

Letter Writing and Fundraising

Developing a support base (financial and prayer) is vital to the effectiveness of a short term mission. It can be awkward and uncomfortable for some of us who would rather be independent and not impose ourselves on others. Yet, God designed us to be in relationships and cross-cultural ministry is no exception. By inviting others to join you in the process, you allow God to work in their lives as well as yours and share the blessing of your ministry opportunity. Support raising also reminds us of our dependence on God. The missionary experience of the apostle Paul indicates the importance and joy of having others support and encourage you.

RAISING SUPPORT:

- Pray: Start by spending time with God. Ask Him to provide direction and wisdom, and to provide for your needs.
- Name storm: List family and friends who may be interested in fulfilling the Great Commission with you through prayer and/or financial support.
- Write: Compose a letter explaining your team's specific purpose, and inviting others to partner with you.
- Call: Get in touch with those who have not responded to make sure they received your letter, and answer any questions or concerns.
- Thanks: Send a personal thank-you note to each person who participated on your team, through prayer and financial support.

Now that you have a general sense of how support raising works, let's take a detailed look at each part of the process.

Step One: Pray

Acknowledge your total dependence on God.

- Proverbs 3:5-6

Consider the following verses in light of support raising:

- Job 42:2
- Jeremiah 32:27
- Ephesians 3:20

Mediate on this aspect of God's character, and other attributes, such as His faithfulness, goodness, loving kindness, sovereignty and wisdom.

You may also want to pray and ask God for the following:

- Wisdom: James 1:5
- Provision: Philippians 4:19
- Peace: Philippians 4:6-7

As you spend time in prayer, commit your support raising to God, and ask Him to use this process for his purposes and glory.

Step Two: Name storm

Start developing an initial list of people who might be interested in partnering with you. As with brainstorming, in name storming, there is one cardinal rule—anything goes. No name is unqualified. Don't decide for someone else if he or she is interested. If you limit yourself to those you think can give, you

might be prematurely disqualifying those whom God wants to partner with you. Later you will need to prioritize which people to contact first, but for now, don't disqualify anyone. A good goal is 30 names.

Step Three: Write

The main focus of the letter should be on building a personal relationship with those to whom the letter is sent. Writing a support letter does not need to be a dreaded task. Think about the missionary letters you may have seen from people you know. What kind of things do you enjoy hearing? Make it creative and fun. Enhance your content by using pictures, a map, and a creative stationary. Keep it to one page so it'll have a better chance of being read.

We've provided several materials to read over while writing your letter. Look through the ideas presented, consider the guidelines, and then add your own personal spin to your letter.

Basic Guidelines to Keep in Mind:

- Give your letter a specific date: March 4, 2020; not March 2020
- Start off with a personal greeting. Ask some questions or refer to a shared experience. It's important to give each letter a personal touch.
- Bring your reader up to date with what God has been doing in your life. If you haven't seen some of your potential ministry partners for a while, this is especially important.
- Educate your reader. Share how you became involved in your current ministry activities and how God led you to join a team.
- Discuss your team's purpose, host ministry, and destination.
- Explain your need. Share specific ways that the reader can participate in this ministry through prayer and financial support.
- Ask your reader to respond. Give a specific timeline, and encourage him to call with any questions or concerns.
- Acknowledge your relationship again with an emphasis on thanks, appreciation, gratitude, partnership and commitment.
- Close the letter and sign it.

Here is a simple, three paragraph format to follow:

Paragraph #1—Briefly update your life. Here are two examples:

I have been thinking about you and want to let you know what I am up to. It's hard to believe my senior year is almost complete. I look forward to attending Oregon State University in the fall. I am excited to write you about an opportunity I have this summer.

What a year it has been so far! James still enjoys working with the Student Ministries, and Janet is now a part of the women's Bible studies. Paul is a junior in high school and Andrea is in eighth grade. Our family has been quite busy but we have taken the time to stop and pray about what the Lord has for us this upcoming Fall.

Paragraph #2—Explain the trip and why you are participating

Clearly spell out the opportunity you have with this trip, including dates, important details, and an explanation of the purpose of the trip and why you decided to go. Also mention what your specific involvement on the trip will be, whether it's being a part of the drama team, leading worship or well-drilling, people like to hear about what YOU will be doing. If you're not sure, don't stress about it. Give an overview of the ways the team will serve, through medical clinics, festivals, pastor's conference, etc.

Paragraph #3—Invite people to join you

Explain how people can be involved. This is a big step to take and we need support. Invite people to pray for you (include a specific request or two). Let them know you are raising money as a team and you are counting on God to raise a specific amount (include the actual amount) toward the team goal. Money raised above your personal goal will go toward the team needs. Invite them to participate in the financial need by sending checks in the enclosed envelope payable to: RSA. Putting a stamp on this envelope makes returning it much easier. Emphasize that you and your supporters are a team in this effort. They are sending you through prayer and contributing towards expenses.

We've also included some sample letters. Allow them to help get you thinking, but make sure your own letter is original.

Step Four: Call

After two weeks of mailing your letters, get in touch with those who have not responded to make sure they received your letter, and answer any questions or concerns.

Step Five: Thanks

When receiving responses, make sure to write a personal thank you to each supporter. This confirms to them you received their gift and shows gratitude. After returning from your trip, send a second thank you letter and recognize them for the role they played in the trip. In your letter, tell them about what you did, how God worked, and some lessons you learned, and the way the people were impacted. Just as with the support letter, make your thank you letter personal and creative. Your thank you can be in the form of a written letter or postcard and may include pictures from your trip. This letter should be sent as soon as you can put your experience into words.

SAMPLE LETTER

March 3, 2020

Dear Family and Friends,

I have great news to share; I have been accepted to go on a Mission Trip to Valencia, Venezuela! Our team will be working with Reid Saunders, an Evangelist and Missionary. For years I have desired to use my gifts on the mission field to make a difference for Eternity. Twenty of us will assist Reid with a two-day Evangelistic Festival where we will have the opportunity to reach the people of Valencia. We also plan on visiting orphanages to share the Gospel of Jesu Christ, and provide several medical clinics.



We will be on the mission trip from August 2 – 17. The only way we will begin to be effective is if God’s hand is with us, so please pray for us as we prepare to leave, for our safety and success while we are there. I would also like to ask you to consider supporting me financially. I have to raise \$3,000 in a short time.

Thank you for your consideration and allowing me to be God’s hands and feet for in Venezuela. If you decide to support me financially, please mail the slip below along with your check payable to RSA, and write in the memo line “Venezuela Mission Trip”. May God multiply your generosity.

In Christ,

Joe Bob

Joe Bob

I want to support _____ on his/her mission trip to Valencia, Venezuela.

Name: _____ Email _____

Mailing Address: _____

Home phone: _____ Mobile Phone: _____

Enclosed is my gift of \$ _____

I would like to give via credit card (please fill out information below or call the RSA office)

Please charge \$ _____ to my credit card Visa MC Discover AMEX

Card # _____ - _____ - _____ Card Exp. _____ - _____ CVV # _____

Name as it appears on card: _____

Zip code of address on card, if different than above: _____

Cardholder signature _____ Today’s Date _____