



Eight Ways to Optimize Your Mission Trip Experience

There are ways to make an awesome mission trip even better. Much of this has to do with the Holy Spirit—the rest has to do with your attitude and expectations. To help you optimize your experience, here is a list of suggestions:

1. **Go with a humble heart.** Don't try to be the "perfect missionary" or "perfect evangelist." Have a servant attitude, pray about everything and let the Holy Spirit do the saving. Focus on the family of God and your relationship with the people you serve. Lift them up by name in prayer.
2. **Read your Bible daily** as you do your devotional journal.
3. **Practice Spanish, Creole or Swahili** before and during your time in-country. Study scriptures in your bilingual Bible if you have one that you can share with others in their language. Reach out and communicate with those you meet no matter your language proficiency. Sing simple VBS songs in their native language for fun with the children during work times. A smile and use of English also will go far!
4. **Be respectful of the people, the culture and the church.** Be humble and respectful of the Dominicans/Haitians/Kenyans at all times, so they know you are there to share God's love with them. Dress and behave as the women and men of the local church do. Remember, actions speak louder than words! Be expressively thankful for all they do for us. Hosting us is not an easy task!
5. **Leave your watch in your room.** Don't worry about the timing of the schedule for the day. Trust your group leaders and the Holy Spirit to lead the flow of the day even if the things that happen may be very different and/or later than planned. Let things be spontaneous and on "local time."
6. **Bond with your group and your new Dominican/Haitian/Kenyan friends in an appropriate manner.** It may be easy to fall in love with your new friends on the trip or with the handsome indigenous people. Make sure you are developing your relationships in an ethical, moral manner. Don't make any promises you aren't able to keep, such as phoning your new friends after you are back in the States.
7. **Give only your friendship and love as an agent of our Lord Jesus Christ.** It may be tempting to give material gifts to your new friends or candy to children. All of our gifts are to flow through the churches out to the people as an outreach of that local church. Please provide them to your FFP staff member for distribution after the group departs. Giving items directly undermines our mission to share our time, talents and the love of Jesus since it can turn community members into beggars who are trying to get whatever they can.
8. **Take care of your body.** It is easy to overdo it in the first few days when you are so ready to do the construction work and/or play with the kids.
 - o Drink water frequently, even if you aren't very thirsty.
 - o Use hand sanitizer before every meal or anytime you are going to eat.
 - o Get to sleep before 11 pm so you are energized to do the Lord's work the next morning.
 - o Eat breakfast even if you aren't hungry.
 - o Wear a hat and sunscreen every day.