

Welcome International Mission Delegation

Thank you for following your call to join, engage and serve in international mission to El Salvador. The following has been put together to help you become aware of and to understand some basic guidelines that we as representatives of our group try to adhere to while serving on these missions. Please remember that while on this mission, you are participating as a member of a larger body/group and that your actions as an individual can and will affect the entire body/group. These guidelines have been set in place to help provide a safe, comfortable travel environment for all who participate in this mission. Please remember this delegation is traveling within a third world country and the safety of the group is and should be everyone's first priority. We must also respect the people we are serving. Please keep in mind our cultural differences. Remember that we are on a mission to walk with and serve the people of El Salvador.

We encourage you as a delegations to always leave your assumptions behind and enter El Salvador with openness and humility, so that you can truly "walk with the people" instead of simply trying to come in and fix things. Listen, love and grow.

GOD,

As we move to answer Your call Lord to serve our world,

Open our ears to hear what we might not want to hear,

Open our ears to hear Your truth.

Open our eyes so we can see the reality of our world,

Open our eyes to see Your truth.

Open our hearts to feel the pain that humanity endures,

Open our hearts to feel the truth which will heal.

Lord, guide our souls and use our bodies to do Your will as we go forward to answer Your call.

Amen

DELEGATION INFORMATION PACKET

Identification:

- Passport & photocopy of the first page of passport (pack separately & leave a copy at home).
- Other photo I.D. (driver's license)
- Carry a card with important medical information (blood type, allergies to medications, etc)

Clothing:

It will be hot and humid (80-90 degrees) during the day, but the evenings can be cool in the mountains of Berlin. Clothes should be clean but not fancy. Tee shirts are common. Shorts are becoming a little more common, but be very conservative (for either gender). **PACK LIGHT!** Try to squeeze all you need in one carry-on. You can always launder your items. The Pastoral Team is willing to do our laundry. At the end of the week, a tip would be very appropriate if you take advantage of their kindness! Better yet, have the team teach you how to launder. You will be humbled! Keep in mind it is fun because we only have to do this for a week!

- Carry-on luggage: include a change of clothes, toiletries, prescription medicines in original containers
- Light-weight skirts, pants, dresses, skirts, etc.
- Conservative clothing: keep skirt and short hems at knee level, no spaghetti straps or strapless tops please

- No backless walking shoes. DON'T break in a new pair of shoes on this trip
- flip-flops (for showers or around the Pastoral House)
- sunglasses, hat/cap, bandana (for dusty truck rides)
- plastic bag for dirty clothes
- bathing suit if a trip to the beach is on the agenda (be very conservative...women, you may want a tank top and shorts as very few Salvadorans have a real suit and go in the ocean in their clothing)
- long-sleeved shirt or light jacket for the evenings
- If you plan to sleep in a hammock outside: WARM sleeping clothes, wool socks (it gets very cool in the mountains at night!)
- For rainy season only (June-November): rain gear if desired

Equipment and toiletries:

- Aspirin/Tylenol or preferred headache reliever
- Pepto Bismol tablets or Imodium
- sun screen and lip balm
- mosquito repellent and a cortisone cream for bites
- empty water bottle
- small flashlight
- munchies (non-melting) and not to share with the children
- camera and batteries if needed
- notebook and journal, pens and pencils
- earplugs if you are bothered by roosters crowing at 4 in the morning!
- leisure (?) reading material
- comfy backpack or fanny pack
- Spanish dictionary (but don't rely on it too much...it can be awkward)

Safety tips:

- Obtain recommended vaccinations and prescriptions prior to departure
- Avoid ingesting ANY local water. Use bottled water provided by the Pastoral Team
- Brush your teeth with pure water
- Be careful not to get water in your mouth when you shower
- Don't bite your nails or rub your eyes after washing in pila water
- Drink lots of pure water or Gator-aid to avoid dehydration
- Avoid local foods unless prepared or approved by the Pastoral Team
- Avoid ice unless you are SURE it is made from pure water
- Have your Imodium ready at the first sign of tummy rumbling!
- Avoid flashy jewelry and watches
- Carry minimal valuables and just be aware of your surroundings and belongings
- Carry minimal money and only a copy of your passport in a money belt. Leave your original passport at the Pastoral House.
- Keep prescription medicines in original bottles with your name on it
- Don't over pack. You can purchase basic items in Berlin and/or launder
- When you go out, travel in pairs. Tell someone from the Pastoral Team and several members of your delegation where you are going and when you expect to be back so they won't worry.
- The use of illegal drugs will not be tolerated.
- Alcohol/tobacco use is prohibited for those under the legal age of their country of origin.
- Avoid all contact with local animals, domestic and agricultural.

