LOVE Consists in Sharing What One Has

and What One Is with Those One Loves.

Love Ought to Show Itself in Deeds More Than in Words.

--Saint Ignatius of Loyola
AN INTRODUCTION
TO THE IGNATIAN SERVICE AND JUSTICE IMMERSION PROGRAMS

A service and justice immersion is about going deep...real deep. It is about immersing oneself in culture, language, customs, poverty, issues of access, work, reflection, and so much more. Our summer immersion programs and quarterly Urban Plunges are centered around five pillars—Education, Service, Spirituality, Community, and Social Justice.

The goals of the immersion programs are modeled on the tenants of the Jesuit Volunteer Corps program. Participants, therefore, are called to:

- Engage in direct service for and with the people of the community we are visiting;
- Live simply, while in community with fellow students and people of the local community;
- Reflect on social justice and Catholic Social Teaching issues pertinent to the community we are visiting; and
- Reflect through prayer at the end of each day as a means of noticing where and how God was acting throughout the day, and, further, how God invites us to respond.
The five pillars supporting these overarching goals are guided by our Graduate and Graduation Values (identified in italics):

Education

In order to form our students in becoming intellectually competent (Open to Growth / Intellectually Distinguished), the immersion experience preparation and post-immersion follow-up examines economic, historic, and socio-political issues that affect people and the environment locally and globally in the quest for social justice and to open one’s self to Finding God in All Things. It is our desire to develop a critical consciousness so that each participant might evaluate issues facing the contemporary world and the various approaches to these issues prior to immersions, through direct experience, and continuing upon reentry into the LHS community.

Service

Service may mean manual labor; it may mean living simply to practice good stewardship of our resources or it may mean establishing relationships with those we encounter at our immersion sites. To form our students into loving individuals (Loving) and leaders (Developing as a Leader), we hope for our participants to move beyond self-interest and recognize the importance of meeting the immediate needs of our brothers and sisters while practicing stewardship of our time and resources. At all times, we will be respectful to the beauty of creation recognizing that all people have been created in the image and likeness of God.

Spirituality

Spirituality is a “growing intimacy with God experienced through persons, places, events, and things in everyday life” (Verploegen, 2000). Here, we create the spaces and opportunities for each of the young men to grow in relationship with God through the immersion experience and through his participation in faith community and prayer experience (Religious).

Community

Immersion experiences offer participants the opportunity to live in a community setting. Looking to the early roots of Christianity, in faith communities there were strong bonds of loyalty and trust, a sense to share destiny, and an obligation to be sure the needs of each community member are met without return. Through communal preparation, travel, and follow-up formation, immersion participants can expect to respond to their baptismal call to holiness (expect a half-day retreat for all participants).

Social Justice

Social Justice (Committed to Justice) is ensuring that those in society, our neighbors, can fulfill their basic needs. Church teaching tells us that all people, no matter who they are or where they come from, have a right to what is required for human decency, such as food, clothing, shelter, rest, medical care, social services and security / safety. The immersion experiences invite students to reflect the lack of access to equitable services and needs exists within those communities they are serving.
Frequently Asked Questions

When do the Immersion Programs take place?

- Usually, immersion experiences take place during vacation periods and weekends throughout the school year.

Where do the Immersion Programs take place?

- Currently, they include the following programs:
  - International – one to five weeks in duration
    - Argentina and Uruguay for Intercambio/Exchange – five weeks
    - Quito, Ecuador – 8 – 10 days
    - Northern Mexico - Kino Border Initiative – 4 – 5 days
    - Puerto Rico – 8 – 10 days
    - Central Mexico – 8 – 10 days
    - Costa Rica – 8 – 10 days
    - Baja Build – weekend projects
  - Domestic Immersion Programs – weekend and weeklong programs
    - Border Immersion Program: Kino Border Initiative—U.S. / Mexico Border (Nogales, Sonora, Mexico / Nogales, Arizona, US)
    - San Francisco, California – weeklong program
    - Los Angeles, California – weeklong program
    - Los Angeles, California – weekend program
    - Detroit, Michigan – weeklong program
    - Washington, DC – five-day program

Who is permitted to participate in the Immersion Programs?

- Rising sophomores, juniors and seniors

What will students do while on Immersion?

