groups, or as a large group—whatever is best for you.

After you have finished the worksheet, go back to the list of things from the beginning of the session. Is there anything they want to add to or change on those lists? Talk with your team about ways you can make sure that they are serving well when they come to New Orleans.

Close the session with a prayer time, and ask God to help each of the leaders and students in your group serve in a way that is glorifying to God and that the people they are working with see Christ in them.

Session 4: Prayer

QUESTION:

What is the most important thing to do when preparing for a mission trip?

POINT:

Prayer is an important part of the Christian faith. This session is designed to help your group understand the importance of prayer in preparation, during, and after your trip to New Orleans. God hears and answers the prayers of His people, we just have to cry out to Him.

SUPPLIES:

You will want to have the following items for each person as you lead this session:

- Bibles
- Pens or pencils
- Notecards
- A copy of Session #4 worksheet for each team member and yourself
- Video – *Simmer Training Session 4* and a way to show it

PREP:

As you get ready to share this session with your team, take some time to examine your own prayer habits. We are told in 1 Thessalonians to “pray continuously.” While it is not an option to forget about your ministry responsibilities, we need to pray in the same way as we breath. This isn’t our natural inclination so it takes some work. Focus on your prayer practices this week as you prep for this session.

LEAD:

Open the session in a word of prayer. Ask God to continue to draw your team closer together. Pray for any needs you know of in your team especially anything that pertains to the trip.

VIDEO: Play for your group the following video: *Simmer Training Session 4*. When the video is finished, walk through the worksheet for this session. You can have the team work through it as individuals, small groups, or as a large group—whatever is best for you.

Pass out notecards to everyone. Have the group write down a few prayer requests. These may be things going on in their lives at home or things related to the trip. Collect the cards and then pass them back out so everyone has a different team member’s prayer requests to pray for in the following days. You can alternatively have everyone mention prayer concerns out loud and write them down so that everyone can be praying for them.

Encourage your team to also find prayer partners this week that they can meet with on a regular basis. These should be people that will be praying for that person specifically and the group while your team is in New Orleans.

Session 5: Share Your Story

QUESTION:

How do you share your story along with Christ's story with those around you?

POINT:

Sometimes, we can scare ourselves out of sharing Christ with others, even as leaders in ministry. We may think that they don't want to hear it or that it may affect what they think about us. We make sharing our faith more complicated than it should be. We tend to forget that the Holy Spirit goes before us and that the Gospel is easy to share.

SUPPLIES:

You will want to have the following items for each person as you lead this session:

- Bibles
- Pens or pencils
- A copy of Session #5 Worksheet for each team member and yourself
- Video – *Simmer Training Session 5* and a way to show it

PREP:

This week's session is designed to help your group work through some of the nervous feelings that they may have in telling others about Christ.

As you prepare for this week's session, examine your own boldness about sharing your faith. Are you open with others about your own witness? Do you leave room to talk about your faith? Do you have any struggles when it comes to sharing your faith? Give those to God.

When you share this session with your students, be open with them about your own witnessing habits. Your honesty may help some of them navigate their own struggles with sharing their faith.

LEAD:

Gather your team together and open with a word of prayer. Ask the Lord to help your team to look for ways that they can share their faith as they prepare for the trip to New Orleans.

Talk to your group about the fact that you will be looking at how to share about Jesus in everyday situations.

VIDEO: Play for your group the following video: *Simmer Training Session 5*. When the video is finished, walk through the worksheet for this session. You can have the team work through it as individuals, small groups, or as a large group—whatever is best for you.

It may be helpful to work through the church word translation table together.

Have everyone break up into teams of 2 or 3. Tell them to take turns talking about their lives before coming to know Christ in just a couple sentences. Then, have them take turns talking about how they came to know Christ in the same way, just a couple sentences. Lastly, have them talk about what their life is like now after coming to know Christ. Assure them that these don't have to be long drawn-out stories. This should help take away some of the fear and make sharing their faith feel like a more accessible process.

