

# 2024 Gesu Honduras Immersion Trip

## Information and Policies

\*It is the responsibility of each participant to read and understand the below information. Contact Amy Zucca, Gesu's Outreach Coordinator, at [azucca@churchofthegesu.org](mailto:azucca@churchofthegesu.org) with any questions.

### 1) Objective

Through the experience of an Immersion trip, participants will contribute significantly to many needs of the Honduran people. Participants will work on construction projects. The trip will also expand one's view of the Creator, the great need in the world, and the relative unimportance of "things" in our lives. This will be a trip of "reverse mission" where we learn some of life's most important lessons from the poorest of the poor.

### 2) Trip Leaders

Gesu will have two trip leaders to provide support and resources for trip participants before, during and after the immersion trip.

### 3) Airline Ticketing

2023 Flight Information for reference for the 2024 trip.

American Airlines

AA 1195	06/20/23	CLE-MIA	6:18am— 9:08am
AA 2693	06/20/23	MIA-XPL	10:07am—10:50am
AA 2580	06/27/23	XPL-MIA	2:03pm— 6:40pm
AA 0711	06/27/23	MIA-CLE	9:01pm—11:56pm

Meet at the airport NO LATER THAN 4:30 AM

Bring food to hold you over – we will not eat lunch until we arrive at the airport and board the bus

### 4) Travel Documents

**You are required to have the following pieces of personal identification:**

- Passport:** Applications can be made at the Post Office or at some local libraries (including the Beachwood Library at Richmond and Shaker). Always check <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most up to date information on passports. **Important: If your passport will expire within 6 months of your travel date you MUST renew your passport.**
- Required back-up ID:** You should copy the inside of your passport which includes your picture and personal information. It should be carried separately from your passport (see below). You may also bring your state ID/driver's license.
- Passport copies:** Make 2 copies. Submit one to Gesu, bring and pack one in your suitcase or wallet.

### 5) Immunizations

Contact Fritz Montague at [montagd@ccf.org](mailto:montagd@ccf.org) with any questions.

- Be sure you are up to date on all routine vaccines as recommended for life in the United States including Tetanus (should be updated every ten years).
- You should also be up to date with your COVID-19 vaccines.
- Prescription medicine to prevent malaria is strongly recommended. Depending on the medicine you take, you will need to start taking this medicine multiple days before the trip, as well as during and after the trip. Talk to your primary care doctor about which malaria medication you should take. You can also email Dr. Drogo "Fritz" Montague at [montagd@ccf.org](mailto:montagd@ccf.org) with the following information: name, birthdate, and pharmacy phone number and he can prescribe it for you.

- d) Typhoid is acquired through eating contaminated food or drinking contaminated water, neither of which should happen on our trip, but pill or shot vaccines are available.
- e) Hepatitis Type A
- f) Other vaccines to consider may be found on the CDC's website at <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/honduras>.

## 6) Health and Hygiene

Sanitary conditions throughout Honduras are poor. Parasites and microorganisms cause many health problems for the Honduran people. These can cause intestinal disorders, such as diarrhea, in foreigners. To remain healthy, carefully observe the directions below.

- a) **Water**: Drink only bottled water. Tap water is unsafe to drink. DO NOT EVEN USE IT TO BRUSH YOUR TEETH. Ice made from tap water is also unsafe.
- b) **Hand Sanitizer**: Hand sanitizer gel is great and convenient to use when water is not readily available.
- c) **Toilet Tissue**: In Nuevo Paraíso, toilet tissue is provided. However, it is not flushed down the commode; rather it is deposited in a container next to the commode.

## 7) Living Conditions

- a) **Housing**: During your stay in Honduras, your Home Base will be comfortable. In Nuevo Paraíso, beds are available and include the necessary linens and pillows. Showers are available.
- b) **Food**: Three meals a day are prepared by Honduran cooks who are associated with the organization. Hondurans show their love and affection for others through their cooking. They appreciate hearing that you enjoyed your meal. DO NOT BUY FOOD FROM STREET VENDORS. In Nuevo Paraíso there is a Pulperia where you can buy pop and Honduran snacks.
- c) **Weather**: The temperature is likely to be in the 90s in the heat of the day. Dehydration can easily occur under these conditions. Drinking plenty of bottled water (supplied) is a must; a water bottle is required so that individuals can obtain clean water from the Home Base. Sunscreen (SPF 30 or higher) is recommended along with lip protection. A hat for all participants is necessary. We will often be in Honduras during the rainy season, which can increase the number of mosquitoes present; pack a strong bug spray (preferably with DEET).

