



Jeremiah Project Sr. High Mission Team Training Sessions

Session 1: Your Week at JP

Purpose of this session/For the Leader: In this session, we will be talking about what students and adult chaperones can expect from their week at JP. There will be some changes from our Middle School model, and we want to communicate this to your students. The core values of Jeremiah Project remain unchanged, and we are excited to bring this High School model to you. We hope that this session helps both first-timers and veterans to JP.

SAY: We hope you are excited for your week at JP, whether it is your fifth year, or your very first year. We wanted to share with you some of the important elements of your time here and what you can expect.

High School JP is team-oriented. You and your church team will come to join other teams and we will be a community for the week. We will also be a part of the community of Lee County, VA and will be model community members. Part of being a team is knowing that everyone has a place in the team.

READ: 1 Corinthians 12: 12 – 31.

ASK:

- How does this passage speak to the idea of community at JP?

The whole idea of High School JP is the invitation to go deeper. Our goal is that you we all come alongside one another to serve and you leave JP this year with three things.

- A deeper sense of faith and who God has created you to be.
- A deeper understanding of issues surrounding poverty.
- An understanding of the difference a life of service can make and how you can make a difference right now.

ASK:

- What excites you about these three goals?
- What makes you nervous about these goals?
- How can you prepare yourself to get as much out of your week at JP?



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One question we have received a lot is how will the High School week be different from the Middle School week?

We don't want to give everything away, but here are some of the changes:

Since we are hoping to create deeper relationships with home owners and doing more challenging projects, most work teams will stay at the same worksite the entire week.

Since you have grown and matured from your Middle School years, we are going to be tackling more mature topics (such as poverty) with activities and program.

We also know you will want to have deep conversations with your church groups, so we have included Church Group discussion time each night.

We also know how important fun is, and that is why we are giving you an extended Free Day with your churches on Wednesday.

Since this is something new, we will be constantly receiving your feedback and need your flexibility.

ASK:

- What are some things you are looking forward to?
- Why is flexibility and an open mind going to be so important for your week at JP?

A Note About Retreat:

READ: Matthew 14:1-14.

Here we see Jesus receiving the news about John the Baptist. Upon hearing the news, what does Jesus do? (Answer: he goes to a solitary place)



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ASK:

- Why do you think he went off to be alone?
- The Bible doesn't tell us, but what do you think he may have done while he was alone?

READ: Matthew 14:15-24

ASK:

- What does the scripture say Jesus did when he withdrew to be alone?
- It seems like Jesus was always surrounded by people who needed him and demanded his time and attention. What can we learn from Jesus' way of dealing with the demands of everyday life?
- How might this apply to our lives?

ASK:

- What are some everyday things, distractions and/or worldly things we need to remove from our lives when we go to JP? (list them on newsprint or a white board)

(some possible answers: siblings, cell phone, a dating relationship, friends that may not be such a good influence on us, video games)

Cell Phones have become such a part of our lives and have become more invasive. There are a number of studies that talk about the addictive nature of cell phones¹ and at JP we want to give students a week to go without their cell phones (with the exception of free day which is leader discretion).

Take some time to address JP's cell phone policy: **Students must turn in their cell phones to their leaders upon arriving to JP. JP allows church leaders to let students have their cell phones on Wednesday – free day – but must turn them back in before dinner on Wednesday. Students may then have their cell phone back on Saturday when they leave camp. Ipods, mp3 players, or any other electronic entertainment devices are prohibited in camp.**

¹ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/alicegwalton/2017/12/11/phone-addiction-is-real-and-so-are-its-mental-health-risks/#40b27dd613df>



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To the leader: Upon hearing this, many students may feel it is unnecessary - and even a form of punishment - to not be allowed to have cell phones at camp.>

JP's Director, Todd Freneau, shares the heart behind JP's policy. Read the following to your students:

"Our passion is to create a place where students experience *more* community, *more* fellowship, *more* of what God has to offer and, *yes*, *less* of the worldly things. A place where students can truly "retreat" from the stress and distractions of everyday life. It's one of the really cool things about going away on a mission trip in the first place: to get away from the normalcy of the world we all live in and to experience something different, something *life-giving*, and maybe even *life-changing*.

And as much as we all love cell phones, the truth is, they can be a major distraction and prevent us from truly being present with others and with God. We believe it's more important to spend time with the people you're with at JP, rather than with whatever is going on back home, easily triggered by texts, notifications from social media, phone calls, etc.

I realize that it feels unnatural for most of us to be without our cell phones for a week, and it's something that's really hard to do. But we think it's worth the sacrifice. The Gospels are full of examples of Jesus withdrawing from people, daily life activities, and the demands of his ministry to be alone with the Father and pray. We believe there's a lot of wisdom in that. I hope that you will hear my heart that we desire the very best for you at JP and know that our policy is really *for* you and not *against* you!"

