

**NOTE: The VOICE Missions Handbook is updated yearly. This handbook is the 2016-2017 edition, and may differ from the handbook that will be used on the 2017-2018 trip.
THIS COPY IS FOR REFERENCE ONLY!**

VOICE Missions Handbook (2016-2017)

Defining Your Mission

All too often when we commit ourselves to something, we do not prepare our heart or emotions for the long haul. As the saying goes, “when the going gets tough, the tough get going” or even better, “where there is no vision, the people perish.” So how do we equip ourselves so that we do not fall to the wayside once the “winds” really begin to blow?

We can help accomplish this by defining our vision, and establishing what our mission is for the battle we are about to enter. How do you know God has called you to Taiwan for a year? Are you trusting God with the “big picture”, and anxiously waiting to see how He’s going to work in you and through you? Have you set some clear-cut goals for yourself before you have entered the “battleground”?

We would challenge you to think through these things. Know where you stand; Know what you stand on; Know Who you stand in. Your personal Mission Statement should not only set the tone for your year - it will define your ministry.

With everything that our King wants to accomplish in and through our lives this year, we cannot afford to stall the process by choosing to walk in our flesh.

Team Life

You are working on a VOICE Missions team, and whether you have one or seven teammates you will need to support each other in this upcoming year.

Basic expectations:

➤ **You must carry your share of team responsibilities:**

Teams have many different responsibilities, from cooking team meals, to cleaning the dorm, to participating in work projects for the government or sponsor. As a team member you must be willing to pitch in and share the load. Your team leader has the authority to assign work and delegate responsibility.

➤ **You must respect your teammates.**

Like it or not, your teammates are very different from you. They are probably from a different family, church, and sub-culture than you, and may act and react very differently than you. Despite this you must show respect for all your teammates.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Listening to their viewpoint and trying to see issues from their perspective.
- Never giving up on them or 'writing them off' when conflicts arise.
- Not gossiping about them.
- Keeping conversations respectful.
- Working towards a solution when conflicts or disagreements arise.
- Serve, care, and love them as members of the Body of Christ.

Ministry

You are in Taiwan to minister to the people of Taiwan. This is the main reason why you are here! Different people may be called to do different kinds of ministry, but the important thing is to focus on whatever area of ministry God has called you to pursue.

Basic expectations:

➤ **You must demonstrate a willingness to involve yourself in ministry:**

You are not here to simply serve yourself, you are here to serve the people of Taiwan. As a VOICE Missions volunteer you must demonstrate a willingness to pursue ministry.

➤ **You must find and attend a local church:**

The local church is where you will find many opportunities for ministry. While it may be difficult to attend a church when you do not understand the language, you will find that connecting with a local body of believers will help you find many ministry opportunities.

Talk with the pastor to request translation. Meanwhile learn to worship God in the spirit and truth.

Dress Guidelines

Like it or not, because you are a foreigner, you will stand out. How you dress conveys what you think of yourself and what you think of your job. It is therefore particularly important to maintain a professional appearance when teaching and when meeting/interacting with school faculty and government officials.

Professional Dress

For Teaching

- Young men should wear clean, collared shirts without large logos or printed messages. Pants must be clean-cut and professional and worn with a belt. Shoes or sandals should be conservative and suited for walking. No sleeveless shirts, baggy pants, sweatpants, shorts, or flip flops. Business casual is a great guideline.

- Young ladies should wear modest shirts without plunging necklines. Tops should not be tight-fitting or revealing. Make sure your shirt is long enough to cover your waistline. No sleeveless shirts. Skirts should fall below the knee. If a skirt has a slit, it should not rise above the knee. Pants must be clean-cut and professional. Shoes and sandals should be suited for walking. No flip flops. Business casual is a good guideline.

*The **guiding principle** is to dress suitably for each occasion and to maintain a neat and modest appearance.*

For Special Occasions (e.g. Graduations/ Meeting government officials):

Please be prepared to show respect by dressing formally.

Sponsor Guidelines

Your sponsor may at times make special dress guidelines and/or ask you to dress more professionally than the VOICE Missions guidelines specify. In this situation you are required to comply with your sponsor's dress guidelines.

Casual Dress

During weekends and non-teaching hours, t-shirts, modest pants, capris, or knee length shorts may be worn. Girls should not wear spaghetti-strap tank tops or dresses, but modest sleeveless shirts may be worn.

