

Greetings!

Thank you for making the decision to serve our Lord Jesus Christ through short-term missions! It's a remarkable step to choose to spend your time off from work or school serving others. In a world that continually seeks to find happiness and contentment in a myriad of unhealthy ways, you have chosen to follow exactly what Jesus Christ told us to do in his last words on earth: "Go into all the world and make disciples of every nation, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19).

As I was sitting cross-legged on the cement basketball court in a small, rural community in Belize a number of years ago with my new best friends, I had the feeling that I wanted to stay there forever. The need for positive influence in the lives of these young men that love to play basketball was very obvious. After finishing Bible study with them that day, I was spending some time talking with God about what I should do after my week in Belize was finished. Should I just stay and become a career missionary? Should I spend all my vacation time and spare family time in Belize? What should I do? And what about all the people in need in the community down the road? What about all the other communities in Belize as well?

God told me he had some other ideas about what could be done. He told me to go back to North America and tell the people I knew about the need in Belize, and to begin to mobilize more people and more teams so they can reach the communities just as I did that week.

One person can reach and pour their heart for Christ into a limited number of people. When thousands of people want to go serve and pour their hearts into the world, the impact is infinitely greater.

Thank you for allowing Jesus Christ to motivate you to serve with us in short-term missions. Our vision is that God will do a mighty work through each individual who serves with Praying Pelican Missions, and through thousands of us serving collectively He will move more powerfully than we could ever imagine.

Have a great week. It's all about God!

In Christ,

Matt Pfingsten  
President  
Praying Pelican Missions

**Contents**

**Required Pre-Trip Documents**

Mission Trip Checklist ..... 4

Passports ..... 5

Recommended Immunizations and Medications ..... 6

Health Guidelines ..... 7

Clothing Guidelines ..... 8

Policy Agreement ..... 9

Packing Checklist ..... 10

Travel Suggestions ..... 11

**Prepare for Ministry**

Why Me? ..... 13

My Prayer Partners ..... 14

My Testimony ..... 15

Preparing to Share ..... 16

Who did I meet this week? ..... 17

12 Ways to Ruin a Trip of a Lifetime ..... 18

**Mexico**

Mexico ..... 20

**Devotional and Prayer Journal**

Devotional and Prayer Journal ..... 26

**Prepare to Go Home**

Post-Trip Checklist ..... 44

Dear God... ..... 45

Sharing Your Experience ..... 46

Bringing Missions Home ..... 47

Five Year Letter ..... 48

Reflection Form ..... 49



## Required Pre-Trip Documents

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## Mission Trip Checklist

As you begin to plan for your mission trip, use the following checklist to make sure you are prepared for a trip of a lifetime:

### Team

- Attend ALL team meetings
- Plan ministries with your team
- Practice your testimony or life story with your teammates
- Pray with your team
- Read the Policy Agreement; then sign the Liability Release & Acknowledgement Form

### Individual

- Pray for your trip
- Thoroughly read through your Praying Pelican Missions Participant Handbook
- Write out your testimony or life story
- Recruit 5 or more prayer partners to pray daily for your trip
- Raise the necessary funds
- Write and send out your support letter to family and friends
- Apply for and receive your passport
- Fill out the Individual Registration Form online (*Group Leader will email instructions*)
- Visit a Travel Clinic or doctor to acquire the necessary vaccinations and medications
- Purchase needed supplies and clothing
- Pack appropriately by using the list in your handbook
- Make 3 copies of your passport
  - One for your group leader
  - One for a family member staying home
  - One to keep with you on the trip
- Leave emergency contact info, a copy of your passport, and travel information with a family member

### Items to turn in to your Group Leader

- The money you were asked to raise
- A copy of your passport

## Passports

Everyone traveling internationally is required to have a passport and a round-trip airline ticket.

### United States Citizens

To obtain a passport for the first time, you need to go in person to one of 6,000+ passport acceptance facilities located throughout the United States with proof of U.S. citizenship such as a birth certificate and a valid form of photo identification, such as a driver's license. Acceptance facilities include many federal, state and probate courts, post offices, some public libraries, and a number of county and municipal offices. Visit the United States government website for more details and locations to obtain your passport at <http://travel.state.gov/passport>.

You'll need to apply in person if you are applying for a U.S. passport for the first time. Each passport usually takes at least 8 weeks for delivery, so allow plenty of lead-time to secure your passport. If you currently have a passport please check to make sure that the date of expiration is not within 6 months of the time you will be departing the country you'll be visiting on your mission trip. If it is, you will need to renew your passport prior to your trip.

Obtaining a passport is an investment in your future travel. The U.S. government is now requiring passports to visit Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean, as well as almost all other countries around the globe. One of the benefits of having a U.S. passport is that it is your most official form of identification and is accepted world-wide.

### Canadian Citizens

A Canadian passport is the internationally accepted evidence of Canadian citizenship. All Canadian citizens traveling internationally must carry a passport valid for at least 6 months beyond your expected return date. Children, including newborns, can no longer be listed on a parent's passport, and must have their own Canadian passport. A separate passport application must be submitted for each child.

You can pick up a Canadian passport application:

- at a Canadian post office outlet or Service Canada Centre
- at a Canadian passport office
- online. (Online forms are as PDFs and must be printed and completed offline, then submitted in person or by mail with accompanying documents. When using the online forms, be sure to select the correct form and follow the directions for printing and completing the form carefully.)

## Recommended Immunizations and Medications

The following is a list of suggested medications and immunizations for your travel into the host country. Please see your health professional for advice on your specific needs and recommendations. You may also visit [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) for Travelers' Health.

### Immunizations

**Routine:** Ensure you are up-to-date with routine shots such as the poliovirus vaccine measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT) vaccine, etc.

