

FIELD MANUAL

Bulgaria
Mission Bulgaria



LETTER TO PARTICIPANT

Thank you for heeding the call of Christ on your life and participating in this life-changing experience. Experiencing how The Lord is working around the world can forever alter your world-view. Short-term mission experiences allow Americans to catch a glimpse of how the rest of the world lives, teaching us to view that culture through the eyes of Christ. We begin to see not just physical poverty or a lack of infrastructure, but a deep need for a Savior.

We at Servant Life desire for you to live a life worthy of the Gospel of Jesus Christ as Paul commands us in Philippians 1:27. We desire for you to live out the Great Commission, in which Jesus commands those who follow him to “make disciples” (Matthew 28:18-20). The purpose of this trip is to “make disciples”, but don’t let that cause anxiety or fear! After all, Jesus tells us clearly, “Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” That’s a promise to which you should cling.

Disciple-making is about sharing life in Christ. It’s that simple. Share your ransomed life in Christ with everyone you encounter and allow the Spirit to do the work of changing hearts. It is God who works through you and God who gets all the glory; we are simply faithful instruments of his plans and purposes.

We have prepared this field manual to equip you for the task ahead and help you navigate the important questions you have about your experience. As always, we are available and willing to answer any questions you have, via email, phone, twitter, or any other means of communication. Thanks for partnering with us to change the world.

In Christ,

The Servant Life Team

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Trip Information	4-6
Contact Information	
The Week at a Glance	
Schedule	
Activities	
Lodging	
Trip Preparations	7-26
Why Go?	
Training Sessions Outline	
Preparing Your Heart	
Trip Expectations	
Mission Principles	
Frequently Asked Questions	
How To Share Your Faith	
Packing	
Clothing Overview, Adaptor/Converter, Airline Restrictions	
Packing List, Gifts for Children	
Arrival and Departure	
Culture Shock	
How To Ruin Your Mission Trip	
Country Information	27-31
Bulgaria facts	
Partner Information	
Do's and Don'ts	
Practice the language	
Servant Life	32
Core Values	
Next Steps	33-34
Sharing Your Experience	
Keep In Touch	35

TRIP INFORMATION

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(Use this address on your customs forms
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The Week at a Glance

Sample Daily Schedule

Your daily schedule will probably look similar to the following. Keep in mind that if you are flying out of the US on a Tuesday, you are likely landing in Bulgaria on a Wednesday. On the way home, if you are leaving Bulgaria on a Monday, you may arrive home on Monday or Tuesday.

Day 1:

Arrive in Bulgaria, Accommodation, Orientation, Cultural interaction, Dinner

Ministry Days:

8:00 Devotional/Breakfast

9:00 Go to Mission site or Prepare for site

12:30 Lunch

2:00 Ministry activities

6:00 Worship Service or Ministry Opportunity

8:00 Dinner

9:00 Debrief

9:45 Bedtime

Sunday:

2 worship services - one in the morning and one in the evening; mid-day sightseeing

Departure Day:

Your schedule depends on how early your flight is leaving this day

Please keep in mind that this is just a **sample** schedule. Your group might be asked to leave earlier in the morning, work later in the afternoon, and lunch and dinner likely won't be exactly at these times. Remember how important it is to **be flexible**.

Activities

Monday - Saturday typically consists of the following activities:

- Food distribution to homes in the Roma village
- Children Festivals in Roma villages & orphanages (popcorn machine, face-paint, soccer, cotton candy, music, toys)
- Community worship services (block party style)
- Vacation Bible School
- Light cleaning at mission center
- Worship services in local Roma churches (Music, teaching, prayer, etc.)
- Visit and pray for local elderly through “Wholesome Life Ministries”
- Document and take pictures of local children for the “Mission Bulgaria Christmas Project”
- Evangelism
- Run feeding station

Lodging



Your team will be staying at the Mission Bulgaria facilities in the capital city of Sofia. These facilities feature bunk bed lodging with separate rooms for boys and girls. The building is securely locked and a very safe place for teams. In addition to being used for lodging, this building is also used to host church services and other ministry opportunities.

TRIP PREPARATIONS

Why Go?

What's the purpose of even going on a mission trip? Great question! The simple answer is this: as believers, we are commanded to go.

In his last words, Jesus said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always to the end of the age (Matthew 28:18-20)."

We are called and commissioned to take the Gospel to all nations. However, this command should not guide us only one week of the year. We should not only "go" on missions trips, but we should also lead missional lives. The idea of Jesus' command is that we should make disciples "as we go," even in the mundane rhythms of normal life. The same God who will be with you on your trip is the same God who will be with you when you are at home, in the classroom, on the field, at work, or in

your community. Our prayer is that you would seek to make disciples in whatever context you find yourself. The Bible commands it, and God is honored when we obey his Word and seek to live for his glory as we share the good news of the gospel with the world.

