

Service Trip Leader Responsibilities

Leading a service trip is an opportunity to engage, support and assist your fellow students through the service-learning experience. As a leader, your job will include facilitating group discussions and reflections, ensuring participant togetherness, handling the trip budget given by the Agapé Center, and maintaining communication between your team and the agency to make decisions that will best support and enable the team.

The Service Trip Student Leader position is selective. The Service Trips Team looks for leaders who show a strong understanding of service-learning, communicate and make decisions effectively, embrace other people willingly, and demonstrate the ability to work well with a co-leader.

Make sure to read and understand your role and responsibilities as a Service Trip Leader. The Service Trips Team is grateful for your interest in leading!

Communicating with Your Co-leader

Don't forget that you and your co-leader are a TEAM!

- Decisions should be made together
- Responsibilities should be split up evenly
- Make sure both of you are aware of the agency's needs and expectations throughout the trip
- If you are driving in separate vehicles, make sure you are in touch about driving routes and pit stops
- If the team needs to split into groups, make sure there is a leader or advisor in each group
- Make executive decisions. Please listen for participants' needs/wants, but if the team is torn between what to do and no one can come to a consensus, make sure you and your co-leader come up with the final decision that appeals to the majority of the team.

Interacting with Participants

*Remember it is your responsibility to make sure participants **feel welcomed and heard** in the group. Make sure you reach out to all members of your team and engage with team members in group settings and individually.*

- Prior to departing campus:
 - Exchange contact information with **all** of the participants
 - Communicate to them where/when you will be leaving campus for the service trip, and make sure they confirm!
 - We encourage that you meet with your group one more time after the orientation
- Show your team that you care about them by asking questions, starting inclusive conversations, and making intentional efforts to get to know everyone
- Have some icebreakers games prepared and bring cards or other games that can help keep people stay involved and active in the group
- Look out for participants who may be feeling left out and reach out to them

Driving

Please make sure only the people that have been Messiah licensed, approved and selected as drivers for the trip get behind the wheel!

- The morning of departure, drivers must go to Dispatch and show their ID in order to get the vehicle key (Dispatch will be given a list of driver names to expect ahead of time)
- **Drivers must not forget to take their license on the trip and must drive according to the speed limit**
- Designate a passenger to help navigate the driver to the agency
- Have at least one person awake in the car in addition to the driver!!!
- **USE GAS CARD**** You will receive a plastic pouch from dispatch with the Messiah vehicle key and a gas card inside of it. This gas card is for you to use when you need to refuel your vehicle. Just follow the instructions that come with the card. Please, please, please don't use personal credit/debit cards!

Facilitating Group Discussion

Reflection and processing are a huge part of service-learning. Please make sure you are engaging in conversation and discussion with your team. You may use the Team and Reflection Facilitation Guide (provided by the Service Trips Team) for discussion and reflection ideas.

- **Pray and Ask God to lead you in service**
- **Lead Devotions**
 - There is no right or wrong way to do this! You can decide what works best for your group. Try your best to have this every day. Some ideas include:
 - Read a Bible verse/passage and reflect
 - Watch a short sermon on YouTube
 - Discuss how God has been moving in your life or on the trip
 - Play a worship song/ sing together
 - Share testimonies
- **Offer time for reflection**
 - This might include moments throughout the day or a set time at the end of each day
 - Don't be afraid to dive deep. Ask challenging open-ended questions
 - Make sure people feel comfortable speaking about their experiences in the chosen reflection setting

Meals

Take into consideration any allergies participants may have before determining a meal or buying food.

- Take note of potential food stops along the way or meals you can prepare upon arrival
- If your agency has a kitchen take turns preparing meals or cook together as a team!
- Make sure everyone pitches in to help whether it be preparing, cooking or cleaning

Communicating with Agency Director

You and your co-leader serve as the main contact between the agency director and your team. Make sure you are remaining in touch with the desires and expectations of the agency. Communicate and discuss information given to you by the agency director with your co-leader and team.

- **Prior to departure-** It is essential for you (or your co) to contact the agency director prior to departing campus. Find out the logistics, like where to park, and inform them around what time you and your team will be arriving at the agency.
- **During your time at the agency-** During your stay at the agency, you will serve as the **liaison** between the agency director and the participants on your team. This means that the director will most likely talk to you and your co-leader directly with instructions about what needs to be done for each designated day in which you will pass on to the participants.
- **After returning to campus-** Remind your team to attend the participant debrief. Reflection is an essential component of the service-learning experience.

Managing the Budget

Please make sure you and your co-leader discuss how you would like to handle the money. Do not involve participants in responsibility for the money envelope.

- **Prior to departing campus:**
 - Pick up the cash advance from the Agapé Center. This includes:
 - A zippered pouch with all of the money for the trip
 - A budget sheet (could already be in information packets)
 - This explains how much money you have to spend on food, tolls and anything else pertaining to your trip
 - A log to track spending(if not available, make sure to keep record of spending on a sheet of paper)
 - When you do spend money, simply write down the date which you purchased it, what you purchased and how much it cost
 - A paper clip to keep **receipts** organized and all together
 - After every purchase **make sure you collect all receipts** from participants, you will need to turn these into the Agapé Center
- **DOs & DON'Ts**
 - DOs**
 - Discuss managing the budget with your co-leader
 - **Save ALL receipts**
 - Keep track of your spending on a log
 - Please bring any leftover money back to the Agapé Center
 - DON'Ts:**
 - Do not use the budget money for gas ...You will have a gas card to purchase gas!
 - Please do not donate leftover money to community partners/agencies

Helpful Reminders

- Return anything borrowed from the Agape Center once returning to campus (GPS, air mattress, money pouch with leftover money & receipts, etc.)
- Remind participants to put their bedding in the laundry immediately to avoid the spread of potential bed bugs
- Attend the debrief meeting held after break
- Make note of anything the Agapé Center should be aware of from the trip (comments or concerns about the agency or participants/positives and negatives from the experience)



To train our leaders, the Service Trips Team will meet with you and your co-leader to discuss expectations and responsibilities included in the leadership role and address any questions or concerns you may have regarding your role as a Service Trip Student Leader. We use email as our main form of communication with leaders, so please make sure you are checking your inbox for any questions or updates from our team. We are grateful for interest in service and your willingness to lead!

For any questions, comments, or concerns please contact servicetrips@messiah.edu or visit the Agapé Center. We are excited to partner with you to serve!