connect
MISSIONS WEEKEND

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS & GROUP LEADER AGREEMENT

The following document is our attempt to answer any questions you might have about CONNECT, in an effort to help make this experience the best it can be for you and your students. We know this is lengthy but believe it is necessary and will be helpful to head off any problems before they have a chance to arise. After you have read the document, please check off and sign the Group Leader Agreement form. Please bring this form with you to the event.

What is the purpose of CONNECT?

The main purpose of CONNECT is to help train and equip participants to be on mission every day of their lives through practical, hands-on mission/ministry opportunities. CONNECT is not about providing a big event for the benefit of the participants. It's about connecting them to the Giver of the mission through worship, prayer, personal Bible reading, and serving in His mission. It's about connecting them to the local church and to other believers from around the state. It's about connecting with lost people, and most importantly, helping connect lost people to Jesus.

For many participants, CONNECT is their first mission trip experience. We want them to leave with a passion for sharing the Gospel and serving others. We want them to have a better understanding of the difficulties and challenges that come from surrendering to live on mission and to see God work through the challenges to do what only God can do. And we want them to leave changed as they experience God in a real and personal way. **Making disciples who make disciples is the ultimate goal.**

Who can come to CONNECT?

CONNECT is for students in the 7th–12th grades and their adult leaders. If your student ministry includes 6th graders, you may bring them as participants. You may bring college students as well but they will be treated as adult volunteers.

What about background checks?

Each church is required to do a background check on every volunteer 18 years and older that you bring to the project. No exceptions.

What do I need to know about the registration process?

-There is a 1 to 7 adult to student ratio. Exceptions may be made on an individual basis.

-You must have an adult male sponsor for boys and a female adult sponsor for girls. No exceptions!

- Registration will be completed online. Please read the instructions below before going to the registration page.

Go to absc.org/connectgroups to register your group. On this form, provide your group information, including the number of participants you expect to bring. Pay the $100 deposit to register your group at this time, and then pay the remaining balance when you arrive at the event. The balance is based on the number of people that you bring, minus the $100 deposit. Once you have the names of all participants, **go to absc.org/connectindividuals to add your STUDENTS and ADULTS to your registration.** *Please fill out **all** information on the first page. You will add the first name on the first page, then will add the others on the second page, clicking "add another attendee" after you enter each name. When you are finished adding individuals, you may click on the "Confirm Registration" button on the next page to complete your registration.*

- The deadline to register your group and submit your participant names is Friday, October 2nd.
- **- Print copies of the Individual Release Forms for all participants and bring them with you completed and signed to the event.**

You will be sent a text message/email instructing you where to go for check-in when you arrive at the project. If you miss the message, simply look for the CONNECT banner which will indicate where you need to go. Please send your group leader with all of the individual release forms and the signed FAQ form found at the end of this document. You will receive your registration packet and instructions for rooming when you turn in your forms. If you cannot arrive by the time we begin at 7:30 p.m., just text/email and let us know. If you arrive late, please leave your stuff on the bus and come to the worship area. We will get you registered and in your rooms immediately after worship that night. Please do not unload during any of the scheduled activities.

What is the dress code?

Students must dress appropriately and with Christian modesty in mind. Jeans/long pants need to be worn at all construction sites. Participants must wear close-toed shoes at all project sites. Appropriate shorts of at least fingertip length can be worn at ministry projects and during all activities at the host church. No sleeveless clothing and no tight-fitting apparel (i.e. tight dresses, short skirts, short shorts, etc.) are permitted at any time. No clothing will be permitted that exposes your midriff area, promotes tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, or suggestive messages. The dress code will be enforced by the students' individual chaperones.

What about lodging? Where will we be staying and what else can we expect?

All participants are housed at a local church. The host church will provide space for worship, eating, gathering, sleeping, etc. You and your group will be sleeping on the floor of a room used for Sunday school or some large group activity. These rooms are not commonly used to house people. For this reason, accommodations will usually be less comfortable and more crowded than most of your students and adults are used to. There is a good chance that you will be sharing the room with people from other churches. Space will be limited, and everyone will need to be open to sharing the limited space available. Everyone will need to bring their own twin sized air mattress and sleeping bag, sheets/blanket, pillow etc. *Due to limited space, air mattresses must be no larger than twin size*. The only exception would be if more than one person is going to share a mattress.

