PROJECT SOUTH AFRICA

Missions Trip Guidebook

2027



Dear Potential World Traveler,

Thank you for your interest in the South Africa 2027 Missions Trip. I am thrilled at the possibility of you joining us.

This guidebook is designed to answer many of the questions you may have as you prepare for the trip. If there is something we have not covered, please feel free to contact me.

South Africa is generally 6 to 7 hours ahead of Eastern Time in the United States.

Contact Information
Phone: 770-744-3234
Email: missionarycoffey@gmail.com
Facebook: mark.coffey

We pray this trip will be an unforgettable and life-changing experience. You will gain firsthand knowledge of the mission field and have the opportunity to participate in the ministry God is building in South Africa.

I encourage you to begin praying now for what the Lord will do in your life during this trip. I look forward to getting to know you during your time in South Africa.

Here to serve,
Mark Coffey
Trip Director





Trip Overview

The South Africa Missions Trip is designed to give participants firsthand exposure to missionary life, church planting, and ministry. This is much more than a sightseeing trip. It is an opportunity to serve, learn,

and grow spiritually while being a blessing to the missionaries and churches on the field.

Cost

Airfare plus $100 per night per person

Estimated Total: $2,600

(9-night / 10-day trip)

Includes:

Round-trip airfare

Lodging

Food

Transportation

Scheduled activities

Not Included:

Souvenirs

Snacks

Church offerings

Optional activities

Recommended extra spending: $200

During church services, offerings will be received. We recommend giving approximately $5 to $10 per person per service, though you are welcome



to give as the Lord leads. Most groups attend between 6 and 7 services during the trip.

Optional activities at additional cost

Walking with elephants (~$40)

Safari hunt (~$350+)

Offshore fishing (~$65)

Bungee jumping (~$90+)

Skydiving (~$150+)

If you are interested in any of these optional activities, please let us know in advance so plans can be made if possible.

Budget Breakdown

Flights & taxes: ~$1,700

Trip costs: ~$100 per night

Deposit: $200 non-refundable
Due: August 1, 2026

First Things to Do

Apply for your passport as early as possible.
Make sure your passport will not expire too soon.
Inform the trip leader immediately if you are not a U.S. citizen.
Begin raising support as soon as possible.
Check with your bank about international debit/ credit card usage and fees.
Check with your phone carrier about international service.
Parents of children under 18 should begin preparing travel consent documents early.



Passports, Visas, and Other Requirements

Apply for your passport at least six months before your trip if possible. Earlier is even better. You can usually apply at your local post office or courthouse. Be sure to bring passport photos, identification, and the required fee.

Your passport should be valid for at least 30 days after your intended departure date from South Africa and should have at least two blank pages for entry stamps. If your trip will also include Mozambique, your passport should have at least six months of validity remaining.

If you are not a U.S. citizen, please inform the trip leader as soon as possible. Visa requirements may differ depending on your nationality, and there may be additional costs or paperwork involved. We are not responsible for travelers being unable to enter a country because of unmet visa requirements.

South Africa may require additional travel documentation for children under the age of 18. If a child is traveling internationally with only one parent or with trip leaders, a notarized letter of consent may be required. It is wise to include the names of more than one group leader in the letter in case of delays or unexpected travel changes. A copy of each parent's identification should also be attached.

Each traveler should bring:

Original passport

A copy of the passport & birth certificate kept separate from the original passport

Airport Instructions Upon Arrival in South Africa

Once you arrive in South Africa, follow the crowd to immigration and customs. You will go through the foreign visitors line and receive permission to enter the country.



If your stay will be longer than 90 days, arrangements must be made before your visa period expires. We can help advise on possible visa run plans if needed.

Once your passport is stamped go immediately to baggage claim to retrieve your luggage. You must retrieve your luggage not matter what someone else tells you.

