

# On the Job Training with God

## Devotions for Volunteer Work Teams



Photo: Barry Carlin



# On the Job Training with God: Devotions for Work Teams

These devotions have been designed to give team members tactile and visual reminders of the spiritual insights to be discovered serving God on a work team. The vignettes describe common work team experiences and emotions. You may want to complement them with additional Scripture and songs.

You will notice there are nine days' worth of devotions. This is so that they may be used for the day before and after the trip. Or two devotions can be used in one day, however the schedule permits and the Spirit moves. It is important to read through the devotions before you lead them. If devotion time is at night, you should read them early in the day. If your devotion time is in the morning, you should read them the night before.

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## **Servant Blessing**

*If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.*

*Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.*

-from the words of Apostle Paul (Philippians 2:1-5 NIV)

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## **Day 1**

Verse for reflection: 3 John 1

*Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the believers, even though they are strangers to you. They have told the church about your love.*

### **If I Had a Hammer**

Dan kept his heart focused on the job at hand, pulling the bent nails from the wooden supports he'd ripped from the old roof earlier that morning. Nothing was going as he had imagined. The food made him sick, and at night the guy in the next bunk roared like a chainsaw motor.

The jobsite was lacking most of the tools they needed, and, oh, what he wouldn't give for an electric saw and cordless drill to get the job done. The final aggravation had been when their leader had assigned him to work with guy who spoke less English than Dan knew Spanish—hola and adios amigo! He'd signed up for the work mission reluctantly, more to humor his pastor than because he really felt called. But for now the hammer felt good in his hand, the sound of steel scratching pine comforting. He would get through the day one nail at time.

“Por favor—el martillo,” said Luis, one of the residents who had come to help. The Latin American fellow teen held out his hand to borrow the tool Dan instinctively clutched tighter.

Luis smiled and repeated his request. He made a fist as if to grasp the hammer, then pointed to the loosed board on the rickety, hand-hewn cellar door they were attempting to repair.

“Hammer?” Dan asked.

“Martillo,” Luis translated.

It wasn't long until Dan picked up the words for nail, level, ladder, and dozens more. In turn, Luis learned an American folk song, as the young men hammered out friendship that week.

Perhaps you, like Dan, are feeling overwhelmed. You feel like a stranger in a strange land. Perhaps you, too, are clutching something familiar, holding on to the very tool God has given you to share.

### **Questions for reflection**

When did you feel overwhelmed today?

Describe the situation.

Are you clutching something familiar? Are you hiding behind dark sunglasses, or retreating to familiarity by only talking to your friends on the team? Are you, like Dan, trying to lose yourself in the work? What might be preventing you from experiencing the blessings God has in store for you this week?

### **Physical reminder of spiritual lesson**

Choose a possession that represents your “clutching the familiar,” and put it in the middle of the circle. Ask God to open your heart and mind to new possibilities to experience tomorrow with the anticipation of serendipity.

### **Prayer**

Lord, I want what you have prepared for me this week. Empty my hands of whatever is in the way of receiving your blessings.



## **Day 2**

Verses for reflection: Luke 12:6–7

*Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet God forgets not one of them. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.*

### **For Want of a Nail**

Jack reached into his nail pouch for a handful of nails, and as usual, dropped several on the ground. He didn't waste time picking them up, but went back to banging his way to completing the task at hand.

He'd signed on to the trip as a chaperone, but secretly hoped to be left to his pleasure, “pounding good sense into dumb wood,” as he described his skill at old-house repair. But then he'd been assigned Kevin, a halfpint adolescent whom Jack assumed was short on common-sense.

He glanced at the kid he'd instructed to “sit and stay out of trouble,” just as his hand came up empty from the nail bag. He remembered an old carpenters' saying, “For want of a nail the house was lost.”

Kevin anticipated Jack's need and scrambled to gather the usable of the nails that littered the ground. If Jack had dropped his measuring tape, he would have immediately retrieved it. And Jack always put his drill back in the case when not in use. But nails? He rarely picked the usable from the spent at the end of the job.