**Other:**

- Hepatitis A: All susceptible persons traveling to or working in countries that have high or intermediate hepatitis A endemicity should be vaccinated or receive IG before departure. Hepatitis A vaccine at the age-appropriate dose is preferred to IG. The first dose of hepatitis A vaccine should be administered as soon as travel to countries with high or intermediate endemicity is considered.
- Hepatitis B: Vaccination should begin at least 6 months before travel so the full vaccine series can be completed before departure. Because some protection is provided by one or two doses, the vaccine series should be initiated, if indicated, even if it cannot be completed before departure. Optimal protection, however, is not conferred until after the final vaccine dose. Travelers should be advised to return for completion of the vaccine series.
- Typhoid: Recommended for all unvaccinated people traveling to or working in Mexico and Central America, especially if visiting smaller cities, villages, or rural areas.
- Rabies: For certain international travelers, pre-exposure rabies vaccine may be recommended, based on the local incidence of rabies in the country to be visited, the availability of appropriate anti-rabies biologicals, and the intended activity and duration of stay of the traveler. A decision to receive pre-exposure rabies immunization may also be based on the likelihood of repeat travel to at-risk destinations over time or taking up residence in a high-risk destination.

### Medications

- Travelers' diarrhea is the most common travel-related ailment. All travelers should bring along an antibiotic and an anti-diarrheal drug to be started promptly if significant diarrhea occurs. An antibiotic is usually prescribed: either Ciprofloxacin (Cipro)(PDF) 500 mg twice daily or Levofloxacin (Levaquin)(PDF) 500 mg once daily for a total of three days. Most cases of travelers' diarrhea are mild and do not require either antibiotics or anti-diarrheal drugs. **Adequate fluid intake is essential.**
- Malaria (**for Belize and Mexico ONLY**): The drug of choice is **Chloroquine**, taken once weekly in a dosage of 500 mg, starting one to two weeks before arrival and continuing throughout the trip and for four weeks after departure. Chloroquine may cause mild adverse reactions, including gastrointestinal disturbance, headache, dizziness, blurred vision, and itching, but severe reactions are uncommon. **Insect protection measures are essential.**

## Health Guidelines

1. Drink water that you know is safe. This usually means drinking bottled water. We provide as much water as you can drink. Bring a water bottle (**with a large mouth opening**) to have refilled and keep with you. Drink water early in the day and often throughout the day.
2. When you are drinking other liquids, look for the word “purified” or “pasteurized” on the container. When you have ice, make sure it is from purified or filtered water.
3. Do not drink out of anyone’s water bottle other than your own. The local children may want to drink from your water bottle, instead find a cup to give them water in.
4. Wash your hands or use anti-bacterial gel frequently but discreetly before every meal. Avoid fruit that cannot be peeled, uncooked vegetables, salads, fruit juices, raw eggs, and uncooked meat or unprocessed cheese.
5. Bring all customary medications with you in their original bottles and take them as directed.
6. Keep your passport and medical cards with you at all times.
7. Be aware of the intensity of the sun and temperature. Apply sun block frequently and dress at all times to avoid sunburn and heatstroke.
8. Do not take unnecessary physical risks and be conservative with physical limitations. Nobody should be a “hero.” Do not push yourself too hard. Take frequent water breaks, get enough sleep, wear shoes at all times, and wear gloves when necessary.
9. Always take a partner with you when you are away from the group and communicate where you will be with the team leader. Be aware of your location and the people around you at all times.
10. Bandage up your cuts and don’t touch anyone’s cuts that are bleeding. We have First Aid kits available for your use.
11. Notify the team leader or seek professional help if you experience physical problems. These could include diarrhea lasting more than 48 hours, persistent cramps or vomiting, severe chills, or any other symptoms that are of medical concern.
12. Please stay away from and do not pet or touch any local animals including insects, lizards, dogs, cats and other pets. Animals are not vaccinated like our pets are in North America and they could carry rabies.
13. Zip up your belongings before leaving for the day. Stay on the lodging grounds unless you receive permission to leave.

## Clothing Guidelines

Our desire is to dress in a manner that does not distract from the message of Jesus Christ at all times. Therefore, wearing dressier and more conservative clothing is a requirement. Washing facilities will not be available, so please pack accordingly. We suggest bringing plenty of shirts and long shorts as you most likely will need a change of clothes on many days because of the heat. Please be sure to pack with the knowledge that it will be very hot.

### So, what should I wear...

	MEN	WOMEN
For Church?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dress pants</li> <li>• Dress shirt</li> <li>• Dress shoes</li> <li>• Potentially a tie</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skirts that fall below the knee, lightweight dress pants or capris</li> <li>• Dress with sleeves</li> <li>• Dress shirt</li> <li>• Dress shoes</li> </ul>
For Work Projects?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knee-length shorts or pants</li> <li>• T-shirt</li> <li>• Tennis shoes, work shoes, or boots</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knee-length shorts or pants</li> <li>• T-shirt</li> <li>• Tennis shoes, work shoes, or boots</li> </ul>
At Other Ministry Sites?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dress shorts or long athletic shorts</li> <li>• Polo shirt or nice t-shirt</li> <li>• Tennis shoes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skirts that fall below the knee, lightweight dress pants, capris, or long shorts</li> <li>• Dress with sleeves</li> <li>• Nice shirt with sleeves</li> <li>• Tennis shoes or closed toe shoes</li> </ul>

## Common Questions

### How much clothing should I plan on bringing?

As you are packing for a generally hot climate, we recommend bringing extra of everything as you may have to change a few times each day. Generally, bring 2-3 church outfits, 3-4 work project sets of clothes, and 6-8 “other” ministry sets of clothes

### What about for swimming?

Ladies, please make sure you bring a one-piece modest bathing suit. Guys, please bring swimming trunks.

