



STRAIGHT STREET
INTERNATIONAL

Team Training Package

Drew Stockton

Hey team, as you are getting very close to serving with us in Nicaragua please know that we have been praying for you in the days leading up to your trip. We have put together a training package for each member of your team to help you to prepare yourself mentally, spiritually, and practically and most of all to fall more in love with Jesus. The package is designed to be implemented the 4 weeks leading up to your trip, if you do not already have a training protocol in place. We encourage you to work through each week individually and then come together as a group to discuss your answers and pray together.

Each week there will be 3 nights of homework that will last as long as you want it to. Remember you will get out of it whatever you put into it. The homework is designed to be devotionally done and is encouraging you to think about each question in the context of you coming to serve in Nicaragua. It doesn't matter to us if you write your answers down as long as you're engaging the questions in your heart and with the Holy Spirit.

The beauty of this is in my experience with hundreds of short term missionaries is that most do not have a consistent and specific weekly devotional life with Jesus. So, this gives you a specific study about preparing yourself for a specific purpose. That purpose is carrying out the Great Commission that Jesus called you to through the help of the Holy Spirit. Also, this unites your whole team because each one of you are working through this together for a common goal.

I encourage you as a group to meet for at least 1 hour in response to the questions weekly, praying together, and answering any practical questions about the trip such as the ones found in the Straight Street International Information Packet. Before leaving for the trip we ask each of you to sign the Straight Street International Commitment Form so that we are united in likeness and purpose for the week that you are going to serve with us. We believe that God is a God of order and so we are committing to you to provide you the best missions experience possible and we ask you to be committed to seeing God do some amazing things through your life. That is a spiritual decision that you make and our prayer is that together we will do some great things for the Kingdom of God in Nicaragua.

Lastly, I am including two documents at the end regarding Jehovah's Witness belief and the History and Theology of Catholicism. JW's are very active in Nicaragua and most likely at some point during the week you will run into their theology. We also serve in a Catholic Culture but most Nicaraguans do not know much about Catholicism nor have a relationship with Jesus.

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Week 1 is about working through your testimony and beginning to learn and memorize scripture that you will need for your week of serving in Nicaragua. Many people are afraid to share their testimony because they are nervous or don't think that their story is that good. Regardless of the details of your story, if you have been born again through the power of Jesus then you are a sinner that he set free from death, hell, and the grave. So, your testimony is very powerful because you are proclaiming the Gospel through your life and also no one can argue against your story. Work through your story and then discuss your story with the group, your family, or maybe a Sunday School Class.

Afterwards, are specific scriptures that we are asking you to learn, not necessarily memorize in a short amount of time, but be able to restate the concept/ truth that is being taught through your own words.

Testimony Training

- 1) **Introduction**- who you are/ what you do/ where you go to school/ etc...
- 2) **The way your life was before you met Christ** -Share about your life experiences and what you felt like inside (Sin, emptiness, brokenness, deceived) before you had a personal relationship with the Lord. Do not beat around the bush but also don't emphasize how bad you used to be.
- 3) **Describe your salvation experience** (How you got saved/what happened to you through that process/ how you felt) Where was your need? What led you to this decision?
- 4) **How your life has been different since salvation**, what has been the impact on your life? (Life Change, Joy, Relationship, peace, freedom from fear, etc.) How have you grown, gotten involved in church, loved people?
- 5) **Challenge to those in audience** (scripture, how others can accept Christ) Do not give the impression that the Christian life is a "bed of roses."

Do's

- Make sure you emphasize the name of Jesus Christ- without him you are telling a pretty boring story.
- Make sure you right-size your sin. Make sin as ugly as God see's it!
Use at least one, at the most two, Scripture verses in the challenge
- Give enough details to provoke interest, but still keep it short, simple and to the point. 3-5 minutes at the most. Also remember when it's translated that it is double that.
- Relive your story and present it from the **heart with the power of the Holy Spirit** (Ephesians 5:18).
- **Smile** often! Ask the Lord to give you a happy, radiant face.

Don't's

- Be careful using churchy words such as "saved," "convicted," "converted," "born again," and "sin." These words confuse many non-Christians.
- Don't use proper names (Use Generic Words)
- Don't speak critically or negatively about any individual or group.

Week 1**Day 1****Immediate, Direct Response Scripture**

Romans 3:23 "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"

Ephesians 2:8 "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith, and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God, not by works, so that no one may boast."

