

MISSIONLAB

LEARN MISSIONS.

DO MISSIONS.

BE A MISSIONARY.

Preparing For Your Missions Experience

Learn. Do. Be.



New Orleans, Louisiana

Dear Group Leaders,

We are excited that you have chosen to spend a week serving with your students, whether that be at home or in New Orleans. New Orleans is one of those special cities known for its vibrant culture. People from all around the world come to New Orleans to experience the jazz music and the Cajun food that is unique to the city. Beyond that, the city is full of things like colorful houses, bayous, festivals, and above ground graves that add to the city's lure. While New Orleans is known for being unique, it is simultaneously viewed as a place filled with sinners and endless partying. However, in actuality, it is a city just like yours that is filled with people living their daily lives and searching for something. Just like here, people in your hometown and everywhere are searching for something and for reason right now.

Many people in your city and New Orleans know Christ and are searching to know Him more and to make Him known. Others are simply searching for ways to make ends meet and to heal the brokenness and pain that they are living with. All the people in New Orleans are as unique as the city itself and are filled with personality. We believe you and your team will love getting to know the people of New Orleans or your hometown better, while ministering to them and alongside them.

As a ministry of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, we at MissionLab believe solid ministry training is a key part of ministry. To help you and your team prepare for MissionLab, we have put together the following curriculum for your team to go through together. This curriculum is meant to help equip and prepare your team with some tools that we pray will be useful in the type of ministry you will be doing here in New Orleans or back home and in other places as the Lord leads you in the future. We also hope that it serves to build unity among your team and to encourage a deeper relationship with God. In the packet, you will find a session discussing ministry in New Orleans in general.

Following that, you will find sessions for each of the different ministry tracks that we have here at MissionLab. In each of these, you will find a description of that session, a biblical basis for that type of ministry, some practical suggestions for that type of ministry, and a list of suggested supplies to bring with you for that type of ministry. There will also be some videos that can be found at our website (www.missionlab.com) to go along with each session. We hope that as your team prepares to serve, you will take the time to go over the introduction session as well as the sessions geared towards each of the different types of ministries that your team will be doing. It is our prayer that as you prepare to come to MissionLab that your team would find they are preparing to live a life on mission for Christ and not just preparing for a trip to New Orleans.

In Him, The MissionLab Staff

MissionLab: New Orleans

Ministry Training

What is missions? Why do we as Christians do missions? Why are we going to do missions in New Orleans? These are all great questions, and we hope that we will begin to present answers for each of them as we work through this training material together. So, what is missions? Missions is the outward obedience of believers to God's calling to proclaim His gospel. We live on mission for God when we are intentionally telling others about Christ through our actions and words.

New Orleans is unlike any other city in the world due to its history and vibrant culture. At the same time, it is just like every other city in the world in its need for Christ. While there are many in New Orleans who have a relationship with Christ and follow Him, there are also many who do not. After Jesus' death and resurrection, He challenged His followers to go into all the world and to preach the Gospel to the rest of creation (Mark 16:15). Jesus still challenges all of his followers today to do the same thing. We are called to go out into our neighborhood, city, state, country, and to the very ends of the world to tell of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This call includes coming to the city of New Orleans to minister alongside the Christians here to demonstrate the love and hope that is found only in Jesus Christ.

Take some time as a group to list some of the excitements, fears, and reasons for coming on a mission trip to New Orleans that you may have.

REASONS MISSIONLAB LOVES MISSIONS:

In this section, you will look at several passages from the Bible that show why missions is important and how we can glorify God by serving others. Let's start by looking at a few verses:

"My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you." - John 15:12-15

"Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us." - 1 John 4:11-12

Both John 15:12-15 and 1 John 4:11-12 communicate a call to love other people. In John's Gospel, Jesus Christ says that we are not only servants but that we are friends because Christ has told us the master's plans. Those plans are revealed throughout the Bible, but let's just look at Psalm 67:2-3 to see what they are:

"That your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations. May the peoples praise you, O God; may all the peoples praise you." - Psalm 67:2-3

God's plan is to glorify Himself through people of every nation and tongue. To this end, He uses those He has redeemed to be the vessels that carry the knowledge of Him to a lost and dying world.

“Do not withhold good from those who deserve it, when it is in your power to act. Do not say to your neighbor, ‘Come back later; I’ll give it tomorrow’ - when you now have it with you.” - Proverbs 3:27-28

These verses in Proverbs 3:27-28 tell us that we should not wait till tomorrow to share with someone if we are able today. This is true of physical needs as well as spiritual needs. If we are able to fix someone’s home, give them food, play games with them, or sit and visit with them today instead of tomorrow then we are called to do so. We are also called to share Christ with them today instead of tomorrow if we are able. Just as 1 John 4:11-12 said, we cannot see God, but if we love each other God lives in us and His love is made complete. If we are able to serve people today and share Christ with them today, we should do so in order to make God’s love complete in us. We are called to make His ways and salvation known to all nations so that all people can praise Him. Coming on a mission trip to New Orleans is one way that you are following His command to love others and make His salvation known to the whole world. If you are scared about coming to New Orleans or about sharing your faith with others, remember this next verse. Know that God is with you and will take care of you as you come to New Orleans to make your mark and share your faith with others.