### What should I NOT bring?

Sleeveless shirts, low-cut shirts, tank tops, tankinis, bikinis, short shorts, or jewelry

### What am I forgetting?

Hat or baseball cap, socks, undergarments, lightweight sleepwear, sunglasses, and raingear

## Policy Agreement

I agree to follow the outlined policies as a mission trip member in accordance with Praying Pelican Missions (PPM):

1. As a representative of Jesus Christ, my country of residence, and Praying Pelican Missions, I will behave at all times in a manner that brings glory and honor to these institutions.
2. I am aware that my every word and action is being watched during the entire mission trip experience. Therefore, I agree to act and talk in a manner that glorifies the name of Jesus Christ. I want everything I do or say to draw people to Jesus.
3. I will be spiritually, physically, and mentally prepared for a mission trip that will stretch me and mold me in ways that I can only imagine. I will do everything I can ahead of time to prepare myself for a "trip of a lifetime."
4. I am a guest in the country I am visiting. I will respect and follow the traditions of the local people and nationals. For example: if the way I dress offends them, I will change. If I am offered food, I will take it with a "thank you" and a smile.
5. I have come to learn from the people I am visiting. I will not criticize the culture, efficiency, work habits, food, traditions, etc. with which I come in contact. I have come not to judge, but to learn and to share the person of Jesus through my words, actions, and deeds.
6. I agree to have a servant attitude at all times. When I am doing a task or ministry I don't particularly care for, I will put my best foot forward and be a witness in this activity and in everything I will participate in while on the trip.
7. I will respect and follow the Praying Pelican Mission Trip Leaders and Group Leader and his/her decisions.
8. I will use words that encourage and build up my team members and the nationals at all times. This means I will refrain from gossip or words that bring dissention and take focus away from the goals of the trip.
9. I will have a positive attitude at all times. Every trip has its challenges and unforeseen circumstances. People could get sick, items lost, and plans changed. I realize that there are times I will need to "roll with the punches" and look at challenges as opportunities to be a witness for Jesus Christ.
10. I will work with all members of the team. I will refrain from pursuing romantic relationships during the trip. If my spouse or significant other is on the trip with me, I will make every effort to spend time with each person of the group and interact with all team members. I realize that sleeping accommodations most likely will not allow me to stay in the same room as my spouse. Men will be in rooms with men and women with women. Rooms will usually have four people per room and shared beds.
11. I will attend all team meetings and fulfill the responsibilities I have agreed to before, during, and after the trip. If I am not able to attend a meeting I will be in contact with my trip leader as to what I missed.
12. I will not talk negatively about my home country's politics or the host country's politics during the trip.
13. I will abstain from using, consuming, or possessing alcohol, tobacco products, and illegal drugs while on the trip.
14. I will not steal or commit any crime or do anything illegal while on the trip.
15. I will meet all medical, logistical, and legal travel requirements.
16. If in the future I desire to return to the host country on a missions trip to visit any connections or ministry locations from this missions trip, I must do so through Praying Pelican Missions or receive their written permission to do so. This will enable the overall vision and plans for the ministry as agreed upon through Praying Pelican Missions connections in the host country to continue.
17. I will follow the travel, supply, clothing, financial, medical guidelines, etc. set forth and explained to me prior to the trip. I am responsible for knowing and following everything in the Praying Pelican Missions handbook and explained at the group meetings.
18. I will follow all import and export laws. I will not attempt to bring any item or good into the host country or back into my country of residence that is banned.
19. If I break any of the policies listed above, at the discretion of a Praying Pelican Missions representative and in conjunction with my Group Leader, my mission trip can be terminated and I can be sent home at my own expense. I realize that to attend this trip and represent Jesus Christ on the mission field is a privilege and if I abuse that privilege this constitutes the right for my trip to end prematurely.

## Packing Checklist

### Clothing

- Dress clothes for church (2-3)
- Work project clothes (4-6)
- Other ministry clothes (6-8)
- Lightweight sleepwear
- Undergarments
- Swimwear (one-piece for ladies)
- Socks
- Closed-toe/tennis shoes
- Dress shoes

### Travel Needs

- Passport and copy of passport
- Flight information
- Medical information and insurance card
- Personal snacks
- Spending money/travel meal money
- Money belt

### Personal Items

- Medications
- Pepto Bismol and Imodium
- Bug spray
- Anti-bacterial hand sanitizer
- Sunscreen/sun block
- Sunburn medication and lotion
- Bath towel and/or beach towel
- Wash cloth
- Laundry bag (pillow cases work great)
- Wet wipes
- Comb/brush
- Contacts, contact solution, and case
- Glasses and glasses case
- Toiletries
  - Razor/shaving cream
  - Soap and shampoo
  - Toothbrush/toothpaste/floss

### Must Haves

- Bible
- Pen
- PPM Handbook/Journal
- Water bottle with large opening**
- Backpack or small duffel bag
- Hat or baseball cap
- Sunglasses
- Work gloves
- Safety goggles
- Battery-operated alarm clock
- Inexpensive watch
- Flashlight
- Ear plugs
- A roll of toilet paper
- Ziploc baggies (some gallon size, some sandwich size)

### Other Items

- Ministry supplies
- Donated supplies

\*\*Confirm other needed items with Group Leader

#### For Floor Sleeping Trips Only:

- Air mattress and pump
- Sheets
- Pillow
- Personal battery-operated fan with batteries
- Mosquito net

**\*\*Please confirm needed items with Group Leader**

## Travel Suggestions

### Packing

- Plan on bringing one suitcase and one carry-on for your own clothing and personal items.
- Pack lightly and efficiently
  - Don't bring unnecessary items in your wallet or purse
  - Stuff your shoes with socks or underwear
  - Roll your clothes to save space
- Bring travel-sized containers of shampoo and other toiletries
- Your luggage may get damaged or lost during travel, so be sure to use older or sturdy luggage.
- Pack one change of clothes and necessary items in your carry-on so if your luggage gets lost or delayed you will have something with you.
- Do NOT bring knives, scissors, or other objects that could be used as weapons in your carry-on luggage.
- Leave enough room in your suitcase for items you may purchase to bring home.
- Bring clothes that are used. Do not plan on wearing your best stuff.

