

# Mission Life

Living the Mission Beyond the Trip

Facilitator's Guide



Developing Leaders To Fulfill The Great Commission

LeaderTreks is a student leadership development ministry using curriculum, innovative training, and trips to help students identify and develop their personal leadership skills. We are calling the church to join us in making leadership development a core of youth ministry. To that end, we partner with youth workers who are passionate about developing the next generation of leaders in the church and culture. Our resources challenge and change participants. Students gain confidence and motivation, and a new vision for how they can lead and serve others.

### *Mission Life: Living the Mission Beyond the Trip*

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25W560 Geneva Road, Suite 30, Carol Stream, IL 60188

630.668.0936

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# Introduction

We understand how difficult it is to prepare for and lead a mission trip. But we also realize that's not the biggest challenge. From our experience and the feedback we get from youth workers, the biggest challenge of any mission trip is making the experience last beyond the actual trip. It is altogether too easy for students to go on a great trip and in three months go back to living life just as they were before. Finding ways to make the trip truly life changing is the greatest challenge faced by anyone who organizes a mission trip. This is what **Mission Life** is all about.

Anyone with missions experience will tell you that their trip did more for them than they were able to do for the people they went to help. Mission trips are great places to learn about spiritual giftedness, major world issues like AIDS and poverty, working with Christians of other cultures, and a host of other important lessons. Often, though, we fail to understand how to assimilate that experience into our lives back home. We run the risk of giving up or driving others away through our activism and passion. A crucial question for anyone who has gone on a mission trip is, "How do I make this experience a part of the fabric of my life? How do I make it last?" This is what **Mission Life** is all about.

Assimilation is doubly hard for students. Often, a mission trip is the first powerful God-centered experience they have had. It is easy for them to be so excited by this new environment that they become disillusioned with their life at home. As youth workers, it is our responsibility to do what we can to help them understand their mission experience. We need to help them bridge the gap between the trip and everyday life, to help them learn how they can live with the same passion and commitment to Christ at home. This is what **Mission Life** is all about.

**Mission Life** is a curriculum designed to give your team a platform to talk about these issues. It will allow you to continue to meet as a group so that the team can help each other transition into life back home and, more importantly, encourage each other to live life differently. Each of the four sessions includes a Bible study designed to help students understand the same things Jesus wanted His disciples to know after He left. Namely, that there's a mission for them in every aspect of their lives. Students will also learn to connect with each other through intentional exercises designed to ease their transition after the trip, and they'll learn how to tell their story of the trip in such a way that it connects with what God is continuing to do in their lives.

Perhaps the most overlooked element of mission trip planning is determining how to get the most out of the trip after it is over. Don't let that happen to you! By using all the tools in **Mission Life**, the impact of your trip will last much longer. Remember, spiritual growth in the lives of our students happens when we help them focus on it. Take advantage of this opportunity and help your students get the most from their experience.

## How to Use Mission Life

This book is designed with you in mind. We have provided all the resources you need to hold four effective post-trip meetings with your team. However, **Mission Life** will work best when you plan to use it before you leave on your mission trip. We encourage you to plan your post-trip meetings as a part of the mission trip process. This will set the expectation in the minds of both students and parents that the trip isn't over the minute the team gets home.

It is also important to use this material with just the individuals who were on the trip. The curriculum will explore ideas such as sharing the experience with others who weren't on the trip, including family members. The sessions are designed specifically to help the team stay connected and accountable to each other as a way of maximizing the experience.

An important aspect of **Mission Life** is the group Bible study included in each session. We have chosen to look at the last words that Jesus said as He left the earth and the effect those words had on His followers. In these passages, we can find our own calling for our life – the mission road that Jesus wants us to walk. Using these Bible studies effectively will help your students discover a passion to live for God everyday.

Everything you need for a highly successful, interactive post-trip training event is included in this book. Each session includes introductory objectives and goals, insightful teaching principles that coordinate with the blanks in the Student Guide, activities that will help students interact with and understand the principles, and application-oriented assignments and/or activities. Use these as you see fit to meet the needs of your group.

### Recommended Timeline for Sessions:

» **Session 1** – The Journey Home

Last night of mission trip or first night home

» **Session 2** – New Directions

One week after the end of the trip

» **Session 3** – Connected to a Cause

Three weeks after the end of the trip

NOTE: The third session has a trip celebration activity. One idea for this activity is to videotape a message from the host partner during the trip and surprise the students with it during the celebration activity. (See page 32 for more information.) If you want to use this idea, be prepared ahead of time.

