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Dear Team Leader,

Warmest greetings from Costa Rica! We pray all is well with you and that you are enjoying the many blessings of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

For those who were able to be with us during 2019, (last time we had teams with us!!!) we want to thank you for the fabulous work and ministry that you were able to accomplish. All of the churches in the Puerto Viejo/El Tigre area and the Guapiles/Pocora region were so blessed by your efforts and we give great thanks for your sharing so extensively with the people of Costa Rica. In addition, a big thanks to all the folks who have helped us at the Children's Home in Coronado. We do give our Lord tremendous thanks every time we remember you and all that you have done for the sake of Christ here in Costa Rica. May God richly bless you!

For those churches that will be joining us for the first time in 2022, please know how grateful we are for your partnership with us and how eager we are to work together in sharing the love of Christ with many who do not know Him as well as building up His church in this part of the world.

In an effort to get a jump on 2022's projects, we've updated our "General Info Packet" and hope that you find it useful. **Some critical details have changed** from our previous packet, so please take a few minutes to read through the information thoroughly. Prices on a few things did go up due to new **Costa Rica taxes**, yet most of the "basics" remain similar to where they were in 2019.. **We ask each team to plan on arriving on a Saturday and departing at the latest the following Saturday from their primary work site lodging location.** (Interns and lodging may or may not be available outside of this time frame)

Secondly, we ask you to please make sure that **each mission team member reads and signs our covenant, and then returns it to you, prior to departing the U.S.**

It is our continual prayer that every team member will be strengthened in their own personal relationship with Christ through the multiple areas of ministry which they will be involved in while in Costa Rica (*work at the construction site, VBS, worship services with the local churches, and various forms of evangelism and outreach*). In addition, it is our prayer that each team member will offer support and encouragement to Costa Rican Christians and non-Christians alike, so that the Church's mission might be fulfilled as more people come to know Him and are incorporated into the local church where they can be nurtured and discipled.

Know that we love you and remember you often before our Lord.
In Christ's name and for His glory,
Ray and Lidia



THE METHODIST CHURCH OF COSTA RICA
Volunteers in Ministry
Outreach Program for 2022
Methodist Children's Home

TASK

WORK PROJECT:

The Methodist Children's Home

For teams working in and around San José, this year we will focus on two construction/outreach projects.

The main focus for the year will be at the Methodist Children's Home located just outside the community of Coronado (20 minutes northeast of downtown San José). We began preliminary work in 2007 and completed construction of the first home in March of 2011. The first children arrived in June 2011. We immediately began work on the second home and finished it in April of 2014.. In just a few short weeks it too was filled to capacity. Today (February 2022) we have 24 children living at the Methodist Children's Home. Most of the teams for 2022 will be working on either the perimeter wall or providing much needed TLC to the two existing houses. Additional projects will include work on the administration building and a future equipment/maintenance building.

MINISTRY PROJECT:

Vacation Bible School

We will host a Vacation Bible School one time during the week **at the Children's Home**.

You will have approximately 1 and 1/2 hours for each VBS. This will include:

- singing and dancing (15 minutes),
- prayer time and a Bible lesson (15+ minutes; using skits/dramas, stories, puppets, Q&A time, etc.),
- **two crafts** (25 minutes; this is your opportunity to share one-on-one with the children, so please take advantage of every minute you have with them),
- and games that you bring (20 minutes to play various games, outside activities).

For the singing and dancing, we recommend that you and your team practice songs in Spanish prior to arriving. (If you'd like to sing one song in English that is fine, but as a time of sharing with the children, not to have them learn the song per se) And, if you'd like and luggage allows, you might even want to consider bringing a musical instrument or two (guitar, small drum, tambourines, etc.) to help create an energetic environment for the children.

For the prayer time and Bible lesson, we suggest that you get as creative as possible to interpret a Bible story for the children. While many of them are familiar with some Bible stories, some of them could be hearing the Word for the first time.

For the two crafts, we've found that it's best for the crafts to relate to the Bible lesson. Granted, it can be a very creative relationship to the lesson, but it usually helps the children to interpret and remember the Bible story they're told. As many of the kids have done the salvation bracelets on a few occasions, we would ask that you plan some other craft besides that one.

And, one random side note: team member nametags are a huge plus, as the children love to call team members by name and focus on the individuals in each group, rather than just see a huge mass of people.

Finally, although we know that folks love to pass out as many goodies (candy, toys, etc.) as possible to the children as they leave VBS, we would like to respectfully ask that you **plan to hand out only one small item for each child at the very end of the VBS time together.** Any other treats, toys etc. that you may have to hand out should be given directly to the pastor and Sunday school teachers, as they will put them to good use throughout the remainder of the year and will distribute them to those in greatest need.

About one month prior to your visit, **please send us an email** with the following information about your VBS plan:

- For the lesson, please include the Scripture passage and basic objective(s) of the lesson.
- For the crafts, please include what materials you'll be using and the overall objective of the craft as well (again, best if it can relate to the lesson!).