### General Travel

- Mark your suitcase with a unique tag or ribbon for easy identification at the baggage claim.
- Stick with a partner at the airport and have all flight information and contact information with you in case you get separated.
- Wear your money belt UNDER your clothing and keep your passport and cash in a Ziploc bag.
- Don't wear brand-new shoes in the airport or bring them on the trip. Break them in before you leave to avoid blisters.
- Leave a copy of your itinerary and emergency contact information with a family member or close friend at home.

### Good to Know

- Come into the trip well-rested and in good health. Please get good rest in the days leading up to the trip. Do not pull an all-nighter prior to the trip; you will not have the chance to catch up on sleep during the week.
- Please DO NOT BRING ipods, cell phones, mp3 players, laptops, or any other personal electronic devices as we find them to be a distraction from the mission experience.
- Don't plan on calling or emailing home. Our policy is "no news is good news" while on the trip.
- Family and friends may visit our website at [www.prayingpelicanmissions.org](http://www.prayingpelicanmissions.org) and receive updates on the trip. Tell them to simply click on the blue button labeled "View Trip Journals."



Prepare for Ministry

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## Why Me?

The question on your mind may be: “Why should I go on a mission trip?” Many people have wondered the very same thing and have been able to find many good reasons to participate on a short-term mission trip. The following list may help you as you prayerfully join your short-term mission team.

### Be a Blessing

- Fulfill the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20)
- Invest in the lives of others (Philippians 2:1-4)
- Care for people in need (Matthew 10:42)
- Encourage the Christians and churches in the country you are serving (Ephesians 6:9-10)
- Use the gifts God has given you for His purposes (1 Peter 4:10)

### Be Blessed

- Deepen your walk with Jesus Christ
- Build lifelong relationships with your team members
- Fulfill a dream of going on a mission trip
- Learn to rely on God for all your needs
- See God’s power and might in a new way
- Be available for God to use in new ways
- Have the opportunity to find gifts and abilities that you may have not known you had
- Experience the worldwide body of Christ
- Step out of your comfort zone and away from your day-to-day distractions
- Travel to a new country
- Learn about another culture
- View the world from a whole new perspective

## My Prayer Partners

Each group member is expected to find at least five people who will pray for them, other group members, ministries, safety, the nationals, etc. each day of the trip. Your Group Leader may ask you to turn in a copy of this page of him/her prior to your trip. You are also encouraged to invite these vital members of the team—these prayer warriors—to your reunion after the trip as a celebration and to say “thank you” for all God has done through them and you.

Name	Address	City	State	Zip	Phone

## My Testimony

As you prepare to embark on the trip of a lifetime, you may want to spend some time reflecting on what God has done in and through your life. The likelihood that an opportunity to share some of your testimony while you are on this trip is great! These opportunities may be in a formal setting such as at church or in an informal setting such as at a nursing home, orphanage, or just walking through the community. You will be most effective if you know what you want to share ahead of time and have practiced prior to the trip.

### Possible Themes:

- Your life story with an emphasis on your walk with Jesus
- Your faith journey throughout the years
- Your conversion experience
- Something God is teaching you now or has taught you in the past
- Personalize a Bible story
- A couple of ways that God has impacted your life

### Some Reminders for a Formal Setting

- Plan to share for 4-5 minutes
- Write your testimony on a note-card and keep it with you during the trip
- Smile, relax, and share from your heart
- Be real
- Have a solid opening and closing
- Remember you are in another culture and some things may not be culturally relevant
- When you are finished, stop
- Speak loudly, slowly, and clearly
- Be ready to share at any time during the trip
- Know what you are trying to say

### Helps

The following page has questions that may help you prepare for sharing your testimony or faith story. Please take some time prior to your trip to think about what God has done in your life and how He may use your story to impact the lives of others. He may surprise you with many opportunities throughout the trip to share!

## **Preparing to Share**

Prayerfully consider the following questions and as you prepare to share what God has done in your life during your trip and potentially after your trip is completed.

**Who is your favorite Bible character and why?**

**What is your favorite Bible story and what does God teach you through it?**

**What has God taught you recently?**

**When did you come to know Jesus Christ as your personal Savior? How has that changed your life?**

**What was the first Scripture verse you memorized and how has that impacted you?**

**How has God amazed you lately?**

## Who did I meet this week?

As you go through your week of ministering to the people of this particular community, we encourage you to remember these people who have found themselves in your heart. When you go home, continue to pray for them and think of them often. As you meet them, remember to write down their names and what you know about them. As much as we would like to remember, our minds quickly forget details, names, and places. Feel free to exchange addresses, but please know that if you do exchange addresses, they will expect you to write. The space below is provided for you to collect names, addresses, and information from people you meet.

Name	Address	Miscellaneous Information

## 12 Ways to Ruin a Trip of a Lifetime

1. Be a loner. Go off by yourself or with one or two others and don't get to know the other team members or nationals.
2. Expect things will be done in the same way things are done at home and make suggestions as to how to do things better.
3. Be inflexible. Complain and whine when things don't go as expected.
4. Don't eat the food of the country you are visiting. Make jokes about how bad it tastes and what it looks like and then sneak off to find "American" food.
5. Stay up late talking and don't get enough sleep.
6. Look for ways in which this trip will benefit you instead of how you can serve.
7. Point out the negative side of people on your team and those you are visiting.
8. Come unprepared for ministry. Just stand around while everyone else puts forth effort.
9. Don't try anything new. Stay in your comfort zone.
10. Don't find Prayer Partners. Don't pray for your upcoming trip. Don't pray for the trip preparations and logistics. And DON'T pray during your trip.
11. Don't take the sun seriously. Rarely drink water and never apply sun block.
12. Don't read through this handbook and never journal.



