

# MEXICO CARAVAN MINISTRIES LEADER'S PACKET

## Weekend/Weeklong Caravan

**MOBILIZING CHRIST FOLLOWERS FOR MISSIONS**



**Table of Contents**

**MCM OBJECTIVE LETTER FOR WEEKEND/WEEKLONG CARAVAN..... 1**

**Our Philosophy..... 3**

**The first steps..... 3**

Make the trip.....3

Build a Caravan Team.....3

Register your Caravan.....3

**Confirm your reservations ..... 3**

**Payments..... 4**

**Emergency Contact..... 4**

**Logistics ..... 4**

Travel.....5

Lodging.....5

Meals.....5

**Budget & Fundraising ..... 6**

Building Your Budget.....6

Raising Support & Fundraising.....7

**Team..... 7**

Team Selection.....7

Documentation.....8

Permission Slips.....8

Mexico Work Teams.....8

**Meetings/Services..... 9**

Informational Meeting.....9

Team Training.....9

Commissioning Service.....12

Reporting Meeting.....12

**Daily Schedule..... 12**

**Question, comments, concerns? ..... 12**

**MCM OBJECTIVE LETTER FOR WEEKEND/WEEKLONG CARAVAN**

Dear Leader,

Greetings from Mexico! We are excited that you are planning to come to Tijuana to work with us. We have enclosed materials to assist you in the preparation of your trip. We strongly encourage you to read through this packet in its entirety.

We recommend that you send the dorm fee/deposit in as soon as possible to secure your reservation.

As a reminder, the cost per shelter is \$1,500. The building fees are due to Caravan one month prior to your arrival in Tijuana. Please make checks payable to “Mexico Caravan Ministries” and mail them to Mexico Caravan Ministries at the address listed below.

If you need any more information as you prepare for your trip, please feel free to contact us in any of the ways below. We are looking forward to having you and your group with us. We will be praying for you and your group’s preparation.

In His Service,



Executive Director

## Our Philosophy

Mexico Caravan Ministries is a mobilization ministry. Our focus is to present God's plan for worldwide missions and his calling for believers to get involved. The teachings will be pointed and focused towards those values.

It is important that you understand the purpose of this ministry so that you may accurately communicate it to those on your team regarding this trip. There will be opportunities to minister to others through building shelters and interacting with children, but those activities will be a secondary focus. The greatest benefit derived from coming to Mexico will be what God does in the lives of Caravan participants.

Please come and bring your team with the desire to serve and to learn about what God is doing.

## The first steps

### **Make the trip**

If this is the first time your church is sending a Caravan to MCM, we recommend sending at least one of your leaders to Tijuana to see the ministry. It is hard to lead somewhere you have never been.

### **Build a Caravan Team**

The ministry focus is high school and college students. Adults are welcome. You need to provide one leader/sponsor for every 8 students (1:6 for those younger than high school). Group size will be limited by available space (we can accommodate up to 85 at a time). At times you may share the dorms with other groups.

All applicants should be approved by recommendation only, whether by the pastor, youth pastor, youth leadership team, missions committee, elders, deacons, etc.

Please be selective. Choose those who are mature, cooperative, and teachable. We are looking for those who come to be servants and learners, not those who come to be tourists.

## **Register your Caravan**

Check out the 'Sending a Team' tab on our website. There you will find the Registration form, Calendar, Leader Resources, and the trip confirmation details form. Fill out the registration form and submit it to begin the process, upon receiving the online form we will contact you with further steps. You may also contact the office to discuss your trip details. Please keep in mind we do not take weekend groups in the summer. Register early as we fill up quickly. Once the date is agreed upon, payment of the Registration Fee guarantees those dates on our calendar.

## **Confirm your reservations**

Sending the registration fee, which is non-refundable and non-transferrable, serves as your deposit and guarantees your spots on our calendar. The registration fee for your weekend or week-long group can be calculated using our budget sheet.

## Payments

The non-refundable, non-transferrable registration fee is due to MCM 30 days after you have made your reservation and will secure your spot for the dates requested.

Building fees are due to Caravan no later than **one month** prior to your arrival.

### Methods Available

1) Personal Check

Make checks payable to “**Mexico Caravan Ministries.**”

Send checks to:

Mexico Caravan Ministries

555 Saturn Blvd.

Suite B-510

San Diego, CA 92154-4731

\*Canadian Churches please send payments via money orders in US Dollars -Thank you-

2) Online payment with credit card or bank transfer upon request. Please note there is a 3% processing fee for the use of these services we require groups to cover.

