



A Ministry of Sovereign Grace Fellowship

TRIP PLANNING PACKET

HomelandMissions.org

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From Our Team

[Homeland Missions](#) began, by God's grace, through our initial response to hurricane Katrina and has blossomed into a permanent fixture in our community.

We are thankful for your desire to be a part of our developing ministry here in the Greater New Orleans area and pray that this packet will help guide you through the process of planning a trip to stay with us.

The immediate emergency phase of hurricane relief work has passed and our focus has shifted now to specific rebuilding/renovating projects and general community relief work.

We are organizing [Homeland Missions](#) as a non-profit group under the oversight of our church (Sovereign Grace Fellowship) so that we can maximize the fiscal advantages of being a 501(c)3 and have the accountability of a Board of Directors.

Many organizations have left the area leaving behind a wake of yet-to-be-finished work and many despondent families still have great need. With a disaster the size of Katrina, the hard reality is that many neighborhoods just won't be back. This doesn't even take into account the already present hardships that existed in our region prior to the storm. And now, we have the BP oil spill. Regardless of ethnicity, income and social status, all people groups have a need for true counsel and relief.

We, therefore, as merchants of hope compelled by the love of Christ, have come alongside the disadvantaged and impoverished, ministering not only to their physical needs, but also to their hurting souls.

We ask that you join us in prayer for our local community, so that the truth of God's grace through Christ may be spoken through our words and resound loudly in our deeds, as we work together with His saints in the call of ministry.

Read through this information packet and familiarize yourself with our protocols and practices. Afterward, email or call us so we can discuss the details of your trip.

We look forward to seeing you soon!





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Sovereign Grace
Homeland Missions



SGHomelandMissions



Homeland Missions



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Planning Your Trip

1. Pick Your Dates

If you haven't already done so, visit our Homeland Missions website and check the Calendar to see what dates are available. (Link can be found under 'Trip Planner' on the 'Resources' tab)

2. Read Through this Packet

Read through the packet to familiarize yourself with the details of various aspects of your stay and week. Take appropriate notes and make a list of questions to discuss with our staff.

3. Pick What Kind of Trip You Want to Book

We have several Trip Options to choose from. Review the Trip Options list (found on page 7) to see what type of stay you would like to organize.

4. Decide on Your Menu

After examining your food options, decide on a menu for your group.

5. Setup a Phone Interview with Us

Contact us to arrange a phone interview with one of our staff. During this conversation, we will answer your questions and concerns and begin planning out the details of your trip. We can be reached at 985.643.8215 or by email – info@homelandmissions.org

6. Plan and Host an Interest/Information Meeting

Print out and use our Promotional Materials. You can find them under 'Downloads' on the 'Resources' tab of our website. Print out the appropriate fliers and distribute them to encourage maximum participation and awareness. At this meeting, present the trip details and relevant information. We have videos available for your use as well. Ask about details.

7. Print Out Individual Information Packets

Print out the information packets from our website (found under 'Downloads' on the 'Resources' tab) and distribute them to your group. Have them read the material and fill-out the appropriate forms and collect relevant fees and deposits.

8. Setup Pre-Arrival Interview with Us

After your trip is planned and your group has been determined, contact us to discuss any additional questions or details that need to be addressed. From this conversation you will receive a Confirmation Packet containing the details of your visit.

Introduction

Locally Connected to Other Organizations

To facilitate good case management we have an ongoing database set up to monitor those who come to us for help and we are connected to many other religious, civic and secular organizations. We are one of the founding members of [Northshore Disaster Recovery Inc.](http://www.northshorerebuilds.org) (www.northshorerebuilds.org), a community non-profit group (composed of some 80+ civic, government liaison, and faith-based groups) designed to combine and share resources. We are also members of [GNODRP – the Greater New Orleans Disaster Recovery Partnership](http://www.gnodrop.org) (www.gnodrop.org) and work closely with the local Red Cross faith-based community initiatives such as the Ready Rating Program.

Constants and Variables

Given the nature of our relief work and our in house needs there are some constants and some variables. The constants are a need for –

- prayer and evangelism
- financial support
- expertise in construction-related work
- supplies and building materials
- volunteer workers

The variables are the *types of work* needing to be done.

As families have moved forward in their dealings with FEMA, job loss, insurance companies, local governments, lenders and grant agencies, they discover new challenges and needs. Because of this flux, the specificity of our work changes monthly.

