

# FAQs

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**1.844.258.9616**

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## WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

- Jr/Sr High trips: Must be at least 12 years old OR entering the 7th grade in the fall of 2020.
- Sr High trips: Must be at least 14 years old OR entering the 9th grade in the fall of 2020.
- ▶ Due to liability, under-aged participants will be sent home at their own expense (NO babies or any children under the required age). Only registered participants are permitted at the lodging facility and on the project sites.
- ▶ No special skills are required.
- ▶ 19 or 20 year olds are welcome to attend as participants! **Remember that only those that are 21 or older will be considered “adults” at camp and count in your 1 adult to 5 youth required ratio.**

## IS THERE A REQUIRED ADULT TO YOUTH RATIO? CAN EXTRA ADULTS GO?

Yes, you must have 1 adult (21 years of age or older) for every 5 youth (20 years of age and under). If both boys and girls are registered in your group, you must have at least one male adult and one female adult registered for supervision at night.

- ▶ If you have extra adults over your 1-to-5 ratio, they can be part of your group or, if staff positions are open at your location, they have the option of serving on staff without paying the registration fee. Information about staff positions can be found on [GroupMissionTrips.com](http://GroupMissionTrips.com) under Join Our Team.

## ARE BACKGROUND CHECKS REQUIRED?

Yes, Group Mission Trips requires that all participants 18 years of age or older be screened and background checked by your church prior to attending.

- Background checks must be national and no older than two (2) years from the start of the mission trip. You choose your background check organization vendor or we do have a recommendation.
- 18-20 year olds are not considered “adults” during camp, however because of our commitment to safety, we still ask them to go through your church’s screening process and have background checks run.
- Group Mission Trips requires a digital pastor signature on a Screening and Verification Form for every 18 participant who is 18 or older.
- You may use any organization to run your background checks, but if you are looking for a reliable one, we recommend Clear Investigative Advantage. Their basic background checks start at just \$12. They can be reached at 1.888.242.2503.

## WHAT ABOUT TRANSPORTATION?

- ▶ Groups must provide transportation to and from the mission trip as well as daily to and from the sites. (Mileage or fuel costs are not reimbursed for any transportation costs.)
- ▶ Vehicles with a minimum capacity of six passengers are requested, with seat belts.
- ▶ While adults will be driving their own vehicles, they typically will not be transporting a crew that includes their own youth members. Typically, the youth from your group will be traveling in other vehicles with their crews.
- ▶ Due to tight and narrow roads, there are some locations that are labeled “Not Bus Accessible”. If you are serving at one of these, you’ll need to plan on renting smaller vehicles.

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## WHAT'S THE SCHEDULE?

### Sunday

3-4 p.m. Check-in  
4:30 p.m. Adult Meeting  
5:30 p.m. Dinner gathering  
6:30 p.m. Kick-off program (Meet your crew and get your project assignments!)  
8 p.m. Chapel followed by youth group devotions  
11 p.m. Lights-out

### Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday

6:30 a.m. Breakfast crew begins  
6:45 a.m. Wake-up call  
7-7:45 a.m. Breakfast and pack lunches  
8:00 a.m. Morning program  
8:45-3:00 p.m. Serve at project sites and have on-site lunch and devotions  
3:30 p.m. Return to lodging for clean-up and free time  
3:30-5:00 p.m. Camp store is open  
5 p.m. Dinner crew begins  
5:30 p.m. Dinner gathering  
6:30 p.m. Hospitality tasks  
7:00 p.m. Chapel team practice (Not on Thursday)  
8:00 p.m. Chapel, followed by youth group devotions  
10:30 p.m. Bedtime stories (optional and not on Thursday)  
11:00 p.m. Lights-out

### Tuesday:

6:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Same schedule as Monday  
3:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. Youth group free time (dinner and devotions on your own)  
8 p.m. Lodging facility is back open  
8:30 p.m. Movie Night (optional)  
10:30 p.m. Bedtime stories (optional)  
11:00 p.m. Lights-out

### Friday:

7-8 a.m. Breakfast  
7-9 a.m. Check-out, hospitality tasks, and depart for home

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## WHAT WILL WE BE DOING?

Be ready to tackle any project and expect to interact each day with local residents from the community. Crews typically serve at the same organization for the entire camp (or at the most 2 organizations), creating an environment where meaningful relationships develop.

Projects could include working with children at a day camp, serving at a food bank or homeless shelter, leading a Vacation Bible School, improving the homes of people in need, assisting the elderly, tutoring struggling kids, working with disabled children, facilitating a sports camp, and/or serving churches and other human service organizations in different ways. If there are any minor repair projects, we may ask your group to bring a few small hand tools and paint brushes.