## Plan and finalize your trip

We are here to help during your planning process. All questions can be directed towards our group coordinator. Email: [group.info@sendmcm.org](mailto:group.info@sendmcm.org)

Towards the end of your planning, you will be asked to submit the “trip confirmation details” form. This form includes:

- Names of participants on your team
- Waiver signed by all participants
- Verification of background checks conducted on adults designated as leaders for your team
- Verification of trip insurance

Please submit this form no later than **one month** before your schedule trip dates.

## Emergency Contact

Following are the contact numbers for when your group will be with us at MCM. Please emphasize that these are for **EMERGENCIES ONLY**.

Spencer Hoyt - Daily Operations Director, cell: 515-770-2358

Cassidy Hoyt - Daily Operations Director, cell: 620-217-4457

Eddie Passmore - Executive Director, cell: 619-654-1777

Maggi Passmore - Executive Director, cell: 619-654-1908

Dorm: 858-309-4741

## Logistics

### Travel

You are responsible for transporting your own team into and around Tijuana. Vans are better than cars and buses. We **strongly recommend** that buses be a last resort. Please be aware that the terrain is really rough. You will be working in teams of 7-15 people and each team must be able to travel independently.

If you fly into San Diego, you can rent vans. We recommend that you reserve early for spring and summer as rentals book fast. Weekly rental fees range from \$800 to \$1200 for 12 or 15 passenger vans. This price range does not include taxes or insurance. **Be sure that the rental company understands you will be driving in Mexico and that you'll need Mexican insurance.**

Rental Car Companies:

Enterprise (619-294-3313)

Mission-Rent-a-Van (619-387-8267)

EZRent-a-Van (760-846-6223) \*\*Have been easy to work with & consistently cheaper\*\*

[www.rentalcars.com](http://www.rentalcars.com) will shop various providers.

**Travel to Tijuana:** Easy-to-follow directions with pictures are available on our website. Just be sure that each driver has a copy. If you need assistance getting to the dormitory, please contact us to set up a time to meet.

**\*IF you have an international phone plan, simply put “Mexico Caravan Ministries” into google maps and it will direct you to our facility.**

### Lodging

You will be staying in a dormitory in the Mariano Matamoros section of Tijuana. The accommodations at the dorm are rustic. You will be sleeping on wooden bunks, most of which have foam mattresses. There are indoor restrooms (though no showers), running water (most of the time!) and electricity (most of the time!). You can use local public showers, which are very clean and offer complete privacy. Please note that you could be sharing the dorms with 2 or 3 other groups during high-demand times (i.e. - summers, holidays, etc.).

Weeklong Group arrival time to MCM should be no earlier than 3pm on Sunday. Departure time should be no later than 9:00am on Saturday.

Weekend Group arrival times can vary. The departure time should be no later than 9:00am on Sunday. This allows our interns and staff to go to their churches.

### Meals

**Breakfast** – Please keep it simple – e.g. cereal, juice, rolls/muffins, fruit, etc. Most teams stop at Costco in San Diego before the cross and pick up continental breakfast items. A stove (upon request), coffee maker, microwave & refrigerators are available for your use at the dorm.

**Lunch** – The majority of the families will provide lunch for you. In rare instances, they are unable to cover this expense. You will be able to buy food in Tijuana to make sack lunches. Note: Bring wipes or hand sanitizer to clean hands on the work site. There may not be water for washing available.

**Dinner** – Eat out at local restaurants or taco stands. The staff will be happy to provide you with their recommendations. For budget purposes, \$7 person/meal should be sufficient for dinner out. Cash will be required for your evening meals – U.S. or Mexican currency is acceptable – small bills are best.

**Water** – Filtered water will be provided for your stay in Tijuana. Please bring your own water bottle.

**Shopping** – Plan on buying the necessary groceries (including disposable cups, plates and utensils) for breakfast and lunch – either in the U.S. or at a supermarket in Tijuana. Anything you need to get during the week can be purchased in the El Florido area.

\*For budgeting purposes figure on about \$13 person/day for food, including your dinner. Most large supermarkets in Tijuana will accept MasterCard or Visa.

\*A stove, coffee maker, microwave and refrigerators are available for your use at the dorms.

## Budget & Fundraising

### Building Your Budget

Start building your budget and determine your per-person costs.

A budget sheet has been provided for your assistance.

Below are some costs to consider while you'll be at Mexico Caravan Ministries. All payments are non-refundable and non-transferable.

