

# Honduras Team Guide

## Fredy and Terisa, Host Missionaries

The Vasquez family is so excited to have you come to work with us in Honduras! Our hope is that this guide will help answer questions and prepare you to have a great experience while you are in Honduras.

### Flexibility

One of the most important qualities of a short-term (or long-term) missionary is flexibility. Flexibility starts right now. Plans may (and probably will) change on this end, between now and the time you arrive. Although we like to plan ahead, we work in a culture that is much less structured; so some details may have to be tweaked along the way. The wonderful thing about a trip such as yours is that God knows exactly what is going to happen. The unexpected changes don't catch Him off-guard and we believe they fit into His plan for you and your team while you are in Honduras.

### Things Needed From Each Group

- Bring two copies of each person's passport with you,
- Each group must register with AGWM. You can go to the website [wideopenmissions.org](http://wideopenmissions.org). Simone Parks is the person to talk to about insurance [sparks@ag.org](mailto:sparks@ag.org)
- She will help you get insurance for your group members and complete other paperwork for final approval. Every group must get insurance through AGWM and Simone. Even if you have another travel insurance you must get the insurance from AGWM in order to work with us in Honduras.
- Please advise team members to come prepared with extra batteries or external charger, medicine, etc.
- Please have team members pack appropriate clothes for Sunday services. Men should have long pants and a collared shirt. Women can wear pants or skirt if we are working in the CITY. If ladies choose to wear a skirt or dress, please be sure that it comes to the knee or below. No spaghetti straps for church services or other ministry. JUNGLE TRIPS: Women have to wear a longer skirt in church services and can then change back into pants or capris.
- For ministry in schools and on the street, jeans or capris are ok for women.. Shorts to the knees are ok for those doing construction. No yoga pants for ministry.

### Water

We encourage team members to bring individual water bottles to refill (with filters is even better, if possible). This makes it easier for everyone. Check for bottles that filter out bacteria. Sawyer, Life Straw, Berkey, and Seychelles all have good options.

Water will always be available for you while we are working and doing ministry, but the self-filtering bottles can be very helpful.

As a general rule: DO NOT DRINK THE WATER IN HONDURAS! Unless you know which bottle it came from, don't drink it. You will even need to rinse your toothbrush using bottled water. Please be sure that any water you drink has been filtered, during your visit to Honduras. (Again we will provide purified water while you are with us but any other water will need to be filtered.)

### Transportation

What we use for transportation will depend a lot on the size of the group and type of trip. For smaller groups, we will rent a van, and one of us will drive. If we have a somewhat larger group, we will hire buses and drivers for pick up and drop off for our daily activities. We need to stick to the schedule that you will receive upon arrival. Please be at the bus on time. Again, please note, although we ask you to be on time we are working in a culture that sometimes you will hurry up to wait.

### Meals out

When we are at restaurants the missionary and/or team leader will give two or three menu options from which to choose. This makes it easier on the waiters and also helps us get served in a timely manner and within the budget. Generally each person can order one drink (be conscious of the fact that many restaurants don't offer free refills in Honduras – sorry). If you want more than one drink it can be worked out with the group leader. But to stick with the budget one drink per meal.

### Meals at Schools and Churches

We will be eating many meals at the places where we will minister (again, depending on the type of trip). If you cannot eat everything that you are served, please do not feed it to a nearby dog; that can be quite offensive. And please smile and say gracias to the cooks.

### Special dietary needs

One of the most enjoyable aspects of a missions trip is trying new foods. Please orient your team members to be willing to eat what is served. We will eat a lot of chicken, beans, rice, and tortilla but don't expect gluten-free options on menus. If there are any special dietary needs or allergies, the individual team member should come prepared with their own food, if we are working in the city. However, with the jungle ministry this will not be possible unless the food does not need to be refrigerated. Unfortunately, due to our ministry focus, we are not equipped to host anyone with severe or life-threatening allergies at this time.

### Poverty and needs

Depending on the situation, you may encounter extreme poverty or people asking for help. Here are a few suggestions regarding appropriate ways to respond and meet the needs:

Remember that the church or school is the permanent representative of the Lord in the communities you will be visiting. The pastor and the school director know the community and situations of the people. Unfortunately, the people who ask are not necessarily the most needy.

If the Lord lays it upon your heart to give, please consider giving an offering to the pastor for the needs of the church and his ministry (this should still be discussed with the team leader and host missionaries before any money is exchanged). Any exception to this would need to be discussed with the team leader and the host missionary to see if it would be appropriate.

All church services will have offerings, it is nice for team members to give. Remember to be discrete when you open your wallets to get out offering money.

In Honduras you will encounter many people asking for money on the streets, or trying to sell small items. In general, please do not give money to someone on the street, or purchase items on the street, as you will overpay. (We can help if there is something you just can't live without.)

Although it may be hard for you to resist helping someone that you feel needs it, being too generous can actually create a safety concern for our group. Most people begging are only asking for 1 Lempira, which is about 5 cents. This will be discussed in more detail, upon your arrival.

