GROUP TRAVEL GUIDE

GROUP LEADER STARTER GUIDE

First steps for bringing your people together

For church groups, clubs, hobby groups, friends, and communities planning a trip together.



www.suesmithvacations.com

Sue Smith Vacations
Your Travel Professionals

01 / THE IDEA

Start here

Most group trips begin with someone saying, "We should all go together." If you're the person ready to turn that idea into a real trip, this guide gives you a practical place to start.

You don't need a destination, a final head count, or a finished itinerary before you talk with Kathy Primm at Sue Smith Vacations. Start with your people, the reason you want to travel together, and a rough sense of timing and budget. We'll help you shape the rest.

Three conversations to have first

01 What do we want to share?

Ask why people want to take this trip together. Worship and reflection, a club's shared passion, a milestone celebration, or simply time away with friends can each lead to a very different trip. Name the experience you most want to protect.

02 Who could seriously consider it?

Estimate how many people might come, and talk about a possible season and trip length. Keep "interested" separate from "ready to book." An honest estimate is enough to start.

03 What would make it workable?

Ask about budget, room preferences, daily pace, and anything that could affect whether someone can come. Give people a private way to answer. Someone may have a concern they'd never raise in a busy group chat.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE
Explore the trip and your role • Send an interest check • Fill in your group brief • Prepare for your first conversation

02 / BUILDING THE RIGHT TRIP

Choose a trip your group will enjoy

Agree on a budget before comparing favorites

Ask each person privately for a comfortable range. Be clear whether you're talking per person or per room, and whether flights are included. A private budget question can keep the group from falling in love with a trip that several people quietly can't afford.

When you compare options, think about the whole trip: the main trip, flights, transfers, any extra hotel nights, meals that aren't included, optional excursions, taxes and fees, gratuities, and travel protection. Some of these may already be included. Your advisor can show you exactly what a proposal covers so nothing gets counted twice or left out.

Match the kind of trip to your priorities

If your group wants	A direction to explore	Ask before choosing
Time together with flexible days	A resort or hotel home base	Can people gather easily and still choose their own activities?
A home base with lots of choices	A cruise	Does the ship and itinerary fit your cabin needs, interests, and arrival plans?
Time exploring a region	A guided or custom land trip	How many hotel changes and how much walking are involved?
A journey built around faith	A pilgrimage	Which visits matter most, and how will worship, reflection, and rest fit?
A shared hobby or interest	A special-interest trip	Is the trip built around the activity, or is it just added on?

These are starting points. Our team will help you compare the actual days and details.

Make room for differences

Choose a few experiences everyone will share, and decide where free time on your own would be welcome. Ask about walking comfort, stairs, and rest instead of guessing what someone can or wants to do.

Count rooms, not just travelers. Who wants a private room? Who's happy to share? Which bed setups matter? Anyone with accessibility or dietary needs should share them privately with your advisor.

A GREAT FIRST QUESTION
“What would make this trip worth taking for you?”

03 / LEADERSHIP & LOGISTICS

Know what your role involves

A group leader keeps the people and the plan connected. Before anyone books, agree on who makes decisions, who answers booking questions, and what's included. Here's a simple way to divide the work.

Planning task	Who handles it
Share the trip idea and gather interest	You, or another group representative
Approve the trip direction and priorities	You, or a small decision team
Explain the proposal, booking terms, and payments	Your Sue Smith Vacations advisor
Provide personal details and complete bookings	Each traveler, through the booking process
Escort or guide the group, if included	Whoever is named in the proposal
Share reminders and trip updates	You or your advisor, as agreed

Keep one official trip summary

Give everyone one reliable place to find the dates, what's included, booking instructions, and contact information. Date it and update it when anything changes. A group chat is great for excitement, but important details shouldn't depend on scrolling back through old messages.

Send booking questions to the right person

You can simply say, "Please send that question to our travel advisor so you get the right answer for your booking." It's better than guessing about room changes, payment dates, or exceptions.