1. Registration/deposit for weekend groups **or** for weeklong groups. (See budget sheet to calculate this amount)
2. Construction expenses = \$1,500/ shelter. Determine how many Building Teams and how many days you plan to build and multiply by the cost/shelter. Keep in mind that a group of 7-15 people can comfortably complete a shelter in a day. Groups of 15 or more will be asked to split into two teams. No build should have more than 15 on a site.
3. Ministry Partner Days. There is a fee for the day(s) you spend working with our partner ministries, such as Spectrum or an orphanage resulting in a non-building day. The charge will be \$150/building group/day spent somewhere other than building a shelter with MCM. This will offset various ministry costs that are incurred on these days.
4. Security fee. There is a \$100 fee to cover the cost of security. You will be provided a GPS to put in your vehicle for the duration of your stay. This allows us to see where you are building and in case of an emergency or car problems, we can easily meet up with you. (We will ask for a passport in exchange to assure we receive the GPS back. We know how crazy leaving MCM can be and don't want to forget to receive it back!) If vehicles have to be left on the pad, we hire a guard to watch over them.
5. Additional money for the ministries your groups will be participating in.
  - **Orphanage:** Each team will provide and serve a meal at the orphanage, this includes the children, orphanage staff, and the team's participants. Estimate for 20 children and 5 staff members.

- **Esperanza:** Each group will provide sandwiches (sack lunch) and water bottles to pass out to those in the community.
  - **Squatters Village:** Beans (Our staff will instruct where to purchase them upon your arrival).
6. Meals. A meal budget of **\$13/person per day** should be sufficient. Grocery prices in Tijuana will be comparable to those found in the U.S.
  7. Showers. A public shower facility is located within ten minutes of the dorm. The showers are clean and offer complete privacy. They charge **\$3/person** for a shower and are on reservations only.
  8. Travel expenses, gas, etc.

## Raising Support & Fundraising

The benefits that are derived from raising support for the trip are twofold:

1. Raising support contributes to the team-building process. Working together to achieve a common goal is a valuable and unifying exercise.
2. Raising support can be a faith-building activity. It's a great way to watch God graciously and faithfully provide for both individual and group needs.

Some ideas to consider:

**Prayer** – Require each participant to have at least two prayer partners prior to and for the duration of the trip. Ask the Lord to meet the needs of the group.

**Supporters** – Send out individual or team support letters. Let friends and relatives know what you are doing and ask for prayer and financial support.

**Church Budget** – In many churches there are designated funds for short-term mission trips. If this isn't the case in your church, you may want to propose making it part of next year's budget.

**Adult Sunday School Class** – Often adult classes respond to the challenge of raising funds for building a shelter for a poor family in Tijuana. The cost per house is \$1,500 each. You can take pictures or video back to show them what their offerings did when you return.

**Activities** – Some fund raisers which have worked for other groups:

Tamales (or taco) sale

Collect pennies

Hire a student (a team member) for a day of work.

Car wash

Rummage Sale

## Team

### Team Selection

Use an application process to select team participants. The ministry focuses on high school and college students; however, adults and families are welcome as well. Be selective. Choose those who are mature, cooperative, and teachable. Please ask before bringing children.

All participants should apply and be approved by a pastor, youth pastor, youth leadership team, and missions committee, board of elders or deacons.



The value of this trip will be directly proportional to how selective you are in identifying the participants. Consider using a team contract or covenant. We have frequently seen the benefits of an entire week spoiled by the immaturity of one or two individuals. Set and maintain high standards for your group. Your team will rise to the level of your expectations.

## Documentation

**Passports:** Passports are required to cross the US/Mexican border. There are special considerations given to those under age 19 that are traveling with religious groups. You can view the regulation and requirements at [www.cbp.gov](http://www.cbp.gov).

**Car Insurance:** You are also responsible to have US and Mexican car insurance. Check with the rental company.

**Liability Insurance:** You are required to have liability insurance for the trip.

**Under 18 years of age:** If traveling without parents they must have a notarized permission slip to cross the border with a designated chaperone specified in the letter by name. For further information on this visit [www.cbp.gov](http://www.cbp.gov).

## Permission Slips

You are responsible for obtaining the permission slips listed below from each team member. Please use the standard forms your church or denomination uses.

MCM trip confirmation form is due one month before your trip.

List of participants

Waiver

Proof of background checks of those designated as leaders

Proof of trip insurance

## Mexico Work Teams

Please have people/teams ready to handle these specific tasks in Tijuana:

**Driving** – Please see attachment Driving in Mexico.

**Meal Preparation** – Please refer to the “Meals” portion of this checklist.

**Worship** – Please have a team prepared to lead worship in the morning worship session. The number of mornings that you will actually be required to lead worship will depend on the number of other groups staying at the dorm. Please be prepared for each day of your stay. PowerPoint is available. Please bring a flash drive with the lyrics or bring enough printed song books for everyone to share.

