

Ministry Tips

For mission team ministries out in the community of Monjas, we have a few tips to help your team to be prepared and to help things to go as smoothly as possible...

- The ministry we go to do is TEAM LED (unless otherwise arranged with our staff for THEM to be in charge). Our staff will be there to support and advise, give tips and translate, but the ministry plans and implementation are done by your team.
- We should have a good plan but also be flexible depending on circumstances and how they change – leaving room also to learn and adjust each day after seeing results.
- If and when giving out Bibles, think through how to have them get into the hands that want and need them without making them cheap or disposable (see children’s ministries tips for more ideas on giveaways).
- Children’s ministries:
 - Some things to remember to bring: trash bags, music
 - Giving out gifts/snacks/candy: It’s GREAT to include a small snack or give out candy or little gifts towards the end of a Bible school, but things can become chaotic pretty quickly and team members can get mobbed if this is not done in an organized and well-thought-out fashion.
 - Use the gifts or candy as a motivator for the kids to behave and get in order (“the children who are in an orderly, non-pushing quiet line will get their snacks now!”).
 - Have a plan (kids in a line, only kids who are sitting, etc.) for how to give out one per person so that they don’t come back around to try and get seconds.
 - Keep gifts/candy for the end of the activity as they’re walking out of the building/area as a goodbye (also maintains order and gives closure to the activity in a nice way – not saying – “ok, time to leave now!”).
 - Snacks can be brought with you or purchased here. If you would like to do this, we will be happy to go and purchase the things each morning according to numbers the day before. We can mix up punch here and get little plastic cups. It will be important for us to remember to bring trash bags to collect our trash.
 - It’s important that we all know ahead of time that we give things only to the kids who are present and not for “my cousin over there who didn’t get one” etc (a common thing they might say to get seconds☺). We want to encourage honesty in the kids and be fair and not cause too much chaos, so we need to be purposeful and well thought out in things like giveaways.
 - Be prepared that some moms (and dads) will show up to the children’s activity and it would be their joy to be included in activities like crafts and given snacks (assuming there’s enough after the children have been served). Some teams have taken this into consideration and even planned a special activity or craft for the adults.

- When planning for games, take into consideration that there is only one translator for the whole team (unless you have other bilingual team members) and usually in a children's ministry the ideal place for that person to be is with the Bible story. Think of games that are not heavily language based. For example, "Simon Says" is not a good game for an English speaker to try and do with Spanish speaking children. "Duck, Duck, Goose" and more action-based games like that can be explained even with motions and by demonstrating and the kids can get started pretty quickly and understand.
- Any crafts you might decide to do should be fairly simple and easy to put together – nothing with too many steps, nothing with a lot of drying time or anything like that. I generally find that if the kids are rotating groups, the craft time takes the longest and the other groups are ready to change. You might want to bring markers or something to put kids' names on things and think through how to deal with crafts while kids play games or whatever afterwards (maybe put them all in a stack or on a table to pass out at the end).
- Cyndi has a nice selection of fun Christian children's songs in Spanish (including "El Sapo" 😊) on her Ipod that she will be happy to let you borrow for a time of songs (with motions to go with them, etc.). Please arrange this ahead of time with her so she can be prepared to help with this.
- Some teams try and do everything whole group while others split them up and rotate them through activities (craft, games, Bible story, snack or whatever) depending on numbers. Keep in mind we will have one translator, who will best be put to use in the Bible story or teaching portion of the VBS. FYI, in the local schools, they many times separate boys and girls to make groups or they can also be separated by age group. Many times in our VBS experience if done by age group or anything besides boy/girl a lot of times the kids run and switch groups to do what looks most appealing to them to do first 😊.
- Many of the kids come from Catholic backgrounds. What this generally means is that when we pray together in a group, they may be used to repeating what the person praying in front says. This can be ok but confusing to someone praying a salvation prayer with the kids. I think it is important if not every day, to at least give this opportunity the last day of the VBS. We would be happy to help with this prayer and this time if you would like. Either way, whoever ends up doing this might want to be prepared that all of the kids may repeat the prayer aloud. It would be appropriate then at the end, to ask the kids to either come forward or identify themselves who prayed for the first time. We can then write their names down or take them aside and talk to them about hooking up with the local church for discipleship.