



Evangelical
Presbyterian Church
of NEWARK DELAWARE

Short-Term Mission Trips

Guidance for Writing Support Letters

Getting started...

Asking for support in preparation for a mission trip can be an intimidating task! However, be encouraged! You have a big group of people cheering you on and willing to help you as you ask for support.

This resource has been built to help you prepare for your short-term mission trip to the glory of God, the Maker of heaven and earth (Ps. 141:6).

Who can I contact for additional guidance?

If you need help or have additional questions, please contact your mission trip leaders for both mission trips, Caleb Evans or Micah Freer.

- Caleb Evans: caleb@epcnewark.org or 864-270-2612 (c)
- Micah Freer: micah@epcnewark.org or 302-409-5436 (c)

What's a missionary?

As you prepare to join a short-term mission trip (which is usually any project that is less than a year), you will be following in the footsteps of millions of people before you. You will be what is called, a “missionary.”

A missionary is someone sent to proclaim the good news of Jesus having come, died, and risen again for you and for the person you will soon meet! In God's Providence, he has chosen us to be the people to share this news with others, in a way that they will understand. Jesus leads by example as a missionary all throughout the Gospels (e.g. Matt. 9:35), sending his disciples into all the countryside.

You may be asking, why would we put so much time, thought, and money toward sharing our faith with others? Well, it is because God has chosen us, to be ambassadors of His Word. The Holy Spirit has opened our eyes to see that we need Jesus as our Savior, and we want to please our Father who loves us and love our neighbor as God has loved us. Jesus talks about the importance of missionaries, by using an illustration of farming. He says,

The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. (Matt. 9:37)

Our prayers should be evangelism-driven, that is, always seeking the salvation of those near and distant to us. Jesus then directly challenges his disciples, and us as a church, in what is called the “Great Commission” of Matthew 28: 18-20.

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

As followers of Jesus, we are now involved in helping to multiply followers. What an incredible privilege to share the faith with others and help them know Jesus as their Lord and Savior!!

What does it mean to ask for support?

No missionary can serve the Lord without the faithful support of a group of people, including those who may never see the mission field you are participating in. The goal of a raising support is to develop a group of people who will join you. This can happen in a couple ways:

1. **The people you ask for support from can pray for you:** praying for you, the Holy Spirit's work among the people you are serving, for safety for the team, and for this project to be a great *means* to connect relationally with people you have never met!
2. **The people you ask for support from can financially support you:** putting money toward the costs of you going, staying, eating, and building. There are many costs involved in missions, and each person needs people outside their immediate family to assist.

Missionaries are the ones who go, but their going is not possible without the prayer and financial support of many who love them and want to help them serve the Lord in this special way. Part of your goal will be to write and distribute a support letter, informing friends and family of your desire to serve.

Remember that everything belongs to the Lord (Ps. 50:12) and God is the ultimate Source of what the missionary needs (I Chron. 29:12). He is worthy of your trust and capable of filling every need (2 Cor. 9:8), so be bold in your prayers and thanksgiving (2 Tim. 1:7; Phil. 4:6). ***When people support a mission project, they are really giving to God – not to the missionary.*** Do not fear the rejection of people (Ps. 56:3-4), do not take it personally when people do not support you, and do not compare yourself to others who are also seeking support. Avoid seeing financial need as your only goal.

Also, do not be apologetic in your letters, but ask with confidence. You are a royal ambassador of the King (2 Tim. 1:7). Expect results as you sow (2 Cor. 9:8). And whatever the result, know that God is in control and that He has your good and His purposes in mind (Rom. 8:28-29).

How can I ask for support?

Asking for support will feel awkward and challenging in the beginning, but as you pray for confidence in being used as a missionary to share the faith with others through acts of service, it will become more natural.

