

Mexico

Workgroup Information Packet

Our mission statement:

To transform Mexico with the love of Christ, through biblical teaching, through the planting of New Testament congregations and by transforming communities.

The purpose of short term mission groups:

We are glad that you are interested in participating in our ministry and we hope that you will return home excited about cross cultural missions. Perhaps in the future you will want to become involved with Christian Missionary Fellowship in Mexico or in one of the other fields where CMFi serves.

Your willingness to come to Mexico is an incredible gift to us as missionaries and will be a testimony to the people in the churches. In addition God will do amazing things in your life and you will have an incredible opportunity to learn in another culture. We are grateful for your efforts to make this trip. Below are guidelines that we ask you to follow during your time with us in Mexico. They may seem a bit restrictive at times, however, they are developed through experience.

We have four goals for your time with us in Mexico:

- 1) Be a living testimony and reflect Christ's love through your actions and words.
- 2) Meet and encourage the people in the church or churches where you will be participating.
- 3) Serve through a work project.
- 4) Learn about Mexican culture.

It is our purpose that God will be honored because of your trip to Mexico. We know that you will be an encourager to the people you meet. We are asking your group to help with projects that are difficult for us to complete along with our normal ministry responsibilities and in which your efforts will save us time and financial resources. God's kingdom will expand because of our efforts together and it is our prayer that God will increase your love for missions and that you will return to your home church more excited about cross cultural missions. We want you to understand that missions is a partnership of mutual encouragement between God's people in different cultures.

Guidelines:

Be aware of these before you come.

1. Groups are suggested to be of 10 persons or less. Larger groups are a possibility as long as the group will be responsible for the additional expense of renting extra vehicles as needed and providing a driver as needed. If the group is quite large a hotel may have to be used and the R&B costs will be adjusted. The minimum age is 16 unless accompanied by a parent. We would ask that the ratio of sponsor/youth be one to four.

2. Please verify flight times and days with us before booking flights.

3. Climate:

March-September: Weather conditions vary but are comfortable (72-84 degrees F) during the days and cooler in the evenings. A light jacket will be handy in the evenings. We often have rain in the late afternoon or evening.

December-February: Night time temperatures can be very chilly dipping into the low 40s. The day time temperatures usually warm up (65-70), but not always. Please be aware that our homes do not have heat and can be very cool during these times of the year. The coolest month is January. Please bring appropriate clothing.

Dress policy: Please understand that these guidelines are for the team and that you will see some, even in the church, that are not dressed according to these guidelines. We are asking you to dress and behave at a level that will give an excellent testimony to those around you and perhaps be an encouragement to some that are struggling with this.

Shorts are seldom worn in Mexico City by adults or youth. You should not plan on wearing shorts except when indicated. Shorts should be of appropriate length. We ask that your dress be very conservative during your time with us. (The way you dress is observed by those in the church and by others. Please make sure it points others toward Christ and not away from him.) Sunday clothes can be casual but should be neat and clean.

- Males: no revealed body piercing, no extreme hairstyles. Please wear your pants so that your underwear is not seen.
- Females: No revealed body piercing. Please wear non-revealing and modest clothing. No halter tops or tank tops.
- Please let us know of any special diet needs and/ or allergies (food allergies and other allergies also) before your group arrives. If you have or have ever had problems with asthma please bring your medication in your **carry on luggage**. Even if you have not had a problem recently the pollution and altitude can create a problem.

4. Housing: During your stay with us you may have a bed, but you probably will not. You may stay in a missionary's home, or you may stay in the home of nationals. Many of these factors will depend on the size of your group and the desires of your group leader or leaders. Please try to keep your things picked up and as organized as possible. Unless a missionary or group leader is present we expect that there will be no males in women's sleeping quarters and likewise no females in male quarters.

5. We try to provide an opportunity for leaders to check e-mails and send messages daily. We will also provide the opportunity for everyone to make one phone call and/ or send one e-mail. However, we cannot guarantee more than that.

