

You are invited to take your congregation, conference or region on a People-to-People mission pilgrimage

“Why take my congregation, conference or region on a Global Ministries People-to-People mission pilgrimage?”

1. To give your congregation, conference or region an opportunity to share in the vision of Global Ministries with a “hands on” experience in mission.
2. To invigorate the prayer life of your congregation, conference or region for Global Ministries missionaries and global ecumenical partners.
3. To encourage and affirm your solidarity with Global Ministries missionaries and global ecumenical partners.
4. To be part of the transforming experience through which participants share themselves and God’s love in a new way.
5. To get a first-hand view of the work and witness of our global ecumenical partners’ and local faith communities.
6. To take common steps of faith in embracing new people, places and cultures.

“How do I plan a People-to-People mission pilgrimage?”

Following are suggested steps on organizing a successful mission pilgrimage experience...

Approximately 18 months before the mission pilgrimage...

1. Consult with your congregation, conference or region and ask for their prayers as you begin planning. Perhaps there are others in your community who are struggling with a similar call: start a small mission study group, look for other pilgrims.
2. Assign a group contact person who will be in touch with the coordinator for the People-to-People Pilgrimage Program office. That person is often the “pilgrimage leader” for the group.
3. Make a tentative decision about possible dates and the geographical area of travel; have alternatives in mind. Note the importance of remaining flexible to the advice and availability of our overseas partners, as well as to the suggestions of our area office.

At least 12 months in advance...

4. Prepare a mission statement for your pilgrimage. Be sure to carefully reflect on what kind of experience you hope to achieve.
5. Begin to consider the group of individuals who will participate on the pilgrimage. It is important to note that 10 - 12 is the ideal size; of course, the hosting partner reserves the right to set the maximum group size based on their ability to accommodate mission groups.
6. Contact the People-to-People Pilgrimage Program office. The coordinator works cooperatively with the five (5) area offices ~Africa, East Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East and Europe, and Southern Asia ~and with our overseas partners in coordinating mission pilgrimages.
7. Request a People-to-People Pilgrimage Program basic information packet and an "Initial Response" form for you to complete. Complete and return the form that will be sent to you with as much information as you can and return it to our office as soon as time permits. The information requested will help clarify your mission goals and ease the planning process.

At least 9 months advance...

8. Set up accounting procedures for your travel funds. As you prepare your group's estimated or tentative travel budget and plan your fund-raising campaign, consider the financial information provided by the People-to-People Pilgrimage Program office for the specific area of the world to which you will travel. Be sure to budget for:
 - preparation cost... passports, visas, immunizations, appropriate clothing for the climate, and type of activity planned;
 - insurance... medical, accident, property;
 - travel... plane tickets, travel within the country to be visited, airport entrance and exit fees;
 - daily living expenses... housing accommodations, food, bottled water, gratuities, laundry, etc., and
 - miscellaneous... camera, film, small gifts for host, etc.
9. See the People-to-People Pilgrimage Program Resource List and order what you need.
10. Organize periodic gathering times for the pilgrimage participants.
11. For international travel, confirm that all participants have a valid passport. Note the importance of passports being valid for 6 months beyond the group's return date. Make certain that all members of the group take this action promptly.

12. For international travel, secure group visas information if deemed necessary by the U.S. Department of State. Visa requirements may be obtained from the U.S. Department of State Internet web sight at www.state.gov, go to Travel and Living abroad, enter Visa Service for Americans and select a letter for the country you will be visiting. Visas are provided by the countries consulates.

At least 6 months advance...

13. Prepare a tentative travel agenda or itinerary and contact a travel agent about ticketing arrangements. The travel agent will advise you about the required and recommended immunizations for the country you will be visiting. Detailed information on vaccinations and other health precautions may be obtained from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's hotline for international travelers at 1-877-394-8747 or through the CDC's Internet web site at www.cdc.gov.
14. Have your group discuss the included paper, "*If you are asked to provide financial assistance and/or are moved to help out in a particular situation you encounter*".... Talk about the content of this document, with each group member sharing his/her impressions. Discuss as a group your intention (or not) of providing special contributions for the work you will visit. Global Ministries has an inventory of special giving opportunities for the partner churches and programs, including the one(s) you will visit. If you have any questions on these matters, feel free to contact the Global Ministries Office of Resource Development, P.O. Box 1986, Indianapolis, Indiana 46206, tel: (317) 713-2555, gifts@dom.disciples.org.

