

**Get Ready
Get Set
GO!!!**

Agua Viva Ministries

**Missions Partnership Experiences
Short Term Missions**

Group Training Manual

Revised September 2010

NEW AND IMPROVED!!

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Welcome!

Greetings! You have made a decision to follow our Lord's command to take the gospel to the ends of the earth. We're excited about the vision of reaching Mexico for our Lord. The opportunity is yours to meet real needs in the community of Ensenada in partnership with Agua Viva Ministries.

One of the goals of Agua Viva Ministries is to provide the opportunity to see and experience first-hand God's work through missions. Coming to Agua Viva is a commitment of yourself, your love, your energy and most of all, your heart, allowing the Lord to work through you in every way He desires. We rejoice that actively serving the Lord causes each of us to grow more in the understanding of Jesus and His ways!

Effective ministry, both within the camp and within the community, requires much prayer and preparation. You may be planning to spend your time working on a project in the camp to bless and minister to those who come to use it. You may be planning to go into Ensenada to pray, to teach, to play and to share the love of Christ with the people there. Whatever your plans may be, it is through prayerful preparation and an attitude of humility and servant-hood that all the elements of your planning will fall into place. Regardless of your ministry, we pray that your goal will effectively serve, impact, train, equip churches, encourage pastors and clearly share the Gospel.

We, the staff of Agua Viva, pray that your preparation and ministry will be a very special time of growing and stretching that will bring you into a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ. This manual is designed as an outline to help prepare you for your time of ministry with Agua Viva. As you will see, it has been divided into major sections, which are best-covered one section per lesson. Each section contains a short assignment to be completed before your group meets for the next training session. It is our desire, through this training manual, to give you a basic understanding of Mexican culture and some tips on how to prepare for your time in Mexico.

We look forward to supporting you and partnering with you as you make preparations for your ministry time at Agua Viva.

En el amor de Cristo,
(In the love of Christ)

The Staff of Agua Viva Ministries

About Agua Viva Ministries

Jesús (Chuy) Dávalos, the founder of Agua Viva Ministries, Inc., is a man of vision and great conviction. God has placed an enormous burden on his heart to see the people of Mexico receive the Gospel and be freed from the tremendous bondage in their lives. Since 1957, Chuy has served as a pastor, missionary, evangelist, and professor of Biblical studies. Since 1984, God has allowed Chuy to focus his ministry on training new leaders and national missionaries and challenging them to go and preach the Gospel in the many unreached areas of Mexico.

Little by little, the Lord has surrounded Chuy with people who share his vision, taking on the task of building up the support system necessary to make it a reality. Agua Viva, a Christian organization dedicated to the ministry of missions, is in the process of building the first of many centers for this type of ministry. The first center is a camp, which occupies 143 acres of land about 12 miles inland of Ensenada in Northern Baja California, Mexico. Nestled away in the coastal mountains, one finds there flowing water, swaying trees and a place of communion with the Creator of all. This campground serves Mexicans as a retreat facility and seminary, and serves Americans as a mission base, providing the opportunity to reach out to the Mexican people for the sake of Christ.

Facilities

Agua Viva Ministries is located on 142 acres, 15 miles from the Pacific Ocean east of Ensenada, Baja California, only 90 miles south of San Diego. Our facilities can house

350 campers in 13 dormitories with hot showers and flushing toilets.

There are always authentic Mexican meals served.



Doctrinal Statement

1. We believe in the Scripture of the Old and New Testaments as verbally inspired by God, inerrant in the original writings, and of supreme and final authority in faith and life.
2. We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
3. We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary and is true God and true man.
4. We believe that man was created in the image of God, but man sinned and thereby incurred physical and spiritual death, which is separation from God; all human beings are born with a sinful nature.
5. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice, and that all who believe in Him are justified on the grounds of His shed blood.
6. We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His ascension into Heaven, and in His life as High Priest and Advocate for us.
7. We believe that all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ are born again of the Holy Spirit and thereby become children of God.
8. We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust, the everlasting blessedness of the saved, and the everlasting separation from God of the lost.
9. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ will personally and visibly return to earth and establish His Kingdom.

* The above has been provided in order that there would be no question as to the basic doctrinal position of Agua Viva Ministries. However, it is to be recognized that the range of denominational beliefs varies greatly in the Mexican churches who utilize the camp, the churches which we as ministers might visit, and the American churches or groups working within the boundaries of the ministries at and through Agua Viva.

Lesson One: Counting the Cost

Defining Your Ministry Goals

Just as every strong building begins with a plan and every competitive sports team trains according to its strategy and goals, an important part of preparing for ministry is defining what you want to accomplish and then how you will work toward achieving it. To help you focus and stay on track as you prepare for ministry, take some time to talk with your group and agree upon a few goals to which you can all be committed. (Do you hope to lead people to Christ, grow closer as a group, or build a house? See also *Ministry Ideas* in Appendix A.)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Looking at what you have agreed upon as a group, consider now what will be required of you individually and as a group to reach these goals. How much of your time and resources are you willing to give? Are you willing to sacrifice some of your other activities in order to spend time preparing for ministry? If it seems too much to ask at this time, please reconsider your decision to participate in this year's ministry trip.

Now make a note of some personal goals you want to work toward through this ministry. (Do you hope to grow closer to the Lord, learn Spanish, make a new friend, or discover God's will for you in missions?)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

The Bible tells us, "Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed." (Proverbs 16:3) We pray that this will be your testimony and we look forward to rejoicing with you at the success of the plans you commit to the Lord.

Assignment to be completed before next meeting:

Read pages 5 and 6, *Culture, Part 1*, and be prepared to discuss what you have read.

Prayer this lesson:

Commit your goals to the Lord in prayer; ask also for willingness to give what He asks of you for this ministry.

Culture, Part 1

Have you ever been to a different country? Traveling or even getting to know foreign travelers in your own country, you must realize that on our planet live a variety of people with different ways of life. Each country, and even many different groups within each country have their own culture--their own ideas about right and wrong, what's important, how to do things, etc. Someone who is exposed to another culture for the first time may feel awkward and conclude that his or her ways, values and traditions are right while those from the other culture are wrong. We must remember that each society has determined for itself the best way of living and is influenced by its history, economy and structure. With this in mind, our attitude toward other cultures must be one of openness and respect.

When you come to Mexico, an attitude of openness and respect toward the culture here will enable you to see that the people and their ways are as dignified, good and right as the people from where you live. In fact, by being willing to explore how Mexicans think, feel, believe and act, you might just go home challenged to rethink some of your own values.

The following pages contain descriptions and some practical suggestions on how to relate to the Mexican culture. We hope these will help make things more comfortable for you during your stay.

Mexico

Mexico is actually called "the United States of Mexico." There are 32 states in all. It is a beautiful country, rich with traditions and diverse subcultures. Most of the people are of mixed heritage--Native Indian (Mestizo) and European (Spaniard). Their ancestors were the children of Spaniards who had children with Indian women when they came to conquer the "New Land." This complicated history is deeply ingrained in the people's view of reality and is detected in areas of their lives from family structures to religion. The dominant religion, Catholicism, also originated from the Spanish conquest, and is influenced by mystical Indian religions.

The People

Approximately 61% of the population is Mestizo, 30% Indian, and 9% Euro-American, .5% Afro-American, and 1.4% other. About 90% of the people are Catholics and 6% Protestants. The country is divided into three major cultural regions. The "Northern States," or border region, is closest to the United States and reflects the American values of capitalism, Protestantism, freedom of speech, etc. Many people in this region watch American television, have relatives in the States, and deal with American tourists regularly. The "Central States," or middle region, is characterized by small villages and towns that are deeply Catholic. Here, the people are very set in their ways both religiously and politically. They are often afraid of change and antagonistic to different points of view. The "Southern States," or lower region, is mostly tribal. Many of the Indian people don't speak Spanish and live simple, private lives. (There are 56 indigenous languages spoken in Mexico besides Spanish.) Here, Catholicism is more mixed with symbols and ideas from Indian religions. As you pray for Mexico and prepare to come, remember that these factors are at work in the lives of those you'll meet and to whom you'll minister.