Mexico

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## Mexico



### Sonora, Mexico, At a Glance:

<b>Location</b>	Northwest Mexico
<b>Language</b>	Spanish
<b>Income</b>	US \$10,000/person
<b>Religion</b>	80% Roman Catholic, 10% Protestant, 10% other religions
<b>Climate</b>	Year-round: Hot and dry, desert climate
<b>Population and Density</b>	2.4 million in a state slightly larger than North Dakota
<b>Ethnic Groups</b>	Mestizo, Native American, European
<b>Motto</b>	"Country, Liberty, Work, and Culture"
<b>Independence Gained</b>	From Spain in 1821

## **Overview:**

Mexico is a land of contrasts. As one of the 10 most populous countries in the world, it encompasses everything from overwhelming population centers to rural Mayan villages. The snow-capped mountains and pine forests east of Mexico City are a far cry from the blistering hot and flat vacations meccas of Cancun and Playa del Carmen on the Yucatan Peninsula. From traditional gauchos plying their trade to modern universities and student life, the variety is truly the spice of life in Mexico.

Sonora borders Arizona to the north and the Gulf of California to the west. The beauty of the American Southwest continues right through the state of Sonora all the way to the Gulf, making the coastline a spectacular sight. The capital of Sonora is Hermosillo, a city of about 1 million people. Hermosillo lies 3.5 hours south of the Arizona border, and is home to not only the state government, but also the state's largest employer, Ford Motor Company. Hermosillo is nicknamed "Sun City" for its constant sunshine and high temperatures during the summer months.

## **Climate, Language, and Safety:**

The northern half of Mexico has an arid, desert-like climate that slowly changes to sub-tropical. Days are hot, and nights cool off significantly. Southern Mexico is quite warm and humid year-round. Days are very hot, and nights stay quite warm as well.

The people of Mexico speak Spanish. Vacation destinations within Mexico tend to have a significant amount of English-speakers due to tourism.

Mexico is generally considered a safe place to visit. Some of the larger cities have their share of crime, and a few of the border towns (most notably Ciudad Juarez) have experienced some drug-related crime in recent years. Hermosillo, the capital of the state of Sonora, has a lower crime rate than the United States national average.

## **Economy and Currency:**

Today, Mexico is doing as well as any time in the past century. Its economy is growing, and democratic elections are held every four years. Poverty is declining, though urban blight and shantytowns that develop as the country becomes more urban are continued concerns.

Mexican currency is in the form of the peso. As of May 2009, the peso was valued at 13 for every United States dollar. U.S. dollars are widely accepted in Mexico.

## History and Religion:

Documented history in Mexico begins as early as 1000 B.C. with the Aztec, Olmec, and Mayan people inhabiting the area. Ancient kings, rulers, gods, and legends stem from this land steeped in history. Archaeological remains of these civilizations are all over Mexico, most notably in the central, south, and east. Beginning in the 1500s, the Spanish conquest of Mexico began when Cortes landed in modern-day Veracruz. He and his crew began a long and violent struggle between Europeans and the Aztecs. As Spain began to take over Mexico, or “new Spain,” Mexico became the most prized possession in the New World for the Spaniards, and was allowed no autonomy. Mexico gained independence from Spain in 1821 at the Battle of Cordoba, after which they were led by a Catholic Priest named Father Hidalgo Costilla. This began a very difficult process in learning self-government over a wide area and large population.

90% of all Mexicans are Roman Catholic. 7% are Protestant Christians, and the remaining 3% generally comprise people of indigenous beliefs dating back to Mayan and Aztec times.

## Food and Fun:

Mexican food is some of the most unique and wonderful in the world. It is legendary, and most anywhere one travels around the globe, you can find restaurants serving Mexican food! The meals that Mexico is renowned for begins with tortillas and tostados, which can be made of corn or flour. Tortillas are the foundation for making nearly any food. Fill the tortilla with chicken, pork, beef, or any other meat. Then add some vegetables and spicy Mexican salsa or hot sauce, and you have a typical Mexican meal. Locals will modify, add, or subtract any of these ingredients to make a hearty (and sometimes spicy) lunch or dinner! Mexico also has wonderful desserts and is well-known for its *pan dulce* (candy bread) and *helado* (ice cream). Try some!

Mexico is blessed with more opportunities for activity than almost any country on earth. Hang out at a pristine white-sand beach on the Yucatan Peninsula; surf at a Pacific Coast beach; or dive, snorkel, or drop a line in some of the world’s best fishing waters. Visit the Copper Canyon (North America’s deepest), spend time at some of the best archaeological sites in the world, or get lost in the humanity of one of the world’s great cities, Mexico City. Whatever your interest, Mexico has it!

## **Frequently Asked Questions about Mexico Mission Trips**

### **What's included in the cost?**

Once in Mexico you will receive transportation to and from ministry sites; three meals a day; purified drinking water; sleeping accommodations; group t-shirts; customizable ministry options; an opportunity to attend local church services, evening worship, prayer, and debriefing meetings; a local sightseeing activity, and basic recreation. Transfers across the border will also be taken care of by PPM.

### **What's NOT included in the cost?**

Transportation to Nogales, Arizona, or airfare to Hermosillo, Mexico; passport; vaccinations; spending money; offering at church services; construction and/or ministry materials; personal insurance; and additional end-of-week recreation in San Carlos (snorkeling, diving, fishing, etc)

### **What language do they speak in Mexico?**

Spanish is the official language. English is spoken sparingly throughout, and there are also many indigenous languages still spoken. Most Mexicans who speak indigenous languages also speak Spanish.

### **Will we need to hire a translator?**

No. We will have Praying Pelican Missions staff that are fluent in Spanish as well as locals who are fluent in English with you often. Most of your ministry opportunities will not require a translator, but when necessary we will have one available for you.