## **Safety**

Although Honduras is not known for being an incredibly safe country, we do everything possible to ensure that your team will be safe at the places we stay, eat, and minister at; but it is very important that the team stays together, and follows directions. No one should venture off alone unless the group has been told that it would be okay to do so.

Personal electronics are welcome on your trip, but please be wise about when and where they are used, During orientation, we will discuss taking pictures as our recommendations and requests will differ depending on the type of trip.

## **Insects, Diseases, and Nature**

It is likely that Honduras is very different from where you live. In Honduras, you will be exposed to many different plants, animals and insects. Each of these things presents a minor hazard, and you and your group will need to come knowing that these things exist, and be prepared to encounter them.

While most plants and animals can be avoided, it is difficult in regards to mosquitos. Mosquitos in Honduras can carry Dengue, Chikungunya, or Zika. Each of these presents its own set of problems, but all of them will make you sick. Zika is especially concerning for women that are, or could be, in their first trimester of

pregnancy. Please let us know if any potential team members are, or could be pregnant prior to your trip.

Some good insect repellent (and even some essential oils), can make a big difference! Although you may get mosquito bites while in Honduras, repellent can help us to limit those numbers.

## Children

Children touch the hearts of all of us. Please use extreme caution in your conversations with children. Often, people from the States feel great compassion and want to take children out of their current situation. Comments regarding coming to live with someone in the U.S., possible adoption, or visits can be misinterpreted in this day of human trafficking. Even discussions regarding academic exchange programs have been misinterpreted. Please DO NOT indicate to any child the possibility of coming to the U.S. for any reason. This can cause legal problems for you, the group, the host missionary and for the local pastor, as well.

Regarding candy that we will use for any outreaches or events:

Although you can bring it in, the candy that the children are used to eating can be purchased here prior to your arrival, if you desire. (It's good for the local economy, as well). All candy will be distributed in an orderly manner, but depending on the occasion, how we do that may change.

Child Protection:

There are several policies regarding social media that are enforced for the protection of children and in line with international standards for child protection. In addition, the policies protect the ministry on the field. Group members must be aware of the policies and follow them:

- No group member may give children or young people or their parents his or her email address, mobile phone number, WhatsApp, Facebook or contact details. Nor is it appropriate to accept friend requests from children on Facebook.
- Do not publish names, personal data or other information about children you encounter in Honduras on social media. This includes Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or personal blogs. This violates the children's right to privacy and protection.

## Leadership

You will be in the country of Honduras at the invitation of the national church through your host missionary. Please encourage your team to adapt to the Honduran way of doing things. Understandably, schedules and details are important in U.S. culture. Unfortunately, it is not always possible to give you firm answers. Please be flexible and enjoy the ride! For example, a service may be scheduled for 6:30pm, but could very well not start until 7:30pm.

Please use caution in asking questions regarding numbers. This is not culturally sensitive. In most cases, the number of people at any given church will be determined upon their arrival. :) However, depending on the activity, if it is possible, we will let you know how many people we are expecting.

Please have a clear line of communication within your team and have **one designated person** to convey special requests to the host missionary. The Honduran culture is one that seeks to please and comply to requests. **PLEASE** channel requests through the team leader and to the host missionary – **Fredy or Terisa Vasquez**.

For example, if a team member asked a Honduran pastor where they could get a copy of the music they heard in church, the pastor may spend all afternoon getting one of those CDs even though he had other pending work to do. (As your host missionaries, we are happy to help.) Let's be a blessing and not cause more work for the Honduran hosts. Clear lines of communication can help us to accomplish this.

**A designated leader** for work or construction projects is also very important. If a team member has an idea of how to better do the project, that person should talk to the team leader. The team leader can communicate any concerns or suggestions with the host missionaries, if necessary.

### Spanish Speakers on the Team

It is a great blessing to have team members on the team who speak Spanish, however, it can also provide its own challenges. Here are a few guidelines for Spanish speakers/translators who come with the team:

- Spanish can vary from country to country. Make sure the “translators” you bring are teachable and able to receive guidance from the host missionary, when necessary.
- With Spanish speakers on the team, it can be tempting for team members to bypass the lines of authority. Please make sure any communication goes through proper channels – team leader and host missionaries.

For example, a team member may have an idea of a change to a service and asks the translator to ask the Honduran pastor. Please remind your translators to **ALWAYS** go through the team leader who will communicate with the host missionaries, and **NEVER** take their requests directly to the local pastor. **This includes any discussion of future projects or ministry.**

### Ministry

As you plan ministry for the trip (preaching, testimonies, dramas, chapel services, etc.) please keep a few things in mind:

- Bring your best and come prepared. (Depending on the type of trip, recommendations will be made to your team leader and opportunities for training/prep on this end during our time of orientation for your team to learn or for the host missionaries to see what you've brought for the week

to make sure it is culturally relevant and appropriate for the ministry we will be doing.