Religion

The Roman Catholic Church has been the dominant church here for four centuries. This doesn't mean that the people fully understand the Catholic Church or its teachings, but they do have a sense of unseen forces in their midst. They thank God for everything, speak of doing things "God willing," and have incorporated these ideas into their language and culture. Many Catholics may call themselves Christians though they do not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. They turn to the Virgin of Guadalupe, the patron saint of Mexico, as their guide and help. This maternal figure intercedes on their behalf, cares for them and defends them against the angry Father. Christ, their brother, came to teach them how to suffer and die. These are general concepts of the common people. They are more evident in the central and southern regions than in the northern region. Avoid condemning the saints, the Virgin, or the Catholic Church--you may greatly offend the people and lose opportunities for ministry.

Family

Family ties are **strong!** The father is usually the dominant person, and the eldest member of the family is usually the most respected, often controlling the family's actions. The mother, however, is the major unifying force and advocate for the children. In many homes, the wife is left to manage the finances, children and household. The children obey their parents and respect them very much. In some ways, the parent/child relationship is the most important, often placed above the husband/wife relationship.

Roles

Mexican males and females have very defined roles. The woman's ideal role is mothering her children in the home. However, women in the business world or leadership roles are also quite respected. Men are to work and provide for their families; many also spend much of their spare time drinking and socializing with other men. Many are "macho" in the sense that they are proud, valiant, in control and unemotional. This usually means that church is only for women, children and the elderly. Because children are often idealized and made the focus of the family, many parents sacrifice a great deal for them and care very much about what they are taught. Small children are not strongly disciplined or inhibited--the common view seems to be that they are too young to understand what should be done, but parents are very strict with older youth. Animals also have a role in Mexican family life, though they are not looked upon as family. For example, many families keep dogs for the protection of their property; they expect them to be useful, just as they expect their cows to produce milk or their chickens, eggs. An animal that is in the way, or not doing its "job" may receive a beating from its owner, be abandoned, or let loose in the street.

Education



Most adults today have had at least five years of schooling. Previous generations have had less, and many are illiterate. Today's subsidies by the government allow more students to receive an education through the high school years. Beyond high school, however, the cost of schooling limits the number of individuals who are able to study. The Mexican government has established a nationwide 24-hour satellite TV network. Many youth also need to work to help support their families. Mexicans value education very

much, but a lack of education does not mean a lack of knowledge. They are intelligent, insightful and perceptive people with much wisdom and experience. By watching everything we do and how we do it, they learn about us, our motives for being among them, and the effect we have on their towns and villages.

Diet

Generally speaking, the people eat beans, rice and tortillas daily; meat and vegetables are added occasionally for variety. Some families have a simple diet because it is more economical for them, but for most it is a matter of preference and taste. They do make great food!

Lesson Two: A Closer Look

Mexican and American

From what you have read so far about the Mexican culture and what you know about the American culture from experience, list all the differences you can think of between these two cultures.

From your reading, list the differences, which you know, will personally be difficult for you to accept (i.e., if you are an animal lover, it may be difficult to adjust to the different view towards animals).

Now list all of the similarities you can think of.

. . . We all need Jesus

Despite all the differences, the basic need for Jesus Christ unites us all. It is important that we approach ministry with an appreciation for the differences between ourselves and those to whom we want to minister, but it is even more helpful to recognize and remind ourselves continually that the people around us need Jesus in the same way we do. At times, the differences between ourselves and those to whom we want to minister will seem so great that they become obstacles; it is at these moments that we must look to Christ for our encouragement. (How did He treat those who were different from Him? What did He say and do for the poor, the sick, and the outcast?)

Assignment to be completed before next meeting:

Read pages 8 and 9, Culture Part 2, and then add more lists on this page. Be prepared to discuss what you have read.

Prayer this lesson:

Pray that Jesus will help you to see the people of Mexico the way He sees them and that you will have the love, respect and graciousness to treat them as He would.

Culture, Part 2

The Value of Respect

Respect is very important to the Mexican people. They show a great amount of respect to those older than themselves, to people in positions of authority and to strangers or new acquaintances. This is reflected in their language, as there are two forms of "you"-- "tú," which is informal or "usted," which is formal and always used in the above situations. The language section will teach you more about this.

The Value of History

Mexicans have great respect for the past. Their history is very important to them as can be seen in the names of their schools, streets and cities. They celebrate great figures of history, their heroes, as well as significant dates and events. You will see many statues and historical monuments around town during your trip.

The Value of Time and Relationships

To some Mexican people, building a relationship is much more important than keeping a schedule. Rather than cut short a conversation to go to another appointment, it is sometimes acceptable for a person to show up late to the next appointment. From this emphasis on relationships, tasks are sometimes put off until "mañana". This part of Mexican culture can be very frustrating to the schedule-bound American group. Be flexible! At the same time, it is important as ministering guests to not use this value to validate your own tardiness. Be on time!



The Value of “Confianza”

Mexicans are warm, friendly and courteous people. As they get to know you, they begin to trust you and speak of this trust, or "confianza," as something they extend to you. It expresses a feeling of confidence in the friendship. For example, someone may invite you to a meal and tell you to help yourself, “con confianza”, -- “make yourself at home”.

The Value of Hospitality

No matter how little they have, Mexican people are very hospitable and will always give you the very best of what they have when you visit their homes. They are modest people and usually have quite modest houses, but they will warmly open their homes to you. It is common to have your host or hostess say "You are in *your* house," "Estas en tu casa", or "My house is *your* house," "Mi casa es tu casa".

The Value of Generosity and Gratitude

Mexicans are very generous and will easily give you their last meal or an item they own. Many believe that their lives and what they have are controlled by destiny or fate, so they are very grateful for what they have. You will experience and witness this generosity during your stay and during your time with the people you interact with.

The Value of Hard Work

A very common misconception is that Mexicans are lazy. In actuality, they are very hard working people. Due to the lack of economic resources in their country, manual labor is the norm and most workdays are 10 hours long or more. The basic schedule for the work force is 8 am to 2 or 3 pm without a break, then an hour or two to go home to lunch, then back at 5 pm to work until 7 pm or later, 6 days a week. This varies, of course, according to the type of work (blue collar, etc.) This schedule is what they are accustomed to, and indeed they are very hard workers. (In fact, some Mexicans think Americans are lazy!)



The Value of the Environment

Because Mexico is a developing country, sanitation and environmental standards and expectations may not be what you're accustomed to. (For more details see Agua Viva Conduct Expectations on page 18).

Assignment to be completed before next meeting:

Review the questions from the beginning of this lesson (Lesson 2). How have your thoughts and opinions changed? (Write any down in the space provided above.)

Prayer this lesson:

Continue to pray that God would give you His heart for the Mexican people.

Lesson Three: Spanish Lessons

One of the most common fears for new missionaries seems to be difficulty or inability to communicate in a foreign language. This week, we want to teach you the basics of Spanish and encourage you with a reminder that the people of Mexico are very gracious and willing to help you learn the language. Just swallow your pride and fear and risk making mistakes! Remember too, that we can communicate without words--a smile or a helping hand speak much louder than words. "And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him." (Colossians 3:17) Just give it a try!

Pronunciation

a	<i>ah</i> , like <i>father</i>
b	like <i>b</i> in English, but soft
c	like <i>k</i> , but like <i>s</i> before <i>e</i> or <i>i</i>
ch	like <i>church</i>
d	soft <i>d</i> ; like <i>th</i> as in <i>the</i>
e	<i>eh</i> , like <i>they</i>
f	like <i>f</i> in English
g	hard <i>g</i> , but like <i>h</i> before <i>e</i> or <i>i</i>
h	always silent
i	<i>ee</i> , like <i>machine</i>
j	like <i>h</i> in <i>here</i>
k	like <i>k</i> in English
l	Like <i>l</i> in English
ll	like <i>y</i> in <i>yard</i>
m	like <i>m</i> in English

n	like <i>n</i> in English
ñ	like <i>n</i> in <i>onion</i>
o	<i>oh</i> , like <i>open</i>
p	softer than <i>p</i> in English
q	like <i>k</i>
r	like a soft <i>d</i>
rr	strong trill
s	slight hissing
t	softer than <i>t</i> in English
u	<i>u</i> , like <i>rude</i>
v	soft <i>b</i>
w	like <i>w</i> in English
x	like <i>x</i> in <i>exact</i>
y	like <i>j</i> in <i>juice</i>
z	like <i>s</i>



Basic Expressions

Try these basic expressions together as a group, then test each other in pairs. Learn them well because you will have many opportunities to use them in Mexico.

