

DISCERN DISCOVER *the best team for your short term trip* DISCIPLE

Thank you for stepping into the challenge and joy of leading teens on a short-term trip. These experiences have the potential to shape hearts for a lifetime, and we believe in the impact of the work you're doing!

Our Global Missions Toolbox team is here to support you as you build your team and discern which students may be ready for this next step in their faith. We know these are meaningful—and sometimes difficult—decisions, but you don't have to make them alone.

The first step we encourage you to take is to form a discernment team. Invite a handful of people from your church leadership, youth team, parents, and/or adults joining you on the trip as you pray and plan together.



This resource was created as a companion to Episode 232 of the Global Missions Podcast. If you haven't listened to *'Developing Vision for Short-Term Trips with Teens'* yet, we highly recommend it.

“

We strive to send our youth... so they can form a heart for the nations.

”

STEP 2: BUILDING AN APPLICATION PROCESS

As we're sure you know, there's no “one-size-fits-all” approach in ministry. You know your teens and your discernment team best. You might find that one of these options fits your team perfectly—but we suspect that a blend will give you the clarity and confidence you need as you move forward.

Wherever you land, we want to caution you—resist the temptation to reduce this decision to a question of efficiency. We invite you to first choose what will provide the greatest opportunities to go deeper with your teens, and *then* determine how to streamline the process for your team.



DISCERN DISCOVER DISCIPLE

the best team for your short term trip

STEP 2: BUILDING AN APPLICATION PROCESS

Written Applications

Pros:

- Best for teens who need time to process and think through answers
- Easy to review later
- Less time/scheduling intensive

Cons:

- You may miss some of the nuance or emotion in written answers
- Less relational
- Will likely still require some level of personal follow up

In-Person Interviews

Pros:

- Relational, builds team connection early
- Allows for immediate follow up
- Tests emotional readiness for deep thinking and hard conversations

Cons:

- Harder to document
- More time-consuming
- Students may feel nervous or unable to represent themselves well

Audio/Video Submission

Pros:

- Flexible scheduling
- Still allows a review of communication skills/emotional readiness
- Great for verbal processors, allows personality and emotion to shine

Cons:

- May require more technical support
- Similar to live interviews, these can be harder to document or refer back to
- Can be hard to discern the authenticity of an answer



DISCERN DISCOVER DISCIPLE

the best team for your short term trip

STEP 3: CREATING YOUR APPLICATION

Below are questions you can choose from to craft your application. We hope this will be a helpful starting place for you, but we believe the more you tailor your application questions to the unique context of your trip, the better you will be able to discern who will be the best fit. Regardless of how your application comes together, we strongly recommend including this question:

‘Why do you want to go on this trip?’

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER INCLUDING

Establishing a Baseline

1. Have you ever travelled internationally before?
 - a. If yes, what are some things you enjoyed and what is something you learned?
 - b. If no, what’s something you’re looking forward to about being in another culture?
2. Have you been away from your family before?
3. How do you feel about spending time away from your family during the trip?

Determining Spiritual Readiness

1. If you were going to share your testimony with someone in two minutes or less, what would you say?
2. How would you describe your relationship with Jesus right now?
3. Please share a Bible verse or passage with us that you love and explain what it means to you.
4. Is there someone in your life whose faith stands out to you? What do you see in them that you would like to grow in?
5. What’s something God has been teaching you lately?



DISCERN DISCOVER *the best team for your short term trip* DISCIPLE

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER INCLUDING (CONTINUED)

Building Your Team

1. What's something you're good at that you think could help the team?
2. What's something you're still growing in that might be hard for you on a trip like this?
3. Is there anything about this trip that makes you feel nervous? If so, what is it?
4. What kinds of situations or activities make you feel confident and excited to jump in and get involved?
5. What kind of situations tend to stress you out—and how do you usually handle them?
6. Can you give us an example of a time when you and someone else didn't see eye to eye? How did you work through it?

