

Mission Trip Tips

Do I need a passport and any other documents?

YES! Everyone must have a passport. Youth under 18 who are not traveling with both parents must also have a notarized consent form from the absent parent(s). Single parents, grandparents or guardians traveling with minors need proof of custody or notarized letters from the absent parent(s) authorizing travel.

What will we do?

It's hard to be specific when it's too far in advance. Your unique skills and interests will allow you to contribute as the Lord leads. Possible activities include: light construction and repairs, painting, sorting clothing and/or medicine, cooking, interacting with the children (soccer, crafts, reading, etc.)

Do I need to get any shots?

Tetanus shots should be up to date. Some recommend hepatitis shots – check with your doctor if in doubt.

What should I pack?

Luggage with wheels is recommended. Check with your airline for details on luggage requirements.

Passport (and consent forms for minors)

Sunscreen, hat, sunglasses

Rain poncho and extra pair of shoes during summer rainy season

Water bottle

Nutritious snacks for yourself

Pepto Bismal tablets

Anti diarrhea medicine

Hand sanitizer, Wet Ones

Pocket Bible

Blank journal

Camera

Work gloves

Wash cloths and towels if staying at Refuge Ranch

Wash cloths if staying at hotel

A roll of toilet paper

Flashlight

Medicine for your personal needs (possible allergies, etc.)

Other tips:

Altitude/Weather:

Refuge Ranch is at about 7,000 feet above sea level. The air is thin, so even though the temperature only reaches the 70's during the day, it is easy to get sunburned. Long sleeves, sunscreen, and hats are recommended. The high altitude can also cause altitude sickness; symptoms are lightheadedness, dizziness, headache, shortness of breath, passing out. Drinking lots of fluids and pacing yourself can counteract altitude sickness. The temperature gets down in the 40's or 50's at night. Buildings in Mexico do not have furnaces. Dress in layers.

Food/Water

All the meals served at Refuge Ranch will be safe for you to eat. Do not eat unpeeled fresh fruits or vegetables. Drink only bottled or filtered water. Rinse your toothbrush in bottled or filtered water. Be careful about any food or beverage you buy at market. Forgo ice in public places. Check with Victor and Julie if in doubt.

Creepy, crawly creatures

There are no mosquitoes at Refuge Ranch; a few flies, but they don't bite. There are cute little salamanders that live in the rocks, but they're afraid of you. We have seen scorpions and their sting is similar to a bee sting - they're not fatal. There are rattle snakes in the area, so be careful when working with or around rocks.

Toilet paper

The sewer systems of Mexico do not seem to handle toilet paper. Place your toilet paper in the waste basket next to the toilet.

Optional items:

Following are some items that are hard to find or expensive to purchase in Mexico, and we like to bring these just to help out the Zaragoza family:

- Peanut butter
- Chocolate chips
- PlayDoh
- Sugar free gum
- Salted peanuts
- Cocoa Wheats (cereal to cook)
- Children's chewable vitamins with iron
- Construction paper and any other school supplies

A Missionary's Perspective

We must never enter a needy community with the attitude that we are somehow superior to residents there simply because we were born into circumstances that provide easy access to employment, food, shelter, and education. It is always important to take time and consider how those we intend to serve might see our efforts. It can be very easy to make them feel that we are only serving because we have pity on them or because we want to feel good about ourselves.

The people we serve persevere in the face of extreme hardships. They are champions, and they should be treated as such. The only difference between us and them is our easy access to resources. Our goal is to develop relationships with mutual feelings of respect and honor. We must always be sensitive to our posture and our attitude so that when we do offer our resources, others feel the love, respect and dignity they are entitled to as God's children. We must continually check our motives for service. We do not want to serve others in a way that causes more harm than good. We want to represent Jesus to others and reflect His unconditional love, acceptance and respect for everyone.

(A Missionary's Perspective -- Taken from the website www.experiencemission.org.)