Your exact work will be assigned just prior to your arrival. We utilize your skills assessment sheets to organize our work and do our best to match your skill level with the needs at hand.

We are also working on renovations and improvements to our own facilities so that we can have a firm base and headquarters for long-term work. Our modest church building was in need of repair prior to Katrina -- virtually untouched for 20 years. Post-disaster, after housing hundreds of workers and visitors, we have begun sorely needed upgrades and maintenance so that our work can continue.

Also, we are preparing to ready our Relief Center for permanent duty. This involves moving our offices and storehouse into a new 1,200 sq ft building adjacent to the church. Through the Relief Center, we provide the community with food, clothes and other benevolence gifts. To accommodate this transition, some of the work to be done will focus on our church grounds and Homeland Missions' facilities so that our outreach and ministry can move ahead.

Trip Options

As you can see from the list below, there is something for every volunteer and every skill level. See what type of trip fits your organization's goals.

- **Relief Work Short Term Mission Trip** – In this service trip, your group will have the chance to serve the Greater New Orleans area (St. Tammany, St. Bernard, and Orleans Parishes) while utilizing their skills, knowledge, and heart for service. Work includes everything from fixing a widow's damaged porch to reclaiming useful materials. We make a point to vary the work so as to expose your group to various faces of mercy work.

We periodically have on-going projects that require extensive attention by various groups over time. If you want to organize a specific type of work project, just let us know and we will do our best to accommodate.

We also have an ongoing list of needed donations that includes tools and materials. If you would like to bring and leave tools with us or sponsor a project through the purchase of materials, please let us know.

- **Church Retreat** – A church retreat will provide your group with a focused time of group prayer and reflection, unified group work projects, and the relaxation and beauty of southeast Louisiana. Bible study time and devotions will be designated and organized for your group in conjunction with your leader(s) by our pastoral staff. Ask about details.
- **Leading As Men Retreat** – This retreat gives men and boys the chance to serve the local community, study the topic of manly leadership, and enjoy outdoor activities such as hiking, fishing and exploring God's handiwork. Bible study time and devotions will be designated and organized for your group in conjunction with your leader(s) by our pastoral staff. Ask about details.
- **EPC Mission Trip** - Our EPC Trip (Evangelism, Prayer, and Counseling) provides your group with the chance to exercise their spiritual gifts by connecting with the hurting and the lost.

Our database provides us with the names and contact information of hundreds of families that we have served over the years. This is one source of contact for our EPC volunteers. By connecting with these individuals we hope to provide them with much-needed followup and spiritual support.

We will also plan weekly prayer for our local neighborhoods followed by strategic visits to designated neighborhoods.

Through one on one contact, focused prayer and biblical counsel centered around the gospel of Christ, these mission trips provide your group with the opportunity to strengthen your giftings by helping to fortify our community outreach.

The Work Week

The Division of Labor

As the scope of our work has shifted, so, too, have our labor categories. There are many areas of service available during your stay with us. Here are some examples and categories:

Evangelism / Counseling

- Many counseling/evangelism opportunities
- Using our database of contacts volunteers can visit the hurting and lost

Organizational

- Internal organization involving everything from sorting through donations to maintaining our pantry and benevolence store

Construction

- Clerical and computer work
- Basic rebuilding work consisting of carpentry, electrical, plumbing, roofing, drywall, framing, painting, etc.

Miscellaneous

- Meal preparations, cooking, cleaning and grounds work
- Community properties – upkeep and clearing of yards, lots, etc.

The Work Week Itself

Although most groups arrive on Saturday and leave the following Friday or Saturday, we are happy to accommodate trips of any length.

Sundays are non-work days. Our worship service is at 10:00 a.m. After service, the rest of the day is a good time for fellowship and sightseeing. On Tuesday evenings we have Bible study and prayer starting at 7:00 p.m.

Tools and materials are loaded up each day, sometimes in the evenings the night before depending on the project. All equipment is to be stored properly upon arrival back at our campus.

Each evening after dinner, crew leaders will meet briefly with our work crew supervisor(s) to go over the day's projects in order to assess progress and address any challenges that need attention.