Romans 5:8 "But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

*Consider a translation (NIV, ESV, NASB) that you can most easily memorize.

Supporting, Concepts-to-Know Scripture

*These scriptures should be well-known, but not necessarily memorized word-for-word. Put each verse into a simpler version, in your own words. What is the spiritual concept?

Romans 6:23 "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Romans 10:9-10, 13 "If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved...
"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

John 14:6 "Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

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.”

Hebrews 9.27 “Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment...”

2 Corinthians 6.2 “For he says, In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you. “I tell you, now is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation.”

John 1.12-13 “Yet to all who did receive him [Jesus], to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.”

John 17.3 “Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.”

Isaiah 64.6 “All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags...”

Romans 8.1 “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

John 10.29 “My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand.”

Matthew 7.21-23 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and, in your name, perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’”

Day 2

1. Read 1 Samuel 17. Remember David is a “boy” approximately 12-15 years old. What prepared David for a fight with the giant (9’6” tall)? Read vs. 34-37.
2. How has God prepared you for this trip? What specific milestones/event/ moments has God used to prepare you for the giant you are about to face? Reflect back over your life and be very specific- more than likely there will be actual events that were spiritual in nature.
3. Read Matthew 20:29-34. Now reread v. 32. Do you think it’s odd that God himself did not know what these men wanted? Remember anytime that God asks a question it is not for his benefit but for ours. Look at their response in v. 33. It was very specific and direct. It was not generic or dull. It was not a shotgun blast but a rifle shot. What if Jesus Christ himself were to ask you that same question in regards to the prep for this trip and the week down there. How would you answer the question “what do you want for me to do for you in Nicaragua? Be very specific

Day 3

1. Read Joshua 6. Now look at Joshua 6:2 and see the importance of God speaking to Joshua and saying “I have given” the city into your hands. The phrase “I have given” is the Hebrew word “Nathan” and is in the perfect tense which means it is “a completed action in the past that has effects in the future.” God has already spoken that you have won and you haven’t even marched yet. The battle has already been won before the battle has been fought. How does this verse affect your own personal life and walk with Christ right now?
2. In what ways do you need to proclaim this promise for this trip? Overcoming fears, overcoming sin, overcoming temptation, overcoming lack of commitment and devotion, etc... What is your personal Jericho?
3. In what way do we need to pray for the things in regard for preparing for this trip and the ministry that we are going to do in Nicaragua? Possibly praise God for what he’s going to do. What are the things you are going to praise him for doing even though you haven’t left yet?
4. Read John 15:7. “If” is a conditional word and means in this context that if you follow your end of the bargain Jesus will follow his. What “words” is He talking about? What is Christ talking about here in regards to receiving from the Lord. Think big picture in regards to this trip but overall the mission of God.

Week 2

This week we have 3 more nights of homework and we begin to look at a large portion of the excuses that many people within a “Catholic Culture” give regarding their salvation and their understanding of God. They typically fall within 3 categories. Consider how some of the scripture that you learned in the first week can be used to combat the excuses of the enemy to keep people in darkness.

3 Categories of Excuses:

1. Good Works/Prideful Excuses

- I was baptized as an infant
- I am a good person
- I go to church
- I tithe/give money to the church
- I used to go to church
- I am a school teacher
- I’m not very bad

*These are excuses that need to be responded with the truths of Romans 3.23 & Ephesians 2.9; namely, that it is not our works that save us, but the grace of God in Christ Jesus.

2. Bad Works/Honest Excuses

- I am not good enough
- I am too great of a sinner

*These are excuses that are only half-truths, which have been distorted by the enemy. The response, therefore, is good news! Romans 5.8 really highlights this, saying that Christ died for us while we were still sinners! We had only done wrong things when He came for us. Rejoice with them, and use stories from scripture to confirm this good news (think of David, the thief on the cross beside Jesus, Paul, your own, etc).

3. Other Excuses

- I don’t know
- I don’t believe in God
- Not now/plenty of time
- Christians are hypocrites
- Everyone is going to heaven/I’m a child of God/I’m a Christian

*These excuses are strange and out there, and can be fueled by many different things. *For the latter response, what must be emphasized is personal decision—have they themselves chosen to follow Christ (this is also a good tactic for responding to “Christians are hypocrites”; see also the story in Matthew 7.21-23)? Yes, we are all created by God, but the Bible says (John 1.9-13) that the only way to become a child of God is to place our faith, our trust in Jesus.

