



Introduction & Guide to the Preparation Materials

Partners in Ministry

We are so excited to partner with you and your group! Promoting growth and serving others is at the heart of who we are at AdventureServe. Our mission is to come alongside you and your leadership team to provide a real, relevant, challenging, life-changing, thought-provoking, and truly outstanding mission experience.

Welcome to the Group Preparation Packets. We have broken it into four sections, each timed with a specific part of the planning process.

- **The Sign up Pack** (what you are currently reading) is intended to help you get your brain around everything you will need to do to prepare your group for your trip and to help you understand how AdventureServe will be planning your trip. Now that you are signed up you are to read it all right away and use the preparation documents in the back to prepare your chaperones and group for the trip. ***Timeline: Read it all as soon as you are signed up.***
- **The Detail Experience Pack** is intended to help you understand the details of your trip like the schedule and meals. This will help you get the most out of the experience for your group. You should read this pack as soon as possible but at least have it completed by March 1st.
- **The Group Analysis Pack** will help you give AdventureServe a better idea of your group's specific needs and goals. You can start working on this as soon as you would like but please return your Group Analysis Sheet by May 1st at the latest.
- **The Seed Thought Pack** contains our seed thought journal for the summer. Many of our leaders like to read through the journal before the trip.

Hey, we understand that your time is a precious commodity...we are ministry workers ourselves! That being said, we suggest that this GPM is something you cannot afford to overlook.



For you, your adults/chaperones and your participants to truly have an outstanding experience it is imperative that all trip participants are clearly prepared for what they will encounter while in Kentucky or Tennessee. ***Nothing will benefit your experience more than having accurate expectations and good attitudes about the trip.*** This is especially true for you and

the other adults and for this to happen preparation is key. Nothing will sabotage the success of your mission experience more than uninformed or misinformed trip participants.

The contents of this manual are based upon our past interactions with incoming groups, their preparation material requests, and preparation shortcomings they have experienced or we have witnessed. You can trust that the content herein will be relevant, practical, and well worth the energy you put into it.

This is more than a packet of information...it's the foundation for a successful mission experience.

Taking the experience home... perpetuating your group's growth

While we want you to have a successful trip, we also want your group to continue growing long after the trip. We do not want the AdventureServe trip to simply be a one-and-done mountain top experience. Please consider using the "Taking the Experience Home" outline on our website or providing your group with other ways to process and continue learning from the trip. ***Intentional follow up will increase the value of your trip immensely.***



Special Dietary Needs: We want to know by May 1 if anyone in your group has special dietary needs like peanut allergies, a need for gluten free, or vegetarian needs. We ask for this info on the Group Analysis Sheet (see website and Group Analysis Pack) and will follow up for more details from there. We want to talk to each person/family about their unique needs so we can accommodate.

Suggested Preparation Timeline

Have You Already Completed This?

- ❖ Read your entire Written Agreement and understand your payment deadlines and cancellation policies. We will email this to you soon after you sign up. (If you did not make a copy of this document for your records before you returned it please contact AdventureServe Ministries.)

Right Away

- ❖ Read the Sign up Pack so you know what to expect and what will be required of you.
- ❖ More Packs of information will be emailed to you during the times in which we think you will need the information. If we are not meeting your needs please let us know and we will be happy to send it to you earlier or feel free to find all the Group Prep Packs on the web page.
- ❖ Set your goals for the trip. What would you like your group to get out of it? What are your community and spiritual goals?

Three to Six Months Out

- ❖ Advertise the AdventureServe Ministries program to the group, their parents, and possible chaperones.
- ❖ Develop an application. Have participants sign-up and commit early. This will help avoid competition with other summer activities and allow you to plan and pay for the correct number of people.
- ❖ Set a budget and develop a fundraising plan. (contact ASM for more help in this area)
- ❖ Set deadlines for trip payments for the group members.
- ❖ Recruit adult chaperones. Involve them in the planning and group preparation. This will give your leaders the proper scope and expectations.
- ❖ Find a copy of the daily devotional (Seed Thought Journal) on our website or we will also be emailing this to you in May.

(At the end of this document you will find materials to assist you in your parent, adult leader, and other group meetings.)

- ❖ Schedule a meeting with parents. Give them as much information about the trip as possible. Informing them now will save you many questions later on.
- ❖ Schedule your first meeting with your adult chaperones.

Before May 1st

- ❖ Fill out the Group Analysis Sheet, which will be emailed to you in March, for your group and mail or fax it to AdventureServe Ministries. We cannot finalize planning your trip without the info provided on this sheet!
- ❖ Make sure your payments are up to date. (See your Written Agreement payment schedule)
- ❖ Finalize your number of participants and inform the Program Director of any changes.
- ❖ Notify the Program Director if you have any special activity, service, or location requests.
- ❖ Begin organizing and gathering tools based on the general tool list if need be. (lists will be in your Detail Experience Pack)
- ❖ Begin planning your post-trip “Taking the experience home” session (see website).

Two Months Out

- ❖ Begin conducting your bi-weekly group preparation meetings.
- ❖ Schedule your second adult chaperone meeting.
- ❖ Plan for your transportation needs.

One Month Out

- ❖ The program manager will contact you to discuss more trip details and to answer any questions.
- ❖ Make sure your payments are up to date. (See your Written Agreement payment schedule)
- ❖ Create a detailed schedule of when to meet at the church, leaving time, estimated arrival time, return time, important contact info, etc. to give to parents and other church authorities.
- ❖ Collect all the Participant Information and Liability Release Forms (on website) from each participants and adult coming. Make sure they are completely filled out and have the appropriate doctor, guardian and participant signatures.
- ❖ Continue your group preparation meetings.

After May 1st

- ❖ Your Program Director will call you to discuss your group’s week and answer any questions you may have.
- ❖ Schedule and finalize your post-trip meeting.

Two Weeks Out

- ❖ You will be emailed a Program-specific packet of information about your week. This packet will include directions, a rough itinerary, lodging details, contact information, and possible worksite details, site-specific tool lists, and regional information.

- ❖ Host your Final Logistics Meeting with all parents, chaperones, and group participants.

7-10 Days Out

- ❖ The program manager will contact you and finalize many of the details of your trip including small number changes, sleeping arrangements, activity changes, AdventureServe staff, and other important logistics.

