



EFCA

Crisis Response

Short Term Missions Team Leader Preparation Guide

EFCA Crisis Response
Hurricane Katrina Response
2006-2008

Introduction

Thank you for considering leading a team to help with disaster relief in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. Katrina has been the costliest storm in US history, displacing over a million people and destroying countless homes and business in the Gulf Coast Region. Lives have been devastated and you have chosen to help. This resource is designed to help you organize your trip as your team's designated leader.

All teams are different and your team will have its unique make up of people and circumstances. As you go through this packet of information, please approach it as *suggestions* to help you organize - not as hard, fast rules. Please pray and be obedient to God's direction as you plan this trip. Without doubt, abiding by His direction, it will be successful.

Immediately after the storm, EFCA Touch Global launched a domestic disaster relief operation, EFCA Crisis Response which organized to provide guidance, facilities and structure to the ministry efforts of Trinity Church in Covington , LA, and Castle Rock Community Church in the Central City area of New Orleans, LA. Your team will be ministering under the guidance of EFCA Crisis Response Staff. The goal of the trips to the Gulf Coast is to share the love of Christ to those whose lives have been shattered. Please plan to serve as God leads and be open to ministering to the spiritual, emotional and physical needs of those affected.

You will be living and working with other church teams from around the country – there may possibly be as many as 120 volunteers working out of Trinity Church and as many as 50 volunteers working at Castle Rock Christian Church at any given time. Most people find their time and experience to be very rewarding. You may find that you are more blessed by this experience than those you are going to help.

Before you start, there are two important points to remember for your trip:

- It's the people, not the work, that's important.
Though assigned physical work projects, your team is actually there to build relationships and minister to people.
- Prepare to be flexible!
No one knows what God will bring your way or ask your team to do. Be ready for the unexpected by working to remove preconceived expectations.

Planning Your Trip

Typical Team Structure

Each team will need to establish leadership and some organization to make it a success. Past teams have identified the following possible roles, but your team can be organized to fit the needs of your team.

Team leader – communicates with EFCA Crisis Response staff members, coordinates transportation, assigns sub-group leaders for work teams, collects and disseminates group information such as phone numbers, personal information sheet, waiver forms and team applications. Team leaders should also be aware of team dynamics and individual team member needs.

Prayer Support Person – communicates prayer needs to individuals back at home, usually via e-mail, communicates with team leader.

At-Home Prayer Coordinator – receives prayer requests from the team and communicates them with individuals at home and with the church prayer ministry.

Team Accountant – develops a budget, keeps track of all spending, collects receipts, obtains and manages cash for the trip.

Team Photographer – takes and manages digital photographs, video, etc. Possibly prepares for publication.

Team Journalist – written communication during trip (many teams have kept up a blog while on the trip – wireless internet access is available), write article for publication upon return

Sub-leaders – responsible for leading daily work teams, getting daily work orders, gathering tools for daily work assignments, writing daily report and communicating with EFCA Crisis Response staff regarding work assignments.

***It is important to keep in mind that the Team Leader should be the main point of contact with EFCA Crisis Response Ministry staff. Teams from all over the U.S. are in constant contact with the staff there, and they greatly appreciate having communication streamlined.

Organizing the Finances

People are needed, God is moving, and no one should be excluded because of finances. It has been said "If it's God's will, it's God's bill!" Anyone who has a burden to go but does not have the money, should be able to go. Pray for their financial provision and God will provide if it is his will for their participation. The cost per person will vary - depending on mode of transportation, vehicles, number of team members, etc. We suggest that you determine a total trip cost amount that will cover the on-site team fees as well as travel, meals and lunches through the week as well as other incidental costs.

Talk with the finance person at your church. It may be easier for you to have all the trip funds run through on a team account set up by your local church. If so, you will need someone on the trip to serve as a designated team accountant to care for the receipts of the funds spent, as your church will require a cost report after the trip.

Another alternative would be to have individuals contribute to a team account held by the team accountant. He would then provide an accounting to the team at the end of the trip.

However, if you decide to have your team members just pay for the hosting team fees and then take care of their own transportation costs and meal costs, be sure to communicate that.

The team accountant's responsibilities would include:

- Keeping a running balance of the money spent on the trip.
- Tracking how the money is being spent.
- Keep all receipts during the trip.
- Fill out forms for reimbursement after the trip
- Report to the team leader on how the money was spent.
- Other cost accounting as needed.

Either way, one check should be sent to EFCA Crisis Response on-site in Louisiana for the hosting team fees instead of individual personal checks from each team member. You may be able to have your team members make their personal checks payable to your local church so you can organize to have one check sent from your church.

Raising Support

To help offset your team expenses for the trip, we suggest that you consider sending out a team support letter to help raise funds. Consult with your local church missions leadership team for specific guidance on your church's support raising policies and be sure to adhere to them.