When we are not at school, it is still important that we present an appropriate and modest appearance as we live within our local communities. Out of respect for those around you, don't dress like a slob. You may consult with your team leader on individual items, to determine if they are appropriate. Your team leader may exercise their judgment in interpreting the details of the dress

code in order to determine what is culturally acceptable and appropriate for your area. You are expected to defer to their decisions in these details.

Housing Guidelines

Back in America, your home would be considered private territory. Here in Taiwan, it belongs to the school, so school faculty may exercise the right to enter and inspect your living quarters without warning. It is therefore vital to be sensitive to the issues that are important to them, so that your lifestyle can be a testimony to them.

Each housing situation in Taiwan is different according to each county. Some are set up dormitory-style, while elsewhere there may be an apartment or house that a team will share. Regardless of the setup, you will be living with a team where members come from different families – thus carrying with him/her an entirely different outlook. Although this will cause some new experiences, make sure you take the time to learn and appreciate the various personalities around you.

Bedroom / Bathroom

There will be no visiting between guys' and girls' rooms. Please respect the rights of your roommates by keeping your room neat and clean.

Likewise, please make a plan for taking out the trash, sweeping the floor, and cleaning the bathroom on a regular basis.

Be sure to turn off the A/C when you leave and when it is not needed.

Kitchen

Please keep the kitchen orderly by washing dishes immediately and taking out the trash every day – if possible. Your team needs to come up with a system to make this happen.

Living Room

Due to the public nature of this room, please keep your personal items in your room, so that this room is always presentable to anyone—students or faculty—who may decide to visit.

Please also be aware of how your activities may be interpreted by unexpected visitors. Be careful to keep your interpersonal interaction and your choice of entertainment above reproach.

The guiding principle is to show deference both to your teammates and your host school by maintaining orderly living quarters.

Entertainment Guidelines

Entertainment has long been the center of much controversy within Christian circles. There are many ways to approach this issue, but our main desire is to challenge you to guard your walk with Christ—make sure nothing robs you of the joys of intimate fellowship with the Lord. Likewise, we want you to guard against anything that might hinder your team from being effective servants of God. Towards that end, instead of guidelines, we'd like to give you a list of questions to help you evaluate the place entertainment should have in your life and on your team.

Music

As a general rule, do not play questionable music in public (anywhere where others can hear it). Ask your team leader if you are in doubt as to what is appropriate. The following questions apply to personal music:

- Does this music edify me?
- Is this music taking up too much of my time?
- Is it hindering my testimony/ministry?
- If the Lord were to ask me to give up my music, could I do it?
- Should I be spending time talking to someone else?
- Am I unapproachable when wearing headphones?

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to guard
your personal walk
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to protect
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of your ministry.*

TV/Movies/Video Games/Internet/Reading Material

- Is this affecting my relationship with the Lord?
- Have I finished lesson planning?
- Do I need to work on other ministry opportunities?
- Is it hindering my testimony/ministry?
- Am I getting enough rest?
- Should I be spending time talking to someone else?
- How is this activity affecting my team?
- Are my chores done?
- Do I need to write/call home?

General Guidelines

Housing:

- Be sensitive to school/sponsor provided property. (Turn off lights, computers, AC, heaters, etc. whenever they are not being used.)

Team:

- Be responsible to inform your team leader when you will be having guests. If you have overseas visitors, please inform your team leader, VOICE Missions Leadership, and IBLP Taiwan.
- If visiting other teams, please notify the respective team leader regarding your plans.

Travel:

- Do not ride or drive a motorcycle or moped.
- Wear a helmet when riding a bicycle.
- If you want to travel outside the country or to the surrounding islands of Taiwan, other than to the island of Kinmen, check with your team leader before booking your tickets and the team leader will notify IBLP.
- If you plan to come to Taipei, IBLP has a room where they allow us to stay. Please ask Alice two weeks in advance before your arrival.
- If you wish to drive a car in Taiwan, you must register your International Driver's License in Taiwan. If you fail to do this, you are considered an unlicensed driver and may be subject to fines and prosecution.

Sponsor:

- Be discreet with what your sponsor has provided. (Doctor visits, sick days, days off... etc.) Ask your team leader before contacting sponsors about days off or changing your schedule.
- Be on time with handing in your passport for visa renewals.
- Be grateful for the time and work that is done on your behalf.
- Teachers are not allowed to be employed by any other schools, cram schools, families, etc. other than what is arranged by the government. Because you are here on a visitor's visa, it is illegal to receive monetary reimbursement for any service or work. Doing so can result in deportation from the country! Tutoring should only be done on a voluntary basis. Teachers should not receive any money for private tutoring.
- Be aware that the return date listed on your plane ticket may not be your actual return date. Your VOICE Missions commitment is for approximately eleven months, and usually includes facilitating winter and summer camps, in addition to your regular teaching.