## WHAT DO WE NEED TO BRING?

**Supplies:** Groups are asked to bring 1 5-gallon water jug and 1 family-size cooler (preferably on wheels) for every 6 people in your group. All other supplies are typically provided, but small items may be requested.

**Personal Items:** The full Packing List is located online for every registered group on their Group Page, under the Schedule, Menu, Packing tab. It's pretty much what you'd expect. A twin-size air mattress and bedding for sleeping, work gloves, and modest swimsuits and clothing appropriate for a Christian mission trip.

**Fun theme days:** Bring fun stuff for our theme days during camp!

## WILL OUR GROUP BE WORKING TOGETHER?

Our work crews are made up of six people with one adult and five youth--typically each person from a different church. We are happy to keep your group together if needed, just let us know. If the goal of your ministry is to have your youth meet new friends and develop social skills outside of your youth group, then there is no need to contact us--we'll mix your participants to make crews.

## WHAT ABOUT SAFETY?

Safety is our top priority!

- ▶ We require groups to bring 1 adult (21 or older) for every 5 participants that are under 21 years of age.
- ▶ We require participants that are 18 and older be screened and background-checked by their church. Their pastor signs off that they meet GMT's requirements and that they are approved to attend.
- ▶ Every staff member has been screened, background-checked, and reference checked by GMT.
- ▶ For overall protection, we have separate shower times designated for participants that are 17 and younger from those that are 18 and older.
- ▶ We review safety procedures at camp.
- ▶ Participants are not required to do any work that they consider unsafe.
- ▶ Although we do serve in needy areas, we require work crews to stay together at all times. No one should ever be left alone and all participants are back at the lodging facility by their designated check in time.
- ▶ GMT Staff visit crews every day so they are aware of where a crew is working and any issues in the area.
- ▶ Every crew has the direct phone number to the GMT office and directions to the closest hospital. If an injury occurs on the project site, and is not serious, GMT staff will contact the youth leader and coordinate any transportation needed. If the injury is serious, the adult on site will call 911 and GMT staff will offer support and ensure needed medical forms are delivered to hospital.
- ▶ Each crew will have a small first aid kit and a bigger one for every vehicle.

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## **WHERE DO WE STAY?**

A Week of Hope can hold up to 100 participants and we house them all typically at a local church. Our staff transforms the facility into a home away from home—there will be a separate boy's hall and girl's hall, a space for meals, adequate bathrooms and showers, and a space for the programs.

Participants need to bring twin-size air mattresses, pillows, sleeping bags or other bedding to sleep on floors. Youth groups are assigned to sleeping rooms together, gender separate. Sleeping rooms may be shared with other youth groups, depending on the size of groups and the size of the room.

Registered groups can see more information about their lodging facility online on their Group Page under the General Lodging tab. Trip Leaders are given the lodging facility's address.

## **WHAT IS THE MENU? WHAT IF THERE ARE SPECIAL DIETARY NEEDS?**

Meals will consist of hot breakfasts, picnic-style lunches, and hot dinners. All meals are prepared by participants on a rotating basis supervised by staff. Picnic-style lunches will be assembled in the mornings and brought to project sites. The first provided meal is dinner on Sunday and the last meal will be cold breakfast on Friday morning. **IMPORTANT NOTE:** Dinner is NOT provided on Tuesday, youth groups have free time this day and dinner is on their own.

For registered groups: If you have a participant that has to eat gluten-free--please let us know. We can have a few gluten free options at camp but need to have an accurate number to plan for. The sample menu is located on Your Group Page under the Schedule, Menu, and Packing tab. Share this with your participants so they can start planning. Participants with special diets or allergies are welcome to bring their own food items to fill in as needed during the week. Please know that we do have peanut butter on the menu. GMT is unable to guarantee there will not be any cross-contamination during meal preparation by kitchen staff. There will be a staff member available at camp who will be able to answer any questions about food.

## **WHAT ARE THE PROGRAMS LIKE?**

- ▶ Focused on Jesus. Our goal is to point people to Jesus. Programs focus on Bible passages and daily themes that challenge us to respond to Jesus in ways we will never forget.
- ▶ Interactive. People learn better by doing. Participants will be involved in sharing, speaking, acting, reflecting....not just sitting and watching.
- ▶ Relevant. Through creative multimedia, thought provoking sound and video, our programs are designed to reach everyone.
- ▶ Fun. Relationship-building activities, games and having fun are part of every program. Expect to have a great time!

## **WHEN ARE THE PAYMENT DATES?**

After you register by paying \$50 (non-refundable) per space, there are 2 payment dates for the remaining amount:

- ▶ March 15th, 2020: Half of what is remaining is due.
- ▶ May 15th, 2020: The final balance is due. (All payments are non-refundable after this date.)