Tips to make your stay more enjoyable:

- Learn some very basic Spanish (please, thank you, where's the bathroom, etc)

- Even if you don't speak Spanish...TRY! Pantomime/gesture/laugh and learn as you go. You will find people are VERY patient and understanding and won't belittle you for not knowing! They will love you for trying.
- Trust the Pastoral Team. Try any food they give you. You might be pleasantly surprised!
- Try to avoid wasting food – if you don't like beans... ask for a plate with “no frijoles, por favor” ... or give them to a table mate who likes them!
- Offer to help in the kitchen with dishes or with the laundry. Ask them to “teach” you because they sometimes feel awkward accepting your assistance! Try making a pupusa! It's a hoot!
- Play with the children. They give unconditional love!
- Listen with your ears and your heart at every opportunity. You will learn and understand so much more.

When you are there...do as the locals do!

- Be thoughtful of the hard work of the Pastoral Team. They clean, cook, and pick up after you. Try to be maintenance free! Be respectful of their hard work.
- Put toilet paper in the waste can next to the toilet. Do NOT put it in the toilet as the sewers tend to plug up! (Don't worry, you'll get used to this habit).
- There are 3 bathrooms available. Be aware of other people's needs.
- People like to have their photos taken but it is polite to ask first. Just say “por favor” and point to your camera and then to them and smile a lot.
- If someone on the street starts to talk to you and you do not understand... just say “no hablo español” and they will understand that you do not understand but they will talk to you anyway! Pantomime and smile!

Be respectful of the local culture:

- Travel in spirit of humility and with a genuine desire to meet and talk with local people
- Be aware of the feelings of the local people; prevent what might be offensive behavior. Photography, particularly, must respect persons.
- Cultivate the habit of listening and observing rather than merely hearing and seeing or knowing all the answers
- Realize that other people may have concepts of time and have thought patterns that are different from yours – not inferior.
- Remember that you are only one among many visitors; do not expect special privileges.
- When shopping through bargaining, remember that the poorest merchant will give up a profit rather than give up his or her personal dignity.
- Do not make promises to local people or to new friends that you cannot keep. Do not hand out money or trinkets.
- Spend time each day reflecting on your experiences in order to deepen your understanding.

BASIC SPANISH PHRASES

No hablo español	I don't speak Spanish
Buenas Dias	Good Day, hello (before noon)
Buenas Tardes	Good afternoon
Buenas Noches	Good evening
Como Está?	How are you
Muy bien, gracias	I'm fine, thank you
Gracias	Thank you
De nada	You're welcome (literally: it's nothing)
Lo siento	I'm sorry
Donde es?	Where is?
El baño	The bathroom

La cocina
El mercado
Como se dice en español?
Help me please.
Despacio, por favor.
Mucho gusto
Me gusto mucho
La comida es delicioso
Puedo ayudar?
Necesito una toalla por favor
Necesito una manta por favor
Enséñeme por favor

The kitchen
The market
How do you say in Spanish?
Ayudame, por favor.
Slowly, please
Pleased to meet you
I like a lot
The food is delicious
Can I help?
I need a towel please
I need a blanket please
Teach me please

SUGGESTED READING BEFORE YOU TRAVEL

Non-Fiction:

The Massacre at El Mozote – Mark Danner
Memoirs in Mosaic –
Salvador – Joan Didion
Violence of Love – (Romero homilies)
Through the Year with Oscar Romero – translated by Irene Hodgson
Search the internet for historical background about El Salvador and the Civil War

Fiction:

Bitter Grounds – Sandra Benítez
The Weight of All Things – Sandra Benítez
From Grandmother to Granddaughter – Michael Gorkin

Watch:

Romero (the DVD)

COMPANEROS CONTACTS FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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Kathy Mahler
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Clive, IA. 50325
515-226-0892 home
515-371-9827 cell

WAIVER OF LIABILITY AND ASSUMPTION OF RISK

The form below allows you to assume all risks while traveling on this mission trip, and enables you to release the church and its officers and agents from liability based on the volunteer's death, injury, or illness.