This will help us to coordinate the VBS lessons for each church and avoid overlap. Thanks!

*****Special Note: We plan to have a Spanish-speaking intern present this summer to assist with many projects, including VBS. Yet we still recommend that you please try to bring a Spanish speaker with you, to assist with both VBS and construction at the site.***

LODGING: **– Wesley House in San José (Tibas)**

The Wesley House now offers the possibility for teams working at the Children's Home a to stay in the community of Tibas. Presently we have lodging capacity for 55+ persons.

Please note that simply by staying at the Wesley House, teams are engaging in a valuable ministry of support towards the training of pastors and leaders within the Methodist Church. All proceeds assist in offsetting basic operational expenses at the Seminary and Methodist University, so thank you!

GROUND TRANSPORTATION–

We will have a bus that transports us around for the week.

SUPPLY AND MATERIAL

Your donations to our supply/material funds are what keep our work projects afloat. This money is used not only to purchase all the supplies and materials needed to build, but it also pays for the construction workers' salaries. We greatly appreciate your ability to help us in this area of ministry.

FOOD AND WATER

Meals

Most teams working at the Children's Home will eat breakfast and dinner daily at the Wesley House.

Lunch at the worksite is prepared by a lady from a local Methodist church with assistance from 2 or 3 team members.

Water

We will always have plenty of drinking water on hand at the worksite.

Also, please encourage your team members to **bring a water bottle**, as it makes worksite water consumption a much easier task. And please remind them that hydration is critical on the worksite, as the temperature can rise quickly. They're more than welcome to bring powdered Gatorade / fruit drinks if they so desire.

All of these, including airfare will be included in the cost of the trip. The cost of the trip will be \$1600. A \$500 non refundable deposit will need to be made to ensure your spot on the trip by January 1.

DAILY SCHEDULE

Recognizing that the key word for survival in Costa Rica is “flexibility,” and that the schedule can change according to various needs and factors out of one’s control, a “typical” Monday-Thursday work team day will look something like the following:

- 7:00 Devotion & Breakfast
- 8:00 Load up bus
- 8:15 Arrive at worksite and begin work
- 11:30 Break for lunch at the church
- 12:30 Begin work again
- 3:00 Begin clean up at work site
- 3:30 Head to VBS (with entire team)
- 4:00 VBS
- 5:30 Back to hotel
- 6:30 Dinner
- 7:30 Group time, Devotionals, and Free Time (hit the ice cream shop in Guapiles)

On Sunday, services are held at 3 p.m. Therefore, you have Sunday morning free to either do some “touring” or relax at the hotel. Lunch is on your own either touring or individually at the hotel. Some teams have traveled to Puerto Viejo where they take a tour on the local river for 1 to 2 hours, where often you can see monkeys, birds, crocodiles, etc. It’s a relaxing way to spend the morning. Team members are also free to swim in the hotel pool or walk around the town.

MORNING AND EVENING DEVOTIONS

We **strongly** encourage you to have morning and evening devotion time with your team members, we’ve personally seen the tremendous impact and benefit it can have on teams.

One of the best schedules we’ve seen teams use is to give team members time alone in the mornings to read, pray, journal, etc. with perhaps a group time of prayer and singing before heading to the worksite.

Then, in the evening have someone on your team scheduled to lead devotion, also allow time for singing, and a period of time for team members to share where they saw the Lord working that day.

You’ll want to assign someone on the team to be in charge of music for your devotion time. It’s okay to sing, pray, etc. at the Suerre hotel.

FREE DAY(S) – (Typically Friday)

Given that many groups have served in Costa Rica before, they may already know where they would like to spend their free/fun day(s). Remember, these arrangements are best made directly by the team leader through the hotel/resort/activity center's web page. For those unfamiliar with options for fun day activities, this year one of our well trusted bus drivers has offered to assist. His name is Wilson Rojas and he has prepared the link below exclusively for teams working with the Methodist Church who would like ideas about "fun day" options. So, if you're still wondering or looking for ideas, please let Wilson assist you in that process. Finally, just a friendly reminder that all fun day expenses are separate from the wired funds that will be sent to cover, food, lodging, transportation and materials.

Fun Day Link: <https://interviajescostarica.com/fun-day-tours-in-costa-rica/>

TEAM CLOTHING / DRESS

Worksite

While at the worksite, remember that you'll be working in dirt, with concrete, around rebar, and with big tools. We recommend that you wear a t-shirt or work shirt, long pants, sturdy close-toed shoes, and a hat. Work gloves and a bandana would also prove invaluable.

We do allow **long** shorts; however, **please refrain from wearing tank tops or sleeveless shirts**, or shirts with their shirrtails cut off of them, as these are not in good taste by Costa Rican standards. Also, teams typically leave straight from the worksite to do VBS at the churches. Team members will need to bring a fresh shirt or a change of clothes before heading to VBS.