STEP 4: VISION CASTING WITH PARENTS

Way to go! You've gathered a discernment team, spent time in prayer, chosen a system, and selected thoughtful questions. You may even be juggling other trip logistics in the background to help get your trip off the ground!

As you take this next step, we want to encourage you to pause. Now that you have the application ready and some details in place, hold off on sending it out to students just yet. Before making any announcements, we recommend reaching out to parents first. Depending on the size of your ministry, this could be a parent meeting, a few intentional phone calls, or even a one-on-one coffee. Whatever the format, starting with parents makes all the difference.

Casting vision for this trip with parents isn't just a step in your process—it's a foundation. When we disciple teens, we're also coming alongside their families to partner in how God is growing their teens. Inviting parents into the purpose and prayer behind the trip builds unity, trust, and momentum. Engaging the family early helps move your plan from idea to action and it lays the groundwork for spiritual growth that continues at home, long after your team returns from your trip.



DISCERN DISCOVER *the best team for your short term trip* DISCIPLE

STEP 5: DISCOVER YOUR TEAM!

As your discernment team invites your teens to apply, don't forget the single most important part of this process: prayer! Ask God for clarity and unity as your team begins to consider applications. One leader may notice spiritual depth, while another sees relational readiness, or even some concern. Discernment is richer in community. Trust the process of seeking God together, and leave lots of space for honest conversation. You're not just selecting a team—you're shaping the culture of the trip before it begins.

As your team begins to take shape, don't be afraid to celebrate! A little fanfare goes a long way. Whether it's an announcement, a small gathering, or a surprise reveal moment, let your students feel the excitement of being part of something Kingdom-sized. It builds anticipation and reinforces that this isn't just a trip, it's a step of faith! This is the start of a meaningful journey, both for them and for the people they'll serve.

A NOTE ON MAKING THE HARD CALL

Not every teen will be ready for an international short-term trip—and that's okay. While it may be hard to say "no" to a student, your courage and discernment can be a blessing. The student, your team, and the people you'll be serving will all be impacted by your willingness to make prayerful, faithful decisions—even when they're difficult.

Here are a few recommendations for navigating those conversations well:

1. Involve the parents. Let them know your decision as soon as possible so that they can partner with you in lovingly communicating with their teen.
2. Remember that saying "not yet," is always an option. It could be that this teen just has a little more growing to do before they're ready.
3. Help them make a plan for how they could prepare for next year's trip. Can you meet with them biweekly to mentor them? Maybe they could serve in the children's ministry, or work through a Bible reading plan with one of your youth leaders.

A well-discerned no can plant seeds for future growth—especially when it's wrapped in care and focused on where God might lead next.



DISCERN DISCOVER *the best team for your short term trip* DISCIPLE

Thanks for letting us be part of your journey to the mission field. Leading a short-term trip for teens isn't easy, but it's worth it—and we believe your intentional investment will bear fruit in the lives of your students.

As Paul reminds us in Romans 11:36, “From him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.” Every detail of this trip, every team member, and every discipleship opportunity that may present itself belongs to the Lord. And we add our prayers to yours that every aspect of your trip—from applications to airport gates—will bring Him glory.

The Global Missions Toolbox Team



Our Global Missions Toolbox team offers **Missions Coaching**—a one-on-one opportunity to connect with an experienced coach who can help guide and encourage you as you plan and lead. Reach out to us at info@globalmissionstoolbox.com to get started today!



Looking for more support as you plan your short-term trip? The GoJournal is a practical tool designed to walk with your team before, during, and after the trip—helping students reflect, grow, and stay grounded in what God is doing. A companion Leader Guide and Mentor Guide are also available to help you lead with purpose and clarity. **Learn more at gojournal.org.**



This resource was created as a companion to Episode 232 of the Global Missions Podcast. If you haven't listened to “Developing Vision for Short-Term Trips with Teens” yet, we highly recommend it! Find us at globalmissionstoolbox.com/podcast, or wherever you listen to podcasts.

