

Mexico Missions Information Package 2011

As part of the Gr. 9 curriculum at Vernon Christian School, we want to provide the opportunity for students to participate in a mission's project that will give the students practical experiences in service to both God and others. Involvement in a project of this type can provide unique opportunities for God to change lives. Further information on Amor Ministries: www.amor.org

VCS SCHOOL VISION

The Gr. 9 Mission trip has been created to reflect the school's vision and calling:

God the Creator of all has made us in His image
and redeemed us into Jesus Christ,
**to walk faithfully with Him and to work together as a community
to reflect God's light in the world.**
By God's grace, on the foundation of His Word,
and in support of the home and church community,

Our task at V.C.S. is:
To educate children in lifelong skills and knowledge
(academic, spiritual, physical, social and emotional)
To enable children to respond joyfully and faithfully
to God and His creation:

- *By discovering and developing their unique gifts
- *By appreciating and serving others**
- *By discerning God's will in the issue of life.

OBJECTIVES

The aims and objectives of the Missions Team are:

- To provide students with the opportunity to extend Christ's love in a practical, tangible way to people in a setting different from ours.
- To stimulate needs awareness through first hand experience in a foreign setting.
- To enrich students' spiritual growth through reaching out to those in need of the Gospel.
- To show students that being a true disciple of Jesus Christ requires the giving of self: materially, physically and spiritually.
- To broaden students' understanding of world missions and evangelism through the simplified study of biblical and practical missions methods.
- To gain an understanding of and sensitivity to other cultures and the effect of the Gospel on those cultures.
- To learn independence and interdependence within the setting of a team.
- To deepen our understanding of what it means to trust God.
- To provide ongoing opportunities at VCS to follow up on things learned through the missions team experience.

ABOUT OUR PARTNERING ORGANIZATION: AMOR MINISTRIES

The Amor mission trip is a short-term mission trip based on touching the lives of families in Mexico at the point of their greatest need. On an Amor mission trip, you will have the chance to understand the conditions of poverty through immersion. You will take bucket showers. You will get dirty. You will build a home for a family. You will experience community. You will discover the profound simplicity of how to "love your neighbor." Further information on Amor Ministries: www.amor.org

How Families Receive a Home

Families are selected to receive homes by the Mexico Ministry Planning Board (MMPB). The selection process begins with the pastors discerning the need within their own communities. Any family within a community can potentially be selected to receive a home, but the family must own their land. Amor and the MMPB have agreed that a family doesn't have to attend the church within that community to receive a home, because we believe that the house becomes a powerful evangelistic tool and opens a relationship between the community's church and the family. The pastors present their nominations for home recipients at MMPB meetings, and those families selected receive an Amor home built by mission trip participants.

The Mexico Ministry Planning Board

Without this group of Mexican pastors, Amor would truly cease to function as well as it does. The Mexico Ministry Planning Board (MMPB) are not employees of Amor, but an integral part of the Amor team, because they provide vital support in Baja California, Juarez, and Puerto Peñasco, Mexico. The board is made up of Mexican pastors who volunteer to serve alongside the Amor staff because they share a vision of ministry to the people of Mexico.

These tireless, self-sacrificing pastors interview prospective families, create biographical sketches on each family, determine the families in the greatest need for house building priority, and return to the family again and again after the house is complete to meet the spiritual needs of the family. The MMPB sets the tone for service by their consistent involvement with outreach programs, medical clinics, and Amor Ministries staff events.

The Amor House Project

Amor Ministries typically builds an 11'x22', two-room home with a concrete floor, stucco-finished exterior, weather sealed roof, two windows, and a door. An Amor house is a simple design, built according to the standards of the community so a group without skilled labor or power tools can still complete the project.

Amor doesn't allow the use of power tools or generators on the worksite. We want everyone to be involved in the house building process and power tools do not foster that environment. We realize that there are other methods of completing the building project more quickly, but we want everyone to experience the culture, get to know the family, and allow for a positive cultural experience while in Mexico.

YOUR CHILD'S EXPERIENCE

Your child has decided to take part in a life-changing experience, and we want to equip you, the parent, with the tools necessary to partner in this trip as much as possible. The times before, during, and after an Amor Ministries' mission trip will bring new challenges, growth opportunities, and eye opening moments. One thing is for sure, your child will not return the same person who left, but this is a good thing. Each group's trip timeline will vary slightly and

we recommend you contact your child's trip leader for specific questions. Below you will find the general timeline for an Amor mission trip.

Crossing the Border: Today your child will cross the border into Mexico. An Amor representative will meet the group and escort them through the border crossing all the way to camp. Once over the border, the scenery changes dramatically. The pristine homes and American cleanliness gives way to a different set of smells, sights and sounds. The eyes of the group are fixed upon what lies outside the windows. Your child will drive approximately 45 minutes to the secure Amor campground where he or she will set up camp, home for the next week.