Ask:

- What are some of your thoughts after hearing this explained?
- What do you agree with?
- What do you disagree with?
- What are some of the challenges you will have by not having your cell phone?

Leader: Here are some concerns students may have by not having their cell phone that you will want to cover with your students:



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“I need to call home.” Assure your students that if they need to call home – even daily – they will absolutely be able to do that using a leader’s cell phone.

“I need it for medical reasons.” If a student needs to have their cell phone for medical reasons (app that monitors blood sugar levels, etc.) they keep it with them as needed.

“I go to sleep listening to music on my phone.” Discuss other ways to substitute for that: bring a fan, book to read, use a white noise machine, etc.

“I take pictures with my phone.” We know it’s not commonplace anymore but encourage students to bring a digital camera from a friend or family member to take pictures during the week. JP will also present a flash drive full of pictures to their youth leader before they get in the church vans at the end of the mission week.

Give the students an opportunity to ask additional questions or to discuss this topic further.

Take the 2-Week Cell Phone Challenge.

If you like the following idea, take this time to agree as a team to take the 2-Week Cell Phone Challenge.

Here’s why:

Some students have grown up with a cell phone in their hands. This may help students prepare themselves for a week without their cell phones, intentionally weaning themselves off their cell phones so it won’t be a sudden shock to their systems when their week at JP rolls around.

Here’s how it works:

Two weeks before you leave on your mission trip, have the group agree to each person limiting time on their cell phones to 30 minutes a day.

If they go to sleep to music, have them select another method during this time as well.

Encourage them to communicate to their friends outside of church that they are taking this challenge and to explain why they are doing it. Bonus: This could



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be a simple way to share about their faith and the reasons they are going on a mission trip. They could also ask these friends to support them in the challenge leading up to the mission trip.

One week before you leave on your mission trip, have the group agree to each person limiting time on their cell phones to 15 minutes a day. Find a way to hold each person accountable. Maybe a text from the leader each morning to remind them? Ask parents to help their son/daughter be accountable during this time. Maybe create a simple one-page covenant form where each person signs their name to commit to the challenge (you could copy and paste the above material very easily). Or, come up with your own challenge that fits your situation better. Be creative!

CLOSE WITH PRAYER.



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Session 2: Poverty

Purpose of this session/For the Leader: Our week together in Lee County, VA will be focused on the issue of poverty. Many of us have an understanding of poverty, but in this session, we hope to create a common definition and begin students thinking about how poverty impacts them and their worldview. As with all of these sessions, you know your students the best so please customize it to fit your context.

ACTIVITY: Welcome students into the space and begin with an activity. For this activity you will need different number of counters (could be pretzels, pennies, etc.) for different participants. Each participant needs a pen and a copy of the paper divided into 16 (Appendix A).

Give 25% of the group 10 counters per participant

Give 50% of the group 15 counters per participant.

Give the last 25% 20 counters each.

Have students write these categories (things people spend money on monthly) in one square of their paper.

- Rent/Mortgage
- Utilities
- Internet (More of a necessity with schools)
- Food
- Car Insurance
- Health Insurance
- Car
- Gasoline
- Clothes
- School Supplies
- Home/Car repairs
- Medical bills
- Free Money

Have students also think through some of the things their households spend money on. (Eating out, Netflix, Cable, Cell Phones, etc.)

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Have students pay for various items using one counter. They can use the sheet in Appendix A or use a similar way to keep track of how they spent their money. Have them make decisions regarding what they will spend their money on by putting a counter next to the item they will purchase or spend money on.

Once they have everything settled tell them that a family member needs surgery and they must adjust and pay one counter on medical bills if they have health insurance and three if they do not. Let students make adjustments. Students who only have 10 may be frustrated and that is an ok thing.

Once you have completed the exercise come back together and

ASK:

- How would you define poverty?

The definition of poverty is the state or condition of having little or no money, goods, or means of support; the condition of being poor.²

To estimate the percentage of the population in a given area living in poverty economists and sociologists use something called the poverty line. The poverty line is defined as the estimated minimum level of income to secure the necessities of life.³

ASK:

- How does this definition change how you view poverty?
- How did this exercise make you feel?
- How did this exercise help you understand more about poverty?

Break up into pairs and ask each other these questions:

- If you lived below the poverty line, how would that impact your life at school? Your activities and hobbies? Your spiritual life? Your life in general?

² <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/poverty>

³ <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/poverty-line?s=t>



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READ: Matthew 25: 31 – 46

ASK:

- What stands out to you in this passage?
- What is challenging about this passage?
- How does this passage impact our life every day, not just on a mission trip?