Church

When attending church services, we recommend a nice shirt and khakis/jeans for the guys, and either skirt, pants or crop pants with a blouse for the ladies.

Free day(s)

While it's up to your team members to decide how they're most comfortable away from the worksite, we recommend sturdy shoes or strapped-sandals for any outdoor activities and a light jacket for any teams who will be traveling in the mountains. And modest dress is always appreciated.

IMMUNIZATIONS – **COVID POLICY** – Extra Costs

Depending upon your doctor, the information you receive about what shots are needed while visiting in Costa Rica will vary significantly.

We typically recommend that team members be up-to-date on their **tetanus** shot and that they receive the **general hepatitis** vaccine. However, the best advice we can give you is to do what is necessary to make your team members feel comfortable while they are here.

A few cases of malaria have been reported in the Caribbean Coast region. We will keep you updated on any new developments, but it would be good at least to know where to obtain malaria tablets should that become a recommendation prior to coming to Costa Rica.

COVID – No longer any Covid protocol.

TEAM GIFT-GIVING

On the last day of work, or after VBS, the mission teams usually bring thank you gifts for the construction workers, kitchen helpers, pastors, and VBS helpers (\$10 or less/gift).

The type of gift you bring is totally up to you. The Costa Ricans always enjoy receiving something unique from your church, city or state. A team t-shirt is more than an adequate example! We usually have three women helping in the kitchen, three or four men from the church working at the site, and two pastors.

*****Special note: Beyond these team gifts which, again, can be shared on the last day of work or after VBS (not during worship services), any other sharing of gifts/money, etc. with other members of the community/church is strongly discouraged, and we ask that you refrain from doing so.***

If you, or another other individuals from your team, would like to contribute to the local congregation, offerings are collected in each church worship service. If you perceive another particular need, Ray and Lidia can assist you in directing funds in an appropriate manner.

OTHER TIDBITS

Cash is Best

All money that you bring into Costa Rica should be in the form of **cash**, US\$. Traveler's checks are not widely accepted and credit card fees down here can put a significant dent in your pocket.

You can use an American debit card to withdraw cash at almost every ATM in Costa Rica, if you don't feel safe bringing large amounts of cash with your team. You'll need cash to pay for your lunch and water money, drivers' tips.

THE COVENANT

Whether this is your first or 15th time to minister with us in Costa Rica, **we want each of your team members to sign a covenant**, and for you - the team leader, to bring these signed covenants with you to Costa Rica.

A copy of the covenant is attached. While in Costa Rica, you and your team members are guests of the Methodist Church. Everywhere you go (hotels, worksites, churches, beach resorts, restaurants, any other free day locations, etc.) and whatever you do, will be a direct reflection on the Methodist Church and its ministry.

For this reason, we ask that you please respect the Methodist Church of Costa Rica's standards and practices while in the country. By not doing so, you send "mixed messages" to those with whom you have direct and/or indirect contact. We recognize that there are multiple forms of ministry and opportunities to serve in missions; therefore, if one of your team members feels he/she is unable to commit to the covenant, we would suggest that you encourage him/her to consider another place of service at this time.



THE METHODIST CHURCH OF COSTA RICA Mission Trip Covenant 2022

Church Name _____

Team Leader _____ Dates of Trip _____

Your Name _____

If under 18, your parent's name _____

I, _____, realize the following commitment is crucial to the effectiveness, quality, and positive expression of our mission together. As a participating member of this mission trip, I agree to:

- Share the love of Jesus Christ in ways that make a Christian difference,
- Lift up Jesus Christ with my thoughts, words, and actions,
- Pray for and support my team leader and his/her decisions,
- Abstain from offering personal gifts or money to individuals in the community/church without the consent of local missionary leaders,
- Abstain from the use of all alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs, offensive clothing, and profanity; from the time of my departure with the team until I return home (this includes fun days!),
- Accept the ministry that is going on in the area where I am serving as well as the native approach to the mission, though it may differ from my approach,
- Respect the host's view of Christianity, because I understand that Christianity has various expressions throughout the world,
- Remember the missionary is to learn and serve, not to teach and boss. I'll resist the temptation to inform our hosts about how I normally do things,
- Develop and maintain a servant attitude toward the people we serve as well as toward each team member, because I am a servant of Jesus Christ called to be in ministry with the host church,
- Serve as best I can so that both the purpose and the task of the mission will be accomplished,
- Refrain from negativism and complaining. Travel and ministry outside my church may present unexpected and even undesired circumstances. However, my support and creativity will enhance the moment while complaining and negativism will destroy the moment,
- Refrain from gossip. If it is not true, good, and positive, I will not say it, and
- Remember the 3 Cs: No complaining. No criticizing. No comparing.

Signature

Date

If under 18, your parent's signature