Jack handed Kevin the hammer, and tucked one of the discarded nails in his pocket to remind himself of the value of skilled labor—even skills yet to be discovered.

### **Questions for reflection**

- Have you felt ordinary or not needed on the job?
- Have you, perhaps, taken for granted the value of a fellow member?

### **Physical reminder of spiritual lesson**

Choose a tool to represent another team member, and place it in the circle. Ask God to reveal that team members' hidden talent or special skill.

### **Prayer**

Sometimes, Lord, you use the most ordinary people for the most extraordinary purposes. We have been hammered and stretched already this week, and often caught up in the job at hand, too busy to appreciate the contributions of fellow team members. Help us to appreciate the nails in our group as well as the hammers.





### **Day 3**

Verse for reflection: 2 Corinthians 12:9

*But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.*

### **Life is Not Fair!**

Liz bought everything she thought she would need for the hundred-plus temperatures. She purchased the best water bottle and sun block, and a really cute sun hat. She'd thought that she was prepared for that week on the coast of the Gulf of Mexico.

What she wasn't prepared for was Danny. The twelve year-old showed up early that morning to help repair the storm damaged home where he lived with his grandmother. Shoes lace-less and soles flopping, Danny scrambled the rock pile time after time to retrieve the required stone for the footings they needed to build a new handicap ramp at the entrance.

Danny had skipped school that day, as he had many times in the previous months, to help his grandmother clean up after the hurricane. The arrival of Liz and her group to help was an "answer to prayer," Danny's grandmother had told the team a day earlier. Yet at that moment, Liz felt like anything but an answer to prayer.

She had offered Danny her work boots earlier in the day, and he took them, but then seemed to be avoiding her ever since. What had begun as a playful adversarial friendship had suddenly seemed to turn cold.

Liz talked to the leaders and other group members and came to realize that accepting that gift had cost Danny dearly. The boy had compromised his pride to accept even badly needed shoes.

"It isn't fair!" Liz told her team mates that evening during devotions. "It just isn't fair. Danny has so little when I have so much. I just wanted to help him."

Perhaps you, like Liz, calculated the adventure to the last detail, only to end up disappointed.

We often expect God to honor our commitments, without really praying about our expectations. We inform God of our goals, remind God of our sacrifice, and ask God to bless our good intentions. We don't factor in the wisdom that God's power is made perfect in our weakness.

### **Questions for reflection**

- Where today were you confronted with the stark reality that life is, indeed, not fair?
- How did that experience affect you?

### **Physical reminder of spiritual lesson**

Choose an item that represents a lesson God may be teaching you about this seemingly unfair situation, and place it in the center of the circle. Share with the group what you have learned.

### **Prayer**

Lord, you know me at my worst and at my best. You are with me when I am strong and when I am humbled. Continue to stretch me and transform into the image of your son, Jesus. Give me your vision to see dignity in the people we come to serve and hope in situations that we cannot change.



## Day 4

Verse for reflection: Proverbs 11:2

*When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.*

### **Nobody Needs a Martyr**

The Caribbean sun was brutal, so brutal that the team leaders ordered rest during the hottest hours of the days, but Nick thought he knew better. He had worked two summers on one of his father's construction crews, spreading asphalt on driveways. Nick took pride in his physique and his ability to handle hard labor, considering the other guys on the team to be video-game wimps and coach potatoes.

It nearly drove him crazy to sit around after lunch "chewing the fat," as his father always called it, when people were standing around wasting time. Why, he could accomplish in their two-hour lunch break what any one of the other members on his team would need days to complete.

Nick went back to the site early with plans to set a full row of blocks on the foundation they were rebuilding, but the sand had not been hauled from the reserve to the spot where they were working. He would also need to retrieve a bag of cement from the back of the pickup truck. By the time the team meandered back to the site from the shady area where they had been picnicking, Nick was feeling a little nauseated.