**Remember this: The best response is a response that has prayed for the discernment and wisdom of God prior to responding.*

Day 1 (This is an excerpt from John Piper's *Let the Nations be Glad*)

“Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn't. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever.

Worship, therefore, is the fuel and goal of missions. It's the goal of missions because in missions we simply aim to bring the nations into the white-hot enjoyment of God's glory. The goal of missions is the gladness of the peoples in the greatness of God. “The Lord reigns, let the earth rejoice; let the many coastlands be glad!” (Ps. 97:1). “Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you! Let the nations be glad and sing for joy!” (Ps. 67:3-4).

But worship is also the fuel for missions. Passion for God in worship precedes the offer of God in preaching. You can't commend what you don't cherish. Missionaries will never call out, “Let the nations be glad!” who cannot say from the heart, “I rejoice in the Lord... I will be glad and exult; I will sing praise to your name, O Most High God” (Ps. 104:34). Missions begin and end in worship.

If the pursuit of God's glory is not ordered above the pursuit of man's good in the affections of the heart and the priorities of the church, man will not be well served, and God will not be duly honored. I am not pleading for a diminishing of missions but for a magnifying of God. When the flame of worship burns with the heat of God's true worth, the light of missions will shine to the darkest peoples on the earth. And I long for that day to come!

Where passion for God is weak, zeal for missions will be weak. Churches that are not centered on the exaltation of the majesty and beauty of God will scarcely kindle a fervent desire to “declare his glory among the nations” (Ps. 96:3). Even outsiders feel the disparity between the boldness of our claim upon the nations and the blandness of our engagement with God.

Spend some time in reflection and meditation before writing your answers out.

1. Why do we do missions? What is the goal of missions?
2. What fuels our desire to do missions?
3. Why are you going on this trip?

Day 2

1. Spend some quality time meditating over these fears of which others have felt on trips and consider how you might feel the same.
2. Read several verses and journal what God speaks to you through his word about fears that we're already encountering or will encounter in Nicaragua.

Fears

- 
- Spiritual Attack
 - Failure
 - Not knowing what to say
 - Making a mistake/ messing up
 - Not quoting a verse right
 - Flying
 - Unknown
 - Not honoring God
 - Getting lost
 - God's presence
 - Being used by God
 - Rejection
 - Standing in front of people
 - Teaching God's word
 - Losing luggage
 - Putting toilet paper in trashcan
 - Not understanding the language
 - Not being good enough
 - Your testimony not being powerful enough
 - Of sin in your life
 - Not being in control
 - Not having a good, fun time
 - The people
 - Spiritual letdown
 - Others not sharing your enthusiasm when you return
 - God not providing
 - God's power
 - Heat
 - Missing out on God's plan/timing

What God says about Fear

- Joshua 1:3-9
- Psalm 27:1
- Isaiah 41:10
- Isaiah 41:13
- Matthew 10:28
- Romans 8:15
- 1 Peter 3:13-14
- 1 John 4:18
- 1 Corinthians 16:13
- Philippians 1:12-14
- 2 Timothy 1:7
- Hebrews 13:5-6

Day 3

1. What do you truly believe about prayer?
2. Read Mark 9:14-29.
 - A) What does verse 24 mean to you in regards to prayer? And praying for this trip?
 - B) What does verse 29 mean to you in regards to this trip and the work you will be doing?
3. “Prayer is not preparation for the work of the ministry; prayer is the work of the ministry.” What do you think this means and why is it important for you in regards to this trip?
4. Is it possible that more people might be saved or more lives changed if we would pray more and ask God for more souls and more opportunities? (This should be a good discussion)



Week 3

This week I am including a sample way to share your faith. Each house and person that you meet will be completely different but we wanted to share with you a way that you can share your faith. We also encourage to check out the video on the evangelism page on our website to see a group of people sharing their faith live in Nicaragua. Remember, you will be with a group from your team, a Straight Street International translator, and a member from the local church. You will have over an hour at each home. In most cases you will spend several minutes in the beginning introducing yourselves, asking questions about their home, animals, and life. You are trying to build relationship with them in a short amount of time. Remember they are just as curious about you as they are you. Be yourself and let the love of Christ shine through you!