How do you say _____?	¿Cómo se dice _____?	¿ Komo say thee -say _____?
What is your name? (formal)	¿Cómo se llama usted?	¿ Komo say yawma oosted ?
What's your name (informal)	¿Cómo te llamas?	¿ Komo tay yawmas ?
My name is _____?	Me llamo _____.	May yawmo _____.
How old are you? (informal)	¿Cuántos años tienes?	¿ Kwan tos onyos tyenes ?
I am _____ years old.	Tengo _____ años.	Tengo _____ onyos
I live in _____.	Vivo en _____.	Beebo en _____.
Do you speak English? (formal)	¿Habla inglés?	¿ Ahbla eengles ?
I don't speak Spanish very well.	No hablo español muy bien.	No ahblo espawnyol mooey bee-en .
A little bit	Un poquito.	Oon po keeto
Slower, please.	Mas despacio, por favor.	Moss thes possyo , pord fabord

Whew! Have you got those down? You may need to use the following expressions as you minister in the community. If you have difficulty remembering them, carry these pages with you and refer to them when you need help.

Greetings

Hello	Hola*
Good morning	Buenos días
Good afternoon	Buenas tardes
Good evening	Buenas noches
God bless you (formal)	Dios le bendiga
God bless you (informal)	Dios te bendiga
How are you? (formal)	¿Cómo está usted?
How are you? (informal)	¿Cómo estás?
What's up?	¿Qué tál?
Good bye	Adios**
See ya	Nos vemos
Until later	Hasta luego
See you tomorrow	Hasta mañana
Until next time	Hasta la próxima
Until we meet again	Hasta la vista

* *Hola* is mostly used by American tourists. If you want to sound like one of the locals, use *buenos días*, *buenas tardes*, or *buenas noches*.

** *Adios* is used for long goodbyes. To say goodbye to someone you will see soon, use one of the *hasta* phrases or *nos vemos*.

For Children's Programs

We invite you to a Vacation Bible School.	Te invitamos a una escuela biblica.
We invite you all to a Vacation Bible School.	Les invitamos a una escuela biblica.
Attention, please.	Atención, por favor.
Please be quiet.	Guarden silencio, por favor.
Welcome, everyone!	¡Bienvenidos a todos!
We are going to pray.	Vamos a orar.
We are going to sing.	Vamos a cantar.
Clap your hands!	¡Vamos a aplaudir!
Sing [you all].	Canten.
Sing faster [you all].	Canten mas rapido.
Sing slower [you all].	Canten mas despacio.
Sing louder [you all].	Canten mas fuerte.
Sing softer [you all].	Canten mas quedito.
Stand up [you all].	Pónganse de pie.
Sit down [you all].	Siéntense.
We are going to listen to a Bible story.	Vamos a escuchar una historia biblica.
We are going to memorize a Bible verse.	Vamos a memorizar un texto de la Biblia.
We are going to do crafts.	Vamos a hacer trabajos manuales.
Do it like this [you all].	Háganlo así.
You can take your crafts home today.	Puedan llevar sus trabajos a la casa.
Please leave your crafts here.	Por favor, dejen los trabajos aqui.
We are going to play outside.	Vamos a jugar afuera.
Go outside, please.	Váyan afuera, por favor.
Go back inside, please.	Vamos adentro, por favor.
Line up.	Hágan una fila.
Make a circle.	Hagan un circulo.
Join hands.	Tomados de las manos.
Run!	¡Correle! ¡Andale!
Jump!	¡Brinca! ¡Salta!
Come here [you all], please!	¡Vengan acá, por favor!
Come back tomorrow.	Vuelvan mañana.
Invite your friends.	Inviten a sus amigos.

Paper	Papel
Crayons	Crayolas
To draw	Dibujar
To color/paint	Colorear / Pintar
Pen	Pluma
Pencil	Lapiz

Glue	Goma
Scissors	Tijeras
To cut	Cortar
To play	Jugar
Ball	Pelota
Jump-rope	Cuerda para brincar

For Evangelism or Visitation

God loves you. (formal)	Dios le ama.
Jesus loves you. (formal)	Jesús le ama.
I am a Christian.	Soy Cristiano(a).
We are Christians.	Somos Cristianos.
I would like to share my testimony with you.	Quisiera compartir mi testimonio con usted.
Jesus is my Savior.	Jesús es mi Salvador.
Bible	Biblia
Salvation	Salvación
Eternal life	Vida eterna
Christ died for your sins.	Cristo murió por sus pecados.
We invite you to a service at the _____ church. (formal)	Le invitamos a un servicio en la iglesia _____.
We invite you all to a service at the _____ church.	Les invitamos a un servicio en la iglesia _____.



Assignment to be completed before next meeting:

Read pages 14 and 15, *Walking and Talking in Mexico*. Fill in the blanks with the help of the *Spanish Lessons* pages.

Prayer this lesson:

Pray that God will prepare you for opportunities to minister to the Mexicans you will meet. Ask for sensitivity to the Holy Spirit's leading and boldness to share about your faith in God.

Walking and Talking in Mexico

Dress

Mexican Christians dress quite modestly. Since you represent a Christian ministry in Mexico, it is important that you also dress modestly to protect the testimony of the local Christian community. It is also important as those ministering to dress conservatively. The following guidelines should help you as you pack and prepare to minister in Mexico.

Ministry/Activity	Guys	Girls
VBS	Slacks or nice jeans and a nice collared shirt. Closed toed shoes.	Dress or skirt with nice shirt/blouse. Closed toed shoes.
Sports Ministry	Shorts (not more than 3" above the knees) and a T-shirt. Closed toed shoes.	Depends on site. Ask your Coordinator. Closed toed shoes.
Medical Clinics	Scrub pants or long pants (jeans ok). Scrub shirt or collared shirt. Closed toed shoes.	Scrub pants or long skirt to the knees. Scrub shirt or shirt with sleeves. Closed toed shoes.
Construction/Work Projects	Pants and T-shirt (Shirts are required). Closed toed shoes. Shorts may be permitted at some sites. Ask your Coordinator.	Pants and T-shirt. Closed toed shoes. Shorts may be permitted at some sites. Ask your Coordinator.
Church Service	Slacks and a nice collared shirt. Closed toed shoes.	Dress or skirt with nice shirt/blouse. Closed toed shoes.
Visitation/Door-to-Door	Slacks and a nice collared shirt. Closed toed shoes.	Dress or skirt with nice shirt/blouse. Closed toed shoes.
Shopping	Shorts (not more than 3" above the knees) and a T-shirt.	Shorts (not more than 3" above the knees) and a T-shirt
Beach	Shorts-type swimsuit	One piece swimsuit or shorts (not more than 3" above the knees) with a T-shirt
Camp	Long shorts or pants. Shirt with sleeves. Closed toed shoes or flip-flops only appropriate at Agua Viva	Long shorts or pants. Shirt with sleeves. Closed toed shoes or flip-flops only appropriate at Agua Viva

There may be some exceptions to these guidelines based on location and type of ministry, but as a rule, it is better to come prepared with more conservative clothing. **Please**, no tank tops, liquor-ad t-shirts, bikinis or speedos. It is only acceptable for boys/men to go shirtless at the beach.

SPECIAL NOTE: Closed-toed shoes are required at all ministry sites for your safety against trauma or roundworm. Sandals and flip-flops are appropriate **ONLY** at camp.