Please carefully read and follow these guidelines to ensure that your support letter is as effective as it can be:

1. Be sure that you pray through the whole process of building support for our mission. Prayer is the most important element of the entire effort.
2. Begin your letter with something that catches your reader's attention and makes them want to continue reading. Perhaps, use a question, or embed a photo of yourself, to spark interest. (Support letters are like websites, people decide whether or not to keep reading after 2 seconds)
3. Type your letter to keep it legible and consistent.
4. Be concise. Keep your letter to one page. Make it to the point.
5. Proofread and carefully edit your letter before you distribute it. Get someone else to read and critique it. It takes much time and effort to produce a good, effective support letter. Give the time and effort it deserves. Do good work. You want your letter to bless your supporters with its excellence.
6. Be sure to include the following information:
 - a. Where you are going and when you will be there.
 - b. The overall goals of the mission.
 - i. For Urban Promise Wilmington (senior high): to show the love of Christ to low-income families by helping to run a summer camp
 - ii. For Sunday Breakfast Mission (junior high): to show the love of Christ to poverty-stricken families by speaking truth in love and working at a homeless shelter.
 - c. What you hope to accomplish and/or learn.
 - d. Who is sponsoring the mission (EP Church is sending).
 - e. The specific amount of financial support you need.
 - i. **For senior high: \$400.00.**
 - ii. **For junior high: \$150.00.**
 - f. How to give financially.
 - g. Checks can be made payable to Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Newark. For the memo line, please put "Youth Missions: [Name of Student]" for the contribution to be properly directed.
 - h. Specific ways they can pray for you and your team.
 - i. A thank-you for considering being a part of your support team.

7. Include a stamped self-addressed envelope and a return receipt with your letter. Your supporters will complete and return the receipt with their support. See "what information should I request from my supporters?" for a sample.
8. Try your best to send your letters out to 15-25 people outside EP Church membership. The sooner you get your letter out to your support team, the better.
9. After you send out your support letter, you will hear back from the members of your support team. Respond to each one immediately with acknowledgement and thanks.

When you return home, write a follow-up letter to your supporters. Do this while the mission is still fresh in your mind (within two to three weeks). Let them know how God worked through you and your team, how He grew you, and what you learned from your mission experience. Let them know, again, how much you appreciate their support.

I hope that you will find these guidelines helpful as you compose your support letter, distribute it, build your support team, and express appreciation for their support.

What information should I request from my supporters?

Here's the snippet you can include:

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I would like to assist _____[INSERT NAME] with the mission project by:

- () Praying for him/her weekly before and daily during the project
- () Contributing \$ _____ towards his/her financial needs
- Name _____
- Phone _____

Please note: financial support can be given by writing checks payable to Evangelical Presbyterian Church. For the memo line please write "Youth Missions: [NAME OF STUDENT]." Any surplus financial support received for this project by EPC will be used to support its other missionaries and/or missions projects.

Please Mail to:

Attn: Youth Missions

Evangelical Presbyterian Church

308 Possum Park Rd.,

Newark, DE. 19711

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What would an example support letter look like?

Dear _____,

Do you want to participate in the work of missions to spread the Gospel of Jesus and serve people?

I am eagerly preparing for a short-term missions trip this summer, with [LIST ORGANIZATION] to serve [INDICATE GROUP THAT WILL BENEFIT FROM SERVICE] to share the Gospel.

Our youth group, with Evangelical Presbyterian Church, is launching this summer [LIST DATES] and staying at a church overnight and working full-days on the project site. Some of our goals, include:

1. X
2. Y
3. Z

The total amount I need to raise is \$XYZ [ENTER AMOUNT], which includes food, lodging, supplies, and everything else we need to do our work. Please consider financially supporting me. Moreover, can I ask for your support in prayer? As I prepare to go on this mission trip, to spread the Gospel of Jesus to serve people in my local community, you can be praying for [LIST PRAYER REQUESTS].

Thank you for considering being a part of my support team!

In Christ,

Hezekiah Daniel

[picture of you]

Please complete this and send it back to me, using the envelope included in this letter!

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I would like to assist _____ [INSERT NAME] with the mission project by:

- () Praying for him/her weekly before and daily during the project
- () Contributing \$_____ towards his/her financial needs
- Name _____
- Phone _____

Please note: financial support can be given by writing checks payable to “Youth Missions: [NAME OF STUDENT].” Any surplus financial support received for this project by EPC will be used to support its other missionaries and/or missions projects.

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