Ministry:

- Find a local church and attend weekly whenever possible.

Cultural Guidelines

In addition to the above guidelines, every culture has its unspoken rules of acceptable/unacceptable behavior. These rules are unfortunately not always identifiable or reasonable. As a guest in this culture, it is important to understand the mentality of the people you are serving, so you can avoid offending them unintentionally.

Be Safe.

Taiwan is a safe country, but just like any other location, caution is encouraged. Theft can be a problem, but usually only occurs when belongings are left unattended. Keep in mind that Taiwanese people generally err on the side of caution. They will expect you to be equally (if not more) cautious, especially because your sponsor is paying for your insurance.

Since riding a moped is unsafe, you are required not to ride a moped or motorcycle during your stay in Taiwan.

*The guiding principle is
to show deference
to the people
you are serving.*

Be Healthy.

It won't take long for you to discover that Taiwanese people worry about whether or not you're eating enough (or eating right), whether or not you're wearing enough, whether or not you're sleeping enough, whether or not you're exercising enough... If at all possible, do not give them occasion to worry. If you cannot adjust to the food at school, make sure to bring your own lunch to prove that you are not merely trying to skip meals.

Be Resourceful.

Waste is one of the cardinal sins in Taiwan. Please take extra pains to sort your trash, so that recyclables can be collected. Likewise, remember to turn off all lights /AC units, heaters, computers, etc. when leaving.

Be Considerate.

In the Taiwanese social system, people tend to cater to those in authority over them. Make every effort to honor the wishes and plans of your supervisors. Think twice before you ask your Taiwanese authorities for a favor—make sure to keep your request clear and simple, so they only need to take care of it once. Be gracious and grateful when asking any Taiwanese for a favor—graciousness goes a long way.

What to Expect

➤ **Teaching Situation**

We have many locations, but two basic teaching situations. Some teams will teach students in a typical school classroom setting, while others will be teaching in a day camp style atmosphere.

➤ **Income**

Teachers will receive a stipend of approximately \$800 USD per month.

➤ **Housing Situation**

Your sponsor has provided housing for your team in each respective county. Your living quarters should already include a washing machine, refrigerator, microwave, toaster oven, air conditioning units, furniture, etc.

Your schools may provide lunch for you during the week. Your team will decide how to arrange breakfast and dinner times. Evenings are ideal for going out to dinner with teachers, students, friends and families.

➤ **Daily Life**

When not teaching, planning lessons, attending team meetings/Bible studies, or having Chinese class, you will have free time for grocery shopping, cleaning, and meeting with Taiwanese friends, etc. Occasionally, your sponsor will set up teaching activities or cultural outings for your team. Sometimes, you may be given little advance notice of these activities and may be expected to be available to go. As with many things in Taiwan – flexibility is vital!

Frequently Asked Questions

What will the weather be like in Taiwan?

March–October: High temperature and humidity, massive rainfall, and tropical cyclones.

November–February: Expect cooler weather with high humidity. The temperature may occasionally dip below 40° Fahrenheit. Teachers should bring warm clothing, as the wet Taiwan wind can be strong and cold in the winter, and the buildings generally do not use heaters.

Do I need to have any medical shots?

Shots are not required for travel to Taiwan. However, a current (within the past five years) tetanus vaccination and Hepatitis A and B vaccinations are wise.

Is the water safe?

While you can brush your teeth and cook with tap water, drinking it isn't advised. It is better to get water from purified water machines, which should be available at each school, or purchase it from a convenience store.

Do I need to set up a bank account?

Many of our teams set up local bank accounts upon arrival. However, volunteers under the age of 20 may have difficulty opening an account.

How much money should I bring?

Bring \$350-500 USD to tide you over until you receive your first stipend, possibly 1-2 months. (Make sure that your dollar bills are newer and "crisp," as older bills are harder to exchange in Taiwan.) Travelers Checks and money cards are not a good idea.

What types of communication do I have access to?

