

El Salvador Mission Trip Information

Thank you for your interest in mission work in El Salvador. This trip is organized by North Ridge Church, Marshfield, Wisconsin. This overview will provide some answers to your questions and give you information you may need for a trip to El Salvador.

2009 Trip Date Information

Trip Dates: Fri., Jan. 30 (early evening departure) through Sat., Feb. 7 (late morning arrival). Departure and arrival times are subject to modifications!

For more information or to register, contact North Ridge Church at (715) 387-6111 or missions@northridgefamily.org.

Mission Information

The missionary we support in El Salvador is Don Triplett. He is married to Terri and together they have served in El Salvador for many years. They have established King's Castle, an Assemblies of God mission based in El Salvador but serving other countries in Central America and across the world. Please see www.kingscastle.org for more details on their work.

King's Castle hosts many work teams from the United States every year. There are construction teams, evangelism teams and medical teams as well as various other service opportunities available. North Ridge Church has been sending teams to King's Castle since 2001.

El Salvador Information

El Salvador is a small country in Central America. It is the size of Massachusetts and has a population of nearly 7 million people. El Salvador is a poor country and many live in third world conditions.

In the 1970s discontent with societal inequalities, a poor economy, and the repressive measures of dictatorship led to civil war between the government, ruled since 1961 by the right-wing National Conciliation Party (PCN), and leftist

El Salvador Information (cont.)

antigovernment guerrilla units, whose leading group was the communist backed Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN). The U.S. intervened on the side of the military dictatorship, despite its scores of human rights violations. Between 1979 and 1981, right-wing death squads backed by the military killed about 30,000 people. The presidency of José Napoleón Duarte, a moderate civilian, from 1984-1989, offered an alternative to the political extremes of right and left, but Duarte was unable to end the war and in 1989, Alfredo Cristiani of the right-wing Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA) was elected. On Jan. 16, 1992, the government signed a peace treaty with the guerrilla forces, formally ending the 12-year civil war that had killed 75,000.

In 1998, Hurricane Mitch devastated the country, leaving 2000 dead and over 50,000 homeless. Then in early 2001, major earthquakes struck El Salvador, damaging about 40% of the nation's housing. An even worse disaster beset the country in the summer when a severe drought destroyed 80% of the country's crops, causing famine in the countryside.

General Trip Information

Language - Spanish is the language of El Salvador. English translators will be available but are limited. Medical providers at the clinic will be assigned a translator during their work times.

Safety - Please see the US consulate advisory at <http://travel.state.gov/>. This has advice regarding international travel and advisories for El Salvador as well. We are kept in safe locations and in groups. Be sure to stay together and not go off alone. Crime is a big problem in this impoverished nation. It is common to see guards with machetes or guns protecting the camp, stores, etc.

Forms - Forms for the trip are needed by the deadlines announced. You will not be able to go on the trip if these are not in by the deadline.

General Trip Information (cont.)

Food and Drink - Drink bottled water only. Local street vendors may sell fruit that may have been washed in local water. Brush your teeth with bottled water. The food provided by the camp is safe. We ask that each team member bring a large jug of powdered Gatorade to help supply the team during the workdays. We will have mixed Gatorade and water for team members each day. The cafeteria serves food at the main King's Castle camp for breakfast, lunch and dinner at set times only. There is a small cantina available at variable times for snacks.

Housing - We will be housed in dorms. Men and women are housed in separate dorms. This includes married couples and families. A large common room adjoins two large rooms with 10 - 14 bunk beds per room and common bathroom and shower facilities are in each dorm. Water is often off or just cold water. Often there is hot water at the camp but not always. Toilet facilities have limited sewage capability. In El Salvador, used toilet paper is thrown in the trash; otherwise, the septic systems will become plugged and not work. Electricity is standard US 120 voltage and outlets.

Weather - Teams are outdoors often. In the winter months, it is dry and hot in El Salvador. Sunny and 75-95 degrees F is usual. El Salvador is closer to the Equator and the sun is high and intense. Sunscreen is needed.

Fun - We often have time at the end of the day to swim, play cards or ping pong, or sit and chat. Time and travel schedule permitting, we try to spend the day at a resort located on the Pacific Ocean. One-piece conservative suits for women are recommended to avoid offending the local people and to be consistent with our Christian values.

Dress - Appropriate for your team. Shorts are not commonly worn in El Salvador, except by children. We request shorts not be worn while working to respect the native people. Modest shorts can be worn at King's castle camp and the beach. We will attend church service while there.

Dress (cont.) - Casual conservative dress is appropriate. Dresses or slacks for women and pants for the men are appropriate. On work sites and in villages there is often raw sewage, trash and rubble in the streets. Open toed shoes or sandals in these environments are not the best.

Sickness - If you get sick, let the team leaders know immediately so that we can help. Diarrhea can occur and taking medicine early can help. Serious illness or accidents will be prudently dealt with. There is a local hospital that is good and safe. Medical insurance coverage is provided for in the cost of your trip. Evacuation to the states, if needed, is also available.

Open to All - We wish to provide this experience to Christians and non-Christians alike from NRC or other churches. This is a NRC lead trip however. We will try to follow Christian principles. We ask that language and conduct be respectful. **Use of tobacco, alcohol, and controlled substances is strictly prohibited by the trip host organizations!** Displays of affection between married couples should be discrete so to not offend our hosts.

Changed Lives - Likely, your life will be affected in many miraculous ways. You are also going to touch the lives of many El Salvadorans for Christ.