Greetings

Everyone shakes hands in Mexico, even children. When entering a room, a conversation, or an area with people talking, an appropriate greeting is always necessary. “_____,” or “Good morning,” is said from morning until noon; “_____” until around 8 PM (or until it is dark), and “_____” is the appropriate greeting in the evening. A handshake is also exchanged when meeting someone new or saying goodbye. If you are introduced to someone, respond with “Mucho gusto,” meaning, “It’s my pleasure.” Then introduce yourself by saying, “_____.” When you leave a conversation or a group of people, excuse yourself by saying, “Con permiso.”

Study the *Spanish Lessons* pages for phrases you can use in conversation.

SPECIAL NOTE FOR LEADERS: As a sign of respect, please make a point to greet the church leadership as you arrive and as you leave your ministry sites.

Affection

We as Americans tend to be more physically affectionate toward our friends of the opposite sex than is customary in Mexico. Though some churches have grown accustomed to American ways, we need to be sensitive to the practices of the Mexicans around us. In general, friends of the opposite sex should avoid touching. This is the simplest way to avoid rumors and misunderstandings, both within your own group and among the Mexicans around you.

Dating couples must be especially reserved in this area. A guy and a girl should never walk off alone, whether in camp or in the community. If they want to talk, they should do this in public or in the center of activity at the community site. Anything less than this may be terribly misinterpreted.

Dignity

Before doing anything like entering someone's house, picking up their child or taking their photo, remember to ask permission. This shows respect for the person's dignity and value as an individual.

Worship

In general, worship in Mexico is very lively and expressive. There is raising of hands, clapping, loud singing, swaying and sometimes dancing unto the Lord. Join in as you feel

comfortable, with an attitude of worship and respect. Avoid being more boisterous than the Mexicans around you--follow their example.

Giving

There is a wonderful (sometimes challenging for Americans) Mexican tradition of "recuerdos," that is, an exchange of small gifts between friends to remind them of each other. The gift could be a piece of jewelry, a bandana, a pen, etc. Be careful, because if you tell someone that you admire something they are wearing or something that they own, they will likely give to you. In the same way, they may come to you at the end of your time together, asking for a "recuerdo." Generosity is expected. So, come down ready to give, but don't feel obligated to give something that you don't want to part with.

Offensive Habits

Without knowing it, we often do things that are fun or funny in the United States but have offensive meanings in Mexico. For example, knocking or honking to the rhythm, "da-da-da-da-da...da-da" or making that "ppbbttt" bathroom sound with your mouth are both very offensive to Mexicans. The word "stupid" carries an offensive connotation in Mexico. Don't use it. Also using the expression, "No way!" can be taken to be very offensive, as this phrase has different connotations in Spanish. Drinking alcohol, smoking, non-Christian music and dancing are considered sinful by the Christian community, which has separated itself from these things to follow Christ. Again, we remind you of the importance of your actions here--the integrity of your ministry rests upon it!

Agua Viva Conduct Expectations

When you come to Mexico, you represent the Lord, your country and Agua Viva in the community of Ensenada. The following camp rules are designed to encourage consideration of others and to help everyone be a good witness for Christ in Mexico.

1. **Teams or individuals should not leave the camp or ministry site for any unscheduled activity without first communicating with the Agua Viva Ministries Group Coordinator for reasons of ministry effectiveness and safety.** (This includes leaving the site to buy snacks at the corner store--it is not appropriate to snack or have sodas at the site unless you have enough to share with everyone, including Mexicans.) ALWAYS communicate clearly with your Coordinator and respect his/her judgment about the appropriateness of your plans.
2. Alcohol, illegal drugs or cigarettes of any kind are prohibited during your week of ministry. If this is a problem for you personally, please discuss this with Agua Viva staff. WE ASK THAT YOU DO NOT DRINK ALCOHOL (OR VIRGIN DRINKS THAT COULD APPEAR TO HAVE ALCOHOL) OR SMOKE WHILE IN TOWN.
3. Get into the habit of washing frequently, especially before handling food. The stress of the week and your low resistance to unfamiliar bacteria make you more vulnerable to illnesses that are spread from hand to mouth. Report any injuries or illnesses to your Team Leader or Agua Viva Group Coordinator. (It may be helpful to eat a lot of yogurt and Vitamin B before your trip.)
4. Please be considerate of the Agua Viva grounds. Help us keep it clean by picking up litter and please don't carve into the trees or bunks. Stay on cleared pathways to avoid poison oak, snakes, etc. Please don't throw anything into the pool.
5. Please do not dive into the pool--it is very shallow. Also, jumping off the bridge is not allowed.
6. Please be friendly to other groups in camp. Remember to ask permission before borrowing anything, and keep your area neat. If you have any problems with people from another group, whether Mexican or American, notify your Agua Viva Group Coordinator immediately.
7. Do not put toilet paper or other items in the toilets, whether at Agua Viva or in town. Put them in the trash. If a toilet is stopped up, DON'T USE IT! Tell an Agua Viva staff person immediately.
8. Be ready to submit to your Agua Viva Group Coordinator and other Agua Viva staff at all times. Whether summer-staff or full-time staff, both have authority, and at any given time, may be aware of factors which will influence your stay in Mexico.
9. Be on time, or even early, to all scheduled activities (meals, departures, campfires, prep time, etc.)
10. Avoid touching people of the opposite sex! Your actions can easily be misinterpreted and may hinder your ministry in Mexico. The purpose of this rule is to maintain a comfortable atmosphere when among Americans, as well as Mexicans.
11. Due to safety reasons, fireworks cannot be bought or used during your ministry here in Mexico.
12. People of the opposite sex are not allowed in each other's dorms.

Lesson Four: What's Your Story?

In addition to your work as a group in Mexico, you may have many opportunities to share about your personal experience with Jesus Christ. Are you ready? Does this make you feel nervous? Your testimony can be a powerful tool for the Lord! We trust that spending time developing the basic outline of your story, along with some practice sharing it, and much prayer will do away with all nervousness!

There are two basic reasons to share your testimony: One, to encourage believers; and Two, to witness to non-believers. It is likely that you will find both believers and non-believers in your audience. In the space below, give a general outline of your story, beginning with what your life was like before Christ became your Lord and ending with what you are learning from Him now.

Now that you have an outline, go back and add to it some notes about details you want to be sure to include when you share with others. (Some ideas: people who have been influential to you, your age when you received Christ and the circumstances surrounding your decision, major lessons you have learned, things you are thankful for today, etc.)

Assignment to be completed before next meeting:

Read pages 19-22, *Sharing Your Testimony*, *Translation Exercise*, and *Working with a Translator*. Write out your testimony, as you would share it, on the page provided. Be prepared to share your story with the group next week!

Prayer this lesson:

Pray that God will give you the words He desires for you to share as you write out your testimony. Ask also for peace and courage if you feel nervous about sharing!

Sharing Your Testimony

Guidelines

Please keep the following important guidelines in mind as you prepare to write and share your testimony.

1. Help your listeners concentrate on your message--keep gum, hats, sunglasses and other distractions out of the picture.
2. Introduce yourself--name, age, where you are from, etc.
3. To make translation easier, keep sentences short.
4. Avoid using slang or expressions that are not directly translatable in Spanish (i.e., "butterflies in my stomach").
5. Aim for a length of about five minutes.
6. Try to memorize your testimony or share with a few notes rather than read off the page.
7. Tell of your relationship with Christ and the difference that He has made in your life. Include an example of what you used to be like and what changing influence Jesus has had on you.
8. Try to focus on a single spiritual truth you have learned, rather than giving a rambling story of your life.
9. It is good to use Scripture to illustrate and back up your testimony. "The Bible says..." is a good way to introduce this. Relate it to your own Christian experience.
10. Include something about the real power and presence of God in your life.
11. Avoid referring to material objects you may have had or have now--this often points out differences between you and your listeners and may make it harder for them to relate to you.
12. Emphasize your point in closing and then stop. Don't ramble--5 minutes max!
13. Remember that this is a testimony of what Jesus has done for you. This should show in your voice, actions and facial expressions--smile and make eye contact! (Avoid scuffing at the floor or putting your hands in your pockets or looking at your translator.)
14. Don't feel bad if you don't have a dramatic experience to tell. God is working in your life--share how. Many people need "common" testimonies to relate to their own "common" lives.
15. Trust God! He will work through what you share.

