

Orientation for Team PRE-TRIP

Team Leader, please go over the following with all of the team members at least several weeks before your departure date to Guatemala. This information will help them to be more prepared for their experience in Guatemala. The Team Coordinator will give more details and answer questions at the orientation meeting upon the team's arrival.

Team House:

- Most of the beds in the team house are bunk beds. Please consider leaving the bottom bunks for the more "mature" of the team members.
- Team members will take turns by schedule washing the dishes.
- Laundry service will be available in Monjas on a limited basis. It is hired out and very inexpensive (to be paid by team members).
- If you want to bring along diet or sugar free drink mixes to use with your water bottles, they are hard to find here. You may want to bring a Water Bottle with you to refill with pure water.
- Please let us know before coming if you have any food allergies (so the cooks can plan accordingly) and bring medicine if you have any health issues or life-threatening allergies.
- Please consider bringing a fridge magnet for the team house as a memento of where your team is from☺

Money:

- James Project staff will exchange money for each team member on the first business day of your trip. The exchange rate fluctuates around 7 ½ - 8 Quetzales to the dollar. Traveler's checks cannot be cashed in Monjas.

Communication:

- The Team Leader will be given a cell phone that can be used to call the States/Canada. JP staff will let the team know how many minutes are available on it for the week.
- If family members need to get in contact with you while in Monjas, they are able to phone the team phone, but only for emergencies please.
- The phone in general should be used for quick calls and not long drawn out chats. The team may want to consider having a "phone tree" at home for dispersing information to save on phone calls.
- Internet is **not** available to team members through the James Project. There are internet cafes in town that can be used in the evenings (going in groups) or during appropriately long periods of free time.
- JP staff will try to post daily on the "Shadow of His Wings Orphanage" Facebook page updates of what the team is doing and even post pictures if possible. If your friends or family members search for that name and "like" the page, those updates will appear on their home pages.

Safety:

- Don't wear large or flashy (even expensive-looking) jewelry out in public.
- Be aware of your surroundings at all times (this particularly applies to your time in Antigua). Pick-pocketing is a fairly common crime, especially in crowded or tourist-rich environments. If you are ever in a robbery situation, just cooperate. Whatever valuables they may steal are not worth injury or worse.
- Be cautious if walking in Monjas, especially on the main street beside the team house, as buses drive very fast and **will not** stop for pedestrians! It is always very important to walk in pairs (and women accompanied by a man) and always with your team leader's approval.

Health:

- Skin protection: team members will need sunscreen and insect repellent to protect their skin while in Guatemala.
- Water: team members should not ingest any water from the faucets anywhere in Guatemala. Bottles of pure water will be provided. You will want to be careful not to ingest water in the shower and use bottled water to brush your teeth.
- Be sure to drink plenty of water.
- You should not eat food purchased from a street vendor. We recommend that you stick to the foods that are served at the team house or at approved restaurants where the team is scheduled to eat. You should also not eat fruits or vegetables that you have not peeled yourself or have not been properly disinfected and prepared by our James Project cooks.
- Do not use ice in any other setting besides the prepared meals provided by the James Project (the ice at Carolina's Restaurant is prepared with pure water).
- You may consider wiping down soda bottles with an anti-bacterial wipe before drinking them. Use hand sanitizer before eating or after much interaction with people (discreetly).
- Even taking all of the above precautions, travelers' diarrhea is terribly common. It usually comes with a fever and is unpleasant, especially being away from home, but usually passes within a couple of days.
- Rest: pay attention to your body – if you need rest or to stay back from an activity, talk to your team leader for arrangements to be made.
- Bathrooms: You should not flush any paper products down any toilet while in Guatemala. Please deposit all paper products in the trash can you will find in each bathroom.
- Weather: the 2 seasons in Guatemala are "rainy" (May-October) and "dry" (November through April). Please be prepared for the weather for the time of your trip to Monjas. You may check with your Team Host/Coordinator as the time of your trip approaches to see what the current weather patterns and temperatures have been.

Culture:

- Women should wear skirts or dresses when attending a church activity of any kind in the community (we will advise what activities in the schedule would be "ladies in skirts" activities). You rarely see anyone in shorts in Monjas, but especially women. If out in the community, it is strongly advised that women not wear shorts as to attract unwanted attention. Conservative

shorts are ok when spending time or working on the Orphanage property. Skirts are NOT required for church services at Shadow of His Wings.

- Women should be accompanied by a man at all times when out in the community. No team member should ever go out or be walking around alone.
- The role of men in small town culture is to get women's attention (whistling, cat calling, etc.) and the role of a respectable woman is to ignore him! Please do ignore, ladies, if this happens out in the community.
- There is a high incidence of people in Monjas that speak or at least understand English (including our kids in the Home). Please do not say anything in English that you don't want everyone around you to hear or understand.
- Please make sure that all tattoos are covered (they signify gang involvement). Men, please remove your earrings. If you must smoke, please do so on the roof of the team house, out of sight of anyone in the community. Please refrain from drinking any alcoholic beverages during your mission trip.
- Please only play Christian music in the team house and out in public as representatives of your team and the James Project ministry.
- **Especially in rural areas**, do not approach children to speak to them or take photos without the OK of the JP Team Coordinator/Host.