Day One: Today your child will pile into a vehicle and drive to the group's building site. The mood of the group is often one of nervous anticipation. There is an excitement about what they are about to do and some reservation as to how they'll build a house in such a short period of time. Once at the site that will hold the new home, the group leader will assess the situation and will build a strategy for the week. Soon your child is digging, leveling, mixing cement, and taking part in some pretty tough manual labor. By the end of today, the group will hopefully finish the foundation to be ready for framing on day two.

Day Two: Today your child will wake up sore. There was a lot of mixing cement by hand the day before! The cement slabs have hardened and the group can continue in the building process. If you were to watch today, you'd see your child sawing, hammering, measuring, and becoming an expert in the art of framing. By the end of this day, the walls and roof are together and positioned on the foundation. There is a visible frame to the house and the project is taking on a shape that will lend to a sense of accomplishment.

Day Three: Your child is probably dreading a wake-up call by day three. As the week comes to its mid-point, time is flying by and your child is acclimated to his or her surroundings. The once intimidating poverty has become a part of daily expectations, and it's now been week without TV, Xboxes, computers and life's other distractions . . . and they are really enjoying themselves! Stress is sometimes high on this day as the reality of only one more day to build is at the forefront. With the walls standing and prepared for stucco, the roof completed and the door and windows installed, the final day will be left for two coats of stucco. The once empty lot is really taking on the form of a home that will keep a family together.

Day Four: Today is filled with much emotion. The group knows it is the last time they will be with their Mexican families, and they begin to realize that they will soon have to re-enter into life back home. Your child will go to the work site excited to finish up the two coats of stucco and give the gift of a completed home to their family. This is an incredible moment.

With a translator at hand, the group will gather the family together to express their love, but more importantly, the great love and grace of God. The key, a symbol of safety and stability for this family, is used to unlock the door to their new home. Throughout the course of the week, your child has come to a place where, without thought, he or she has adjusted to seeing poverty, and instead of being threatened, finds comfort in these new surroundings. He or she also see change happening. There is an understanding your child can make a difference, they have something to offer the world, and he or she has a role to play.

By taking part in providing the gift of a simple home, your child has experienced a glimpse of the joy that comes when we give rather than receive. This is just the beginning of a life that is shaped by not only building into the lives of a family across the border, but making a difference

in the lives of each person your child will encounter upon returning home from the Amor mission trip.

Taken from Amor Ministries Website
<http://www.amor.org>

FINANCES

The Mexico trip will cost approximately \$1300 (Canadian) per student. **The finalized amount will be determined and presented at the September information meeting** after flight and other costs can be finalized. The price will include return transportation to/from an Airport, all accommodation, meals and entrance fees to activities. Students will be responsible for spending money, the costs of obtaining a passport, medical and other insurance.

Students and parents can help to substantially offset these costs by organizing and actively participating in fundraising. At the parent information meeting in June a fundraising committee will be formed to begin this process. If you were unable to attend this meeting or later feel called to serve in this capacity please email us at cbannick@vcs.ca or apodolski@vcs.ca. Parents will regularly be informed of these opportunities through email updates.

In semester one of the 2010/2011 school year, students will also draft a sponsorship letter that they can send to family, friends and church community to help raise financial support for their trip.

IDENTIFICATION

We need a *photocopy* of each participant's passport and birth certificate to be included with the application package. Students **MUST** have a valid passport. Failure to produce a valid passport will result in the student not being able to participate on the trip. Check to ensure, if you already have a passport *that it will still be valid well past March 2011*. Please see information regarding delays when obtaining passports.

Passport Canada Service Delay (from <http://www.ppt.gc.ca>)

As of May 28, 2007:

[Our offices](#) can now process in-person applications within the service standard of **2 weeks** plus delivery delay. However, applicants should be aware that they may face long line-ups at our offices before they meet with a passport officer.

It may take up to **10 weeks** to process applications sent by mail within Canada or submitted through a receiving agent (Canada Post or Services Canada).

To avoid further delays in getting your passport, make sure your application is complete by using the [checklist](#) detailing the most common errors.

Please note that delays may change based on the volume of applications being received.

Please visit our website regularly as this page will be updated weekly.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Everyone is required to have extended international medical insurance for the trip. This travel insurance can be purchased from Thomas Cook travel agency for an additional cost. Your place of employment may provide you with extended international medical insurance through a benefit package. After checking the extent of their coverage you may waive this fee by providing the necessary documentation with your application form.

TETANUS SHOTS

The school will arrange the required travel shots. You will be given advance notice to the date and time. Any adults requiring this immunization can receive it from the local public health clinic.

FOOD AND MONEY

We will provide 3 meals a day and snacks for the entire trip. All entrance fees to activities will be paid. Students will want to have a small amount for discretionary spending (souvenirs, junk food, etc.). Please bring only US currency in cash only (no traveler's cheques!)

ACCOMMODATIONS

Our accommodation in California before and after we enter Mexico is yet to be finalized. In past years we have stayed in churches and/or campgrounds and will be doing the same this year. While in Mexico, Amor Ministries will provide safe and secure camping facilities during the trip. "Banos" (outhouses) will be provided along with outdoor "shower" facilities. These units are primitive but effective!