Although sleeping on the floor in a crowded room of a church is not as comfortable as a hotel, the cost savings is significant. Many times, in an effort to keep costs down, mission trip participants are forced to sleep on floors, in hammocks, or in other unfamiliar and possibly uncomfortable accommodations. Remember, this is only for two nights and the rooms are mostly for sleeping. Luggage can be stored in the hall if necessary. Participants can learn that they can handle this type of discomfort for less than 48 hours. Think of this as preparation for future trips and a unique opportunity to build relationships and get to know a different group of people.

IMPORTANT!! – Due to limited space, there will be no special accommodations available for families to stay together. There will be a girls' section with rooms and a boys' section with rooms. The two areas will be clearly marked and separated. No males (no matter the age) will be allowed in the girls' sleeping areas. No females (no matter the age) will be allowed in the guys' sleeping areas.

Bathrooms:

The number of bathrooms may be an issue. Be prepared. The CONNECT leadership team and host church will do their best to ensure that you have plenty of toilet paper, paper towels, etc. If you run out, just let one of the staff or CONNECT leaders know and we will take care of it. Ideally, there will be plenty of bathrooms available. Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee this as churches are set up for worship and teaching, not necessarily for large groups to spend two nights sleeping there. If necessary, we will provide portable toilets on site at the host church. **Prepare your students and adults for the possibility of standing in line for the restroom.**

Showers:

Showers are provided through various ABSC Disaster Relief shower units. These mobile units have individual stalls and will be set up somewhere outside of the sleeping areas. For large groups we will do our best to have at least two shower trailers available. Please prepare your students for the possibility of standing in line for a shower. Showers are open on Friday night until 11:00 pm, Saturday from 6:00 – 7:30 am, 4:00 – 6:00pm, and 10:00 – 11:00 pm.

What do I need to know about Friday and Saturday night worship?

Our desire is to CONNECT students and adults to the Giver of the mission through worship. CONNECT is not a big event designed to entertain participants during the worship time. Ideally, this is an intimate, private experience in a corporate worship setting.

Speaker: CONNECT speakers are local student pastors, BCM ministers, and some others who might be getting first time experience speaking in front of a large group.

Music – Worship music is provided by Arkansas worship leaders. Some may be well known; others you may hear for the first time. Please encourage your students and adults to give both speakers and worship leaders respect. Teach them Who worship is really all about and help them learn to worship in spite of personal preference. If there is a serious issue within our control that keeps worship from happening, please let the CONNECT leadership team know.

Friday night – Friday night is about preparation for the weekend. There will be a Gospel presentation and an invitation of some kind on Friday night. Most who come to CONNECT are believers. Some are not. We want to give everyone the

chance to hear and respond. We want to remind them that the Gospel gives purpose to what we are doing this weekend and beyond. Even those who are believers can benefit from a reminder of the power of the Gospel to transform their lives on a daily basis. It is our belief that the Gospel is not just for lost people.

Saturday night – Saturday night is about celebration. It is a celebration of what God has done and what He will do in the coming days, weeks, etc., in our lives and in the lives of those we have ministered to during the weekend. We will have an opportunity for students to share testimonies from the weekend and an opportunity for students to respond to a call to ministry.

Where do you get the ministry projects?

Most of the CONNECT ministry/mission projects are provided by local churches. One of the goals with these projects is to assist the local church in doing ministry and to help them have a greater presence in their communities.

How do you assign projects and how are the teams divided?

Project assignments are made based of off of the list of names that you submit at least two weeks before CONNECT begins. Typically, church groups are split up into different ministry teams depending on the size of your group and number of adult volunteers*. IMPORTANT!* – Every one of your students will have at least one adult from your group with them at each project. This limits the number of projects that your group can be divided into. EX: 2 adults 10 students would be 2 different ministry teams made up of 1 adult and 5 students. If you are adamant about your group staying together on Saturday, please let us know and we will do our best to accommodate you.