Handling Your Money

Approximate rate: $1 = 18 rand

Use debit card at ATMs- The easiest and most practical way to access money is by using a debit card at an ATM. Before your trip, contact your bank and let them know you will be traveling internationally. Ask about international fees, foreign transaction fees, and withdrawal limits for both your debit and credit cards.

Visa & MasterCard Credit cards are widely accepted

Cash is still useful for souvenir vendors, smaller shops, and church offerings.

If you do not have access to a debit card, money can be deposited into one of our American accounts, and South African currency can be provided upon arrival.

It is usually not best to bring a large amount of American cash, but if you do bring some emergency cash, make sure the bills are clean and in excellent condition.

Packing

Bring:

Checked suitcase

Carry-on bag

Personal item

Tips:



Pack essentials in carry-on in case your checked luggage is delayed.

Be prepared to assist with extra luggage- If you are willing, you may be asked to help carry an additional suitcase for one of the missionaries serving in South Africa.

Laundry Services

Laundry service is affordable and often available the same day. If you are staying in missionary homes, you may have access to a washer and dryer. Dry cleaning may also be available depending on where you stay.

You do not need to bring bedding or towels, as these will be provided.

An iron should be available during your stay. In some places, ironing services may also be available for a small fee.

Electricity and Electrical Outlets

South Africa uses 220 volt electricity. Do not plug in any device unless it is clearly marked as dual voltage.

Most phones, digital cameras, and laptop chargers are dual voltage, but always double check. Hair dryers, curling irons, and other styling tools are often not dual voltage, and many travel transformers do not work well with high wattage items.

You will need a plug adapter for South African outlets. We usually have adapters available for dual voltage items once you arrive, but you may also purchase your own before leaving.

Mobile Phone Service and Internet

Using your normal U.S. phone plan outside the country can be very expensive. We recommend keeping your phone on airplane mode unless you have made a plan with your carrier.

Internet is usually available in missionary homes and in many restaurants and public places we visit.

For calls back to the United States, Facebook Messenger, FaceTime, and similar internet based apps are usually the best option.

At airports such as Johannesburg or Cape Town, you may be able to purchase a local SIM card if your phone is unlocked. Vodacom and MTN are generally the recommended carriers. The cost depends on the amount of data and calling time you purchase.

If you choose to use a South African SIM card, be careful not to lose your original SIM card from home. Keep it in a safe place until you return.

Many people find it helpful to limit phone use during the trip so they can stay focused and engaged. The group leader should have a phone available for emergencies, but not everyone needs to stay constantly connected.

Medication and Health

You are welcome to bring over-the-counter medications with you. For prescription medications, please carry them in their original containers and bring a copy of the prescription if possible.

South Africa does not require vaccinations for our area, and Gqeberha / Port Elizabeth is not a malaria area. However, you are welcome to consult your doctor or local health department regarding any recommended vaccinations.

Safety and Caution

Always remain alert and keep track of your belongings, especially in airports, shopping areas, and crowded public places.

Avoid wearing expensive jewelry or anything that would draw unnecessary attention. Do not openly display large amounts of cash.

Stay with the group, follow the instructions of the missionaries and group leaders, and use good judgment at all times.

A second reminder: South Africa uses 220 volt electricity. Only plug in dual voltage devices.

How to Dress

May through September

Gqeberha / Port Elizabeth has mild weather throughout the year, but during the South African winter months it can be surprisingly cold, especially indoors. During these months, temperatures often range from about 45 degrees at night to 70 degrees during the day.

Please bring both lighter clothing for daytime and heavier layers for evenings, mornings, and church services. Some churches and homes do not have heating, so layered clothing is important.

October through April

The warmer months in South Africa are generally from December through March. Temperatures may range from 65 to 85 degrees, though it can still be windy and rainy. A light jacket is still helpful.

Comfortable shoes are a must, since there will be a good amount of walking and possibly sports or hiking.