Travel Day

- ❖ Make sure you have signed Participant Information and Liability Release Forms from all of your participants. Keep these handy so you can give them to your AdventureServe staff upon arrival. It will be one of the first things the AdventureServe staff will want.
- ❖ Monitor the things being packed so you can weed out anything that will be a hindrance to traveling comfort or group growth.
- ❖ Give a copy of directions to each driver. Make sure contact information is exchanged.
- ❖ Bring AdventureServe Ministries' phone numbers with you in case you have trouble finding your camping area.
- ❖ Eat dinner before arriving at your assigned campground.
- ❖ Meet your AdventureServe Ministries staff at the campground after 6:00pm Eastern Standard Time. Aim to arrive between 6:00 and 6:30pm.

After the Trip

- ❖ Review plans and have your "Taking the experience home" session.
- ❖ Fill out AdventureServe Ministries' post-experience survey. This will be emailed to you after your trip.



AdventureServe
— MINISTRIES —

Growing faith in action

AdventureServe Ministries Background & Philosophy of Ministry

The Founding of AdventureServe:

In 1980 AdventureServe Ministries was founded in Altamont, Tennessee by John and Jan Bell as Confrontation Point Christian Wilderness Adventures. The service-oriented ministry focused on youth encountering Christ in wilderness settings. The camp grew steadily and over the years missions programs were added. Now each summer we facilitate about 50 groups (750+ participants).

Mission Statement:

AdventureServe Ministries seeks to create a Christ-centered community and encourage growth through confrontational experiences with God, self, others, and nature.

We live out this mission by providing relevant service and adventure opportunities for mainly youth groups, but we work with all other kinds of groups as well; using the experience to challenge the group to grow as a team; and challenging each person to grow spiritually and as a leader.

Changing Our Name from Confrontation Point to AdventureServe Ministries:

To better communicate what we do, we changed our name to AdventureServe Ministries in the fall of 2013. This decision was made in the wake of much prayer, research, and organizational discussion. Adventure and Service have been a signature combo of every experience we guide. We make service become adventure, we follow the greatest Servant, and believe the best adventures happen when everyone sacrificially serves the team. The mission and programming will not change as we remain committed to our core values. We are the same crazy and caring ministry. We will continue to serve community members in need, inspire people to serve, and train future leaders!

Theological Position:

AdventureServe Ministries is in a unique position in that we work with groups and employ staff from many different denominations. As a staff we affirm the Apostle's Creed. By using this creed and the other early Christian creeds as our guide we can be assured that our core beliefs are located directly within the "trunk" of Christianity. Our staff is encouraged to have a strong faith and to live this out in a context of love. We expect our staff to be firm on these core truths and to exercise charity and love in all aspects of the Christian worldview.

Our emphasis at AdventureServe Ministries is on developing a supportive Christian community and encouraging a lifestyle that flows from a Christian worldview. We provide a structure for you and your adult leaders to disciple the group and develop relationships with them within your specific theological system.

THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; He descended to hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From there He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church*, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting, Amen.

* Universal Church

The Pillars of AdventureServe Ministries

One of our main goals is your group's growth! All programming elements and activities within the mission's portion of your trip are designed to create a safe environment where this growth can occur. We use five elements to achieve growth in your group: ***focus on God, community, service, leadership development, and challenges***. We call them the pillars of AdventureServe Ministries. While the different programs we offer may focus more predominately on certain elements, the pillars—our core philosophies—are woven into all programs.



Remember, **we want to partner with you for the trip**. The philosophies and practices described below have been effective for ministry in the past but if your goals are different let us know! We will work with you for the best possible experience for your group.

Focus on God

It is often easy to focus on the life we're living rather than the reason for it. At AdventureServe Ministries we deliberately schedule time into every day to reflect on God and His challenges for us. There are so many things that God wants to teach us from the Word and through our relationships with others.

Tools Used:

- ***Morning devotions*** give us the chance to take time away to read the Bible, pray, and journal. When we listen God speaks! Devotional themes change each year and are designed to bring the Bible to life by speaking to real, relevant needs/issues. "Seed Thought" as we call it, is just the beginning of the spiritual development plan for the week.
- ***Evening worship*** helps the group to communally focus on God. There are various options on how this can be done. Details are in Section 5 of this manual—*Group Experience Details & Options*.
- ***Teachable Moments*** are times to pause and see or experience a new understanding of God through His creation or people.

Community

We are committed to living, teaching, and modeling a supportive Christian Community. The biblical model is a body—we are all members of one body and need each other. No part of the body is more important than the other (Ephesians 4).

As your group grows together as a community it becomes an even better context in which the group can grow as individuals. If youth have friends in youth group who are growing in their faith they are more likely to do so themselves. Also, youth with strong relationships with Christian adults other than just the youth pastor are far more likely to keep their faith. This is another reason

community, including adults, is important to AdventureServe Ministries. What better place to develop relationships between your youth and adults than on a trip like this!

Tools Used:

- A **Covenant**: At the beginning of the week your group will write an agreement that will be the focus of your relationships for the week. Members of the group will be responsible for helping others to keep this agreement for the good of the whole group. There are options for how this can be facilitated which are detailed in section five of this manual—*Group Experience Details & Options*.
- **Doing activities as a group** helps us to think of the others in the group (i.e. if two people are late for a meal the whole group waits until they arrive before eating).
- **Decision making** is done by the whole group, not a select few. Often the leadership will say to the group “These are your options, what do you want to do?” Making a group decision isn’t easy, but doing it with respect for everyone’s views and discovering a solution that everyone can accept is a victorious moment. Decisions involving safety will remain the responsibility of the leadership team (AdventureServe Ministries staff and Group Leaders).
- **Chores** are used as an initiative activity to teach small groups how to work together to achieve a task. Upon your arrival your group will be divided into smaller groups of four or five who will be given different responsibilities including meal preparation, meal clean up, and preparation/leading of worship services, etc.
- **Games and team building initiatives** are activities that have a specific goal in mind (e.g. to teach the group how to accomplish a difficult task using everyone’s skills and talents).
- **Debriefing** is a daily time of discussion for the whole group. We reflect on the day and share the things we learned, the struggles we had, deal with issues of conflict or frustration in a healthy way, and discuss how to apply all these things at home. It gets the whole group on the same page, is an integral part of processing growth, and helps the group begin to transfer the lessons learned on the trip to life at home.