Typical Daily Schedule*

6:00 a.m.	Wake up time
6:30 a.m.	Eat breakfast, lunch preparation, prayer time
7:15 a.m.	Morning devotional
7:30 a.m.	Pack up vehicles for departure
12:00 p.m.	Lunch
4:30 p.m.	Pack up and leave job site / neighborhoods Showers and cleanup
6:30 p.m.	Dinner
7:30 p.m.	Evening Study / videos / outing / games
10:30 p.m.	Lights out

**The daily routine will fluctuate depending upon the size of your group and the nature of your stay*

Dining Setup

Breakfast

Breakfast options include cereal, fruit, juice and milk, with an egg or meat dish, as well as toast, bagels or pastries. Coffee is made daily.

Lunch

With the help of one or two group members, we will make bag lunches during breakfast and morning devotions. Lunch includes two sandwiches, chips, and a sweet snack.

Menu Options*

Dinner

Rice Dishes

- Red Beans & Rice w/sausage
- Jambalaya (a classic Louisiana Creole dish of Spanish and French influence infused with spicy Cajun seasonings) w/beef, venison, chicken & sausage, or seafood (when available) with rice
- Dirty Rice (a traditional Cajun dish with mild flavoring) w/beef or venison
- Gumbo & Rice (a New Orleans staple stew with strong flavoring and spice) w/chicken & sausage

Pasta Dishes

- Pasta Jambalaya, w/beef, venison, chicken & sausage, or seafood (when available)
- Spaghetti & Meat Sauce
- Meat & Veggie Lasagna

Other

- Grilled Hamburgers
- Grilled Hot Dogs (and/or Polish Sausage)
- Grilled / BBQ Chicken
- Meatloaf
- Fried Chicken

Side Dishes

- Bread or Garlic Bread
- Salad, Potato Salad
- Mashed Potatoes, Grilled Veggies, Cole Slaw
- Baked Beans
- Chips and Dip

Tuesday Church Night Options

- Delivery Pizza (variety)
- Po-Boys (variety of fried shrimp, fried catfish, fried oysters, roast beef, hot sausage)

Dessert

Desserts each evening will include such things as cobblers, bread puddings, cakes, cookies, etc.

** Please let us know if anyone has any particular dietary needs, food allergies or special requirements. We will do our best to make the proper arrangements.*

Local Touring and Attractions

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly Tour

On Thursday evenings we make available a special local tour led by Pastor Eddie, who is a lifelong resident of the New Orleans area. The tour includes visiting destroyed and recovering neighborhoods as well as the local landmarks that overflow with the region's unique and colorful history.

Pastor Eddie covers a wide array of topics from politics to ongoing relief efforts, discussing the importance of understanding cultural demographics when attempting to do urban relief work. We leave the church grounds at 4:30 p.m. and arrive back around 11:00 p.m.

The evening includes a trip to Deanie's Seafood in Bucktown for dinner and winds down in the French Quarter for beignets and café au lait on the Mississippi Riverfront at the world famous Café Du Monde.

[While there is no charge for the tour, each person attending is responsible for their own expenses at dinner (which runs around \$15 per person) and any other places we may visit. Each vehicle is responsible for downtown parking as well. \$10]

Honey Island Swamp Tours

Located in Pearl River just a few miles away, Honey Island Swamp is described as a "pristine wilderness." It is a permanently-protected wildlife area that is rich with history and beauty and on the tour you may spot an alligator, red wolf, or even a bald eagle! Let us know if you would like to book a tour with them, and will we help you make your plans ahead of time. For more information about the tour, pricing, and times, visit their website at www.honeyislandswamp.com

The National WWII Museum

Located in New Orleans, the WWII Museum gives a unique opportunity to explore *"exhibitions that blend personal accounts, artifacts, documents, photographs and never before seen film footage to tell the stories of the amphibious landings that made victory in World War II possible. Special Exhibitions draw on Museum collections and relevant traveling exhibitions to further explore and illustrate the war that changed the world."* If you would like to visit this museum, we would love to help you plan your outing. Group rates on tickets are available if you book two weeks ahead. For more information, visit their website at www.ddaymuseum.org

New Orleans Audubon Zoo

Also in New Orleans, the Audubon Zoo is often ranked as one of the top zoos in the country for innovation and entertainment value. This zoo *"offers an exotic mix of animals from around the globe, engaging educational programs, hands-on animal encounters and lush gardens. Unique natural habitat exhibits—such as the award-*

winning Louisiana Swamp and Jaguar Jungle—showcase the relationship between people and nature.” If you would like to visit, let us know, and we can help you plan your outing. For more information, visit their website at www.auduboninstitute.org. For more local attractions you can visit this site - www.go2slidell.com/attractions.