Knowing that we are commanded to play an active role in global disciple-making, our team at Servant Life has heard from missionaries and ministries around the world who have identified a huge opportunity for short-term teams to support and strengthen their on-going ministry. Teams can be a huge catalyst for reaching people and opening doors that might otherwise be closed. We also hope that participating in a mission trip like this will leave such an impression on your life that you will become supporters of mission work for the rest of your lives, whether through prayer, financial support, church leadership, or even life service. Our prayer is that God would do an incredible work both *in* you and *through* you, and that is why we joyfully send you out on mission!

Training Sessions Outline

Servant Life has content for your short-term team to walk through four training sessions before your trip, covering topics such as why we go on mission, how to share your faith, and culture shock / cultural sensitivity. Each session is designed with a few short articles that your team members would read on their own, then you can come together for a guided discussion and time of prayer and studying the Word. [The training sessions can be downloaded from our online Prepcenter.](#)

Here is an outline of the four sessions:

Training Session 1:

- Discuss Trip Expectations
- “There Is No Greater Satisfaction” by John Piper
- Prayer Guide
- Scripture Review: Matthew 28:18-20
- Scripture Memorization: John 14:6
- Prayer

Training Session 2:

- Scripture Review: Acts 1:6-8
- Scripture Memorization: Romans 10:9-10
- How to Share Your Faith / Build Your Testimony
- “Extravagant Daily Time with Jesus” by Dick Brogden
- “Abiding Leads to Fruit” by Dick Brogden
- Prayer

Training Session 3:

- Customs and Cultural Guidelines
- Scripture Review: John 20:21-22
- Scripture Memorization: John 3:16
- 7 Ways to Make a Fool of Yourself
- “Cross Cultural Servanthood” by Duane Elmer
- Witness Well to Anybody, Anywhere, Anytime
- Prayer

Training Session 4:

- Culture Shock
- Servant Life Mission Principles
- How to Ruin a Short-Term Trip
- Packing List / Airfare Tips
- Scripture Review: Revelation 7:9-10
- Scripture Memorization: Romans 3:23-24
- Prayer

Preparing Our Hearts and Minds

When planning for a mission trip, it is important to prepare yourself spiritually for what you will experience on the mission field. Begin praying now for the people you will be serving with throughout the week and the ways God is going to use you all to serve Him most effectively. Also be in prayer for those you will be ministering to in Bulgaria, keeping in mind scripture passages about God's heart for missions and His desire for all nations to know Him. Here are a few ideas to help you even more as you begin to prepare spiritually for your time in Bulgaria.

Build a Prayer Network

As the Lord prepares you for this journey, He is also preparing the hearts of those who will pray for you. Believe it or not, there are probably many who are already lifting you up without you even knowing it. In an effort to join the body of Christ together in commissioning you on this journey, it is important that you have a group of committed prayer partners who will bathe you in prayer before, during, and after your trip. Begin now to recruit a team of prayer partners who will commit to pray for you as you share this journey with them. Keep them updated with requests and how your journey is going so that they can know how to pray specifically for what the Lord is doing in and through you.

- Make prayer cards containing specific prayer requests and hand them out to church members, family or friends.
- Create a blog to keep friends and family updated on your trip.
- Use a journal to record some of the steps of your journey, not only emphasizing your time in-country, but also in the weeks leading up to your trip.

Trip Expectations

What are your expectations for this missions experience?

By now you have probably spent some time imagining what your mission trip will be like. You have thought about what the culture will look like, how the food will taste, what type of work you will be doing, and many other aspects of your trip.

There is nothing wrong with having expectations, but we have to hold on to them loosely. Mission trips never go exactly as planned and foreigners often have a difficult time imagining what life in another country, or even a sub-culture in their own country, will be like before they experience it. There is a good chance that many of your expectations will not be a reality, especially if this is your first time serving in another context.

It is crucial to begin a mission trip with proper expectations. Consider this equation: **if (Expectations ≠ Reality); then (Reality = Frustration)**. Don't spend the first few days of your trip unlearning what you expected to be true prior to the trip and getting frustrated as a result. But even worse, you could miss the point of the trip altogether.