Before you invite anyone to book

- Ask your advisor what services are included and what you'll be expected to handle.
- Confirm who, if anyone, will travel with the group and what support is included during the trip. Planning a trip doesn't automatically mean an advisor will escort it.
- Don't build your invitation around a promise of savings or perks. Wait until the terms are confirmed in writing.
- Have travelers send payments and personal information through the booking process. Keep passport details, payment information, and private needs out of group messages.

04 / THE INTEREST CHECK

Find out who's interested

An interest check tells you whether the idea is realistic. Share a possible season, trip length, purpose, and budget range, and be clear that you're exploring an idea, not taking bookings.

A message you can copy and send

Hi everyone! We're thinking about a group trip for [group name] in [month or season]. The idea is to spend about [number] nights [what you'd do or share together].
Before we go any further, I'd love to know who could seriously consider it. We're thinking about a budget of around [range] per [person or room], [including or not including] flights. That's just a starting range, not a final price.
Could you reply to me privately by [date] and let me know how many people would come with you, whether the timing and budget could work, and what you'd most want to do on the trip? It's completely fine to say you're not sure, or that it doesn't work for you right now.
We'll be talking with Kathy Primm at Sue Smith Vacations about options. Saying you're interested doesn't hold a spot or require any payment. Once we have a proposal, everyone can look at the details before deciding.

No budget range yet? Replace the budget sentence with: "Could you tell me privately what budget would feel comfortable for you, and whether that needs to include flights?"

Use the answers to decide what's next

Write down how many people are likely, how flexible the dates are, what budget feels comfortable, and what people care about most. Don't count every excited comment as a commitment.

If dates are the problem, compare seasons. If cost is the concern, look at a different length or kind of trip. If people want very different trips, go back to why you're traveling together before collecting more destination ideas.

When to start

Many groups start planning 12 to 18 months ahead. Pilgrimages, international trips, popular cruise dates, and larger groups may need more time. The earlier your group agrees on why, who, and when, the more choices you'll have.

Interest check › Planning conversation › Proposal › Review the terms › Book

05 / FILL THIS IN

Your group trip brief

Fill in what you know. "Not sure yet" is a perfectly good answer. Print this page or type your answers into an email to Kathy, and bring it to your first planning conversation.

Group leader name and best way to reach you

Your group, and why you want to travel together

About how many travelers

Preferred month or season, and about how many nights

Destination ideas, or the experiences you most want to share

Comfortable budget range, and whether it's per person or per room

Flights included in that range? Yes / No / Not sure Likely departure cities: _____

About how many rooms, and any preferences for sharing or beds

Preferred pace, and the balance of group time and free time

Dates or events the trip needs to work around

Who can approve the trip direction, and what's still undecided

Please share accessibility, dietary, or other private needs directly with your advisor. This brief doesn't need passport details, dates of birth, payment information, or medical information.

06 / READY TO TALK

Your first conversation checklist

You don't need every box checked before you reach out. Anything unchecked is a great question for your first call.

☐ We can explain why this group wants to travel together.

☐ We have a realistic estimate of how many people are interested.

☐ We've talked about a possible season, trip length, and how flexible the dates are.

☐ We have a budget starting point and know whether it includes flights.

☐ We know roughly how many rooms we need and any preferences to discuss privately.

☐ We know who can help choose the direction of the trip.

☐ We understand that being interested is different from booking.

Questions to ask on your first call

- Which kinds of trips fit our people and priorities?
- What information do you need from us next?
- Which decisions should we make first?
- What would my role be before and during the trip?
- When we have a proposal: What's included, what's extra, which requests are confirmed, and what happens if our numbers change?

07 / NEXT STEPS

Start the conversation



Kathy Primm | Manager, Sue Smith Vacations

Start with Kathy Primm, Manager at Sue Smith Vacations. She'll talk through your idea, then match your group with the right advisor on our team to plan it. Kathy brings decades of travel experience, including organizing and escorting faith-based groups. Bring your idea and your trip brief. A possible season and a rough group size are enough to start, even if you haven't picked a destination.

PHONE 501-771-0987
EMAIL kathy@suesmithvacations.com
WEBSITE www.suesmithvacations.com

Your next step

Email subject line: Group trip idea for [your group name]

Attach your trip brief, or tell us who you hope to bring together and what you want to share. That is enough to start.