

THEPEACEPLAN



GracePoint
Church

Raising Prayer, Moral & Financial Support For Mission Trips

When it comes to missions it takes an entire team to make a trip successful. **Part of this is connecting mission “Goers” with potential mission “Senders”**. Inviting people to pray, offer moral support, and/or give financially ensures that we involve as many as possible in the process of sending missionaries. God will bless and reward many more people for faithful service when we are faithful to present meaningful ways to contribute to and participate in missions. You may be surprised to find how many friends and family members are willing to partner with you in missions!

What do we mean when we say “support”?

We truly mean building a team of people who encourage you. Everyone on the team needs people supporting them. The Christian life is one build on community. We should not be serving in isolation, but with the support of those around us.

3 Types of Support:

- 1) **Financial.** This is what most people think of when they think of support. Most trips are too expensive for an individual to pay out of pocket. They are able to ask others to support them by contributing to the cost of the trip. Many are willing to do this as they themselves are not able or willing to travel, so they can still participate in missions projects by helping those who can and are called to go.
- 2) **Prayer.** These are people who will pray for you, the team and those who you will be working with before, during and after the trip. These are believers who know the power of prayer. You will need to make sure to keep them informed of your requests through the process.
- 3) **Moral.** These are your cheerleaders. Those who are asking you “when do you leave?” “Are you excited?” “What did you do?”. They may or may not be able to give money, but they are rooting for you to have an incredible experience. This is a great way to include non-believers in this process. This also gives you the opportunity to share the gospel with them!!

What Support is Not... Fundraising.

Our Philosophy Regarding Fundraising verses Team Building:

Fundraising	Team Building
Sells gizmos, widgets and brownies	Clearly and briefly tells the mission and it's purpose
Doesn't care where the money comes from	Builds on personal sphere of influence
Sends out cliché ridden, photo copied appeal letters to people who don't even know them	Sends thoughtful, imaginative communication to friends, family and colleagues
Expects everyone to give them money	Expects God to provide the needs
Says, "Let others pay my way"	"Says, "I will first give all I can before turning to others"
Depends on clever ideas and "selling" of the trip	Depends on prayer and thoughtful consideration
Never follows up once the money is given	Thankfully reports the victories of the mission's team
What you do for school, scouts, band, etc	What we do for God

How do we ask for support?

The most common way this has been done in the past is a letter. A letter is still the most effective method, but it is not the only method of raising support. You will find an article attached with great tips when writing a support letter.

But letters aren't the only way... GET CREATIVE!! Face-to-face is one of the best ways to build a support team. You could also use social media as a teaser to get word out. However you would let people know about an incredible restaurant or product that "changed your life"... those are great ways to get the word out. No matter what method you use, the biggest thing is making sure the content is consistent.

Content needs to include:

- Why you are going. (not the church... YOU! That is who they really care about).
- What you will be doing. (They don't need lots of details.)
- Where and when you will be going. (Look at the social media warning about dates!)
- What type of support you are needing (prayer, moral, financial).
- How do they join your support team.
- Deadlines. (If they want to give when does it need to be done by?)

Content should NOT include:

- Fluff! Don't waste their time.
- Impersonal details. Make it about you... you are the one they will be supporting.
- Too formal of speech. Make it read like you are talking to them (with a few less umm, likes, and ahhs).

WARNINGS ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA AS A MEANS OF ASKING FOR SUPPORT.

We want to keep everyone safe on this trip. So if you choose to use social media for support raising that is fine, but please follow these few rules:

- **Do not give out exact trip dates** (you don't want people to know when a house will be empty or where a group of Americans will be at an exact time overseas to target). You can just say "in June" or "late July".
- Include the link for them to give online. It will speed up the process and give them the opportunity to act right then! Gracepointcoppell.org/givetotrips.
- Don't just use social media!! It is great to get the word out, but it not personal, so you cannot expect a personal response.

Think Ahead: Follow Up and Follow Through

When people join your support team, it is not a one time thing. They will be a part of your team through this whole process. So have a plan in place on how you will communicate and follow up with your supporters. THIS IS HUGE if you plan on going on more trips in the future. People are more willing to support you again, if you truly show them they are part of the team and what God is doing through their support.

