



Missionary-Mentor Questions

We've all benefited from the experience and wisdom of those who have gone before us--at least, we all want to! The reality of our fast-paced lives is that, too often, we don't make time to sit with and learn from those who have a bit more experience than we do. That is why we ask churches to provide a mentor to walk alongside the missionary missionary applicants as they go through the exciting process of applying to be a missionary. In addition to encouraging and supporting the applicant, it is also our hope that this process will help you to identify additional strengths and areas of growth in the applicant.

At this point, you might be thinking to yourself, "I don't have time to mentor every missionary applicant from our church." You're probably right! That's why we'd encourage you to only take this responsibility on yourself if you truly have the time and energy for it. Additionally, if you are a key decision-maker for the church when it comes to missionary selection, there might be additional reasons for you to encourage someone else to step into this process. Mentorship, after all, is often best conducted outside of normal authority and accountability structures. With this in mind, we often encourage church leaders to engage other members of the church at this point. Maybe this is a good time to tap into the expertise of a retired missionary or a lay leader in the church?

Every mentoring relationship will look different, but establishing a few basic guidelines can make this a fruitful process. First, it is essential to establish trust with the applicant, because this relationship should be a safe place where the missionary can process both their excitements and their fears. A second key component is growth.; this relationship is meant to guide the missionary toward growth in six critical areas. Sometimes that will mean the mentor guides the applicant toward a certain book or resource, but other times it can be even more helpful for the mentor to share their personal experiences about how God has grown them in a particular area. In any event, this process is meant to unsettle and move you forward; it should never leave the applicant stagnant. Thirdly, mentoring should provide a context for accountability. If the mentor sees a certain area in which the applicant can grow, this should be a place where they can share that observation gently, but honestly.

Instructions

The following questions are adapted from TEAM's *Selection and Placement Policy*, where we look at 6 domains of a missionary's preparedness for missionary service. A variety of formats would be appropriate for these questions: you could discuss one domain each time you meet, or tackle a few questions at a time, whatever makes sense for you. You may want the missionary to prepare written responses, or perhaps you would prefer to work through these topics verbally. It's often helpful to give the applicant time to reflect on the questions before you meet together to discuss. Finally, we have also provided a short list of additional reading material for each domain, which you can feel free to integrate as opportunity arises.



Domain #1 :: Spiritual

- ▶ Describe your regular spiritual disciplines. How have your spiritual disciplines changed over the years? Where do you hope to be in your practice of the disciplines by this time next year? Which disciplines are more difficult for you? Which are especially life-giving to you?
- ▶ How is the fruit of the Spirit evident in your daily life? What elements are you working on right now? Where are you experiencing growth?
- ▶ How have your relationships in the church impacted your spiritual growth? How have these been challenging/fruitful?
- ▶ How do you understand your church's authority over yourself and your family, and your accountability to the local church?
- ▶ What experience do you have with suffering as a follower of Christ?
- ▶ How have you experienced spiritual battle as a follower of Christ?
- ▶ **Further Reading:** *Celebration of Discipline* by Richard Foster, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* by Donald Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines Within the Church: Participating Fully in the Body of Christ* by Donald Whitney, *Soul Keeping* by John Ortberg, *Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Secret* by Frederick Howard Howard, *Radical* by David Platt



Domain #2 :: Interpersonal

- ▶ How does meeting new people make you feel? Are you comfortable making new friends?
- ▶ Describe your friendships with people who aren't Christians. How do you try to represent Christ to them?
- ▶ Have you ever been in a situation where you didn't get along with a coworker? How did you handle that?
- ▶ What kind of role do you like to take in team situations? Would you rather lead or follow? What happens when you are put in a role where you are uncomfortable?
- ▶ How do you practice accountability in your daily life? What are ways that you can grow in accepting guidance from others?
- ▶ How are you practicing hospitality in your everyday life? What are some things that keep you from practicing hospitality?
- ▶ **Further Reading:** *The Attentive Life: Discerning God's Presence in All Things* by Leighton Ford, *Respectable Sins* by Jerry Bridges, *Choosing Forgiveness* by Nancy DeMoss, *The Wisdom of Teams* by Jon Katzenbach and Douglas Burnet Smith



