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PARTICIPANT PACKAGE

Participating in a cross-cultural missions trip is not a vacation or holiday! This is a journey with a purpose. This package has been written to help you understand what you have signed up for, to reveal our hearts a little, to set out a challenge for you, and to give you some of the nitty gritty details you need to get ready!

So, here we go...

Thank you for being willing to come to Guatemala. We are excited to see what God is going to do in you and through you as you work alongside the beautiful Kekchi people of Northern Alta Verapaz.

The people of Chisec and the surrounding 200 small villages are poor, humble people. From our North American perspective, their poverty can seem overwhelming. We see everything they don't have – no running water, no electricity, no concrete floors, no desks or books in classrooms. But, we really want to encourage you to look deeper and see them as the wonderful human beings they are, created in Christ's image, just like you and me, full of potential.

Ron Pearce, founder of Empower Ministries International, once said that the real beauty of a cross-cultural missions experience is this heavenly exchange that happens between the team participants and the nationals they have come to serve. A team comes all hyped up to serve and complete a project and help "those in need." Yet the reality, if they are willing, is that they receive as much or more than they give. Perhaps not in a material sense, but North Americans have much to learn from people in developing nations (like Guatemala).

Your team is bringing along funding for a project and we are very thankful for that. It is a way that we can work together with a community to build relationship with them and help them to improve the quality of their lives. But, the real treasure that you bring is YOU! Your presence in a small village speaks volumes to the people. It is more important than any "real work" you will do. And it is something that sending money alone cannot accomplish. Don't get me wrong...we need your financial support, too. But equally important, the people we share life with need you!

They need to know that they are worth travelling across the world to meet! They are worth leaving behind your home, family and friends. They are worth it because they are dearly loved and precious to the Lord! That is where their value lies, just like yours!

Participating in this cross-cultural missions experience can be life changing if you let it; over the years of hosting teams we have seen this first-hand. It is a part of your journey – a boot camp of sorts – to better equip you to move forward in your life-long relationship with the Lord. In the words of David Platt, “what you do in that 1 week away from your home culture can positively affect the way you live the other 51 weeks of the year.” That is our prayer for each one of you!

And, as with any exchange, we (your missionary hosts and the Guatemalans) reap a benefit from your presence here, too! You are a huge encouragement for the Body of Christ in our area. When you are here, we are reminded that we are part of a bigger body, a bigger family. That although we may be separated by a great distance, geographically, our hearts are kindred spirits. This is energizing! This gives us the push that we need to keep pressing on.

What do you think? Are you ready to make an exchange?

Rocky and Karren

If you want to learn more about our ministry and some of the things we are involved in, please visit our website (www.compellingloveministries.com) and our facebook page.

What Will You Be Doing?

Every team wants to know exactly what they will be doing when they are in Guatemala. And, you will be “doing” a lot of stuff. But, we want you to know, that more important than anything on the list below, will be the relationships you cultivate through this experience. Relationships with other team members; relationships with your hosts; relationships with Guatemalans; and, most importantly, relationship with the Lord. If everything that you “do” gets done in and through relationship, it is going to be awesome!

Although every team is a little different, there are some common threads that run through most team schedules.

- Work project – most teams are involved in a work project either out in a rural community or on Compelling Love Ministries’ property.
- Children’s ministry – most teams will also participate in 2-3 days of children’s ministry that looks a little like a Vacation Bible School program. You will sing songs, tell stories, do crafts and play games with kids.
- Evening Debriefs – every evening after supper we will get together and share a little about the day. It is a time for us to talk about what we’ve seen and experienced as well as dig a little deeper into what God may be teaching us.

- Home Visitation – Whether we are out in a village or working right in Chisec, there are always opportunities for home visits where we can visit with a family and hear a little about their life and then pray with them. These are always special times.
- Church Participation – you will have the opportunity to attend church with Guatemalan brothers and sisters and worship the Lord side by side!
- Market Experience – Chisec has no grocery store! We will make sure you get the opportunity to see our local market and have the chance to stimulate the local economy a little (buy some souvenirs)!
- Sightseeing – you will have the opportunity to visit one or more of the many tourist sites here in Guatemala. The details of this will be planned with your team leaders.