### **Where in Mexico will my group be serving?**

Most of the teams registered for trips in the \$295-\$395 range will be serving in Nogales, Mexico. The majority of the \$495 trips will be located in the Hermosillo, Mexico, area.

### **Is it safe?**

Yes. We take extra precautions and lay down strict ground rules to ensure safety. Crime occurs in Mexico just like everywhere else, but we have never had a PPM team experience an incident of crime. Our genuine partnership with pastors and other community leaders in Mexico ensures there is always someone looking out for the well-being of our teams.

### **What about bugs, snakes, and other poisonous creatures?**

Mexico has its share of these; however, the chance of seeing anything dangerous is very, very slim. In the unlikely event that one of these creatures is encountered, our staff is well prepared and equipped to handle such a situation.

### **Do I need to fly or drive?**

Teams have the option of flying or driving.

### **If I want to drive, where should I go?**

Teams will meet up with PPM staff in Nogales, AZ, where they will cross the border.

### **If I want to fly, what airport do I fly into?**

All teams that are participating in a \$295 or \$395 trip will fly into Tucson, Arizona (TUS). A select number of \$495 trips will have the option of flying directly into Hermosillo, Mexico (HMO).

**How do I get from the Tucson airport to Nogales, AZ?**

Teams that are flying into Tucson will be met by PPM staff at the Tucson airport where transportation to Nogales will be provided. The roundtrip cost is \$25 per person.

**How does border transportation work?**

Transportation across the border is included in the cost of the trip and will be arranged by PPM to ensure teams are able to safely and efficiently cross the border.

**How does transportation work within country?**

All transportation within Mexico is included in the cost of the trip and will be arranged by PPM. Most often teams will be riding in school buses, church buses, or other vehicles provided by the local church.

**Can I eat the food and drink the water?**

All food and drink provided by PPM during trips is safe for consumption. Purified drinking water will be provided, which our cooks use for preparing meals. Tap water in Mexico is generally not safe to drink.

**Will there be an opportunity to buy souvenirs?**

Yes. There will be a time set aside to buy souvenirs if so desired.



Devotional and Prayer Journal

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## Devotional and Prayer Journal

Dear Trip Participant,

The mission trip you are about to begin is an experience that may change your life forever. God is truly faithful to reveal Himself in new ways during short-term mission trips: whether that is through learning about a different culture, serving with your team, seeing a new side of God's beautiful creation, or being away from the distractions of your day-to-day life. Each time we venture out, we return home with a slightly different perspective on life and our relationship with God.

In the following pages are a Devotional and Prayer Journal with Scripture for the day, encouraging words and discussion questions to go deeper. There is also space available for you to write your thoughts and prayers, what God is doing in your life during the week, and what He is revealing to you through Scripture.

We encourage you to take time each day to spend with God in Scripture, pray, and write in the journal. After you return home, you will have the journal as a reminder and keepsake from this life-changing experience of all God did in and through your life. Let the mission adventure begin!

With joy and blessings,  
The PPM Staff

## Grace and Peace

*“And I am sure of this, that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.” —Philippians 1:6*

### Read Philippians 1:1-11

Greetings and welcome to the first day of an experience that you will never forget! Grace and peace to you as you are traveling, arriving, or waking up for your first full day of ministry here. You will not quickly forget your experiences here, but as you begin this week it is important to remember who really is at work here. God is constantly growing you and stretching you through different experiences and giving you opportunities to share His love with others—even at home! For this time, however, He is working in and through you in a new place many miles from home.

When Paul wrote the letter to the Philippians, he was in prison clinging to the joy and hope he found in the person of Jesus Christ. Even though he was in a position of persecution and pain, he wrote letters of joy and encouragement to people he loved so dearly. Paul knew that the joy and hope he had in the Lord could not be shaken by anything in the world. He also knew that God was still working in the lives of the Philippians and encouraged them to continue pressing on toward a deeper faith.

### What’s the Point?

This week your challenge is to press on toward a deeper faith. Each day will bring new experiences, new people, and new opportunities to share the love of God! You may stumble through some of these experiences and wonder, “Why am I here?” Don’t worry! “He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion the day of Jesus Christ.” You may be surprised at some of the areas of your life He will use this week. Always expect the unexpected and have faith as you serve this week!

### For Discussion:

1. List the things Paul prayed for the Philippians in verses 9-11.
2. What is one area that you think you will grow in this week (from Paul’s list)?
3. What are your thoughts going into this week of service?
4. How do you think God will use you this week?

### Digging Deeper: Romans 11:33-12:1, Psalm 121:8




## A Life Worthy

*“Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel.” —Philippians 1:27*

### Read Philippians 1:12-30

“For me to live is Christ and to die is gain.” One of the most famous statements of the Apostle Paul, this verse shows that Paul was willing to do whatever God called him to whether that was to live or to die, to be imprisoned or free. He longed to be with God and give Him glory with such intensity that everything else in the world didn’t matter. He encourages the Philippians to live their lives in the same way, with the gospel in the front of their minds while they are serving the Lord in unity!

### What’s the Point?

Being on the mission field away from home with a group of people you may or may not know very well can be an intimidating experience. We are here to serve the Lord in this culture as one body. We are chosen representatives of the gospel and of Jesus Christ, so as we are serving let’s remember that we are serving the Lord and that He calls us to “strive side by side.” It is amazing to see what God can do when we are so focused on Him and His gospel; the world disappears and we are free to do His work well. You may be distracted this week, or even today, by conflict, homesickness, or disappointment, but if you continue on—forgiving others and focusing on God—God will continue to work in mighty ways through you!

### For Discussion:

1. When you think about Christ dying on the cross for your sins to be forgiven, what is your reaction?
2. How does the knowledge of what Christ did for you impact your day-to-day life?
3. What is one way that you can “live a life worthy” this week? How about when you go home?

