

New York Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church

Volunteers in Mission



Manual for Team Leaders

Rev. Joseph Ewoodzie
Conference Mission Coordinator
20 Soundview Ave., White Plains, NY 10606-3302
(914) 615-2233 / jewoodzie@nyac.com

Updated April 2011

INTRODUCTION

This manual is a basic guide for NYAC Volunteers in Mission personnel. Additional information is available at www.nyac.com and other United Methodist Mission Agencies.

What is UMVIM?

A United Methodist Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM) team is one that **serves** locally, notionally, or internationally where it **is invited**; works in a ministry endorsed by the host Methodist church, partner church or agency, or nongovernment organization (NGO); and serves **in cooperation** with the local host group. A Volunteer in Mission (VIM) is an individual volunteering to serve on a UMVIM team.

Within the New York Annual Conference (NYAC) UMVIM teams typically serve in one of two ways: disaster response or non-disaster response. Disaster response teams have tended to serve only on the local or national level. For additional information on disaster response, see the NYAC Disaster Response Manual or contact the NYAC Disaster Response Coordinator, Rev. Tom Vencuss of the Wethersfield UMC.

The Purpose of UMVIM

The UMVIM motto, "**Christian Love in Action**," is taken from 1 John 3:18, in which Christians are asked to love "not in word or speech, but in truth and action." Living our faith is at the very heart of our Christian calling and reflects the purpose that has grown out of our understanding of who we are and what we want to be: those who express "Christian Love in Action."

Conference UMVIM Sites

The NYAC has established numerous VIM sites. The following is a list of the current NYAC approved (non-disaster) mission sites:

Bolivia: The Bolivia Mission Program of the New York Conference of the United Methodist Church is a multi-faceted connection with our brothers and sisters in the vicinity of Cochabamba in central Bolivia. This connection, which was started in 2002, focuses on strengthening:

- Children's programs
- Medical health programs
- Christian education
- Evangelism
- Church and community development and
- Numerous self-help programs.

Chile: The main focus for the Chile mission, which began in 2009, is to work with the United Methodist Church in Chile in helping the Mapuche people with education

opportunities, children ministries, job training in agriculture and training Pastors and church leaders.

Costa Rica: The Costa Rica mission is about strengthening the family of Christ. The Costa Rica mission began in 2004. We connect with children; inspire the youth; fellowship with parents and also do physical construction work. By so doing we hope:

- To build stronger and lasting relationship with children, youth, and families.
- To empower young teens to overcome the struggle against teen pregnancy.
- To help improve education facilities.
- To provide valuable school supplies and resources for school children.
- To help build classrooms and playgrounds

The teams have lodged at St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Siquirres and been involved in a variety of projects serving that congregation, the Methodist Church in a neighboring town, Cairo, as well as local schools. The VIM program has: built and maintained a basketball court for the youth program at St. Mary's, made repairs to the sanctuary and lodgings there, done major improvements to the sanctuary at Cairo Methodist Church, installed playground equipment at three different elementary schools and built an entire classroom for an elementary school.

Ghana: The Ghana mission is about changing lives. We are committed to helping transform the lives of impoverished children, and under-privileged youth, through education. Believing that education is the best tool for alleviating poverty and the effect of poverty on individuals and entire communities, we are providing education facilities and resources in the Awombrew village of Ghana.

Nana Jay Hockenberry believed that with just a little training and with the right tools young people of the village of Awombrew will be able produce pens and key chains using native Ghana wood. The dream became a reality in November 2008 when young people of Awombrew beautifully crafted 20 new pens.

Yipala and its surrounding villages always experience the occurrence of preventable diseases such as cerebro-spinal meningitis, measles, and diarrhea among others. The Northern Region has a much higher diarrhea prevalence rate at 31% compared to the national average of 18%. Most of the children under five years suffer from malnutrition, which has a negative impact in the growth and development process of these children. The incidence of malaria is also high in these villages. With these and many other factors taken in consideration, we have built a clinic hoping to furnish and equip it with medical resources.