Domain #3 :: Intercultural

- ▶ What excites you most about living and working in another culture? What intimidates you about the possibility of moving overseas? What do you expect this transition to feel like? What challenges do you expect to face?
- ▶ Are you naturally curious about other cultures? Does cultural sensitivity come naturally to you? Are you a naturally good listener? How do you plan to grow in these areas before leaving?
- ▶ Have you ever learned another language? Tell me about that experience. What lessons will you draw on when you move overseas and begin studying a new language?
- ▶ Tell me about a time that you have felt like an outsider. How did you handle yourself? What lessons did you learn from that experience?
- ▶ How would you feel about working under the authority of a non-North American? What challenges would you expect to arise in this context?
- ▶ Have you ever worked in a culturally diverse setting? What was that like? What challenges arose, and how did you deal with them?
- ▶ **Further Reading:** *Foreign to Familiar* by Sarah A. Lanier, *When Helping Hurts* by Brian Fikkert and Steve Corbett, *Crossing Cultures with Ruth* by James Nelson, *Culture's Consequences* by Geert Hofstede



Domain #4 :: Ministry

- ▶ Tell me about the last time you shared the Gospel with someone. Did you feel comfortable sharing? What opportunities have you had to share the Gospel regularly?
- ▶ Do you have someone you are currently discipling? What have you seen God do through that experience? What are some challenges of discipleship?
- ▶ How would you define spiritual leadership? What does that look like in your family? What does it look like in a ministry setting?
- ▶ What does spiritual leadership look like in a professional setting?
- ▶ Is it easy or difficult for you to step aside and let others lead? How do you encourage other people to develop their gifts and leadership for ministry? How might this look different in another culture?
- ▶ How do you feel about raising money for your ministry? What are your fears? How can encouraging others to give be a part of your ministry?
- ▶ Do you feel confident communicating in large groups? One on one? In small groups? What are some ways you can grow in these skills? How could this skill benefit your ministry on the field?
- ▶ Describe your spiritual gifts. How do you use those gifts in ministry? What are you doing to intentionally grow these gifts?
- ▶ **Further Reading:** *Teaching to Change Lives* by Howard Hendricks, *The Global Gospel* by Werner Mischke, *The 3D Gospel* by Jayson Georges, *Telling the Gospel through Story* by Christine Dillon, *Reaching and Teaching* by David Sills, *Radical Together* by David Platt, *A Spirituality of Fundraising* by Henri Nouwen.



Domain #5 :: Personal & Family

- ▶ How do you anticipate your relationships with family and friends will change when you are on the mission field? What will make maintaining these relationships difficult? How do you plan to overcome those difficulties?
- ▶ How do you currently practice self-care? How would being on the field change how you take care of yourself?
- ▶ Tell me about a season of life that was particularly stressful. How did you handle the stress? What lessons did you learn from that season?
- ▶ How would being on a modest ministry budget change your lifestyle? How do those changes make you feel?
- ▶ Have you ever been in an environment where moral purity wasn't valued? How did you deal with that? How do you fight to maintain moral purity?
- ▶ Do you enjoy learning new things? How can you pursue lifelong learning in another culture? What might make it difficult?
- ▶ Tell me about your current family dynamics. How does your family handle conflict and stress?
- ▶ Describe how the process of applying for service has grown your marriage. How do you stay connected to one another when you are in a busy or stressful season?
- ▶ Describe your parenting philosophy. How are you and your spouse leading your children to Christ on a daily basis? How might your parenting have to change in a cross-cultural environment?
- ▶ **Further Reading:** *Hedges* by Jerry Bridges, *The Purity Principle* by Randy Alcorn, *Margins* by Richard Swenson, *His Needs Her Needs* by Willard F. Harley, *More Screams* *Different Deserts: Joy and Perseverance for Women in Cross Cultural Ministry* by Sue Eenigenburg



Domain #6 :: Organizational

- ▶ Tell me about the organization with whom you are applying. What made you choose to move forward with them? What makes them different from other organizations?
- ▶ What are the ministry's core values? How do they line up with your personal ministry values? How do they connect with your church's values?
- ▶ What are some professional goals you have for yourself? Does this organization help you reach those goals?
- ▶ Tell me about a time where you worked under someone else. How did you feel about submitting to their authority? If there was a time in which you disagreed, how did you handle that?
- ▶ What is the organization's strategic plan for the future? Does this organization's future excite you? How does the ministry assignment you are considering line up with that vision?
- ▶ Tell me about the organization's doctrinal statement. Do you subscribe to those views? Does anything give you pause? How would these stances influence your ministry?
- ▶ What do you know about the structure of the organization? Will you be reporting to someone locally or in another country? What skills do you possess that will help you flourish in that structure? What skills can you grow in to help you succeed?
- ▶ **Further Reading:** *Help Your Missionaries Thrive* by Ken Harder and Carla Foote, *Stuck* by Terry B. Walling, *Servant Leadership for Slow Learners* by J. David Lundy, *They Smell Like Sheep* by Lynn Anderson, *Well Sent* by Steve Beirn