Service

Consider Christ's "parting shot": in His last hours Jesus chose to demonstrate to the disciples that "the greatest among you must become like the least; the leader like the servant." As Christians it's this humble servanthood we are called to emulate. We are God's hands and feet on earth and it's our desire to incarnate (flesh out) God's love to those with whom we come in contact.

Tools Used:

- **Serving each other** by helping with chores and encouraging others is essential. Your group will be challenged through the covenant and actions of the leaders to display a servant attitude to the other members of the group.

- ***Serving people outside your group:*** Whether home repair clients or other individuals that you meet during your trip, your group will have the opportunity to communicate Christ's love through service and compassion.

Leadership Development

We all know that claiming to be a leader or even holding a leadership position does not make someone a leader. We believe that *spiritual leadership* is the responsibility of all who take the name "Christian." We suggest that the definition of *spiritual leadership* is closely tied to an individual's understanding of and interaction with God, community, and service. Based on the principle that leadership is learned and cultivated, "Leadership Development" has been at the core of AdventureServe Ministries' philosophy since our inception.



We want to give your group a chance to take responsibility, ownership, to struggle, fail, and succeed. We desire to foster a safe arena in which people can "practice" leadership. The key here is empowerment—giving them the tools necessary to be successful in their endeavors and then LETTING them proceed. Our philosophy is summarized is **Show, Help, Let.**

Let can be the tough part but is the crux of what we want to accomplish here—giving the participants ownership. We want them to face opportunities to engage their mind (facing a situation), to overcome obstacles (difficulties or consequences of their decisions), and complete a task while being supported by the adults in ways other than providing all the answers. Support will look like creating a setting in which the group is ready to face these challenges. We want the group to have opportunities to make mistakes and learn from them. We want the participants to have this chance to accomplish more than THEY ever thought they were capable of and more than YOU ever thought they were capable of!

Tools Used:

- ***Planning and leading worship.*** There are various ways to organize worship but one option is to let the participants plan and facilitate it. With support from the leaders, the participants have the chance to express their love for God in their own way and to challenge others in the group.
- ***Decision making*** is used to build community and to help your group think through a problem and find the best solution.
- ***Responsibility*** for much of the experience is given over to the group. All leaders will be asked to step back and allow the participants, at times, to make mistakes (when safety is not a concern). We use the group setting to process and evaluate successes, failures, and frustrations that may arise from inexperienced leadership.

Challenges

Romans 5:3-4: "... We also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope."

We strive to produce an experience that isn't "easy" or "comfortable" but is challenging yet achievable. We want your group to be outside their comfort zones so that they rely on God and their peers to help them.

We view growth opportunities in three stages—the green, yellow, and red zones.



Green Zone: This is the place we are comfortable and life is easy. It's where we live the majority of our lives—it is the sustaining zone.

Yellow Zone: Here participants are placed in a position where they are uncomfortable. This can often be a place of "perceived risk" but is actually a safe place where growth can occur.

Red Zone: This is the danger zone where participants are placed in an environment that is so far away from where they are comfortable that they can't grow because they are restricted by fear due to threats to their emotional, mental, spiritual or physical health and well being.

All participants will find themselves in different growth zones at different times throughout their experience. Our goal is that each individual would experience the yellow zone without entering the red zone.

When challenging participants we follow a guideline called **challenge by choice**. We will challenge participants and provide them with experiences that can push them into their yellow zone. However, we will never force them to do something they are not comfortable with. We will encourage them but the choice is theirs. This means that AdventureServe Ministries' job, and your job, is to create an environment in which participants can choose to step into the yellow zone.

Tools Used:

- **Camping** means living in close quarters with the outdoors and each other. This means bugs, rain, no soft bed, no gourmet meals and no TV or radio.
- **Outdoor adventure** activities often put the participants in a scary situation. Fear of heights, water, small spaces and rocky terrain are very real fears that can be faced, giving people more confidence than ever before.
- **Program specific challenges** like in the daily activities. In the Mystery Trip program, not knowing what to expect is trying for many people. Doing physical labor all day is a challenging part of Home Repair. Adventure activities test those in the Wilderness program. Sometimes being responsible for something like cooking for your whole group is a challenge!

Organizational Promises:

Regarding High Risk Activities

We desire to push people beyond their comfort zones. Because of this we do activities that are perceived as being high risk. We take reasonable precautions to be prepared for emergencies that may occur and have an excellent safety record. Nevertheless, no matter how hard AdventureServe Ministries works for safety, wilderness settings and construction worksites inherently involve risk. You and your group must understand that accidents can happen in the outdoors no matter how safe the program. Parents sending their child to AdventureServe Ministries are voluntarily accepting these risks.

As a courtesy, we have purchased primary medical insurance to cover all campers and chaperones attending AdventureServe Ministries to the value of \$3,000. Further details regarding this courtesy coverage are available in section three of this manual, *Goods and Services*.

99% of the injuries we see in the course of a summer are minor incidents including bumps, bruises, sprains, strains, minor cuts and abrasions, bee stings, etc.



Group Preparation Outlines & Handouts

Overview

You have now been equipped with the information to overcome barriers and to prepare your group for a great trip. The success of your trip will depend largely upon how well you prepare your group for their experience.

We understand that time is of the essence. We understand that weekly trip meetings are not an option. We understand that it is tough enough to get adults to volunteer to chaperone the trip let alone get them to trip leaders' meetings as well as all of the group preparation sessions. We understand that each group leader will tackle these problems differently. With that said, we have provided in the following pages, suggested preparation outlines and handouts for parents, adults/chaperones and participants. This is how we would go about it if it were our group...this is what our experience tells us are the essentials in preparation communication.



Also, as you plan for these pre-trip sessions to prepare your group, you should plan a post-trip session to follow up with the experience afterwards. "Another meeting?!?" Yes. Again, this is not about a week-long trip. It is about long term results, and helping the group process the experience after the trip is essential for the lessons to sink in and stick for the long haul. Use "Taking the Experience Home" found on the web for information on this session.

Parent Preparation

Two Sessions

Session #1

Purpose: Orient parents to AdventureServe Ministries. Communicate trip preparation time table.

Suggested Handouts: Participant Information & Liability Release Form. Also feel free to give parents any part of the Preparation Packets we send you. You know your parents and you know what will make them feel safe about their child on a trip.