6. Whether you are staying in a missionary home or a national home please be

aware that you are a guest in that home. You are expected to clean up after yourself and to help with trash, dishes, or whatever you are asked to do. Please do not plan to control the TV or watch movies late. Please respect other people's bedtimes and schedules.

>People in the home where you are staying will still have to go to work each day. Even if you are in the home of a missionary they may have other things that have to be done during the time you are there. Of course, they will give your group priority, but they may have some other things that need to be done.

>If the home has children they may have homework and need to go to school each day. Please remember to respect these schedules.

7 You will be able to exchange US dollars at the Mexico City airport. You can either bring cash and exchange it for pesos or bring an ATM card and withdraw pesos from your US account. (Please be aware that only pesos can be taken out of an ATM here in Mexico.) We will be with you to help with this process. Check with your bank concerning ATM use in Mexico and any related charges. Please think about this before you arrive so that we can take care of this at the airport. It is inconvenient to exchange money at other times. Traveler's checks are inconvenient.

8. Christ-like behavior is expected at all times.

Please do not:

- Use profanity or obscene gestures or tell questionable jokes.
- Use any alcohol or tobacco products.
- Bring any clothing that displays negative messages to others.

Before arriving in Mexico:

1. Please pray for the experience you will have. Pray that God will use it to help mold you into the person he wants you to be.
2. Pray about a flexible attitude. We will help you plan most of the details of your trip. However, there are many factors that are not within our control. It is important that you realize this. Schedules will have to be adjusted from time to time. Having a flexible attitude will make this easier on you, as well as on the missionaries.
3. Start drinking extra water several days before you arrive in Mexico. The altitude of our ministry area is about 7200 feet above sea level. Hydration is one of your best defenses against altitude sickness. Getting extra water in your system before you arrive is a good beginning.
4. Unless the missionary picking up your group knows someone in your group please send a photo of your group so that we will recognize you at the airport.
5. We require that everyone is current on their Tetanus shot.

While you are in Mexico you should know:

1. Never go off by yourself. Never go off with a national unless an adult missionary gives you permission.

2. We may not know everyone in our churches. We usually have first time visitors as well as regular attendees. Please do not assume that because you meet someone at church that you can trust them.
3. You will be expected to follow the schedule and to participate in all activities.
4. Please be careful with money and cameras. Only bring very simple and inexpensive jewelry.
5. We encourage you to establish friendships with nationals, missionaries and their children. However, please refrain from any "romantic involvement".
6. We ask that you stay focused on your task that your group has chosen to do during your time in Mexico.
7. Please do not give any money (a handout or love offering) to a national without first talking to the missionary.
8. Do not eat or drink anything from street vendors without first talking to the missionary.
9. Any time anyone feels ill we would appreciate it if you would inform your team leaders who in turn will inform us.

These guide lines are a result of years of experience. They may seem confining, but there are reasons for each one. We want this to be a positive experience for your group as well as for the people you will serve. If you have any questions concerning any of these do not hesitate to ask.

What do you need to come to Mexico?

Please be aware that this information may be dated. It was the most current information in March, 2008.

1. Identification: Everyone must have a current passport if flying into Mexico.
2. If you are under 18: in addition to a current passport you will need a notarized letter giving you permission to travel outside the US from both parents even if one of the parents is traveling with you. If you are from a single parent home you will need notarized permission from both legal parents or guardians.

At the Mexico City airport you will receive your Mexican visa when you go through immigration. It will be a small piece of paper. You will need this to leave the country. Please put it inside your passport so that it does not get lost. There is a fine of \$40 for not having it when you leave the country as well as some additional paperwork and time.

What to bring:

1. Any medication that you need or might need. Also bring a copy of the prescription in case of questions in customs.
2. Clothing for the entire week. Laundry facilities are only for emergencies.
3. Bible and journal

4. Pocket size hand sanitizer, Sunscreen, insect repellent, sunglasses, hat, flashlight, etc.
5. Personal toiletry items

Bedding and towels will be supplied. (unless otherwise specified.)