One of the girls on the team reached for the handles of the wheelbarrow load of sand he'd just shoveled, as Nick closed his eyes to dizzying whorls of red.

"I can do it myself," He managed to grouse.

The petite redhead ignored him, grabbed the wheelbarrow full of sand, and headed up the ramp and toward the wall where they were working.

Nick grabbed the shovel to use as a crutch, afraid his knees would buckle. Just then Martha, the team medic, slipped her arm around Nick to brace him.

Heat exhaustion was her diagnosis.

"I felt bad for embarrassing him," Wendy whispered in earshot of Nick. "But he deserved it—didn't he?"

None of us likes the take-charge know it all, and may even wish for his collapse. After all, he deserved it, didn't he? Yet we, like Nick, all have expectations—all make judgments about others and their capacities. We each have gifts, which when we are prideful, often become our weaknesses and cause our downfalls.

### **Questions for reflection**

- In what one area of your life do you see yourself as in control, and think of yourself, perhaps, better than others?
- How might this become a weakness—perhaps causing your collapse?

### **Physical reminder of spiritual lesson**

Choose something that represents a talent or skill you bring to the team, and place it in the circle, asking God to keep you humble. Ask for guidance in using your special gifts and talents to glorify

God in service to others. Teammates may want to offer words of encouragement to friends who confess struggling with pride.

**Prayer**

Lord, we are self-centered creatures. Thank you for giving us strengths and weaknesses. Help us to balance those as we work together this week. We dedicate our talents and skills to you and the work you have called us to do.

## **Day 5**

Verse for reflection: Romans 5:5

*And hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.*

### **If You Just Would Have Been There**

Lacy hugged herself tight against the wave of remorse. She'd only turned away for a moment to help team member with a bucket of cement. Audrey had been up and down that ladder a half dozen times that afternoon, and it stayed anchored.

Two minutes tops! That's all the time Lacy had left her post as spotter.

"Audrey has a concussion," the doctor announced. "Maybe some internal bleeding. We won't know until we get the results of the tests."

He rambled on, and Lacy listened like the dutiful friend she wanted to be. Two of her team members stood behind her, their unspoken accusation burrowing into the back of her head. "If you just would have been there..." She could almost hear their silent blame. "You should have been holding that ladder."

Lacy was not doing her job, but neither was Audrey. She started down the ladder without a spotter. It is easy enough to do when we are feeling confidently in control. Each of us has an obligation to the other—the spotters and the climbers.

### **Questions for reflection**

- When have you felt like Audrey, shortchanged by someone missing when needed?
- When have you felt like Lacy and neglected your responsibility?

### **Physical reminder of spiritual lesson**

Choose something that represents one of your responsibilities on the job, and place it in the circle. Ask each other to help one another not to take responsibility for granted.

### **Prayer**

Lord, we often blame you for not anticipating our foibles and failings. And we often fail to be there for those who need us. Lord, help us to be both attentive spotters and sensible climbers. Help us to shoulder our responsibilities and keep each other accountable on the job.



## **Day 6**

Verses for reflection: Matthew 5:23–24

*So when you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first to be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift.*

### **Forgiving the Unrepentant**

Their backpacks had been robbed. The thief, or thieves, had not taken anything more valuable than a few disposable cameras, a pair of work gloves, a flashlight, and some loose cash. Carol had not had anything taken from her bag, yet she felt worse than violated; she felt betrayed.

She'd come on this mission trip to serve "the least of these" – as their leader had referred to the poor children who hung around the job site. How could they have robbed the very people who had come to help them?

Carol sat numb, refusing to feel compassion for the boy their team leader questioned after the boy had been caught with the flashlight.

The nine year-old neighborhood kid she'd come to know as Pinch pulled his shoulders in and lowered his head. He looked at Carol with downturned eyes, but did not confess to the group. He was the child she'd given a candy bar a day earlier. He'd walked back to the van with her. He'd seen the open backpacks and their personal possessions in back of the van.