In advance, you may want to validate that your church insurance will not provide coverage and also check with your medical insurance of the coverage while you are traveling on a mission trip.

TAX DEDUCTION

WAIVER OF LIABILITY AND ASSUMPTION OF RISK

NOTE: This form is for use by adult members who participate on short-term mission trips to other countries. Because the church may not have insurance to cover injuries or accidents that occur on such trips, and it has no means of adequately supervising foreign activities, we ask members who participate on such trips to assume all risks associated with them as a condition of their participation. All reasonable precautions have been taken and no problems are expected. Nevertheless, individuals, rather than the church, are asked to assume their own risk for the trip.

I, _____, in consideration of my acceptance as a short-term volunteer on a mission trip sponsored by

_____ to El Salvador, represent and agree that:

1. I am a volunteer worker and not an employee of my church.
2. I am aware of the hazards and risks to my person and property associated with serving in a missions capacity, such hazards and risks including, but not being limited to, death or injury by accident, disease, war, terrorist acts, weather conditions, inadequate medical services and supplies, criminal activity, and random acts of violence. I accept my assignment with full awareness of these risks, and subject to any insurance coverages that may be available to me from any source, and only with respect to my church and its agents, officers, directors, and employees, I voluntarily assume all risks of death, injury, and illness associated with such risks, and any damage to my personal property, and I release my said church and its agents, officers, directors, and employees from any liability whatever arising as a result of death, injury, or illness that I may suffer as a result of participation in the missions project. I further recognize that such risks have always been associated with missionary service (2 Corinthians 11:23-28).
3. I attest and certify that I have no medical conditions that would prevent me from performing my duties.
4. I expressly waive any defense to the enforcement of any provisions of this commitment arising from a claim of lack of consideration, and warrant that this commitment constitutes a legal, valid, and binding obligation upon me, enforceable against me in accordance with its terms.
5. I am aware of the hazards and risks to my person associated with participation in a short-term mission trip, as described above. I further understand that my church may not have any insurance coverage that would apply in the event of my death, illness, injury, or damage to

my property that may occur during my participation on the trip, and that if I desire insurance coverage I am responsible for the cost of such insurance.

6. I expressly agree that this assumption of risk agreement is intended to be as broad and inclusive as permitted by law. I further state that I have carefully read the foregoing assumption of risk and understand its contents, and I voluntarily sign this release as my own free act. This is a legal document and I understand that I have the opportunity to consult with an attorney before signing it.

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Address: _____

IMPORTANT: Please have two (2) witnesses observe your signature, and have them sign below. They must be at least 18 and should not be relatives.

Witness: _____

Address: _____

Witness: _____

Address: _____

This assumption of risk by the individual does not affect insurance coverages available to the volunteer from any other source. Also note that no other institution or individual is released with this form.

Compañeros Waiver of Liability & Assumption of Risk
June 2006

TEN SECOND RESPONSES TO “HOW WAS YOUR TRIP?”

1. It made me realize that friendships and solidarity with those in life-threatening circumstances can make us both feel a commonality of our faith and our lives as humans.
2. For me it marked the beginning of a long-term relationship with the people of the Berlín parish.
3. It is humbling to see such hope and love in the midst of desperate situations.
4. Conditions are bleak but our partnership helps keep hope alive!
5. While there I learned about a *finca* (coffee plantation). This particular *finca* is special because the owners pay their workers three times as much as the average *finca* owner—the average being as little as \$2 a day. This *finca* also has better living conditions.....
6. (DC church) We met the people of the mountain village of Virginia where they had started building a small church when the earthquake hit last year and damaged the corners of the structure. The engineer says the building can be completed with the