Excursions

Your team leaders may discuss some excursion options with you that are not a standard part of the regular team itinerary and do come with an additional cost.

For example, while you are in Chisec, your team may choose to swim at the local pool – Q50/person or go caving in the local cave system Candelaria – Q150/person.

Your team may choose to visit historic Colonial Antigua at the end of your trip. Be prepared to cover the cost of your own lunch on this day as well as whatever activities you choose to participate in. Some options for 2 hour tours are Bean to Bar chocolate workshop at Choco Museo Q200; Carve your own piece of jade at Casa de Jade Q500; Finca Filadelifa Coffee Plantation Tour Q200; or Antigua Walking Tour with a Guide Q350 (for the group) plus entrance into ruins (Q60).

There are also many Artisan Markets and small shops where souvenirs can be purchased.

Some groups choose to visit the Mayan Ruins in Tikal while in Guatemala. This is a 2 day trip and adds \$100 USD/person to your per diem, and covers the travel there and back, meals out, hotel, park entrance fees, and a professional guide.

What is it like in Guatemala?

Rocky and Karren will be at the airport to pick you up and you will travel together as a group. Guatemalan roads and traffic conditions are different than what you are used to, but we have lots of experience driving in this country, so don't fear! The drive between Guatemala City and Chisec takes anywhere between 6 and 8 hours depending on traffic, road construction and weather.

Your team will be staying in hotels (not like a North American hotel), dormitories, Bible schools and/or mission complexes. We work hard to ensure you have clean, safe accommodations and easy access to clean, purified water.

You will be eating a wide variety of food while in Guatemala: everything from North American fast food (McDonald's) to traditional black beans and tortillas. We try to include enough

familiar food that even fussy eaters are satisfied. If you have any food allergies or restrictions, please let us know **in advance of your arrival**. We can find some substitutions if given the time to look around. It is also a good idea to bring along a supply of food/snack items that are safe for you to eat.

We will provide you with three meals a day, but if you are accustomed to eating more than that, you will need to bring some extras along! Granola bars/power bars are great to have on hand.

You will experience a wide range of climates while in Guatemala. In the capital city and Antigua, it is usually spring-like, but in Chisec it can get very hot and humid. It is a good idea to bring along a sweater or hoodie just in case it is cool, but be prepared for the heat as well. Bringing a supply of electrolyte replacement powder (see packing list) is an essential tool to fight heat exhaustion.

You will be accompanied by a translator most of the time. The official language is Spanish, but many people in our area speak only Kekchi. It may be frustrating for you not to be able to communicate with words, but we trust in those moments you will look for other ways to make yourself understood. You would be surprised what you can communicate without words. Remember a hug and smile are universal!

You should purchase travel medical insurance and visit your local Travel Health Clinic to be sure you have been educated in all the health concerns when travelling to Guatemala. Chisec is in a malaria zone and the worst time of year for this would be June – October (our rainy season). As a ministry, we do not require any immunizations or medications. These are decisions you need to make after discussing them with your health care professionals.

Your per diem funds (\$55 US dollars/day) cover all your in-country meals, lodging, travel expenses, translators, and drivers. Your per diem does not cover any entrance fees for your tourist day(s), personal spending money, or any expenses incurred prior to getting to Guatemala (immunizations, flights, passports, medical insurance, meals en route, etc).

Your project money covers the cost of all the supplies for the work projects to be completed, including paid labour.

Money

Although the per diem covers the vast majority of your in-country expenses, team members will want to bring along some money for incidentals and souvenirs from the local market. In Chisec, credit cards are not accepted anywhere. You will need Quetzal (the local currency) for any and all purchases you want to make. If you go online you will see the current exchange rate for buying Quetzal.

Please go to your local bank and order Quetzales prior to leaving for Guatemala (this usually takes 3 – 4 weeks). If this isn't possible, we do have two ATMs in Chisec, but remember you will be charged a fee to withdraw money.

How to prepare spiritually?