## 8) Clothing

It is important, out of respect for Hondurans, that we comply with their standards. Please use discretion and common sense; keep modesty in mind. Wearing clothes that are tattered is a sign of disrespect. Cool, comfortable clothing is recommended; cotton clothing is most appropriate. Hospital scrubs are ideal for both the Home Base and the work sites.

- a) **Male Attire**: Lightweight work pants, slacks, and jeans are appropriate. Shorts may only be worn at the Home Base, not to the work area or off-site. Short -sleeved shirts or t- shirts may be worn, however they must not contain any questionable logos, such as beer, cigarettes, or rock groups. For church, a collared shirt and casual pants are recommended. Tennis shoes and boots are recommended foot attire. Sandals/flip-flops can be used at the Home Base and are excellent for showering.
- b) **Female Attire**: Jeans, slacks, and dresses/skirts may be worn. Shorts and tank tops can only be worn at the Home Base, not to the work area or off-site. Skin revealing attire is not appropriate. For church, dress/skirt or casual slacks and blouse are recommended. Tennis shoes and boots are recommended foot attire. Sandals/flip-flops can be used at the Home Base and are excellent for showering.
- c) **Laundering**: During the week, the women at the Home Base will wash your clothing. This service is included as part of your trip cost.

## 9) Make-Up and Jewelry

Keep make-up to a minimum. Leave expensive jewelry at home. Inexpensive watches are recommended for everyone. Please keep in mind that jewelry may be an attraction for you to be robbed.

## 10) Packing

Pack lightly; you will only be gone for a week. Do not take anything you cannot afford to lose. You may bring one carry-on (it is recommended that your carry-on is a backpack), and a personal item. Nametags need to be on all baggage (these will be supplied by Gesu). **It is recommended that you visit the airline's website prior to the trip to be sure regulations concerning luggage have not changed.**

a) **Personal Item** American Airlines - Purse or small handbag must fit under the seat in front of you. Dimensions should not exceed 18 x 14 x 8 inches.

- i) Passport
- ii) Gesu shirt (to be worn to the airport)
- iii) Driver's license or back-up ID
- iv) Cash - \$75 - \$100 is sufficient for the week, unless you plan on spending more on souvenirs
- v) Change of clothes in case your luggage is lost
- vi) Camera
- vii) Mobile phones, iPods, and other small electronic devices, as well as items such as playing cards are allowed if desired but not necessary. Participants are permitted to use mobile phones to take photos, but are expected to keep them off or on airplane mode during our time in Honduras.
- viii) Reusable water bottle
- ix) Hand Sanitizer
- x) Medications: Imodium or Ciprofloxacin for diarrhea. If you are prone to motion sickness, Dramamine is recommended. **Remember all personal medications.**
- xi) Health insurance card
- xii) Sunglasses

b) **Carry-on Bag** American Airlines - Shouldn't exceed 22 x 14 x 9 inches. Be sure to pack any items you do not want to lose in this bag.

- i) Clothing - Pack light. There is laundry service and you can wear your clothing more than one time. Remember, everything must fit into a carry-on bag.
  - (1) Copy of your passport
  - (2) One nice outfit for Mass - pants, polo shirt, blouse, long skirt, long dress, shoulders covered (no strapless or spaghetti strap or bra showing)
  - (3) Work pants (2 pairs) - scrubs or lightweight pajama pants are great for work pants
  - (4) T-shirts - you will likely go through at least 2 a day - one for work/one for play
  - (5) Tank tops
  - (6) Shorts are acceptable. Very short running shorts ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE. You will be asked to change if shorts are too short. Soccer and basketball shorts are the best options.
  - (7) One sweatshirt/long sleeve t-shirt
  - (8) Work shoes can be a pair of sneakers (not your favorite, brand new pair) or work boots if you have space to pack

- (9) Have a pair of sandals for the shower and down time
- (10) Another pair of sneakers is ideal for play time
- (11) Crocs (or any shoe that is easily washable) are a great option, especially if it rains
- (12) Jewelry and makeup are not necessary and it is suggested to pack erring on the side of simplicity