CLOSE WITH PRAYER



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Session 3: A Look at Lee County, Virginia

Purpose of this session/For the Leader. This summer we will be serving in Lee County, Virginia. In this session we are going to talk about data regarding Lee County and give you resources to look up information in your county. We also want to share with you some things that Lee County is known for so that you can compare information with your students' home county. We will be presenting both points of pride as well as challenging points about Lee County. It is important to discuss both so that we don't go into our week pitying the people we will be serving alongside. It will be up to you to compare information to your home county.

Go to <https://datausa.io/search/>? To find information about your home county, and other information than what is presented here on Lee County, VA.

Some basic information about Lee County⁴:

- First Europeans to set foot in Lee County were the Spanish looking for gold.
- It was named for the governor of Virginia "Light Horse" Harry Lee. He was governor from 1791- 1794.
- Lee County has been the birthplace of several members of Congress, authors, entertainers, and notably the founder of osteopathic medicine was born in Jonesville, VA.
- The people of Lee County are proud of their heritage and their music.

Some Challenges:

- The main challenges are economic.⁵ The main industries in Lee County were tobacco and coal mining and with the decline of both industries it has hurt the economy.

⁴ Wikipedia. "Lee County, VA". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lee_County,_Virginia.

⁵ <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/lee-county-va/#economy>



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- According to the 2016 census the median (middle) household income is \$31,577. That is much lower than the median income in the US (\$ 55,332) and Virginia (\$ 66,149)
- The poverty level in Lee County is 26.1% and women are the most likely to live in poverty. Women 25 – 54 are all above the 8% mark for living below the poverty line.
- In 2012 Lee County was ranked the third poorest county in Virginia with regards to median household income.⁶

Then Ask:

- Why is knowing this information helpful before serving in Lee County?
- Why is it important to know some sources of pride for the county?
- How can we serve without belittling the people we are serving?
- What can we learn about ourselves while serving this week at JP?

Share something like: It is important for us to know the challenges as well as the sources of pride for any community. We hope that you know that we will not be solving the issues of Lee County, but instead will partner with local community members and homeowners to do some work to help. We also hope you realize that these community members and homeowners will be serving us through prayer, teaching us and giving us the opportunity to be a part of the community for a week.

Close with prayer.

⁶ <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/virginia/2014/measure/factors/63/data?sort=sc-2>.



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Session 4: Sensitivity and Compassion

Purpose of this session/For the Leader: On any mission trip it is important for us to be sensitive to the homeowner and community we are serving. We don't want students thinking they are the solution to the problem, but instead partners trying to do their part to help. We also want them to realize that the other partners (other campers, staff, homeowners and community members) have things to teach them. We hope that they come away from this session with a deep appreciation for sensitivity which will form a foundation for their service during their week of JP and beyond.

ASK:

- What is the difference between empathy and pity?
- If you were going through a difficult time which (empathy vs. pity) would you prefer to be shown?
- How would you define sensitivity?
- How is sensitivity and compassion linked?
- When we show sympathy, is it closer to empathy or pity? Why?

One of the most important things we can discuss in a training session is the importance of sensitivity to one another as campers, to the homeowners and finally to the community with whom we serve. The dictionary defines sensitivity as "harmony of or agreement in feeling as between persons or on the part of one person with respect to another."⁷

ASK:

- What words stand out to you in that definition?

Jesus was known for showing compassion to the people in the towns he visited. We are going to read one such story and then ask some questions regarding showing compassion and sensitivity.

READ: Luke 7: 11 – 17

⁷ Dictionary.com "Sympathy."



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ASK:

- Why did Jesus heal the woman's son?
- What was the people's response to Jesus's act of compassion?
- Do you think Jesus's sympathy was motivated by empathy or pity? Why?

READ: Matthew 9: 35 – 38

ASK:

- Why did Jesus have compassion for the people?
- What does this passage have to do with us coming together to serve for a week together?
- How can we be sensitive to one another and the other students and adult leaders that come on the trip with us?
- How can we be sensitive to the homeowners we serve? (Feel free to share an experience you had on another mission trip.)
- How can we show empathy to a difficult homeowner? (Feel free to share an experience you had on another mission trip).
- How can we show sensitivity to the community we serve?

SAY: Ultimately, even Jesus served alongside the people he helped. He listened to their stories, healed them, taught them about life and they served alongside of Him sharing the Good News with those who would hear it. As we work alongside other JP students and adults, the homeowners and the community we all work together to serve God. If we remain sensitive and humble, then we will do great work for the Kingdom of God and will learn a lot from those who seek to be laborers for God's harvest.

CLOSE WITH PRAYER.