The purpose of missions is to glorify God by making disciples of Jesus Christ. Therefore, you should expect:

To serve missionaries and the local church

- Making disciples takes longer than a week, therefore, Servant Life partners with missionaries and the local churches to create long-term ministry strategies. Making-disciples is about sharing life in Christ with others. A short-term team can establish great initial connections or even deepen the faith of the local church, but the ministry must extend past the 7-10 days your team is on the ground. In order to make disciples, we support the missionaries and the local church in their mission.
- In Matthew 20:28, Jesus tells us that, *“the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”* This is what we are called to do as those who follow Christ. We are not heroes coming to save the world in a week. We come humbly with a heart to serve the Church in the way that will best help them in their ministry.

This heart of service may lead you to cleaning toilets, washing clothes, or mopping floors, but know that, *“whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.”* (Colossians 3:23-24)

To share your faith

- As we “go and make disciples” we must proclaim the Good News.
 - For *“everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”* How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, *“How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!”* (Romans 10:13-15)
- We must be sent and preach so the nations will believe and call on the name of The Lord for salvation.

To experience difficulty

- In John 16:33 Jesus says, *“I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”* We are promised difficulty in this world. Since the fall of man this world has been warring against man. When we take mission trips, we do not escape the the sin of this world. In fact, when the Church is proclaiming the Gospel we often enter dark places and Satan is working much harder to distract us. Go into this trip expecting to experience difficulty, but know that our God is bigger than delayed flights, broken down vehicles, the weather, or any other obstacle that you may encounter.

To grow

- We have never known a person to leave a mission experience the same as they began it. Mission trips can forever alter your world-view as you become aware of the physical, spiritual, and social needs of the world. Expect to grow in your knowledge of the world you live in. Expect to grow in your love for The Lord and His people. Expect to be changed.

Pray that God will give you proper expectations for your missions experience. Pray daily throughout the trip that He will give you wisdom and discernment to handle everything that comes your way. Trust that He will never leave you, nor forsake you.

**“Be still and know that I am God”
(Psalm 46:10)**

Servant Life Mission Principles

Servant Life seeks to equip and encourage trip participants as you prepare for your experience. Outlined below you will find a list of character traits along with Scripture references. As you begin to process the attitude and posture of your heart and prepare for the trip, pray the Lord will supply you with these Christ-like traits.

1. Humility

- Go with a humble heart attuned to the Lord's plans for the trip, not your own agenda. You are not going to "fix" anything, but rather to selflessly serve alongside the long-term missionary partners. Fervently pray against pride creeping into your heart.
 - *Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. {Philippians 2:3-4}*
 - *When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with the humble is wisdom. {Proverbs 11:2}*

2. Flexibility

- A mission experience exposes you to different cultures, which often times means the schedule isn't always predictable. Having a "go with the flow" attitude is crucial, as plans may change from day to day. Flexibility allows you to continually find joy in each circumstance.
 - *I desire to do your will, my God; your law is within my heart. {Psalm 40:8}*
 - *Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. {1 Thessalonians 5:16-18}*

3. Patience

- Patience is key as you encounter new people, places and cultures. Things may not always go as planned, and communication with locals may not always be as easy. Pray for the Lord to equip you with an attitude that is slow to speak and quick to listen.
 - *Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger. {James 1:19}*
 - *May God who gives patience, steadiness, and encouragement help you to live in complete harmony with each other – each with the attitude of Christ toward the other. {Romans 15:5}*

4. Perseverance

- You may experience unfamiliar or difficult situations while serving; therefore perseverance is important. The Lord will supply you with the strength to make it through each and every circumstance.
 - *Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. {Galatians 6:9}*
 - *Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. {James 1:12}*

5. Love

- Love is central to each and every character trait that a Christ-follower embodies through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Love always, often, deeply, sacrificially, selflessly, and unconditionally.
 - *Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. {1 Corinthians 13:4-5}*
 - *And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. {Colossians 3:14}*

Frequently Asked Questions

How will my airfare be handled?

Servant Life will book all airfare through our travel agency. If you're traveling in a group, everyone on your team should travel together. We book group airline tickets and cannot always accommodate special requests for different individual flights, but please ask us if you have exceptions and we will see how we can help. Due to commitments to our missionaries to have groups there on set dates, trip dates may not be flexible. Once a ticket has been purchased in your name, it must be paid for regardless of circumstances. All tickets are non-refundable and non-transferable.

If I have a frequent flyer program, can I use those miles to cover my plane ticket?

Possibly. We cannot guarantee which airline your team will use, as we are watching for competitive pricing and schedules. Please contact Servant Life if you are interested in learning more about using frequent flyer miles on a mission trip.

When do I need to get a passport?

If you do not already have a passport, we encourage you to apply for one as soon as possible. The amount of time it takes to get a passport can vary, and we cannot book plane tickets without a copy of each person's passport. Any costs associated with obtaining a passport are solely your responsibility. You can download a passport application and read instructions on obtaining a passport online at www.travel.state.gov/passport. *Please note that your passport's expiration date should be at least 6 months after your trip ends.

