

FBS Students Financial Support Guide

We know large events or mission trips may be expensive and can seem financially out-of-reach. Please do not let finances stop you from following God's call. We want to encourage you with a few things:

- Before you decide to attend a mission trip, determine your motive. Ask the question: Is this something the Lord is leading me to do?
- Make sure you spend time talking to God. If you're anxious about the cost, let Him know and surrender it to Him. Prayer is a vital part of this process.
- Next, take a step of faith. Believe that if God has called you, He will provide for you.
- Finally, get to work. Raising support requires effort and creativity. Let your effort to raise support match your faith that the support will be provided.

A. How to Raise Support

- a. Raising support is a vital part of missions. In fact, most missionaries and those called to full-time missions are required to raise their own financial support. We want to help make it possible for you to do this.
- b. See the information below for tips on raising support.
- c. You may also contact Byan Biggerstaff for more help at bbiggerstaff@fbs.org

B. Financial Assistance

- a. Our teams have made it possible to receive financial assistance. Please know, this should be step 2 in the process of raising support. There are two requirements for receiving assistance.
- b. First, please head to the website below. There is an application and interview process.
- c. Second, students who apply will be asked to serve in some capacity with our church prior to the trip. The details will be discussed in the interview.
- d. <https://www.fbs.org/ministries/students-next-steps/>

C. Student Testimony

- a. Last year, we took students to South Africa and the Dominican Republic. Head to this website below to hear a testimony about raising support from a student.
- b. <https://www.fbs.org/ministries/students-next-steps/>

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Donations and Enlisting Support for Short Term Mission Trips

The purpose of this document is to familiarize members, givers, and goers of First Baptist Spartanburg with First Baptist Spartanburg's policies regarding finances and mission trips.

Donations & Support raising policies for FBS Short-Term Trips:

- Once a trip member is officially approved by the MPACT Team for a short-term trip, the first step is to **Pay the Trip Deposit** (\$250 for international trips, and \$100 for National Trips). This payment is non-refundable and non-transferable deposit that is credited towards the total cost of the trip. No additional funds can be accepted towards the trip balance until a deposit has been paid. The deposit may be paid online or through the mission trip "event" link via www.fbs.org/go.
- **Prayer Support** – More important than any financial support enlisted for the trip is the need of prayer support for every mission trip and every trip participant. Participants should prayerfully consider all aspects of the trip and invite others to join them in prayer throughout the entire Trip process. Every partnership and trip are prayed over by the MPACT office. Trip participants should regularly send out prayer updates to supporters before, during, and following the short-term trip. Prayer is extremely important and necessary for a successful short-term trip.
- **Donations from others towards your trip** – After paying the deposit, the next step is to enlist support. It is expected that all members of FBS trips seek enlist support in some manner. We firmly believe that being sent (even on a short-term trip) is a calling of the local church and seek to demonstrate this unique calling through God's people coming together to support mission trips of the church financially. All contributions must be made out to First Baptist Spartanburg and are considered tax-deductible expenses and are non-refundable.
- **Donations can be given online-** by visiting www.fbs.org/go by selecting "Give to mission trips" and selecting the way in which you wish to sponsor. You may also give to each trip individually by clicking the sponsorship link associated with each trip, such as "Sponsor Student serve week". Should you have any questions about donating to a particular mission trip, please contact the Missions ministry office (864-699-4309 or bbiggerstaff@fbs.org).
- **Donations can be given via check-** all checks should be mailed to First Baptist Spartanburg and include in the memo line *the name of the mission trip*, such as "Israel Mission Trip". Checks should be payable to First Baptist Spartanburg.

