

Pre-Trip Session 1: Connect



Purpose of this Session

This is where you start with your mission trip preparations! This session includes an Icebreaker to get your team working together, then you will connect your team to ASP and our mission through a Trivia Challenge. Invite your team to learn about our Guiding Principles which are the foundation of our mission and vision for our ministry. Then as a team, explore our theme, Be the Light through a discussion on scripture and light. Each session ends with some time to share important information with your team members and close in prayer.



Denotes the Power Point slides that coincide with each section

What You'll Need for this Session

- Copy of this document for each leader
- The Power Point for this session
- Projection
- Copy of the handout page for each participant

This session is planned for 60-90 minutes but could run longer for a larger group.

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Welcome, Introductions and Opening Prayer

5 minutes

Get creative with your team and build some good energy and excitement for the team by sharing information about your group. How many members? Who has served before? Who is new to this experience? Do some research before this session to share a few fun facts about the Group Leaders and their favorite music, snack or verse from scripture.



Prayer:

God of light, thank you for bringing us together in common purpose to prepare for our time of service with ASP.

Please give us open ears as we learn about our siblings in Appalachia. Give us open hearts as we prepare to serve and be served, to love and be loved. Give us open hands, ready to take up whatever work is set before us. Shine through us in your love. Make us light of your goodness and grace. Amen.



Ice Breaker: Three In Our ASP Crowd

5-10 minutes

Have the large group split off into smaller groups of three and find three things in common (besides the obvious gender, color of clothing worn, school attended or hair/eye color) such as: favorite holiday, season of the year, hobby, phone app, movie, etc. One person then introduces the group and shares the three things they have in common. Depending on your group, you can make it a bit silly by asking the person who does the intro to use a voice like a talk-show host/sports commentator or famous musician. Bonus points for using a cool voice! Set a timer for 3 minutes for people to find their 3 and plan an intro. Allow each intro to be 1 minute. Adapt this to the size of your group.



Trivia Challenge to Learn About ASP and Appalachia

10 minutes

Test your knowledge with this timed trivia challenge. Read these questions to your group and give 15 seconds to answer. The Correct answer is highlighted.

Share the answers below with your group. Use this trivia challenge as a fun way to learn more about Appalachia.

(continued)



1. According to the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), how many states are considered part of Appalachia? (5 states | 7 | 10 | **13** | 15)

The 13 states from southern New York to northern Mississippi are considered part of Appalachia.

2. This summer, ASP will serve families in how many Appalachian states? (1 state | 3 | **5** | 7 | 10)

5 states (Kentucky, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia & West Virginia)

3. Why do ASP vehicles have names? (it's a tradition | it's funny | all ASP vehicles look alike | **all of the above**)

All of the above. The first vehicle donated to ASP, a station wagon nicknamed "Pinky" for its fading red paint, started the tradition. We've kept it up since then, plus it's more fun than saying "white van #3."

4. How many volunteers will serve with ASP during the Summer of 2025? (500 vols | 1,000 | 5,000 | **8,000** | 10,000 | 12,000)

This answer is still evolving! 8,000- 10,000 are expected this summer, as of February 2025, 8,300 have registered!

5. Who founded ASP? (Melisa Winburn | Mrs. Mary Ellen Evans | **Rev. Glenn "Tex" Evans** | Rev. Walter Crouch.)

ASP was founded by Rev. Glenn "Tex" Evans, a United Methodist minister. During Tex's 13 years serving Henderson Settlement in Frakes, Kentucky, he witnessed the great need for home repair assistance for Appalachian people. As part of his already-thriving outreach, he recruited 50 teen and adult volunteers to repair homes in Barbourville, Kentucky in the summer of 1969 and ASP was born.

6. What year was ASP founded? (1954 | **1969** | 1982 | 1995 | 2013)

1969 – were you paying attention to the last question?



7. Which subregion of Appalachia has the lowest median household income? (North | North Central | **Central** | South Central | Southern)

In Central Appalachia, the median household income is \$34,628 which is 38 percent less than the national figure. (From an Appalachia Regional Commission paper 2021.)

Bonus questions! What did ASP's founder like to say about ASP & how we interact with people, which has become one of our Guiding Principles?

