



Welcome to the B. C. Mission Boat Society

Working with this ministry on one of our land based mission teams is an exciting and memorable experience. You will have the opportunity to spend up to a week living in a community, sharing God's Word and His love with those you meet. Past volunteers have found this experience to be life changing and spiritually renewing as they come to see God's presence clearly in events and people they meet.

You will have the opportunity to remove yourself from the day to day distractions we all experience at home and enjoy the beauty of God's creation on the British Columbia coast. During your land based mission you will have a chance to witness to others through one on one visits, Christian Children's Camps (VBS), teen activities, fellowship events, worship services, music ministry and more.

This Orientation Guide has been designed for those who have made the commitment to join in a land based mission team. We recommend you also read our 'Cross Cultural Ministry' document which will help you become familiar with the rich culture of First Nations people here on the coast. This Guide covers general preparation on a personal level, as well as the details your team will need to know as they plan their event.

Our Statement of Faith and Mission

All who volunteer with this ministry, work in agreement with our mission statement and our statement of faith.

Mission Statement

To show and share the love of Jesus Christ through relationship ministry in Coastal B.C.

Statement of Faith

We believe in the Triune God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:19)

We believe that the Bible is God's true inerrant Word given to us through writers inspired by the Holy Spirit that we might know God and His will for our lives (2 Timothy 3:16 and 17)

We believe that we are justified before God by His grace, through faith in Christ Jesus and we believe that no human works of our own attribute to salvation. (Ephesians 2: 8 and 9)

We believe that the means by which the grace of God reaches our hearts, minds and souls are through His Word and Sacraments (Baptism and the Lord's Supper).



Preparation

We strongly encourage you to speak with your pastor or someone you may know who has had a mission field experience. Ask your pastor and others to pray with you and ask them to share resources that may help you prepare to witness to others in a way that uses the unique gifts God has given you.

Prior to coming, pray for those you will meet in the community and for your fellow team mates. We encourage you to have two or three prayer partners who pray for you as you prepare and while you are on the mission trip.

Your team will need to select a team leader. This person will be the primary contact for your team of volunteers and with the Mission Boat office. The team leader will discuss with the Mission Boat office what the best number of people for your team will be based upon the community size and expected number of children at the camps or teen events.

Your team leader will need to discuss your gifts and skills as a group. This is so that you can identify the activities which you may be able to provide and the roles within your team.

During your preparation weeks, we highly recommend that you involve people who from your home congregation. There may be people who wish to help, but who are not able to go out with you on location. There are so many ways to involve others. Arrange a time at a congregational fellowship event or during a regular service (you will have more attendees) to share the initiative. Be prepared with a list of specific things you need help with. This may include such things as:

- food planning and organization,
- food purchasing and or precooking meals and freezing them,
- baking cookies to hand out during the camps and events,
- craft preparation (cutting, sorting etc),
- photocopying of activity sheets, craft instruction etc
- supplying camping equipment,
- packing,
- transportation,
- financial aid,
- PRAYER

Keep your congregation informed as to where, when, who and what is involved. Enable them to be a part of the event through prayer support. Post information on a bulletin board, in the church bulletin or newsletter. You will be able to generate a lot of enthusiasm by sharing and give your team members spiritual support as they prepare for the trip.



General Information

What is my purpose while on this mission trip?

- ***To share the hope that you have in Jesus Christ.***
- ***To establish a relationship with people so that the message of God's love is shared by your team.***
- ***To make a difference in the lives of the people by praying with and for them, by listening to them, by laughing and crying with them or by just being there.***

What is expected of me as a volunteer team member?

Your time in the community will be full of activities. This leads to late nights and early mornings. Courtesy, respect and a forgiving spirit go a long way in helping everyone have a positive experience. Prayer is a vital part of the experience as our idea is to help others grow in their faith while you grow in yours. Allowing the Holy Spirit to lead you each day will ensure a calm journey.