What about supplies and tools?

The local partnering churches are responsible for providing most of the supplies you will need to complete their project. When you get your project assignments, you will also receive requests for any other specialized equipment that may be needed for your project. However, there are some general supplies that you could bring, if possible, that are needed on many of the projects. Even if your group ends up on a project that doesn't require one of these tools, other groups might be able to use them.

1. Gloves
2. Garden tools, including rakes, shovels, trimmers, and possibly a lawn mower or weed eater if you have space.

3. Paint supplies - brushes, rollers, handles, etc.
4. Ladders

We ask that you clearly mark your name and/or church name on any tools that you are willing to share with other groups. We understand accidents can happen and tools can be misplaced, lost, etc. If you bring an item, share it with another group and it gets broken, lost, or stolen, we will work with you to replace that item at no cost to you.

What about construction projects?

Many of the local partnering churches provide light construction projects like wheelchair ramps, decks, porches, etc. Please let us know from the beginning if you will be bringing any adults with construction experience. We will have a construction coordinator that will communicate with your construction volunteers to assist them with leading their project, making sure supplies are on-site, and helping them understand the what, when, and how of their projects. Again, the churches and/or convention will be responsible for providing the supplies needed to complete the project. These supplies should be on-site when you arrive. Specialized tools such as power saws, drills, etc. may be needed if you have room to bring them with you.

Who provides transportation to and from projects?

When you fill out your group registration form, you will need to tell us the number and type of vehicles you will be bringing. We will also need to know any available drivers. We will use your vehicles and drivers for transporting teams to and from the projects on Saturday. If you are unable/unwilling to use your vehicle on Saturday for any reason, please let us know.

What about food and do we need to eat before we come on Friday night?

You will need to eat before you arrive on Friday night. There will be concessions available that night before and after the scheduled activities.
Breakfast and supper on Saturday will be provided by a local ABSC Disaster Relief team. Lunch on Saturday will be provided at your worksite by the church that is responsible for that project. If you do not receive your lunch by noon, please call us and we will get it worked out.

What if we decide to stay for Sunday morning worship?

All groups are encouraged and invited to stay on Sunday morning and participate in worship with one of the area churches. You will be assigned as a youth group to attend worship with one of the churches that provided projects

for CONNECT. There may be some down time on Sunday between clean up, breakfast and the time your worship service begins as churches start at different times. If you agree to stay for worship, please be sure to honor that commitment as that church will be planning to serve you a meal before you leave on Sunday afternoon. This way you do not have to stop somewhere to eat and spend money on the way home. If you have questions about Sunday morning worship, please let us know.

Will there be any free time?

The schedule for the weekend is packed but does provide for some built-in free time to allow the participants to fellowship and take a break from the busy weekend.

Friday night: After worship from 10:00 – 11:00 pm.

Saturday night: After worship from 10:00 – 11:15 pm.

There will be some down time on Saturday afternoon after returning from the projects. Students are encouraged to return all borrowed tools, shower, and clean up during this time. The gym and student center will be open during free time and for a little while before supper on Saturday. Concessions will also be available for students to purchase snacks and/or drinks.

Please limit food and drink to the designated areas. Absolutely no food or drink in the worship center.

Who is responsible for making sure the participants follow the rules?

We do not expect your students/adults to be perfect. However, we do want to hold them to a standard of conduct that seeks to please and honor God. You and/or your adults are responsible for disciplining your students. We need you to police your group and handle any issues that may arise. It is your job to help enforce the dress code, PDA policy, etc. Please make sure that your group does their best to clean up trash, take care of the facilities, attend all scheduled meetings/activities, and respect the other participants and their possessions.

Do we get a t-shirt?

CONNECT shirts are available for purchase for $10 if any of your students want one.

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Group Leader Agreement (Form 2)

Due on or before Friday, October 2nd

_____ I have read through the Frequently Asked Questions. I have a good understanding about what to expect at CONNECT and agree to abide by the rules/guidelines listed. I also agree to use this information to help prepare my students and adults to be flexible and to have the best experience possible for everyone.

_____

Group Leader Signature