Emotions - It is common to feel overwhelmed or afraid. The host missionaries and missionary assistants are very experienced. For some this may be your first travel to a foreign country. You may never have seen poverty to the degree you will experience it on this trip. Remember we are there to serve and help. Be flexible and patient. Unexpected delays and situations are commonplace. It is often shocking the first time someone experiences a third world culture. Sadness and frustration are common feelings you may experience. You may feel helpless or that the small job you are doing is not effective. When you return home, you may feel sad, lost, guilty, lonely etc. This is common.

General Trip Information (cont.)

Prayer and Devotionals - This is a Christian service trip and while we welcome believers of all faiths, as well as non-believers, most trip participants are devoted Christians. Trip participants can expect to see the work of Jesus Christ during these trips. There are structured daily devotional sessions and faith discussions. All trip participants are free to share in these activities.

Devotionals are held daily in the morning after breakfast. These are considered mandatory and you are encouraged to attend. We understand that these may not serve everyone on the team depending on their current relationship with Jesus Christ but they are often very interesting and helpful to the team. Announcements and other informational items may be discussed at this time as well. You will not have to lead a devotional. Certain team members will lead these but you may be asked to help with one or lead one on a voluntary basis. Evening team wrap up meetings are held each night. These are mandatory as well and are a great time of sharing and unity.

El Salvadoran Children- The children of El Salvador often pull at our heartstrings. Team members sometimes like to provide candy or toys to these kids. Remember that their teeth are bad to begin with, so sugarless gum would be better for them. There are usually many kids and if you give things out a large crowd will form. Try to do this at times that will not be disruptive to the work site or clinic. Do not throw items to the children from the bus. It is dangerous as the children run after the bus, might fall, and get run over. Play with them and love them as much as possible.

Requests for Travel to the U.S. - Occasionally native El Salvadorans may approach you and ask that you support them in their efforts to immigrate to the US. This usually involves saying you will employ them and give them a place to live so that they can get a visa to travel to the US. This process in itself is difficult. If they do get a visa, they may not leave the U.S. when the visa is expired. This is not encouraged. We seek to help all we can

but we do not encourage team members to sponsor nationals for a visa.

Passports - A valid passport is needed for travel to El Salvador. You can obtain forms for a passport at city hall in Marshfield or at your local city hall. It takes about 2 - 6 weeks to get a passport; therefore, you need to do this as soon as possible.

Fees - Fees for the trip are set each year. Occasionally, fees may need to be increased to cover unexpected costs for air travel, materials, or lodging. Team members usually bring extra cash with them to buy snacks and gifts while in El Salvador. The El Salvadoran currency is the US dollar; therefore, currency exchange is not required. Cost for things in El Salvador is comparable to prices in the US. Nationals often are extremely poor as well, sometimes making as little as \$70/month or less. Let us be aware of our affluence while being a guest in their country so that we do not insult or upset these great people.

Fundraising - Fundraising is often undertaken by team members to pay for their trip. North Ridge Church has a fundraising packet that can be used for the trip to help raise your support. Please inquire at the church office for a packet. Begin fundraising as soon as possible so that there is time to make payment deadlines.

Operations Support Teams

Leaders – Missionary staff will lead this team.

Team – Men, women, and children.

Work – Specific tasks to support King's Castle operations. These tasks include bus repair, food and clothes sorting, costume sewing, and general repair.

Dress – jeans and t-shirts, work boots or shoes.

Construction Teams

Leaders - We will have a missionary associate that lives and works in El Salvador for King's Castle leading our efforts.

Projects - The jobs often include digging, block wall building, painting, carpentry, drywall, moving dirt, etc. No specific skills are needed, except a willingness to work and serve.

Locations - We work at various locations depending on need established by King's Castle.

Supplies - Materials will be purchased in El Salvador with money we provide. Fund raising is important to supply our efforts. Tools are available at King's Castle but if you wish special equipment or tools, you need to bring them. Your own work gloves are a necessity. It is hot and dry and dehydration is common.

Dress – jeans, t-shirts, work boots or shoes, gloves, hat, and sunscreen.

Medical Teams

Leaders -Dr. Boris is an El Salvadoran Doctor that works full time for King's Castle. He runs the medical clinic at King's Castle. North Ridge designates a medical team leader as well.

Team -Visiting medical teams like ours are usually composed of doctors, nurses, dentists, other medical workers, non-medical personnel and local El Salvadoran Christians. Teams work together to set up clinics in poor areas where medical care is limited. These clinics may see over 100 patients per day. Cases are usually minor. Skin problems, minor infections, pain, malnutrition, and parasites are commonly encountered. Some minor excisions and procedures are done at times. Equipment and instruments are usually available at the clinic at King's Castle. If you wish to have certain equipment or instruments, you should bring them. Medications are purchased and brought with us to supply these clinics. Patients will be provided the

Medical Teams (cont.)

needed medications at a pharmacy area staffed by one of the nurses and assistants. Patients often wait hours to be seen. Non-medical team members are used to help register patients, help with patient flow and assist with various duties. There are many children at the clinics that need play time and interaction. Non-medical team members also play with the children and play games color read stories etc. There are national Christian counselors that will share the Gospel with each patient in a non-threatening manner and pray with him or her if desired.

Work -The first day is usually used to prepare medications and supplies for the clinics held during the rest of the week. These may be held on the King's castle property and or villages and towns around the area where need exists.

Dress - For clinic days, scrubs are appropriate; otherwise casual, culturally appropriate clothing is fine.

Evangelism Teams

Leaders – Local missionaries and students will lead this team.

Team - Men, women, and children. No talent needed. Includes significant contact with people. This is fun and active work!

Work - Our goal is to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ. These teams spend time performing songs and plays and dance for groups of people in villages to give them the hope of Jesus. Members also interact by playing games and sports with the El Salvadoran kids. It is very fun and emotional. This starts with a day of training then 4 days of presentations in different locations.

Dress – Casual but no shorts when off-site or during work hours.