

GENERAL NOTES FOR A MISSION TRIP

COMMUNICATING WITH HOME:

Free internet is usually available in the hotels where we stay so you can use web based email, Facebook, chat services, or Skype video calls, all of which are free from computer to computer.

INTERPRETERS:

Each team member will have an interpreter.

Treat them respectfully. Practice with them things you will be saying.

In the Latin culture friends are more demonstrative than here. Friends of the opposite sex will walk with their arms around each other and such, but to them it is not a romantic gesture. That will carry over to you also, so don't take their behavior as romantic. They are just being friendly.

It is a tradition to take your interpreter a small gift. You may consider sportswear. If you choose to take a t-shirt, a medium will usually be large enough. For ideas of other gifts, ask a team member who has been before. Some of them like beef jerky, candies such as Smarties, Skittles, journals, a great bag for traveling. They also like contemporary Christian music in English. These gifts should be held until you say goodbye on your last day. You may not give monetary gifts. The e3 leaders will give each of them a monetary gift for working with us.

SHOTS:

Talk with your physician or a travel department as we are not allowed to tell you what shots to get or meds to take. We recommend tetanus, and Hep A. If you get the Hep A booster within a year of having Hep A, the shot will last for ten years or forever depending on the resource you check. Check with insurance to see if they will pay. Check with your local health department or doctor to see if they will provide them. We also recommend asking your doctor for a prescription of the antibiotic Cipro which can be used if you get a digestive tract issue. You can usually just put a call in to your doctor explaining why you would like a prescription and they will call it in. If you have Publix grocery stores near you, Cipro is one of the antibiotics you can get free with a prescription. Your doctor might recommend a different medication.

PASSPORT:

Keep it with you in a safe place (security belt not backpack) and carry a copy with you. Leave a copy at home. Leave a copy in your suitcase. You can get a security belt at Walmart or such in the travel section.

EATING:

Eat only cooked fruits or vegetables. This means no salads and no lettuce or tomatoes on sandwiches. If they are on the plate just leave them or push them to the side. You can ask that none be put onto your plate. Remember: IF IT'S NOT COOKED AND YOU CAN'T PEEL IT, FORGET IT.

Stay away from mayonnaise based dips and such.

Ask for no ICE IN YOUR DRINKS. It is made from the same water you are not to drink. I know that sounds silly to have to say, but you would be surprised how many people never think through that. If you would like a cold drink instead of room temp say "helada" which is pronounced without the h and with short vowels. Your interpreter will be with you to help :)

Bottled beverages, including water, are safe to drink. **DON'T DRINK THE TAP WATER OR PUT IT IN YOUR MOUTH OR BRUSH YOUR TEETH.**

Pure juice with no water added, bottled water added or boiled water added is okay. Just ask your translator to find out. Remember, you will have someone who speaks Spanish with you to help.

We will purchase a large container of water for your room. You will reuse your small bottles throughout the week just refilling them from the large container. You can take a water container of your preference too as I know many people have ones they use daily. When your large container is running low, let Liz know and we will get you more. Even if you are not usually a water drinker, please drink mostly water and limit your sodas in order to stay well hydrated.

If your host gives you something you know you should not eat, you can ask your translator to nicely explain why it would not be good for you to eat it. If you were to get sick, you would not be able to work the rest of the week. I think this can be done in a loving way. This does not mean you turn down good food just because you are a picky eater. Your host has given up so that you can eat. They have sacrificed time and money. Be grateful. You can also just offer it to your interpreter when your host is not present.

HYGIENE

Keep your mouth shut while you shower. No tap water should be put in your mouth or eyes.

Brush your teeth using your bottled water. Just don't turn on the tap while you are brushing to make it easier to remember. Take an extra toothbrush in case you goof. One good idea is to set an object over the handles so you can't turn on the faucet. Use bottled water for drinking, tooth brushing, pill taking, mouth rinsing, In other words keep tap water out of your mouth and eyes.

I suggest you take a scrungie instead of a washcloth because they dry quickly and do not sour. Don't count on having a washcloth in the room. Take your own small soap and shampoo in case there is none in the room. Don't take large bottles of toiletries, instead transfer your things into small bottles.

Toilet paper goes in the trashcan. Carry some TP with you in your backpack whenever you leave the hotel. Take an empty quart size ziploc with you to Ecuador and just fill it with TP from your hotel room.

DON'T TOUCH ANY ANIMALS. They may have cooties and not nice ones.

Wear close-toed shoes. Good walking shoes shoes are a must. You may wear open-toed shoes on the days we will be on the airplane.

Take a hat, sunglasses and sunscreen as we will be near the equator and you will burn quickly.

LEAVING THE HOTEL:

Suggested items to carry in your backpack/ daily are: sunglasses, snacks, water, hat, Bible, Harvest Journal*, Spanish Bibles*, blank paper*, pens, hand wipes or sanitizer, medicine you may need personally (stomach and head), TP, passport copy, address of hotel, some money, a jacket if you'll need it at night, chapstick, sunscreen, small notebook to write appointments and prayer requests. picture of your family and map of US laminated to show people(just a suggestion).