**Digging Deeper:** 1 Corinthians 12:12-31; Hebrews 12:12-14; Psalm 84




## The Humble Servant King

*“Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” —  
Philippians 2:9-11*

### Read Philippians 2:1-11

“Therefore” is such a great word. It makes you wonder what came before it and makes you look back and really look at the verses prior to the “therefore.” So, let’s look. The end of chapter 1 leaves us with the assurance of salvation but also tells us that we will suffer for Christ’s sake. Chapter 2 picks up with promises of encouragement and a call for believers to be unified! We, as Christians, are to give up our selfishness and live our lives for God. In living for God, we are to be serving others. Paul gives us the greatest example of living for God: Jesus Christ. Jesus had more to give up than any of us, and He did. “He made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of a man” (v.7). Even after making himself a servant, He gave up even more in dying for us. This is the example we have to follow. This brings us to “therefore.”

### What’s the Point?

God has called us to follow Christ’s example and be His ambassadors here on earth. We are here to point people to God and give Him glory. What an honor! What a privilege! What a task we have in front of us. Philippians 2:4 is your challenge today: “Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.” All for the glory of God the Father.

### For Discussion:

1. Do you find it difficult to put others before yourself?
2. Why do you find it easy or difficult?
3. What would be the hardest thing in your life to give up or leave behind if it was asked of you?
4. Would you be able to leave everything and everyone behind to serve Christ?

### Digging Deeper: 1 John 3:16-17, Luke 9:23-27




## Blemish Free

*“Do all things without grumbling or questioning, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.” —Philippians 2:14-15*

### Read Philippians 2:12-30

Sometimes serving others and serving the Lord is not easy and is not always what we would call a pleasant experience. Paul knew this as he served the Lord even in hardships! In 2 Corinthians 11:24-28, he shares a little bit of his experiences: “Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and day I was adrift at sea; on frequent journeys in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger through false brothers; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.” Paul went through so much for the cause of Christ and yet he writes to encourage the Philippians to do all things without grumbling or questioning.

### What’s the Point?

This week, you have a chance to serve the Lord in a mighty way! He more than likely will stretch you, and some of the things that you are going to be involved in may not be your favorite things to do. You may not like laying tile, scrubbing toilets, praying with the elderly, or playing with kids. But we have been called to “do all things without grumbling” so we will “shine as lights in the world.” As the week continues on, keep on serving the Lord with joy and gladness. People will notice and you will shine as lights!

### For Discussion:

1. Is there something you were not especially looking forward to on this trip?
2. How can you put Philippians 2:14-15 into practice now?
3. Have you seen someone on your team shine as a light already this week? You should tell him or her!
4. In what ways are you being stretched this week?

### Digging Deeper: Psalm 51:10-17; Matthew 5:13-16; 1 John 4:7-8




## Christ as Our Treasure

*“Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish in order that I may gain Christ.” —Philippians 3:8*

### Read Philippians 3:1-11

Knowing Jesus Christ is the most valuable thing that anyone can ever have. Paul considered everything this world had to offer as garbage—worthless—when it was compared to knowing Jesus Christ. He had a deep, unquenchable desire to know Christ more and more. As he continued to know Christ on a deeper level, whether that be through suffering, miracles, or studying Scripture, Paul saw the world’s worth shrinking. He closes this section with walking in faith and a desire to “know Him (Christ) and the power of His resurrection, and may share in His sufferings, becoming like Him in his death.”

### What’s the Point?

Look around you. Knowing that Jesus Christ is the most valuable thing anyone can ever have can give you a new purpose. It doesn’t matter if people have a lot of material wealth or very little; if they know Christ and have a relationship with Him, they are the richest people on earth. So are you! When you learn to value Jesus Christ above all other things on earth, you have the most valuable thing. God calls us to share this treasure we have found in Jesus with the nations. Today, share that treasure you have found with those around you by sharing His love!

### For Discussion:

1. In what areas have you given up things in order to have more of Christ?
2. In giving up these things, how has it changed your perspective on the things of this world (or how has your worldview changed as you have gained more of Christ)?

### Digging Deeper: Matthew 13:44-46




## Running with a Purpose

*“I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” —Philippians 3:14*

### Read Philippians 3:12-4:1

Paul isn't going to let us forget that we are not here just to be here, but we are here with a purpose—an upward call—to be lights in the darkness! He knew that he wasn't perfect in this calling, but even in his weaknesses and imperfections he wasn't going to give up. He was going to press on no matter what: growing in his knowledge and love of Jesus Christ, encouraging believers to continue sharing the gospel and focusing their minds on heaven. He ends this section with a simple statement: “Stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.”

### What's the Point?

This week you have been stretched, and you may be tired or running low on energy. Remember that you are running this week with a purpose! You have touched people with the love of God and still may have some time left to show more people the love of God in a real and tangible way. Your encouragement today is to keep on going and stand firm as you continue serving the Lord.

### For Discussion:

1. How are you feeling now that you have experienced serving the Lord in another culture?
2. Are you ready to continue giving 100%?
3. What is one area you need strength in to continue?
4. Have you considered that your purpose doesn't end at the end of this mission trip, but it continues when you get home?
5. How do you think having a renewed sense of that purpose will change how you live at home?

### Digging Deeper: Hebrews 12:1-2; Galatians 6:9-10




## Joy, Joy, Joy

*“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.” —Philippians 4:4*

### Read Philippians 4:2-9

The theme of joy is mentioned more than 15 times in Paul’s letter to the Philippians. Paul talks about finding joy in the Lord, even in the midst of incredible suffering time and time again. Most every time he mentions finding joy or peace, he links that directly with focusing our minds on Jesus Christ and our heavenly calling. In verses 6-7 he says, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplications with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” When distractions of the world start overtaking the peace and joy that you can find in the Lord, Paul says to present your requests to God. What a relief that we have a God who listens to prayers and grants us peace.