What immunizations do I need to get?

Immunizations and any costs related to them are the sole responsibility of the trip participant. All childhood immunizations must be complete (measles, mumps, rubella, polio, diphtheria, pertussis, and tetanus). Make sure you are up-to-date on your tetanus! We also HIGHLY advise any immunizations recommended by your physician and/or the CDC for the area of travel. Both Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B are strongly recommended for all international travel. It is solely the traveler's responsibility to obtain information on required/recommended travel immunizations and travel precautions for the area. The CDC website is www.cdc.gov and has up-to-date information on immunizations for every country.

Am I serving alone or as part of a team?

You will be part of a Servant Life team, which can be made up of groups and/or individual participants. If you are registering alone, you will join the team at a domestic or international airport, and stay and work with them for the remainder of the trip.

Is there any supervision?

Servant Life trips are led by our in-country missionary partners. This partner serves as the host and leader for your team from the time you land in-country at the airport until you depart at the end of the mission experience.

How safe are these trips?

Servant Life makes every effort to keep you safe during your entire experience with us. We carefully evaluate each location before sending a team, and work with partners in the country who are familiar with the area in which you will be staying and working. We research and plan the safest places for you to eat, stay, work and play.

Who will my team work with?

All teams work with established missionary partners in the Servant Life network. These are either missionaries or ministry leaders who have a history of service in the country and programs that fit with the mission of Servant Life. To read more about the mission partners in our global network, visit servantlife.com.

Who do my parents call in case of an emergency?

If an emergency arises where your parent needs to reach you, they may reach out to you directly or to your group leader who is overseeing your trip. If they are unable to reach you or someone on your team, please have them contact Servant Life, and we will work closely with our mission partners to be able to connect you.

Will I be able to call home and email while on the field?

Access to phone calls and email may be limited, and varies from location to location. In the event of an emergency, Servant Life will contact parents immediately. So remember that no news is good news!

Is a visa required for my trip?

No, however there is an exit fee but this will be included in the price of your airline ticket. You won't have to take care of this on your own.

Will I receive any training?

Aside from this manual, Servant Life has a 4 session training manual that can be found on the online PrepCenter. We highly encourage you to complete the Servant Life training, or a different training through your church. And other training will take place with the ministry partner once your team arrives at your destination.

Is there anything not covered in my trip cost?

The only expenses not covered in your trip cost are meals in airports on travel days, any souvenirs that you may wish to purchase while in country, and any expenses related to obtaining a passport and immunizations. Airfare is also not included in the base cost of the trip.

How To Share Your Faith

Our team at Servant Life feels that it is not only for your benefit, but also our responsibility to make sure that you have a clear understanding of the gospel and how to share it. After all, if we are going to make disciples, we need to be able to tell others what that means. We believe that your ability to articulate the gospel and share your testimony is not just something you should rehearse before a mission trip, but something you are prepared to do at all times as a Christ-follower.

Below is a guide to help you prepare how to share your testimony with the essential elements of the gospel. On a mission trip you might not have extended time to lay out the full story of salvation with those you encounter. It is important that you are able to share the Gospel in both short and extended versions. We ask that you take the needed time to seriously work through the following questions. We know that it is the work of the Holy Spirit that brings about new life through Christ, but we have the responsibility to share God's good news and make disciples (Mt 28:18-20, Acts 1:8-9 & Luke 24:44-49). Our hope is that this exercise will not only prepare you, but also remind you of the goodness of God's grace through the work of Christ (Eph. 1:18-21 & 2:4-10). We look forward to hearing how God uses your testimony in the life of others!

PART ONE: THE GOSPEL

Use these five elements of God's story to write the Gospel in your own words:

The Character of God
(1 John 1:5-10, Ephesians 2:1-10)

Write the Biblical truth about the character of God found in this passage:

The Sinfulness of Man
(1 John 1:5-10, Ephesians 2:1-10, Romans 3:23, 6:23)

Write the Biblical truth found in these passages:

The Sufficiency of Christ
(1 John 1:5-10, Ephesians 2:1-10)

Write the Biblical truth found in these passages

The Necessity of Faith
(1 John 1:5-10, Ephesians 2:1-10, Romans 10:9-13)
Write the Biblical truth found in these passages:

The Urgency of Eternity
(Ephesians 2:1-3, Romans 6:23)
Write the Biblical truth found in this passage:

Write in your own words (100 words or less) the five biblical truths studied above:

PART TWO: SHARING MY STORY

Work through the following questions to help you simply and clearly share your story.