For the last two sections, **PRAY** and **LIVE**, encourage your team to pray that God gives them opportunities and the courage to share their faith this week, just like they did with their team members. Close this time with prayer, asking God to help everyone be open to opportunities to share with those around them this week and to continue to prepare for the trip.

Session 6: Let's Go!

QUESTION:

You have your team and the training sessions are done. What do you do next?

POINT:

At this point, you know everyone who is going on the trip. You know how many vehicles you will need, who will be driving, and maybe even where you are going to stop on the way to New Orleans. Even with all the plans set, it will be beneficial to spend some time "practicing" serving in your home town. You will also want to spend some time praying for your team, your travels, and the people you will and will not encounter in New Orleans.

SUPPLIES:

You will want to have the following items for each person as you lead this session:

- Bibles
- Pens or pencils
- A plan for doing practicing missions in your community

PREP:

This session will be a little different than the other sessions. For this session, we want you and your team to spend some time out in your community serving and loving people. In preparing for this session, pray that the Lord will show you as the leader, unique, but practical ways to serve your community as you challenge the group to be the presence of Jesus Christ in their home town.

A few examples of being present in your community include: prayer walking through a neighborhood, serving at a local food pantry, or finding some people in your community who need help with their yards or homes. There are also countless other things you could do to serve and minister in your community. Allow the students to be creative in thinking of ways to serve, but guide them in realistic ideas.

LEAD:

For the last session, get the team together and spend some time in prayer. Ask God to continue to guide you and the team in preparing for the trip. Ask Him to break the team out of their comfort zones and think of ways that they could show the love of Christ by serving their community. Ask God to unify the team and give everyone a willing, serving spirit as they go out into the community at home but also when they arrive in New Orleans.

Talk with the team about some practical ways they can prepare themselves as the trip approaches. Have different people in the group read the following verses: John 13:34-35.

Now, we encourage you to take some time and go out into your community to serve those that live around you. A great way to start is by going on a prayer walk in a neighborhood around your church. Here are some suggestions of things to do when you go out:

1. Pray
Split the team up into smaller groups of 4 or 5 and give each group a map with a specified area to prayer walk. Have them pray for the residents of the homes. Pray for those that you see out while walking. If you pass a school, pray for the teachers and leaders there. Simply pray as the Holy Spirit leads.
2. Pray with those you see
If a group sees people out in the area in which they are prayer walking, stop and ask that person if you can pray for them. Tell them the church you are from, that you are on a prayer walk, and ask if they have anything you can pray about for them. They may ask you to pray for their life, health, family, neighborhood, work, or countless other things.
3. Debrief
When each group gets done with their route, meet back together. Take some time to let people share about their experiences. What was the best part? What did they dislike or what made them feel uncomfortable? Was there anything that you noticed for the first time? Did you connect with anyone?
4. Go Back
When you come back from MissionLab, go back to the same areas and pray again. Pray for wisdom. See if the Holy Spirit is speaking to you to pray for and reach out to any specific person. Hopefully, you will connect with the people in your community and have opportunities to share the Gospel.

After you have spent time praying over your community, brainstorm with your group about service projects you can do in your community. Hopefully, these projects will come out of a need they noticed in your community while prayer walking. Help equip and encourage them to plan, organize, and serve. Make every effort to let the students lead the service project, with adults serving as a support system to help when needed. This will help them to see the needs of their city and give them hearts to serve compassionately with the love of Christ right where they are. This is especially important if you have never done anything like this before. Take some time to debrief from this experience as you prepare to come to New Orleans. Allow this time to equip and prepare them for serving in New Orleans, but also inspire them to continue service more and more after the trip.

The service projects in your community that result from MissionLab preparation shouldn't end after this time. Keep going back and loving your community. Continue the relationships you make. This is an amazing way that people in your community will see God at work through your church.

Close this time with your group with prayer and ask God to go before you as you finalize the last details. Pray for each person on your team, and pray that your time here at MissionLab is glorifying to the Lord.