Translation Exercise

Read through this example testimony. The appropriate breaks are marked with ||. The bolded, italicized phrases are difficult to translate, could be said in a better way, or are inappropriate. The reasons are given below.

My name is Joe Johnson and I'm from Santa Barbara **where our President lives.**¹ || I thank God because I could be here today with you all. || I want to share with you how I became a Christian. || When I was ten years old I was really happy. || **Everything was going my way.**² **But then my father left my mother and my brothers and sister and I, || there are four of us all together, and then my mom lost her job || and my grandma died || where we had been living.**³ || So we all went to live with my aunt **who was very sweet**⁴ and lived in Santa Barbara. || She knew I was very sad and angry || so one day she told me that even though my father wasn't there anymore || I had another father who always watched over me, || who loved me very much and who had died for me. || I didn't understand her. || **I thought she was a stupid, old lady**⁵, but I liked the idea of being loved. ||

Each night she persisted in telling me He was there still waiting for me to accept His love, || but I rejected it. || However, I needed it. || One day I was so lonely I thought my heart would break. || I cried and cried. || I hadn't cried for over a year. || **It was cool.**⁶ || So, finally I told this Father-God that if He was real || He had to take away this loneliness and pain || **or I would kill myself.**⁷ || The next morning something was different. || He did. || I knew that He was real from that day on. || You can know He's real, too. || Just give Him a chance.

1. Irrelevant, reflection of prestige or wealth of community.
2. **Going my way**—not easily translatable. How could this be better said?
3. Rethink the long run-on sentence. How could it be stated more succinctly?
4. **Sweet**—This would have to be translated to *friendly* or *kind*, because it doesn't have the same connotation in Spanish.
5. **Stupid, old lady**—This is a very offensive, negative statement. Do not use the word "stupid" in Mexico. Please be careful with anything of this nature as it often carries stronger meaning in Spanish than it does in English.
6. **Cool**—American slang is difficult or even impossible to translate into Spanish.
7. **I would kill myself**—This is not incorrect as part of a testimony. However, we caution you to consider carefully strong statements like this and always avoid exaggeration solely for effect.

Lesson Five: Guiding a Person to Christ



One of our main goals as missionaries is to share God's love and plan of salvation with others. Whether we minister through sports, vacation Bible school, or a work project in town, it is essential that we are prepared to share about Jesus. When the Lord allows us to encounter a person who understands the message and wants to make a personal commitment to Christ, we must know how to direct the conversation to the point where that person can pray to receive Jesus.

This week we will focus on the basics of God's plan of salvation. There are many different "styles" for sharing the Gospel (the colors of the Gospel, the "Four Laws", the bridge illustration, etc.), but the basic message is the same.

God's Plan of Salvation

1. God loves us and desires to give us abundant and eternal life. (John 3:16, 10:10)
Dios nos ama y desea darnos vida abundante y eternal (Juan 3:16, 10:10).
2. Our Problem: We are separated from God because of sin. (Romans 3:23, 6:23)
Nuestro Problema: Estamos separados de Dios por causa del pecado (Romanos 3:23, 6:23).
3. The Only Solution: Jesus, God's perfect Son, died in our place and rose again to free us from sin, making a way for us to have peace and a personal relationship with God. (1 Timothy 2:5, 1 Peter 3:18, Romans 5:1, 5:8)
La Unica Solución: Jesús, el Hijo perfecto de Dios, murió en nuestro lugar y resucitó para liberarnos del pecado, haciendo un camino para que tengamos paz y una relación personal con Dios (1 Timoteo 2:5, 1 Pedro 3:18, Romanos 5:1, 5:8).
4. In order to enter into this relationship with God, we must believe in Jesus and invite Him to be our Lord and Savior (John 1:12, Romans 10:9).
Para tener este relación con Dios, tenemos que creér en Jesús y invitarle a ser nuestro Señor y Salvador (Juan 1:12, Romanos 10:9).

Sharing God's Plan

Here are some hints to help you share God's plan of salvation effectively.

1. Share the main points clearly. A tract or illustration can be helpful.
2. Turn to relevant passages in the Bible as you talk about each point. Ask your listener to read them aloud (or, you read them).
3. Ask your listener periodically whether he/she understands what you have shared so far.
4. When you have finished sharing, ask your listener whether he/she would like to pray and enter into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
5. If your listener is ready to pray, ask him/her to repeat each phrase after you. Or, if your listener would rather say the prayer alone, write it down for him/her.
6. If your listener is not ready to pray, don't press the issue. Let him/her know that the local Christian church welcomes him/her to visit and ask questions. Smile, and thank him/her for taking the time to listen.

Sample Salvation Prayer

Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner and that I need your forgiveness. I believe that you died for my sins. I want to turn from sin. I invite you now to enter into my life and my heart. I want to trust in you and follow you as my Lord and Savior. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Señor Jesús, se que soy pecador, y que necesito tu perdón. Creo que tu moriste por mis pecados. Quiero dejar de pecar. Te invito ahora a entrar a mi vida y mi corazón. Quiero confiar en ti y seguirte como Señor y Salvador. En el nombre de Jesús, Amén.

Assignment to be completed before next meeting:

Practice sharing the Gospel with at least three Christians this week. Ask them how they think you could be more effective.

Prayer this lesson:

Pray for opportunities to share the Gospel with non-believers. Ask the Holy Spirit to soften the hearts of those you will share with.

Lesson Six: Pack Your Bags!

Checklist

- o Warm sleeping bag and pillow
- o Fitted twin sheet
- o Bug spray
- o Flashlight and extra batteries
- o Water bottle
- o Work gloves, if needed
- o Work clothes (could get ruined)
- o Tennis shoes or hiking boots
- o Jacket
- o Dress clothes for church and VBS
- o Camera and extra batteries
- o Bible, notebook and pen
- o Group first aid kit
- o Hand sanitizer
- o Group ice chests
- o Tools for work projects
- o Sports equipment
- o Chapstick
- o Beach towel
- o Swim suit
- o Sunscreen
- o Washcloth and bath towel
- o Shampoo, soap, toothbrush, deodorant, comb or hairbrush, etc.
- o Toilet paper, Kleenex, baby wipes
- o If you wear contacts, bring an extra pair of glasses.
- o Spanish dictionary
- o Alarm clock
- o Any prescribed medication (ex, allergy, asthma, etc.)
- o Recuerdos - some groups like to bring small trinkets to give to the children at their ministry sites on the last day.



Note: Names should be written on all equipment and personal items, borrowed or otherwise. Please respect other people's property and remember that Agua Viva Ministries is not responsible for equipment that your group borrows, loses or breaks!

Last Meeting Details

- Prayer time: This is a great way to send your team off with a blessing. It's a way of commissioning your team off together.
- Mexican meal: Share a meal together and have a time to go over everything that your team is in store for during their week of ministry.
- Pack boxes and luggage: Set a time to get your team together to go over last minute packing and organizing of the vehicles.
- Meeting/details of travel: Go over how long it will take to travel to Ensenada, when and where your team should meet the morning of departure, etc.

Checklists and Sample Schedules

VBS Checklist

- Do you have the appropriate clothes?
 - Girls: long skirts, shirt with sleeves, closed-toed shoes
 - Boys: long pants (nice jeans are ok), collared shirt, closed-toes shoes
- Do you have an MC?
 - Have you reviewed the schedule of activities?
- Are your songs ready?
 - Are your musicians ready?
 - Do you have your song boards ready?
 - Do you know the motions?
- Is your story ready?
 - Do you have props?
 - Does your team know the story?
 - Are your team members ready to tell the story?
 - Is the Salvation Message ready?
- Is your memory verse ready?
 - Is it written on poster board?
 - Has it been checked?
- Is your craft ready?
 - Do you have tables?
 - Does anything need to be done beforehand?
 - Do you have the glue, markers, crayons, etc.?
- Is your game ready?
 - Do you have team members ready to play it?
 - Do you have all your equipment?
- Do you have snacks ready?
 - Cups
 - Napkins
 - Water/ Punch
 - Food Item
 - Trash Bags

Sample VBS Schedule

10-30 Minutes	Free play and set-up
10-15 Minutes	Introductions and songs
10-15 Minutes	Story
5-10 Minutes	Memory Verse
15-20 Minutes	Craft
5-10 Minutes	Prayer/Salvation Opportunity
15-20 Minutes	Snack/ free play
5-10 Minutes	Pack up and leave

This is just a sample schedule to help you as you begin to plan your own VBS. These minutes are flexible, and the order of events is flexible as well.

