

Pre-Immersion Prep

Goals of ABI Preparation

Each team of co-leaders (with some assistance from program staff) is responsible for preparing students for the ABI experience. Each individual ABI has particular preparation needs. The goal of preparing students to be ready to experience the immersion as fully and meaningfully as possible is universal for all ABIs.

Practically speaking, pre-trip meetings are essential for gathering information from participants that is necessary for making the appropriate travel arrangements, etc. (van reservations, plane tickets). However, pre-trip meetings are more than simply logistical. Pre-trip meetings help to ensure that the ABI will be more than just a “good experience.” The meetings offer community building, background information on the historical, political and social situation of the areas we visit, discussions of “Why we go,” and thought-provoking reflection.

Preparation meetings also set the tone for the ABI experience. It is important to convey that while there are co-leaders or facilitators on these trips, the immersion is really a community experience, and all members of the community contribute to the fullness of that experience. You may ask the group to take ownership of fundraising, education, reflection, or assign different roles, etc. as a way of conveying mutual ownership of the experience.

Preparation Meeting Guidelines

For domestic immersions:

3-4 meetings (usually 2 hours) should include:

community building

prayer/reflection

specifics about the immersion (what to bring, rough schedule if available),

education (readings, videos, discussions, guest speakers including previous ABI participants);

overview of cultural sensitivity

fundraising

clear sense of expectations

For international immersions: All of the above through 5-6 meetings. Part or one whole meeting with students and staff who participated previously; historical development of politics, culture, social movements/civil society. Examine social situation and conditions of power through presentations, film and or reading assignments. Consider tapping into faculty expertise and local immigrant communities. Major emphasis on cultural sensitivity and what it means to be a foreigner/representative of Loyola and the U.S.

Preparation Meeting Outline

First Meeting:

Casual Meet & Greet

Ice-breakers

Snackluck/Meal

Second Meeting:

More ice-breakers & get-to-know you activities

Introduce Host Community:

Mission statement, webpage, photos

Invite someone from previous trip to share about their experience

General Trip Logistics (Share schedule if possible)

Third Meeting:

Movie or Excursion (borrow film from library or go to movie theatre; museum; restaurant)

Reflection (reaction to film or excursion; discussion; education for justice site)

Fourth Meeting:

ABI program goals

Cost of Short-Term Missions

Justice Circle

Other readings/articles

Group Discussion

Fifth/Final Meeting:

Final logistics

Potluck