Discussion Points:

- Your goals for the group and this trip.
- How ASM will help you achieve these goals.
- Details about ASM (Suggested Handouts). For further reference, refer them to our website: www.Adventureserve.org.
- Importance of adult/youth relationships ("5 Pillars" "community") **Consider: What can parents do after the trip to connect with their children?**
- Your timetable...what's next, how you would like them to be involved, financial deadlines, paperwork deadlines (Participant Information & Liability Release, others you may require), required parent and Group preparation meeting dates/times, fundraising information, etc. You may want to craft your own handout for this.
- Answer questions.

Session #2 (They are different session numbers, but this is the same meeting for parents, & the group)

Purpose: Final logistical meeting.

Suggested Handouts: See below.

Discussion Points:

- Craft a simple handout with an emergency cell phone contact for parents to use (yours or another trip leader's). Be sure to include our toll free office number (800-884-8483) for emergency use. Parents must understand that this is our office number and we will reach the group as quickly as possible (it could take 2-3 hours as cell phones do not always work in the rural areas of KY and TN and a physical visit may be necessary). *Contacting our office directly is most often the quickest method for an individual to contact you or a member of your group while you are on your trip.*
- Collect any last minute Participant Information & Liability Release forms.
- Share about the spiritual journey your group will be on and how parents can pray for your leadership team and their group while you are in KY/TN.
- Answer last minute questions.
- Recommended: spend the last part of this session developing your group's covenant for the trip.
- Close the meeting with corporate prayer for your experience in KY/TN.

Adult/Chaperone Preparation

Three Sessions

It is assumed that all adults/chaperones are present at the parent preparation session. If this is not true, you must adjust accordingly. It is imperative that your adults/chaperones are exposed to the same information. It is also assumed that your adults/chaperones will attend all group preparation sessions.

Session #1

Purpose: Developing your leadership team.

Suggested Handouts: Have them read about ASM philosophy and 5 pillars found in your Sign up Pack. You know your leaders so feel free to pass off any further information you think may be needed

Discussion Points:

- Define the purpose of this trip and establish goals as a leadership team for the experience.
- What is the role of the adult/chaperone in trip preparation? During the experience?
- Re-emphasize the importance of adult/youth relationships ("5 Pillars," "Community." This is a suggested handout for parent prep session 1.)
- Discuss Creation Restoration program philosophy (Suggested Handout). What difficulties or challenges does your leadership team anticipate and how can you address them together?
- Foster a commitment to prayer for your experience.

Session #2

Purpose: Acquaint your leadership team with specific details regarding your experience in KY.

Suggested Handouts: Allow them to read the Detail Experience Pack. You know your leaders so feel free to pass off any further information you think may be needed

Discussion Points:

- Thoroughly discuss the Detail Experience Pack ...your adults/chaperones **MUST** have mastery knowledge of what they are getting into!
- What difficulties or challenges does your leadership team anticipate and how can you address them together?
- Answer questions and develop a list of questions you need to ask ASM as a result of your leadership meeting.
- Close with prayer for your experience and all those involved in it.

Session #3(They are different session numbers, but this is the same meeting for parents, & the group)

Purpose: Final logistical meeting

Suggested Handouts: None.

Discussion Points:

- Craft a simple handout with an emergency cell phone contact for parents to use (yours or another trip leader's). Be sure to include our toll free office number (800-884-8483) for emergency use. Parents must understand that this is our office number and we will reach the group as quickly as possible (it could take 2-3 hours as cell phones do not always work in the rural areas of KY and TN and a physical visit may be necessary). *Contacting our office directly is most often the quickest method for an individual to contact you or a member of your group while you are on your trip.*
- Collect any last minute Participant Information & Liability Release forms.
- Share about the spiritual journey your group will be on and how parents can pray for your leadership team and their group while you are in KY/TN.
- Answer last minute questions.
- Recommended: spend the last part of this session developing your group's covenant for the trip.
- Close the meeting with corporate prayer for your experience in KY/TN.

Group Preparation

Five Sessions

Five preparation sessions sounds crazy! You're right! It's really only four sessions plus attendance at the Final Logistical Meeting. We suggest one session every two weeks, beginning two months prior to your experience. All "suggested handouts" for group preparation follow this group preparation outline. We have provided leader outlines, which help walk the leader through each session as they prepare beforehand, and participant handouts. Feel free to use and adapt these outlines and handouts to fit your group's dynamics and time schedule.

Session #1

Purpose:	An invitation to mystery: Provide general trip information to the group.
Leader Materials:	An Invitation to Mystery Leader Outline. Optional Introductory Activities.
Participant Handouts:	An Invitation to a Mysterious Journey. What to Bring. What to Expect. Top Ten Things. The Law.

Session #2

Purpose:	To help develop a stronger group community before your trip. To help the group identify the ways they can foster their group community on the trip.
Leader Materials:	Building Community Leader Outline.
Participant Handouts:	Fellow Travelers.

Session #3

Purpose:	To understand what it means to serve out of compassion instead of pity.
Leader Materials:	Compassionate Service Leader Outline. Mysterious Identities. An Account of the Unnamed Leper.
Participant Handouts:	A Touch of Compassion.

Session #4

Purpose: To provide a fun hands-on activity to enforce the previous sessions.

Leader Materials: Making it Stick Leader Outline.

Participant Handouts: None.

Session #5 (They are different session numbers, but this is the same meeting for parents, & the group)

Purpose: Final logistical meeting

Suggested Handouts: None.

Discussion Points:

- Craft a simple handout with an emergency cell phone contact for parents to use (yours or another trip leader's). Be sure to include our toll free office number (800-884-8483) for emergency use. Parents must understand that this is our office number and we will reach the group as quickly as possible (it could take 2-3 hours as cell phones do not always work in the rural areas of KY and TN and a physical visit may be necessary). *Contacting our office directly is most often the quickest method for an individual to contact you or a member of your group while you are on your trip.*
- Collect any last minute Participant Information & Liability Release forms.
- Share about the spiritual journey your group will be on and how parents can pray for your leadership team and their group while you are in KY/TN.
- Answer last minute questions.
- Recommended: spend the last part of this session developing your group's covenant for the trip.
- Close the meeting with corporate prayer for your experience in KY/TN.