- ii) Hat for protection from the sun, 2 hats if possible
- iii) Contact lenses (bring an extra pair). Glasses are preferred at construction sites.
- iv) Light rain jacket or umbrella
- v) Snacks (granola bars, crackers, hard candy in resealable Ziploc bags)
- vi) Flashlight
- vii) Insect repellent with DEET is highly recommended and can typically be found in the outdoor section of Target, Walmart, etc. (can be put into the donation suitcase that will be checked)
- viii) Work gloves (at least 2 pairs), garden gloves will work
- ix) Sunblock SPF 30 or higher is recommended (can be put into the donation suitcase that will be checked)
- x) Toiletries - if liquid quantity is too large it can be put into your checked bag
- xi) Ladies note: Come prepared with feminine products. These items are not always easily accessible in Honduras.
- xii) Bags - grocery plastic bag for laundry, drawstring bag for worksite, ziplock bag for phone

Things to bring to Nuevo for fun/down time:

- xiii) Journal
- xiv) Portable speaker
- xv) Games- cards, Catch Phrase, other large group games, etc.
- xvi) Book to read for down time
- xvii) bracelets/coloring pages
- c) **Checked Bag** You may be asked to bring a checked bag (max 50lbs and 62" total L+W+H) for donations that the group collected. You will need to take out of packages and roll up childrens sizes of-
  - Shoes and Sandals - tennis shoes, Crocs, etc
  - Clothing - jeans, shirts,
  - Socks
  - Underwear (especially boys)
  - Bras
  - Things we can play with them during our trip - balls (especially soccer), frisbees, sidewalk chalk, bubbles, jump rope, etc.
  - NO toiletries or medicines for donation. Only those for your personal use that exceed fluid limit for carry on (shampoo, insect repellent, sunblock, toothpaste, medicines, etc.)

## 11) Miscellaneous Information

- a) **Communication**: Good communication is essential for preventing and solving problems. If you have any problems or health concerns, please talk with your leader.
- b) **Being Sent Home**: If you create a serious problem within the team, you will be required to return home immediately. **The use of drugs or alcohol is unacceptable.**
- c) **Working with Interpreters**: The interpreters are vital to the organization. Be sure to go out of

your way to treat these individuals as part of your team. We encourage you to get to know them personally.

- d) **Currency:** Upon arrival at the airport in Honduras, your leader will exchange American dollars for Lempira. Most team members spend less than \$100. Credit cards are accepted at most shops in the city. You will want to bring some money with you for use in the airport and for souvenirs.
- e) **Giving to the Poor:** Refrain from giving to beggars, many of whom are professionals; even the children consider begging a game.

#### 12) Gift Giving:

- a) If you want to leave some of your personal belongings (clothing), check with your team leader first.
- b) If the team leader approves, the item(s) will be given to Mr. Claudio Elvir who will (anonymously) present the donation.
- c) Never arbitrarily give items away to Hondurans.
- d) Giving things away, even candy, can create chaos.
- e) It is very important not to add to the disempowerment of the people by creating a begging mentality. The gifts that the team brings down will be distributed by the Home Base leaders.

- 13) **Shopping:** On one of your days in Honduras, there may be an opportunity to shop for souvenirs - basket weaving, leather goods, pottery, hammocks, etc.

#### 14) Team Projects

**Construction:** Recent teams have worked on projects which have included churches, schools, orphanages, dormitories, hospices, and individual homes. All these projects have one thing in common; they are built out of concrete. This means that most of the team will be carrying tools and materials, mixing and pouring cement and laying concrete blocks. All this work is done “Honduran-style”, by hand. Additionally, there is often carpentry, painting, plumbing, and electrical work to do. We have found that men and women of all ages are able to learn and do all the types of work needed to complete these projects. There is plenty of opportunity for light tasks that require no lifting. The rule is that when one is tired, they are expected to get out of the sun, sit down, and rest. On hot days, a cycle of twenty minutes on and twenty minutes off may be appropriate. **Drink plenty of water.**

#### 15) Application Process and Withdrawing from the trip

- a) The latest date to **apply** for the trip will be **February 16, 2024**. After this date no additional applications can be received, not even for the waiting list. This is to ensure that there is time for the participant to prepare for the trip, allows the committee to make an educated decision about whether this individual should be permitted to participate, and does not place undue hardship on the individual who is working with the airlines. The exception to this deadline is if Gesu needs to recruit additional trip participants.
- b) The latest date that participants can **withdraw** from the 2023 trip is **May 16, 2024** (5 weeks prior to the trip). All payments are non-refundable. Any participant who withdraws past this date may incur additional fees, since the Church will incur added expenses because of their late withdrawal.
- c) To apply for the trip, participants must be at least entering the 11<sup>th</sup> grade to be eligible.

