

Mission Trip Planning Guide

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We wanted to put together some “helps” especially for first time missionaries. Below are listed a few things to help you in your mission trip planning process. This list is not intended to be all inclusive but hopefully it will give you an idea of some of the things you’ll need to consider for your trip.

It is best to start planning several months in advance. The larger the group of missionaries – the more planning is required.

1. **COORDINATE:** The first step is to coordinate with Bishop Opicho. He will help you with selecting dates for your trip, give you information on things to consider when selecting team members, information on appropriate dress, ministry ideas, preparation, safety, what to bring, and provide you with lots of other valuable information.
2. **DELEGATE:** You will want to appoint a leader/coordinator for your team. You need one person at the top to delegate and ensure that everything gets done that needs to get done.
3. **PLANNING MEETINGS:** You will want to have regularly scheduled meetings to discuss plans, fund-raisers, answer questions, etc... The meetings will be a great opportunity for the team to pray for the trip, insure everyone stays informed, and insure everyone is ready.
4. **ESTABLISH DEADLINES:** Use your calendar to establish deadlines for accomplishing certain tasks such as passport and visa application, immunizations, arranging for travel, fund-raisers, etc...
 - a. **AIRLINE RESERVATIONS:** Contact your travel agent as soon as you know when you want to travel. The earlier the better, especially if traveling with several people. Certain times of the year can offer much cheaper rates for airline tickets. A good travel agent can offer you a wealth of information to help with your trip.
 - b. **PASSPORTS:** Apply for your Passport as soon as you can – six months in advance if possible. Passports can take up to two months to receive after the application has been sent in, and you must have your Passport prior to requesting a Visa for Kenya. You can usually apply for a Passport at your local government offices or Post Office. For more information on obtaining a U.S. Passport visit the U.S. Department of State website at: http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html .
 - c. **VISA FOR KENYA:** Information about applying for a Visa for Kenya can be obtained from the Kenya Embassy in Washington D.C. Their website includes lots of information and downloadable/printable application forms and instructions: <http://www.kenyaembassy.com/> .
 - d. **IMMUNIZATIONS:** The Kenya Embassy website contains some information about immunizations but you may wish to contact your local health department for more up to date information. Start immunizations at least four months in advance of travel. Some immunizations come in a series that must be received over a period of time.
5. **LODGING & TRAVEL IN KENYA:** Bishop Opicho can pre-arrange for lodging and rental vehicle(s) as needed. A nominal deposit may be required.
6. **COST PER PERSON:** Consider the following list when figuring your costs (list may not be all inclusive).
 - a. Passport & Visa fees
 - b. Immunization costs
 - c. Round-trip air fares (add money for food during layovers)
 - d. Lodging accommodations while in Kenya
 - e. Food while in Kenya (some food can be purchased and prepared by the local women which will save on dining out)
 - f. Vehicle rental in Kenya

- g. Ministry materials to hand out as applicable (teaching notes, etc...)
 - h. Possible gifts for children's ministry. It can be a nice gesture to bring a small gift for local Pastors & their wives. Check with Bishop Opicho for what would be appropriate if you plan to do this. Anything else you may think of.
 - i. A NOTE ABOUT FINANCES: When foreign missionaries come to the United States it is expected that the host churches cover all the expenses – travel, food, lodging, etc... However, when going to other countries this is not the case. It does not work the same way in reverse. Remember that Kenya is a poor country and that the church there is not financially capable of supporting any part of a mission endeavor. When in Kenya, you must be prepared to pay your full way – food, lodging, transportation, etc... Also, if you plan to minister in different cities or villages, you will need to provide funds for transportation, food and lodging for any local church members who will be traveling and working with you as ministers, interpreters, or helpers if needed. These individuals are vital to your success and they cannot afford to pay their own way. Please be aware that although this is an additional cost to your trip, it will also be a blessing and God will use it to bless your work in the mission field. Bishop Opicho will keep this cost to a minimum and will help you in figuring this expense. It can vary considerably from no cost at all to several hundred dollars depending on how many missionaries are in your group, how many cities you plan to minister in, how long you will be there, and what types of ministry you plan on doing.
7. FUND RAISERS: Plan your fund-raisers well in advance if needed. Get members of your congregation, family, and community involved.
 8. EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES: Mission trips are great but they are also a lot of work. You don't want your people to get burned out, especially first-timers. Work with Bishop Opicho to schedule a day off for shopping and sightseeing.
 9. INSURANCE: You may want to check with your insurance company to see if you are covered for emergencies while traveling and overseas. If you desire, there are insurance packages available for short term missionary programs. Try searching the web for these "missionary insurance".
 10. MISCELLANEOUS THINGS TO CONSIDER BRINGING:
 - a. Anti-bacterial wipes or liquid such as Purell®. Hand-washing facilities are not frequently available when needed. These are great for before and after meals and after hands-on ministry. Hand washing is the best way to easily help prevent infection.
 - b. Sun-screen.
 - c. Background music if you wish to minister in song.
 - d. Camera/video recorder.
 - e. Small back-pack or fanny-pack for carrying items with you during the day.
 - f. Consider one person bringing a laptop computer with microphone and headset. If you will have access to the internet in Kenya (at local internet shops), you can call anywhere in the U.S. for about 2 cents per minute using programs such as Skype®. See individual programs for details. This can keep you in touch with the people back home very inexpensively.

I hope this information has been helpful to you.

God bless you abundantly as you serve Him!