



SIMMER

MISSIONLAB 2017

LEARN. DO. BE.
PREPARING FOR YOUR MISSIONS EXPERIENCE

a guide for LEARNERS

Session 1: What is Missions?

QUESTION

What is “missions” and why do we do it?

THINK

You’re about to come on a mission trip to New Orleans. Maybe you’re excited. Maybe you’re nervous. Maybe you’re still trying to figure out what a “mission trip” even means. Whether this is your 4th trip or you’ve never done this before, it is a good idea to have a correct understanding or reminder of what missions is and why it is important.

Following His death and resurrection, Jesus challenged His followers with a final mission that is our same mission today. He told them to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation. (Mark 16:15) We are to go out into our neighborhood, city, state, country, and ultimately, the world to declare the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ through our words and actions. Missions is joining God in His work in our own backyards and around the world. We join Him because He calls us to share the love and hope that can only be found in His Son, Jesus Christ.

READ

Matthew 25: 35-40

CONSIDER

By serving others and sharing the love of Christ with them, we are participating in the mission that God has assigned to us. As we feed the hungry, give water to the thirsty, provide shelter to the stranger, clothe those in need, and help the sick, we are demonstrating love to Christ and to those with whom we are serving. As Christians, we have been called to reach others by Christ and for Christ, and we do that by showing others the love of Christ.

Have you ever been in one of the situations mentioned in Matthew 25:35-40? When did you have an opportunity to care for someone that was in need? What did you do?

Does your view of missions or motivation to serve change after reading “whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me”?

Write out each different situation/need you find in Matthew 25:35-40 and describe how that need was met.

SITUATION	FULFILLMENT OF NEED

READ

Deuteronomy 31:8, Ephesians 3:20-21

CONSIDER

Simply put, missions is our outward obedience to God's calling on all believers. We obey God by intentionally telling others about Christ through our actions and words. The act of loving, serving, and sharing the Gospel with strangers or even those closest to us can seem like a challenging responsibility, but our God is faithful. Because we join Him in this mission, we can be confident that He will prepare us and guide us along the way. Not only does God walk with us as we go, He goes before us and promises to never leave us. As we are with Him in doing missions, He often exceeds our smallest expectations and is glorified in the end.

What are some fears/apprehensions you have about this trip?

What are some of your expectations?

PRAY

Spend some time praying over the things you've listed above. Pray that God would give you peace for your fears. Pray that He would exceed all of your expectations as only He can. Pray that God would use you for His glory and to bring anyone you encounter closer to Him.

LIVE

As you go throughout the week, think about ways that you can serve others as you're joining God in His mission. Love those around you through what you speak and what you do. Your calling to missions doesn't begin when you get to New Orleans. It begins now.

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?

THINK

New Orleans is different from many other cities because it is a melting pot full of different peoples and cultures. Here in the Crescent City, you can observe the world by seeing different religions, traditions, and heritages. The unique stories here make up one narrative that is New Orleans. There are many aspects of this quirky city that you can appreciate and even more to understand before you come.

What do you know about New Orleans? You've probably heard all about our food—po' boys, seafood, beignets and king cake, and even the jambalaya. You probably know that we're the birthplace of Jazz, have above-ground cemeteries, and have a festival almost every weekend. Besides this, you may have also heard that New Orleans is a city of depravity and sin. It's all true, even the last part. However, in regards to a need for Christ, New Orleans is no different than any other city in the world.

Sin is not an issue of geography. Sin is an issue of *humanity*. Reaching others for Christ is about more than one person, one trip, and one city. It's about serving Him through word and action and trusting Him to do the work of saving.

READ

1 Corinthians 3:5-9

CONSIDER

What did Paul say was the purpose of the man who plants and the man who waters?

Who makes things grow?

THINK

Sometimes, God calls us to do things we don't understand. He might even tell us to go places that seem strange or unfamiliar. Getting pulled out of your comfort zone can be hard and can sometimes cause us to rebel against God's calling. Take comfort in knowing that you are not alone in feeling this way. The Bible is full of people who didn't always do the right thing or follow God perfectly. It's important to remember that, just as God loves you, He loves the people to whom He is calling you to serve. It's important that you are obedient in sharing the love, grace, and mercy that He has shown you.

READ

The story of Jonah

CONSIDER

What was Jonah told to do in Chapter 1? What was he told to do at the beginning of Chapter 3?