Haiti: The New York Annual Conference has had a long history of ministry in Haiti including Rev. Bob and Nancy Osgood who served as resident missionaries from 1994 to 1995. In 2002 a connection with Haiti was re-established. In May of 2004 the Connecticut District formally adopted Haiti as a mission priority and in 2005 it became a Conference priority.

In 2005 a Haiti Task Force was formally established to develop and oversee our Conference's mission in Haiti. In September 2008 the name of the mission was formally changed to Mountains of Hope for Haiti (MHH). MHH is part of the overall mission of the New York Annual Conference and functions under the guidelines of the Volunteers in Mission Ministry of the General Board of Global Ministries.

The main focus of the work of MHH has been in the small village of Furcy, a mountain village southeast of Port-au-Prince. Work in Furcy has included:

- Building and financially supporting a medical clinic
- Providing scholarships for 45 students each year at the Methodist School
- Providing seeds for the local Farmer's Association
- Installing a basketball hoop and soccer goals
- Holding medical clinics
- Financially supporting the school hot lunch program
- Holding Vacation Bible School Programs, Classroom modules and other recreational activities for the children in the village

Mozambique: Volunteer In Mission teams travel to Beira, the capital of Sofala Province, on the Indian Ocean. This ministry began when Bishop Forrest Stith led a delegation in 1994. Each year our teams have included some trained carpenters and other trades people who help teach their trades and skills to the people of Mozambique. Past projects include rebuilding a warehouse roof that was destroyed during the civil war; rebuilding educational, medical, and church facilities; repairing new and old roofs on orphanage dorms; and replacing screens on doors and windows.

Some people help with the construction, although those with computer, medical or technical skills are in great demand also. Library skills, teachers of computer skills, singers, musicians, craftsmen, nurses, housewives, students, pastors – all have had successful VIM experiences. In fact, whatever your walk in life, you will find countless ways to share your time, talent and Christian love with our brothers and sisters in Mozambique. VIM teams have traveled to Niassa province Mozambique, where we helped with a new church building in Lichinga, as well as a new parsonage in Cuamba.

In 2005, we helped to start construction of an Episcopal residence and conference center, needed because of the rapid growth of Methodism in Mozambique. Most

important is the sharing of ourselves with the Mozambicans. Our presence is more highly valued than our presents!

United Methodist Action Reach-out Mission by Youth (UMARMY)—Youth and adult teams combine to experience Christian growth through service to others. Participants combine their strengths to meet home repair and maintenance needs for those unable to pay for the work, or who cannot do the work for themselves. United Methodist churches host the mission camps for one week each summer. Participants eat, sleep, enjoy fun evening programs and worship together each day.

Youth Ambassadors (YAMS)—Typically international mission trips that allow youth to have a mission experience during their high school years.

Preparations are underway to establish new VIM sites in Thailand, Cambodia and Ecuador.

PROCEDURE FOR STARTING A NEW CONFERENCE VIM PROJECT

Individuals, local churches or groups interested in starting a new NYAC VIM Project must follow the following procedure before planning a VIM trip.

1. Concept Proposal
 - a. An individual, group or a local church will present a proposal to the Conference Mission Coordinator. This proposal must include the following:
 - i. Location of Project
 - ii. Contact person(s) coordinating the initiative
 - iii. Purpose for the project
 - iv. Proposed work to be completed if already determined
 - v. Existing contacts/relationships at the location, if any
 - vi. Any other additional, relevant information that can be shared
 - b. The proposal will be presented to the conference VIM Leadership for review and recommendation.
 - c. The Conference Mission Coordinator will act upon the recommendation.

2. Initiating the UMC relationship
 - a. The Conference Mission Coordinator contacts the office of the NEJ UMVIM coordinator for the following official contact information to begin the initial conference relationship:
 - i. The Office of the Bishop of the country
 - ii. The UMVIM mission coordinator (s) for that country, etc.
 - b. The Conference Mission Coordinator contacts GBGM for the following official contact information:
 - i. The missionaries assigned to the country
 - ii. The Advance projects in the country

3. Pre-visit
The Conference Mission Coordinator and VIM team leader(s) visit the country for initial project assessment.
4. Final Report and Response
If the project is accepted, the report from the project assessment will indicate the following:
 - a. Project Name
 - b. Project Location
 - c. Project Host
 - d. Project will benefit
 - e. Project cost
 - f. First scheduled VIM trip
 - g. Trip leader(s) for first trip
 - h. First VIM trip cost per person

If the project is not accepted, the report will indicate the reasons why.