It is important that your team members be familiar with the resources available for 'hand-outs' during your visit. Your leader will share this information with you and your team may want to discuss ideas for using the resources you are bringing. We have a list of Bibles (adult, youth and children's) that we recommend based on past experience – for example the Children's Picture Bible is very popular and the children spend time reading it. Your team might also consider bringing Christian magazines, tracts, colouring books etc.

Consider beforehand whether your team will distribute Bibles after discussion with the Mission Boat office. Try and make sure the Bible is age related so it can be read by the intended recipient. There have been many cases of adults with limited reading skills finding a children's picture Bible the only Bible they can easily walk through. If your group is distributing Bibles, it is recommended to write an inscription inside to personalize the gift. Make a note of who they were distributed to so that the following year you do not overlap unnecessarily due to costs.

We will supply your team with crosses to distribute, curriculum for the Children's Camps and teen activity ideas. It is your team's responsibility to prepare all craft supplies for the Children's camps, the curriculum will provide you with suggested crafts to assist you. The more you can leave with people you visit, the more of a reminder they will have of our visit, but more importantly, our purpose for being there.

While in the community you should be prepared to meet new challenges and have new experiences. When you are open to these experiences, you will naturally treat others in a Christian manner. Listen to people and respect the differences you do encounter. Be prepared to pray and talk with people, listen and learn from them, be ministered to by them and share the hope you have in Christ Jesus with them. However, if these opportunities do not present themselves as you would hope and expect, remember that you are a part of



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God's plan and are making a connection that will lead to future opportunities and ways for God to work in their lives. Always do your best to be flexible and go with the flow. Lastly, relax. Remember, God will prepare people's hearts for the Word, all you have to do is share your faith and hope in God.

While in the community...

When arriving in the community you will be living in for the week, your team leader should introduce themselves to the key contact we have in the community and any other local leaders. Please note that with most teams we place a Mission Boat staff member who will have been handling the contacts to arrange your visit and they will assist your introductions. Remember we will have obtained permission for you to be there. You will find communities welcoming and willing to work with you.

We want to assist any local Christian leaders in ministering to their community. We should ask them and the local leadership (such as band council members) how we can best serve their community and try to help them. In most cases this will have been done prior to your team's arrival in the community by the Mission Boat office to help plan your activities, but we always recommend inquiring once on site so as not to miss any opportunities.

Please do not use any cameras until you have obtained permission. Ask the Mission Boat staff member if cameras are allowed. We would rather be seen as helpers and guests than as tourists. Most communities do not object to photographs of our events such as VBS or pot-blessed suppers. **If you wish to photograph cultural events or part of the community, permission MUST be obtained from the band office or via an elder or council member. Respecting privacy of those we visit is our first priority.**

Please use common sense and avoid being alone with a child or teen out of the sight of others, so as not to put yourself in a possible compromising situation.

Participating in a land based team means that you are part of the ongoing spiritual growth and process in the community you are serving. Entering a new community you may find things quite different from the community you live in. Go with an attitude of respect; put aside any pre-conceived ideas and see God's beautiful children there. Listen and learn about them and their community with an open heart and mind. Serving our Father in this way, we are blessed as much as those that are touched by your visit.

When you are in the community, you may become aware of social, economic or family problems. You are there from several days to a week, yet you may feel great concern over the problems you see. This is part of God's purpose in bringing you to such a community – to help His people find acceptance, love and hope. You are there for Him, and He will help you share the Gospel message and provide the Holy Spirit to help both you and those you are there to share with.



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Above all, do not make comments that judge their situation. Listen to understand. Really listen with your mouth closed and your ears and eyes open. This is a real sign of respect and consideration. Learn what it is like for them in their community, their struggles, hopes, concerns and opportunities. Be gentle in your approach and show God's love to those that are lost to him so that they find their way home through Jesus, to be saved. If you are in a First Nations community, it is very important to remember the respect accorded to the Elders

in the community. As about the history of the community, much is contained in oral histories such as the history of the people, the community and stories. This oral tradition is very important in First Nation culture. This is not a time to contradict or correct if certain observations are made, this is a time to listen to understand.