What was Jonah's reaction to what God was calling him to do? How do you react when God is calling you to do something you may not fully agree with or understand?

Think of anything in your own life that God has been calling you to do. Have you been running from it? What is it?

PRAY

Pray for yourself and the team as you prepare to come to New Orleans. Pray that you are coming to be used by God in whatever way that He wants. Pray that God would be already calling Himself to the people of New Orleans. Pray that God will prepare you to share His love with those in this city.

LIVE

This week, try to be intentional with those around you. Think about who God has been wanting you to serve or share the Gospel with and remember that He goes before you. You can stop running and know that His power works inside of you as you share. Take this opportunity to be obedient.

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

QUESTION

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

THINK

Have you ever asked someone to help you with a problem or show you how to fix something, but instead of teaching you, they just do it for you? What happens next time? You still don't know how to deal with the problem yourself and you are stuck in a cycle of need.

When someone is in need, they often feel they have lost some of their dignity. That feeling can often be made even worse by the people who mean to help them. It is important to examine our hearts and motives when we serve. When God provided salvation, He sent his Son so that we could know that we are loved. He took away our shame, gave us dignity, and we can become His sons and daughters. When we are helping others, we should show them this same quality of sacrificial love. Serving isn't about handing down. It's about reaching out.

READ

2 Kings 4:1-7

CONSIDER

Who are the people involved in the story?

What questions does Elisha ask the woman?

How are the woman's needs met?

How is the woman's dignity preserved in how Elisha handles the situation?

THINK

Do you know what having dignity means? A person who has dignity realizes his or her worth in life. They feel capable in who they are, knowing that they can accomplish the things set before them. Summed up, a person who has dignity has the self-confidence to live his or her life.

In this 2 Kings passage, Elisha helped the widow in two ways to help her maintain her dignity. He helped her place trust in a God who provides the needs of His people. He ultimately gives His people the truest form of dignity and worth through His love. Elisha also helped in guiding her in the situation, rather than simply fixing it.

We can sometimes be guilty of thinking we know what's best for everyone else, especially when we find ourselves in the context of missions. We think we can identify the need and then work to fill it. Jesus Himself didn't even do things this way. Read the story below and ask yourself the following: Does he prioritize fixing a problem or focus on having a conversation?

READ

Mark 10:46-52

CONSIDER

In verse 51, what question does Jesus ask? Who is he asking?

Why is Jesus's question to the blind man important? What does it teach us about how to interact with someone who is in need?

PRAY

Spend some time praying that when you are helping others, it is done in a way that allows them to have dignity and your service honors God. Pray that you can help in meeting people's physical needs but more importantly, their spiritual needs. Pray that you will point them to Christ with your words and actions.

LIVE

Spend time this week thinking about what your motive is in helping those around you. When you serve others, ask them what they need rather than making your own assumptions.

Session 4: Prayer

QUESTION

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

THINK

You probably guessed the answer from the title, but without a doubt, it is prayer. Let's just be honest with ourselves. How often do we acknowledge the real necessity of prayer? Unfortunately, more often than not, it is during a time when we need something. Prayer is a form of communication, communion, and proactive defense against those things that distract us from effectively ministering to others.

Relationships require communication. Our relationship with God is no different. How do we do that? Prayer. As you prepare to go on mission, pray. As you tell others about where you're going and what you'll be doing, ask them to pray. As you gather with your church, pray together as a team.

READ

Colossians 1: 9-13

CONSIDER

Colossians is a letter that Paul wrote to the church in Colossae while he was in prison. He had never met the believers there, yet he was still praying for them. In this passage, how are some of the ways that Paul prays for the Colossian people?

Why is it important for us to pray for each other?

How can your team pray for each other during the trip? List a few prayer requests that you have on the paper that is in front of you.

PRAY

In addition to the prayer requests you are tackling now, remember that prayer will be an important thing to take with you beyond this time. Pray before you leave, pray while you're in New Orleans, and pray when you return home. It may be helpful to have the table below to help you to be intentional about your prayer for this trip.