Before the trip:

- Track your responses using the forms provided
- Thank them when you see them
- Maybe do a countdown so that they can grow with you in anticipation as the trip draws near.
- Let your prayer support know when you are struggling, so they can come alongside of you in that.
- Put together (or send if someone else does it) a prayer guide for while the team is on the trip.

During the trip:

- Get word back to a point of contact to spread the story of what the team is doing. If you have social media, post a thank you to those who are praying for you, rooting for you and gave so that you could serve.
- Some people buy small souvenirs to give their financial supports while on the trip.
- If possible, mail a thank you post-card or letter from the trip.

After the trip:

- Send another support letter, but this time thanking them and letting them know how God used you and the team on this trip.
- Host a dinner or party to tell people about the trip. People will get tired of hearing about it and you will get tired of sharing, so a single event where everyone knows they are going to hear about it saves your energy and their ears.
- Make sure to have a face-to-face with your moral supporters who are not believers.

HOW TO CREATE A GREAT SUPPORT LETTER

from www.youthworks.com/how-to-create-a-great-support-letter/

Mission trip support letters are easy to write **IF** you know what to include. The following are some quick tips on what to put in, what to avoid and how to share your mission trip support letter.

But first, let's make sure you know why you're writing a support letter. When you write a support letter, you're doing way more than just asking for money and prayer – you're inviting someone to *participate* in your trip. While they won't be hopping in the van with you, they *will* be filling the vital role of providing support in your mission trip experience. Keep this in mind as you write and send your support letters.

10 WRITING TIPS

- 1. KEEP IT SHORT.** One page is plenty. Two pages should be your maximum. Quality trumps quantity.
- 2. MAKE IT LOOK GOOD.** First impressions matter. If designing documents isn't your cup of tea, find a friend who can help. Including a picture of you or your team is an easy win.
- 3. PROOFREAD IT.** Errors are fairly noticeable... and often avoidable. Have someone help you by reading your letter for any errors before you hit PRINT.
- 4. BE INTERESTING.** Share about what you are doing, the place you are going and the people you will be with, but don't drag out your letter with tons of minute details.
- 5. MAKE IT PERSONAL.** People want to support *you*! Don't send a generic letter from the team when you can send a personal letter from you. While you might share some details about your team, also include what your hopes, fears and needs are.
- 6. DON'T FORGET THE DETAILS.** Where is the trip? What are the dates? What will you be doing? Is there a send-off service beforehand? How much money are you trying to raise? If they want to donate money, where do they send it and who are checks made out to? A great way to ask for money is to suggest a couple options for dollar amounts (e.g. "I recommend a gift of \$50, \$100 or \$150, but of course, any amount is more than welcome.")

You should also include whether or not donations are tax deductible. Ask your church if gifts qualify. Also, many qualifying organizations recommend that checks have nothing written on the Memo line as it can jeopardize the gift's tax deductible status. If the gift qualifies as tax deductible you might write something like this: "Gifts are tax deductible. You can make checks out to ABC Church, but please do not write anything on the Memo line as this could jeopardize your gift's tax deductible status."

7. DON'T JUST WRITE A "FUNDRAISING LETTER." *Support* is so much more than people's money. At the same time, there is nothing to be ashamed about when offering people the opportunity to be generous. If asking for money is *part* of the support you need, make it secondary to asking for prayer. Even if people can't contribute financially, they can certainly still support you.

8. ASK FOR PRAYER. And be specific when you do. Give them 4 or 5 things they can pray for, for example: the community and ministries you are visiting, your team, your travels, etc. (If you wrote a team covenant, there is probably some great things to pray for in there!)

9. BE HUMBLE AND RESPECTFUL. Don't make the place you're headed seem destitute in an effort to make your trip sound more significant. Remember that Jesus is the hero, not your team. Use language that honors what God is already up to in the place you are headed. Use phrases like, "serve alongside," "partner with" and "learn from."

10. SAY THANK YOU. A great way to end your letter is with gratefulness for the people you are asking to partner with you in this mission trip. Thank them in advance for whatever way they choose to support you.

Sample Support Letter:

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Schulte,

Over the past three years I have had the opportunity to grow so much in my faith through the exciting youth ministry at our church. I have been involved in a Bible study with a group of 8 boys; we have been studying the book of I Timothy. We have been holding each other accountable to studying the Bible on our own and praying for each other. I have also been involved in the church's children's ministry by leading games during the weekly Wednesday night program.