With the comfort in story telling found in First Nations community, this is an especially important time within the Children's camps (VBS). The children will love the stories from the Bible. You will also find story telling an effective way of speaking to an adult or youth gathering if your team is sharing a short message in a fellowship time. Designate someone to become familiar with a few scripture messages told in the parable manner that Jesus himself used. Be sure to link it to the scriptural truth at the end so the connection is made.

It is suggested if you are able, to invite an Elder in a First Nations community to join in your events such as the Children's camps, teen events or fellowship night (even if just for a short time). This shows respect to them for their position in the community and the honour accorded to your group for being there.

The evening or late afternoon when the VBS is done may provide the team for some opportunity for fellowship with others in the community. Your team can decide if they want to try an open fellowship BBQ one evening, or encourage youth or grown ups to come for song and fellowship. There may be some communities that may even respond to an informal worship service if offered. Decide ahead of time what you will be able to provide. In Bible studies and discussions, be aware of the value of listening, of silence. It is common for First Nations people in particular to appreciate more pauses and time to think in conversations so relax and go with the flow.

As team members walk about always be respectful, smile and greet those that you see, talk if they seem interested but do not make it your agenda. Ask conversational questions; perhaps explain who you are and why you are there. If you have event planned, simply invite them. They will recognize you as new there and your willingness to reach out is a witness.



PRAYER

Prayer ensures your plans are God's plans and that you are open and flexible. Be sure to involve your congregation in supporting your team in prayer. Here are some suggestions of specific needs your prayer partners could pray for as your team serves:

- That all involved have a time of spiritual growth
- That the team may be empowered with the Holy Spirit for joyful service
- For the health and safety of all involved, including safe travel
- To have hearts and doors opened to the ministry and the Word
- For attendance at the events the team does while in the community
- That God's Word may take root throughout the team visit and afterwards
- For deliverance from discouragement
- That the whole community may see the blessings of this ministry
- That team members be able to minister in a way that meets the needs of the people
- For generous hearts who will provide resources for continuing ministry
- After the team returns, for the community and for its ongoing support



Getting Ready

To help you and your team get organized we recommend you think about your time lines. For example, the following can be used to make sure you stay on track and are ready.

Date of trip: _____

One Week Before is: _____

- Confirm all materials are ready
- Confirm all transportation arrangements are firm
- Confirm all food, accommodation needs are looked after
- Check with the Mission Boat office to confirm any last minute changes in the team.

Two Weeks Before is: _____

- Ensure all craft supplies, in the number suggested by the Mission Boat office, are ready, organized, pre- cut etc.. It is recommended you have finished samples of each.
- Group materials by age category and place in separate containers.
- Prepare menu and shopping list for team meals.
- Prepare items for children's refreshments, drinks or snacks.
- Put the finishing touches on music, skits, etc... The Mission Boat will provide you with their songbooks and the staff member is normally a guitarist to assist your team. Please discuss music with our office as it is an important part of the ministry.

Four to Eight Weeks Before is: _____

- Firm up team member volunteers and provide orientation to their roles
- Obtain medical and emergency contact information, medical treatment forms, waivers and criminal record checks for all volunteers – send these to the Mission Boat office.
- Submit your Mission Team Application to the Mission Boat office along with the \$250.00 co-ordination fee.
- Discuss the needs of the community with the Mission Boat office and any special considerations within your team or the community.
- Discuss transportation, accommodation and other unique logistical issues with the Mission Boat office.
- Obtain curriculum from the Mission Boat office and share with team members. Please note if you wish to use your own curriculum we will request a copy of it to determine content and how it may overlap with other teams visiting the community.
- Start getting volunteers to help with preparation (congregational involvement).
- Assign team member roles.
- Obtain camping gear if required, practice putting it up.
- Ensure you have a medical kit.
- Purchase any needed supplies (for children's or youth events)
- Discuss bible needs with the Mission Boat office (past teams may have supplied ample bibles to the community)
- Determine from the Mission Boat office who the staff member will be that accompanies your team, what their gifts are, and what their role will be.