"We accept people right where they are, just the way they are."

How did ASP's founder describe ASP?

"ASP is a relationship ministry with a little construction on the side." Servant Leadership exercise (from 1990 EG on New Ways to Serve.)

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Guiding Principles Discussion

20-25 minutes

Group leader instructions: Divide your group into small groups of 5-7 people, share this discussion guide with them (pages 4-5.) Ask small groups to read each Guiding Principle and take a few minutes to discuss the questions attached to each principle. Be aware that if you want to get through all seven, you can only spend a few minutes on each. You may also assign 1 or 2 Guiding Principles to each small group, give them 10 minutes to talk together and then come back and share with the entire group.

We believe that each person is a child of God imbued with dignity and worth.

- Genesis 1:27a – So God created mankind in his own image, / In the image of God he created them[.]
- John 3:16 – For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.
- Discussion question: How is the work you will be doing this summer building up the dignity and worth of those around you?

We accept people right where they are and just the way they are.

- Romans 15:5-7 – May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Jesus Christ had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.
- Discussion question: How does accepting those around you bring praise to God? Do you think that holding in mind the intention to give glory and honor to God might make it easier to accept someone you'd otherwise have a hard time accepting?

We believe that all people should be able to live in affordable, safe, sanitary housing.

- Isaiah 65:21-22 – They will build houses and dwell in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant seeds and others eat. For as the days of a tree, so will be the days of my people; my chosen ones will enjoy the work of their hands.
- Discussion question: In this passage, it's clear that part of God's intention to bless God's people is the safety and stability of a home. What can you do to help provide or push for the blessing of a home for those without?

We are committed to witness through the good quality of our work and careful stewardship of our resources.

- Colossians 3:23 – Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters[.]
- Discussion question: Have you ever considered good stewardship as "witnessing- or sharing your faith" before? Does taking that into account change how you feel about your stewardship and the quality of your work?

We believe God calls people to serve others as volunteer partners in ministry, and we will encourage their growth in faith as they answer this call.

- 1 Peter 4:10 – Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.
- Discussion question: As you will be volunteer partner in ASP's ministry this summer, how will you use your gifts? Have you discovered any new talents or passions?



Where ASP is involved in local communities, we will encourage, affirm, and support the fair and just treatment of people.

- Isaiah 1:17 – Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow.
- Discussion Question: Who do you see in your home communities that need encouragement, affirmation, and support? What can you do to contribute to their fair and just treatment? How will you do this in a new community where you serve this summer?

We believe in ministering in the spirit of love, acceptance, and hopefulness.

- Romans 12:10-13 – Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.
- Discussion Question: What can you do to prepare for your summer service trip, so that you can practice hospitality with others? How will you prepare to be joyful, patient, and faithful with all people you meet this summer?

22-25

10 minutes

Connect to Our Theme Devotion

As you are likely well aware by now, ASP's theme for 2025 is "Be the Light." This phrase is not a random selection, but rather a carefully curated decision based on prayer and study and discussion. Now we invite you to spend some time with this phrase as well.

Split into small groups and take about 10 minutes to read the following Scripture passages and discuss the adjoining questions. Finish by making a list of all the ways your team will Be the Light this summer as you serve and keep this with you as a reminder!

Matthew 5:14-16

- What can you do cultivate your light and "let it shine before others?" Are there any "lampstands" God has placed in your life that are just waiting for you to set your light there?

Psalms 119:105

- Can you think of a time when God's Word has acted as a guiding light in your life? What happened?

Ephesians 5:8-10, 13-14

- What do you think it means to live as a child of light? What can we do to cultivate the fruit of goodness, righteousness, and truth?

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Wrap Up and Sending Prayer



As you wrap up, share with your group the 3 things they need to know before your next meeting. You can customize this for your group!

These 3 things might be information about your group's fundraising, deadlines for forms and payments, dates for your next meeting, whatever the most important 3 things are for YOUR group to know.

Sending Prayer: Franciscan Blessing

May God bless you with discomfort at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships so that you may live deep within your heart.

May God bless you with anger at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people, so that you may wish for justice, freedom and peace.

May God bless you with enough foolishness to believe that you can make a difference in this world, so that you can do what others claim cannot be done.

Amen.



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