I was awakened to my need for a Savior by (people, circumstances, books, etc.):

I realized that God is:

I realized that I was separated from God because:

I came to understand that Christ:

I responded to the good news of
Christ's death and resurrection by:

PART THREE: PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Using the five elements of the Gospel and the previous questions just answered, use the following space to share your story and the gospel. The goal is to be able to clearly articulate the Gospel and your story within 60 seconds.

Packing

Clothing Overview

The most important thing to keep in mind as you decide what clothes to pack is to be appropriate and modest. It is essential to be sensitive to the culture of Bulgaria. While you're out working during the day, cotton t-shirts and appropriate length shorts are great! Make sure to pack nicer clothes for church and worship times. Here are a few packing tips as you begin preparing for your trip.

- Pack lightly! Airlines have restrictions on how much your checked luggage can weigh. Make sure you pack what is necessary without too much excess. Plus, who wants to carry around that much stuff in another country?
- Leave room in your suitcase for any souvenirs you may want to bring back.
- Consider packing items like shampoo, conditioner, etc in plastic bags. In case these things leak during travel, your clothes and other items will be protected.
- It's a good idea to pack a change of clothes, toothbrush, important travel documents, and any irreplaceable items in your carry on bag in the event that your checked luggage is lost.
- To save space, you can roll your clothes instead of folding them.
- It's best not to pack any flashy or expensive jewelry to wear while you're in country.

Plug Adaptor and Converter

Bulgaria typically uses 220-240 V, so standard 2-prong US plugs will not work in many places. Adapter types C and E/F, as well as a power converter, are needed to get power to American products. Be mindful that there are sometimes irregularities with electricity.

Airline Restrictions/Tips

Arrive early for check-in at the airport.

Because you are flying, we strongly suggest arriving at least two hours before your flight is scheduled to depart. This allows time for parking, shuttle transportation, check-in, and security checks.

Label all of your luggage.

Servant Life provides each trip participant with two luggage tags that we strongly recommend your group using. This will help when collecting luggage from baggage claim. Due to the similar look of most luggage, you may also want to set your bag apart in another way by adding a ribbon, luggage strap, or sticker in a visible location.

Always have your passport with you.

While traveling through airports, it is important to always have your passport with you. Do not pack it in your checked luggage, and do not put it in the pocket of your airplane seat. It is best to keep it in a secure section of your carry on luggage.

Checked Baggage

We recommend that everyone travel with one checked bag. It is helpful if everyone can manage their own luggage while traveling. Remember that luggage with wheels will make life much easier as you maneuver through airports! Also, be sure to put a copy of your passport information page in every piece of your luggage.

Carry-On Bags

It is always a good idea to keep a change of clothes as well as a small toiletries kit (toothbrush, deodorant, etc.) with you in your carry-on in the event of flight delays or cancellations. Your passport counts as your form of identification and you must keep this on you at all times in the airports. You may not carry-on liquids of any kind larger than 3 oz. Any liquids 3 oz. or smaller must be in their original container and in a quart-sized Ziplock bag.

*****Baggage policies are based on airline regulations and change often. Please visit your airline's website before you leave for their latest baggage policies. Any costs associated with checking bags or overweight bags are solely the responsibility of the participant.*****

General Packing List

Baggage policies are based on airline regulations and are subject to change. Please visit your airline's website for their latest baggage policies.

Clothing

- Lightweight clothing for hot weather, such as athletic shorts and t-shirts
- Pants and shorts that you do not mind getting dirty
- Tennis Shoes, chacos, or sandals
- Shorts - no Softees, cut-offs, spandex, or jogging shorts** (knee-length shorts, capris, jeans are fine)
- T-shirts – **No tank tops/spaghetti straps**, no inappropriate slogans, midriff fully covered
- Nicer clothes for worship
- Sweater, sweatshirt, or light jacket for chilly evenings
- Flip flops for use in the showers
- Bathing suit - has to be a one piece for girls
- Hat
- Raincoat/Poncho
- Girls: it's a good idea to bring a couple of long skirts
- Guys: bring some khaki shorts for village visits

Toiletries

- Basic Personal toiletries – toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, shampoo, feminine items, etc.
- Insect repellent
- Sunscreen
- Disinfectant hand gel
- Dramamine/Gas X/Antacids/Imodium/Tylenol (as needed)
- Baby Wipes/Kleenex
- Chapstick with Sunscreen
- Aloe vera – for sunburn relief

Other

- Passport (place in your carry-on bag and have a copy in your checked bag)
- All your linens will be provided but feel free to bring your own pillow/blanket, etc. if you'd like
- Bible, Journal and Pens
- Camera
- Flashlight
- Sunglasses
- Snacks
- Water bottle
- Spending money for day off
- Toys/games to play with the children

*Please do not plan on being able to access / use laundry facilities.