**Building** – You will be responsible for determining your work groups (if you have more than one work group per day). A work team of between 8 and 15 is recommended.

**Loading Crews** – The staff will need assistance in loading tools and supplies each morning after the teaching session. The staff will also need help in the afternoons unloading vehicles and cutting/loading the next day’s housing materials.

**Dorm Clean-Up** – Daily clean bathrooms, sweep dorm, wash dishes and empty trash.

**Debriefing/Prayer** – Direct evening meetings for your own church group that focus on sharing the day’s experiences as well as the lessons that God is teaching through those experiences.

## Meetings/Services

### Informational Meeting

Hold at least one pre-trip informational meeting to explain the ministry (as outlined in the information we have sent you) and answer any questions. An information meeting is especially beneficial for parents.

### Team Training

We strongly encourage you to have team training sessions prior to coming to Tijuana. Our recommendation is at least six training sessions that cover the topics listed below. **Require** attendance at all sessions and the completion of all assignments as a minimum for trip participation. One seasoned leader of teams to Caravan has said, “Maximum impact comes from maximum preparation.”

1. **Spiritual Journey** – Explain the spiritual purpose of the trip and some spiritual disciplines to develop (e.g. journaling, silence, prayer, meditation, etc.). Make prayer a high priority. Think through and develop which disciplines or other activities you want to give your group. Make sure to have them use free time in a valuable way. Take advantage of being in a third-world country away from the many distractions we are surrounded by at home.
2. **Basic Missions** – Do a basic overview of the Biblical basis for missions, a brief history of missions, and cover key definitions – “missionary,” “people group,” “unreached people,” “the 10/40 window” and others you want to include.
3. **Entry Posture** – This involves the attitudes with which you come into Mexico. These are the most important to emphasize and develop:
  - i. **Being a Learner** – develop skills of observation and the attitude that “different is not inferior – it is just different!”
  - ii. **Being a Servant** – “I am here for you – you are not here for me!” Always respond to Caravan leaders and your own team leaders with a smile and the response “I would love to” whenever asked to help. Respect the rules, and consider others as more important than yourselves.
4. **Mexican Culture** – Please cover with the participants the following aspects of the culture.
  - i. **General Behavior** – Please avoid the typical loud, obnoxious, and arrogant U.S. behavior (that includes you Canadians!). No yelling and screaming. Try not to call attention to yourself. Let quietness and gentleness be the rule. Do not point or make faces – this is their home and you should respect it as such.
  - ii. **Dress – NO TANKTOPS, SHORTS, OPEN-TOED SHOES ARE PERMITTED**
    - Pants, t-shirts, work shoes/tennis shoes
    - Appropriate and modest clothing: no tight-fitting pants both on the work site and in the dorms. These include (but are not limited to) yoga pants, jeggings, super-skinny jeans or leggings.
    - Conservative and neat, no ripped garments (cultural sensitivity)
    - Light jacket, sweatshirt, or long-sleeve shirt for the winter months

- iii. **Language** – Use as much Spanish as you can – the nationals will love it. Learn to at least introduce yourself and how to respond when others introduce themselves. Other basic phrases will be helpful.
  - iv. **Food/Eating** – For some, the thought of eating in Mexico is cause for extreme stress. Following a few simple guidelines can alleviate much of that and make it an enjoyable experience. After all, Mexican food is great! What should be avoided are the small pushcarts – no matter what they are selling. Sodas and packaged snacks bought in the corner stores are fine to eat. Do not be concerned about the water – even Mexicans only drink purified water. However, try to avoid ice whenever possible. If you are offered something to eat or drink in a home – our advice is to eat whatever is set before you. The offense given by not eating is greater than the risk taken by eating. In regards to food – there is little reason for concern. Relax and enjoy the food!
  - v. **Health** – To avoid sunstroke, heat exhaustion or dehydration – wear a hat, get plenty of shade and drink plenty of water. Bring a water bottle. Eat adequately and wisely. Wash your hands before you eat. Get plenty of rest. Don't play with the animals. We recommend that you get a tetanus shot if you haven't had one in the last five years. Garlic, yogurt and/or acidophilus pills are good to take before you come as well as while you are in Tijuana. Minors must bring treatment consent forms. Everyone should bring their health insurance policy number. In case of a medical emergency, there is a clinic located three doors down from the dormitories. In most cases, we will cross the border for any necessary treatment in the U.S. Please note that U.S. Health Insurance is not accepted in Mexico.
  - vi. **Safety** – Do not go anywhere by yourself – use the buddy system. Do not wander off without alerting a team leader.
  - vii. **Relationships** – Do not talk to people of the opposite sex your own age and older. Do not respond in any way to whistles, catcalls, etc. – this includes turning around to look. You are already considered immoral and “easy” by virtue of being U.S./Canadian. Please do not confirm the stereotype by your actions. Unmarried couples should put their relationship on “hold” and should refrain from any activity that would indicate that they are a couple.
  - viii. **Basic Gringo Mistakes** – Do not throw things to each other – hand them directly. Girls – do not talk to or make eye contact with men your age and older when in the community. This does not apply to the family you are building for. Please try to avoid loud and obnoxious behavior.
5. **Team Building** – Learn how to be supportive of one another, to work together, to solve conflicts, etc.
  6. **Trip Logistics** – Please discuss and distribute copies of the Packing List attachment to each participant. Please also inform the participants of their daily schedule while staying at Mexico Caravan Ministries. As the leader, you will be responsible for enforcing the clothing section of the Packing List as well as the daily schedule.