As she now realized he had been planning the robbery, Carol wanted to scream. She just wanted to go home, put this whole sorry experience behind her.

"The door was unlocked," the leader told them, after he'd dismissed Pinch and sent him home for the day. "Who had the key last?"

He glanced around the room.

Carol fingered the serrated edge of the key in her pocket. The others already didn't like her—called her a whiner and cry-baby. They would hate her if they knew she had left the van unlocked.

### **Questions for reflection**

- Have you ever been wronged by someone who wouldn't admit it? How did you handle it?
- Have you ever done anything to hurt someone that you have not confessed? What held you back?

### **Physical reminder of spiritual lesson**

Place a dirty work rag or stinky piece of clothing in the center and ask God to forgive you for being unlovely to someone else. Ask God to help you apologize to that person. Quietly forgive those who have wronged you, even if they are unable to ask for forgiveness. And if you harbor bitterness, ask God to take that from you.

### **Prayer**

Lord you challenge us to remove the log from our eye before we pick splinters from our neighbor's, but it is hard to forgive when we don't understand the why. Give us the strength to confess our sins, and forgive those who sin against us.





## **Day 7**

Verse for reflection: Romans 5:5

*And hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.*

## **Windows for the Soul**

“It doesn't fit.”

A collective groan.

Mark, their adult leader, scrutinized the pane of glass Jason was holding, as the rest of the group circled with tools in hand, half expecting a miracle in the front yard of the adobe house on a Cheyenne Indian reservation.

The members of the crew came from three different states, and represented several religious denominations with about as varied an amount of construction experience. Their task was to replace broken windows and two rotten doors, then scrape and paint the house. Thus far, wreckage seemed all they had to show for their first day on the job.

The new doors swung the wrong way, something they discovered after they destroyed the old ones, and now it was clear that the precut windowpanes wouldn't fit. Someone suggested scraping the house, and they realized they didn't even have a ladder.

They stood befuddled until Mark bowed his head. Dropping their tools, they circled and held hands, and Mark asked God to provide new windows and doors.

A choral “Amen” punctuated what felt like newfound confidence.

Jason and a couple of others taped plastic over the missing windows and covered the doorframes with plywood, anticipating a miracle in the morning. The rest of the day Jason had a wonderful time playing with Asa, the resident's adorable four year-old.

The first test of the team's faith came that afternoon when they were informed that replacement doors and windows would cost more than three hundred dollars extra. On top of that, they probably couldn't be delivered before the team had to leave. Then, that night they experienced a torrential downpour!

“Never underestimate God,” their work camp leader told them that night after supper. But all Jason felt was disappointment. Other groups at the camp were finishing projects, while their resident's house was being pummeled with rain.

Where was God?

Mark called them over to see the slide show of the day on his laptop computer. Jason swallowed his disappointment and tried to enjoy the photo journal of the day's failures. How could God not answer their prayers? Why would God bring rain when the family had no windows?

Why Lord?

Just then Asa's beaming smile lit the screen. His pudgy arms were wrapped around Jason's neck. The music faded as the slide show ended, but Jason continued to stare at Asa on the screen.

The day's scripture, "For your ways are not my ways," flashed in his mind. He had become so concerned about the "work" they had to accomplish, that he had almost missed his real mission.

That night when teams held hands, Jason offered a prayer, "Lord, Your will, not ours."

The next morning they received a 12-foot ladder, and two teenage neighbors came to help them paint. Jason had a great time getting to know them, but still had not heard about the windows and doors.

"Trust," whispered the Still Small Voice in Jason's mind.

Friday morning, not only were glass panes and doors that swung the correct direction waiting for them, but they were met at their site by two additional crews—equipped with ladders!

Their prayer circle formed once more on the front lawn of that home, this time joyfully praising God, not only for God's provision, but also for their transformed lives.

### **Questions for reflection**

- When have the tasks you have been assigned seemed impossible? How did you manage?
- Describe a relationship you have discovered during your down time on the job.