DAILY ROUTINE GUIDELINES

Remember all activities must be flexible. For most teams there will have been dates and times established for the Christian Children's Camp. Beyond this we recommend planning fellowship, teen and other events once you are in the community and understand what events would be best and other things that may be going on in the community.

Meals

We normally recommend that you try and establish meal times and rotate cooking responsibilities so that you can structure your open time in each day. This allows the whole team to have the opportunity to participate in outreach activities.

Briefing (morning)

We recommend that during or after breakfast your team has a briefing on the day's planned activities. This will include a general outline of what you are doing that day and a time to share thoughts, devotion, and prayers for guidance. This can also be a time to assign tasks. You will want to be sure to have time to rehearse anything necessary for your events that day.

Debriefing

As important as it is to spend time reaching out to others, you must also spend time taking care of yourself and your spiritual needs. This is the time for making notes on the events of the day and sharing the experiences you have had. It is a time for a Bible study or devotion. Your team may have one person lead this session for the week or everyone may take a turn. It is important to remember people have different comfort levels with this type of sharing and that should be respected.

When you discuss the day's activities we encourage you to share how God worked in your lives and the events that day.

Please try and note the names, addresses and phone numbers of people that you wish the Mission Boat to keep in contact with throughout the year. ***We also ask that each team member find one or two people that they could write letters of encouragement to through the coming year as part of their ministry after leaving the community. This should be noted in your daily notes at the end of the week.***

Remember as you debrief that there are times the team will get to see results of sharing His word, and times they will not. When a volunteer goes into a mission team it means acceptance that they may not see change or impact from their service. God takes small seeds of faith and nurtures them according to His time, not ours. All team members should take heart that they have been blessed by His love to take part in the event, meet people from a new community and culture, and feel their own faith strengthened by serving.



FELLOWSHIP and OUTREACH

Fellowship time with your team

Witnessing to others about the love God has for you in Christ Jesus can be challenging for some. This is personal and intimate for Christians and it can often be difficult to put our belief into words that express our faith to others. However, sharing our strengths and weaknesses, concerns or joy is part of our spiritual growth. The time you are on this trip is a time we walk together in faith with other Christians, working together and sharing our experiences – both the success stories and the works in progress. It is a wonderful opportunity, given to us by the Lord, to grow in our own faith and to be a part of others' growth. God has a plan for each of us and we need to listen closely to Him at all times. Look for ways to help strengthen each other. Look for ways to care for the needs of each other and those we meet!

Sharing God is a personal undertaking. There is no right or wrong way to tell others of His effect on your life and His love for you. Below you will find some ideas for ways to share with your team and with those you meet. Remember that everyone has different levels of comfort for sharing their personal walk of faith and that God will lead your sharing just as He guides everything else.

Ideas for Sharing

Bible Studies:

If you have a favorite Bible study you wish to share, please discuss this with your team leader. This study can be one you have created yourself or one you have done in the past that you feel would help your team on their spiritual journey. You may have the opportunity to share it in the community you are visiting too.

Bible Quotes:

Many teams have found that having one or two members share a favorite verse at the beginning of each day for everyone to ponder on through the day generates a lot of thought. That evening, the people who shared the verses can discuss the meaning of that verse and share it with the others. Everyone takes a turn so everyone shares. This offers a comfortable level of sharing for most members and gives a focus for the day.

Faith-based discussion of the day's events

This often occurs during the debriefing and can provide a great way to share how God worked in everyone's life that day. It also affirms your reason for being on the trip as you can recognize the great ways God is working through your team and those around you.



OUTREACH Ideas

Outreach is often challenging, but always rewarding. Here are a few simple guidelines and ideas to help you plan your outreach activities. Remember to pray. Ask the Lord to open the right doors and give you opportunities to share Him with people and He will guide you.

Use the skills of the team. If you have a person that is gifted in working with children or someone who is comfortable leading adults' discussion group, use those people! This does not mean that everyone cannot help out – in fact everyone who feels called should be involved so that they can learn new skills and discover their talents.