#### 16) Payment Policy

- a) Trip must be paid for in full prior to the final ticketing of the trip. The cost of the trip is **\$2,000.00**.
- b) The Payment Schedule for the trip will be as follows:

- i) **Application Fee (\$100):** Due with application no later than application deadline
- ii) **Payment #1 (\$900):** Due at Pre-Trip Meeting #1: March 14, 2024
- iii) **Payment #2 (\$1000):** Due at Pre-Trip Meeting #2: April 18, 2024
- c) If a participant has not paid in full by April 18, 2024, then we will not issue a ticket for them. If their payment comes late, then they risk higher costs and not having an available flight to participate.
- d) The total cost of the trip is non-refundable.
- e) Payment Information:
  - i) Checks should be made out to *Gesu Honduras* and sent to  
Church of the Gesu  
Attn: Amy Zucca  
2470 Miramar Boulevard  
University Heights, Ohio 44118  
With participant name on memo line and deposit, payment #1, or payment #2 indicated.  
Checks can also be dropped off at the front desk of the Parish Offices.  
Credit card payment can be accepted with an additional 2.9% fee. Contact Amy Zucca at [azucca@churchofthegesu.org](mailto:azucca@churchofthegesu.org) to arrange.

## 17) Important 2024 Dates

### December 1

Applications Open

### January 25

Information Meeting for Interested Trip Participants: 6:15–7:30 pm, Sacred Heart Room in Parish Offices

**February 16** (will be extended only if Gesu needs to recruit additional trip participants)

Applications and \$100 deposit due

### February 23

Participants notified of acceptance on trip

### March 14

Participant Pre-Trip Meeting #1:

6:15–7:30 pm, St. Ignatius Conference Room in Parish Offices

Payment #1 Due - \$900

### April 18

Participant Pre-Trip Meeting #2:

6:15–7:30 pm, St. Ignatius Conference Room in Parish Offices

Trip Payment Balance Due in Full - \$1,000

Gesu will try to have someone available to notarize the *Authorization to Travel for Youth*

### May 30

Participant Pre-Trip Meeting #3:

6:15–7:30 pm, St. Ignatius Conference Room in Parish Offices

### June 16

Missioning Mass, 10:00am and last minute meeting/packing if needed

### June 20– July 27, 2024

Honduras!

## 18) Travel Alerts/Trip Cancellation

The health and safety of Gesu Immersion Trip participants are top priorities. There are risks inherent with any international travel. Current U.S. Department of State Travel Alerts and Warnings

for Honduras can be found at

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html.html?currencyID=CHF>

Honduras is typically at a Travel Advisory Level 3: Reconsider Travel. A U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory Level of 4 for Honduras will result in the cancellation of Gesu's Honduras Immersion Trip.

### 19) Required Forms for Participants

Must be turned in to Amy Zucca at the Parish Offices, [azucca@churchofthegesu.org](mailto:azucca@churchofthegesu.org). If the participant will be under the age of 18 on June 20, 2024, forms must be signed by a parent/legal guardian.

- a) Application - <https://gesuchurch.wufoo.com/forms/zzftupb1ujrhfx/>
- b) Passport – copy
- c) Emergency Medical Authorization and Release for Treatment
- d) CHURCH OF THE GESU INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY/WAIVER AND RELEASE
- e) AUTHORIZATION FOR INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL for Youth - must be notarized, Susanne Knauer, Gesu's Director of Finance and Operations, is a notary public and will be available to do this at Participant Pre-Trip Meeting #2 on April 20, 2023
- f) Church of the Gesu Honduras Immersion Trip Photo/Video Consent and Release
- g) VIRTUS Training and Background Check – Adult
  - i) Log onto the Virtus website at [https://www.virtusonline.org/virtus/reg\\_0.cfm?theme=0select](https://www.virtusonline.org/virtus/reg_0.cfm?theme=0select), select *Begin the registration process*, select *Cleveland, OH (Diocese)*, it will ask if you have previously registered with VIRTUS Online (create an account if you have not), it will provide you with a list of current/available sessions. You must REGISTER for a session in order to be assured of a spot (you cannot just show up). **Register for a session as soon as possible.** Participants must also submit a Background Check through VIRTUS/Selection.com. The charge for this service is typically \$25.00 but may vary if the participant has lived in areas of the country with higher Background Check fees.  
If you have any questions regarding the VIRTUS process and your compliance with it, please contact Amy Zucca at [azucca@churchofthegesu.org](mailto:azucca@churchofthegesu.org), as she will be able to best guide/direct you.
- h) Emergency Contacts for Gesu Honduras Immersion Trip Participant