“The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.” Deuteronomy 31:8

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR MISSIONS:

1. As you are preparing to come to New Orleans, think about ways that you can serve others as you are joining God on mission. Look for people around you today that you can show the love of Christ to. Commit to your calling to follow Christ on mission where you are now.
2. Remember that sin is not an issue of geography but of humanity. To reach others for Christ is more than one person or one trip, it is about serving Him in word and deed and trusting Him to save others at His appointed time.
3. Remember that God loves you and has showed you love, grace, and mercy. He also loves those around you at home and when you are here in New Orleans, and He wants you to show them the same love, grace, and mercy that He showed you.
4. Pray while you are preparing that God would use you to grow His kingdom where you are now and while you are in New Orleans.
5. Pray that God would be moving in your life now and preparing you for your time in New Orleans.

THINGS THAT MISSIONLAB SUGGESTS YOU BRING:

1. Bring a love for Christ and for sharing His love with people.
2. Bring a humble spirit.
3. Bring a willingness to step out of your comfort zone.
4. Bring a flexibility in order to follow the Lord’s lead.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TRAINING

Children's ministry is a vital part of MissionLab's ministry in New Orleans. During the school year, this can include after-school programs, preschool work, and playground ministry around the area. In the summertime, free or low-cost camps and programs for children are essentially non-existent in certain parts of the city, leaving a huge need to be filled. Through Backyard Bible Clubs and sports camps provided by our volunteers, these children not only fill their days, but they fill them with Christ-centered activities that can change their lives!

Most of our children's ministry groups set up their programming in parks and green spaces around the city and spend the week ministering there. We provide the location, and you're off and running! Many groups have found it best to spend the first day physically and spiritually prepping the area where they will be working. This includes picking up trash, handing out flyers, and prayer walking. Groups need to come prepared with whatever supplies they want to use for their ministry, whether that involves crafts or equipment for games. We also partner with local churches and community centers to help out with camps and VBS activities all over the city. The supply needs and the level of preparation necessary will vary by location, but your site coordinator can give you some insight when planning for these sites.

REASONS WHY MISSIONLAB LOVES CHILDREN'S MINISTRY:

Children's ministry has always been a very important ministry for the church. There are numerous places in the Bible where it talks about ministering to children. Let's look at a few of them:

"Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it." - Proverbs 22:6

"He took a little child and had him stand among them. Taking him in his arms, he said to them, 'Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me.'" - Mark 9: 36-37

"People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.'" And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them." - Mark 10:13-16

Now think back over these verses. What do they say about the importance of children?

What do they say about how we should treat children?

Here at MissionLab, we believe children's ministry is important because Scripture tells us that it is. In the verse from Proverbs we are told that we should train a child in the way he should go, and when he is older he won't turn from it. While you may only be with the kids from your site for a week, you are still helping to train them and share Christ with them. If you love on them and share with them in ways that they can remember, they will recall it even when they are older. We are also told in Mark 9 that if we welcome a child and care for them then we are not only doing it for that child, but we are also doing it to God. We love and treat the kids in the neighborhoods with respect because we are doing it for God as well.

In the last verses we looked at in Mark 10:13-16, we see that we are not to be a hindrance to children coming to Christ. Please remember this while you are working with the kids, and do not do or say anything that might be offensive to the kids. Doing so may cause them to not want to know Christ because of you. Just remember that Christ took the children in his arms and blessed them. This is what we want to do as well. We want to love on them and be a blessing to them while showing them the love of Christ.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR CHILDREN'S MINISTRY:

1. This is a great time to spend with kids in the city and share Christ with them. On your first day though (and maybe each morning when you first get there), it is usually best if you spend some time cleaning up around the park and canvassing/prayer walking the area to let people know that you are there.
2. Try to be consistent in getting to the sites on time. In some areas, the kids may not wake up and come out till around 10 a.m., but please go ahead and be at the park at 9 a.m. in case some kids are out.
3. We have also found that having several shorter, bite-size bible studies with repeating information rather than one longer one helps the kids learn it and remember it.
4. If you are planning to use the same material that you used for your VBS back home, know that several groups may have used that same material in the weeks before you, so coming up with some new and creative ways to share the bible study may be helpful in keeping the kids' attention. Some ways to consider is sharing through sidewalk chalk kinesthetics, verbal, and visual story time.
5. Please be sensitive to the area and kids that you are around. This is a public park, and you are a visitor there. This is their city and neighborhood, so please show it and them love and respect.
6. If you are serving in a lower income area, please be sensitive not to insult anyone because they do not have as much material wealth as you.
7. Always remember, if there is something you don't want to have the possibility of being taken, please leave it at home or on the seminary campus locked in your room
8. Please be sensitive to the fact that you are not these children's parents, and you should not be calling them your child or baby. This can come as an insult to them and their actual parents. Just know that you are a friend that is there to love on them and share Christ with them.

9. Depending on the park, there may not be a covered area or a bathroom. It is best if your team plans to bring a tent in order to have a little shade in these cases. Also, it is best if your team uses the restroom before going to sites each morning.
10. Bring enough snacks for your team and the kids while at your ministry site.
11. We have found that groups that came prepared for what they were doing, with all the material they needed and with creative ways to share the gospel, have had the best time and the most success with the kids.
12. Above all else, do not forget to LOVE the kids.