Group Preparation Session One: Leader Outline & Resources

An Invitation to Mystery

Leader Outline

Note to leaders:

Some past Mystery Trip Leaders have found it difficult to keep participants excited about the Mystery Trip. While initially they had quite a few participants sign up, as the trip approached several people began to get apprehensive about not knowing what was going to happen and bailed out.

This first session was developed to help group leaders combat this problem. While it is important to share the basics of your Mystery Trip Mission with your participants and answer their questions, it is also essential to get them to realize that they are invited to join in something big, a mysterious journey. God has a plan for them on the Mystery Trip.

Session Goal:

To invite participants on a mysterious journey and to provide important information about your trip.

Optional Introductory Activity: (See Optional Introductory Activities page for ideas)

Optional Illustration: (You can use this before or after your discussion of the handouts)

Video clip from Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring—Scene where Elrond holds a council of all races at the Elven city of Rivendell to decide the fate of The Ring of Power. The scene where nine men decide to make the journey and the fellowship of the ring is formed.

Discuss— In the movie, do they know exactly where their journey will take them? Do they know if they will live or die? Why do they choose to go? What do they leave behind? What do they bring with them?

Scripture:

Matthew 4:18-22

Illustration:

An Invitation to a Mysterious Journey (Participant Handout)
Discuss responses as a group.



Application Points:

- Sometimes God calls us to leave behind our ordinary life and follow him on a journey into the unknown.
- There are things that we have to give up and fears that can hold us back.
- The journey may be filled with wonderful times and difficult experiences.

- When we do not know what the future holds, we are more apt to look for what God is doing in the moment.

Prepare your group for their experience:

Discuss participant handouts

- What to Bring
- What to Expect
- Top Ten Things
- The Law

Answer questions: Be as helpful as you can, but do not be afraid to answer, "It's a mystery! I guess we will have to wait and see?"

Close your time with prayer.

Optional Introductory Activities

Option 1: Packing by Phonics — For groups that don't know each other's names

Equipment: none (15+ min)

Purpose: To familiarize participants with each other's names.

Procedure: The facilitator begins by stating his/her name; listing one object he/she would bring along on a trip and doing a gesture to represent that item. (Example—Curtis brings a compass—puts both arms out and slowly spins in a circle like the arms of a compass--Sarah brings a suitcase—acts like she is closing a suitcase). The entire group must repeat the facilitator's name and gesture together. The person to the facilitator's right then expresses his/her name and gesture. The entire group now repeats this second person's name and gesture, and again the first person's name and gesture. This pattern continues until the last person in the group adds his/her name and gesture and the group repeats that name and gesture and every group member's in line. The group should be encouraged to go as fast as possible. Frequent mistakes are common and acceptable. After you finish ask if any individual in the group can repeat all names and gestures by themselves. Try someone else but change positions of the individuals in the group.

Option 2: Unusual Introductions—For groups that don't know a lot about each other

Equipment: none (15+ mins)

Purpose: To introduce all the individuals on the team and get to know a little bit about each person.

Procedure: Break the group up into smaller groups of 2 or 3 (preferably pair up people who don't know each other well). Tell them that they have 5 minutes to get to know each other. At the end of 5 minutes, they will have to introduce the other person to the entire group. Encourage them to find out things about the other person that other people in the group probably don't know about them. After the 5 minutes, allow each person to introduce their partner or small group member to the entire group.

Variation: Have the group ask each other why they are coming on the Mystery Trip and what they hope to get out of it. Include these answers in the introductions.

Option 3: Into the Wilderness—For groups that know each other

Equipment: (10 minutes) List of ten things the group could use to survive in the wilderness or ten props of things that they might need to survive. Some suggestions include (pocket knife, duct tape, matches, map, compass, hatchet, blanket, mirror, string, flashlight, GPS, box of granola bars, empty backpack, pot or pan, Bible, canteen, tent, cans of food etc.)

Purpose: To have the group work together as a group to set priorities and to think about what they would be willing to give up to survive.

Procedure: Explain to the group that they are stranded in the woods, and they have ten items that may help them survive. Give them a limited amount of time. They must work together as a group to rank the items in order from most important to least important. Then tell the group that they can choose only two items. See what they pick and why?

Group Preparation Session Two: Leader Outline & Resources

Building Community

Leader Outline

Session Goal:

To help develop a stronger group community before your trip. To help your group identify the ways they can foster their group community before and during their trip.

Introduction:

Something special happens when people gather together, united under a common cause. Bonds are developed, life-long friendships are created, and lives are changed. Your mission team is a community that God has called to journey and serve together. God has given us some guidelines into how to live and work in community.

Scripture:

1 Thessalonians 5:12-18

Read through scripture.

Illustration 1: Up and Over (10-20 min)

Equipment: Rope at least 6 feet long

Purpose: To get your group to work together to overcome a challenge.

Procedure: String a six-foot rope between two objects four to five feet off the ground. (If you can't find objects to tie the rope to, you can have two leaders hold the rope). The object is for the entire group to get from one side of the rope to the other without touching the rope, going around the rope or under the rope. (Safety note: proper "spotting" is required when someone is off the ground. This means that *at least* two people not helping lift have hands up ready to keep the person off the ground safe if they fall. Focus on head, neck, and back. The goal is not to catch, but to get them to the ground safely and with no pain.)

Observe how your group works through this challenge. Are they encouraging and cooperative with each other, or do they have a difficult time working together? Spend a little time after the activity debriefing, asking questions to get the group to think about how well they worked together. Ex: How did you overcome the challenge? Why is it important to work together? In what ways will we need to function like this on our mission trip?

Illustration 2:

Fellow Travelers (Participant Handout)

Discuss responses.

Application:

- Your group will have to work together on your Mystery Trip.
- What are elements of a healthy community?
- What can each person contribute?
- What do you need to work on as a group?
- How will your group handle difficulties?
- How your group interacts with each other will affect your witness.

Optional Illustration: (You can use this before or after your discussion of the handout)

Watch video clip from Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring again -- Scene where Elrond holds a council of all races at the Elven city of Rivendell to decide the fate of The Ring of Power. The scene where nine men decide to make the journey and the fellowship of the ring is formed.

Discuss—What does the community of the fellowship look like? What does each person offer to make the community stronger? How does their commitment to each other affect the world they live in? How does their fellowship help each other face difficult and potentially deadly situations?