Keeping in touch with friends and family is quite easy. Cell phones can be purchased for a decent price in Taiwan. You should be able to purchase reasonable phone cards at any local convenience store so you can make international phone calls from your cell phone. Skype, Facebook, Google hangouts, and other computer programs/phone apps are also very affordable ways to keep in touch; if you use them computer to computer, they're free! Your dorm and/or office will be equipped with internet access, so you will be able to write home.

Will I be allowed to share the Gospel at school?

While you are not permitted to share the Gospel at school, we encourage you to live out your faith and actively build relationships with teachers and students, so that they will ask for a reason for the hope within you. In those one-on-one situations, it would be appropriate to give a Chinese tract or Bible.

Sharing about the Gospel through American culture (i.e. Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving, Family life, etc.) is an acceptable way to begin conversations with your students. Be bold, and look for opportunities to link God into conversations and topics.

It may also be wise to read up on Buddhism from a Christian perspective, in order to

understand the mindset of many Taiwanese.

Will I receive Chinese Lessons?

Chinese classes and/or language exchange will be set up once you arrive in Taiwan. It would be wise to begin learning the language now, so that you can at least familiarize yourself with Mandarin. The Taiwanese people always appreciate foreigners who make the attempt to speak their native tongue!

May I host overseas guests?

Please check with your Team Leader before scheduling an overseas guest, so that he/she can get approval with both your sponsor as well as IBLP Taiwan. A few things to keep in mind: Please provide your leader with the names of the guests, dates of stay, arrival/departure times, and flight numbers.

If you need to spend the night in Taipei or arrange airport runs, please give IBLP Taiwan as much notice as possible. If IBLP housing is not available, you will need to cover your own lodging.

Please be prepared to cover any food, lodging, or event expenses incurred during their stay. All guests should be prepared to honor sponsor/housing guidelines and come with a ministry mindset.

Packing List

You can find almost everything you'll need in Taiwan. The following list was compiled by VOICE Missions veterans to help you pack for the coming school year:

Suggested Items:

- Clothing and a coat for cold weather (Although Taiwan is tropical, it gets fairly cold in the winter and your dorms and schools will probably not be heated. The constant wet cold in winter will probably chill you to the bone! Coats are easily purchasable in Taiwan, if you're saving on packing space.)
- Underwear. (Guys and Girls) While underwear is very easy to purchase it may be difficult to find brands that are comfortable.
- 100% cotton T-shirts, for those who prefer them (They're harder to find in Taiwan)
- Deodorant (only a few brands can be found in Taiwan)
- (Girls) Make-up that you are familiar with (Although it is readily available in Taiwan, it can be expensive)
- Small gifts for your students, teachers, and other friends (such as pictures, postcards, and souvenirs from America, etc.).
- Candy is also a fun gift, and it's hard to find Smarties, Reese's PB cups, Airheads, and Starburst in Taiwan.
- Personal medicine, vitamins, pain killers. (Benadryl, Tylenol, Ibuprofen, Pepto-Bismol are challenging to find in Taiwan). Herbal supplements can also aid in staying healthy!
- Peppermint tea can be a little challenging to find here.
- Favorite recipes and some seasoning packets (Ranch dressing, gravy mix, etc.)
- If you wear a woman's size 8 shoe or larger, or men's size 10 or larger, then you will have a much harder time purchasing shoes in Taiwan, although it's not altogether impossible.
- Pictures of your home, family & friends (these can also be printed off at local photo shops in Taiwan)
- You will NOT need a voltage converter, since Taiwan uses 110v just like America. Most plug-ins are 2 prong, but 3-to-2 prong adaptors are very cheap and readily available. You may even find several sitting around your team station!

Additional Ways to Prepare:

- Begin learning Mandarin Chinese! You can start building a foundation by learning Hanyu Pinyin and Zhuyin (Bopomofo). Don't get frustrated if it's not making sense – it will come together!
- “Chinese with Mike” on Youtube is helpful for beginners
- A great Chinese dictionary app is Pleco.

- Check out some travel books or sites; Lonely Planet (lonelyplanet.com) has quality resources. These will help to give you a better understanding of the country, culture, people, and religions that you'll be working among. Travel guides also have great ideas of places to visit!

Authority Structure

All of the VOICE Missions Teams fall under the jurisdiction of IBLP Taiwan. A general overview of the organizational authority structure as follows:

Operational Authority Structure:

Director: *Stephen Chen*

Team Coordinators: *Matthew & Cami Fedoriw*

Team Leader: *Local County Team Leader*

Team: *Individual Teachers*

Authority Synopsis:

For living conditions and local needs, consult your team leader, who will consult with your sponsor.