Ask your friends and family to join you in praying for:

BEFORE TRIP	DURING TRIP	AFTER TRIP
A heart that is right before the Lord.	Opportunities and a willingness to share Christ.	A renewed sense of purpose in missions.
The team. For a sense of unity and community.	Ask for people back home to be in prayer every day you are gone.	Opportunities to tell others about the impact of the trip.
Fears or concerns you may have. Lay them before the Lord and ask him to take them.	Spiritual warfare is real. Pray against it and ask other to do the same. The enemy will try to undermine what you are doing.	For continued growth with the Lord as you return home.
Your expectations. Pray that they are exceeded in ways you cannot even imagine.	Remain open and ready to hear God's voice while you are here. This can be so much more than just a camp experience.	Opportunities to share the Gospel with those around you and serve Him in your own city.
The people who you don't yet know but you will meet. Begin praying for the conversations you will have.	For empowerment as you speak with others and that the Holy Spirit gives you the words.	The city of New Orleans and the people that you met.

LIVE

Make sure to find some prayer partners that will be willing to pray for you as you prepare and come on the trip. Don't forget to pray for your other team members and the prayer requests that they put on the card.

Session 5: Share Your Story

QUESTION

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

THINK

It can be scary and intimidating to share the Gospel. You might even be hesitant in telling your own story of how you came to know Christ. We worry about not saying the right thing, how the person is going to receive it, or we may worry that we will stumble over a scripture reference.

There have been times for all of us when we have talked ourselves out of sharing the Gospel and our story. We might do this because we are uncomfortable or afraid, but it isn't because the person doesn't want to hear it. When you feel that fear coming on, remember two things:

1. You are sharing **your** story and no one can tell that story better than you. You are the only one that has lived through those experiences and you can share them the best. The story of how God saved you is the best story you can ever tell anyone. Instead of being scared, be excited to share this important part of your life with another person!
2. You are not alone. The Holy Spirit is with you. The Spirit will guide you through difficult conversations and can use your words to help the other person understand what you are trying to tell them. Remember Deuteronomy 31:8 from the first lesson.

You are a vessel and a testimony to the love and power of Christ. All you must do is listen to His Spirit and speak when he leads you.

READ

Philippians 3: 1-11

CONSIDER

What are some of the things Paul says about himself in this passage and what does he say about them when compared to Christ?

In these verses, we see Paul talking to the people of Philippi about his own life. In verse 5, he talks about the family he was born into and in verse 6 we see him move into his adult life. Paul knew his story better than anyone else so he knew how to tell it to people. Paul also knew that his life wasn't anything compared to Christ. He knew how to get that point across in his story. Do you know how to talk about your life before and after beginning a relationship with Christ?

Take some time now to think about the Gospel and how it has transformed your life. Think through your life before coming to know Jesus, how you came to know Jesus, and the change

that occurred after you came to know Christ. This is your story. Think through the following questions:

Before Jesus: What were some bad habits, fears, or anxieties you had before Christ?

How it happened: When did you know that you wanted to follow Jesus and why did you decide? How did it happen?

After Jesus: What is different about your life after beginning a relationship with Christ? How do you know that Jesus has saved your life?

THINK

Jesus relates to people where they are. He takes time to talk to a person, helps them see what their needs are realistically, and then shows them that He is the quenching of not only spiritual needs, but physical needs.

When sharing your story with others, it may be helpful to start there. Tell the person the need that Christ illuminated in your life and then how He satisfied that need.

With that in mind, read the following account:

READ

John 4:1-15

CONSIDER

Jesus used several different ways to communicate and teach His message. What does he use in these verses?

Is the way that he approached this situation and talked with this woman important? Why?

What can you take from Jesus' example that could be helpful to you when you are sharing your story with others?

Jesus used a situation that was personal to him and to the woman. He turned a physical need into a conversation about spiritual need. What are some ways that you can use your story to talk about how you ultimately needed Christ?

Many times, when we try to tell others about Christ, we use words we don't normally use and may not even fully understand. Take a few minutes to work through this chart and change the "church words" into words that are easier to understand.

ORIGINAL WORD/PHRASE	REAL-WORLD TRANSLATION
Washed in the blood	
Give your heart to Jesus	
Sanctified	
Sin/iniquity	
Holy	
Redeemed	
Lost	
Make a profession of faith	
Saved/born again	
Conviction	

Are there any other words that you would add to this list?

PRAY

Pray that God brings someone to mind with whom you can share your story. Ask Him to give you the confidence to talk with that person and the words that He wants you to say. Pray for that person, and ask the Lord to open their eyes and ears to listen as you share your story with them. Pray that God shows you an opportunity to share with this person.

LIVE

Take some time to sit down and write out your story. This might help you when you start to verbalize it. Spend some time this week sharing your story with those around you. Try to use simple, everyday words in your conversations. Let the Holy Spirit to guide you as you talk.