5. Registration of the VIM site
The Conference Mission Coordinator is responsible for registering the new VIM site with NYAC conference treasurer and CMVT for official recognition. In addition, the VIM site should be registered with the NEJ of the GBGM.

PUTTING TOGETHER A VIM TEAM

There are a number of positions that are essential to a successful and effective VIM Team. They may be adjusted or combined according to the particular needs and numbers of a team and the identified project.

Team Leader

The Team Leader(s) (TL) has overall responsibility for the organization, oversight, and well being of the entire team and trip, and the development of the project. The TL is a major factor in the effectiveness and success of the mission.

It is up to the Team Leader to identify as many of the other team positions as may be needed and to develop a "leadership team" within the overall VIM team. The specific details of the duties of the TL are developed below. It is important that all team members in leadership positions work together, as there is a great deal of overlap in coordination and job responsibility.

Pre-requisites for Leading a UMVIM Team

It is imperative that the team leader have prior experience as a team member or co-leader. In addition to the prior UMVIM experience, the team leader must possess basic qualities such as:

- Commitment to Christ and the mission of UMVIM
- Maturity and patience
- Travel knowledge
- Flexibility
- Sense of humor

The team leader must have attended UMVIM leader training and be endorsed by the Conference.

Team Leader Responsibilities

Where do you want to go? Individuals interested in leading a VIM team can select a project from either the existing Conference VIM Sites, the NEJ Project Site or may present a new mission project proposal to the Conference Mission Coordinator (as outlined above). Most often, individuals will lead teams to locations that he/she has traveled to before. This is extremely beneficial for first time team leaders. Team projects and dates should be chosen and developed in consultation with the NYAC Mission Coordinator and the in-country contacts.

Publicity: When a site/project is selected, the team leader, in collaboration with the Conference Mission Office, will produce a flyer that includes the following information:

- Profile of the country
- Description of the mission
- Goals of the projects
- Trip information

News Release: The team leader is responsible for preparing a special news release for publication. This should be sent to the Mission Office. Venues for publicity of the news release will include: the Conference website (www.nyac.com), the Conference Vision Newspaper, the Conference e-newsletter and the District Offices email distribution list. In addition, team leaders may contact the local media for coverage before and/or after the trip. Typical media information includes where the team is going and why, what will take place on the trip, and what is needed for the trip (pre-trip communication).

Recruiting Team Members

The team leader must actively participate in a conference wide recruitment process and must be involved in VIM presentations at local churches and the district level. Team size will vary from location to location, but it is imperative that team leaders be aware of what number is manageable for the location. A typical international team

size is 8-12. Team Leaders may consider interviewing prospective team members before accepting them onto the team. Occasionally people think they want to go on a mission trip but they may not be able to meet the physical needs of the trip or the trip may not be what they are looking for; an interview can answer questions for both the team leader and the interested person. Once the team is put together, the TL must determine which of the following positions should be considered for other team members. TL's should always try to mentor potential future team leaders by giving them responsibilities on the trip that would teach them more about the role of a TL.

Assistant Team Leader: The ATL is responsible for assisting the Team Leader with the preparatory work prior to the trip and with oversight and decision-making during the trip. The ATL will assume responsibility for the team in the absence of the Team Leader.

Project Coordinator: This person or persons will work alongside the Team Leader and Assistant Team Leader to develop a plan for the project decided upon. There may be multiple coordinators depending upon the particular mission of the group. For example, a team may be working on renovations to a school and doing a Vacation Bible School Program and Clinic Day all in the same week, perhaps all at the same time. Different persons may be designated to coordinate and oversee these various programs. It is essential that all team members have a place within the projects and feel comfortable in those roles. Project Coordinators are responsible for seeing that all necessary tools, equipment, supplies, and other needs are secured and available to team members.