Arrival and Departure

You will be able to follow the flow of the crowd as you proceed through the airport in Bulgaria, but we've also given you specific information to help this process go as smoothly as possible.

Arrival

Just before your plane lands in Bulgaria, each person will be given customs forms to fill out. You are considered a tourist by the government so you can list that as your reason for entering the country. You don't have anything to declare unless you brought something LIVE over, such as an animal or plant (and we hope you didn't!). Do not lose these forms, as you will be asked to present them as you go through customs. The address you should put on your customs form is:

Dinko Zlatarov, 37 Vasil Drumev Street, Sofia, Bulgaria

Follow signs to exit/customs once you get off the plane. Here you'll hand the form you received on the plane. Once you process through, you'll be able to claim your luggage and proceed to the exit.

Upon exiting, there will be a Mission Bulgaria staff member waiting for you as well! Dinko will have a sign that says "Servant Life / Mission Bulgaria." He will be directly after exiting customs and after getting luggage. It is a small airport with simple customs, then a 3 carousel baggage area. After leaving the baggage area, go to the exit but stay on the left side and do not try to talk to the security.

Departure

Before you clear security, there is a departure customs form that you will have to fill out that you will get at the airport. Always mark tourism/travel as your reason of travel.

**Servant Life recommends not wearing matching t-shirts in the airport. It is more likely that you will be searched in customs and draw unnecessary attention to yourselves if you are wearing matching shirts.

Culture Shock

It may not seem like it, but culture shock is a big deal. Any time you experience another country, culture, people group, and way of living, it takes some adjusting. Not everyone experiences culture shock, but it's still important to recognize it and know how to deal with it.

Culture shock is characterized by an anxious feeling from being surrounded by completely new things. You are so accustomed to life in America that it may overwhelm you to all of a sudden find yourself in a culture that you know nothing about.

The best thing you can do when it comes to culture shock is to keep an open mind about your new experiences. Remember that people around the world think and act differently than you. Keep an understanding mind about others' opinions. The worst thing you can do is to think that you are superior to someone of a different culture or people group.

Along with keeping an open mind, it's important to be flexible as well. You will be experiencing a new culture and things may not always go your way. In fact, you probably already know that things will rarely go your way. Remember to be easy going when new plans arise. This also includes maintaining a positive attitude instead of complaining.

If you're feeling some culture shock, communicate that with the people on your team. Chances are good that someone else may be feeling the same way or can at least help you through it. Being able to identify with others about your thoughts can help you not be overcome with culture shock.

Keep in mind that if you experience culture shock, that does not mean you are a failure. Everyone adjusts differently to a new setting. You may not even identify with culture shock. However, if you do, it's important to be aware of what to do so that it does not become a problem.

How To Ruin Your Short Term Mission Trip

1. *Have an "It's all about me" attitude.* The best way to ruin your mission trip is to act as if everything revolves around your comfort and your wants and needs. Even if you are sacrificing time and resources to go and serve, don't expect others to worship the ground you walk on. Read Philippians 2:3-8 and consider the humble attitude of Christ.
2. *By all means, don't be flexible.* If you don't live out the words of Philippians 2:14 to "do all things without grumbling or questioning," then you are guaranteed to have a trip full of complaints. There is not a formula to mission trips; you should expect a high degree of flexibility when you are serving real people and meeting real needs. Please be a blessing to work with and a joy to be around, not the person complaining that your expectations aren't being met.
3. *Don't devote yourself to prayer or time in the Word.* Spending time talking to the Lord and studying His word only ensures that your heart will be aligned with His will. Failure to draw near to the Lord will set you up to have the wrong attitude, and possibly the wrong actions. Furthermore, in order to tell others about the spiritual disciplines of prayer and Bible study, we ourselves must practice those disciplines.
4. *Start thinking your mission trip is terrible because you didn't see much fruit.* It is likely that you might not see hundreds of people come to know Christ while you are there, but that does not mean your trip was a bust. 1 Corinthians 3:6 reminds us that there are stages of planting seeds, watering, and seeing growth. As a short term team, you are largely helping to plant and water seeds-- and ultimately God gets the glory in their growth!

(We want you to have the best mission trip possible. So please do the opposite of these 4 things. Always keep the Lord and the gospel in the forefront of your mind!)

COUNTRY INFORMATION

Bulgaria

Population

Estimated to be 6.73 million people

Capital City

Sofia

Language

The official language is Bulgarian.