VBS: <u>day one</u> Ministry	Person/s Responsible	Phone number	Evaluation	Due date Practice with translator	Good to Go!
Pre-VBS games and supplies			Supplies, instructions clear		
MC			Transitions smooth		
Songs			Song board/chart legible		
Memory verse			Verse: _____ easily understood and read		
Bible message			Gospel message clear		
Crafts			Supplies, instructions clear		
Snacks			Pre-packaged snacks, cups and napkins		

Checklists and Sample Schedules Cont.

Traveling VBS Checklist

- Do you have the right clothes?
 - Girls: long skirts, shirt with sleeves, closed-toed shoes
 - Boys: long pants (jeans are ok), collared shirt, closed-toed shoes
- Are your songs ready?
 - Are your musicians ready?
 - Do you have your song boards ready?
 - Do you know the motions?
- Is your story ready?
 - Do you have the props ready?
 - Are your team members ready to act it out or tell it?
- Do you have multiple activities planned?
 - Crafts
 - Snack
 - Games
- Do you have enough supplies to repeat the VBS 2 or 3 times during the day?
- Do you have all the supplies?
 - How many tables do you want? _____
 - How many tarps do you want? _____

This ministry is usually accompanied with a medical clinic. One thing to remember when planning a traveling VBS is the children are going to be trickling in and out of it all day. Have enough activities planned so that you can repeat them as necessary with new children that come. It is important to not think of this ministry as entertainment for the children waiting to see the doctor. This is a very important ministry and a great opportunity to introduce children from the communities to Jesus.

Checklists and Sample Schedules

Traveling VBS Sample Schedule

10-15 Minutes	Set Up
10-15 Minutes	Songs/Prayer
10- 15 Minutes	Story
10-15 Minutes	Craft
10-15 Minutes	Memory Verse
5-10 Minutes	Prayer/Salvation Opportunity
10-15 Minutes	Snack
10-15 Minutes	Puppet Show
10-15 Minutes	Game

**Repeat as needed

VBS: day one Ministry	Person/s Responsible	Phone number	Evaluation	Due date Practice with translator	Good to Go!
Pre-VBS games and supplies			Supplies, instructions clear		
MC			Transitions smooth		
Songs			Song board/chart legible		
Memory verse			Verse: _____ easily understood and read		
Bible message			Gospel message clear with Salvation message		
Crafts			Supplies, instructions clear		
Snacks			Pre-packaged snacks, cups and napkins		

Check Lists and Sample Schedules Cont.

Sport Ministry Checklist

- Do you have the right clothes?
 - Long shorts (They must be long)
 - T-shirt
 - Tennis shoes
 - Sunscreen
 - Sunglasses
- Do you have all the equipment?
 - Soccer balls
 - Pumps
 - Needles for the pumps
 - Activities for younger children
- Are testimonies ready?
 - 2-3 testimonies 5 minutes each
 - Salvation message ready
- Are you serving a snack?
 - Water/ Gatorade
 - Granola Bars (or other snack items)
 - Cups
 - Napkins
 - Trash Bags

Check Lists and Sample Schedules Cont.

Sample Sports Ministry Schedule

10-15 Minutes	Intro/pick teams
50-60 Minutes	Play
20-25 Minutes	Break for snack/ testimonies/Prayer/Salvation Opportunity
15-20 Minutes	Play
5-10 Minutes	Pack up/ Leave

This is just a sample schedule to help you as you begin to plan your own sport ministry. These minutes are flexible, and the order of events is flexible as well.

Sports Ministry: <u>day one</u>	Person/s Responsible	Phone number	Evaluation	Due date Practice with translator	Good to Go!
Pre-VBS games and supplies			Supplies, instructions clear		
MC			Transitions smooth		
Songs			Song board/chart legible		
Memory verse			Verse: _____ easily understood and read		
Bible message			Gospel message clear		
Crafts			Supplies, instructions clear		
Snacks			Pre-packaged snacks, cups and napkins		

Appendix A: Helpful Hints for VBS

Songs

Music and singing is a big part of the Mexican church and its worship time. The people love to sing, and are very willing to sing as loud as they can—with their whole heart. Songs that share the Gospel and hope of Jesus are often carried back into homes where perhaps no one knows Him.

The worship service is a good time for sharing through music. Be prepared to sing one or two songs as a group, in English or Spanish. If possible, prepare special music—the people will love it! Always be ready to share the special meaning a song may have for you. In any singing time, do as the people do—clap when they clap, raise your hands when they do (if you feel comfortable), but be sensitive and avoid being more boisterous than they are.

In preparation for singing in VBS, choose some songs from those listed in the VBS section of the *Agua Viva Ministry Songbook*. Next, appoint people who can write legibly to make Song Charts. The words of the songs should be written on large poster boards (bed sheets work well, too), in large letters. If you have two sites, make two sets. Be creative with shapes, colors, pictures, etc., but be sure your Spanish is correctly copied. ***Check your finished song charts with your Agua Viva translator when you arrive.***

Mexican children love to sing and are very quick at learning new songs. Teaching them songs is a good opportunity to expand on that day's VBS lesson, as well as involve the members of your group. When singing, explain the meaning of the song or apply the message of the song to the day's lesson. Use hand motions whenever possible—the children love this.

Bible Story

After you have chosen a theme for the week, use the theme as a guide for selecting your Bible stories. There are Spanish Bible storybooks available through most Christian bookstores, or, since you will be working with a translator, English Bible storybooks may also be helpful.

The following hints will help you prepare your stories:

1. Bring and carry your **BIBLE!**
2. Include and introduce the pastor or ministry leader from the community (have them open in prayer, summary of story, closing prayer, or whenever possible).
3. Begin by asking for the Lord's help! No story can be effective unless the Holy Spirit speaks through you.
4. Have a genuine desire to impart a message through the story. Know what it is you would like the children to "walk away with."
5. Become *thoroughly* familiar with the story you are going to tell. Know the basics of it well enough that no distractions will fluster you.

Appendix A: Helpful Hints For VBS Cont.

6. Emphasize that the Bible is the Word of God by having a Bible open to the very story being told.
7. Be Biblically correct! Read, study and be sure you understand and are teaching correctly the passage of scripture from which the story is taken.
8. Think of ways to make the story more meaningful to the Mexican children. Include everyday life in the stories, as Jesus did in His parables. Remember, however, that their way of life is different in some ways than ours.
9. Use visual aids whenever possible (*i.e.*, drama, puppet show, chalkboard drawings, flannel graphs, items that emphasize your point, etc.). Try to involve several group members in the story. Try to bring up children to help act out the story. This is exciting for the children chosen and helps keep the children's attention on the story.
10. Rehearse your story several times.

These hints will help you present your stories:

1. Use facial expression, tone of voice, etc. Over-do it! Keep it natural, but with zest and action!
2. Tell the story simply, and in language and terms children can grasp.
3. Maintain eye-contact with the children; avoid looking at the interpreter.
4. Try to make one central application of the story. Avoid rambling from one application to another--your story will be much more effective if it has a single, specific message for people to consider. Be conscious of challenging them to action and personal responsibility, as well as teaching truths about God.
5. Involve guys and girls in the story time. We don't want to encourage the Mexican perception that Christ is someone for women and children only.
6. After the story, have the Pastor or storyteller review the message of the story with the children and do a modern day application.
7. Repeat the main point of the lesson throughout the day; include it somehow in your craft choice.
8. Evaluate the attention span of your audience and consider what can be improved for the next day.

Appendix A: Helpful Hints For VBS Cont.