Airport Pick-up: A missionary or missionaries will pick you up at the airport. However, traffic is very unpredictable in Mexico City. If we are delayed and are not there when you arrive, do not panic. Terminal One information is as follows (See map below). If you exit customs through Gate E3 you can meet just to your right of the gate. Bathrooms and elevators are located across the hallway. If you exit customs through Gate E2 and are not met by one of us we ask that you walk down the hallway just past Gate E3 and in front of the elevators. Stick together. It is very important that someone is watching the luggage at all times. Often we plan a meal for you after your arrival, however, depending on your arrival time you might eat at the airport. We will assist you with your luggage, with any money exchange and if we eat at the airport we will help you with that as well.

If you exit through Terminal Two our people will meet you where you exit. If there is a delay in our arrival keep your group together and wait for us in the main corridor just outside of where you exited.

Group Leaders:

There are 3 books we would recommend for your preparation.

- 1) "Prepare "Your Heart Before You Pack Your Bags" by Cindy Judge- 12 devotional Bible studies (workbook style) to be done by each participant in the weeks prior to the short-term trip. They handle issues such as flexibility, service, cultural clashes, etc. You as the leader can then pull principles to be discussed at orientation meetings from what they have processed through Bible study. The cost is about \$8, and includes a journal page for each day of the trip as well as a debrief question or two for each day.
- 2) CultureLink Team Leader's Manual and Team Member's Manual. This manual deals with issues more in depth. It provides you as the team leader with lots of resources in preparing the team, time line of preparation, logistics, and samples of forms. The cost is about \$25. CultureLink PO Box 6623 Marietta, GA 30065-0623 770-973-8809 Cullink@aol.com
- 3) "The Essential Guide to the Short Term Mission Trip" by David C. Forward- Published by Moody Press This book helps with physical preparations, as well as preparing your group to work together. It includes sample forms and evaluations. The cost is about \$15.

1. Please review this packet with your group before your trip to Mexico.

2. Your group will function better on the field if you begin to work with them to form a team through a few get togethers in the months prior to your trip.
3. Please make sure your group has all forms signed prior to your departure.
4. We will have an orientation meeting as soon as everyone is settled in.
(Approximately one hour after arriving from the airport.)
5. We ask that you supervise your group and make sure that their conduct is within the written guidelines of this document.
6. Please advise us of any medical concerns or sickness as soon as you know of any. Most things are no big deal, but we need to be aware and take appropriate action when necessary.
7. Please emphasize the dress code before your departure from the US. We ask that you monitor your group's compliance with the dress code so that we do not have to. We want the group to have a positive influence on the culture they are visiting.
8. We will arrange the schedule so that you have time each evening for group devotions and debrief of the day's events.

Costs:

R&B funds (room & board) are \$35 dollars per day per person and covers **food, housing, sightseeing and ground transportation**. If the group is larger than 10 there will be an additional expense to rent an extra vehicle for those days. If the group is quite large a hotel may have to be used and the R&B costs will be adjusted. 50% of the R&B funds should be sent to CMFi 1 month prior to departure and the rest brought to Mexico and given to the host at the airport to be exchanged. The part sent to CMFi should be sent, Attn: Financial dept. A separate note should accompany the check with your church's name and the missionary's name and please write "Mexico workgroup housing allowance".

Project funds will be determined by the workgroup team leader and the missionary. The base set for project funds is \$100 per team member. However, specific projects can be chosen for your team that involve more funds. This money should be sent to CMFi 1 month prior to your arrival in Mexico. Send to CMFi, Attn: Financial dept. A separate note should accompany the check with your church's name and the missionary's name and please write "Mexico workgroup project funds".

There is an administration fee of \$100 per team. Include this with above funds and designate as administration fee. One check can be sent with all funds listed above but please be sure to include a separate note that gives the breakdown of the funds, your church's name and the missionary's name.

Personal spending money: this is your choice and is based on how much you want to spend. We often recommend \$75 as a minimum for purchasing gifts.

Contact information:

Any questions concerning a trip that you would like to plan or for general information can be directed to:

Missionaries:

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