### **Physical reminder of spiritual lesson**

Choose something that represents how your life has changed during these few days on the job, and place it in the circle. Or contribute something that represents a seemingly impossible obstacle you overcame with God.

### **Prayer**

Truly Lord, your hope will not disappoint us. Help us to keep this in focus as we face daily setbacks and frustrations and seeming failures. Open our eyes to see special relationships you have planned for us this week. We trust that you who began this good work will see it to completion.

## Day 8

Verse for reflection: Romans 2:1–4

*Therefore you have no excuse, whoever you are, when you judge others; for in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, are doing the very same things. You say, “We know that God’s judgment on those who do such things is in accordance with the truth.” Do you imagine, whoever you are, that when you judge those who do such things and yet do them yourself, you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you despise the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience? Do you not realize that God’s kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?*

## Tell Tale Heart

It was not Ella’s first work mission. She was a seasoned veteran, brave enough to face a crew of antsy adolescents looking to transform the world. So when they were assigned to give the kitchen walls a fresh coat of paint, she figured, “Piece of cake.” She would supervise the teens as they slapped on the lemon latex, and resident would not only get a new house, but a new lease on life.

She and her teen crew arrived at the work site Monday morning, eager to slosh paint for the Lord, but then the stench ambushed them at the door before their resident Mike even had a chance to greet them.

Ella could not help her disgust; after all, as her grandmother used to say, “It’s not a sin to be poor: the sin is to be dirty.”

Her grandmother’s words would plague Ella that week.

They went to work clearing the counters and removing debris, optimism still being the operative word as they plunged into the job of cleaning the kitchen. They were not only going to spruce up the place, Ella decided, but effect some changes in Mike as well.

Mike seemed more concerned with purchasing the daily lottery ticket than whether the supper dishes from the night before were washed. Ella was sure their example of humility in service was totally lost on the man.

That night as they sang “Humble Thyself in the Sight of the Lord” at evening devotions, Ella felt herself being pulled down rather than lifted up.

She scrubbed the kitchen floor most of the next day in self-martyred silence, until she felt an invisible nudge.

“You know,” Kara, one of Ella’s favorite teen charges began. “Maybe this place was so dirty Mike didn’t know where to start. My bedroom gets like that. My mom comes in and starts to help me, and all of a sudden it gets done. What you think?”

Ella shrugged. Mike did not deserve sympathy. They should be helping someone willing to help themselves.

Kara left to dump the bucket of water, and Ella leaned back on her haunches, exhausted.

“Why are you doing this job?” came the voice of the Lord in her mind.

“I don’t rightly know!” Her own honesty astonished her.

The Lord persisted. For whom are you doing this job?”

“For you, Lord.” Of this she was certain—or so she thought.

“I’m doing it for you, Lord.”

“Do you love me?”

Her heart ached as she realized the truth; she did love Jesus—a lot more than she cared for Mike.

### **Questions for reflection**

- Whom are working to please?
- Have you found yourself judging whether or not people are deserving of your help?
- Do you feel underappreciated for your hard work or financial sacrifice made in coming on this trip?
- Whom did you come to serve?

### **Physical reminder of spiritual lesson**

Choose something that represents a time during this trip when you lost sight of why you came and whom you serve, and place it in the circle.

### **Prayer**

Dear Lord, sometimes we forget that we have been called to serve you. Whatever we do for any of these people, we do for you. It is not ours to judge the worthiness of their needs or content of their character. We are called to serve you. Help us to see you in our residents and in each other.

**Day 9** (can be used for de-briefing or re-entry)

Verse for reflection: 1 Peter 3:15

*But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.*

## **Homecoming Grief**

It seemed like her friends were avoiding her. In the week since Julienne had returned from the summer servant trip, Molly and Erin had stopped returning text messages. And her neighbor Morgan had turned down Julienne's invitation to come swimming. Even her parents seemed more preoccupied these days.