Participating in a cross-cultural missions experience can be a stretching time and it is a good idea to prepare yourself, spiritually. Set time aside, each day, to read the Word and pray and allow the Holy Spirit to prepare you. We encourage you to begin a journal as you prepare. Write out scriptures that the Lord has laid on your heart. Write down your thoughts, concerns, and questions.

Talk to your pastor and your missions coordinator (if your church has one). Discuss your involvement on the team with them and ask for their advice, counsel and blessing.

It is also important to have a prayer covering. Ask two or three people to commit themselves to pray for you as you prepare, while you are in Guatemala and then when you get home. This is not a vacation and you may face spiritual opposition, so prayer is essential! It is helpful if you can make up a photo/prayer card with a magnet on the back that they can put on their fridge. This will help remind people to pray for you.

Take advantage of the Devotional Preparation package, too. They have been written specifically for this trip, and a requirement to complete for each team member. Even if you have participated in other cross-cultural missions trips, we really encourage you to spend time preparing yourself. It is one more way you can equip yourself to both give and receive.

How to prepare culturally?

Guatemala is a very rich and diverse culture and we think, once you experience it, you will come to love some of their traditions very much. It is very relational as opposed to task driven, like we are in North America. This sometimes pushes our “patience” button, but it is good to be stretched...right?

Guatemala suffered from a 36 year long civil war – the longest civil war in world history (1960 – 1996). This has had a lasting impact on the people we share life with. In order to understand the people and their culture better, it is worth spending a little time researching the country and its history.

Some guidelines to follow that will help...

Remember that you are leaving your culture behind to experience something different. Different doesn't automatically translate into “wrong,” it actually just means different!

The local people will be fascinated with you and will watch you very closely. So, in order to cope well and be a blessing...

- Read Galatians 5:22,23 regularly. This is an awesome reminder of what we are to demonstrate to those around us. It is the outward expression of our inward condition!

- Maintain a positive attitude. They may not understand your words, but your facial expressions, tone of voice and body language speak loudly!
- Don't be offended if people stare or even point fingers at you laughing! Just smile! You are a stranger to them and you look very different than most others they encounter. And you speak gibberish (English), which they find very amusing.
- We ask that you do not drink any alcohol or smoke while you are with us. In this culture, those are inconsistent with an evangelical lifestyle and we don't want anything to cause confusion or create a stumbling block for any of our Guatemalan friends.
- Please respect your team leaders and hosts and the decisions they make. If you have legitimate concerns, please address them personally with those involved, always working towards harmony and unity.
- Be dedicated to serving others, rather than being served. Look around for what needs to be done and then do it rather than waiting to be asked.
- Take direction cheerfully and cooperatively. Be a blessing to work with!

What to think about when you pack?

We will most likely be spending our first night in Guatemala City. It is super helpful if you can have all that you need for that first night and the following day in your carry-on luggage (pjs, change of clothes, travel size toiletries, medications). Your larger, checked in bags may get loaded into a truck or put on the roof of a vehicle and it is a challenge to have to dig through the pile after they are tied down, secured and ready to travel! Thanks for helping us out in this way!

You should also pack, keeping in mind that you probably cannot do laundry unless you wash something out by hand. The following is a list of some of the things you should remember:

- Clothes (see **what to wear** below)
- Toiletries, including prescriptions
- Bible, journal and pen/pencil
- Sun screen & bug repellent
- Sun glasses & hat
- Day pack/back pack
- Water bottle
- Work gloves
- Sturdy work shoes
- Bathing suit
- Rubber boots and light rain jacket (if you are here in the rainy season)
- Gatoraid powder or electrolyte replacement powder
- Snacks (box of granola bars)
- Ziplock bags to store opened items – ant protection!

- Camera, flashlight, alarm clock (or your phone if they are all 3)
- Hand sanitizer

What to wear?

It is important that you dress appropriately for the activity that you will be involved in. I saw a post of Facebook that I liked: "Raise your hands and touch your toes. If anything shows, go change your clothes." That may seem a little simplistic, but it sure makes sense. You want your clothes to be comfortable and modest.

The following is a guide to help you determine what different kinds of clothing you should bring along.

