



## Group Experience Detail Options

### Covenant

Sometime during your first day your group will discuss the group covenant. A covenant is a promise which is made and upheld by the whole group. This is a serious vow which says that during the time limit described, we as a group will follow the stipulations of the agreement. This is your group's covenant -- they come up with it and they enforce it. Things are included on the covenant if, and only if, each group member decides that he/she can and will abide by that stipulation for the duration of the contract. If a single group member will not agree, that stipulation must either be changed slightly until the person will agree, or it is left out of the covenant. People needn't love each stipulation, they simply need to agree to abide by them for the duration of the covenant. All group members sign on the paper that they agree.

We believe in the development and use of the covenant for several reasons:

- Establishes the intentions of the group
- Defines expectations of group behavior in all areas (physical, spiritual, social, mental)
- Provides accountability for all of these expectations
- Enhances commitment
- Provides a basis for vulnerability
- Puts love into action - "Let us consider how we can spur one another on toward love and good deeds." (Hebrews 10:24)
- Makes everybody a team; everybody works together (there's no "them against us")
- God uses covenants to define the expected commitments between God and His people (Exodus 19:1-8, Hebrews 9:15)



There are two ways that you might go about establishing a covenant. We recommend you establish one before your trip but if this is not feasible for you, a covenant can be established upon your arrival.

#### Option 1: Create your covenant before you come

If you create a covenant before your trip the covenant will be "meatier" due to greater time available for formation and a group who is not tired from a long drive. You can take time for this at the end of your final preparation meeting (see Packet One) or any other time before the trip as a group. Should you elect this option, be sure to write out the covenant, have everyone sign it and bring it with you! Some good questions to ask when you are creating your covenant are:

- What is a covenant? (See above)
- Why are you going on this trip?
- How do you want this trip to affect your life?
- What do you, as a group, want to be about?

#### Option 2: Create your covenant upon arrival

If you choose to create your covenant once you arrive, your AdventureServe staff will lead the group through the process, either during the evening you arrive as part of your orientation time or the next evening.

No matter which option you choose, covenants are only as good as the time and thoughtput into them.

If you are unsure of where to start or what kind of items should be included in a covenant, here is a list of suggestions:

- Only use “words of life”: Nothing negative / making fun of yourself or others (Example: 1 cut-down = 2 sincere compliments/words of life).
- Good attitude about all of the safety rules.
- No complaining or whining about things we can’t change (weather).
- Be positive and encouraging to one another (never negative).
- No junk food for the week.
- Everybody share in the group worship/discussion (at least a short something).
- Personal disciplines during the week (quiet time, journaling, etc.).
- Prayer partners for the week.
- No cell phones or iPods (except by adults, only when absolutely needed).
- No romantic pairing off during the week.

#### Seed Thought Devotional Time

Each morning ASM staff will set aside time for devotions that we call Seed Thought. In your next packet you will receive more information on this year’s theme and a copy of the journal. This time with God is beneficial in the group’s growth both throughout the week and life after the trip. ASM staff will assume Option A (see below). Staff are trained and prepared for the other options as well.

#### Option A: AdventureServe Led



This devotion is written by ASM. The layout of this time typically involves an introduction to the day’s theme, 15-20 minutes of quite time for everyone to work through the Seed Thought material, and then some closing thoughts.

**Benefits:** Our staff have been trained in leading this devotion and have been working with the material.

The material and responsibility is one less thing for you to do.

**Drawbacks:** ASM staff are just getting to know your group and may not know the best way to personalize the material.

#### Option B: Group Leader Led with AdventureServe material

You as the leader are receiving the Seed Thought journal a few weeks before your trip. This will allow you to then lead each day's devotion in your own way but using a theme the staff will be pointing to throughout the week during various activities.

**Benefits:** You know your group best and may know what stories are better to connect with them.

The material is provided for you.

**Drawbacks:** Having a fresh voice and perspective that your group is not used to hearing may be more impactful.

#### Option C: Group leader Led with your own material

This would be a time of devotion that you would lead in whatever way you choose. You would also provide the material for the group to follow throughout the week.