Memory Verse

The Bible tells us, "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." (Psalm 119:105) However, God's words cannot guide and direct us unless we know them so that they are available to us when we encounter a time of need. Therefore, during your time with the children, it is important to give them the opportunity to learn what God says in His Word.

The following hints will help you prepare your verses:

1. Pick a short verse for each day, tying it in with the Bible story.
2. Look at the length of the verse and its wording--judge its appropriateness for children.
3. Write the verse and reference out on poster board, clearly and legibly from a Spanish Bible. (Do *not* just have someone freely translate it.) ***Check your finished verse charts with your Agua Viva translator when you arrive.***
4. Feel free to be creative in use of shape, color or design, but avoid distracting from the words and message. For example, a good way to teach Psalm 23:1 would be to cut and decorate the poster board in the shape of a sheep. Other examples: have different children hold pieces of the verse--mix them up or turn them around one by one; write the verse on a dry-erase board and erase words one by one.

These hints will help you teach your verses:

1. Allow the interpreter, Pastor, or other church leader to read the verse to the children to insure proper pronunciation.
2. Explain what the verse means and how it relates to the week's theme and the day's story.
3. Have the leader read through the verse phrase by phrase several times, and ask the children to repeat after him/her.
4. Begin repeating it together completely several times until it is memorized. If you have incorporated any of the creative methods in the preparation section above, now is the time to use them.
5. Ask for volunteers to stand up and recite the verse, then all the boys, girls, etc.
6. Review the verse before the children leave for the day, as well as each day thereafter.
7. Print small copies of the verses for the children to take home and encourage them to bring a friend.

Crafts

Making a craft project is not only a special treat for Mexican children, it can also serve as an effective tool for emphasizing your theme and key points of your Bible lesson. It also gives you a significant time of interaction and an opportunity to express love and care through actions instead of words. **Think, pray and plan carefully what you will do**

Appendix A: Helpful Hints For VBS Cont.

so that craft time is more than just entertainment or a "time-killer." Make it a meaningful reminder of Bible school and the lessons taught during the week. Select projects that the children will be proud to display in their homes and that will bring the Word of God into families that might not otherwise be open to receiving it.

Keeping the above suggestions in mind, these hints will help you prepare:

1. Plan for an average of 30-100 children at *each* site you are assigned to, and if possible, bring back-up items to be used in a pinch. (Check with the Program Director on the number of children that might be at your site. This number will increase during the week.)
2. Bring all necessary supplies in a quantity to facilitate a large number of children.
3. Allow the children to be creative, but at the same time give them direction. For example, giving them a heart and letting them decorate it with certain available items will work better than giving them a blank piece of paper and crayons and telling them to draw whatever comes to mind.
4. Have some steps of the project done ahead of time to save time and confusion. For example, if the project involves threading yarn through holes in some poster board, punch the holes first, but let the children do the threading.
5. Include scripture on the project.
6. Bring a finished project or two to serve as examples.
7. If the project will be especially messy, plan to do it outside (bring tarps, if necessary).

These hints will help you to teach the craft:

1. If you have a large number of children, consider dividing them into two groups (either by age or by sex) and having one group work on crafts while the other plays games.
2. Have all supplies for crafts ready and available (this can be set up while the memory verse is being taught).
3. Have one person thoroughly explain the craft (through the interpreter) and show the example.
4. Have other group members prepared to help pass out materials to the children. Depending on the difficulty of the craft, each group member should gather and help a group of five to seven children to complete their craft.
5. If using supplies which could be dangerous, messy, or are only available in limited supply (*i.e.*, scissors, staplers, glue, etc.), we suggest that the leaders in each group be responsible for these items, assisting the children with steps in the craft where these are needed.
6. Make sure the name of each child in your group is written on his/her craft. Say, "Pongan sus nombres en tus manualidades."
7. Unless the children will continue the project the following day, let them know that they can take it home when they leave. You can say, "Pueden llevar sus manualidades a sus casas." Suggest that they leave them in their seats while they play games

Appendix A: Helpful Hints For VBS Cont.

8. Make sure that *everyone* pitches in to help clean up. Use it as a time to emphasize the respect we need to show for the house of God. Make sure you bring a trash bag to the site.
9. As a leader, feel free to participate in making a project too, but only if there are enough supplies for all the children. Don't forget to continue helping the children with their projects.

Games and Sports

Games and sports can serve several important functions within your community ministry. First, they are a natural outreach tool--non-threatening and easy for everyone to get involved in. Second, these activities are a visible way to communicate love and care without reliance on language. Third, you can easily learn from the locals as they share with you their favorite games or their expertise at a favorite sport. Finally, it's FUN! Have a good time, and let the following suggestions guide you in your preparation for the recreation part of your program.

1. Don't assume you can buy or borrow what you need once you arrive in Mexico--be prepared before you come. Also, make sure the necessary things get in your vehicle each day (delegate this task to someone each day).
2. If you are bringing personal or borrowed equipment, mark it well and put someone in charge of being responsible for its whereabouts. Also, consider the possibility of leaving what you bring with the Mexican church (or Agua Viva Ministries). Only do this through the Group Coordinator or the local Pastor, not directly to a child.
3. Use your imagination in planning, but remember the age group you are ministering to and the number of people involved.
4. Be sure to plan activities that give everyone the option to be involved. For example, don't assume that older boys will be happy playing "Duck, Duck, Goose," or that the younger children will be capable or safe playing soccer or basketball.
5. Prep the rest of your group on the activities of each day so that they can be energetic and active participants. Each group member should be involved, unless he/she has another responsibility that requires immediate attention.
6. **Remember that safety is essential – keep aware of what is happening around you and use common sense. Seek to facilitate the involvement of the children and people to whom you are ministering, rather than to flaunt your own athletic ability.** For example, in a game of baseball or soccer, *do* make an effort to play competitively and well, but *don't* seek to be the "Home Run or Goal King/Queen."
7. Here are some ideas for activities:
 - o Any group sport or game--dodge ball, baseball, soccer, basketball, frisbee, etc. If dividing into teams, bring something that players can wear to show which team they are on (colored strips of fabric, etc.).

Appendix A: Helpful Hints For VBS Cont.

- Simple children's games--"Duck, Duck, Goose," "Ring Around the Rosie," "London Bridge, "Simon Says" (in Spanish), etc.
 - Relays--be creative but simple.
 - Simple games with simple equipment—jump rope, tossing a ball around a circle, "hot potato", playing catch, making a "train" and running around, etc.
8. Have someone ask the children to show you one of their favorite games, then join in and learn it. (Don't depend on this idea to fill your time.)

Snacks

Snacks at VBS should be used only if desired, and never as a means to draw the children or to keep them coming back. With this in mind, it is preferable to keep things simple--Kool-Aid and cookies, instead of sodas and candy bars.

Plan on bringing down the necessary items for each day's snacks. We have igloos to mix Kool-Aid in. Keep in mind that Agua Viva does not provide cups or Kool-Aid – you need to bring these. Purified water for mixing punch will be provided by Agua Viva.

Each day, have your snacks prepared and loaded into vehicles *before* the appointed time of departure. Those on the "snack team" should find a spot at the site on the first day, outside and out of the sight of the children, where everything can be set up and served.

Snacks should be set up during the last 15 minutes of the program, *after* all the children have regrouped for closing activities. Know how many children have come that day, and pour sufficient drinks to serve them all--so that you can hand them a cup as they go through the line. Group members should help dismiss the children and keep them lined up in an orderly fashion. See that each child receives his/her snack and does not return to the line for a second helping, unless there is enough. Group members may be served after all the children have their snacks; serve the same amount to the group as was served to the children.

Appendix B: Ministry Ideas

Introduction

At Agua Viva Ministries we believe in partnerships. We partner groups with Mexican churches. Our goal is to encourage the Mexican churches and engage them with you in ministry. The following are descriptions of ministry projects your group may choose to prepare for. Any ideas you have that are not listed here should be discussed with the Agua Viva Programming Director. Together, we'll try to make it happen! We believe that through all these ministries, the Gospel should be clearly presented in word and deed.