- corners reinforced. I think it would be the perfect continuation of our building project if we could provide the resources for the people of Virginia to finish work on their church.
7. The trip was a wonderful experience and quite an eye-opener!! Over 20% of the population have no income and do not know where tomorrow's meal will come from.
 8. Did I enjoy my trip? The suffering from corruption, poverty and violence broke my heart. But the faith, love and hope of the Salvadoran people filled my broken heart.
 9. How was my trip? It was the most beautiful landscape I have ever visited. And it is the most wounded place I have ever been.
 10. How was my trip? That's a hard question. I feel like I've been to the ends of the earth, and seen the deepest level of poverty. And God was there.
 11. Did I enjoy my trip? I loved the beauty of the place and the people. But it is hard to enjoy the poverty and suffering I saw. We can't enjoy the one, and ignore the other.
 12. My trip was one of sharp contrast. The people are open, warm and loving; the countryside is breathtakingly beautiful; but all this is in a setting of extreme poverty.
 13. During my time in El Salvador I met some of the most loving people I have ever known in my life. I also learned that the nation and its people are deeply scarred by a horrendous war where thousands were killed and massacred for seeking economic and social justice.
 14. While in El Salvador I fell in love with the gracious, warm people who live there. I was deeply saddened to learn that the horrific war that ended in the early 90s is not truly over as the people continue to suffer extreme social and economic injustice.
 15. Although I truly and deeply enjoyed the wonderful people and the extremely beautiful countryside, I was saddened to learn that 25% of the population is in extreme poverty and another 30% is on the edge of poverty. These are huge numbers in a country with a population of 5½ million.

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Amen

DELEGATION LEAD INFORMATION PACKET

Delegation Parameters:

- Delegates must be 16 years or older to be unaccompanied by a parent or legal guardian.
- Delegation should not exceed 16 members unless approved by IMC and Session.
- There needs to be at least one adult delegate designated solely as youth chaperone.

Pastoral House rules:

- Abide by all Pastoral House rules.
 - Be in the Pastoral House by 10:00
 - Lights out by 11 p.m.
- Keep your living space tidy at all times.
- Respect male/female boundaries in sleeping quarters.

LEAD DELEGATE RESPONSIBILITIES AND GUIDELINES

Prior to trip:

- Determine trip dates
- Build agenda timeline for tasks needed done prior to trip
- Plan the agenda with mission co-worker
- Communicate with mission co-worker
- Build budget
- Communicate that budget to delegates and gather money

- Arrange airline tickets
- Designate trip treasurer, scribe, journaler, photographer, and youth delegate
- Designate spiritual discussion leader if lead delegate is not comfortable doing so
- Using Heartland's resources (Mark) develop a basic curriculum for nightly debriefings
- Facilitate discussions with out of town delegates regarding trip expectations
- Facilitate discussions with youth, their parents and the youth chaperone
- Facilitate pre-trip meeting with all delegates regarding expectations

While in El Salvador:

- Set and ensure groups awareness of daily calendar
- Become the lead communicator with Pastoral Team
- Set agenda for community meetings
- Lead meeting discussions with Team and Communities
- Encourage participation and facilitate participation with all delegates
- Look after the overall well being and safety of the group

Back home:

- Facilitate communication with IMC and Congregation – trip report

YOUTH CHAPERONE RESPONSIBILITIES AND GUIDELINES

- Abide by the basic delegate expectations and implement delegation policies with youth.
- Be available for conversations with a young traveler
- Soothe if a young traveler is either un-healthy physically, mentally or spiritually.
- Pretend this is your own child (student) and basically keep an eye on their well-being.
- Watch for subtle signs of angst/stress that the young traveler might be experiencing
- Encourage talking and de-briefing with you or someone else within the group.
- Initiate conversations regarding what he/she is experiencing
- Watch for signs of illness (physically, mentally or spiritually)
- Tend to an illness or find someone able to do so.
- Smile, hug, encourage, listen, be in tune with, discipline lovingly if necessary
- Give space when needed and/or encourage quiet reflective time and help them find a space for reflection
- Be the 'reminder' of the rules person – tidiness of space, clothing, language