



## National & International Service Trips Experiences

*The Agapé Center for Service-Learning provides students with opportunities to engage with diverse communities through acts of service and fellowship. We hope students will experience enriching and challenging growth, which will help to foster learning of oneself, of the needs of others and of the role that service plays in society through a lens of Christian faith. The Agapé Center seeks to foster positive group dynamics, education and reflection during the Service Trip experience.*

*Service Trips are a great way to experience a unique community and explore social issues through service. The Agapé Center hopes that, as a result of a student's participation in a Service Trip, he/she will feel more prepared to live, learn, lead and serve in an increasingly multicultural and global society. Because we seek to make our Service Trips as inclusive and available as possible, participants will be entering into the short-term service experience with varying levels of knowledge, expertise and understanding of themselves and service-learning. No matter where students are in their development, Service Trips through the Agapé Center will seek to provide intentional content, service, and reflection that will guide participants' experience and learning.*

### **Themes**

Service Trips give students the opportunity to engage with service, while reflecting on both their self and their experiences. Reflection is the key component of service-learning, and is that component which distinguishes service-learning from volunteerism. To reflect is to think critically about and analyze emotional responses to service activities. It is the means by which those participating in service can begin to connect content & service – rather than viewing them as unrelated, isolated events. By engaging in intentional, ongoing reflection, students will...

- Gain a Deeper Understanding of Societal Issues
- Develop Cultural Awareness
- Experience Greater Self-Awareness & Identity Development
- Encounter a sense of Civic Responsibility
- Understand Effective Group Dynamics

### **Domestic:**

Domestic Service-Learning trips seek to accomplish these themes by sending students around the United States to work with local organizations and local communities. Students work alongside these communities and the community leaders to build relationships and assist in various projects.

Domestic Service-Learning trips are designed to introduce students to service by providing multiple opportunities throughout the year. These experiences allow students to serve throughout the country, with the hope that they will continue to engage in service-learning beyond this trip.

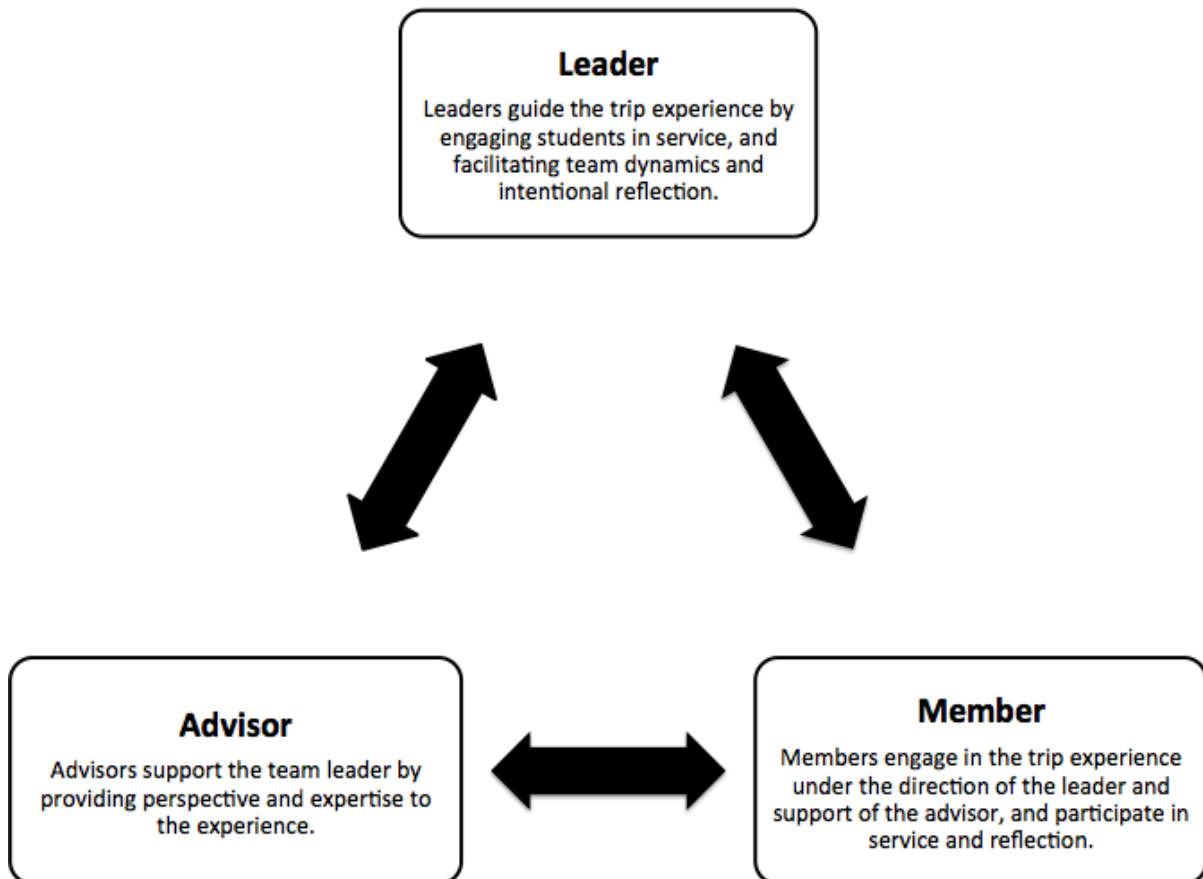
### **International:**

International Service-Learning experiences seek to accomplish these themes by sending students around the world to partner with local organizations and local communities. Students work alongside these communities and the community leaders to build relationships and assist in various projects.

International Service-Learning is designed to provide an in-depth experience in which students serve in a different country. The Service Trip is a week-long opportunity to engage in a new culture and country through service. Students spend months prior to their departure broadening their previous understanding of service-learning.

## Team Roles

Domestic and International Service Trips teams consist of three different roles. Each role is a crucial part of the overall team dynamics and functionality. Student leaders, selected by the Agapé Center, engage the student members in the service experience by facilitating the trip as a whole--including projects, communication, reflection, and group dynamics. Student members are able to participate in the trip, under the guidance of the leader, by focusing on specific service projects, getting to know their team, and reflecting on their experiences. The advisors are Messiah College employees who seek to serve alongside students while supporting the student leaders and providing guidance when needed. The following diagram displays the relationship between these roles:



## How to Get Involved

The Domestic Service Trips take place three times a year: Fall Break, J-Term Break, and Spring Break. Each break, 3-5 trips are sent out to varying places including: New York, West Virginia, and Maryland. Each team consists of two leaders, 10-12 members and one professional staff advisor. For more information, contact the Domestic Service Trips Team at [servicetrips@messiah.edu](mailto:servicetrips@messiah.edu).

The International Service Trips have long-standing partnerships in Torotoro, Bolivia; Lurgan, Northern Ireland; and Dulce Nombre de Jesus, Nicaragua. These trips occur over Spring Break and at the end of May, and include 2-3 student leaders, 2-3 advisors, and 10-12 student members, per team. For more information, please contact the International Service-Learning Coordinator at [nismooffice@messiah.edu](mailto:nismooffice@messiah.edu).