It is important that the scope of a project be defined early on. If the project will require building materials, it may be necessary that the team to do prior fund raising specifically for a project. It may also be necessary for materials to either be purchased and brought in with the team or purchased in country prior to the team's arrival. Team Leaders might consider assigning one or two team members to be the fundraiser coordinators for the trip.

Safety Persons: There are two dimensions to this role, and it is recommended that two different persons fill them. One is a **Medical Safety Person** whose responsibility will be to take care of the first aid kit and keep an eye on team members for possible medical emergencies, such as dehydration, heat exhaustion and other physical or even emotional needs. It is recommended that this position be held by a person with a medical or emergency services background (doctor, nurse, EMT, fireperson, or at least someone who has Standard First Aid and CPR training).

A second **Safety Person** should be available as the "eyes and ears" of the group—keeping an eye out for situations that may become uncomfortable or dangerous. This person should be in close contact with the Team Leader or ATL and the Interpreters especially when in crowded areas or cities.

Forms Person: This person will be responsible for keeping track of the many forms that are needed and required to be part of any VIM team. They will carry the original set with them on the trip and arrange for a copy to be left at the local church of departure or at the NYAC Center.

Forms may be obtained through the NYAC Mission office or on-line through the NYAC web site: www.nyac.com. Each team member **must** complete the following:

- VIM Application Form
- UMVIM NEJ Insurance Application Form (must be submitted to TL at least one month before departure)
- Medical Information Physician Form
- Medical Liability and Release Form
- Emergency Contact Form
- Mission Policy Agreement
- Notification of Death Form
- Copy of Passport

IMPORTANT: UMVIM NEJ Accident Insurance Application forms must be submitted at least three weeks prior to leaving. It is imperative that a priority be given to this form.

Treasurer/Finance Person: This person is responsible for handling all finances for the team. This person will keep a record of trip fees sent in by participants and will be responsible for holding the funds and keeping track of all monies spent. A receipt must back up all expenditures. A full written accounting of all expenditures should be submitted to the Team Leader at the completion of the trip.

Chaplain: The Chaplain is responsible for coordinating a short prayer and devotional time each morning and an evening service at the end of each day. This time of gathering is important for team members. There are several approaches to take, one is to have one or two people responsible for this for the whole trip, and another is to have a sign up sheet so that each team member can have an opportunity to lead a time of devotion.

The Chaplain is also responsible for keeping an eye out for the overall spiritual and emotional well-being of the group, being available to team members and local persons if needs arise, and reporting any concerns to the Team Leader.

Team Debrief: This position can be combined with that of the Chaplain but it is recommended that the Debrief be someone with prior experience in this area if possible. It is very important to allow team members a time of reflection to discuss the events of the day or week and to share their feelings and emotions. It is also important that the team address the process of re-entry to their home environment.

Team Journal Writer: It is suggested that each team keep a journal of the happenings on the trip. This journal can also be used to create the team report at the end of the trip. One person should be responsible for purchasing and bringing the book itself. One suggestion is to have team members sign up to write in the journal on different days. Another suggestion is to just continually circulate it among the team members for various entries starting with the first night. As a suggestion, at the end of the trip, each member can note his or her most memorable and most humorous situation/memory, which will create a nice epilogue.

Team Photographer: While many on the team will take photos throughout the trip, it is recommended that one person be designated as the team photographer. This person should try to get photos of each worksite throughout the work process as well as a team photo at some point.

Other Preparations for the Trip

T-Shirts: It is important at times that persons be able to be identified as part of a UMVIM team. A person should be assigned the responsibility of collecting t-shirt sizes and the number desired. The team fee should include the cost of one shirt—additional will be at the expense of the team member. T-shirts can be purchased from various places but we ask that teams may not use sweat shops.

Other team positions may be added or adjusted as needed for a particular UMVIM team.

DEVELOPING A VIM TRIP

It is essential that VIM trips be developed, and work begun, as soon as possible—give yourself a full year to develop the team, especially if you have not led a team before and if special fundraising needs to be done for a particular project. The following list is not necessarily a sequential order of tasks—some of the details may need to be worked out in tandem and will be dependent upon each other. For example, your trip may be contingent upon the availability and cost of air flights, the availability of the Guest Houses, and local calendars (i.e. U.S. school vacations, in-country events, etc.). .