## **WHAT IF I NEED TO ADD OR CANCEL A SPACE?**

Call us! If there's space available in your camp, we'll ask for necessary payment. If you have a cancellation, and you've exhausted all efforts to re-fill spaces, call us to make cancellations. We'll adjust your balance accordingly. If you cancel a space before May 15th, 2020 you'll just lose the \$50 deposit. The entire fee is forfeited for cancellations made after May 15th, 2020.

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## WHAT IF I NEED TO CANCEL MY ENTIRE GROUP?

Cancellations have a huge effect on the people we serve, it is devastating news to them when we have to cancel. Based on the number of registered participants, we plan for lodging, food orders, supplies and staffing—just for starters. Also, depending on the time of year, it is simply impossible for us to re-fill cancelled spaces.

We also recognize that unexpected events happen that can pull participants away from their original commitment. Please give us a call, we are happy to talk through ideas to recruit other participants and keeping your group intact.

If there is no other option but to cancel your group, call us by May 15th, 2020 to let us know. As long as you cancel by May 15th, you'll only lose \$50 per spot. All mission trip fees will be forfeited for any cancellations after May 15th.

## IS THERE A DRESS CODE?

We request modest clothing choices in our Code of Conduct. While Group Mission Trips doesn't have a formal dress code, we serve local organizations that do have specific requirements for volunteers. Don't be turned away from your assigned project due to inappropriate dress!

- ▶ Pack plenty of t-shirts, longer shorts, capris or pants, and close toe shoes.
- ▶ Please have your females bring a one-piece swimsuit in case they are assigned to a project site teaching a resident how to swim.
- ▶ Many of our partner organizations don't allow volunteers to wear spaghetti straps, shirts that reveal the midriff, short shorts or flip flops. And, of course, no clothing with offensive language or images.

## WHAT ARE HOSPITALITY TASKS?

- ▶ Hospitality tasks are opportunities for participants to serve each other during the mission trip week.
- ▶ Hospitality tasks include: cleaning the cafeteria, restrooms, shower areas, and other common areas. Trash will also need to be taken out. The lodging facility will NOT have the services of a custodian.
- ▶ Participants will prepare and serve breakfast and dinner. A staff member will oversee the meal preparation, cooking, serving, and cleanup of all meals. Everyone participates!
- ▶ Meal shifts are divided into teams that will help prepare, cook, serve, and clean.

## WHAT'S INCLUDED IN THE REGISTRATION FEE?

- ▶ Lodging during the camp.
- ▶ All meals, except for Tuesday dinner.
- ▶ Site selection and organization.
- ▶ Supplies and project materials for each project site.
- ▶ Bible-based thematic, fun, faith building programs.
- ▶ Devotions to do before, during, and after camp.
- ▶ 3 highly-trained staff plus 2 volunteer staff to handle all the details.
- ▶ An online Group Page full of resources to help prepare you and your group for camp.
- ▶ Unlimited customer support from professional and courteous staff.
- ▶ T-shirt and Mission Handbook for each participant.

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## **WHAT IF SOMEONE IN OUR GROUP HAS TO LEAVE EARLY OR ARRIVE LATE?**

We ask that all participants arrive on time and stay for entire time. Every part of the program is valuable and helps guarantee a life-changing experience. We really try not to make too many exceptions to this because it does effect other participants, partners, and work projects--so please check the schedule and make travel arrangements accordingly. Contact us if a situation arises.

## **DO PARTICIPANTS HAVE TO HAVE INSURANCE?**

- ▶ Personal health insurance is not required to attend, although highly recommended.
- ▶ If you carry personal health insurance, bring the appropriate information. It is needed if treated at any health-care facility.
- ▶ All health-care costs are the responsibility of the participants or his or her parent/guardian.
- ▶ If you have participants without adequate medical insurance and/or you desire to purchase trip protection insurance, you can purchase low-cost domestic and international insurance from any insurance provider of your choice.

## **WHAT IF THE CAMP I WANT IS FULL?**

All trips are filled on a first-come, first-served basis, so register early. However, if you register for a trip that's full, we'll give you a choice: Join the waiting list for your first choice, or register for your second-choice camp. Call us. We're eager to help!

## **CAN PARTICIPANTS BE MORE INVOLVED?**

Yes! There are many ways participants can be more involved in the camp:

- ▶ There may be a couple skits during the programs for any participants that enjoy acting.
- ▶ There will be a lip-sync battle during the week! If any participants, or your entire group, want to prepare a little something for this, the camp staff will just need to approve your song (at camp) beforehand.
- ▶ Bring fun stuff for theme dinners! There will be 3 evenings where participants can have fun dressing up: Mustache Monday, Wacky Wednesday and Tropical Thursday.

## **DO YOU HAVE REFERENCES?**

Absolutely! Don't just take our word for it. Give us a call (844.258.9616) and we'd be happy to connect you with other youth leaders who have served with us.

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