In the absence of a defined policy, an approach some churches have taken is to have individuals invest 20 - 33 % of their own personal funds, and allow the opportunity for God to provide the balance. Frequently, God provides an abundance and support raised in excess of team costs may be used to provide "scholarships" for those who may otherwise not be able to

participate in the trip and/or left as an “extra blessing” to be used on the mission field to meet other ministry needs such as purchasing tools and materials or supporting individual missionaries serving on the field.

Ways Others from Your Church Can Help

Prayer Team - A simple small group of people praying back home is an excellent way to up lift the missionaries on this short term trip as they encounter front line ministry.

Donate To Your Team - Groups or individuals can donate supplies or money for your team. It is best to talk with them and coordinate with Trinity Church to see what supplies and equipment needs they currently have. Monetary donations made to your church and one check from your church can be made out to EFCA Compassion.

At Home After the Trip

Debriefing

It may be helpful to meet with your team afterwards or create some sort of mass emailing list so your team members can share their thoughts, experiences, and pictures! If your team is asked to share with your church, it might be a good idea to meet prior to that Sunday to prepare a presentation as well as pray for your team to be able to communicate their experience.

What to Expect While in Louisiana

Daily Work Projects

Groups are organized into work teams and each morning each team is given a “work order” with tasks and locations. The team then heads out on their own, using their own vehicles, to complete what work they can during that day. Larger teams may be broken into smaller groups and go out separately.

You will need to designate Sub-Leaders to head the work teams - the number of sub-leaders needed will be determined by the size of your team. **Division of teams into sub groups or the combining of teams may happen depending on needs and skills of project and team.** The Team Leader can be a sub-leader but it is not required. The sub-leader communicates with Crisis Response staff on work matters, organizes and coordinates gathering tools for the day’s work and oversees the work team during the day.

Type of work to be completed includes: **help prepare meals for the volunteers, follow up**, tree removal, debris removal, cleanup, gutting, demolition and/or renovation/construction. There is also a need for child care, running the Church’s Free Store, cooking large group meals, maintaining the Trinity Church facility as well as occasional needs for clerical work. **You must remain flexible and be prepared to work where you are needed.**

Please remember, though the work is important, ministry to people is of primary importance on these trips. You will have ample opportunities to listen to people's stories, show God's love, and share the good news of Jesus Christ - please do. You will most likely find people are willing to pray and are open to talk about spiritual things.

Ministry Opportunity

This is a short term mission trip and opportunities to minister to others will arise. Come prepared to experience new ways in which God will use you to share His love. Start by working to discover and dispose of preconceived ideas of what you will be doing, how you will be used and, who you will be led to minister to.

During the work day you will be encouraged to talk with the owners of the homes you will be working with. You will find that neighbors, family members and others you will meet want to tell you their story. Be sensitive and let your team members know they should come prepared to listen. However, the people you meet will also want to hear your story. Tell them! Encourage your team members to pray about their testimony and come prepared to share it if the Lord leads.

Take Bibles to hand out. It is a nice gesture to write an encouraging scripture or note inside the Bible and have your team member sign it. You may also find other relatives and friends asking for Bibles and prayer.

Some suggestions:

- Let them know you are volunteering, serving through the local church. When people know you are not being paid they understand you are there to help, not to take advantage.
- Share your testimony.
- When asked why you are there, let them know you are "doing God's work", or are the "hands and feet of Christ", that as a Christian you believe it is your duty to help those in need and to show them there is hope. These are just some ideas. Often this question of "why" comes up, and it would be good to have some type of reason why everyone on your team believes they are there to help.

Ministry opportunity may come at other places, in other ways.... Someone on your team, someone on another team, a Trinity staff person, someone you meet while traveling, etc. etc. Just be open and obedient! Be ready for God to use you at any time!

Team Dynamics and Team Member Needs

You are in a key position as a team leader. Some of the things that the members of your team are doing and experiencing have the potential to change their lives! Please help them process these experiences in an open and godly way so that they can integrate them into their life and faith.

Also, be aware that some of your team members may be affected by the destruction they are seeing and by this whole experience. Be sensitive and look for signs that something is going on; i.e., the person who has been outgoing and talkative is suddenly quiet and sullen. It is good to plan one or two team meetings during the week where you can ask questions (see suggestions

below), pray, share and get input from the team. Take the time to talk to team members one-on-one to better understand how they are processing what they are seeing and doing.

Below are some suggested questions or topics of discussion.

1. Share and ask people to share what they've seen, done and *felt* over the past day or couple of days.
2. Ask the team how what they've experienced is different from their expectations.
3. Discuss how what you're doing is making a difference in people's lives.
4. Ask if they can think of or have thought of anything that God is teaching them through their time on site.
5. Take some time to discuss practical considerations. Are people getting enough sleep? Do they feel competent (enough) to continue to work? Are they struggling with the living arrangements or team dynamics/structure?
6. How will the things they are doing, seeing and hearing here affect them back home?
7. Take some time to pray together.