Church attire

Women should wear modest dresses or skirts for church services. Men should wear collared shirts or dress shirts and slacks. Preachers are encouraged to wear ties, especially on Sunday mornings, though suit coats are not necessary.

At all times, please dress modestly and remember that this is a ministry trip, not merely a tourist excursion.

South African seasons

December to February: Summer
March to May: Autumn
June to August: Winter
September to November: Spring

Please remember that the seasons in South Africa are opposite from those in the United States.



Emergency Contact Section

Trip Director- Mark Coffey +27(72) 978-1894
Veteran Missionary- Kevin Hall +27(71) 444-0193
Veteran Missionary- Jeremy Hall +27(82) 598-6081
Address in South Africa:
12 Household Crescent
Ben Kamma
Port Elizabeth 6025
Eastern Cape
Local emergency number in South Africa (10111 police)

Cultural Dos and Don'ts

- Treat churches in South Africa with the same respect you would a church in the United States, even if the buildings are simpler.
- Show national pastors the same honor and respect you would show pastors at home.
- In Xhosa, the common greeting is molo for one person and molweni for a group. For older people, molo mama or molo tata is a respectful greeting.
- Shake hands with people at church and be willing to learn the Xhosa style handshake.
- If you are eating or drinking in front of others, it is polite to offer them something as well.
- Speak well of South Africa and avoid constantly comparing everything to the United States.
- Be adventurous with food. Do not make faces at unfamiliar smells or flavors.
- Attend services faithfully. Avoid spending your time standing outside the church building instead of engaging with the people.
- Smile often, especially in the townships, where people may seem reserved at first.
- Be aware that personal space may feel smaller than what you are used to in the States. Homes and transportation are often crowded, and people are generally less private.
- At souvenir stands and smaller beachfront shops, bargaining is common. In larger stores, prices are usually fixed.

Possible Ministries/Activities

- Preaching or teaching in church services
- Singing, both individual and group
- Preaching or teaching in public schools
- Ministering in our Christian school



- Construction projects
- Tract distribution
- Children's programs
- Sunday school classes for ladies to teach
- Camp events
- Miscellaneous ministry projects
- Family festival days with inflatables, games, snacks, and preaching
- Animal safari parks
- Traditional South African cooking classes

- Optional extra cost activities may include:
- Bungee jumping
- Walking with elephants
- Skydiving
- Safari hunts
- Offshore fishing

Guidelines for Giving Your Testimony

Write out your testimony beforehand so you do not get sidetracked by noise, interruptions, or translation.

Keep it brief, about 3 to 5 minutes.

Begin with a greeting in Xhosa if possible to show love and respect for the people.

Introduce yourself and share a little about your family, work, or background.

Say positive things about the country, the church, and the people. Express gratitude for the opportunity to be there.

Do not focus on poverty, make jokes about the currency, or speak in a pitying way.

Explain clearly how Christ saved you and how He has been working in your life.

Include a Bible verse and a simple application if possible.



Avoid American slang, idioms, and expressions that may be confusing to those speaking English as a second language.

Do not emphasize material blessings or compare your lifestyle to theirs.

Do not talk about the sacrifices you made to come. Instead, emphasize that it is a blessing to be there and that God answered prayer in allowing you to come.

Thank the people and ask them to pray for you as well.

A prepared testimony will also help you in everyday conversations, since many people in this culture listen carefully and respectfully.

Please use the King James version of the Bible for all teaching and preaching.

Keep a Journal of Your Trip

We strongly encourage every person to keep a journal during the trip.

Your journal can include:

A record of daily events

A record of prayer requests

A record of what you are learning

A record of how God is working in your life

Quotes and sayings that have blessed you

Important decisions you make during the trip

Thoughts you want to remember later

A journal will help you review your day with God and will also help you share with your family, church, and friends what the Lord did in your heart.