### What’s the Point?

There may be things you are anxious about at this point of the trip—maybe something going on at home, maybe wondering if you will ever come back. Regardless, present your requests to God with thanksgiving. We are called not only to rejoice, but also to be thankful for the things God has done as well as for the joy and peace we can rest in. This week we can find joy in all the things we have seen God do in us and through us, in the people we have met, and in everything we experienced. Now, going home, we can continue rejoicing in the Lord and serving Him.

### For Discussion:

1. What did you find joy in this week?
2. How did you see God work?
3. What are you looking forward to doing when you get home?
4. How do you think letting “your requests be made known to God” with “thanksgiving” changes your outlook from anxiety to joy and peace?

### Digging Deeper: Matthew 6:25-34; Psalm 66:1-4




## What Matters

*“To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.” —Philippians 4:20*

### Read Philippians 4:10-23

When Paul wrote this letter, he had recently received gifts from the Philippians. If you received gifts in this time period, it was the custom to reciprocate with a gift of your own. As Paul was in prison, he had nothing to give them, but he ends his letter with the greatest encouragement and gift they could ever receive. This is what he knew and he could give them: the faith and confidence in knowing that God would supply every need and that with God all things are possible. Paul was completely reliant on God and His provision. He knew that he had nothing and could give nothing without God’s power. Even when he had nothing, he was content in knowing that God was with him. He also knew that whether he was in want or had plenty, it was all for the glory of God.

### What’s the Point?

It doesn’t matter where we come from or what we have by worldly standards; when we have God, we can be content and trust that He will supply all of our needs. This includes the needs of the people you met this week. You may be leaving this week wanting to give more time, energy, or things. Know that God will continue to supply all their needs as well as yours. He has endless riches in glory. His riches may not look like our riches, but every need will be met for His glory!

### For Discussion:

1. What have you learned this week about what true riches really are?
2. Do you think it is easier to remember that God supplies every need when you have much or when you have little? Why?
3. How can you bring this knowledge home with you?
4. How can you continue to minister to and with the community you have been serving in this week?

**Digging Deeper:** Isaiah 58:9-11; Job 42:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24






## Prepare to Go Home

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“Every time you cross my mine, I break out in exclamations of thanks to God. Each exclamation is a trigger to prayer. I find myself praying for you with a glad heart....There has never been the slightest doubt in my mind that the God who started the great work in you would keep at it and bring it to a flourishing finish on the day Christ Jesus appears.” Philipians 1:3-6 (MSG)

The following pages will help you prepare stories to tell, clarify what God was teaching you in the past weeks, and thank God for all He has done for us! Review these pages in the days, weeks, and months to come as you continue to serve our King at home.

## Post-Trip Checklist

### Continue to grow:

- Spend time each day in prayer
- Commit to read the Bible and journal daily
- Attend church
- Attend a youth group
- Join a Bible study or small group
- Attend a trip reunion

### Continue to serve:

- Volunteer at your church or in your community
- Pay it forward - contribute financially to your church or charitable organizations
- Make plans to attend a future mission trip
- Use this trip to share about Jesus Christ with people who don't know Him
- Send letters to the nationals you met

### Share about your trip:

- Send thank you letters to financial supporters and prayer supporters
- Share pictures with others by posting them on a website or blog
- Send a story and picture to your local newspaper
- Share trip experiences at school, church, or work

“May God himself, the God who makes everything holy and whole, make you holy and whole, put you together—spirit, soul, and body—and keep you fit for the coming of our Master, Jesus Christ.”

1 Thessalonians 5:23

## Dear God...

Take some time to write a letter of thanks to God for all the things He has done in, through, and sometimes in spite of you this week.

“You need to know, friends, that thanking God over and over for you is not only a pleasure; it’s a must. We have to do it. Your faith is growing phenomenally; your love for each other is developing wonderfully. Why, it’s only right that we give thanks.”

1 Thessalonians 1:3 (MSG)

## Sharing Your Experience

You may find upon returning home, that some people want to hear every single detail about your trip and will sit down with you for hours as you share about what you saw, who you met, and how God worked on your trip. More often, though, you will find people who will only want to hear one two-minute story about your trip. Make it a good one! The following questions and suggestions will help you prepare to share your mission experience effectively in any situation.

**Think of one “God” story that you witnessed while on the trip.**

**Think of one person you met that had an impact on you.**

**Think of one funny thing that happened on the trip that may still point people to God.**

**What did you learn about God on the trip?**

**What did you learn about yourself on the trip?**

**What was one thing that surprised you on the trip?**

**What is one thing that you will NEVER forget?**

## Bringing Missions Home

It is vitally important that you continue thinking about what God has revealed to you on this mission trip and continue serving once you return home. Please prayerfully consider the following.

**What things will you do differently upon returning home?**

**What are some lessons you learned on this mission trip that you will never want to forget and which you can apply to your life back home?**

**What are some goals for the rest of your life that God has revealed to you on this trip?**

**In what ways have you grown in your faith?**

In the following chart, please list the ministries you were involved in during the trip and how you can continue to serve in those types of ministries upon returning home.

<b>Ministry</b>	<b>Plan for continuing at home</b>
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

## Five Year Letter

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Some things to include:

1. Date
2. Age
3. Location – where are you now living?
4. What's happening now in your life?
5. What's happened the past five years in your life?

Some areas to focus on include: family, church, friends, missions, vocation (work), school, finances, faith, media

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

## Reflection Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Church: \_\_\_\_\_

After reflecting on this mission trip experience, please share with us the single most significant moment of the trip for you?

The Lord uses each season in our life to change and mold us. How is God using this experience in your life? What things will you start doing, stop doing, or change in your life?

As Praying Pelican Missions has the opportunity to encourage thousands of mission group leaders each year to add missions to their ministry opportunities, please share with them some of the things Praying Pelican Missions does well on a mission trip.

*Praying Pelican Missions...*

I give permission to Praying Pelican Missions to use pictures taken of me and quotes from this page to promote future missions trips.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ YES NO