Close your time with prayer:

You may want to break into small groups.

Group Preparation Session Three: Leader Outline & Resources

Compassionate Service

Leader Outline

Session Goal: To encourage your group to serve out of compassion instead of pity.

Introduction Activity:

Mysterious Identities (Introduction Activity, described below)

Scripture and illustration:

Follow “An Act of Compassion” (Participant Handout).

Have one person read the scripture aloud. Ask the group to imagine that they are the traveler in the story.

Work through the questions in small groups or as one group. Discuss responses to the questions.

Application:

- How can stereotypes affect the way we view and treat people?
- Discuss how compassion and pity are different.
- How can your group serve people out of compassion?
- Talk about how you can serve compassionately even if you never meet the people you serve.
- Challenge your group to look beyond the obvious need to the deeper needs of people.
- How can compassion affect the way you serve each other within your group?
- How is your group’s service different than a group of non-Christians doing the same type of service?

Close your time with prayer.

Mysterious Identities

Introduction Activity

Equipment: One large paper bag per person (10-20 min)

Prep Work:

Get some large paper grocery bags and cut eye slots in each one. Across the top of each sack in large letters write a stereotypical identity. (ex. Muslim, Businessman, etc.) Then in smaller letters write how they are to be treated in random places on the rest of the bag. (See table below for ideas, feel free to add your own)



Procedure:

1. Give every person a paper bag mask, face down so they don't see what is on it. Have them close their eyes and put the mask over their head.
2. Explain that they must treat each person according to the directions written on the masks, but they cannot tell anyone what identities are written on their masks.
3. Everyone should try to guess what their identity is based on the way they are treated by others.
4. Tell them to mill around the room and interact with each other. Allow them about 10 minutes to interact.
5. Afterwards, discuss their thoughts and feelings about the experience.

Stereotypical Identity	How to treat the person in the mask
Miriam Muslim	Call me a terrorist; laugh about my clothes; speak slowly and loudly to me.
Andy with AIDs	Shun me; keep your distance from me; don't allow me to touch you or breathe on you.
Millionaire Max	Try and be my friend; comment on my nice clothes; try to get me to give you something.
Homeless Harry	Refuse to give me money; ignore me when I try to talk to you; tell me to get a job; act like I stink.
Famous Fiona	Take my picture; try to get my autograph; act like you are my best friend.
Pastor Peter	Be on your best behavior around me; tell me all the things God is doing in your life; use lots of religious terms when you speak to me.
Brenda Bookworm	Reject me; tell me I'm boring; ask me to help with your homework.
Hank the Hunk	Ask me out; tell me how good-looking I am; if you are a girl, hang all over me and giggle.
Stinky Sam	Don't stand close to me; act like I stink; ask me how long it's been since I've had a shower.

Beautiful Brittany	Tell me how good-looking I am; flirt with me; ask me on a date.
Elderly Ellen	Comment about my bad driving; tell me to hurry up; speak slowly and loudly to me.
Disabled Debbie	Act uncomfortable around me; talk to me like I'm a child.
Poor Paul	Tell me to get a job; make fun of my clothes; offer me your old socks and a toothbrush.
Nerdy Nate	Reject me; poke fun of me; push me.
Acne Angie	Point at me; whisper about me behind my back; don't ask me out; if you are a guy avoid me; make jokes about my face.
Fat Fred	Make comments about how much food I eat; tell fat jokes around me; don't include me.
Gracie Gossip	Tell me all about other people; don't tell me anything about yourself.
Heath the Heathen	Tell me how bad I am; preach to me.
Jesse the Jesus Freak	Ask me to quote scripture; talk to me about church; don't invite me your parties.
Redneck Ray	Talk to me about my big old truck; make jokes about my mullet.

Group Preparation Session Four: Leader Outline & Resources

Making it Stick

Leader Outline

Session Goal: To provide a hands-on opportunity to put together what they've learned.

Description: Plan a mysterious service outing for your group. Prearrange a service project in your community. (Make sure you think through all of the logistics and the materials you will need.) Don't tell your group where they are going or what they will be doing until you arrive at the service location. Try to do something that stretches your group beyond their comfort zones.

You can finish this session with a meal or snack together as a group. While eating, consider discussing the service experience. For thoughts on how to generate discussion, consider using some of the following:

- What was it like coming today without knowing what you would be doing?
- Who did you serve today?
- What was your biggest surprise today?
- How did today's experience compare to your expectations?
- How did you feel when you arrived at the service location?
- How did you feel while serving?
- Name several lessons that you have learned at the previous preparation sessions.
 - How did today's experience help you better understand these lessons?
 - How can we continue to make these lessons stick?
 - How can we share these lessons with others?
- In what way do you think today's experience helps YOU prepare for the upcoming Mystery Trip?
- In what way do you think today's experience helps the GROUP prepare for the upcoming Mystery Trip?

End the session with prayer.

An Invitation to a Mysterious Journey

Read Matthew 4:18-22. Keep your Bibles open as you continue...

Imaging for a minute you are one of the men Jesus calls to follow him. Answer the following questions from that fisherman's perspective.

1. What are your thoughts and feelings when Jesus invites you to join him on a journey?
2. What questions would you want to ask Jesus?
3. What things do you have to leave behind?
4. What duties or fears might keep you from following Jesus?
5. Why do you choose to follow Jesus?

Based on what you know about the rest of these fishermen's journeys with Jesus, fill the chart below with experiences that they encountered on their journey?

<i>Exciting or Good Things</i>	<i>Difficult or Disappointing Things</i>

On the day Jesus called these fishermen to follow him, they had no idea where they were going or what would happen on the way. If the four disciples knew both the joys and sorrows their journey would cause before they followed Jesus, do you think that they still would have accepted Jesus' invitation to follow him? Why or why not?

Jesus could have told the fishermen where they were going and what would happen along the way. Why do you think he chose not to tell them anything?

In a way, you are a bit like the fishermen. You are invited to leave behind your normal routine and follow God on a Mystery Trip. You don't know exactly where you are going or what will happen along the way. Answer the following questions as honestly as you can (There are no correct answers).