Project and Dates: Team projects and dates should be chosen and developed in consultation with the NYAC Mission Coordinator and the in-country contacts. This is to ensure a coordinated effort on the part of all work. You may choose a project and then seek personnel (teaching, medical, etc.) or develop a particular project as people sign up. It is highly recommended that a project focus and location be identified and advertised before enlistment occurs. A team-size should also be determined. Depending on where the team will be staying, team sizes may need to be limited. Smaller teams, or specific skill teams, may also be considered depending

upon need. In some cases, a minimum team size (10) may be required for booking airfares through mission travel agencies.

Trip Cost: Determining a cost for a trip is one of the most important details in putting together a VIM trip. There are various things to consider when developing the budget for a VIM trip. Major budget items include, but are not limited to:

- Airfare
- Travel in country
- GBGM VIM Insurance fee (75¢ per day/per person)
- Airport fees: carts, handling fees, possible Customs "tips"
- Accommodation Costs
- Interpreter or Cook Fees
- Project Cost
- Tips
- Miscellaneous (and there is always a "miscellaneous")
- Extra "just in case" cash

It is important to determine a fee schedule prior to advertising the trip and informing team members of this fee schedule when they join the team! A suggested fee schedule is as follows:

Deposit to accompany VIM Application—due at least 4 months prior
Three months out: one half payment
Two months out: full payment due

It is essential that all participants respect the fee schedule.

Team Members: Non-Methodist (and even non-Christian) persons are welcome to be part of VIM Teams but all persons must be informed that this is a Christian organization and we travel under the auspices of the United Methodist Church. All team members will be expected to participate in all activities or programs unless particular arrangements or understandings are made with the Team Leader.

A parent or guardian must accompany all persons under 18. Youth must have completed ninth grade to be on a UMVIM trip.

Flights: Once dates have been confirmed check on air flights. These should be made as soon as possible. Determine who on the team will make the arrangements.

There are several considerations:

1. Point of departure—from which airport will you be leaving?
2. How will you get your team to the airport? When? Will there be an additional cost for travel to and from the airport?

3. Do you have enough space for personal and team luggage to the airport?
This is a very important factor in making arrangements to the airport.

There are several mission travel companies available to use for flight arrangement. Mission travel companies give the flexibility of adding/subtracting numbers and names without penalty—up to a certain point; however, their fees may be a bit higher. Local travel agencies may be able to book flights at lower rates but may usually require immediate booking and payment. Search the website for competitive fares and inform the mission office to make reservations and payments. Home land security require official ID name and date of birth for booking airline tickets

Itinerary: There are many questions that must be addressed as you plan your itinerary. For example:

- Where will you be staying? For how long?
- Will you be traveling to another site? For how long?
- What will your team travel needs be: vehicles, supplies, translators, drivers, cooks, etc. And, for how long?
- Will there be additional in-country flights?
- Are there baggage fees associated with the airline you are using?

There are specific fees associated with each of the above, which must be considered as you make your plans and develop your budget.

Supplies: Typically UMVIM teams collect supplies to bring on the trip. In determining what type of supplies to collect, you should consider the type of mission project you will be doing. For example, if you are spending most of your time in an orphanage or school you may want supplies specifically for those needs. A list of needs should be developed and sent out to local churches and other organizations. Please be as specific as possible with your needs. If you are taking medical supplies, here are some helpful suggestions:

1. Carry a letter from the in-country mission personnel or health officials requesting medical supplies.
2. Carry a letter from your organization stating that the goods are all donated, will not be sold, and are for medical care of the poor.
3. Packing and handling of medication:
 - a. Do not take expired medicine. Some countries require a six month expiration date.
 - b. Pack medications separately from personal items.
 - c. Carry a detailed list with expiration dates.
 - d. Only travelers licensed to have prescription medication should carry these products through customs.

Questions to consider: How will supplies be collected and received? A reception date should be established. When will they be packed? Will individuals or churches be bringing their own supply suitcases? Do you have enough suitcases?

Packing: A “packing day” is recommended at least one week (preferably two weeks) prior to leaving.