Religion

Much of the country is familiar with Christianity, but only about 2% practices evangelical Christianity.

Time Zone

Bulgaria is in the Eastern European Time Zone (UTC+02:00, or +3:00 in summer).

Currency

The main currency used in Bulgaria is the Lev. The currency conversion rate as of July 2023 is 1 US dollar to 1.79 Lev.

Safety

Servant Life makes every effort to keep you safe during your entire experience with us. We carefully evaluate each location before sending a team, and work with partners in the country who are familiar with the area in which you will be staying and working. We research and plan the safest places for you to eat, stay, work and play. In general, you should always be cautious and aware of your surroundings when you are traveling internationally.

Food

Bulgarian food is a representative of the cuisine of Southeastern Europe. Essentially South Slavic, it shares characteristics with other Balkans cuisines. Bulgarian cooking traditions are diverse because of geographical factors such as climatic conditions suitable for a variety of vegetables, herbs and fruit. Aside from the vast variety of local Bulgarian dishes, the cuisine shares a number of dishes with the Russian, Italian and even Middle Eastern cuisines. Bulgarian food often incorporates salads as appetizers and most main courses consist of meat, potatoes, bread, stew, and fresh vegetables. Water is safe to drink at the mission center and when served in restaurants. Drink bottled water in any other situation. Always ask a Mission Bulgaria staff when in doubt.



Water

Do not drink anything that has not been pre-approved by the missionaries. Tap water should be avoided. Bottled or purified water will be provided for you and should be used for drinking as well as brushing your teeth.

Weather

The climate of Bulgaria is somewhat moderate, but it is certainly a country that has four distinct seasons. While you're in country, the temperature will likely be around 70-80 degrees. At night, it can be chilly with temps around 60. May and June get more rain than any other time of the year, and you may see some while you are there, but the rain is typically pretty sparse.

Immunizations

It is solely the traveler's responsibility to discern what shots and immunizations are needed. Please inform your physician as early as possible that you are going to Bulgaria and ask what immunizations are recommended. Some immunizations may need to be started sooner than others. You can also check the CDC website (www.cdc.gov) to see what immunizations are recommended for travel to Bulgaria.

Partner Information



Servant Life is thrilled to partner with Mission Bulgaria to send American teams on short-term missions experiences to this beautiful country in Eastern Europe. Mission Bulgaria is a Christ centered-ministry that desires to reach the lost of Bulgaria through community development, outreach, and ultimately the ministry of local churches.

The two pictured above are Ben Nelson (left), who gives leadership to the American side of operations, and Dinko Zlatarov (right), a national Bulgarian who has helped to plant many churches across the country. Teams in country may work with Dinko, his brother Stefko, or other Mission Bulgaria team members. Mission Bulgaria is involved in many different ministry efforts, including the following: food distribution, church planting, children's festivals, orphan care, worship services, mission trips, and Christmas shoe boxes.

You can learn more about Mission Bulgaria by visiting their website: www.ourmissionbulgaria.com

Bulgaria Do's & Don'ts

As those seeking to honor Christ, it should be our desire is to build each other up and encourage one another in love at all times. The staff of Mission Bulgaria want to create an environment that is one of the most encouraging places on earth! They desire to walk in a way that is pleasing to the Lord throughout the year. The staff will positively encourage one another in both word and deed, treating the opposite sex with the utmost respect! As such, they expect both their visiting leaders and their mission team to possess similar character and lifestyle qualities.

DON'TS

- DON'T be a loud/obnoxious tourist that needs to be toned down.
- DON'T give out your personal information
- DON'T make yourself stick out by wearing inappropriate clothing.
- DON'T make fun of differences in culture. You never know who might understand English. It is safer to just assume someone in the crowd understands you.
- DON'T encourage begging by rewarding the effort.
- DON'T go out after dark.
- DON'T bring anything that you aren't willing to give up if someone asks for it.
- DON'T drink tap water.
- DON'T go without sunscreen!

DO'S

- DO be prepared to smell body odor. Stifle your reaction (facial expressions are bilingual)!
- DO compliment babies and play with them. Be aware that women may breast-feed at any time and in any place.
- DO feel free to give gifts, but please ask the missionary before doing so.
- DO label any medicines you are taking with you.
- DO remember that you are representing a ministry that has been around longer than you've been in the country and will still minister there after you have left.
- DO keep a copy of your passport on you, NOT your actual passport (except in the airport).
- DO use the "buddy system."
- DO bring any medicines that you may need (pepto bismol, ibuprofen, allergy, etc.).
- DO take food that's offered to you - just wait until the missionary gives the okay to eat it.
- DO sanitize your hands before eating. But do it discreetly, not blatantly just after holding a child or shaking a national's hand.