Check with local leaders to see if they have events they would favor once you are in the community. This will have been part of the pre trip planning done by the Mission Boat office for your team but we always recommend checking once on site.

While on site there are certain guidelines that must be followed to prevent any unforeseen events. Specifically,

- **It is recommended that team members never walk about individually in a new community – but always with a partner or in a group.**
- **Never leave valuables unattended – do not bring valuables to the site!**
- **Always lock the facility, if possible, when it is not in use**
- **Never be alone with a child – this is common sense in today's world but very important. Volunteers must adhere to this during the VBS or any other event and while in the community.**
- **Be sensitive to appropriate touching with children – a friendly hug or holding hands can seem innocent or threatening depending upon the situation – be careful not to unintentionally create a situation that could be misinterpreted.**
- **Remember while you are on site that YOU represent a Christian to the community in all that you do.**

Activity ideas

Ask the adults or teens to suggest an activity, or if they have any events when you are there that you might be able to join in.

General Fellowship:

Team members can walkabout in twos, introduce themselves and visit. We recommend inviting people to your 'home' location for coffee, singing and fellowship in the evening or any other open time. A general rule, as much as possible, team members in small groups should be encouraged to be out meeting and talking with people.



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Barbecues and Pot blessed Meals:

Join the community in a barbecue or pot blessed (pot luck) dinner. Music is always great at these events. If you plan a barbecue after a VBS, it may be nice for the children to have a skit, story, song or craft to share with everyone.

Youth events:

Bonfires, story telling, swimming, games, music, crafts, and Bible studies on real life issues all go over well with youth. Their needs are different than younger children. Ask them what they would like to talk about.

Adult events:

These events can be as simple as having coffee or as complex as planning a course or Bible study. They will depend on the skills and interests of your team and of the community.

One on one ministry:

Just spend time talking and listening to someone in need, shut ins, families, the elderly.

Visitations:

The Mission Boat staff member will have a list of people we stay in touch with who would appreciate a visit. Ask those that you meet who might like a visit from some of your team members. In most communities there are those that are lonely or housebound who really appreciate a caring visit.

Helping or service projects:

Sometimes special help is requested of us for service projects. If we can meet this need people really appreciate the extra hands. However, if nothing is open at the time we visit it is worth looking into "hammer and nails" projects that we could help with in the future.

Advertising Events:

Advertising of events will have happened before hand and this will be discussed with your team leader prior to your arrival in the community, but never assume people know about our event.

Children's Camps (Vacation Bible School or VBS):

Please be sure to have practiced your curriculum including skits, stories and the crafts before trying to do them with children. This will enable you to comfortably cover the important parts of the story and/or craft preparation smoothly.

We have tried to provide you with some other tips for the Children's camps:



Registration of Children

Whenever possible it is desirable to register children each day. **This would include designating someone in your team to find out and record the parents name, address, phone number and emergency number. This may not always be easy to obtain in some of the communities you are in. Children may just show up.**

See if any of the local parents who may be there recognize and know the child's contact information. You will have to make individual decisions as to the child attending if you do not know the contact information. In many communities you may find children arriving in a group,

without a parent. Be ready to deal with this, as you will want to avoid turning a child away from attending the VBS unless absolutely necessary.

Provide each child with a nametag (stick-on is preferable to pins that may injure), or a nametag necklace. Ensure each team member is also wearing a nametag.

Christian Kids Camps - Routines

Each day, the team should make time for devotions before the VBS and afterwards.

Prior to each day, the team should review their schedule and task assignments/plans.

It is highly recommended that you have 2 spare volunteers to help set up and clean up after activities. It is best to move the age group from one centre to the next, IE: story telling area, to outdoor activity, to craft to music – or however your schedule co-ordinates. The spare volunteers can prepare for and clean up after each group.

Remember to have each team member and child wear their name tag every day.

Decide whether you want to have opening or closing worship with the group. This each team will have to decide. Some feel the attention spans are longer in the opening worship, others feel the closing worship reinforces the biblical truths learned that day.