THINGS THAT MISSIONLAB SUGGESTS YOU BRING:

- Bible Study Materials
- Crayons
- Bubbles
- Jump Ropes
- Jacks
- Basketballs
- Soccer Balls
- Footballs
- Kick Balls
- Sidewalk Chalk
- Snacks for Children
- Juice/Punch for Children
- Cooler for Juice/Punch
- Tent (if necessary for ministry site)

CHOIR/DRAMA MINISTRY TRAINING

Many of our volunteer groups have skills in music and drama that they would like to share with the community here in order to share Christ with them. In these cases, we try to work with your team to schedule performances in different locations throughout the city such as Washington Artillery Park, St. Louis Cathedral, children's homes, nursing homes, local apartment complexes, and other venues throughout the city. This is a great ministry to be able to share with a large number of people.

REASONS WHY MISSIONLAB LOVES CHOIR/DRAMA PERFORMANCES:

The Bible talks a lot about singing praises to God, and it is important that we remember what singing was created for. Singing was created to worship God. Let's look at a few verses that talk about this.

"Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations." - Psalm 100

These verses describe worshipping God with gladness and thanksgiving. It talks about his faithfulness continuing through all generations. Maybe your group will be singing at a nursing home one day. While there, take some time before or after singing to talk with the residents because they are from a different generation than you. See how He has shown His faithfulness to them, and share how He has shown His faithfulness to you.

"Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things; his right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him. The Lord has made his salvation known and revealed his righteousness to the nations. He has remembered his love and his faithfulness to the house of Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth, burst into jubilant song with music; make music to the Lord with the harp, with the harp and the sound of singing." - Psalm 98:1-5

This Psalm talks about all that God has done. What are some of those things that He has done?

One of the things that He has done is work out salvation and made known His righteousness to the whole world. While your group is here in New Orleans, you may have the opportunity to sing at Washington Artillery Park or other locations around the city where lots of people from all over the world may be present. As you are singing and praising God, don't forget to have conversations with those that are listening. This will be a great time to tell why you are there singing praises to God and to tell them about His righteousness and how He worked out a way for their salvation. He may be using you to tell the nations about all that He has done for them.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR CHOIR/DRAMA PERFORMANCES:

There are a few things that we ask your group to keep in mind while planning and performing your ministry:

- This is a great time to have some team members that are not involved in your performance to interact with those watching the performance whether that be at the nursing home, apartment complex, or on the street at Washington Artillery Park. There may be those wondering why your team is performing or that have questions about the performance. It is great to have those that are not performing prepared to answer those questions and hopefully be able to build a relationship with them to share the gospel.
- Depending on your performance location, you may not have access to a power source, and amplification systems may not be allowed. You should be prepared to perform without them.
- Depending on your performance location, there may be time restrictions. Please look at your leader guide to know whether there are restrictions.

THINGS THAT MISSIONLAB SUGGESTS YOU BRING:

- Sunscreen for outdoor venues.
- Whatever your group deems necessary.

CONSTRUCTION AND YARD WORK MINISTRY TRAINING

Construction and yard work are key parts of our ministry here at Missionlab. New Orleans is home to many in need of physical labor, and, while hanging sheetrock and mowing yards, God gives us opportunities to share the Gospel with the homeowners and their neighbors. MissionLab groups help with anything from maintaining a yard for an elderly person to helping rebuild an entire house. We work with homeowners as well as local organizations. If your group is planning on doing construction, please keep in mind that you will need to bring the tools that you will need for your construction or yard work ministry site. MissionLab does request that homeowners provide the materials for the repairs, but you are welcome to assist in the purchasing of these materials if you feel led to do so but are not requested to do so. Construction and yard work ministry is a great way to show our faith through our actions, but it's also a great time to talk with people and tell them about Christ as your team is working on their home.

NOTE: Please come prepared to lead your team in whatever level of construction you choose! Unless otherwise noted, groups will be working independently with homeowners, and site foremen are not available.

REASONS WHY MISSIONLAB LOVES CONSTRUCTION AND YARD WORK MINISTRY:

Doing construction and yard work can be tiring work, and there might not be much reward that comes out of it. Your group may be clearing a lot in the Lower 9th Ward or cutting grass for an elderly person, and you may never get thanked for the work you do. Also, you might get bummed because you didn't get to share Christ with anyone or because it's so hot here in New Orleans. Remember what Galatians 6:9-10 says:

“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.”

Your group may be working with a homeowner that is already a believer. Continue to work hard and serve them well. They may be elderly and can't do the work themselves, and you are showing them the love of Christ and the love that the Church should have for one another. As you are working and serving, continue to strive to honor God in what you are doing. You may not see the people whose lot you are clearing or the homeowner who you are repairing their house come to know Christ, but we are all called to strive to do good because we never know when the harvest is going to come. You might get to be the person who shares Christ with them when they accept Him or the person after you might be, but we are all called to continue to serve each other and the lost.

Now let's read 2 Kings 4:1-7:

“The wife of a man from the company of the prophets cried out to Elisha, ‘Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that he revered the Lord. But now his creditor is coming to take my two boys as his slaves.’ Elisha replied to her, ‘How can I help you? Tell me, what do you have in your house?’ ‘your servant has nothing there at all,’ she said, ‘except a little oil.’ Elisha said, ‘Go around and ask all your neighbors for empty jars. Don’t ask for just a few. Then go inside and shut the door behind you and your sons. Pour oil into all the jars, and as each is filled, put it to one side.’ She left him and afterward shut the door behind her and her sons. They brought the jars to her and she kept pouring. When all the jars were full, she said to her son, ‘Bring me another one.’ But he replied, ‘There is not a jar left.’ Then the oil stopped flowing. She went and told the man of God, and he said, ‘Go, sell the oil and pay your debts. You and your sons can live on what is left.’”