- In general (in and around Chisec or other villages)
 - Men: there really is no dress code per say for men. Sorry ladies...this is part of the culture. Because of the climate, lighter colours are better/coolier.
 - Women: Capris or pants (long shorts are fine in Chisec, at the hotel, at our place and on tourism days, but generally not for villages). Please take care with your choice of shirts. You will do a lot of bending over, so something with a higher neckline is always going to be the better choice. Sleeveless tops are fine as long as the straps are thick and cover your bra straps and they are not low cut (do the "bend over" test).
 - Men & Women: Please be cognizant of negative images on clothing – skull and crossbones, beer labels, etc.
 - Footwear: it is great to have along a pair of flip flops or sandals, walking shoes and work shoes.
- On the work site
 - Close-toed shoes
 - Hats and work gloves
- At church – although there is no dress code for attending church apart from **no shorts**, it is good to keep in mind that here in Guatemala people will wear their best to church, so it is good time to dress up a little, or at least to reserve something clean!
 - Men: long pants (no shorts) and a clean shirt (t-shirt or dress shirt).
 - Women: long pants, capris or skirts (that come to the knee) with a clean shirt.
- On tourism day
 - These are your days. All we ask is that you are modest – no short shorts or bikinis please.

Will I have access to media/telephone?

When we are at a hotel/hostel, you will have internet access, but on our missions base you will not.

That being said, some of you will want to put an international texting or data package on your phone so you can communicate with the outside world while you are in Guatemala. And, we recognize that for some of you who are leaving behind wives, husbands, and/or children, or businesses that require some supervision, it will be important to remain connected.

But, for the rest of you...we would **strongly recommend** that you go on a media fast while in Guatemala and take advantage of the chance to disconnect from technology and connect with each other and the Guatemalans you have come to get to know! If a complete fast is not possible, we ask that you limit your access to media (calling, texting, using internet). We don't want you to be so plugged in to communicating with home that miss out on what is happening right in front of you. That would be very sad!

What do they speak?

Guatemala has 23 official languages, one of which is Spanish. It is the language of business and education and is the most common language in the country. The people in our area speak an indigenous language – Kekchi – and many of those living in the villages are not able to speak Spanish.

This may seem a little daunting, but don't worry. The people want to get to know you and certainly understand the universal language of love. It is awesome if you can learn a few basic Spanish greetings and words to communicate!

Basic Greetings

Some of the translations are "lose" in that the way you say things in other languages is not always exactly how we say it in English. When the pronunciation is strange for the Kekchi, I put it in parenthesis following the word. A general rule of thumb for Kekchi is that an "x" makes a "sh" sound and a "w" makes a "kw" sound. Also, every time there is an apostrophe that is a glottal (like a click in the back of your throat). It is tough to do, so don't worry too much about it.

| English | Spanish | Kekchi / Q'eqchi' |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Hi. How are you? | Hola. Cómo estás? | Ma' sa la ch'ol |
| Fine, thank you. | Bien, gracias. | Os, bantiox. Sa lin ch'ol. |
| My name is (Karren). | Me llamo Karren. | Karren k'ab'a. |
| What is your name? | Cómo te llamas? | Ani la k'ab'a? |
| Where is your house? | Dónde está tu casa? | Bar wan (kwan) li ochoch. |
| Thank you | Gracias | Bantiox (ban-tee-osh) |
| Please | Por favor | Banun (banoon) si lal |
| Thank you for the food. | Gracias por la comida. | Banitox li wa (kwa). |
| You're welcome. | De nada. | Os (oose). |
| God bless you. | Dios le bendiga. | Dios osob tesinq away (akway). |
| | Dios les bendiga (plural). | Dios osob tesinq aray. |

| | | |
|----------------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| Come here. | Venga aqui | Kim a rin. |
| Good bye | Adios. | Wan chik (kwan cheek) |
| | Que via bien. | Os bi. (oos bee) |
| Well done (good job) | Bien hecho. | Os aran. |
| Looks good. | Que bien. | China os. |
| | | |

Well, that is probably enough for now. Go through this package a couple of times and write down any question you have. Feel free to address those questions with your team leader(s) or to email us (karrenchupa@hotmail.ca). We are happy to correspond with you as you are preparing.

Blessings and we will see you soon!

Rocky & Karren Chupa