How to share faith

1. First, you want to ask if everyone is present.
2. Say, “I have come all the way from the United States to share some good news with you, (or share the love of Jesus Christ) do you have a moment?”
3. Secondly ask, “If you were to die today and you stood before God and he said “why should I let you into my kingdom?” what would you say?”
4. At this point they are either going to reveal to you that they are Christians- true believers or they are not believers with some of the excuses they give you. Do not accept “I am a Christian” or any of the other excuses. If they say “Because I believe in Jesus, he is my savior, I asked him into my life”- more than likely they know Jesus as Lord. If you believe they are Christians you want to ask them, “Can you remember asking Christ to come into your life?” If they are Christians ask if there is something you can pray about for them and thank them for giving you the opportunity.
5. If they give you an excuse you will want to say back to their excuse, “well the bible says...”. Such as “I go to church.” Well the bible says that church attendance does not guarantee us a place in heaven. The bible says in Ephesians 2:8-9 that “For it is by grace through faith that you have been saved, it is a free gift of God, not a result of works so that no man can boast.” At this point you have refuted their claim and also given them scriptural truth.
6. You may want to add something to your testimony at this point. Anything you feel led to say.
7. Then step through the Romans Road- say “the Bible says in Romans 3:23 “that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.” You can teach a bit here of what that means.” Our righteousness is as filthy rags, we are sinners separated from God. Sin is anything that dishonors God, lying, cheating, gossiping, etc....”
8. “Because of our sin the bible says in Romans 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death.” Now explain what that means. “What sin pays us is eternal death separated from God in a place called hell. The bible says it’s a bad place and it is for eternity. Do you know how

long eternity is? Yes it's a long time. But God does want that for your life. The rest of that verse says "But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

9. Talk about Jesus death, burial, and resurrection- what he accomplished on the cross. "God sent his son to die on the cross so that he could take my sin upon Him and my wrath upon Him, so that I would not have to." Look to one of their children and say, "I'm sure you love your children very much and you would not let them die for a bad person, but that is what God done for you. He let his son die so that you a sinner could live."
10. The bible says in Romans 10:9-10 that if you believe in your heart that Jesus is Lord and confess with your mouth that God raised him from the dead you shall be saved." The bible also goes on to say "For whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." That's a promise God has given to you."
11. Say "I would like to lead you in a prayer today so that you can have the assurance that Jesus Christ is Lord. There is nothing magical about this prayer, it is not a magic formula, but it is only you telling God what you want him to do for you. You must believe it with all of your heart.
12. "Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner.
And I cannot save myself.
I ask you to come into my life and save me.
Make me a new creature. Help me to live for you the rest of my life.
Lord Jesus Thank You for saving me.
In Your Name Amen."
13. Say, "The bible says that if you meant that with all of your heart that God has saved you and you are a child of God. It also says that a big party is going on in heaven right now because of the decision you made, just for you. I may not ever see you again on this earth but if you meant it with your whole heart I will see you again in heaven."
14. At this time the local church member will take the person(s) name, address so they can plug them into the local church. Then you will ask them if God could perform any miracle in your life what would it be. Take time to sincerely pray for that. Leave them with "God wants you to do three things, he wants you to get involved in a local church where they disciple you. He wants you to get baptized, and also wants you to tell people about your decision you made.

Day 1

Have you ever wondered what it feels like to have a love for the lost? This is a term we use as part of our Christian jargon. Many believers search their hearts in condemnation, looking for the arrival of some feeling of benevolence that will propel them into bold evangelism. It will never happen. It is impossible to feel for the “the lost.” You can’t feel deeply for an abstraction or concept. You would find it impossible to love deeply an unfamiliar individual portrayed in a photograph, let alone a nation or a race or something as vague as “all lost people.”

Don’t wait for a feeling of love in order to share Christ with a stranger. You already love your heavenly father, and you know that this stranger is created by Him, but separated from Him, so take those first steps in evangelism because you love God. It is not primarily out of a compassion for humanity that we share our faith or pray for the lost; it is first of all, love for God. The bible says in Ephesians 6:7-8 “with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.”

Humanity does not deserve the love of God any more than you or I do. We should never be Christian humanists, taking Jesus to poor sinful people, reducing Jesus to some kind of product that will better their lot. People deserve to be damned, but Jesus, the suffering Lamb of God, deserves the reward of His suffering.