Julienne ached to have someone understand what had become her passion—serving the “least of these” as her youth leader called the poor and disadvantaged they had gone on a mission trip to help the week before. People needed to think about the poor more often, and they needed to evaluate how they spent their money. If only they could understand—experience what she just experienced.

Just as Julienne was about to give in to the undertow of grief, her cell phone rang. It was Randy, a friend from high school who had just returned from his church's mission trip to Mexico. He, too, was feeling alienated.

“Nobody cares about what we did,” he was saying.

Julienne nodded, eager to share her similar experience, but every time she tried to get in a word, Randy began to preach again. Mexico was so much more deserving of help, he told her. The United States had plenty of resources to recover from disaster, but not Mexico.

Julienne hung up feeling all the more isolated.

“Oh Lord, I went to serve you and nobody cares.” As she cried her frustration and disappointment to God, she was reminded that Jesus also came to serve and he, too, was not appreciated. Many did not care to listen to him.

In the following weeks Julienne drifted back into the flow, chatting about television programming, clothes, and what was happening with friends, but her life was different. She felt herself drawn to people in need, thinking twice about buying a new purse or shoes. She became more generous in her giving at church, and at school became known as an advocate for outcasts.

Yet Julienne thought she'd lost the sense of urgency she'd carried home from the mission trip. Then their team leader called and told her that they needed someone to interpret mission for the opening exercises for Sunday School.

“It's in the walk,” her team leader answered, when she asked why he had chosen her to make the presentation. “You have been walking the talk,” he told her on the phone.

As Julienne prayed and planned her presentation, she thought about Randy and how she had been put off by his run-on journal of his trip and his more-self-sacrificing-than-thou attitude. In sharp contrast, she remembered the attraction to Jesus and his walk she had experienced several years earlier during a study of the Gospel of Mark.

You have been through a life-changing experience. It will be hard for others to appreciate that change. They may feel intimidated by your fervor or convicted for their seeming lack of mission zeal. Jesus is the one person who understands fully what you have experienced and how you have been changed. Let your homecoming be an opportunity to connect with God on a deeper level.

### **Questions for reflection**

- Describe an experience in which you identified with Jesus.
- How will you handle a lack of enthusiasm or interest in your experience on the part of your friends?
- How will others know you have been changed without your saying a single word?

### **Physical reminder of spiritual lesson**

Take a moment to think about your walk. Choose something that represents a way you have changed that you can demonstrate in the way you live your life, and place it in the circle.

Choose one item that represents your talk, and this time use no words to describe it. Write the list of items in your journal, and talk about them at your work team reunion.

### **Prayer**

God, you sent Jesus to live among us. Jesus, you laughed and cried— loved and died. In everything you did, you directed the attention to God. Lord, help us to walk in your footsteps. Help us to communicate, in the way we will now live our lives, all you have taught us this week.

