



Pro Tips from Past Trip Leaders

The tips below are shared by experienced trip leaders who've done a great job in the past, adding their unique touch to create fantastic experiences for their participants. You can use this as a handy guide or a jumping-off point for leading your own trip. Remember that YOU were chosen for a reason, so let your personality come through with how you lead. We'll be adding ideas as they come in!

Before You Go

Preparing Trip Leads

Before you head out on your trip, it's a good idea to have a meeting with the Trip Leader, GO Group Leader, and Worship Leader. During this meeting, you can get to know each other better, talk about how the trip will be structured, plan the baptism ceremony, and decide who will do what. Ask them to arrive early to pre-trip meetings to pray and welcome the team.

It's also a great time to invite someone you trust and look up to as a spiritual mentor to join you. This person can offer prayers for your team, the trip, and all the participants, and they can give you a special blessing for your roles as leaders.

Encouraging Trip Leads

Hand-write a note for each of your GO Group Leaders to give to them at the airport. Thank them for their commitment and sacrifice for the team. Call out specific ways that they are excellent leaders, and express how happy you are to have them on the team.

Communicate early and often

Each month before the trip, an email will be sent to all participants. This email will contain words of encouragement, fundraising suggestions, stories about fellow participants, and birthday greetings when necessary. Use the templates provided and add to them to make them personal and customized to your team and trip.

These monthly emails are meant to keep the excitement and camaraderie building within the group. Many participants are eagerly anticipating the trip, and these emails will help foster a sense of connection.

Additionally, participants are encouraged to share any fundraising success stories or opportunities to assist each other. Collaboration is key, and together, we can accomplish remarkable things! They can use the “discussions” feature in Go Method to build camaraderie online.

Assign GO Group seats at PreTrip Meetings

Having participants sit with their respective GO Groups during pre-trip meetings is a great way to foster rapport and provide familiar faces as the trip unfolds. To facilitate this, consider creating name tags with a clever twist: use colored dot stickers or colored ink to code the tags into groups. When participants arrive, they can mingle and find their color-coded group, encouraging interaction and connection before the meeting starts.

Consider Sharing Your Packing List

Our trip handbooks include a packing list, but if you have a tried and true packing list, share it with your team! Some trip leaders have included a daily packing list to help the team better understand what is necessary/appropriate for each day.

Travel to/from

Airplane mode

For international trips, encourage team members who do not want to purchase international phone plans to keep their phone in “airplane mode.” They will still be able to connect to wifi, which is available at most of our lodging facilities.

Leverage a layover

Layovers sometimes line up perfectly, but usually when we are traveling in large groups during busy seasons, you’re going to end up with a lot of time between flights (on purpose, to get some cushion for possible delays). Use this time to get to build relationships:

- Plan an optional airport scavenger hunt (use ChatGPT to help you)
- Suggest that GO Groups have meetings

On the Ground

Reflection time: SOLA

Take time the first night on the ground to explain S.O.L.A. to your participants and set the tone for reflection time throughout the trip. SOLA reflection time refers to the amount of time it takes for someone to pause and think deeply about their actions, decisions, or experiences. The term "SOLA" is often used as an acronym for Stop, Observe, Listen, and Assess, which are the key steps in this reflective process.

Here's a breakdown of what each step means:

- **Stop:** This means taking a break or a moment to halt your current activity or thought process. It's like hitting the pause button on whatever you're doing or thinking about.
- **Observe:** After stopping, you should focus on observing your surroundings, your thoughts, or your feelings. It's about paying attention to what's happening in and around you.
- **Listen:** This step involves not only listening to external sounds but also listening to your inner thoughts and emotions. It's a way to become more aware of your internal dialogue.
- **Assess:** Finally, you should assess the situation or your own feelings and thoughts. Think about why you're doing what you're doing or feeling what you're feeling. Consider the consequences of your actions or decisions.

So, SOLA reflection time is essentially a practice of taking a break, paying attention to your thoughts and feelings, and evaluating your actions or decisions. It's a valuable tool for self-awareness and personal growth, as it allows you to make more informed choices and gain a better understanding of yourself.

Daily Energizer

To boost energy levels and foster group bonding after emotionally and physically demanding days on our GO Trips, introduce nightly games before worship sessions, featuring quick, all-inclusive activities that add a fun and competitive twist. Think about offering "Gumby" prizes to the winners as an added incentive.

- **Head, Shoulder, Shoe** - participants pair in groups of 2 with an object, such as a shoe, between them. As the leader calls out body parts, participants have to touch what is called out with both hands. When the leader calls out "shoe" the first participant to grab and control the object in the middle wins. Winners of the pairs then repair with other winners. Continue the game until there is one winner.
- **Get to Know You Bingo** - Create a bingo board with interesting things about the people on the trip. You could ask ahead of time for people to give some of these facts or come up with your own. Make enough copies of the board for everyone. Spend a few minutes letting people mingle to fill in their bingo board with names of people that fit the interesting facts.

Invite others to Pray: GO Group Leaders/Participants

To create a prayerful atmosphere from the start, initiate group prayers at the first trip meeting, ensuring that all gatherings involve prayer, with different leaders and participants taking turns to lead. Begin with the GO Group Leaders to establish the practice and offer clear examples of vocal prayer. However, it's advisable to provide a heads-up to some participants beforehand to avoid putting them on the spot.

Think of GO Groups as your Lead Team

As a Trip Leader, it's important to rely on and delegate tasks to your GO Group Leaders, treating them as an extension of yourself, to ease your workload and empower them as leaders while also recognizing that nurturing potential future Trip Leaders is a crucial aspect of your role.

Encourage sharing

During morning group time or morning travel, pick 3 people (get introverts involved too!) to give highs/lows/standouts of the previous day. This usually turns into something deep and opens the door for discussion, depth and breakthrough.

Encourage community

Encourage people to mingle: sit with a new person on the bus, have a meal with someone you don't know yet. Give them a prompt to help them start a conversation.

Leverage talents

Look for skills in members of your team, and leverage their natural abilities:

- Does someone take amazing photos? Ask them to share them with the GO Team to post to social media.
- Is someone constantly counting heads for attendance? Put that person in charge of a vehicle or of doing group counts.
- Is someone super chatty? Ask them to give the group discussion topics for things like the bus rides or during meals.

Handling Difficult Situations

Take time to listen

A problem is an opportunity that is misunderstood. Listen to issues as they arise, using active listening techniques. Sometimes just being heard is all that someone needs. Repeat back to them what the concern is and work together toward a solution. Don't forget to check back in with them later.

Remember the “I Commit”

It's possible that you need to remind someone of the commitments that they made to the team. If necessary pull up the “I Commit” in the field guide as an aide to realignment.