Other cultural pointers:

- Latino culture is relationship oriented and not task oriented as are most North Americans. This means the most important thing that one has going on at any given minute is the relationship with the person that you are physically present with. Keep this in mind, especially during work projects or ministries where there are also Guatemalans involved. Make sure to take the time to greet others and say goodbye to them as you (or they) leave.
- Social niceties are very important in interactions here. Make sure to say thank you ("gracias") for just about everything. Make sure to ask permission ("permiso") before entering someone's home or space. Another common nicety is the exchange of "Buen provecho" ("I hope it serves you well") and "Muchas gracias" ("thank you very much") when getting up from the table after eating.
- Greeting each other with hugs and kisses on the cheek is absolutely typical and normal. Same for when saying goodbye.
- Latinos are very emotionally expressive and will happily tell you all about how they feel about you, even after knowing you for a short time. This should not be taken so seriously as to make you uncomfortable, but please do know that they are usually sincere with such expressions. Expressions for "I love you" in Spanish: "Te amo" – romantic love between couples; "Te quiero" – friendship or family love; "Te aprecio" ("I appreciate you") is a nice thing to say when you want to be clear that you don't mean anything more romantic than that 😊.
- A lot of times, because of our task oriented natures, we are seen as abrupt and short with people when we often times don't mean to be. Be cautious with body language and facial expressions, especially with imperfect verbal language skills. Many times HOW you say something is much more important than what you're actually saying.

- There's something called "Guatemala time," which refers to the fact that punctuality is not necessarily the priority (again, relationship-oriented culture). We as a team want to be as punctual as possible although this may mean that we get places and have to wait on others to show up. We do NOT want to be the ones everyone else is waiting on.
- There is no such thing as "politically correct" in this culture. Don't be surprised to be asked things or hear comments that in North American culture would be considered embarrassing or even rude. Some examples of topics: age, weight, physical attributes, skin color/race, marital status, etc.
- Even the poorest of people here, though they may not have much, will take very good care of what they have. Waste is not common and is frowned upon. Things are not normally disposable here.
- Littering is NOT culturally taboo at this point. We don't want to contribute to this problem (bring trash bags to ministries in the community), but we need to understand that it's not frowned upon.

JP Team Coordinator/Team Host/Local Coordinator (and other Project staff):

- For those of you who have come on a trip with us before, this will be a new system. We do think it is the best use of our people resources, however and know you will greatly enjoy getting to work with each of these people☺.
- The JP Team Coordinator is the North American missionary who does the communication pre-trip with the Team Leader. Working closely with the Team Leader, the JP Team Coordinator will develop the schedule and make the plans for your trip and then pass them on to the Local Coordinator and Translator. The Team Coordinator will give the orientation and accompany the team on some, but not all ministries.
- The Local Coordinator (Walter Oliva) will make arrangements locally for all of the team's ministries. He will accompany the team most of the time and will be with Victor to assist him and the team in whatever needs doing. He is in charge of the team house and those who work in it and take care of it.
- The team will be provided a translator that will accompany them during scheduled activities. At this time, our main translator is Victor. The general job of the translator is to make sure the team as a whole is safe and understands what is going on. It is simply not possible for him to translate for each individual conversation each team member might want to have. He will do his best to be there when needed, but please be understanding and patient, realizing that his responsibility is to the whole team.
- Please do not even jokingly mention to additional hired translators or other nationals that you would like them to come and visit you in the United States. Please do not make any jokes or promises about helping them to get jobs or an education either.

Giving gifts:

- Please discuss any desire to bless an individual or family or group with the JP Team Coordinator or Executive Director before giving monetary or other gifts. Many times they will be able to give guidance and share wisdom about perceived needs and appropriate giving.

- Do not give individual gifts to individual or small groups of children at Shadow of His Wings under any circumstances (sponsorship is the exception). If you do bring gifts for the children, please include the house parents' natural children as well. Contact JP Team Coordinator for current numbers.

Sponsorship:

- PLEASE let us know ahead of time if any team members are currently sponsoring one or more of our children so that we may arrange for you to be introduced to the child(ren) individually if you haven't already. It is acceptable (although not required) for sponsors to give gifts (value of \$15 or less) to the child(ren) they sponsor or even arrange to have a special time with their child(ren). Please let us know ahead of time if you would like to arrange such a time. One period of about a half an hour will be provided with one-on-one translation for a sponsor and their child(ren).