1. Have you ever heard say “you must love the lost?” What does this paragraph say above about the reasons to do missions?
2. What do you think about the idea of Jesus being a product we export for consumer needs?
3. Many people feel sorry for “poor” people, why do you think that is? By what standard do you/they judge that they are poor?

Do you think your American materialist mentality has clouded your judgment on what it means to be poor? Do you think that we believe others are poor because they do not live the same middle class American lifestyle that we do who have the highest rates of divorce, substance abuse, mental disorders, and sexual addiction in the world? Maybe being “rich” isn’t as good as we think it is. Look at what Jesus says in Matthew 5:3 “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” The word poor means the opposite of self-sufficiency or recognizing one’s spiritual bankruptcy apart from God. God’s word says that “He opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

4. What are your thoughts on that?
5. Who are truly the poor ones, financially rich people or financially poor? Is it easier for one group to truly be poor?
6. Is it possible that American prosperity which is seen as a gift from God could actually be a curse? Could it be that they are better off with substandard housing and lack of food? Why?

Day 2

In your words why did Jesus come to earth?

2. Read Luke 4:17-21. Why did Jesus say he came to earth?

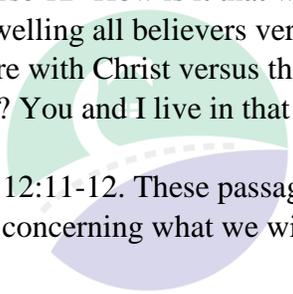
3. How close was your answer to Jesus'? Does this enlarge your role in why you have asked to join God in his work in Nicaragua? What type of work might you be involved in if that is Jesus' purpose that he wants you to accomplish for Him?

Day 3

1. Read John 16:5-16. Why is it to our advantage that Jesus went away (7)? Whose ministry does the Holy Spirit spread (14)? So, we have the same power and ministry inside of us that Jesus had while he walked the earth. What are your thoughts on that in regards to fears, overcoming spiritual warfare, and having a successful week of ministry in Nicaragua?

2. Read John 14:1-15 for context. Verse 12- How is it that we will do greater things than Jesus did? (think about the Holy Spirit indwelling all believers versus there only being one Jesus) Compare the disciples while they were with Christ versus the disciples after they received the Holy Spirit. How were they different? You and I live in that same power!

3. Read Matthew 10:16-20 and Luke 12:11-12. These passages are speaking of being persecuted but there is a great spiritual principle concerning what we will say at the moment of divine appointment. What is that truth??



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Week 4

Just a word on sharing your faith and what is necessary to truly have faith in Christ before we begin this week's homework.

Sharing your faith

Be careful using the phrase “**invite Jesus into your hearts/lives**” (not in scripture) because it is confusing to the non-religious and to the religious it signifies that salvation=saying a prayer. Prayers do not save people, trusting in Jesus Christ alone does!

For a person to be truly saved there are a few things they must have understood;

1. God is Holy
2. Man is sinful (man is separated from God)
3. Jesus' death on the cross allows man to have relationship with God

A person must understand that all of us are sinners against a holy God. The punishment for that sin is death and eternal separation from God. Jesus Christ satisfied the anger of God against our sin by taking the punishment we deserve and rising from the grave the third day. We should then invite the lost to trust in Christ alone. Upon trusting Christ, they are as certain of heaven as though they are already there.

Instead of asking are you ready to invite Jesus into your hearts we could ask:

- Would you like to begin a relationship with Jesus Christ?
- Would you like to trust in Jesus as your Lord and Savior?
- Would you like to receive salvation through Jesus Christ?

If they do not understand this (if you have not explained this to them) do not give them a false assurance that if they “say a prayer” they are saved. Can people be saved by saying a prayer? Yes, that is how you demonstrate saving faith through prayer (speaking to God), but salvation is by faith and not repeating after me certain words!

Day 1

12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Paul reminds us that we have spiritual authority and blessings in the unseen or *heavenly realms* (1:3). God wants people to be delivered from the power of Satan and his forces (2:1-2).

The good news is that Satan and his forces have already been defeated and disarmed (Col. 2:15). Consequently, there's no need for believers to fear their spiritual enemy. While Satan still has the

freedom to tempt and harass Christians, he has no direct authority over them. The armor of God pictures the protection Jesus gives us against demonic attack.

Spiritual warfare for believers, therefore, is fought in the mind, emotions and the will. Scriptural truth is our primary line of defense. That's why Paul frequently urges us to be renewed in our minds (Romans 12:1-2; Col. 3:1-3). The more our minds are filled with the truth of God's Word, the less susceptible we are to Satan's deceptions and temptations.