Customs: If you are going to another country, ask the advice of the local contact person in your destination country about getting through customs. Bring two copies of a list of the contents and value of each box or suitcase. Mail (well in advance) a third copy of the list to the host coordinator. You might also consider bringing two copies of a notarized letter from a high official in your church or annual conference (Bishop, Conference Treasurer, Conference Mission Coordinator) on letterhead stating that you will donate the items and not sell them. Such documentation often enables a team to pass through customs with only a cursory glance through personal luggage.

Team Meetings

It is important that several team meetings be held prior to the trip for informational purposes, for determining tasks, and for teambuilding. A first “informational meeting” may be needed to raise interest or answer basic questions.

Team meetings also provide the opportunity to:

- Collect documents and payments from team members
- Delegate team responsibilities and assignments
- Discuss the “what to bring” items with team members
- Verify all arrangements
- Involve sending/sponsoring congregations in the mission
- Finalize travel plans

Team Leaders should focus on Building a Christian Community among the Team Members. Team Leaders should stress the following:

- The purpose of UMVIM
- Unity in accomplishing the task
- Thinking of the team before thinking of yourself
- Serving Christ and God’s people
- Loving each other with the love of Christ, and showing it
- Accepting one another—even in our differences

Safe Sanctuaries—Youth trips must include a review of the safe sanctuaries policies and procedures and a background check for all adults traveling on the trip.

Cultural Sensitivity Training: One of the team orientation sessions should focus on cultural sensitivity. The Conference Mission Coordinator is available to give a presentation on cultural sensitivity. This session helps prepare the team to encounter a culture different from their own.

It is important for team members to know, and be reminded, that they are part of a team. There can be no private itineraries on a UMVIM team. Promptness, patience and understanding are as essential as any other skills. There are many resources available for "teambuilding" activities and Team Leaders are free to use them. A review of the "Ten Commandments for UMVIM Teams" is also helpful and allows for open discussion, the sharing of ideas, experiences, and group building.

It is important that Team Leaders keep team members informed of all arrangements and changes. Periodic notes help build a sense of trust, community, excitement and expectation.

Insurance Forms and Payments: Our insurance is through the United Methodist Volunteers in Mission Northeast Jurisdiction. Insurance forms must be submitted to the team leader at least 4 weeks prior to departure to. Team leaders must submit these forms to UMVIM NEJ at the following address at least 3 weeks prior to the trip.

UMVIM NEJ
32 N. Church Street
Cortland, NY 13045
607-756-7799

All forms should be submitted together (rather than staggered) with complete payment.

The accompanying letter should include:

- Team Leader Name, Address, Telephone and E-mail
- Destination of VIM team
- Names and number of persons on trip and complete coverage dates.

If persons are arriving or leaving at different times they must be identified specifically. For example:

January 1 through January 10:
Abraham
Isaac
Jacob

January 2 through January 9:
Matthew

Mark

A letter of “acceptance” and an “insurance claim number” will be received by the Team Leader and should be carried with the team at all times.

Ids: It is important for Team Leaders to communicate with the team if they are required to have a Passport and Visa, or any other documentation, for the trip planned.

Immunizations or Medications: Depending on where a team is traveling, there may be immunizations or medications required. Team members should always check with their physician before traveling. Some immunizations, and travel to certain countries, may result in a person not being able to donate blood for a certain amount of time.

- **Immunizations**—check with your local health department or the CDC website at: www.cdc.gov/travel/index

Basic immunizations are as follows:

- (1) Diphtheria/tetanus (DT) booster within the last 10 years.
 - (2) A polio booster (only once in adult life).
 - (3) Measles immunity—by vaccine or by having had the disease.
 - (4) Some countries require yellow fever vaccine (every 10 years).
 - (5) Vaccination is recommended for both Hepatitis A and B.
 - (6) Typhoid vaccine may be recommended for some countries.
 - (7) Cholera vaccine does not protect you and can cause a reaction.
- **Prophylaxis**—the only clear indication for prophylaxis is for malaria. Malaria is a very serious disease, and it can be fatal. Travelers are often advised to take prophylactic antibiotics to prevent traveler’s diarrhea. However, this may cause resistant organisms to develop in your body.

