

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

ABOUT ACE TRIPS TO EMMANUEL CHILDREN'S HOME IN JUAREZ, MEXICO



OF ALL THE PLACES IN THE WORLD TO GO, WHY HERE?

People ask this all of the time...and it is a completely valid question. Why, of all the cities in the world, do you choose to go to Juarez, Mexico, which in recent years had been called "The World's Most Dangerous City"? *Are you CRAZY?* And in a way, our answer is a resounding and emphatic "YES!" We are crazy...crazy in love with this place, these kids, and the God who loves us and them. Until this place closes their doors – we will continue to go, continue to love and continue to embrace being crazy! When ACE first traveled to Emmanuel in July of 2009, we didn't expect this place to become our second home...but it has. It has become a place with some of our closest friends. The place has changed us. This place captured our hearts and it would be impossible to not return! We are so excited to have more and more people each year joining us in this journey with Emmanuel!

WHAT SAFETY PRECAUTIONS ARE WE TAKING?

There are a few major precautions we take as a team to conduct these trips in the safest manner possible. The first is that we do not go to the areas of the city that tend to attract the most crime and violence. We go straight to the Children's Home and stay there. (The two exceptions to this include our trip to the waterpark and our mountain climb to the cross.) We will take multiple vehicles across the border together and drive about 15 minutes directly to the Children's Home, traveling in daylight hours. The entire Children's Home is gated and locked as well as our specific rooms in the Visitor Center.

WHAT IS EMMANUEL MINISTRIES?

For over 50 years, Emmanuel Ministries has served as a refuge and beacon of light for children and families in Juarez. When families are struggling to make ends meet, or unable to provide the basic care their children need...Emmanuel has been there to provide shelter, food, education and most importantly the hope and love found in Jesus Christ for families in need. Currently Emmanuel is home to about 75 of the most incredible niños. (Check out their website for more information...www.emmanuelgo.org)

ARE ALL OF THE KIDS WHO LIVE AT THE HOME ORPHANS? WHAT BROUGHT THEM TO THE HOME?

Each of the kids at the home has a family or a relative whose custody they are under. Majority of the kids either come from a single-parent household or live with a grandma/aunt because their parents are not living or are unable to care for them. During the week the children live and go to school at Emmanuel, providing them a safe place for the kids to be cared for. Then, on Friday afternoons, the kids return to their homes for a weekend with their family.

DOES A WEEK ACTUALLY MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

YES! In many cases short-term missions can be harmful and unbeneficial for the people a group goes to serve...but we are striving to break this mold. Through a long-term relationship we have formed with Emmanuel, they have come to trust and know that ACE will continue to come down.

Even though the faces of each group may change – ACE will continue to be there to do whatever we can to serve. As a ministry, we do not believe in taking trips to as many places as possible – we have chosen to invest in specific places for the long haul. Building deep, messy, meaningful relationships that break the mold of what short-term missions usually implies.

During this one week we have in Juarez – you have the opportunity to make an impact. It can be very helpful to pick a few kids to really invest in. Get to know their stories, share your own story...build a relationships. You can, even if just for a week, be a smiling face that brightens their day...you can, even if just for a week, give them extra one-on-one attention that the home may not be able to provide on a daily basis...you can, even if just for a week, show Christ's love through word and action.

BUT IT CAN'T STOP THERE.

We are fully aware that we will probably be the ones leaving more changed than the kids...and that's okay as long as you use it! Take what you experience, learn and see and bring it back to your life here. Continue Kingdom, life-giving work in your own families, neighborhoods and communities...get involved in ministries and with places that serve the least of these...continue to serve and love others on a daily basis at home.

WHAT ARE THREE BIG THINGS TO COME PREPARED KNOWING?

1. **BE ALL IN** from the very start! Don't waste a single day at Emmanuel. Sometimes people tend to take the first few days to just observe, take it all in, sit back...our encouragement is to jump right in!!! Don't let a single moment pass because the week is going to go SO FAST. From day one...be all in.
2. **BE PREPARED TO BE THE ONE CHANGED**. Although WE are going to serve and love these kids...you will soon realize that YOU are the one leaving more loved, blessed, and changed than you ever expected.
3. **BE FLEXIBLE**. Meal times, times we are supposed to start activities, projects we hope to accomplish...these might all change while we are down there. But be flexible, be open to whatever the day holds and don't be held back by your own expectations or ideas. Let God work in and through us, whatever it may look like.

WHAT WILL WE BE DOING?

There are a lot of things we will be trying to accomplish during our week in Juarez...but first and foremost, above any to-do list or project is to LOVE the KIDS and the LEADERS of this home. In whatever way possible, we will seek to encourage, support, serve and love them with all that we are. During our summer trip, daily activities include leading kids in an outside activities program, taking them to the waterpark, coordinating and leading indoor arts and crafts projects, possibly engaging in a mural/paint project, hanging out with your trip mates. Lots of kids. Lots of sun!

WHAT IF I DON'T SPEAK SPANISH?

Don't panic! The majority of people who have gone on these trips do not speak Spanish. And it's okay! There is great power in just being present with these kids...a simple hug...a smile...a piggyback ride...trying to use any broken Spanish you may know...doing all of these things will mean more than you can imagine! Remember you can show love without speaking a single word.

WHERE WILL I BE SLEEPING?

We will be staying in the Visitor Center directly connected to the Children's Home. There will be a room for the guys and a room for the girls, each with bunk beds, showers and bathrooms. We are even blessed with air-conditioning in these spaces! We also have access to a room where as a group we can debrief, worship and play games in the evenings.

WHAT IS THE FOOD LIKE?

You will experience a week of the most DELICIOUS FOOD made by incredible women! There will be lots of beans, rice, tortillas, salsas, enchiladas, guacamole, tostadas and other classic Mexican dishes. There are always many options provided at each meal – so there will rarely if ever be a time you do not find something you will like. We eat all of our meals at Solie's home right across the street from the Children's Home...expect to be treated like family when you walk through their doors!