

## YOUNG LIFE EXPEDITIONS

### ***MISSION STATEMENT***

In accordance with Young Life National's Statement of Mission Purpose our short-term missions "Expeditions" program sees itself as a "mission community of Christ-centered people committed to reaching adolescent youth with the gospel of Jesus Christ." We endeavor to work under the "authority of scripture and in accordance with our understanding of incarnational witness, seeking to flesh out the gospel in our lives and relationships." Our central purpose, as put forth in Young Life's Statement of Faith, is to "proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ," both through our involvement with trip participants and in the lives of the people we serve in the international community.

Finally, we are committed to this aim: that everything we do will be directed towards supporting the Young Life staff in our host countries and serving the people of that region. We believe that in doing this we are in fact serving and loving our Lord.

**Trips are designed to support this Mission of Young Life in Costa Rica.**

### **Service Ministry**

Young Life in Costa Rica is a relationship-based, outreach ministry seeking to share the message of Christ with young people. Costa Rican and North American staff and volunteers seek to build relationships with youth and in the course of those relationships, to introduce them to Jesus Christ through verbal as well as non-verbal witness. We are committed to loving and serving people on *their* terms, not ours. We want to serve our Costa Rican family.

You as a Work Team participant are a servant. A servant does what is asked. We ask how we can serve. If the response is "paint the rusted chain-link fence," we'll do it. Servanthood may mean that you are asked to do work that seems pointless: clean bathrooms, paint and scrape walls, play with kids all day, dig a hole and fill it back in ☺, work all day in the rain, ride a bus for 2 hours to do 1 hour of work and then return again, worship in a language you don't know – in a style you aren't comfortable with. However, even this type of work done with a Christ-like attitude can communicate God's love.

It will be an adventure for you!

### **Hopes and prayers for your time in Costa Rica:**

1. That you would come with a truly humble heart.
2. That you would fall more in love with Jesus and hear more clearly His call on your lives. That you would be drawn to a greater understanding and passion for the Lord's work in the world.
3. That you would make a heart connection with Costa Rica – the people, the country, the ministry – not just for this week but for the rest of your life.
4. That you would come to serve no matter how futile or senseless it may seem. That you would leave understanding the difference between "*servicing*" and "*being a servant*".

### **Discipleship & Spiritual Direction**

The ministry and philosophy of Young Life is built upon a relational foundation. God revealed Himself to the world through the medium of relationship. He “became flesh and made His dwelling among us” (John 1:14) in the person of Jesus Christ. We believe that by sharing “not only the gospel of God but our lives as well,” (1 Thess. 2:8) we might introduce young people to the living Savior. Remaining focused on this philosophy, we believe that you as trip leader are best equipped to supervise in the spiritual leadership of your group. You are the one(s) who have been investing in their lives prior to your trip experience and you are the one(s) who will journey back with them as they return to their lives in the States. You have the relationships! **For this reason we leave the majority of the organization and planning of group worship, discussion and teaching or study time largely up to you. You are responsible for providing a worship leader(s) if so desired.** We will give you a schedule structure that will help you plan for such times with your group. It is recommended that the group leaders prepare daily devotional materials for the participants to work through individually, as well as materials to guide evening group discussions.

In addition, we will provide you with materials to use as supplements or guides for the spiritual direction of your trip. The staff in Costa Rica will gladly make themselves available as they are able, sharing their testimonies, their spiritual journeys and giving insights to how God has called them to the mission field. We will make suggestions and share from our experience with previous groups, but the themes, biblical teachings and general spiritual direction of your group is in your hands. Among other benefits, this allows you to begin processing the experience with your folks before you arrive, as well as once you have returned home. We want to serve you in this process. Rest assured you will be provided with ample time to stop and inquire together about what God wants in the life of your group throughout the trip. (probably 4-5 times during your stay in Costa Rica)

We’ve seen God use Expedition trips as a powerful tool in drawing people into deeper intimacy with Himself.

Participants tend to be stripped of their normal comforts and devices on which we often depend for our security. When that gets stripped away; what is left? This puts us in a situation where the only place to turn is God. You as trip leaders will be able to process through this reality with your kids.

Control can be a vice. You will not be in control of your time in Costa Rica. You will be dependent. You may be called upon to deal with living conditions and developing-world circumstances that inevitably draw you to the Lord...in this place of dependence you’ll have to trust God and the people in Costa Rica.

**It would be a mistake to ever promote a Young Life short-term mission as a "vacation"! As a trip leader, please do not “sell” a work team trip to Costa Rica based on getting to go to the beach or walking through the rainforest. While we strive to create an atmosphere in which folks will have fun and opportunities to relax and enjoy themselves, the adventure is in terms of service. The structure of daily living in Costa Rica can present real challenges to the individual and flexibility is a MUST. One can expect cold showers, hot sun, rain, humidity, spiders and other bugs! Yet, it is these very things that make our experience so rich and memorable.**

Overall, the short-term experience has proven to be a landmark in the life of a Christian disciple, deepening their faith and strengthening their convictions. As a teenager, a college student, a child or a senior adult, trip participants are brought into the presence of Christ in a unique, profound way. Young Life Expeditions is more than a short-term missions opportunity. Participants are both Givers and Receivers, sharing their time and resources

with the international community and partaking of the Bread of Life as offered by the Lord Himself.

### **Come visit our world...**

Please read through the following pages carefully. They should answer the majority of your questions about the “when, what, where and how” of the Expeditions program. As you move deeper into the process of preparing for your trip, we will send you additional materials.

#### **Field Costs**

**\$675** per person for trips of 8 days or less (including travel days) and **\$50** per person for each additional day. <sup>1</sup> These prices *do not include transportation* to and from the host country.