For work or ministry-related needs (schools, camps, flights, vacations, challenges with sponsors, focus/direction, guidelines, etc.), consult with your team leader, who will consult with VOICE Missions Leadership

Contact Information

Director

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Leadership Team/VOICE Missions Coordinators

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*Please note that when dialing a Taiwan phone number from within Taiwan, omit the country code (886), and then add "0" (e.g., Stephen Chen: 09-3312-0001)

Standard Procedures

- **I want to travel on the main island of Taiwan or fly to Kinmen.**
 - Inform your team leader. (Make sure to tell them where you will be, and what time you plan to leave and return.)
- **I want to travel internationally, or to an outlying island besides Kinmen.**
 - Inform your team leader about your plans.
 - Complete the VOICE Missions international travel form – www.voicemissions.org/forms/internationaltravel.php
- **My family wants to visit.**
 - Inform your team leader (If they plan on staying at your team station, you must get your team leader's permission!)
 - Inform Alice Kuo.
- **I want information about my return ticket.**
 - Contact Matthew
- **I want to take time off.**
 - Ask permission from your team leader first.
 - Follow the procedures outlined by your sponsor or school.
- **I want to ask for an exception from a VOICE Missions rule.**
 - Discuss it with your team leader.
 - AFTER you have discussed it with your team leader, contact Dr. Chen. An exception to a rule is granted in special situations as we try to discern God's will together.
- **I want to stay overnight at the IBLP office.**
 - Email Alice two weeks before your planned arrival to make sure that there is space. (Make sure to CC Dr. Chen and Boba.)

Team Leaders	Teammates
Uphold VOICE Mission’s Guidelines (SOP Manual)	Be submissive to your authorities (Team leaders, VOICE Missions, government, co-teachers)
Intervene when the team members’ choices affect the team or your responsibilities.	Respect team leaders and teammates, but have the courage to confront team members if necessary.
Ensure that requests and expectations of authorities are met.	Be responsible to use free time wisely.
Middle man between sponsors, government, teams.	Be considerate of your environment.
Have a servant’s spirit.	Have a servant’s spirit.
Responsible in emergency situations.	Take care of your own health.
Keep authorities updated. (VOICE Missions and sponsor)	Inform team leaders of your plans.
Coordinate team activities.	Participate in all team activities.

Taiwan VOICE Missions Commitment 2016 - 2017

The Taiwan VOICE Missions Program is an extremely unique opportunity to represent Christ under the watchful eye of many different organizations. Because there is so much riding on this life-changing experience, it is required of you to live and act responsibly on a daily basis. Please take the time to read the following commitments carefully.

1. **Be Courteous**

- I will respect the property, privacy, and rights of others, and will be resourceful with everything that is entrusted to me.
- I will keep myself, my belongings, and my room neat and orderly.
- I will show respect to my teammates and the Taiwanese people.
- I will not engage in offensive language or behavior.
- I will actively work to resolve conflicts on my team.
- I will build-up and encourage my team-mates, and will respect their privacy by not gossiping or spreading unkind rumors about them.

2. **Be Professional**

- I will dress suitably for each occasion and will follow the guidelines set forth in the Taiwan SOP Manual.
- I will act professionally in my all my classes by, preparing well, arriving on time, and proactively working with my co-teachers and students.

3. **Be Focused**

- I will avoid any entertainment that distracts me from serving the Lord and others.
- I will use my free time wisely.
- I will find a local church and attend whenever possible.
- I will not seek or pursue a romantic relationship while serving as a Taiwan VOICE Missions Teacher.
- I will purpose to invest in the people around me, whether they are teammates, Taiwanese teachers, students, or those in my community.
- I will not receive monetary reimbursement apart from my stipend.

4. **Be Safe and Healthy**

- I will wear a helmet while riding a bicycle.
- I will be a wise steward of the body that God has given me and use caution in everyday activities and travel.

- I will refrain from partaking of alcoholic substances and from smoking.

I have read and agree to abide by all of the above commitments. I will follow the established guidelines, and will submit to the authority of VOICE Missions, my sponsoring organization, the Taiwanese government, and my team leader. I also understand that God is not limited by these guidelines and that appropriate appeals are encouraged in specific situations. I understand that I will be warned if I do not abide by the conditions of this commitment and that if I continue, I may be required to leave without compensation and reimburse my sponsor for the original cost of my plane ticket.

Name: _____

Date: _____