



The Penn Northeast Conference
of the United Church of Christ

...God is still speaking,

DISASTER RESPONSE MINISTRY

HANDBOOK FOR VOLUNTEERS IN SERVICE



Our Ministry is focused on:

Preparedness, Response, Recovery

We do not see ourselves as first time responders.

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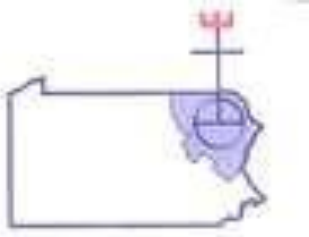


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PENN NORTHEAST CONFERENCE

DISASTER RESPONSE

MINISTRY

TEAM

Mission Statement

Our mission is to participate, as a witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in timely and effective meeting of the physical, psychological and spiritual needs of communities affected by natural and human-caused disasters.

Mission Objectives:

- a. Stand on the side of the oppressed through advocacy with and for those most in need.*
- b. Seek out unmet needs of all survivors, particularly people who were vulnerable before the disaster.*
- c. Provide a larger vision of life that includes emotional and spiritual care as well as physical rebuilding.*
- d. Assist in long term recovery of those in need.*
- e. Restore and build community relationships.*

Our Senses and the Bible

The Bible talks about the senses in ways that teach us more about
Jesus and God's Word.

Jesus had power in His *touch* to bless others, even children.

"Then they brought little children to Him, that He might touch them...And He took them up in His arms, laid His hands on them, and blessed them" (**Mark 10:13, 16**)

Jesus wants us to *hear*, understand, and believe His words, and to let them change our lives.

Jesus said, "If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear" (**Mark 4:23**).

We are blessed when we *see* the truth about Jesus, that He is the Son of God who died for our sins and rose from the dead, just like the Bible says.

Jesus said, "Blessed are your eyes for they *see*" (**Matthew 13:16**)

God's Word, the Bible, is compared to sweet honey (and that *tastes* good!).

(**Psalm 119:103**) says, "How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!"

When we *see* and *hear* and *taste* the truth in the Bible, we will know that we are sinners who need a way to get to God. And Jesus Christ provides that way through His death on the cross. When we trust Jesus, we become children of God and then...the Bible says WE become a sweet fragrant-*smell*-to God and others because of our faith in Jesus.

"For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing" (**2 Corinthians 2:15**).

WHO...WHAT...WHEN...WHERE...WHY...

Of a mission trip

❖ WHO

- Conference run, church run, individually run?
- Who is going, what talents do you have?
- Who will you be serving, how is their culture different from yours?
- Who can go- any age or is there a minimum age requirement?

❖ WHAT

- What will you do?
- What is your vision or mission statement?
- What kind of trip will this be? Work camp, etc.
- What supplies do you need to go?
- What medical information and release forms do you need?
- What do you want to accomplish spiritually in the group- devotions/worship?
- What kind of Leadership Development do you want to accomplish?

❖ WHERE

- Where are you going? Local, Domestic, or International?
- How will you be getting there- personal vehicles, rented vehicles, bus, train, plane, etc?
- What are the climate conditions that you will be serving in?
- What travel details do you need to take care of before you go?

- Where will people be staying-hotels, people's homes, dorm style, on site or camping?

❖ WHEN

- When are you going?
- When are the deadlines for trip registration, forms, and financial contributions?

❖ WHY

- Why are you going?
- What are the personal motives of the group members?
- Why do you want to be involved in service?

Your Group is heading to ...

NOW WHAT?

- **Make a group decision early.**
 - Make clear that this represents a firm intention of the group to follow through.
 - Programming then may be geared to planning and implementing the decision.
- **Contact site to determine available dates and reservation policy.**
- **Reserve dates and make a firm commitment to honor the reservation.**
- **Begin recruitment of participants.**
 - Seek involvement or participation of other church groups.
- **Study the materials from your site.**
 - Know if meals are provided or if you have to prepare and provide your meals.
- **Achieve some consensus of the group's goals for your mission trip.**
 - A discussion about a satisfactory combination of working, learning, and recreational activities for your trip.
- **Discuss finances.**
 - Many groups finance their trip with work projects and money-raising activities.
 - It is important that the group in advance of beginning moneymaking activities agree upon a policy or understanding.
- **Get a commitment from participants.**
 - Set a deadline for signing up and require a deposit.
- **Arrange for transportation-vans, private vehicles, etc.**

- Having several vans available makes it possible for sub groups to engage in work or recreational activities without requiring participation by the whole group.
- **Secure adequate travel and liability insurance coverage.**
 - This may be available through conference insurance or your local church policy.
- **Publish and distribute an itinerary** of your trip to participants so that families will be fully informed about the group plans and whereabouts in the event of an emergency.
- **Plan as a group to make decisions about and implement preparations for your trip.**
 - Assign someone to take charge of medical and release forms.
 - Assign someone to take care of vehicles. Plan if you are renting vehicles, buying travel tickets, passports, train, plane, etc. Make sure each vehicle has a copy of the medical forms.
 - Assign someone in charge of food preparations.
 - Assign someone in charge of finances and fundraising.
 - Clothing list needed to fit the needs of the climate and work to be done.
- **Safe ministry policy concerning abuse, harassment and medical prevention forms.**
 - Forms are available through conference.

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