However, because Satan still rules the unbelieving world, we will, on occasion, have to confront Satan's work in people's lives (for example, Acts 13:9-12). To dislodge Satan's influence in someone's life, a supernatural encounter of God's power and truth may be required.

1. What is spiritual warfare?
2. In what ways are you likely to be attacked personally while on the trip? (Mentally, emotionally, thought life, relationally with other people, weaknesses, fears/ insecurities, unconfessed sins, things of your past, etc... and explain)
3. How will you battle attack from the enemy before we go on mission and especially while doing work in the country?

It is also possible for our team to feel attack from the enemy in two ways: 1) External- through not being able to share the gospel because of weather, missed opportunities, sickness of team members, deliberate vandalism (tires slashed), etc... 2) Internal- This comes through tension **between** team members. Prior experience proves that people's frustrations and annoyances can ruin/leave a bad taste in your mouth for the whole team even if it is only between two people. Through living very "close" to one another for 7 days, sharing bathrooms, being hot, sweaty, and tired, tempers have a tendency to flair and people lash out which often causes hurt and stress for the whole team.

4. How will you overcome your frustrations/ annoyances of someone else on the team? Or possibly a change in schedule, disappointment, not getting your way, etc...?

Day 2

1. Read John 4:1-7. Look at verse 4- Why did Jesus have to go through Samaria? God had setup a divine appointment for Jesus and this woman even though she did not know it. What is a divine appointment?
2. Read Acts 8:26-40. In verse 26 what happens to Phillip? Do you think you will experience any divine appointments in Nicaragua, where (what place or time) will they be?
3. Search scripture and find 3-4 promises in the bible and write down those scriptures and why those promises are important. Begin to pray the Word of God back to God and tell him why His Word is so important. For example, Philippians 4:13 says, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." God, your word says that I can do anything because you give me strength. God, I know this trip is going to be hard and that there will be times when I am very tired mentally, emotionally, and physically and I will want to quit or slow down. But God *you* said I can do all things, even overcome my flesh being

tired, and God I am praying this promise back to you. Thank you, God for giving me the strength to do all things you've called me to do on this trip.

Find your scripture and proclaim the promises back to God in a very personal way!

Day 3

1. Read 2 Corinthians 5:17-21. The word reconcile is a banker's term that means "to bring into agreement or harmony." It is used of banker making their ledger sheets come into agreement where their equals a zero balance. How was your life brought into a zero balance with God?
2. God has given you the ministry of reconciliation- what does that mean to you in your current employment situation? What does that mean in regards to this trip we are about to go on and for the lost of Nicaragua?
3. The word ambassador means "a diplomatic official of the highest rank, sent by one sovereign or state to another as its official voice and opinion." What does it mean for you that you are Christ's ambassador as though God was making his appeal through us? You are Christ's ministers of reconciliation.



Jehovah's Witnesses Beliefs

God

Jehovah's Witnesses believe in one God, who created the heavens and the earth.

Jesus

Jehovah's Witnesses do not believe that Jesus was both fully God and fully man. Rather, they believe that Jesus was God's first creation, and thus not equal with God. This is seen in the way they have translated several key passages about the nature of Jesus, including John 1.1-3:

In [the] beginning the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god. 2 This one was in [the] beginning with God. 3 All things came into existence through him, and apart from him not even one thing came into existence. (NWT)

Compare the ESV:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.”

They do believe Jesus came to earth in human form through the virgin birth, to teach the world about God, to model a perfect life, and to set humanity free from sin and death. They believe that God raised Jesus from the dead, but not bodily.

Holy Spirit

Jehovah's Witnesses reject the doctrine of the Trinity. Thus, they see the Holy Spirit as an active, but impersonal, “force” of God.

Bible

Jehovah's Witnesses believe that the Bible is fully inspired by God. They have their own translation, the New World Translation that translates key passages with a slant toward their own beliefs about Jesus and God (see above).

Human Nature

Jehovah Witnesses believe that the sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden is how sin, and death entered the world. However, they do not emphasize the spiritual impact of this sin (ie— that we cannot still obtain salvation through anything other than Christ), and therefore they still emphasize that humans can use their own free will to remain holy in God's eyes.