In this story there are several things that we can learn. First, look at the way that Elisha treated the lady. When she first came to him what did he say?

How was Elisha able to help the woman while still preserving her dignity and respect?

When you are at a homeowner’s house to cut their grass or do some repairs, it is nice to start by showing them respect and dignity by talking with them. Talk to them about what they think needs to be done and how they would like for you to fix the repairs or cut their grass. You may have more knowledge about fixing or repairing the house that you could offer up, but do it in a way that helps them to keep their dignity and see God honored in the way you talk with them. In the story, Elisha didn’t just fix the problem for the woman by giving her money, he instead allowed her to be a part of the solution. When you are at a homeowner’s house, try to get them to be part of the solution if at all possible. We have tried that by asking them to provide the materials, but you could also do that by having them help you or by just sitting and talking with them for a while. Elisha also helped restore her trust in God by providing for her and her sons. He did this by showing her how God is working. Your team being present to complete some repairs may be the answer to a prayer that the homeowner has had, but sharing your time and story with them may be another way that your team can show them respect and the love of God.

EXERCISE TO THINK THROUGH:

Once upon a time, three youth ministries decided to address an unusual and dire problem affecting a lady living in New Orleans. Over time, her house became filled with many problems. It was lacking proper flooring, sheet-rock on the walls, air-conditioning and heating, a secure door, a sidewalk to a side door, painting on the outside and inside of the house, and other problems. The lady began staying in one or two rooms of the house in order to avoid the worst parts of the house, and she did whatever she could to stay cool during the summer and warm in the winter. In an effort to fix the lady’s problem, the first youth group went to the house and came up with some quick and easy solutions to some of the problems. Their plan was to put in a sidewalk to the side door of the house and to paint the outside of the house. The lady watched as the group came to her house and started to dig a path for the sidewalk. They also painted part of the outside of the house without checking to see if the siding on the house was rotted or not. The lady was very appreciative of all the work that they had done on her house. The outside of the house looked better for a little bit, but it did not fix the major problems she had with her flooring, heating and air-conditioning, and safety in her home.

The second youth ministry came to the lady's house to see what the problems were. They came up with different things that the lady needed done. They asked the lady some of her more pressing needs and then went to the home improvement store. The lady made suggestions of things to fix around her house that the group would have never thought of. The youth group and lady worked together to try to solve some of the problems with the house. They decided to take off the bad part of the siding that was rotten and to put up the sheet-rock on the inside of the ladies house. However, the team didn't take into consideration the amount of time both of these projects would take. They ended up not having enough time to finish replacing the bad siding they had taken off, which left some holes in the lady's house. The lady was there with them and grateful for all that they did for her. Still, some of her most urgent needs, like her unsecure door, were not fixed because the group didn't deem them as urgent as the lady did.

The third youth group, having heard about all the well-intentioned, yet not entirely beneficial, work that the other two groups did, took another approach. This group spent some time with the lady talking with her about her biggest needs and wants for her house. They also heard about her fears of living in the house with its unsafe conditions. Wanting to avoid the same mistakes of the first two youth ministries, they decided to have the lady make a list of the most important problems to her and then to do as much as they could without starting something that they didn't have time to finish. They decided they would start by replacing the lady's front door with one that had a better lock so that the lady felt safe in her home at night. They then decided to start replacing all the bad siding on the lady's house, making sure not to take any off that they didn't have time to replace. After that, they prepped the siding to be repainted. They didn't have time to paint, but they knew now that the lady had all her siding replaced, the new sheetrock was up, and her door was replaced. They had fixed the problems that she thought was most urgent without creating any new ones. She now felt safe in her own home.

What were some of the ways that the first two groups did right in helping the lady?

What were some ways that they could have served her better without hurting her?

What were some of the good things that the third group did to help the lady without hurting her?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR CONSTRUCTION AND YARD WORK MINISTRY:

1. This is a time for your group to serve a homeowner here in New Orleans that cannot necessarily do the work themselves or cannot afford to pay someone to do the work. That doesn't mean that they are inferior to you or someone you cannot learn from. Most of our homeowners would love to sit down and have conversations with you. Please have some in the group sit and talk with them. This is a great time for you to learn from their experience and for you to share Christ with them.
2. Spend this time working together as a team to build camaraderie and bonds within your own group. It's a great time to get to know each other better and grow stronger as a team. Don't just work, but have conversations with your team as well.
3. Some of the teams may be at smaller yards or houses and may not have enough space for everyone to be working at the same time. Take turns working so that no one over exerts

themselves. Also, it's usually a great idea to have some trash bags so you can walk the neighborhood to pick up trash and pray for the neighborhood and people you might meet.

4. While MissionLab does have some tools, we do not have enough for everyone. Therefore, it is best if your team brings the supplies that you will need. While many of our homeowners have some tools, they typically do not have specialized equipment or enough tools for an entire volunteer group to use. There are several home improvement stores in the city that rent tools and equipment if you are unable to bring everything that you need.
5. Missionlab does require that homeowners provide whatever materials are necessary for the repairs. It is wonderful and absolutely welcome if your group feels led to help cover the cost of these materials, but please know that it is not expected of your team.
6. The MissionLab staff has met with each of the homeowners that our groups work with. If the homeowner is asking you to do something that wasn't mentioned to you before coming or that you don't think that you can complete during the time that you are supposed to be at their house, please talk with the MissionLab staff before starting.