1. Why are you choosing to go on the Mystery Trip Mission?
2. What things might you have to give up by coming on the Mystery Trip?
3. What can you learn by not knowing what is going to happen next?
4. List two things you are excited about and two things you are nervous about.
5. God is inviting you to follow Him on this Mystery Trip Mission. God already knows exactly what is going to happen and has a specific plan for you on the Mystery Trip. How does knowing this make you feel?
6. If you are honest with yourself, you never know exactly what is going to happen next in your life. How could treating every day like a mysterious journey change the way you live your life?

Mystery Trip Packing List

- ☐ T-shirts (immodest clothing or inappropriate graphics are not appropriate).
- ☐ Shorts (no short-shorts).
- ☐ Sweater, jacket or fleece and pants for cool evenings.
- ☐ At least one pair of long pants
- ☐ One set of old clothes (long sleeves and long pants) and old shoes (which may get ruined).
- ☐ Socks, underwear (enough for the entire week).
- ☐ Modest swimsuit (Swimming may or may not be available).
- ☐ Footwear is required for swimming (unless in a pool). Flip-flops are not enough. Use sandals or old sneakers.
- ☐ At least 1 pair of tennis shoes or boots.
- ☐ Shoes and/or sandals for around camp.
- ☐ Hat
- ☐ Raingear: poncho or jacket (plan for rain).
- ☐ Personal toiletries (toothbrush, soap, shampoo, deodorant, etc.).
- ☐ Towel & washcloth.
- ☐ Flashlight or headlamp with 2 sets of batteries.
- ☐ Reusable water bottle.
- ☐ Bug spray & sunscreen.
- ☐ Sleeping bag & pillow, ground pad (air mattresses are not ideal - too big).
- ☐ A small folding camp chair (if your group has room to pack them).
- ☐ Bible, notebook and pen (in a Ziploc bag is a good idea).
- ☐ Large and small plastic bags for dirty clothes & protecting gear from rain.
- ☐ Lifeguard card (if you are one, you can't lifeguard without it).
- ☐ Any necessary medications.
- ☐ A small daypack or bag to keep your daily items with you.
- ☐ Camera if you want to take pictures.
- ☐ Musical Instrument (i.e. guitar, drum).
- ☐ Be sure to bring enough clothes for the entire week and the trip home!!!



DON'T BRING:

Valuables (your gear will be stored in tents or vehicles).

- Cell phones, TV's, stereos, CD players, video games, etc.
- Your favorite clothing (will get dirty, torn, and most likely ruined).
- Junk food.
- Alcohol or drugs, firearms, pocketknife with blade over 2 inches long.
- Animals/Pets.

Be Responsible!

* At ASM, you will be responsible for keeping track of your own stuff. ASM is not responsible for any lost, damaged, or stolen items.

* Any personal gear/equipment requiring special knowledge for use must be stored away from other participants.

*Community gear is provided by AdventureServe like tents, cooking equipment, general camping gear, food, etc.

***You may be packing and unpacking several times through the week, so don't bring lots of "stuff," and make sure you have a bag that is quick and easy to pack/unpack.**



What to Expect on Your Mystery Trip Mission

- Expect the unexpected.
- It probably will rain on you at some point in time, so come with extra clothes. We will make the best of it!
- You will be sleeping 4-5 to a tent for the whole week.
- You will be in a small group rotating responsibilities (cooking, cleaning, leading worship, etc.)
- Swimming may or may not be available.
- Showers and restrooms are usually available during the week.
- You will face challenges physically, spiritually, mentally, and emotionally.
- Your group will have to work together as a team.
- You will know the members of your group very well by the end of the week.
- You will probably do something you've never done before.
- God will push you out side of your comfort zone.
- You will impact someone's life.
- You will be tired by the end of the week.

A Sample Daily Schedule

7:00 A.M.	Rise & Shine
7:15 A.M.	Breakfast
7:45 A.M.	Pack lunch if needed
8:15 A.M.	Seed Thought
9:00 A.M.	Creation Restoration or Wilderness Activity
12:00 P.M.	Lunch
1:00 P.M.	More Activity
4:30 P.M.	Possible free time
6:00 P.M.	Dinner
7:00 P.M.	Free time/Leaders meeting
8:00 P.M.	Processing of the day
9:00 P.M.	Worship
10:00 P.M.	Quiet hours begin

Do Not Expect

- To keep in contact with friends and family at home via phone or Facebook
- To do the same thing everyday
- The entire trip to be evangelistic
- To build or remodel a house
- To encounter third world poverty
- To have a lot of free time

Top Ten Things You will Give up While At Adventure Serve

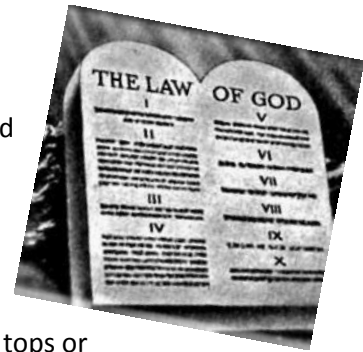
1. The comforts of home. Participants, leaders, and staff will be staying at a state park. You will be staying in tents that have few "creature comforts."
2. Your private shower & bathroom. The bathrooms and showers are also used by others, so please be very clean. Please be courteous of others and their needs.
3. Your nice soft bed. Everybody sleeps on the ground. It is good to bring a sleeping pad (therm-a-rest, ridge-rest, etc.) and a sleeping bag. These add a bit of comfort.
4. Your time. The schedule can be very busy. Free time is scheduled, but often it does not seem like enough!
5. Mom to fix your meals for you. Will we starve without Mom around? Your group will be split up into small groups, which will each be responsible for specific tasks. These tasks include: cooking, cleaning up, preparing and leading worship services, etc. Each small group will get an opportunity to cook. The food is tasty and we try to avoid less- healthy foods like "junk food" or "sodas." Ideally one adult will be in each group.
6. The indoors. It is impossible to guarantee what the weather will be like, but we will make the best of the weather we get. Be prepared for cool evening temperatures and for possible rain showers.
7. Boredom. At ADVENTURESERVE MINISTRIES we do exciting activities. We teach rock climbing, rappelling, cave exploration, and we also do white water rafting. These activities, and spending time with others in your group, will make this week long remembered!
8. Your comfort zone. We try to stretch groups and individuals to do things that are new and sometimes uncomfortable. This is when rapid growth occurs.
9. Being anonymous. We expect all group members to be active participants in the discussions and worships.
10. Pick the one worldly thing you think you can't live without. You can.