Tips for journaling

Set aside a quiet time each day for writing

Write honestly and thoughtfully

Keep your journal private if needed

Answer helpful questions such as:

- What did I learn today that will help my spiritual life
- What did God seem to be speaking to me about
- What did I learn about serving Him
- What did we do today
- Who did we meet today
- What decision did I make for my spiritual growth today

Interesting Facts About South Africa and Its People

South Africa has 12 official languages. The main languages spoken in Gqeberha / Port Elizabeth are:

Afrikaans

English

IsiXhosa

Approximate population of South Africa: 62 million

South Africa is one of the most ethnically diverse countries in Africa. It has a large population of African, European, Indian, and mixed ancestry communities.

Coloured

In Southern Africa, the term Coloured is an ethnic label for people of mixed ethnic origin who possess ancestry from Europe, Asia, and various Khoisan and Bantu ethnic groups of southern Africa. Not all Coloured people share the same ethnic background, and different families and individuals have a variety of different physical features. There were

extensive relationships and unions among these diverse peoples in the Western Cape — in which a distinctive Cape Coloured and affiliated Cape Malay culture developed. In other parts of Southern Africa, people classified as Coloured were usually the descendants of individuals from two distinct ethnicities. Genetic studies suggest the group has the highest levels of mixed ancestry in the world.

Afrikaner

Afrikaners are a Southern African ethnic group descended primarily from Dutch settlers who first arrived in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. They traditionally played a dominant role in South Africa's agriculture and politics prior to 1994. Afrikaans, South Africa's third most widely spoken home language, is the mother tongue of Afrikaners and many Cape Coloured people. It developed from the Dutch vernacular of South Holland, incorporating influences from languages brought by slaves from the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia) and Madagascar. Afrikaners make up approximately 5.2% of South Africa's total population.

Xhosa

The Xhosa are a Bantu ethnic group of Southern Africa, living mainly in the Eastern Cape and other parts of South Africa. Approximately 9 million people speak Xhosa, making it one of the most widely spoken languages in the country.

The Xhosa people are divided into a number of tribes and family groupings with related, but distinct, heritages.

A major part of traditional Xhosa culture includes strong views on ancestors, ritual ceremonies, and manhood customs. These beliefs continue to affect how many people view Christianity, especially among the older generation.

Many older Xhosa men resist Christianity when they feel it will require them to abandon ancestor related traditions.



Summary of Traditional Beliefs

Among many Xhosa people, ancestral beliefs and rituals still play a major role in life. Cattle often symbolize wealth, success, family honor, and are used in marriage arrangements and ceremonial events.

Cattle and goats may be slaughtered in family ceremonies when ancestors are believed to need honoring or when help is sought in making important decisions. Communication with ancestors is often connected to traditional healers or diviners.

These beliefs are one reason why some people struggle with the exclusive claims of Christ and the authority of His church.

Initiation to Manhood Among the Xhosa

Traditional initiation into manhood is extremely important in Xhosa culture. This process often includes a period of isolation, ceremonial instruction, circumcision, and symbolic practices such as white clay and the burning of temporary structures at the end of the process.

A man who has not gone through this process may still be viewed as a boy in the eyes of many within the culture.

This is important for visitors to understand because it shapes respect, identity, and social relationships in powerful ways.

Apartheid

Apartheid was the system of racial segregation enforced in South Africa from 1948 to 1994. Under that system, the rights of black, coloured, and Indian South Africans were severely restricted while white minority rule was maintained.

This remains a very sensitive subject in South Africa, and visitors should speak with care and understanding when the topic comes up.

Townships

Townships are the communities where many black South Africans, especially Xhosa speaking people in our area, live. These communities were formed under apartheid when black, coloured, and Indian people were kept from living in many suburban areas.

Some townships include formal housing, while others include many shacks made from corrugated iron, wood, cardboard, and other materials.

Even with many challenges, there is often a strong sense of community and shared life in the townships, sometimes described by the word Ubuntu.

Walmer Township is one of the few townships located right within the suburban part of Port Elizabeth. Most other townships are farther out and depend heavily on buses and taxis for transportation.