- Our service immersion program offers rising sophomores, juniors and seniors an opportunity to put their faith into action in a very challenging and real way. The service experiences are about responding to the Gospel call to serve those in need, while questioning the reasons behind why people are in need. While each immersion has its own unique slant, they all encourage participants to learn about living in solidarity with people and experiencing a different way of living, often without many material possessions.

- Students may be building homes, cleaning, tutoring, environmental restoration and preservation, providing humanitarian aid, cleaning, learning about laws / policies that impact marginalized groups, learning advocacy methods.

Will students receive course credit for participating in an Immersion Program?

- No. Only service hour credit, and only for sophomore and junior service. Not for the Senior Service Project.
What does it cost to participate in an Immersion Program?

- All prices will vary given on distance and time-away. Immersions may anywhere between $100 and $5,500, depending on the length of the immersion. This information will be listed on the application. Yes, partial financial aid is available for students who currently qualify for tuition assistance and are in good standing with the school.

Is there an application to participate in an Immersion Program?

- Yes. A Pre-Registration Form is the first step. This determines the program the candidate is interested in and the commitment level. Once this has been reviewed, a formal application is submitted to the Immersion Coordinator for that specific immersion program.

Are payment plans allowed?

- Yes. Payment plans are welcome and payment may be accepted using cash, credit card, check, or Cub Cash.

Where do students stay while on an Immersion experience?

- Students stay in a variety of settings depending on the immersion experience. This may range from dormitories on a school campus, a separate dorm setting in a homeless shelter, a hotel, with a host family, in a gym, or in residential housing.

Should students bring spending money?

- We recommend that students bring an internationally enabled debit card (Visa or Mastercard) that they can use at ATMs to withdraw local currency if on an international immersion. Note that most banks are able to issue a separate card with a finite balance so that your bank account isn’t compromised if the card is lost or stolen during travel. Remember, Puerto Rico and Ecuador use the US Dollar, so there will be no need to exchange money.

What forms of ID are required?

- All students must possess a valid US Passport to travel abroad and a California ID that allows for domestic flights.

Will the school provide travel insurance?

- No. The school will not provide travel insurance, but parents / guardians may choose to purchase this and add the amount to the overall program cost. However, third party organizations such as Walking Tree purchase basic, secondary travel insurance for all participants, the details of which can be found on their program webpage.

What are the school’s expectations in terms of behavior / code of conduct?

- This is a school-sponsored activity. Therefore, the code of conduct stipulated in our Parent / Guardian-Student Handbook applies. Dress code and grooming will, however, differ due to the type of work students will be engaged in.
Will I be able to speak with my son during the immersion experience?

- Yes, but use of cell phones are severely restricted during most of the immersion experience as a way to allow the students to “immerse” themselves without distractions. However, time is set aside to speak with friends and family. Please know that charges for long-distance calls (international calling) will be paid for by the student.

When does the process begin and how do I apply?

- The process begins in October with the Immersion Information Meeting / Expo. We will offer two informational meetings to best accommodate family schedules in December.

When do the immersions take place?

- Service immersions are scheduled for April/Easter vacation, June/July – before Summer School and after Summer School, over 4th of July Holiday extended weekend, during December/Christmas vacation and at other strategic dates so as to minimize loss of class time for students. Please check your calendar for date conflicts in advance (SAT, Summer School, family trips). Even though we start the process in October, it is possible that the dates for a few of the immersions may not be secured until early December.

Does participating in an immersion fulfill my service requirements?

- Yes! Sophomore and junior requirements. Not for the Senior Service Project.

How many students are selected for the service immersion teams?

- Immersions groups are composed of 6-20 students, depending on the Immersion trip.

Who are the chaperones?

- Each immersion has at least two Loyola faculty or staff members who act as the immersion leaders and chaperones.

What are you looking for in an immersion participants?

- The ideal participant is someone who is compassionate, empathetic, open to growth, hard-working, flexible, spiritual (it is not a requirement that you are Catholic!), reflective and able to reflect with his peers, concerned about social justice, and passionate about instigating change in our world, while learning about and serving a specific population of people. Immersions require a lot of work and energy before, during and after, and they are not for everyone! That being said, they are life-altering experiences for most participants. Students come back feeling enriched, renewed, and challenged to continue with the work they did.

*Serving Christ's mission today means paying special attention to its global context. This context requires us to act as a universal body with a universal mission, realizing at the same time the radical diversity of our situation...thus, as this world changes, so does the context of our mission; and new frontiers beckon that we must be willing to embrace.*

--GC 35, Decree 2