## Ten Pointers for the Polite Servant

- 1. Courtesy is contagious.** Always address adults by titles Mr., Miss, or Mrs. Introduce yourself to the resident with a handshake. Smile a lot! Residents are often nervous about hosting a group of “foreigners” and may appear unfriendly at first. Your warm smile and verbal respect may be the icebreaker to a new friendship.
- 2. Guests always knock.** Ask permission before entering the house or using the bathroom. Never throw anything away or begin a project without conferring with the resident. Treat the resident’s property with respect by picking up after yourself. Say thank you each afternoon before returning to camp.
- 3. Servants serve.** It is easy to demand your own way and vent dissatisfaction, but God has chosen you to be different. God has asked you to serve even the unlovely. You may not receive a compliment from the residents you help. You may even be cursed. With prayer, God will help you remain loving even in difficult situations. Should someone insult you, smile in return. Also seek ways to help your leaders and fellow teammates. Be open to opportunities to encourage.
- 4. God paints in Technicolor.** One team member may love country/estern music and another rap, while you hate both genres. One resident may be surly and another sweet. Some of us are cleanfreaks and others are lackadaisical about hygiene. Nevertheless, we are all God’s children. Do your best to accentuate the positive in each person and try to overlook what you may view as negative.
- 5. One person’s trash is another’s treasure.** Possessions are often treasures. Never toss anything away without asking permission. Ask your resident to tell you about possessions or photos prominently displayed. Check with teammates before borrowing tools, gloves, or other personal possessions. If you damage something, be quick to admit fault and apologize, even if the object seems of little material value to you.
- 6. Use the right tools for the right job.** God has blessed you with many skills, but not all skills. God created us to work in community. Appreciate the talents of your teammates. Ask for guidance in tackling new projects and when operating tools, even those you think you understand. And remember, God may have another person in mind for a job you impulsively tackle. Wait. Listen. Pray. Then volunteer.
- 7. You can’t fix stupid.** It is easy to blurt the wrong thing, steamroll a chore without thinking of the best approach, or close the door to a friendship opportunity with a careless remark. Save critique for your journal and prayer time. Ask the Lord to give you the words to address the problem, and take disagreements to your leader first. Listen to directions, and ask questions before tackling a job. Pray for guidance in handling a difficult situation or team member.
- 8. Be humbly grateful, not grumbly hateful.** Christ has chosen you to represent him on this job, a very high calling. Things didn’t always go well for Jesus, either. He was overworked and often badgered by people wanting things from him. Jesus took it to God in prayer. God will give you strength to deal with inconveniences and difficult situations. Thank God for choosing you, and open yourself in prayer to guidance.
- 9. We’re not in this alone.** The folks back home want to hear from you. Buy postcards and jot a few notes each night. Let your support system know how much you appreciate them. Remember to update your prayer partners. They are your best resource. Keep them posted on your prayer needs.
- 10. It ain’t over until the mission committee says amen.** Christ’s ambassador is a lifelong commitment, and after this experience, you will never be the same. This trip has changed you. You have a story to tell and an obligation—to God who called you and the church family who sent you—to share it. Make yourself available to share your experience. Give financially to the next team or a friend participating in another servant project. And remember to be open for your next call.

## Health Tips for Servants

- 1. Beware of the sun!** Watch for signs of heat exhaustion in yourself and other team members. Signs include thirst, chapped lips, decreased urination, headache, dizziness, and incoherent speech.
- 2. Drink plenty of water, even when you are not thirsty.** Dehydration can be serious, and the first sign is thirst. Colas and other sweetened drinks are not replacements for water.
- 3. Eat properly.** Work trip week is not the time to start a new diet. While dieting, you often become fatigued more easily, and you will need your strength to complete the tasks assigned. Stay positive about the food possibilities. If you are not careful, you can talk yourself into hating the cuisine before you have even tasted it.
- 4. Take regular breaks.** The summer sun can be just as dangerous behind the clouds. Whether you are an athlete or a computer geek, your body needs time to rest and recuperate.
- 5. Wear a high protective level sunscreen and a hat.** A long-sleeved, pastel-colored cotton shirt is best for really sunny days.
- 6. Get enough sleep.** It is tempting to lie in bed and chat with your tent mates, but sleep deprivation accumulates, and you may end up out of commission later in the week because of physical exhaustion.
- 7. Wash your hands often.** Wash not only after using the restroom, but right before eating. It is easy to forget on the job and reach into a snack bag with millions of germs on your fingers. You will be shaking hands often; keep this in mind if you unwrap a candy to pop in your mouth.
- 8. Don't share your water bottle or use your fingers to take ice for your drink.** If any team member is becoming sick, sharing water bottles can spread the illness to other members.
- 9. Wear shoes at all times.** Flip-flops are great for the showers, but work boots or sturdy sneakers are best on the job. Do not go barefoot even on grass; protect your tootsies from foreign bacteria and fungi.
- 10. Listen to your body.** If you are feeling sick or very tired, take the day off. Spend some extra time in bed, and if you feel better later in the day, you can volunteer in the kitchen or help the regular camp staff.