Facts About Port Elizabeth / Gqeberha

The city officially changed its name from Port Elizabeth to Gqeberha in 2021. Many people still use both names.

Gqeberha / Port Elizabeth has a population of approximately 1.5 million people and is one of the major cities of South Africa.

It is known for its mild climate, beaches, strong winds, and as an important center for the South African automobile industry.

It is also known as:

The Friendly City

The Windy City

Nelson Mandela Bay

Ibhayi

The 10 Minute City

There are several major townships in and around Gqeberha / Port Elizabeth, including:



- KwaZakhele
- New Brighton
- KwaDwesi
- KwaMagxaki
- Motherwell / Wells Estate
- Walmer Township
- Zwide / Soweto on Sea

The city lies roughly halfway between Cape Town and Durban and has long served as an important coastal port.

Checklist

Required

- ☑ Passport
- ☑ Copy of passport stored separately
- ☑ Copy of birth certificate stored separately
- ☑ Notarized travel consent letter for each child under 18 if needed
- ☑ Bible
- ☑ Ink pen

Recommended

- ☑ Visa or MasterCard ATM debit card
- ☑ A credit card with no international fees if possible
- ☑ A small amount of emergency U.S. cash in excellent condition
- ☑ Camera or video camera
- ☑ Change of clothes in your carry-on



- ☑ Sunscreen
- ☑ Toiletries
- ☑ Sunglasses
- ☑ Only necessary credit cards
- ☑ Hiking or walking shoes

Recommended Covenant for the South Africa Missions Trip

I acknowledge and accept the following expectations in order to help make this trip safe, useful, and honoring to Christ.

I understand that South Africa may not provide all the same comforts as my home country, and I am willing to be flexible and adapt to the expectations of my hosts.

I am coming as a servant of Jesus Christ and desire to treat my teammates, the missionaries, and the people I meet with a Christlike attitude.

I understand that this trip is a mission, not a vacation. I want to learn more about missions, serve God, and be a blessing to those around me.

I will respect and follow the leadership of the trip leader and group leaders.

If I am traveling with a family member or friend, I will not isolate myself only with that person, but will seek to engage with the whole group.

I will not begin or pursue romantic relationships with team members during the trip.

I will not behave in a way that could be interpreted as romantic interest toward local people.

I will not consume alcoholic beverages during the trip.

I will seek to bless the missionaries and willingly help where needed.

I will not complain about food, lodging, or accommodations, but will seek to be a gracious guest.

I will treat missionary homes with respect and seek to leave them in the same condition in which I found them.

I will faithfully maintain my personal devotions and be diligent in both spiritual and physical responsibilities.

I will attend all services, activities, and outings unless excused by the trip leader.

I will maintain a positive and Christ honoring attitude throughout the trip.

I understand that I represent Christ, my church, and fellow believers, and I will conduct myself accordingly.

I will follow instructions concerning attire, eating, drinking, and local customs.

I will strive not to cause offense or embarrassment to the missionaries, but rather to support their long term goals and ministry.

I understand the importance of preferring others above myself and seeking to be a blessing to all members of the team.

I recognize that travel, especially to remote locations, can involve unexpected difficulty, and I am willing to remain flexible and cooperative.

I will consult the missionary or trip leader before giving gifts to local people.

Preaching, Teaching, or Testimony

We desire to give every preacher a chance to preach and every teacher an opportunity to teach. If you wish to share a word of testimony, we'll do our best to accommodate that during one of our services. We encourage everyone to give their testimony of salvation at least once during a church service. Additionally, during our adult services, there might be simultaneous children's services where you can also participate.

The missionaries will inform you about the time you have for teaching or preaching. Some services will be in English without a translator, while others may require translation. We value your contributions and want to make sure you have a meaningful and inclusive experience during the services.