Pastor Gary, our youth pastor, has seen the growth that has happened in me and asked me to come on a **mission trip this summer to the Navajo Indian Reservation**. When he told me about the opportunity this trip will give us to share Christ with the Navajo people through construction and a children's ministry my heart jumped. I have been looking for a way to take my faith share it with those who have not heard the Good News yet.

On our trip we will be doing home renovation as an outreach to the Navajo Indians. Many of the Indians celebrate the religion of their ancestors that praise the gods of nature as the ones who provide for their well being. What an awesome experience it will be to share the news of a living, loving God who wants to see them reconciled with Him forever!

I, along with 12 other students from our youth group, am going to be in Arizona for two weeks doing construction for and evangelizing to this people group.

Would you aid us on our trip by covering our whole team in prayer, as we will need diligence to work hard and courage to share the Gospel with the children?

Would you prayerfully consider sending us out as bearers of the Gospel to the Navajo people by financially supporting us?

I must raise \$1,000 by May 2nd in order to carry the Message to the Navajo people.

Thank you so much for your prayers and support.

In His Love,

Kristin Peterson

PS- Please prayerfully use the enclosed response card and envelope to come alongside myself and our team as we reach out to the Navajo people this June.

THIS SUMMER

Dear Aunt Jean,

Opening statement:

This has been a great school year. I cannot believe I am graduating next year and then going to college!! It seems like I just started high school!

What is God doing in your life right now? How has this led to you wanting to go on this trip?

Sample: A highlight of my year has been attending GracePoint's Student Ministry. On Wednesday Nights we have been learning about the need to share Christ's love with everyone. I realized that I am not doing a very good job of this. I want to do a better this summer.

Details about the trip:

I am so excited about this summer. I have been praying for an opportunity to serve Christ in a new way and get out of my comfort zone. I have the opportunity to go as part of a team with other High Schoolers from my church to Atlanta. The trip is June 14 - 21. There we will be working with Higher Level Baptist Church. They have just moved into a new location and have a huge heart for their community. We will be helping with community outreach through construction projects and afternoon kids programs in a local park.



My Favorite Verse

Recently at a Wednesday Night student meeting we learned Philippians 4:13 "I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength". It just reminded me how weak I actually am when it comes to making a difference in this world. But God is so strong! With Him I can make a difference in this world.

My Favorite Song

I cannot stop listening to "Come As You Are" by Crowder. My favorite lines are "Oh wander come home. You're not too far. Lay down your hurts, lay down your heart. Come as You are"

My Hopes for this Trip

- I hope to be able to pray with someone to receive Christ
- I hope to make a difference in the lives of those we meet
- I hope to make a kid smile
- I hope to come back changed and more in love with Jesus



Please Pray for My Trip to Atlanta

Here are some prayer requests I have about this trip.

- Pray that I can get all my school work done and end the school year well.
- Pray for all the funds to be raised for this trip.
- Pray as I prepare to be used by God in Atlanta. I am nervous not knowing exactly what we'll be doing, but know that God wants me on this trip
- Pray for safe travels.

Thank you. I want to know that you are supporting me by praying for my trip. Would you please fill out and send in the form I included with this letter to let me know you are praying. I will also send you some updates as the trip draws closer and after we return.

Financial Support for My Trip to Atlanta

If you want to support my trip financially, please read, fill out and mail back the card I put in with this letter.

Partnership Possibilities: (include amount & deadlines)

For this trip, I do have a few needs I would like to invite you to join my team as a supporter. First and foremost, we need prayer. I have included a list of prayer requests to the left. It is really important to know that others are praying for us as the team is serving in Atlanta. If you will commit to praying, I want to know. Please fill out the card I included with this letter and mail that back to me in the envelope provided.

Though I am able to work and raise most of the funds, if you would like to give financial to help support this trip, you are welcome to do that. This trip costs \$650 and is due May 15. You can use the same card and return envelope as for prayer, if you'd like to give financially.

Closing Thoughts:

I know that not everyone can go on trips like this one. I am grateful to God that I can go and share Christ's love with others this summer. Please pray about joining my team as supporter of this trip.

