MINISTRY INTERACTION GUIDELINES

If you’re a participant, you’ve recently said ‘yes’ to God’s invitation to bring the Gospel to the nations – maybe even to some of the remotest places on the earth. You’re about to witness and partake in an incredible story of God’s love and work here on earth – in each country can feel confusing. The following guidelines will help you create a safe and honoring environment wherever you are serving – whether the camera is out or not!

1. Be attentive to the perception and appearance of the relationships you establish with the children and adults you serve. For everyone’s protection, it is important to avoid even the appearance of inappropriate conduct.

2. Be aware of the various cultural sensitivities of the country you’re visiting and avoid behavior which could potentially be interpreted as flirtatious, unwelcome, or sexual. (For example, in some countries, it is considered flirtatious to point a certain way, to hug, or to show your ankles in person.)

3. Respect the parents/guardians’ relationship with their children and do not interfere with parent/child relationships without expressed consent from your ministry host.

4. Adhere to your mission trip dress code. Dress codes are set based on cultural relevance, not to limit you, but to honor the ministries we serve and for the safety of all we serve.

5. Do not post any photos of children without the parent or guardian’s consent. If you feel led to give financially, consult your ministry host for the proper way to do so. Our goal is to avoid giving patterns of dependency and ensure we are truly aiding sustainable ministry opportunities in the future.

6. Do not hire men, women, or children for any purpose without the expressed consent of your local host.

7. You must not exchange personal information with children. This age range includes from birth to 18 years and includes email, social media, addresses, phone numbers, etc.

POSTING GUIDELINES

You are witnessing and partaking in an incredible story of God’s love and work here on earth – and it’s not for you to keep. The truth is, many potential abuses can occur from media getting in the wrong hands. Seemingly innocent photos and videos of children and adults have put people in harm of sexual exploitation, abuse, and trauma of various kinds. Even with good intentions, you can accidentally dishonor and disrespect someone by posting a photo before understanding the cultural and societal norms.

Please hear our heart: we don’t share this information to scare you from taking pictures, but rather to provide some context and implications of understanding cultural norms. However, for the safety of those we meet, it is important to consider whether the story or image you are sharing is empowering, and honoring to the person. Even if you have permission from someone who is an orphan, the red-light district, or with any known survivor of abuse/trauma, you must ALWAYS use a fake name and blur faces when sharing testimonies online even with consent. When sharing stories on your blog or social media, change people’s names and blur out anything that could be used to identify them. When sharing photos, do not share any personal information in the caption, only the story.

We encourage you to consider questions like: Does this glorify God, and does it honor the community you’re serving? What would I want someone to post or read about me? Would I want my child to share their story or photo? If not, do not post it. If you’re unsure if you should post a photo, ask a ministry leader first. It’s always better to create a personal photo album to remember your mission experience offline and not post images publicly if safety is a concern.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I MESS UP?

We understand that it can feel overwhelming as you enter into a new culture and process a myriad of new norms – and often times, these norms are vastly different than what you’re familiar with. But, that’s why we have trained staff members, training, and Dignity Guidelines to help support each narrative. We’re here to help you navigate what is honoring and what brings dignity to the people you serve.

We encourage you to consider questions like: Does this glorify God, and does it honor the people or community you’re serving? Ultimately, the first violation will be a verbal communication between you and your Squad Leaders and Mentor. From there, you and your leadership team will build an action plan to ensure you are honoring your host, your team, and the ministry you are serving. If the guidelines are continually broken, it can possibly result in removal from the field. We’re confident your heart is in the right place and you want to bring dignity to the community you’re serving. We’re here to help you, not ‘catch you’!

Please note: Adventures in Missions reserves the right to ask you to remove any public posting that might bring harm to the people, ministries, and communities visited during your mission trip.