Example Letter to Assist in Raising Support:

Dear Mr. and Mrs. [Last Name],

I hope this letter finds you well. I am excited to share that I have the wonderful opportunity to join my church's youth group from Vision Baptist Church on a mission trip to Port Elizabeth, South Africa [month/year]. We will be partnering with veteran missionaries Mark and Amy Coffey for a 10-day trip.

To make this mission trip possible, I am aiming to raise $2600 to cover plane tickets and room and board expenses. Any donation you could offer would be a significant help. Additionally, I am more than willing to work hard to contribute to my trip funds. Whether it's babysitting, cleaning, office work, or any other tasks you might need assistance with, I am eager to lend a hand.

Thank you so much for taking the time to consider supporting me in this endeavor. I am greatly anticipating the opportunity to witness the work being done in the field of South Africa and to be a part of it.

Once again, thank you for your support and consideration.

Warm regards,

Emilee

Support Address:

Vision Baptist Missions
P.O. 647
Dawsonville, GA 30534
(please mark checks for Emilee Coffey's Mission Trip)

or

Emilee Coffey
7060 Old Post Court
Cumming, GA 30028

Example Affidavit of Consent for Children Traveling Abroad

To whom it may concern,

I/We, _____
full name(s) of parent(s) / organization giving consent
Address: _____
street address, city

_____
province, country
Telephone and email _____ _____
Telephone *email*
am/ are the parent(s), legal guardian(s) or other authorized person(s) or organization with custody rights, access rights or parental authority over the following child:
Child Information:

Name _____
child's full name
Date and place of birth: _____ _____
dd/mm/yyyy *city, province*
Number and date of issue of passport _____ _____
Number *dd/mm/yyyy*
Issuing authority of passport _____
country where passport was issued
Birth Certificate registration number _____
Number
Issuing authority of birth certificate _____
province/country where birth certificate was issued

This child has my /our consent to travel alone or This child has my/ our consent to travel with

Accompanying Person:
Name:_____
full name of accompanying person
Relationship to child: _____
mother, father, grandparent, sister, brother, relative, friend, other
Number and date of issue of passport:

_____ _____
Number *dd/mm/yyyy*

Issuing authority of passport:

_____
country where passport was issued

Contact Information during trip:

Destination(s)

_____
name of destination country/ countries

Travel dates: _____
date of departure to date of return

To stay with / at _____
name of person with whom child will be staying /hotel or other

At the following address(es)

_____
street address(es), city (cities)

_____

_____
province(s)/state(s), country (countries)

Telephone and email _____ _____
Telephone *email*

This affidavit must be signed before an official who has the authority to administer an oath or a solemn declaration.

Signature(s) of person(s) consent Subscribed and sworn before me
_____(signature) this_____ day of_____, 20_____
At
_____(signature)
_____(Signature)

Name: Name of Official _____
Date:
Title:_____

Missionary Families Working With Project South Africa

- Kevin & Corli Hall 2006
- Mark & Amy Coffey 2013
- Jeremy & Rebekah Hall 2013
- Joshua & Meagan Sullivan 2018
- Amanda Baine 2021
- Brittany Shear 2022
- Brandon & Maggie Byerley 2023
- Lynette Osborn 2023
- Noah & Tristan Wilkerson 2024
- Ashley Taylor 2024
- Joy Wahl 2025
- Madison Brown 2025
- Tim & Jessica Johnson 2025

(sorted according to arrival date to South Africa)

Churches With Project South Africa

1. Barcelona Baptist Church
2. Fellowship Baptist Church
3. Grace Baptist Church
4. Kuyga Baptist Church
5. Lighthouse Baptist Church
6. Madiba Bay Baptist Church
7. New Life Baptist Church
8. Newton Park Baptist Church
9. Nkandla Baptist Church
10. Soweto Baptist Church
11. Vision Baptist Church

Ministries With Project South Africa

- Bay Baptist Academy
- Bay Baptist Bible College
- Camp Rhino
- Rhino Youth Home