Practice Your Bulgarian!

ENGLISH	BULGARIAN
Praise the Lord!	Slava na Boga
Hello	Zdravei
Good morning	Dobro utro
How are you?	Kak si?
Thank you	Blagodaria
What is your name?	Kak se kazvash?
My name is...	Kazvam se...
Goodbye	Chao
Money	Pari
Bathroom	Bania
Coffee	Kafe
Water	Voda
I am from...	Az sam ot...
One	edno
Two	dve
Three	tri
Four	chetiri
Five	pet
Six	shest
Seven	sedem
Eight	osem
Nine	devet

SERVANT LIFE

Since its inception in 1999, Servant Life has been a mission-mobilizing ministry providing dynamic mission experiences for students and church groups. Our aim is to connect students' love for God to the nations through His Word and by His Spirit. Currently, Servant Life sends short-term mission teams to a global network of partners in eleven countries, including two locations in the United States. Servant Life is dedicated to *Helping People Go And Make Disciples Of All Nations*.

Core Values

Servant Life strives to focus on three aspects, or values, of ministry that are central to our philosophy and practice.

1. Gospel-Centered Ministry

2. Long-Term, Church-Centered Strategies

3. Relationally-Focused Approach

For more detailed information about each of these values, please visit www.servantlife.com/core-values.

NEXT STEPS

Reflection

As your time in Guatemala comes to an end, you've probably seen, touched, tasted, and felt things you never had before. You have seen God work in new and powerful ways, and your eyes have been opened to a whole new world. It can be a confusing, emotional experience to participate in a foreign mission trip and then be thrust back into "normal" life in the United States. Spend some time journaling about your experience and praying about your re-entry into American culture. The following questions will help get you started. Remember that just as it took a few days (at least) to get acclimated to Guatemalan culture, it will also take you some time to get re-acclimated once you get home. And hopefully there are a few ways that you have been changed forever.

1. What did you learn during your time in Guatemala?
2. How did God stretch and use you?
3. List names of people you don't want to forget and why.
4. How will you share your experience with those back home?
5. How did your team work together as the body of Christ during your trip?
6. Describe at least one experience in which you felt or saw the power of the Holy Spirit as He worked among the people.
7. Explain at least one situation in which your prayers were answered.
8. What were you most thankful for?
9. How have you been changed?
10. How were the people you ministered to changed from you being there?
11. How will people at home be changed by you and the experiences you share with them?
12. How will you ask others to continue to pray for the people you ministered to during your trip?

Sharing Your Experience

When you get home, you may become overwhelmed with the number of people who ask to hear your stories from your trip. If you had a dollar for every time someone will say “How was your trip?!” or “Tell me all about it!” than you could probably pay for a whole other mission trip.

When it comes to sharing your story, you’ll encounter different types of listeners. Some people will ask you about your trip in passing and will only want to hear one or 2 sentences about your experience. In the space below, go ahead and write down a few sentences that you can quickly share with people. The most important detail to include is something incredible that you saw the Lord do. Think of a great story you have and sum that up into a few words that will give the other person a feel for what happened on your trip.

Others will want to have a detailed, but not lengthy conversation with you. Imagine that you are grabbing coffee with a friend as you share your experiences. This person will likely spend a decent amount of time with



you and will expect to hear several stories. Have a variety of stories ready to share with this person and be ready to answer any questions they might have. Also, it’s safe to assume that people who will sit and listen to you talk for an extended period of time are interested in missions as well. Don’t be afraid to encourage them to go on a mission trip!

Lastly, you will definitely have people in your life who will want to hear every single detail you are willing to share. These types of people will come to your house and spend hours sitting on your couch as you pour out your heart. In these instances, feel free to share any and every detail you would like. You might want to consider taking your journal along so that you don’t miss a beat.

One major thing to remember is this: people love pictures! Your stories will be better if they have pictures to accompany them. Have some printed out or saved to your phone/computer so that you can easily show your friends and family.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

We are thrilled that you will be serving on a Servant Life mission trip! Know that we are here to help you in the process of preparing. Anyone on our team is available to answer questions. You can find that contact info at the beginning of this Field Manual. Feel free to contact us at any point.

On the same note, we love seeing pictures and hearing stories from your trip! If you have any photos, blogs, videos, etc. that you'd like to share, you can email those to us, or tag us on social media.

Know that we are praying for you with expectancy! We are confident that The Lord has great things in store for your mission trip!

In Christ,
The Servant Life Team



/ServantLife



@servantlifemissions



@ServantLife