THINGS THAT MISSIONLAB SUGGESTS YOU BRING:

- Work Gloves
- Garbage Bags
- Sunscreen
- Bug Spray
- Swing Blades
- Rakes
- Clippers
- Gas-powered Equipment
(lawn mowers, weed eaters,
etc.)
- Loppers
- Hammers
- Tools for specific
construction Sites

FOOD BANK MINISTRY TRAINING

Across the world, the United States, and the city of New Orleans, hunger continues to be a growing problem. An increasing number of children, seniors, adults, and families are at risk of going hungry every day. MissionLab partners with local food banks and community centers across the city to help fight this. Your group will have the opportunity to participate in this fight by serving at a local food bank or community center. You should be prepared to help load and unload donation trucks, sort and pack donations, clean, and complete other various projects at these facilities. You may also have the opportunity to meet and talk with those that are coming through the center. In these cases, take some time to help them, love on them, and pray for them as you are helping them find their items.

REASONS WHY MISSIONLAB LOVES FOOD BANK MINISTRY:

There are many reasons that you might choose to serve at a food bank, share your faith, or pray for others. Often, these actions do not start out of a love for humanity but out of a love for God. Look at Ephesians 6:7-8:

“Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free.”

We are called to serve others because we have a love for God, and He has called us to love others and to serve them. We should be serving people not simply because they need it, but because we have been called to serve by Christ.

Let's look at Matthew 25: 34-40:

“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’ “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’ The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’”

What do these verses tell us about how we should treat others?

What do they say are the reason that we should help others?

Jesus tells us that we are all one body in Him. It doesn't matter if we are rich, poor, young, old, or what race we are. We are all part of the body of Christ, and we should all be helping each other and growing in our likeness of Christ.

Take some time before coming to MissionLab to see what food banks are in your area and how you can help them. See if your church can take up a collection of food for them or if your team can go volunteer there.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR FOOD BANK MINISTRY:

Food Bank ministry is such an important ministry, and it is one that is greatly needed and appreciated in the New Orleans area. Here are a few practical suggestions for you as you are serving at a local food bank ministry:

1. Listen to the site contact and help them in any way that they ask. They are typically there year round and during very hectic times. Your team will be a great asset for them.
2. Be willing to jump in and serve wherever they ask you to.
3. Be self-starters and take initiative, looking to see if there are ways that you might could help that they haven't pointed out yet.
4. Though it might seem sporadic, hectic, or lacking organization, most of the food banks/pantries that we work with are very organized. The high volumes that come through their location can make it seem like they are not.
5. Be relational with those coming through the food pantry. Be kind to them and caring. Talk with them, and see if there are other ways that you can relate to them or pray for them.
6. There may be other volunteer teams at some of the food banks/pantries. Work with them, and get to know them. Some of them may not be church groups or followers of Christ. This is a great time for you to witness to them as well.
7. There may be times when your location is overflowing with people to serve and trucks to unload. If this becomes the case, do your best to help with both. At other times, your location might be very slow. Please take this time to grab some water, restock, or talk with all the people helping at your location.

THINGS THAT MISSIONLAB SUGGESTS YOU BRING:

- Bring your own water to drink while you are serving at the food banks.
- Bring closed-toe shoes.

Homeless Ministry Training

New Orleans is an urban center, and, because of that, some of the same issues that are found in most urban centers around the world are present in our city. While New Orleans has made great strides in reducing the homeless population, it still has a significant number of homeless residents. Some of them have become homeless recently, and others have been that way for a much longer time. No matter the reason for them being homeless, it is not our place to judge them. As Christians, we are called to love on them and share Christ with them.

REASONS WHY MISSIONLAB LOVES HOMELESS MINISTRY:

Let's look at James 2:1-5 together:

"My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism. Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in shabby clothes also come in. If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man, "you stand there" or "sit on the floor by my feet," have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?"

What do these verses say about how we should treat those with more money or nicer things? What does it say about how we should treat those with less money?

These verses tell us that we are to treat every person equally. It doesn't matter if they have nice clothes, cars, houses, and more or if they are poor and dressed in shabby clothes. We are to treat every person equally. Every person on the planet is looking for the same things: love, understanding, and respect. Homeless people are the same way. They want you to treat them the same way that you would anyone from your neighborhood or community. God has created us all equal and worthy of love and respect.

Now let's look at Romans 12:10:

"Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor."

The reason that your team has requested to do homeless ministry is so that you can help someone who is in need, but we are all in need in some way or another. You may have a nice house, but you may need a friend. You may have lots of friends, but you may need help in school. We all need something, but the most important thing that we need is to know Christ and to have people treat us with dignity and love. While you are there to pass out some material things, the main reason you are there is to show respect and to have a conversation with someone. While you are there, talk with them. Share about your life, and ask them about theirs. Remember, they are a person with interests and hobbies, and you can talk to them as you would any other new friend.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR GOING OUT TO SERVE THE HOMELESS:

1. You can't fix the problem. Some people want to ignore the homeless because they can't fix them. This is true. We cannot simply fix the problem of homelessness. When you are going out to minister to the homeless, don't act like they are a problem that you can fix. They are merely people in need of love.
2. Homelessness isn't a disease. It isn't something that you can catch by spending time with them. They are people just like you. Some are homeless temporarily because of some bad circumstances, and some are homeless because of issues that they struggle with. Others may even choose to be homeless.
3. This is their home. When you are going out to talk with them, you are doing so in their home. You wouldn't just walk into your someone's house and sit down without knocking first. In the same way, don't go into these areas without saying hello and talking with them as you are walking up. Don't stand over them when you are talking. If they are sitting or lying down, ask if you can sit next to them and talk with them. If they don't want to talk, they will let you know.
4. Meeting their physical needs isn't the main purpose. While we do request that you take something to help meet their physical need (see suggestions below), that isn't the main point. The main reason that we have groups go serve the homeless is so that they get to sit and have conversations with them. So many homeless have great stories to tell and enjoy talking with people, so take some time to talk with them like you would do anyone else. While you are talking with them, try to turn the conversation to Christ. By spending this time with them, you will have an opportunity to share Christ, and they will be more open to hear you.
5. Be relational, and pray with them. This ministry is just as relational as any other ministry that we do. As you are leaving, ask them if you can pray for them. Pray for them there and after you leave. When you are praying, do not stop being aware of your surroundings. Someone in your group should keep their eyes open in order to observe others around you.
6. Walk around in small groups. It is intimidating for anyone to have a large group of people walk up to them. Break up into smaller groups of 2-4 when you go out to talk. This will make them feel more relaxed and will allow more of you to be able to join in on the conversation.

THINGS THAT MISSIONLAB SUGGESTS YOU BRING:

These are only suggestions and your groups should feel free to bring as little or as much as they want to pass out.

- Socks
- Bottled Water
- Toothpaste
- Toothbrush
- T-shirts
- Hats
- Non-Alcoholic Wipes
- Fresh Fruit
- Raisins
- Granola Bars
- Bug Spray
- Sunscreen
- Deodorant
- Bibles
- Books

Please do not bring the following items:

- Mouthwash (with Alcohol)
- Hand Sanitizer (with Alcohol)
- Rubbing Alcohol
- Razor Blades
- Sewing Needles
- Any other items with Alcohol or Sharp Objects in them.

INTERNATIONAL MINISTRY TRAINING

New Orleans is like a patchwork quilt of ethnicities and cultures, and opportunities for ministry to international residents are around every corner! We work with some local ministries specifically geared toward internationals. These projects can involve working with cruise ship employees and sailors from around the world. We also send groups to minister to the day laborer community we have here in the city. We have had a huge influx of construction workers in the city since 2005. Many of them speak Spanish, and a small number may be fluent in English. They work long hours but are not contract employees. They wait outside several of the home improvement stores each day to get chosen for jobs. This has brought about a new ministry in the city. Handing these men a snack package and a Spanish Bible speaks volumes to them, despite the language barrier. If your group has a specific people group that you are interested in working with, please let us know. However, keep in mind that a working knowledge of a foreign language is great, but it is not necessary to minister! Smiles and kindness cross cultural barriers!

REASONS WHY MISSIONLAB LOVES INTERNATIONAL MINISTRY:

There are so many verses in the Bible about reaching out and ministering to people. Let's take a few minutes to look at just a few verses that talk about reaching people from all nations.

"All the nations you have made will come and worship before you, O Lord; they will bring glory to your name." - Psalm 86:9

"All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations will bow down before him." - Psalm 22: 27

These verses, along with others throughout the Old Testament, tell us that all nations will worship God and bring glory to His name. Psalm 67 is another that tells us that God's ways and salvation will be known among all nations. We are to talk to people from every nation because God has called us to. Now let's look at some verses in the New Testament.

"And the gospel must first be preached to all nations." - Mark 13:10

"Then Peter began to speak: 'I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right.'" - Acts 10:34-35

"For this is what the Lord has commanded us: 'I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.'" - Acts: 13:47

The Bible tells us that all nations need to hear the gospel. In Acts 10, Peter tells us that God doesn't show favoritism. He didn't show favoritism and come just to save the Jewish people, but He came to

save people from all nations. This is great news for us, and it gives us a great opportunity. We are living during a unique time in history where you don't have to travel across the world to reach all the nations for Christ. When you come to New Orleans, you will have the opportunity to meet, befriend, and share the gospel of Christ with people from all over the world. More than likely, there are people in your town that are from other nations that you can befriend and share Christ with as well.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL MINISTRY:

- Depending on the culture of those you may be interacting with, it is a good idea to avoid wearing shorts. We suggest that on the day that your team will be working with internationals that everyone wear pants and dress modestly.
- Be aware that these people may be far away from their home country, culture, and family. Make sure you have a smile on your face while being friendly and encouraging to them.
- Many internationals have come here hoping for a second chance or better life but unfortunately have not found that. They have found that internationals are often marginalized in the United States. Remember to be friendly and encouraging to them.
- It is a great idea to be aware of what is going on in the world so that you can have conversations about their native countries. Google some news articles about events happening around the world.
- Ask them about their home country, culture, religion, food, or what they like to do. This could lead into conversations that will hopefully lead to Christ.
- There may be a language barrier that makes conversations difficult. Be patient with them as you are talking. Please do not treat them as though they are unintelligent because they do not know your language. Try to use simple words and body language instead of speaking louder or over emphasizing syllables.
- If you are serving at Global Maritime, remember that most of the people have given up spending time with their families in order to provide for their families. They may be lonely, so spend some time talking with them and asking about their families while sharing about yours.

Before you come to New Orleans, take some time to think through some conversation starters. Think about ways to start conversations about your family, your faith, and what's going on in the world. Think of ways to move the conversation to talking about the gospel. Practice with a partner and see how it goes.

