

SOUP KITCHEN ORIENTATION SHEET

DUE TO OUR 6 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN THIS MINISTRY, WE HAVE FORMULATED SOME STREETWISE GUIDELINES TO KEEP OUR MINISTRY AND ITS MINISTERS SAFE AND SCRIPTURAL

1. ATTIRE: Due to the often extreme summer temperatures in San Antonio, we do allow people to wear shorts, but please do not wear shorts that are shorter than you would wear to a church picnic. If you wear sandals, we suggest that you wear socks, because there is often a lot of dirty gravel and broken glass and debris on the ground. Please, no dresses that show knees at all. This can cause a double threat—it can put you and people trying to protect you in danger, it detracts from the focus of our ministry, and can be a stumbling block to ministers as well as the people we are trying to help and reach. In the same vein, please, no sleeveless shirts. Evangelistic attire always encouraged!

2. INTERPRETERS AND MEN ALWAYS NEEDED! : If you speak Spanish, your interpretive skills will probably be called upon. Also, since the SAMM Shelter is primarily a men's shelter, there are more men to minister to than women. We can never have enough men volunteer who have a heart, the training and skills to evangelize at the Soup Kitchen. Doing this at the Soup Kitchen involves some accountability, because you will see some of the same people over and over. Since we are there meeting a physical need, it gives many opportunities to sit and speak one on one with people.

3. PERSONAL CONTACT: Be aware that when we are under the bridge, we are on their turf. We choose to be under the bridge for closer accessibility to the people and protection from the elements, but we must be ever vigilant. We never go anywhere without a partner, and a male is stationed at all distribution points for the protection of the women. If a person who you are giving direct eye contact begins getting agitated, be aware that they may be under the influence of a substance and the eye contact could be interpreted as aggressive. Simply break eye contact and return to the group. We never enter confrontations. If a fight breaks out, we step out of the way and call for help if it is needed. We always have retreats to the cars available to us. Keep in mind that these confrontations are extremely rare. Finally, do not give people hugs there, and use your own discretion regarding handshakes. Do not be hesitant to refuse, just politely put your hands up in front of you and say firmly that you do not hug strangers. If someone holds your hand too long in a handshake, do not be afraid to pull it back. Your safety is above their offense. Your safety is paramount.

4. DONATIONS: We never, never, never give money. If someone wants money, refer them to us, or say that we don't give out money. We often give out clothing and hygiene items. We always have soap to offer, and have bibles in Spanish and English. Feel free to bring anything that you would like to distribute such as clothes, doctrinally sound literature, shoes, coats, hygiene items, etc. We normally serve sodas, water, soup, and crackers. If you would like to bring other food, that is fine. Keep in mind that they are mobile and sometimes fed several times on Saturday, but not during the week. So, food in baggies that they could save would be very appropriate.