I cannot wait to share some details about what God did on and through this trip when I return.

All for God's glory,

SIGNATURE



Potential Supporter Brainstorming

Friends from church (and their parents):

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

- 4. _____
- 5. _____
- 6. _____

Friends from school (and their parents):

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

- 4. _____
- 5. _____
- 6. _____

Friends from other churches (and their parents):

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

- 4. _____
- 5. _____
- 6. _____

Friends of my parents:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

- 4. _____
- 5. _____
- 6. _____

Co-workers of my parents:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

- 4. _____
- 5. _____
- 6. _____

Relatives:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

- 4. _____
- 5. _____
- 6. _____

Out-of-town friends (and their parents):

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

- 4. _____
- 5. _____
- 6. _____

Mentors/teachers who have had an impact on me:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

- 4. _____
- 5. _____
- 6. _____

Business/ministry associates of my parents:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

- 4. _____
- 5. _____
- 6. _____

Potential Supporter Tracking Sheet

#	Name(s)	Address	Phone Number	Letter	Call	Response	Thank-You
1	Toby & Melanie Sachulte	1234 Circle Square, Nowhere TX 12345	(555) 555-0000	X	11/05	Prayer & \$20	X
2							
3							
4							
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THE PEACE PLAN



GracePoint
Church

GracePoint PEACE Trip Financial Agreement

These best practices have been assembled to uphold the unique vision and values of PEACE and to help us be in compliance with IRS guidelines and requirements for charitable donations received as financial support for PEACE trips.

Financial Responsibility of the Traveler

- By agreeing to go on a GracePoint PEACE Trip, you are assuming the responsibility of covering the trip cost provided.
- The cost may be paid by yourself, parents, scholarships (if available) and other supporters donations or any combination of these.
- You agree to have costs in according to the schedule provided for this trip.
- If there is any reason why you cannot pay or raise 100% of the cost of this trip, you agree to inform your trip leader of this before the deadlines.
- If you cannot fully raise support on the timeline provided, you may have to forfeit your spot on the team. (Though this is a last resort and can usually be worked out as long as you are communicating with the trip leader.)
- If you over raise for this trip, you know that those funds will go to help other team members who may be struggling to be fully supported.

Solicitations of Support

- Donors are advised that donations are requested and made with the understanding that GracePoint Church has complete discretion and control over the donated funds.
- Check donations are made payable to “GracePoint Church”, and a specific trip destination can be indicated.
- Check donations should only indicate a trip destination and not the name of a particular individual on the memo line.
- GracePoint Church does not promote privately held fundraisers. Team members must only support raise and are not allowed to fundraise for GracePoint Missions Trips.
- Refunds of donations are made only if a trip is cancelled by GracePoint Church due to unforeseen events (e.g., war or political unrest, etc) – No other refunds will be allowed.

Trip Budgets and Expenses

- Funds in a PEACE trip account are for team and may not be co-mingled with other funds or projects before a trip.
- All funds not used on the designated trip are to be returned to GracePoint Church.
- Excess or non-budgeted funds including personal funds are not to be distributed by a PEACE trip team or team member to local residents or entities in the country visited, and are not to be sent via another church or non-profit 501(c)(3). This includes, but is not limited to, the giving of donations, gifts, love offerings, and stipends.

After the Trip

- The PEACE trip team leader will turn in a completed trip Expense Report, along with all original receipts, within 60 days after returning. PEACE trip expenses can only be reimbursed up to the amount of the approved expense budget and not to exceed the trip account balance.
- PEACE trip funds may not be used to reimburse personal vaccinations, passport, or visa expenses under any circumstances **before a trip**. If funds remain, you may submit a receipt for partial or full refund of those expenses after your return.
- Any funds remaining in a trip account at the completion of a PEACE trip remain under the control of GracePoint Church. A request can be made to reallocate the total remaining funds to one approved project account, or to one other PEACE trip account in the destination region of your trip.
- After completion of the trip, team leaders submit a debriefing report documenting the work that was performed and identifying future opportunities.

I have read, understand, agree with, and will follow all of the best practices listed above along with information received in training.

Team Member Signature _____ Date _____

Printed Name _____ Trip Destination _____

Parent Signature (if under 18) _____

Parent Printed Name _____