

Missions to Mexico

Training Resources

Ten Ways to Ruin a Mission Trip

Believe it or not, it's possible to have a bad short-term missions experience. Most times, this is not the fault of the situation or organization. The root cause is most often the short-termer's own attitudes and expectations.

To help you maximize your short-term experience, here's a checklist of what not to do.

Keep narrowly focused on "spiritual" activities. Since you want to win people to Christ, focus on only the loftiest of things.

Avoid menial work like data entry, loading trucks, or working on buildings. Such things will only distract you from your primary task.

To tighten up your schedule, eliminate personal prayer and Bible study. You will be so rushed that you won't have time. Besides, can't you get all the spiritual food you need from group devotions and from church services?

Stay organized and on schedule. Set detailed goals before you go. Establish schedules and refuse to deviate from them. Do not accept delays, last-minute changes, and impromptu visits and invitations. Those things will just keep you from getting things done for God.

Help the missionaries by pointing out their mistakes. Bring them up to date on what you've heard are the latest missions trends. Some missionaries are stubborn. So, you may need to enlist some support among the nationals for your views about how things should be run.

Get involved romantically with someone. Being away from family and friends makes this the perfect time to get involved romantically. While it may distract you slightly from the work, you will be able to expose national Christians to America's progressive dating customs.

Don't embarrass yourself by trying to pick up the local language. People are always saying that English is spoken all over the world. So, insist that those people use it with you.

Immediately begin pointing out your team members' faults. Time is short. It will be difficult for people to make the needed changes if you don't help them from the start. Focus your helpful criticisms on team leaders.

As you go all out in warring against attacking germs, don't eat any of the local food. To be sure, you may miss some friendly opportunities with "the natives," but you'll avoid all those awful germs!

Keep your distance from team members who couldn't raise their full support. They may try to mooch off you. Don't give in. Sweating over finances will help them build their faith.

When you return home, scold your home church and friends for their lack of commitment, for their weak prayers, and for their inadequate giving to missions. This may be one of the few times you will have their deferential respect. Make the most of it.

If you'll do all ten of these things (or even some of them), I can promise you a bad short-term mission trip.