THINGS THAT MISSIONLAB SUGGESTS YOU BRING:

- If your group is working at Global Maritime Ministries, it will be important to get in touch with the site contact before coming in order to know if your team will be helping around the facility or if seafarers will be there. This will help you know what items you might need to bring.

Prayer Walking Training

The most vital ministry taking place in New Orleans is prayer. New Orleans, like every city, is a broken city with broken people living in it. The ministries taking place all over New Orleans can't be done without prayer. People often ask us why prayerwalking is important. Isn't it just as easy to pray from our homes or work? You can pray for New Orleans and every city from your home or work, but walking in the city or neighborhood works better for several reasons. God will hear your prayers for New Orleans no matter where you are, but being in the area you are praying for is important because it helps you to understand the community better. You will have sounds, sights, and smells that will help you engage in the act of praying for that particular area. It will give you a new fervor and intensity when praying for the area that you are walking through. It will help you continue praying for the area that you will walk through and for the people that you will meet there. When you come to New Orleans, we will provide you with a location, a map, and instructions for an area to prayer walk through while you are here.

REASONS MISSIONLAB LOVES PRAYERWALKING:

You may be asking why we view prayerwalking as a vital part of Missionlab's ministry. Prayerwalking will put you in position to meet a divine appointment, in which case you are pointed towards prayer by an encounter or event that takes place. It also helps to lead you to other activities for the Kingdom of God. Evangelism and church-planting efforts often come from prayerwalks. Prayerwalking can also stretch your faith to pray large, visionary prayers for lasting change in the city and the area that you are walking.

You may find prayerwalking to be difficult for several reasons. One of the most common difficulties is our lack of patience. Most of us want to see immediate results and to have dramatic stories that we can share with others. This does not always happen when we go prayerwalking. The city of New Orleans, or even your own city, will go to those who are persistent. There has been harm done in every city, and that harm can only be undone through new seeds of life being planted through prayer. We have to be patient because God is patient.

"The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance." - 2 Peter 3:9

We must continue to be persistent and patient knowing that God is patient and is working everything for His glory. We may not see any obvious signs that people have changed when we prayerwalk, but we know that God is moving and the enemy's strongholds are being broken down by prayer.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR PRAYERWALKING:

- Before you go out prayerwalking:
 - a. Confess any sin that you may have.
 - b. Make sure that everyone on your team is in a loving relationship and that no one is mad at someone else on the team.

- c. Make sure that everyone knows each other so that you are spending the time on the walk praying to God instead of getting to know each other.
- d. Praise God.
- e. Prepare your heart and mind. Read Scriptures in quiet or aloud with your team.
- f. Seek God for guidance as you are preparing to go out.
- When you go prayerwalking:
 - a. Approach God. Hebrews 4:14-16 says, *“Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are-- yet was without sin.”* Fix your attention on Christ and the purposes, ways, and thoughts of God as you are setting out. Christ is ever present with God and is listening to our prayers.
 - b. Set out in small groups. We have found that when a group is larger than three people some group members don’t participate or get distracted by other things. In groups of two or three everyone can stay focused on the purpose of the walk and praying to God.
 - c. Open your ears so that you can hear from God. Not all silent moments are a bad thing that has to be filled with someone talking. Let the silent moments be a time when you are listening for God to speak to you.
 - d. Pray out loud together as you walk.
 - e. Pray with Scriptures.
 - f. Pray with relevance for the area that you are walking. Leave your personal prayer list at home for a little while in order to focus on the prayer needs of the area that you are walking.
 - g. Combine compassion and curiosity as you are walking past homes, shops, and schools. If you see people out, talk with them. See if they have any specific prayer requests or if they know of specific things going on in the neighborhood that you can pray for.
- When you are preparing to end the prayerwalk:
 - a. Gather everyone together to have a time to share your experience, but don’t expect everyone to have a story to tell.
 - b. Continue to think about and pray for the area you walked even as you go back home.

THINGS THAT MISSIONLAB SUGGESTS YOU BRING:

- Comfortable shoes for walking.

SENIOR ADULT MINISTRY TRAINING

Senior adult ministry is a great experience for all of our groups that come to Missionlab. This is a time where your group will go to serve different nursing homes or assisted living facilities that we partner with. It's a great time for your team to talk with people from a different generation and to learn from their experiences. Make sure that you don't stay just with your team members, but go and talk with the people at the facilities.

REASONS MISSIONLAB LOVES SENIOR ADULT MINISTRY:

Senior adult ministry is important for several reasons. First, the Bible tells us to honor and show respect to those who are our elders. Take a look at Leviticus 19:32:

“Rise in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly and revere your God. I am the Lord.”

Second, it is important to spend time with other generations and to encourage them. The Word of God says:

“Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers, older women as sisters, in all purity. Honor widows who are truly widows.” - 1 Timothy 5:1-3

Spend some time with those who are older than you. Honor them. Encourage them. Love on them and have conversations with them. Ask them about their lives. You will enjoy learning from them and sharing with them. Psalm 71:17-18 tells us:

“Since my youth, O God, you have taught me, and to this day I declare your marvelous deeds. Even when I am old and gray do not forsake me, O God, till I declare your power to the next generation, your might to all who are to come.”

