

General Team Information

- Teams fly into Augusto C. Sandino International Airport in Managua (transportation will be provided to Leon or Matagalpa). Team leaders are responsible for making their own flight arrangements.
- A valid passport is required (must be at least 6 months before passport expires). No Visa is required.
- The US Department of Health recommends the following vaccinations (check with your local doctor): Hepatitis A and B, typhoid, tetanus, and malaria prevention medication.
- The US State Department recommends that all US Citizens traveling abroad register with the State Department. This gives the US Embassy in Managua a record of all US citizens that are in Nicaragua.

On the following link is “A Checklist for Travelers.”

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/tips/68426.htm> The last bullet is where you click on “register.” This will take you to a page that tells:

1. What is Travel Registration?
2. Why should I register?
3. How can the embassy and consulate assist me while I am abroad?

From this link, there is a button “Register My Trip.” After you click this button, the form will appear that you need to complete. This form needs to be completed and submitted individually by each team member. It is not possible to register as a group.

- Each team member should check with their insurance carrier to make sure they are covered while in Nicaragua.
- It is recommended that the team leader purchase accidental/evacuation insurance for the team members.
- Nicaragua’s entrance fee of \$5 is required as team members pass through customs in Managua. A \$32 exit fee is also required, but is included in most airline tickets identified as a tax.
- The local currency is the cordoba, but US dollars (bills) are accepted. These bills should be in good condition without tears or marks. Exchange rates vary, but generally, 18 cordobas = 1 US dollar. Smaller bills are better, since you may receive change in cordobas.
- For youth teams, it is recommended that team members have completed 8th grade. It is suggested that there be 1 chaperone for every 5 youth.

Contact Information While in Nicaragua

Team leaders are given an El Ayudante cell phone upon arrival in Managua. The cell number will be provided to the team leader before departure to Nicaragua. This phone can be used to receive and send calls to the US.

Calls from the US to this cell phone will be charged to the US caller only. This allows for unlimited opportunities to receive calls from the US. There will be enough time placed on the cell phone to allow for the team leader to call a predetermined contact person in the US to notify of their team’s safe arrival. If the team desires additional

time for this phone to call the US, the team can purchase phone cards (ranging from \$20-\$100) in Leon/Matagalpa.

Wireless internet service is available at El Ayudante's team house in Leon. We encourage teams serving in Leon to bring wireless laptops to communicate by e-mail. Teams serving in Matagalpa have opportunities to e-mail from the location of lodging or internet cafes.

If there is an emergency, and your family cannot reach the team phone, they may call Bill Cox at (731) 697-8377.

Recommendations for Good Health and Safety

- Wash hands often. Also, use anti-bacterial gel which kills most germs. Carrying an antiseptic mouthwash is also good. These practices will help prevent illness.
- Drink only bottled/purified water or carbonated drinks in cans or bottles. Brush teeth with bottled water. Avoid tap water, fountain drinks, and ice cubes. It is safe to drink the fountain drinks with ice cubes at the restaurants that are chosen by the staff of El Ayudante.
- The food served to you at El Ayudante will be safe. The staff at El Ayudante will take you to restaurants that safely prepare the food and use purified water. Do not eat anything in Nicaragua unless it is prepared for you at the team house or at a restaurant chosen by El Ayudante's staff. You can politely turn down food.
- Don't handle animals (especially monkeys, dogs, and cats). Remember, these animals probably have not had rabies or other vaccinations.
- The current in the Pacific Ocean along the coast of Nicaragua is very strong and often very treacherous.
- Don't forget to use sunglasses and sun block.
- If you use prescription medications, make sure you take plenty with you to last; it is also not a bad idea to carry a copy of your prescriptions.
- Never go anywhere by yourself. Always let someone know where you and another team member are going.

You Are Not a Tourist

Tourists are usually self-centered. They have come to get their money's worth in sights and sounds. They want to be comfortable and pampered. You are a missionary! You represent the King of Kings. You should act like Jesus did when He "became a servant" to lead men and women to His Father. Humble yourself. You have traveled to Nicaragua to serve – not to be served; to love – not to be loved; and to be humble – not to exalt yourself. Nicaraguans will automatically think of you as a missionary. They expect the same conduct and witness from you as they do a long-term missionary. You are a guest. Be grateful and be appreciative. Don't complain. Look for opportunities to help, no matter how menial the task.

Avoid a superior attitude. Do not talk about how great things are in the U.S. Assume that Nicaraguans have figured out the best way of doing things from the options available. Avoid saying, "You should do it this way." What works at home, likely is not available in Nicaragua or doesn't work in their culture. Remember, your comments to your team

members can be heard by Nicaraguans. Some people will understand more English than you think.

Work hard to understand the culture. Ask questions. Be outgoing. Be appreciative of the time the Nicaraguans give you. There is much to learn from these gracious people!

Nicaraguan Culture and Customs

- Learn as much Spanish as you can and use it every chance you get. The Nicaraguans love for you to try to speak their language.
- Nicaraguans like to hug and give “abrazos,” women often kiss on one or both cheeks. Handshakes are usually soft and gentle. A solid handshake may seem overpowering and even rude to them.
- Take time for polite conversation before talking “business.” Nicaraguans are not as forward as people from the U.S.
- Be prepared for worship services that are very different from those you are accustomed to – very informal.
- Latin Americans are Americans just as we are. They are sensitive to people from the U.S. claiming the name “Americans” for themselves.
- Make no promises to the staff, pastors, or others that you cannot keep.
- Be sensitive when taking photos.

Gifts to Staff and Others

The last night your team is in Leon, tips can be taken up among the team members and given to Omar Alvarado for distribution to the staff who serves your team during the week. This tip is much appreciated by the staff. If additional gifts are to be given, please give to all staff members at the same time. Use common sense about giving gifts to those you meet during the week. If ever in doubt what to do, ask Omar or the translators what should be done.