Salvation

Jehovah's Witnesses affirm Jesus' sacrifice for sin, but they add that faith in Jesus is not enough. One must prove oneself as a person of faith, by doing as many good works as possible.

Heaven/Hell

Jehovah's Witnesses do not believe in Hell, but in an annihilation of the wicked. They also believe that only 144,000 will be in Heaven, while the rest of the righteous will remain on a new earth, made like the Garden of Eden's original paradise before sin entered the world

Roman Catholic Theology

History of the Church

- 30 ad- 325 ad The Church is hunted by Rome (68)
- 325 Emperor Constantine is “saved”- Christianity is Official Religion of

World

- 440 Leo the first Pope declares church “Universal”
- 1302 Papal Infallibility is Claimed
- Dark ages (Illiteracy, superstition, oppression, and control)
- 1517 The Reformation Begins
- 1524 Catholicism reaches Central America (Granada, Nicaragua) Oldest City
- 1854 Immaculate Conception-Virgin Mary’s Conception w/out sin (Virgin birth)
- 1870 Papal Infallibility (dissenters are anathema)

Foundation of Church:

Matthew 16:18 states “I tell you, you are Peter (petros) and upon this rock (Petra) I will build my church and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against.” At this point Jesus appointed Peter as the first Bishop (Pope) of the Church and there has been papal succession since that time, even to the present. The word of the Pope is just as authoritative as the Word of God because the Head Bishop (Pope) is the “Voice of God on the Earth.” Therefore, all Catholic theology is a result of the Word and the tradition of the church (Pope’s opinion). Because at times the Pope’s words have caused tension between the truth of scripture and he is infallible their theology has “developed” over time.

Seven Sacraments of Catholicism. A sacrament is a vehicle through which the grace of God is distributed to a person. Divine life of Christ is imparted to believers. An occasion for experiencing God’s saving presence. Problem is that they become means to salvation.

1. Baptism (of Infants or whenever you join the Catholic Church) Removes sin up to that point
2. Confirmation- HS is granted but can be also leave
3. Penance- forgiveness of Post-baptismal sins (see Priest)
4. Eucharist- Transubstantiation- Freshly saved and forgiven each time
5. Marriage- only in catholic church and divorce is unforgiveable
6. Orders- For clergy only- entrusted with bringing sacraments to others
7. Last rights- Anointing physical and spiritual sickness with oil for healing

Papal Traditions:

- 1) Purgatory- Invented to explain sins after salvation, need dictated doctrine, Rome cannot admit that its wrong (infallible).
- 2) Indulgences- Selling of penance “As soon as copper makes the cup ring another soul from purgatory springs.” \$\$\$
- 3) Simony- selling of offices, \$\$\$

- 4) Relics “The castle church in Wittenburg contained over 5,000 relics, among them 35 fragments of the actual cross, milk of the virgin Mary, and a piece of the burning bush of Moses” \$\$\$
- 5) Feast Days- “tickets” are expensive \$\$\$
- 6) Veneration- Saints empowered to bless and to curse, so great that Scripture is unnecessary (Prayers are given to them but they are not worshipped) Church is alive on earth and Heaven
- 7) Magic and the Mass- (Magic and superstition)
- 8) Catholic “Universal” exclusive Church

Current (since days of reformation)- because of technology, advancements, bible in other languages, etc... Their “developing” theology has become and is becoming their downfall. Because of this “pressure tactics” are used to control the people. People are sinners and “must” do x,y,and z to go to heaven. (In America the majority of the time you spend trying to convince people they are sinners, in Latin America the majority of the time you will spend trying to convince the people that they are so lost to be saved, that there is something salvageable in them (the image of God).

Catholic theology clearly teaches salvation by faith in Christ alone but if baptism or other sacraments remove sin then you don’t necessarily need belief in Jesus Christ and you do not have to live by his standard of holiness. (The majority of Nicaraguans are very “religious” more so than here, they’ve heard the stories, will say they believe in Jesus Christ, but do not have a personal relationship with him.

Catholic scripture contains the pseudigrapha. A collection of writings that are not acknowledged by the Protestant church. Judith, Macabees, etc... A total of 73 books versus 66, all within the OT. They are open to “newer” gospels like Thomas, Mary, Judas, Peter etc... The Gospel of Thomas is what the book/movie The Da Vinci Code is based off of. These books due to their language and style were written by “false” writers assuming the name hundreds of years later than gospel writers.