Sit and talk with the residents at the facilities. They may be followers of Christ who can help you grow in your love and understanding of God. They may not know Christ, and you might get to share the Gospel with them. Whatever the case, senior adult ministry is about spending time with them, learning from them, and loving on them.

Before coming to MissionLab, visit a nursing home or assisted living facility in your town. Talk with the residents at these places and get to know them. Come up with some activities you can do with them so that you can bring those activities to do in New Orleans as well.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR SENIOR ADULT MINISTRY:

1. Be prepared to love on the people there. They love having visitors and desire to talk and share with you. Be open to talking and laughing with them.

2. Be prepared to play games or do crafts. Many residents at these facilities love playing different kinds of games and doing different crafts. Bring some games and crafts to have a great time with the residents. Some great games and crafts to bring are ones that will help them with their memory.
3. Play music and sing with them. We often send our choir groups to different senior adult facilities because they love to hear music and singing. They also love to sing and play with you, so be prepared for them to join in.
4. It's also a great idea to bring supplies to paint nails or to do hair. They will love being pampered and having time to talk with you while you are pampering them.
5. Bring some books to spend some time reading to some of the residents.
6. The best advice that we have is to go and talk with the people. They love getting to spend time with people, sharing their stories, and learning about you. Make sure you are open with them. You never know what you will learn from them.

THINGS THAT MISSIONLAB SUGGESTS YOU BRING:

- Instruments (if anyone can play music for the residents)
- Craft Materials
- Games
- Nail Polish Supplies
- Books

STREET WITNESSING/ BOTTLED WATER MINISTRY TRAINING

Many church groups come to New Orleans every year. Many of these groups come here specifically to spend some time doing street witnessing. This ministry takes on many different styles depending on the group. The people of New Orleans are not unfamiliar with street witnessing. Throughout the years of MissionLab, we have found that certain things work better than others when you are sharing your faith. If you speak kindly to people, ask them about their story, share your personal story, and have an open dialogue with them, people are more likely to listen to what you are saying. There may still be some people who are not interested in talking with you, but others may be intrigued by your openness and continue the conversation with you. We have also found that passing out bottles of water, cups of lemonade, or snowballs is a great way to start conversations and open the door for sharing the gospel.

REASONS MISSIONLAB LOVES STREET WITNESSING/BOTTLED WATER MINISTRY:

Why do we share the gospel with others? Why do we pray for them? Do we share Jesus with people we don't know out of love? Is it because we know how much they need Jesus? Is it because we feel we have a duty or obligation to share Christ with others? The Holy Spirit speaks to each Christian about sharing their faith with others, but most don't want to do it because they are afraid of rejection. We often approach evangelism grudgingly and out of a sense of obligation. Thankfully, we have the Holy Spirit that goes with us, and we don't have to be afraid.

"Again Jesus said, 'Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.' And with that he breathed and said 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'" - John 20:21-22

We have the Holy Spirit that is going with us, which means we don't have to fear rejection. We have been chosen by Christ and called to continue His work. God sent Christ to the earth to save the world, and we are called to continue as His body and to tell others about Him. We don't have to fear rejection or feel obligated because we are not alone. We have the Holy Spirit with us.

Why are you sharing the gospel at local parks in middle/upper class areas? Wouldn't it be better to share it in poor areas or with the homeless? Here at MissionLab, we do believe that it is important to share the gospel with the homeless and in the poorer areas of the city. We have groups doing that. We also believe that it is important to share the gospel with those that have more material wealth. No one deserves the love of God any more than you or I do. We should never become people that only share Jesus with poor people as if He is only a product that will make the life of the poor person better. Every person that has ever walked the earth, except for Christ, deserves to be separated from God for eternity, but Christ came to die for all so that no one would perish, but so that we would all be

reconciled to God. Our material wealth has nothing to do with that. When we read Ephesians 6:7-9, we see that we are all equal in the eyes of the Father.

“Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free. And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.” - Ephesians 6:7-9

We have been called to follow Christ and to serve others. Whether they have a lot of money or very little, everyone needs to hear about Christ. As you are going out to do evangelism and water bottle ministry, remember that everyone you will meet is important to God. He wants you to have peace knowing that He has sent you and that He is with you. For that reason, feel confident talking to people and sharing His love with them.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR STREET WITNESSING/BOTTLED WATER MINISTRY:

1. It is a great idea to bring water bottles with you and to ice them down before going out. You can get ice from the ice machine in the Price Lobby and the Providence Guest House.
2. Many groups have found it useful to have some in their group walk around to pass out water and start conversations while having others stay near a water fountain to pass out water there.
3. Passing out water bottles is not our main goal. The point of passing them out is to start a conversation with people in hopes of being able to share the gospel.
4. Approach people near exercise stations, benches, and water fountains. All of these are great places to meet people and start conversations with them.
5. These people don't need Jesus any less than someone who is homeless. They may have more material wealth, but they may not know Jesus.
6. Here are some simple suggestions to start a conversation with:
 - a. Ask them if they are from New Orleans.
 - b. Ask them about New Orleans in general.
 - c. Ask about their family, job, and friends.
 - d. Ask about Katrina and their struggles.
 - e. Ask for recommendations of things to do in New Orleans.
7. If you talk with a Christian, don't just write them off. Ask them about their walk with Jesus. This city has a large Catholic population. Most people will tell you that they are Catholic and that they believe in Jesus, but take some time to find out what He really means to them and to share what He means to you.

THINGS THAT MISSIONLAB SUGGESTS YOU BRING:

- Bottled water