These costs cover the following:

- all in-country transportation and meals
- all lodging
- a varying fee for materials that your group will work with
- orientation materials

***The only thing not included in the above costs is airport taxes for entering and leaving Costa Rica, approximately \$26 total, and optional spending money.*** (\$50-\$100 will buy plenty of souvenirs if your team members desire to do so)

#### **Travel Costs**

We are happy to help you with your airfare. You can fundraise for the costs of your travel through Young Life, through your church, or handle this directly with an airline or travel agency.

#### **Fundraising**

The vast majority of our trip participants raise part or all of their costs. This is a powerful and overwhelmingly meaningful part of any short-term missions experience. It brings into the process hundreds of people who might not otherwise have a connection with the people of Costa Rica. It also gives participants the immeasurable blessing of having a “Body” of contributors to support them not only financially, but perhaps, most importantly, prayerfully. It also provides a way for individuals who are not coming as part of a church or organization to raise the costs necessary to finance their trip. If you **are** coming with a Young Life area group, a church group or another organization, you may find the fundraising process a necessary and beneficial supplement to the other resources you are gathering for the funding of your trip.

Our three-page “Fundraising Guidelines” will help as you begin the process of gathering the financial resources for your trip. Included is a “Sample Support Letter” to serve as a guide in helping individuals write support letters. These materials were developed to help make the fundraising process less intimidating. Use them as you have need or to supplement any fundraising procedures you might already have in place.

#### **Payment Schedule & Deadlines**

Travel payment deadlines will be in accordance with respective airlines or travel agencies, and will depend on whether we are handling set-up for your travel or if you are doing this independently. Airlines and agencies typically require a deposit within 2 weeks of seat reservations. If you are using our recommended travel agency and have at least 10

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<sup>1</sup> \*Trip prices subject to change up until Nov. 1<sup>st</sup> of each year.

in your group, you will not be required to pay for airline tickets in full until approximately 6 weeks before departure, allowing the maximum amount of time for fundraising.

The balance of your per person trip, or “Field” costs, are due in full to Young Life no later than two weeks before your group’s departure. You will only be charged Field Costs for the people whom you bring. There is no penalty from Young Life for reducing your number at any date. However, a significant change in your group size may result in some itinerary modifications, or we may ask for your willingness to share your week with an additional group.

### **Passports**

Passports are required for entry into Costa Rica. Passports must be valid and unexpired, with an expiration date of **no earlier than 30 days after travel is to be completed**. Please have all trip members check passports carefully to make sure they meet these requirements.

### **Shots & Immunizations**

Young Life recommends the following:

- 1) Updated Tetanus Booster -(within the last five years is fine)
- 2) Hepatitis A -This is a two-part shot with an optional booster. You must get the first shot at least 5 weeks before your trip. The second shot is administered 6 months later and provides a +50 year immunity booster.

We update this information frequently in consultation with our in-country staff and other medical resource guides. However, if you would like to consult the CDC or a family physician, and make additional suggestions or recommendations to your team, feel free to do so. We have found that often the CDC will recommend precautions that do not apply to the regions where your team will be staying. The above recommendations are made in accordance with your team's in-country itinerary.

### **Group Size**

There is no hard and fast rule; however, we feel that ideal group size is 15-25 persons, including leaders. Often we will schedule more than one group at the same time, with a maximum number of participants around 60. In such cases, you will most likely share evening worship and meeting times, but can retain group autonomy for purposes of discussion, Bible study and question/answer times. In this scenario groups work, lodge and eat together, but are afforded ample time for individual group fellowship. You may find this a wonderful help in the area of leadership responsibility. Along with other groups’ trip leaders, you can divide and delegate various leadership roles. For example, while your group may not have a music/worship leader, another group might. Together multiple groups can create a more complete experience for your work-trip participants. If you are scheduled at the same time as another group, you will be put in touch with the other trip leaders beforehand so that you might discuss the sharing of such responsibilities.

### **Length of Stay**

Typically, spring trips, often during college and high school “Spring Break” vacation, are 9 days or less in length.

Summer trips can be up to two weeks in length, with exceptions for longer stays. In our experience ideal summer trip length is 10-12 days. This period of time allows for richer cross-cultural opportunities. Groups are able to spend more time investing in their work projects and more time building community among themselves. We strongly encourage you to aim for the longer trip length if at all possible.

### **Leaders**

Young Life requests that you provide at least 1 leader for every 10 college-age participants or 1 leader for every 5 high school-age participants. We highly recommend that you bring leaders who are familiar with your group members. While our staff will do everything they can to supplement your leadership, please do not depend on the Young Life staff in your host-country to control or discipline your folks. You know them! Most likely they are going to listen to you much more quickly than they will a stranger!

### **What to Bring?**

You will receive a packing list in a later email.

### **Gifts and Additional Donations**

Over the history of Young Life Expeditions, the practice of many groups has been to donate clothing, gloves, tools, water bottles, etc. to host-communities and countries. The decision to do this is completely up to you. You should feel no pressure to do anything more than you already are. We are simply grateful for the gift of your presence and the hours you will volunteer in Costa Rica!

As you move through the preparation process, we will send you additional information to help you ready your team. If the Lord brings you to be with us in Costa Rica we are confident that you will discover that a powerful and profound experience awaits you!

**Browse our main missions website at [www.Expeditions.younglife.org](http://www.Expeditions.younglife.org) for a list of all service opportunities with Young Life International, including Latin America, Africa, Eastern Europe and American Indian reservations.**

Blessings in Christ,  
Jeff Tait

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