*We will supply

If you leave the hotel let your leader know where you are going and make sure you are in groups of at least three. There should be at least one male with a group. **DO NOT GO OUT ALONE!!!**

No persons of the opposite gender in your room. Okay, spouses allowed:)

GENERAL INFORMATION:

You will need a backpack or some type of bag to carry supplies out with you each day. Take it with you on the plane as a personal carryon and put whatever you want on the plane to entertain yourself, any prescription meds you take, a change of underwear in case your luggage doesn't get there when you do, a snack or two, your contact case and solution (no containers over 3 oz in size containing liquids. This means the container itself cannot be over 3oz not that it only has 3 oz in it.) Liquids in your carryon must be placed into one quart-sized ziploc.

Check with team leaders to see how many checked bags you are allowed on the flights as well as the weight allowed for each. If it weighs over, you will be responsible for paying the fee incurred. Besides the checked bag, you may take a carryon to put in the overhead compartment in the plane and a personal item such as a purse or backpack. All liquids over 3oz should be placed in your checked bag. Pour liquids into small containers instead of taking large bottles. I suggest putting containers of liquids into a plastic bag in case they leak.

Ecuador uses the same voltage of electricity as we do.

Ecuador uses the same currency as we do; the US dollar. Don't flash money in public. Instead take a small amount out discretely. **DO NOT TAKE ANY BILLS OVER TWENTIES. TAKE SMALL BILLS FOR SHOPPING AS MANY PLACES WILL NOT HAVE CHANGE EVEN FOR A TEN.** The bills need to be in good condition. You will be given some money, so you will not need be spending personal money each day you go out if drinks or a taxi or snacks are needed. The churches will be providing your lunches and dinners and transportation.

Back pockets are a bad place to keep money or a passport. Consider a security holder.

Be as positive as possible. No, things will not be like back home, but you need to work to be positive in your thinking.

You will need a plain, inexpensive watch if you use one at all. Leave all other jewelry at home unless it is costume not real gold or silver. Don't bring anything you can't afford to lose.

Place your name and address on the inside of your suitcases and backpack. I have been told it is not a good idea to put your home address on the outside of your bag. So, you may want to put your church or business.

To know the weather before we leave, check www.weatherchannel.com. Or www.wunderground.com which I find to be more accurate.

Be careful when you cross the street. You do not have the right of way and many times cars don't slow down.

Refer ALL requests for donations, love offerings or any other payments to the team leader. What seems like an act of love on your part can cause problems you can't even imagine. So, we want to allow the local church to do the financial ministry, not us.

ETIQUETTE AND CULTURE:

Some of what you see while on the field may disgust you or make you wonder at how the people could live that way. Please do not make comment about it. You never know who around you may understand English, which translator may live in the same conditions, or who you may drag down by your negative comments

Women often give cheek to cheek kisses. Or a man will give a woman a cheek to cheek kiss.

Throwing things such as backpacks down is seen as anger, so place things don't dump them. Greet everyone when you enter a room and tell each person goodbye when you leave. If you walk away from a group or conversation without excusing yourself, it is seen as very rude.

When shopping, place the money in the shopkeeper's hand, not on the counter.

Refills in restaurants are not free.

You need to be careful not to make any promises to anyone. It may be that for some reason you cannot keep that promise due to a change in our plans or something. You may get back to the States and forget your promise, but they won't. This can leave a bad taste in the mouths of the people for North Americans and Christians.

Please do not give anyone your street address. They may end up on your doorstep. Don't laugh. It has happened.

Before leaving a house, ask if you may pray for God to bless them. Ask what you can pray for them. It is a good idea to write down their request and address so the nationals can follow up.

If you give something to someone, do it in private or you may have a mob, especially with children.

Keep hold of your backpack and other belongings at all times or they may get stolen. If you need to go somewhere such as the bathroom, ask someone to watch your bag and hand it to them. If in a restaurant, keep it on the floor in front of you.

While we are on the trip, all of your expenses except travel day meals, souvenirs will be paid for. Now, I do have to add that if you plan a nightly visit to the ice cream or coffee shop, a junk food/soda raid at the grocery store, that money comes out of your pocket☺

Trip Specific Information

CLOTHING

We will be in the mountains with highs in the 60s and lows in the 40s. That high may just last a couple of hours. So layer your clothing including a jacket. You may wear jeans as well as any other kind of pants. You may wear t-shirts but nothing with a suggestive, patriotic or questionable slogan. Also, no camo clothing. Good walking shoes are a must and closed-toe shoes for the week. No shorts allowed for girls except inside your hotel room. Guys may wear shorts but not gym shorts out of the hotel.

We will be giving you lodging information, flight itinerary, as well as emergency contact information to share with family closer to trip time.

I know I probably left out something you are just dying to know, so don't hesitate to contact jgordon@brookhills.org or me, liz.gordon@e3partners.org

We are looking forward to serving with you and seeing God working in amazing ways.