**F3**

**Planning for Your Trip:**

**Do’s and Don’t’s**

**This form should be provided by the local trip coordinator to each participant at the first planning meeting, and reviewed each subsequent meeting.**

**Planning for Your Trip:**

**Do’s and Don’t’s**

*There will be many cultural differences you notice on your trip. As in our own culture, there are many very positive differences, and other differences that may trouble you.*

**DON’T**…

Start lecturing**, offer advice, or otherwise trying to change** the ways things have been done in Haiti for hundreds of years.

Think that your way is the best way. There may be cultural or other reasons for how something is done.

Bring hair dryers. They take a lot of energy and increase the cost of the generator.

Waste water.

Put toilet paper in the toilet – it goes in the wastebasket.

Eat raw vegetables or unpeeled fruit unless it has been washed appropriately.

**Leave the compound alone or wander off from the group at a clinic.** Leave only with a trip leader or permission of a trip leader.

Wear expensive jewelry or flash large sums of money.

Hand out money, food, or other items unless specifically told it is OK by a trip leader.

**DO…**

Remember this is God’s trip, not yours.

Be flexible.

Have a sense of humor

Build relationships with the Haitian people and appreciate the uniqueness of their culture, the beauty of their land, the delicious cuisine. You will find more ways to delight in their home than ways to object.

*Always remember: we are guests*. Be a gracious guest.

If a **trip leader tells you to do something, do it first** and ask questions later. There may be situations that are dangerous, and the leader may not have time or may otherwise not be able to give an explanation first. Your safety is a priority of the leaders, so obey first.

Tell someone if you are not feeling well any time on the trip.

Learn as much about Haiti, the culture and the language as possible.

Smile- it is the universal language of love.

Pray with and for the interpreters and the people you are serving.

Help to collect necessary items for the trip

Remember that you are a part of a group and you should act accordingly. Separate trips not offered to all the group are not appropriate.

Have a servant heart.

Leave the area better than you left it.

Take time for journaling.

**Do’s and Don’t’s – a little more detail**

**Attire**

On the plane you may wear clothes appropriate in the U.S., but when you travel to rural Haiti (Saintard included), the **ladies must have dresses skirts on that are at or below the knees, no cleavage or tummies exposed, and no spaghetti straps**. You may see a wide variety of clothing once you arrive in Saintard, but we want to err on the side on conservatism. Men may wear pants or shorts, and T-shirts or other appropriate shirts. Men should not wear “muscle shirts”. A lot of men wear the pants with the zip-off legs to make them shorts for when they land in Haiti.

While we are on the compound you may wear “American type” clothes, i.e. loose walking shorts, etc. Please **keep your dress modest at all times**: women should never expose cleavage and should wear dresses, skirts, or shorts that are longer than fingertip length. Tattoos and piercings are becoming more accepted in Haiti (traditionally they were taboo in protestant circles), but removing/covering them up (when possible) can decrease misperceptions, especially when in rural areas. Pierced earrings for women are fine. Any time you leave the compound, follow the dress code in the first paragraph above. The exception to that is appropriate dress in Port au Prince or other metropolitan areas: women can wear fingertip-length or longer shorts/pants in Port au Prince.

At the beach, men should wear **modest swim trunks**, no Speedo-type swim wear. Women should wear a **modest, one-piece swimsuit**. You should wear some sort of cover-up to and from the beach.

At church, women should wear **dresses or skirts with shoulders covered** (no sleeveless tops), and men should wear **long pants and dress shirts** – long or short-sleeved. Dress shoes are most appropriate.

For clinic/hospital days, **scrubs** are fine, or the **same attire you wore when landing in Haiti** (first paragraph above). Closed-toe shoes should be worn. We often go to remote areas for mobile clinics where it is still considered inappropriate for women to wear pants or shorts. Scrubs are associated by the Haitians with medical personnel and are acceptable even in remote areas.

**Personal Habits**

There is to be **no smoking** or use of tobacco products on the trip.

There is to be **no drinking** of alcohol or purchasing of alcohol on the trip.

There is to be **no use of illegal drugs** or purchase of illegal drugs on the trip. This rule is especially important. Use or purchase of illegal drugs in Haiti could lead to imprisonment in a Haitian prison, and could also endanger all members of the group. **Infraction of this rule will result in an immediate return to the United States at the trip participant’s cost.**

Please use **appropriate language** at all times. You are an ambassador of Christ.

**Acts of Compassion**

You will likely want to give to Haitians during the trip, whether that is money or other gifts. Please **do not give anything away in public areas**, such as the airport or clinics. This could quickly cause a mob scene and endanger the group and the person receiving the gift. It is advisable to first ask Dr. Mark if it is OK to give someone something before you give.

Please **do not give anything to the children in the children’s home without first consulting with Sister Phyllis or Dr. Mark**. There are often extenuating circumstances of which you may not be aware.

Please **do not make any promises** that you are not certain beyond the shadow of a doubt that you can keep. More than one Haitian heart has been broken by promises of gifts that the giver was not able to keep.

Oftentimes, giving money or other items to a Haitian serves two purposes: it makes the giver feel good, and it perpetuates an entitlement philosophy. Think through your motives and through your actions before you act. Investing in ways to help the Haitians long-term is a far better option. Ask yourself: if I can never come back to Haiti, will this gift help this person long-term? Will this gift empower this Haitian or enable?

**Culture**

There will be many cultural differences you notice on your trip. As in our own culture, there are many very positive differences, and other differences that may trouble you. **Refrain from lecturing, offering advice, or otherwise trying to change** the ways things have been done in Haiti for hundreds of years. Instead, build relationships with the Haitian people and appreciate the uniqueness of their culture, the beauty of their land, the delicious cuisine. You will find more ways to delight in their home than ways to object. *Always remember: we are guests*. Be a gracious guest.

**Never take someone’s picture without first asking them**. Some Haitians believe getting a picture taken of them will steal their soul. Others are skeptical that a photo may be used for soliciting funds that are never returned to help the people of Haiti. Think of how you might feel if a stranger visiting the U.S. would take your picture.