**Benefits:** Your group may be walking through a unique season of life and the devotional theme of the week will not impact that growth but hinder it.

**Drawbacks:** This option is more work for you and it takes away avenues for ASM staff to connect with your group.

### Evening Debrief



Debrief is a time during the evening set aside to discuss the day's activities, the morning devotion, or other group dynamics that need addressing. Often this time may include team building activities, spiritual practices, or just group sharing. Our staff will assume Option A when it comes to debriefing but are trained for the other choices as well. Each have their pros and cons.

#### Option A: AdventureServe Led

This option would allow for ASM staff to choose the topic of discussion. They would also lead facilitating it through methods they choose- i.e. team building activities, questions, etc. Staff go through many hours of training and practice in group facilitation and team building activities.

**Benefits:** ASM staff offer outside opinions about your group dynamics.

There is no planning on your part.

**Drawbacks:** The group leader does not have control over the discussion or topic.

#### Option B: Group Leader Led and AdventureServe Led

This option allows for a partnership between ASM staff and you. You may choose to plan out debriefs together ahead of time, trade leadership roles, or tag-team the discussion.

**Benefits:** You will be able to speak to past experiences the staff do not know about.

Staff will be able to offer a fresh external perspective.

**Drawbacks:** The staff and you may not understand each other well, leading to discussions that aren't cohesive or that take too long.

#### Option C: Group leader Led

This will be a time lead by you. It can be as long as you wish and discuss whatever topics you think are best. Your basic goal will be to discuss the day.

**Benefits:** This allows for you to do more personalized discussion, perhaps for a graduating class.

**Drawbacks:** It's harder for the ASM staff to connect with your group.

It may require prior planning.

## **Worship Services**

There are three main methods of preparing the worship element of an AdventureServe Ministries experience. They each have their own unique benefits and drawbacks. Our staff assume and expect option A as the method of programming but are also prepared for options B or C.

#### Option A: Group-led worship service each evening (Recommended)

The whole group is split up into smaller groups of around 5 people. A different group is responsible for planning, preparing and leading the evening worship each day. The AdventureServe staff have a worship manual resource for these small groups to help in preparation and can help guide them. A leader from your leadership team is normally also included in the group. This is done so one of the group's leaders can approve the plans before the worship team takes it to the large group. The goal is for the group to come up with a creative, meaningful service that incorporates ideas, challenges or actions of that day. Because it is focused and customized it can be very powerful.

**Benefits:** Leadership and decision-making is fostered in group members as they learn to plan and lead worship.

It is customized to the exact needs of the group.

Doesn't require prior planning.

The leader is not set up as the only "spiritual" one.

**Drawbacks:** Group members may plan a poor service. (This doesn't normally occur when there is adequate guidance.)

The group leader is not in control of the outcome. (This may be a benefit--sometimes the group will push way beyond where the leader would have drawn a line.)



#### Option B: A worship service pre-planned and led by a leader

This can be a theme for the week or a set of topics that relate to what will be happening. These can be very meaningful if they are well planned.

**Benefits:** You feel prepared because you are!

A theme can be followed or content can be covered.

Your position as the leader is firmly established.

The group leader is in control of the outcome.

**Drawbacks:** The topic(s) may not fit with what the group is experiencing.

The group leader is in control of the outcome.

Leadership or decision-making is not fostered in the group members.

It's not the group's service; it's the group leaders.

#### Option C: Small groups leading a pre-planned session with the flexibility to customize.

This is an attempt to get the best of both worlds. You get the structure and peace of mind from a pre-planned worship, and the spontaneity of the group-prepared worship.

**Benefits:** The group leads worship.

You have peace of mind knowing there is a plan.

Worship can still go on (even if the group doesn't plan).

A theme or certain topics can be covered.

**Drawbacks:** The group is given a lesson to lead and have no ownership in the service.

They may lead it but say, "I'm not sure what it means."

Groups don't learn to plan and prepare for a worship service.

Group members take no initiative and don't have the opportunity to express creativity.