The Law of AdventureServe Ministries

Always:

- Stay within the defined camp boundaries. (Notify a leader if you need to leave)
- Wear shoes or sandals, even when swimming (unless in a pool) and rafting. Flip-flops are not enough. (Old sneakers work great)
- Be safe. (No horseplay, running near cliffs, etc.)
- Follow all specific safety procedures given by staff. (rock climbing, rappelling, caving, etc.)
- Follow all sanitary procedures for cooking and cleaning up meals.
- Wear clothing that is modest and will not offend anyone (i.e. crop tops or immodest clothing is not appropriate)
- Follow the instructions of the AdventureServe Ministries leader.



Never:

- Swim, unless there is a AdventureServe Ministries lifeguard on duty or have you have signed the Swimming Liability Release form and your Group Leader/adult leaders tell you it is ok to swim at this time with the group.
- Dive into any water (except a pool's deep end where diving is permitted).
- Use or possess alcohol or illegal drugs anywhere or anytime.
- Drive any AdventureServe Ministries vehicles.

Responsibilities & Requirements

Exhibit a Christ-Like Spirit

- Have a good attitude
- Be encouraging
- Enjoy other's achievements, not just your own

Keeping Yourself Safe

- Eating well
- Getting enough rest
- Being careful during high risk activities

Keeping Others Safe

- Don't be careless with equipment or tools
- Don't fool around with other's safety

Work

- Work hard with the tasks at hand
- Take initiative

Be a Team Player

- Looking out for others
- Serving each other
- Doing things as a group

Face the Challenges

- Push yourself
- Attempt even the tough activities

Fellow Travelers

Take a minute to glance around the room. Whether you like it or not, the people in this room going to be your fellow travelers on your Mystery Trip journey. You will all have to work together as a group to overcome challenges each step of the way. You will be forced to depend on these people, and they will depend on you. The way you interact within this community affects the outcome of your Mystery Trip.



Begin by reading 1Thessalonians 5:11-18. This Bible passage below gives us guidance into how God wants us to interact with others in our community. After reading, continue below...

Theses verses offer actions we can take to build a healthy community. In the space below, list at least ten actions from this passage.

- | | |
|----|-----|
| 1. | 6. |
| 2. | 7. |
| 3. | 8. |
| 4. | 9. |
| 5. | 10. |

Place a ★ next to an action that is easy for you and a 😊 next to one you think is easy for your group. Place a ✓ next to one that is difficult for you and a ☹ next to one you think is difficult for your group.

How could anyone or community ever live up to all of these goals? For a moment, think what it would be like to be a part of a community that did all of these things. How awesome would that be?

The Bible gives us a picture of what a group that followed these principles looks like. You can find their example in the book of Acts. Shortly after Christ's death and resurrection, followers of Jesus began to gather, discuss and worship together.

Read Acts 2:42-47

What are some of things that happened because believers in this group were committed to each other and the principles of 1Thessalonians?

Each person has some qualities to share that make their group and world better. What areas can YOU contribute to make your group more like the group of believers in 1Thessalonians and Acts 2?

Did you notice the last part of verse 47? “And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.” Their community was so great people were excited to be a part of it.

On our Mystery Trip, people in the area you serve will be watching the group to see how we interact with each other. If we are a loving and encouraging community that helps each other, people will be attracted and may be willing listen to what we say. If our group argues, gossips, complains, does low quality work, or constantly tears each other down, the local people will be turned off by our group and will not want to have anything to do with us or our God.

Will you pledge to encourage your fellow travelers? Will you commit to being a 1 Thessalonians group? Will you make the decision to serve God this summer as a community and set an example for all believers?

A Touch of Compassion

Luke 10:25-37 (NASV)

Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?" He answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." And he said to him, "You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live."

But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.' Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

In this parable, several people saw the traveler on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. In the space below, describe how each person/group responded when they found the traveler, and write the reason why you think they may have responded in this way.

Person/Group	Response	Reason
Robbers		
Priest		
Levite		
Samaritan		

Above and beyond the call of duty:

Notice that in the parable the Samaritan did not just slap a band-aid on the traveler's wounds. The Samaritan put the traveler on his own animal to transport him to an inn. Then he took care of the traveler while at the inn. Finally, he provided in such a way that the innkeeper could continue caring for the traveler. The Samaritan held nothing back. He got dirty, got personal, and made certain that the traveler had everything needed to heal.

If you were the traveler, how would you feel after learning of how the Samaritan cared for you?

In the parable, the Samaritan responded in the way he did because he felt compassion. The word compassion is derived from the Latin words pati and cum, which together mean "to suffer with." It is as though the Samaritan saw the beaten traveler and could feel the pain in his own body. He gave his own strength to fight to save the traveler's life. Acting in this way, out of compassion, the Samaritan did not think about his actions, but responded as if the beaten traveler was his best friend, his brother, and perhaps he worked as though the life he saved was his own.

How do you think compassion is different than sympathy, pity, or feeling sorry for someone?

“Go and do the same”

Every year thousands of Christians go on mission trips all over the world. While most of them are genuine in their desire to help people and share Jesus’ message, many end up serving out of pity or duty instead of compassion. Many Christians go to help “the poor people” but never see beyond the outward problems they are trying to fix. They miss out on the opportunity to “suffer with” people and touch their deeper heart needs. In the parable, however, we are called to “go and do the same.” We are called to serve out of compassion, not pity or duty.

What are some things that your group can do on your Mystery Trip to serve people out of compassion instead of pity?

What is one way you can be compassionate this week?

How could you be compassionate in the following scenarios?

- 1.** You arrive at the home of an elderly widow. Her yard is overgrown with grass and bushes. As she welcomes you inside, you can hardly stand the smell. Dirty dishes cover her kitchen, and you don’t think her bathroom has been cleaned in a year.

- 2.** You spend an entire day cleaning, sorting canned goods, and throwing away spoiled food in the warehouse at a food bank. You never even see the people you are trying to serve.

- 3.** You’ve just finished serving a meal at a soup kitchen. You take a seat across from a homeless man who appears to be in his late forties.

- 4.** A teenager wearing all black with her hair dyed three colors and more piercings than you can count walks into your meeting. She looks around the room scowling and takes a seat in the corner.