If your group is large, you may want to consider having the younger ones worship separately in a shorter service. This needs to be decided by each group.

The teams should be broken down by age groups (perhaps for 2 –3 age levels, depending upon the numbers).

Do not let kids run in and out getting into everything. They will be curious and excited, but they do need structure.

Encourage local people to participate and be sure to record their name, address and phone number. If local volunteers do come to help, never leave them alone with children. You will not know their background.



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Discuss a 'bathroom' plan. How will this be handled?

Some children may have come without eating anything. Depending upon the area, you might want to start with peanut butter/jelly sandwiches, water, cookies, a granola bar etc.. The children will not be able to concentrate if they come hungry so it would be better to have them sit at a table, and the team distributes the food directly to them. Be sure to reinforce they are not to run around with food.

You may wish to bring plastic sheeting to cover the floors or tables.

Have something like activity sheets, colouring etc.. with paper, pencils or crayons for any free time if children arrive before the VBS activity is actually starting.

Make sure your first aid kit is handy.

You may find it helpful to take some of the older ones (pre-teen or early teen) and split them up to be helpers with other groups. The older ones can assist the younger ones. This eliminates some of the problems you may encounter with distractions if this age group feels they are bored. Alternatively, if your team has someone with special youth activities and discussions, that team member should move the group to a more private area for part or all of the day's session.

At the end of each day, be sure to clean up the area completely. At the end of the VBS the facility should look as good, or better, than you found it.

It is suggested that the team de-brief on the day's activities. You will have already had the team broken into groups based upon the ages of the children. These groups will have a daily schedule they were following. In the debrief, discuss how it went. What went well, what could have been improved? Is there anything to be aware of that will affect the next day's activities (ill child, behaviour issue, ill team member etc). Encourage each other if a team member had a challenging day or a down day.

Pray as a team at the end of each day.

Try very hard not to put your expectations on the event or the outcomes. Do not be disappointed if only a few children attend. God works in ways we cannot comprehend. He has brought you to that community to do a VBS for His reasons. Trust God.

Remember when you pray during the VBS you are showing children how easy it is to speak to our Father in heaven.

When you come back home, continue to pray for specific children or situations.



WHAT TO BRING ON YOUR TRIP

We cannot guarantee the availability of any laundry facilities in the community you will be visiting. You will know during the preparation phase what your accommodations will be (for example camping, staying in homes with people from the community etc...)

Although this is a mission of God, this is not a formal church. Please avoid bringing your best “whites”. Layering is the best way to dress as the weather in July and August is quite variable and there is usually a breeze near the water. Summer time on the coast is the dry season, but it is very unpredictable and rainfall is possible. Temperatures can range from 15-30 degrees Celsius (55-85 degrees Fahrenheit) depending on the wind speed, wind direction, cloud cover and rainfall. It is always better to be prepared for cold weather and have a warm sunny holiday, than the opposite.

Clothing Needs

Warm jacket or wind breaker (evenings can still be breezy cold)

Rain Gear (if your jacket isn't waterproof)

Sweats and t-shirts

Jeans

Shorts

Bathing suit

Towels

Flip-Flops (when using showers)

Comfortable walking shoes or hiking boots (if you bring hiking boots, you may want to bring a pair of runners for on the boat)

Sunglasses and/or Sun hat

Conservative sleepwear as your sleeping accommodations may be communal (light jogging wear is usually most comfortable)

Personal needs – i.e. soap, shampoo, toothpaste, towels

We asked you not to bring personal walkmans, Discman, MP3 players, hand held video games etc that take you away from fellowship with others. No alcohol is allowed.

WHEN YOU RETURN HOME

We request your team provide us written summary of your visit, with contact names/info, events held and the response, future opportunities, what went well, what you would change, the people your team selected to write encouraging letters to and any other information you think is helpful for the Mission Boat ministry. Please also provide a list, with addresses, of anyone who you would like to receive a special thank you from our office and include the reason why so that we can do an appropriate note.