

## **GUIDELINES FOR PILGRIMAGE APPLICATIONS (Youth or Adult)**

A pilgrimage, by definition, is a learning event involving witness and experience in the midst of difference. It is learning about other cultures, but more importantly, learning about ourselves and our relationship with God and His people.

There are many times when congregations are not ready for Global Mission in its relational sense. For example:

- Young people are in a transitional time of their lives and may be unable to manage global relationships.
- Adults may face issues of finances, uncertainty, even a lack of exposure or a need for more information.
- A congregation may be looking for leadership in its effort.
- Leaders might feel they need more experience themselves.

What is certain is that situations like this should not stop us from having the opportunity to engage in global mission at its most fundamental level, one in which the experience leads to a better understanding of global mission, mission partners, and our role in God's mission.

For this reason, the Diocese of Massachusetts supports Pilgrimage as an element of a larger Mission Formation effort. Respect requires us to work **WITH** our host partners, not do **FOR** them. **We cannot love our neighbor if we do not know them**, so we need to spend time with them, and find opportunities to share. This may involve sharing meals, participating in worship together, the joint completion of a service project identified by the host community, or any activity that brings us into conversation. Some of the standards for Pilgrimage are the same as those for Relational efforts. Some additional guidelines for thinking about your Pilgrimage follow:

- Pilgrimage is an ELEMENT of a larger effort for Mission Formation. Thus, participants must engage in preparation before the trip that teaches them how their baptismal covenant connects to the work they will be doing. The pilgrimage is not a celebration of completion, but an element of the formation process.
- Also prior to a trip, participants should become informed about their hosts with respect to language, food, important historical events and influential figures, specific cultural expectations, the circumstances they will encounter, how those circumstances came into being, why they persist, as well as behavioral expectations during the trip.
- On the trip, participants should engage in daily reflection on their experience looking through the lens of the baptismal covenant, in the context of their day.
- After the trip, participants should gather to engage in reflection on their entire experience from the perspective of the baptismal covenant, reconciliation, and their participation in God's mission, looking for applications in their current (home) context.

- The grant application must speak to how the pilgrimage will lead to opening the participants' eyes to a community they would not otherwise experience and lead them to think about how they might seek to make a difference in the world, in terms of how they vote or influence public policy and legislation, what they study, what they do for a living, etc. In other words, if a long term relationship is unrealistic, what effect has the experience had on the individual in terms of their relationship with God, with their neighbor, and with themselves? How has it changed thoughts about reconciliation, love, respect, dignity, justice?
- A presentation to the supporting congregation should be scheduled shortly after return, where participants can articulate what they have learned about themselves through this experience, and how their transformation (assuming there is one) has changed the way they view and act in the world.
- If possible, the grant application should refer to respect and mutuality. How will participants interact with the host community on a regular basis? How has the host assumed leadership in identifying projects? How will they be involved in the work performed? Will you eat together? Worship together? Where are joint opportunities for reflection?
- At least 50% of the grant proceeds must directly benefit the community of the target population. Expenses might include locally provided transportation, translation, room, and board. Donations of materials, program fees, and financial resources to the host community for a specific project of their choice are also appropriate.

A Final Report is due within one year of the grant award, addressing the questions posed, providing photographs, and detailing the source and expenditure of all funds. A copy of the Report form is mailed with the grant check and is available on the Diomass website in the Matching Grants section.

NOTE for Youth Pilgrimage: Please refer to the following Q&A for Youth Pilgrimage Guidelines.

## Q & A's

### Youth Pilgrimage Recommended Guidelines

In an effort to make the pilgrimage experience for youth an element of a broader formation effort, transformative for both youth and their hosts, the following Guidelines are recommended:

- What is an appropriate **age** for a mission trip?
  - **International** trips one week or more – at least 17-19 years old (unless accompanied by a parent)
  - **US** trips one week or more – at least 14-18 years old (unless accompanied by a parent)
  - **US** trips weekend – Jr. High at least 12-14 (younger kids as appropriate)
  - **Local** mission – younger kids under 12

Note that projects cannot allow any child under 18 to handle power tools.

- How many youth per **chaperone**?

A ratio of 4 youth per adult is recommended. It allows for an emergency where one adult might need to take additional youth while another deals with the situation. No more than 6 youth per adult.  
On trips with mixed groups, it is recommended that there be a chaperone from each congregation or organization involved.
- How are youth consistently **prepared** for a pilgrimage experience?

Preparation should consist of:

  - 1) A Logistics meeting (including parents) re: the details of the trip
    - a. Requirements
    - b. Financial commitment
    - c. Create a Covenant
    - d. Ice-breaking and warm up activities
    - e. ID host (who should take the lead in developing the itinerary)
    - f. ID host community with whom relationships will be built
    - g. Talk about the difference of work activity vs. conversation – give the trip substance and purpose
    - h. Discuss the cultural experience of crossing into difference
    - i. Detailed itinerary for the trip
  - 2) A teambuilding day
    - a. Examples: Ropes courses are great – BCH Camp (\$25pp + bus), Gordon College, Thompson Island (\$80pp), Camp Wing in Duxbury
  - 3) A day-long (or longer or shorter) workshop based on the principles of *Going Global With God* by Titus Pressler, and *Toxic Charity* by Robert Lupton, covering the philosophy of mission, answering the question of "Why is it like this in this place?" and developing Cultural Competency. It would be helpful and supportive, and perhaps even required, for parents to be involved in these meetings.

4) A Day of Service (some type of local mission that reinforces the principles of the workshop)

- How are youth developing **Cultural Competency**?

Time should be allowed for the study of every participant in the following areas:

- Language – common/polite phrases
- History – and its impact on the present day
- Economy – common work and how people can or cannot participate
- Food – grown locally and how it is eaten
- Dress – what is considered acceptable and appropriate
- Religion – what are the basic tenets and how do they relate to Christianity
- Politics – and how they affect the host community

- How are youth **planning** activities with their hosts?

Develop ways, if possible, for youth to begin to get to know their counterparts in the host community. The trip should be by the host's invitation.

- How are youth **reflecting** on their observations and experiences during the trip?  
Develop a program of worship and reflection to be used during the trip.

- How are youth using the experience to **introduce** their sending congregation to mission and relationship?

**Before the trip:** Get the rector's commitment and identify support – both prayer and financial. Get him to help the youth involve the congregation. Youth might make a presentation about the trip they are about to take and what they have done in preparation. They may hold fundraisers. They should ask for prayers during their journey. Youth might write a prayer to be added to the Prayers of the People.

**After the trip:** Get the rector's support to include the experience and its value to the congregation. Encourage parish presentations – oral and visual. Relate the experience in terms of their Baptismal Covenant. Write a prayer for the host community to be included with the Prayers of the People.

- What kind of **follow-up** is planned?

Will there be continued fellowship between participants?

Group should gather 2 weeks post-trip for reflection and planning how each participant will apply the experience in a local context

Reunion after 6 months to share "so what happened as a result of this trip?"

- What are the **expectations** for participating youth?

That they understand and are willing to participate in the above.

Seriously consider including Code of Conduct, Acknowledgement of Risk and Release of Liability, and Medical Conditions forms in your application. Customizable samples are available from the diocesan offices.