Conflict Management: Team Leaders and Chaplains should make a special effort to tune in to any conflicts that may develop within the team. Apply the spiritual principle and wisdom stated in Matthew 18:15-17.

“If a fellow believer hurts you, go and tell him—work it out between the two of you. If he listens, you’ve made a friend. If he won’t listen, take one or two others along so that the presence of witnesses will keep things honest, and try again. If he still won’t listen, tell the church. If he won’t listen to the church, you’ll have to start over from scratch, confront him with the need for repentance, and offer again God’s forgiving love.”

Staying Healthy: Team Leaders and the Medical Safety Person should make a special effort to care for the health and well-being of team members. Some factors that may affect the health of team members while volunteering are:

- Exposure to disease
- Exposure to high temperature
- Difference in water requirements
- Difference in type of physical work
- Psychological and emotional stress

Daily Routine: While it is understood that each VIM trip will be different and each day will be different, it is helpful to stress the importance of flexibility from team members. It is also important that each day time is set aside for the following:

- Daily Devotional
- Daily Debriefing
- Prayer Time
- Review of schedule/agenda for the next day

Homecoming: The same importance given to team preparation before the trip must be given to team preparation before returning home. A time should be set aside for a final team reflection and devotion before returning home to families and work. Below are some suggested issues for discussion with the team:

- Elations and mountaintop experiences
- Depression and drastic adrenaline
- Guilt
- Denial
- Rejection and acceptance
- Evaluation
- Team Reunion
- Plan for follow-up
- Telling the story

Upon Your Return: After returning home from the trip, Team Leaders, or another designated person, must submit a written report to the NYAC Mission Coordinator. This report must include the following:

- A spreadsheet of contact info for all team members (including name, address, phone, email address)
- Description of the work accomplished
- Stories and photos for the website
- Concerns that need to be addressed
- Challenges that were overcome

- New learning experiences to be shared with other team leaders

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF A VIM TEAM MEMBER

1. Remember that team members are servants of Jesus Christ, called to be in ministry with the team, missionaries and host country. **Thou shalt lift up God in all that you do.** Radiate his love by actions, attitude and words. You are here at the call of God. Remember that on any given day you may be the only expression of Christ that another may see.
2. Expect things to be radically different from home. **Thou shalt prepare for less comfort, a different diet and different way of doing things.** Think team—not self. Plan to participate in and cooperate with all team activities. Be willing to step out of your comfort zone. Volunteer for, and accept, assignments for team duties. Recognize that your attitude and behavior are crucial to the effectiveness of the team’s mission.
3. **Thou shalt respect the leadership of the Team, the Mission House, and the local people.** Remember that some decisions will need to be made by others for the group.
4. **Thou shalt understand that cultures are different, not superior or inferior.** The people we are visiting have a lot to teach us about life and faith. Respect their religious faith. The expressions of faith may be different from those of team members. Be supportive of the ministry that is going on in the area where the team is serving.
5. **Thou shalt look forward to meeting people and experiencing a unique Christian fellowship.** Get to know the people on your mission team, your work group and at your mission site. Take time to engage local people even if you don’t know the language. Participate in worship as you are able. Volunteers come away with much more than they thought.
6. **Thou shalt look forward to the experience of a lifetime.** Expect to learn new skills and ways of doing things and looking at life.
7. **Expect to lose any romantic illusions you may have about mission teams or the country.**
8. **Thou shalt not WORRY ABOUT TIME.** Most of the people won’t own a watch. Be flexible, patient and relaxed.
9. **Thou shalt refrain from negativism and complaining when unexpected and undesired circumstances occur in travel and ministry.** Remember that relationships with people are more important than work results. Serve Christ

and his people so that both the purpose and the task of the mission will be accomplished.

10. **THOU SHALT NOT MAKE PROMISES that you cannot keep.** People will hold you to your word. Do not give gifts, especially to children, unless you can give to all equally. If someone asks for help, refer them to the local pastor, missionary or team leader. Do not give money to individuals. There is a great temptation to respond to the needs of people but the things we do can have long-term effects after we leave.

And, "Rejoice in the Lord Always." Find God in the people, places and tasks you do. Be thankful for the diversity of God's people.