At least 3 months before the mission pilgrimage...

15. Complete the final roster of trip applicants. Prepare a list with participants' name, address, telephone number, email address, passport number, birth date, and at least one emergency contact person(s) name~ address~ telephone number~ email address. Forward a copy of the list to the People-to-People Pilgrimage Program office.
16. To study and prepare for the trip, in addition to any materials provided by Global Ministries, try to meet a person from the country to be visited. Read newspapers from the chosen country, and try to get other material related to the country, learn songs, and poetry; go to the Internet and explore the country's web page at www.globalministries.org. Take a workshop in cross-cultural living, and some language lessons, if possible. Buy a tourist guidebook. Begin to have orientation meetings together. Discuss group norms (being on time, no putdowns, whatever you think is appropriate), and how you will handle it. Plan for what type of materials you will seek to bring back to your congregation, conference or region.
17. Be flexible! You may encounter changes in almost all the arrangements. Changes are not barriers; they are part of the whole learning experience.

18. Consider international travel insurance for the group participants. The People-to-People Pilgrimage Program does not insure the groups that travel internationally. Mission pilgrimages are self-funded, and thus, groups are responsible for their own international travel insurance. Contact the People-to-People Pilgrimage Program office for information on the insurance company that Global Ministries' Mission Personnel office has worked with in the past, for both individual and group coverage.

At least 2 months before the mission pilgrimage...

19. Compile a list of any special needs (i.e. physical, dietary, medicinal, etc.).
20. Encourage all participants to set up a personal journal; write reflections on biblical studies, learn about mission personnel in the region through the Internet web page at www.globalministries.org.
21. Train the members to be interpreters for mission.

At least 1 month before the mission pilgrimage...

22. Plan a "sending forth" commissioning service in which your whole congregation, or representatives of your conference or region participate. If participants come from various congregations, conferences or regions, plan a joint commissioning service.
23. As a group, preview / review all parts of the tentative travel agenda or itinerary (including what time to be at the airport or departure area).

Day of departure...

24. When all participants have gathered together, pray as you begin your pilgrimage and have a brief orientation. Go forth!

While on the pilgrimage...

25. Assure a time for daily devotions and group reflections.
26. If daily activities become overwhelming, set aside a special "processing" time. Talking over what's happening will help the group process the experience.
27. Keep a daily journal. You may not remember everything that happens or everything you see and learn without writing it down.

Last day of the mission pilgrimage...

28. Take time to share and celebrate with your host. This is the time for expressions of gratitude and exchanging of gifts.

After you return (within the first month).....

29. Organize a debriefing session for the group to guide them in processing the experience and incorporating it into their lives, and that of the congregation, conference or region.
30. Prepare a presentation for your congregation, conference or region and any others who may have assisted you in the planning process.
31. Submit copies of stories, reflections, photos (preferably email documents and photos) and evaluation forms to the People-to-People Pilgrimage Program office. Your group's documented experience is a record of the mission of the whole church. The People-to-People Pilgrimage Program will share your group's mission experience through newsletters and Global Ministries web site (www.globalministries.org).
32. Keep praying for the people you met and tell your story to anyone who will listen. Start planning for another visit. Be creative about ways to stay in touch with your community host. Invite your new friends to visit your country and advocate on their behalf.
33. Discuss any pending financial issues, including any special giving opportunities that you wish to explore as a follow-up to your visit and a continuing link to the ministries you visited. The Global Ministries Office of Resource Development is happy to work with you about these possibilities. If your group has funds remaining from your shared travel expense, you may wish to consider contributing them to the program(s) you visited. You may direct your gifts or inquiries to: Office of Resource Development, Global Ministries, P.O. Box 1986, Indianapolis, Indiana 46206, tel: (317) 713-2555, gifts@dom.disciples.org