PERSONAL PACKING CHECKLIST

Students can take 2 pieces of luggage plus a carry-on with them on the plane. Students must be able to carry and keep track of their own luggage. The rule is pack light, smart and with modesty in mind. Some items like a camp chair and air mattress may be purchased in California. There will be an opportunity on the first day to make these purchases.

Travel pouch for carrying money and ID

Sleeping bag, blanket, and pillow

Hot Shots (hand/feet warmers for cold nights)

Solar Shower (black solar bag with hose that can be filled in the morning and warmed in the sun.

For showering it is hung on the wall and used in 'shower room' on Amor campground)

Toiletries (toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant, brush, soap, and shampoo etc)

Toilet paper (in plastic bag)

Towel and wash cloth

Small Flashlight (bring extra batteries)

1L Water bottle with lid (nalgene or similar)

Sunglasses and hat/visor (bring a toque for nights)

Sunblock and lip balm

Insect repellent

Waterless hand sanitizer

Work gloves

Rubber glove (dishwashing gloves)

Plastic bags for wet/dirty clothes and towels

CLOTHES: rule is pack light, smart and with modesty in mind

Work shoes (runners or boots, no open toed shoes allowed on worksites)

Work clothes (no dresses, shorts, capris, no sleeveless or bare midriff tops) 2 pants/2 T

Shirts adequate

Travel/Camp clothes (shorts and dresses okay)
Bathing suit (no bikinis) and cover for showers
Warm clothes for evenings (fleece jackets/sweaters are great – dress with layers)
Jacket(s) and sweatshirt(s)
Rain gear (jacket/pants)
Small Bible, journal, and pen
Spending money, postcards, and stamps
Camera and film
Foam or air mattress
Camp chair - may be purchased in San Diego!

TENTS

We will need tents that will have to be packed along with your other luggage (there are ways of doing this!). If you have a tent, please contact Mrs.Podolski and let her know its sleeping capacity and who will be sharing the tent. Please inspect your tents prior to departure to make sure the planned occupants know how to set up the tent on site and all the parts are there.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

All work will be done within 30 minutes of the US Border. We are within easy access to US hospital services. We will have basic First Aid Kits with us, and a nurse or doctor trained in this area. **A Medical Release Form is included in the application package to be filled out with any information re: allergies, etc.**

CHAPERONES

We will need parent volunteers. Please prayerfully consider your involvement with your son or daughters trip. We specifically will need persons with skills in carpentry, cooking and a nurse or doctor as well as those with a love for teenagers!

Sample Itinerary and Timeline:

Friday

Drive to airport
Fly to San Diego
Stay at a nearby church and set up 'camp'
Shopping for any extra supplies and essentials
Games/Dinner/Devotions at church

Saturday

Breakfast at Church/pack bag lunch
Hike at Torrey Pines/visit to Mission Beach
Supper/Games/Devotions at Church

Sunday

Breakfast at Church/pack bag lunch
Worship at host Church
Drive to Amor/ meet representatives
Cross Border – go to Amor Campsite
Set Up tents in Mexico – Have Dinner/Devotions at Camp

Monday (see above day one)

Breakfast/pack lunch
Worksite
Camp Dinner/Devotions

Tuesday (see above day two)

Breakfast/pack lunch
Worksite
Camp dinner/devotions

Wednesday (see above day three)

Breakfast pack/lunch
Worksite
Camp Dinner/Devotions

Thursday (see above day four)

Breakfast
Worksite
Lunch Meal/pray with family
Cross Border
Dinner & shopping
Stay at host Church

Friday

Breakfast/Pack Lunch
Sea World or Disneyland (9-6) Dinner included
Stay at host Church
Snacks/Devotions at camp

Saturday

Breakfast at Church – pack and clean
Drive to San Diego Airport
Arrive in Vernon Saturday afternoon/evening

Please NOTE: If you have any dietary concerns you must inform supervising teacher so arrangements can be made.

Start Preparing Now!

STUDENTS:

Prayerfully consider becoming involved. *This will not be a holiday.* You will need a genuine desire to go and a strong willingness to serve. If you have a heart for serving God, you will receive an unforgettable and life-changing experience. This is a chance to really connect with your fellow students. Greater still, it is a chance to see God supplying your needs as you do your part by working, saving, participating and praying.

- Fill in your application along with your parent
- Save your money and submit it by the deadlines
- Participate in fundraising opportunities
- Pray for your trip, the family you will serve and your leaders

PARENTS:

Parents have the powerful responsibility to help and motivate and encourage their children. Pray with your child about the decision to go! Recognize the importance of his /her need to be properly motivated. Assure them of your practical and prayerful support.

- Prayerfully consider becoming a chaperone/pray for those who choose to serve in this way
- Fill in your child's application with him/her
- Commit to financial obligations for the trip
- Support and participate in fundraising efforts

COMMUNITY:

We need the prayers and support of the general Christian community. Let your friends and relatives know about our program. Ask them to consider sponsoring a student or providing materials towards the Mission project.