- Make sure there is a clear message.
- Do everything with excellence whether ministering to children, youth, or adults.
- Everything should support the message that you wish to communicate; no “fillers.”
- Let your goal be for God to receive the glory in any story you share!
- As you share your testimony, spend more time telling the good things God has done and less time telling the bad things done before Christ.
- Remember it is about God – do your best to clearly state that it was God who turned your life around.
- Be careful with illustrations that may not translate culturally.
- Don't use sayings and clichés. They do not often translate and you lose the meaning; stick to truths. Think about illustrations you use. Do you think it will relate culturally? (During orientation, this topic will be addressed and there will be a time for questions. For example: *You gotta walk the walk and talk the talk*. Sounds cute in English. Doesn't sound the same in Spanish and doesn't rhyme. *He hit it out of the park*. That is a reference to baseball. We all know what it means but Honduras is a soccer nation. The saying would have no meaning. Or, *The Holy Spirit is like a thermostat*. Honduras is in the tropics. Nobody has central air or heat. A thermostat is not common here.
- **No chewing gum during ministry.**
- The team should be focused on the ministry that is taking place. The team members who are not sharing should have their focus on the person or persons ministering through the work or drama etc., or quietly interceding. This helps the audience keep their focus.
- **Practice** your testimonies **before** you arrive.

## Money Issues

Please send any project/construction money in to Fredy and Terisa Vasquez' AGWM account #2631836 **class 60**, and per diem (daily team money) **class 08**, two months before the team arrives and let us know the money has been sent. The money must arrive before the 20 of the month before you arrive.

If the team leader chooses, he or she can pay some expenses with a credit card. Hotels and some restaurants can accept credit cards. A credit card will be required to reserve your rooms at the hotel. Because excess amounts of cash could create security issues, using credits cards (yours or mine) is advisable when possible.

If we need to hire a driver and bus, transportation can only be paid in cash. In addition, money to schools or churches for providing meals must be in cash. These cash amounts should be included in the amount you send in advance, and we will make the cash payments for these expenses in local currency.

For souvenirs, most vendors will accept U.S. dollars. So team members can bring cash and not have to change it at a bank. However, most vendors do not like to take bills larger than a \$20 - please pass this information on to your team.

Upon arrival, 500 Lempiras, (\$25), will be available to exchange for each team member that is would like to have some extra money on-hand to use for miscellaneous purchases at gas stations, etc. (For team leaders, your credit or debit card can be used, as well, in most places; however, please notify your bank ahead of time, and be aware of any fees that might be added on.)

## Arrival

Immigration and customs forms need to be filled out on the plane –make sure each team member has a pen. Passport number and flight number will be required on the form. Check the box that says you are coming for tourism. Your foreseen address is: Instituto Biblico Asambleas de Dios, and add the name of the city you are flying in to.

If you allow someone to help you with your luggage it is \$1.00 per bag. In the event that you receive help, the men will take the bags to the bus and help load them. After you clear the customs area, you will exit through the glass doors, where we will be waiting to take you to our transportation.

Please let the team know that they are responsible for any hand luggage they take out of the airport. There could be men hovering trying to help you with any luggage as you exit into the “waiting” area of the airport. If a team member allows someone to help them outside, they will have to tip that person. A smile, a “no thank- you” and a death grip on your bag will help prevent problems.

## Wifi

Each team has different needs for their accommodations. Not every place that your team could choose, has wifi available (i.e., the Bible Schools in Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula, and the jungle). If it is decided to have you stay in a place without wifi, we can schedule times to stop at public areas that do have a connection **UNLESS we are in the jungle.**

Team members may want to sign up for Whatsapp or Tango to communicate with their loved ones at home while they are at an area with wifi. Also, make sure to check with your U.S. phone carrier to make sure you do not get roaming charges. They will tell you what to do with your phone.

Groups can use the internet when they are at the hotel (if available), or designated wifi area for your group.

## Emergency Numbers

You can leave our cell phone numbers for emergency calls. Honduran number is:

Fredy: (011)504-9829-0340

Terisa: (011)504-9829-1626

## What to Pack

Sunscreen

Insect repellent

Flashlight

Extra batteries for all electronics

Chargers for all electronics

Lightweight clothes

Light Jacket

Shoes that you don't mind getting soaked (just in case we have rain)

Umbrella

Photo of yourself and your family to show your new friends

Suitcase lock to safeguard items in your room (zip ties work well, too)

Water bottle

Appropriate clothes for church

Swimsuit – the hotel has a pool

**A DETAILED PACKING LIST will be sent separately. (Please let us know if you have further questions.)**

## Team Orientation

Please review these items with your team before you leave for Honduras. Everyone needs to be aware of things like: wifi, special dietary needs, potential hazards, etc. Please hold a meeting to discuss these items early in your preparation process.

Upon arriving we will also have a time of orientation with your team to review this information, and update anything that has changed, as well as a time to prepare or perfect ministry dramas, skits, etc.

Our desire is that this packet of information will help prepare you for your trip. Thank you so much for coming to serve in Honduras. You will be a great blessing to the people of this wonderful country.

Blessings!

Fredy and Terisa Vasquez (Izabela, Iliana, and Aedan)

Missionaries serving in Honduras