Mississippi Beaches

About a half hour away in Mississippi are some beaches. Gulf waters are usually warm and good for swimming from May through September. While visiting the beach, you'll notice that a lot of properties on the Coast were destroyed by Hurricane Katrina, including many historic plantation-style homes.

Disclaimer: The ability to go to the beach and other water-related activities is currently restricted to the progress of the BP oil spill recovery efforts.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are type of fees can we expect?

There is a \$25 per day per person cost. This fee includes room and board. RVs and campers pay a flat rate of \$40 per week for utility hookups.

A 50% deposit is required two weeks prior to your trip with the remaining balance due upon arrival.

Where will we stay? What about bathrooms and showers?

Sleeping is done dormitory-style in our worship area. We can accommodate up to 35 people. We have a few roll-away beds, cots and air mattresses. Check for availability. You will be responsible for bringing your own bed linens, towels, and pillows.

There are four toilets currently available on site, and we have arrangements with local shower facilities to ensure that your group can get showers efficiently each evening.

What kind of tools do we need to bring? Should we bring any?

We have a good supply of tools and equipment; however, that changes from time to time due to breakage, use and changing needs. Before you come, ask us what our current tool needs might be, and consider donating tools to our ministry.

Are there any age requirements for those who volunteer to work?

Can I bring my teen-age son or daughter with me?

Our cut-off age for workers is 14. The physical labor involved is generally too intense for younger children. If you have younger children that you wish to bring with you or feel that their maturity level and physical conditioning is adequate, let us know.

If children remain with their parents, we can allow them to come along with the group. Families ministering together are a great thing and sometimes we have small jobs that small hands can help with. We will take each situation on a case-by- case basis.

PLEASE NOTE: *When dealing with children and teenagers, for the sake of safety and order we reserve the right to correct and/or remove any undisciplined child/ teenager from any situation if they are deemed to be troublesome and/ or disrespectful.*

Do you allow individuals with disabilities to come with a work crew?

Except for physical needs that cannot be met while here, there is often no reason why many disabled individuals cannot come with a group. We would ask such a crew member to fill out a skills assessment sheet like everyone else (which asks about physical and spiritual skills) so we can plan work for him/her. In addition to construction, and the organizational work in the Relief Center, there is follow-up phone calling, visitations, evangelism, prayer, etc. Also, cleaning and such is always a need when a group is in-house. We will do our best to accommodate their needs.

How will we know where we are working and what we are going to be doing? What kind of work will I be assigned?

Given the fluidity of needs, work schedules are put together as close to your arrival date as possible so as to be up-to-date. Some folks have been on our list for quite some time (as well as other lists) and may have had their work done already, so a site inspection is critical. After that assessment is made the work is scheduled.

Our work crew supervisor will use the Skills Assessment forms to put together individual crews and match them with jobs. A short orientation will be scheduled covering basic work week information and details when you arrive.

Where and how far is the nearest major airport?

The Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport (<http://www.flymsy.com>) is the most major, but the Gulfport-Biloxi International Airport (<http://www.flygpt.com>) is smaller and easier to deal with. When buying your tickets, check both and go with the best fare since they are equidistant from our church (approximately 50 minutes away).

What about transportation? If we fly in can we get back and forth to the airport? What will we drive?

If you fly in, you will need to rent vehicles to accommodate your group. Depending on the size of your group, our personal vehicles can also be made available as well.

If we want to bring donated items (or buy them in Slidell), what is most needed by your ministry?

Given the nature and flux of our work it is best to ask us what our food pantry, volunteer and community-use needs are at the time of your booking. We will be glad to go over the list of options with you.

What recreational activities are available for our crew members in the evenings after dinner?

We have yard space if anyone wants to throw a football or Frisbee (you'd need to bring them along). Since it is legal to burn much of our wood and paper trash on site, we have a fire pit in the backyard that you're welcome to use.

We have access to a wooded swampland area for those interested in seeing Louisiana outdoors up close. Hiking, nature watching, and more can be enjoyed by your group. Bring your waders, mud boots, and other gear if you are interested.

We also have a small collection of board games, and you can bring your own as well. We have a 55" HDTV with a VCR and a DVD player that can also accommodate video games.