Checks should be mailed to:

First Baptist Spartanburg
Attn: Finance office – *name of the mission trip*
250 E. Main St
Spartanburg, SC 29306

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- **Payment Deadlines** – Generally, FBS short term trips follow these financial / planning deadlines (exact dates will be communicated upon registration):
 - 4 months pre-trip – Registration and Deposit Due.
 - 2.5 months pre-trip – Majority of funds due and flights/rentals are purchased. Airline tickets **will not** be purchased for team members who miss this deadline.
 - 1-month pre-trip – Full cost of trip is due.
- **Contributions are for the trip, not individuals** – All money given to First Baptist Spartanburg is given towards the specific trip, **not** a specific individual. However, each team member is expected to contribute their share of the total trip expenses. All money contributed to the trip is a tax-deductible donation to the church and is non-refundable (even if an individual is unable to go on the trip). All donations to the mission trip will contribute to the Mission trip team estimated expense. In the event of an excess of funds raised for the trip, these extra funds will be reallocated towards future trips the church wishes to sponsor.
- **The team raised more money than needed** – If a team raises more money than needed or field expenses are less than projected, any extra funds from a particular trip are placed into **the “Go” Fund**. The Go Fund assists with the costs of supporting short term, mid-term, and career missionaries sent out from First Baptist Spartanburg. The Missions office along with the MPACT Team will discuss and determine the best use for the monies. As these gifts are tax-deductible, they are unable to be refunded.
- **Cancellation policies:** Occasionally, team members will decide not to go on a trip, have an issue come up, or experience a last-minute emergency that prevents the individual from being able to go on the short-term trip. Trips may also be cancelled due to lack of interest or cancelled by our on the ground partners. Below are the policies for each case of cancellation.
 - Cancellation by Team Leader or Team member:
 - Deposits are non-refundable
 - If the trip takes place, any contributions given on your behalf will go towards the trip.
 - If due to a last-minute family emergency, a credit will be given for the total amount raised towards another trip (deposit + any contributions). The new trip must be within 1 year of the originally scheduled trip and chosen within 60 days of cancellation. If not selected within 60 days, all raised funds will go to International projects/mission trip sponsors.
- Cancellation by Field Partner:
 - Deposits are non-refundable

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- Contributions may be transferred to another trip. The new trip must be within 1 year of the originally scheduled trip and chosen within 60 days of cancellation. If not selected within 60 days, all raised funds will go to International Projects/ Mission trip sponsors.

Best practices to raise Support:

- God explicitly tells us that He will supply all of our needs in Christ Jesus and the call of God to go on a short-term trip provides an opportunity for all believers to grow in their trust of the Lord in the area of finances. Support raising can be a time-consuming and daunting process. However, God has called his people to make disciples of all nations. So, how should God's people respond in raising support? Here are a few principles that should guide you as you raise support:
 - a. God is not in need, He provides opportunities for us to join him on mission through giving.
 - God does not need money to accomplish his mission of redeeming the world and making all things new. However, He does provide opportunities for us to join Him in these realities through the means of giving financially.
 - b. The Church sends, individual Christians support
 - The goal is not to raise the most amount of money as quickly as possible. The goal is to raise supporters. Even if you can finically pay the cost of your trip on your own, we encourage you to raise supporters and give them the opportunity and privilege to support you in prayer and through finances. You are looking for a team of people to invest not only in you but the work of God in your life. God may use this opportunity to stir others affections for the nations and drive them to outrageous obedience. Pray that God will use your support raising as an opportunity for laborers to be called to the harvest fields (Matt. 9:38).
- Based on these two principles, we advise all team members to send out **support letters** regardless of the amount of support needed. Letters communicate a personal invitation to others to be involved with what God is calling and commanding you to do in obedience to Him.
 - **Who?** – Support letters should be sent to believers who know you and might want to know what the Lord is calling you to do. Examples might be friends, family, neighbors, coaches, and coworkers. God can use even the smallest opportunity for eternal impact.
 - **When?** – Support raising should begin as soon as you are officially approved for the trip and have paid a deposit. An example timeline would be:

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1. First contact (5-6 months out from the trip/ following trip approval).
 2. Follow up phone call (4 months out)
 3. Halfway update (2-3 months out)
 4. A thank you (week of trip departure)
 5. A final thank you / report (following the trip)
- **How?** – Ask for the Lord to guide you in how to reach out to certain people. For example, sending an email to your grandma may not be the best means to reach her. For most, a simple letter, personal phone call, and the opportunity to meet with you in person will be best. Be aware of how many times you reach out to an individual or family. If you choose to send an email, please send it individually and write it personally for the certain individual you are inviting to support. A personal invite goes a long way!
 - **Other Fundraising opportunities:**
 1. Odd Jobs- The Lord values hard work!
 2. Sacrifice- cut expenses in obedience to God’s calling. Put money saved towards the trip cost.
 3. Use your gifts- make, build, or do something that uses your God given gifts to raise support towards the trip.
 - *Remember to send a handwritten thank you note as soon as you are aware of a contribution. Celebrate the provision of the Lord for His purposes throughout the world!*

Support Letter Outline

- Consider the following outline when writing a support letter:
 - Avoid a standard “form” letter if possible. The body of the letter/email can be the same for all recipients but personalize at least the name at the top and, if possible, an opening remark or closing comment for each letter/email you send.
 - Limit your entire letter to no more than two pages.
 - Use a type font that is easy to read (12 or 14 point) and be sure to cover the following:
 - Your call and motivation to go
 - When and where you are going (use non-specific language when visiting closed countries)
 - What you will be doing on the trip and with whom you will be serving (first names only)
 - What you are requesting from those who get your letter:

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- Prayer - give specific ways to pray for you and those you are going to serve
 - Financial Investment – share your financial deadlines
 - Details regarding financial gifts:
 - The amount needed as a team.
 - How to give online
 - Tax deductible nature of contributions
 - FBS will advise you who has contributed but will not reveal the amount.
 - Donations are given to fund the team, and not directly to the individual. This is part of what makes a donation “tax-deductible”. We ask that they note who requested their donation so that we can add it to your trip amount, but ultimately all donations are given to support the short-term team as a whole.
 - Thank them for praying and supporting you!
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SAMPLE SUPPORT LETTER

Dear

This upcoming April 2-9 God has blessed me and a team of others with the opportunity and the honor taking His message of Hope and Truth to the people of Northern Africa. This country is not open to the Gospel, and I cannot even mention its name in this letter. During our trip we will be working closely with a member of our church, Jenny Neely, who has been in the country for over a year. Our desire is to come alongside Jenny and the team in showing God’s love to those who have yet to hear or receive it. One of our other main focuses as a team is to be an encouragement to the believers there. Daily these believers live as a minority in an area heavily populated by Muslims and often they face the very real fear of extreme persecution for what they believe. We will work in orphanages and in colleges, teaching English, prayer-walking, and developing relationships with nationals that we pray will lead to opportunities to share our faith in Christ.

Just as God has pierced and continues to pierce my heart for the great need in Northern Africa, I am praying as I send out these letters that God would begin to touch your heart as well, so that you will be included in what God wants to do and is doing in the this country. The first and most important way I want to challenge you to be included is through your prayers.

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Pray for the continued wisdom, encouragement, focus, and faith of believers in Northern Africa. Pray that God would reveal His Truth and soften the hearts of the many unbelievers there. Pray that God would prepare our team to be used and that we will walk away changed. Secondly, if you are able, I challenge you to be included financially. Each person on our team is raising \$1000, by the end of March, to go on this trip, so prayerfully consider how you might be involved in helping send us and God's love to the ends of the earth. I am already looking forward to seeing how God is going to touch many lives including our own through this trip.

If you feel led to support our trip financially, your gift will be tax deductible if you follow the guidelines on the attached sheet. If you are led to support us in prayer, you will receive some important and specific information on our trip and the needs on the field; including sensitive information that we would ask you to keep confidential. Thank you so much for your love, your prayers, and your support.

Pursuing God,
Your Name)

"You will seek Me and find Me when you seek Me with your whole heart!" – Jeremiah 29:13

(Please cut this slip and return in the envelope provided ~~ Thank you!)

Type Your Name Here

I will pray for you. _____

I would like to receive prayer updates _____

I will financially support the team with a gift of \$ _____

I would like to be added to the mailing list for a final report _____

You Should Include A Self-Addressed, Stamped Envelope in Each Support Letter You Send.