**Spanish** – In Mexico “se habla español” so include it in every meeting! It is definitely a Spanish speaking country. Very few people in the Mariano Matamoros area speak much English. Our advice is to study up on your Spanish. Learn whatever you can and use whatever you learn. The people will love it! Bring a Spanish/English dictionary and as many interpreters as you can find. Find a Spanish speaker to teach you some basic phrases.

¡Hola! - Hello

¡Buenos días! – Good morning

¡Buenas tardes! – Good afternoon

¡Buenas noches! – Good evening

¿Cómo está usted? – How are you?

Muy bien, gracias, ¿y usted? – Very well, thanks, and you?

¡Adiós! – Good bye

¡Hasta luego! – See you later

¡Hasta mañana! – See you tomorrow

¿Como se llama usted? – What is your name?

Me llamo John – My name is John

Mucho gusto – Pleased to meet you

El gusto es mío – It is my pleasure

Por favor – Please

Gracias – Thank you

De nada – You’re welcome

Dios de bendiga – God bless you

Gracias por la comida – Thank you for the food

No entiendo – I don’t understand

¿Como se dice \_\_\_\_ en español? – How do you say \_\_\_\_\_ in Spanish?

Martillo – Hammer

Clavo – Nail

Sierra – Saw

Puerta – Door

Ventana – Window

Techo – Roof

Pared - Wall

¿Cuanto cuesta? – How much does it cost?

La cuenta, por favor – The check, please

¿Donde esta el baño, por favor? – Where is the bathroom please?

## Commissioning Service

Work with the pastor and/or missions committee to put together a commissioning service on the last Sunday before the team leaves for Tijuana. That will impress upon the team members that they really are doing missions and upon the congregation that they really are sending the team out. It can be a very meaningful time.

## Reporting Meeting

Work with the pastor and/or missions committee to put together a reporting meeting soon after the group returns. Use both testimonies as well as slide/video presentations. These have proven to be times of significant spiritual growth for both the team members and the congregation.

## Daily Schedule

6:30 am-----Rise  
 7:00 am-----Personal Devotions  
 7:30 am-----Breakfast and breakfast clean up  
 8:00 am ----Worship and teaching with Caravan staff  
 9:30 am-----Load and make lunches (if necessary)  
 10:00 am ----Leave for work sites  
 1:00 pm-----Lunch (approximately)  
 5:00 pm ----Leave work sites for dorm (approximately)  
 6:00 pm ----Dinner and showers  
 7:00 pm ----Tues. & Thur.: MCM-planned speakers  
                   Mon., Wed. & Fri.: your own team worship, devotion/debriefing time  
 9:00 pm ----Everyone inside the dorm  
 10:00 pm----Upstairs – Quiet and lights out  
                   Downstairs – Quiet conversations, no games, time to settle down  
 10:30 pm----Discipline of silence – journaling, devotions, quiet time – NO talking  
 11:00 pm ----Lights out everywhere

## Question, comments, concerns?

If we can be of any help, please don't hesitate to contact us. It is our desire to see young people exposed to and challenged toward missions. We are glad to help in any way we can to see that accomplished.

### Contact us:

Mexico Caravan Ministries  
 555 Saturn Blvd., Suite B-510  
 San Diego, CA 92154-4731

Phone: 858.309.4741 (8am – 5pm PST)

Email: [group.info@sendmcm.org](mailto:group.info@sendmcm.org) for group inquiries or questions.  
[admin@sendmcm.org](mailto:admin@sendmcm.org) for all other info about MCM.