» **Session 4** – Life on a Mission

Six to eight weeks after the end of the trip

**Mission Life** will help you maximize the effectiveness of your mission trip. By encouraging your team to continue to meet together and share with each other, you will help them apply the lessons they learned from the trip to their everyday life. This process will enable them to avoid sinful habits as they walk the road together. The bonds of friendship will strengthen and the lessons learned will last a lifetime.



# MISSION LIFE

Session 1

## The Journey Home

Mission  
< never >  
ends.

## Session 1 The Journey Home

**Recommended Timing:** Last night of mission trip or first night home

**Objective:** In Session 1, students will prepare for the transition from the mission trip to home.

### Goals:

1. Students will think through how they will prepare spiritually for their return home.
2. Students will have a chance to think through what they have learned and write out their story of the trip.
3. Students will look at the final words of Jesus to discover that they still have a mission to accomplish.

#### NOTE:

Have students turn to page 2 in their Student Guides and fill in the blanks as you talk.

### This session includes:

- » Introduction
- » Activity – Encouragement Sheets
- » Bible Study – The Last Words of Jesus (Matthew 28:16-20; Acts 1:1-11)
- » Discussion – What to Expect When You Get Home
- » Activity – Your Story
- » Closing Thoughts

### Introduction

After all the planning and hard work, your mission trip is (almost) over. This could be the most important time of the trip for your students. They have just encountered God in an unexpected and unique way. This trip has been more than they could have imagined, and now they are going to need help going back to “life as usual.”

Think about the changes you have seen on this trip. As exciting as it can be to see students come alive in Christ, we have to remember that life is stacked against them when they get home. Their friends and family know them as the student who left, not the one who’s coming home. The habits they have left behind will be waiting for them when they return to their old routine. The structure of the trip will no longer be there. They will miss their teammates. They face a difficult battle, and they are going to need some help to get through it.



This first session of **Mission Life** is all about this difficult transition. Your students will look at the last words Jesus said while on earth, both in the Great Commission and in His instructions to the disciples in Acts 1. This will help them bridge the gap so that they can understand that there still is a calling for them even after the trip. They will learn how to tell their story and make a list of people to tell. They will think about what it will be like to be home and make a plan to stay on track once they get there.

*Introduce this session by saying something like:*

*We have enjoyed a unique experience while serving God on this mission trip. Often we spend a lot of time looking forward to a trip like this but we fail to prepare for what it will be like when we go home. As the old saying goes: "By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail" (Benjamin Franklin).*

*The transition back to life at home can be more difficult than you realize. There are many temptations waiting for you. People who weren't on the trip will have difficulty understanding what happened. People who didn't witness the change in your life might not be ready to accept a new you. As a team we are going to need the support of each other to continue to grow through this difficult time. We will be going through four sessions as a team that will help equip us to make the transition back home after this trip. We will be discovering together our ongoing calling from God. Let's see what we can learn through this process.*


**Activity - Encouragement Sheets**

Make a sheet for each person on the trip, including adults, by writing his or her name at the top. Hang the sheets on the wall or put them on a table. Give everyone a pen. Ask them to go to each sheet and write down one thing that they saw God do in that person's life during the trip. It could be simple or dramatic but encourage them to think of something for everyone who was on the trip. You can use these as certificates of encouragement. Students will walk away with a written record of how others saw them grow and develop.

**NOTE:**  
Be sure to use this time intentionally. This is a great chance for you and your adult staff to specifically encourage your students' growth. Write out specific ways you saw them grow on the trip.

**From the Student Guide:**





**Session 1**  
**The Journey Home**

After all the planning and hard work, your mission trip is over. What you do in the next few days and weeks could be even more important than what you did on the trip. You have just encountered God in an unexpected and unique way. This trip has been more than you could have imagined, and now you are going back to "life as usual." Only you're not the same!

Think about the changes you have made on this trip. As exciting as this experience has been, we need to remember that life is going to be difficult when we get home. Your friends and family know you as the student who left, not the one who's changed. The habits you have left behind will be waiting for you when you return to your old routine. The structure of the trip will no longer be there. You will miss your teammates. You face a difficult battle, and you are going to need some help to get through it. This first session of Mission Life will help you prepare for this transition.

**Bible Study — The Last Words of Jesus**

This passage is known as the Great Commission. Jesus is giving His disciples their marching orders. Read this passage together and answer the following questions.

**Read Matthew 28:16-20.**

What was the response of the disciples to seeing Jesus again? Why did some worship and some doubt?

Why did Jesus talk about His authority?

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What did Jesus instruct the disciples to do? Why did He want them to focus on these things?

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What was His final promise? What do you think this meant to the disciples?

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Read Acts 1:1-11.

This passage describes the last time the disciples saw Jesus on earth. As He left, He had some final words for them. Let's look at His words and their response.

What emotions do you think the disciples were feeling at this point?

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