Construction/Work Projects

There are numerous opportunities to minister through construction and other work projects, both in camp and out in surrounding towns. Examples include cement pouring, carpentry, painting, clearing land and digging. Some projects require fund-raising in order to purchase materials. Project costs range from \$300-\$50,000 depending on the size of the project. (Projects are prayerfully decided by need, finances, skill level, and number of persons serving.)

Sports Ministry

A friendly game of soccer, basketball, volleyball, etc. is an effective way to draw people together. Many lives have been touched through the sharing of testimonies and having a salvation opportunity during a short break for Gatorade and rest. We encourage groups to bring Bibles to distribute. Some groups donate gently used soccer shorts and jerseys and distribute the last day. (See sport ministry sample schedule)

Crafts

Projects such as making bead necklaces, painting, etc. are also great ways to draw people together. As they work, group members can share testimonies or talk with individuals.

Vacation Bible School

The goal of this ministry is to teach children about God and lead them into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. They learn about God through Bible stories, memory verses, crafts and praise songs, and they experience His love as they interact with the group that takes the time to teach and play with them. Sites range from churches, open fields, and desayunadores, to houses, parks, and parking lots. Agua Viva has seen more of a need to help with ministries that provide meals and supervised programs for children who otherwise would be home alone. We find that orphanages in the Ensenada area have been blessed with many groups. (See also "Helpful Hints for VBS," Appendix A, and VBS sample schedule.)



Appendix B: Ministry Ideas Cont.

Women's Bible Study

While their children attend VBS, mothers can also enjoy a time of fellowship and learning with other women. Some ideas for your time together include singing, teaching, giving testimonies and making crafts.

Prison Visitation

The local prison allows male members of the groups to enter and play sports (basketball, volleyball, soccer and softball) or to just talk with inmates. In the past, there have been Bible studies and groups have shared testimonies after playing sports with them. Also, women have the opportunity to lead a bible study with the female inmates. However, this ministry is not always available depending on the authorization given from the prison warden.

Serving Meals

Serving a meal at your ministry site is a great way to show them the love of Christ. Group members can share testimonies and talk with individuals as they eat.

Medical/Dental Clinics



This ministry is a tremendous blessing to the many Mexican people who are unable to afford medical and dental care. Your team of certified doctors can travel to various towns with a national Christian doctor or dentist, helping and sharing the love of Christ with your patients. (For specifics about medical/dental clinics see Appendix D)

Special Skills Ministries

Some groups have a number of members who are trained in a particular skill, such as cutting hair, electrical wiring, masonry, etc. These are all great ways to minister to people through meeting a physical need. At the same time, opportunities are created to share the Gospel.

Gospel Meetings/ Outreach

We encourage groups to partner with local churches in outreach to the community. Gospel meetings are usually held in the evening, and may include music, drama, testimonies, preaching, and/or a Gospel movie. Meetings can be set up at various sites, such as churches, basketball courts, parks, etc.

Appendix B: Ministry Ideas Cont.

Door-to-Door Ministry

Visitation is an effective way to invite people to the various activities taking place at the church. When accompanied by local church members, it is an exciting way to encourage the local church to reach out to its own community. It also creates opportunities to witness for the Lord. (See also "Helpful Hints for Door-to-Door Ministry," Appendix B.)

Appendix C: Helpful Hints for Door-to-Door Ministry

1. It is best to go in groups of three when contacting people: one interpreter, one female and one male. If possible, involve church members and the pastor in your outreach. Involving the local church increases the possibility of continued relationships after you leave. If inviting children, bring other Mexican children from the church along--they make great "spokes people."
2. God *must* be with you. Pray before you go out--spiritually, you are on the front line. The people you meet will be watching you and learning about God from your words, attitudes and actions. When visiting, the person who is not talking should be praying.
3. A positive attitude is vital. You have something important to tell them, good news to share!
4. If you are visiting homes, introduce yourselves and wait until invited in before entering. Don't appear shocked by the poverty of some of the homes.
5. Be careful about opening a gate that is shut. The courtyard is part of the house. Call out your greeting ("Buenas Tardes") from the gate.
6. When you introduce yourselves, explain who you are and what it is you're doing (*i.e.*, visiting the neighborhood to invite people to join you at church).
7. If invited inside, go in (if you feel comfortable), but focus your attention on your host. Don't be afraid to eat or drink something if it is offered, but feel free to refuse if you're not hungry.
8. Give the person your complete attention. Don't look past the person into the house, or at any other object. Be attentive, whether you speak Spanish or not. Remember, a smile can go a long way!
9. If you feel led to share the Gospel, look the individual squarely in the eye--do not in any way be apologetic in your approach. Remember that the individual you are talking to is a person, just like you are. Be genuinely interested in and concerned for the person. Ask questions and *listen* to find out where that person is spiritually, so you can better speak to the person's need.
10. Remember the importance and urgency of sharing the Gospel with others. Otherwise, you will feel uncomfortable and your message will seem irrelevant to the people listening.
11. Develop phrases to be used in introducing the Gospel. For example, "I'd like to share something with you that has changed my life." Be ready to share how you came to Christ.
12. Ask pointed questions, such as, "Do you know the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior?" Never ask anyone whether he/she is a Christian. In Mexico, most people call themselves Christians if they go to the Catholic church.
13. Capitalize on the answers to your questions. If you get a reaction, you may be touching something on the inside of who they are. Be sensitive. Try to build that relationship throughout your week in Mexico.
14. Make sure your interpreter lets you know what is being said.
15. Be flexible, go with the flow. Be relaxed and not in a hurry. For the Mexican people, relationships are far more important than time, and looking at your watch can stifle a conversation very quickly.
16. Take along a supply of tracks and bibles to share as needed. Be acquainted with the material you are handing out.
17. Before leaving, know the service schedules for the church you're working with so that you can invite them to weekly activities and offer to pray with the person for anything that is on their heart and mind.
18. Trust God.
19. **Please note** that this ministry requires special permits from the government in Mexico City. The people participating in this ministry are required to send us their immigration material a minimum of seven months in advance. We cannot guarantee that the government will grant these permits, but we will try our best to make it happen.

Appendix D: Helpful Hints For Medical Clinics

Short Term Medical, Dental and Optometry Mission trips Partner with *Agua Viva Ministries* in Ensenada, Mexico

Agua Viva Ministries is Reaching Mexico for Christ by partnering with Medical, Dental, and Optometry providers from the US and Canada with underserved, remote communities surrounding the Ensenada, Mexico area. Agua Viva Ministries (AVM) believes that serving the physical needs of the rural communities and using the gift of medicine can be used to draw people in and open doors to share the Gospel.

AVM programs teams of medical and dental providers for short-term mission trips year round. Makeshift clinics are set up either in rural churches or lean-to shelters. Each day you are scheduled in a new location. Local Mexican Christian MDs, Optometrists and Dentists will accompany you to each site and will facilitate patient follow-up and ensure legal coverage. Statistics show that the best way to reach an area with the gospel is to use national Christians to reach the lost. AVM believes in partnerships. Thus, a team of local pastors and trained Christian leaders in the communities are formed to partner with you to provide counseling and prayer stations during the clinics.

All sites are programmed prior to your arrival including purchasing or essential medications and promotion of the clinics in the community.

We welcome students in training.

What Agua Viva Ministries provides:

- Extensive training materials
- Pre-trip ministry site setup and pre-planning
- Purchase of essential formulary medications
- Pre-clinic community promotion
- Translators
- On-site consultation with local Christian medical, dental and optometry providers to facilitate proper imaging, lab follow up and umbrella coverage
- Charting for chronically ill patients to ensure continuity of care
- Agua Viva staff will always accompany and partner with you in ministry

Costs: Varies depending on the size of your team and the number of days serving. Contact the Programming Director for current charges and a clinic ministry packet.

Appendix E: Safety Policy

Agua Viva Ministries Mexico Travel Update: March 2009

At Agua Viva Ministries (AVM) we understand your concern and safety for your group; especially in the wake of the recent heightened press. Even though we can never fully allay our guest's fears, nor make any guarantees, we know that God is on His throne and desires Mexico to be reached.

AVM boasts that since 1989 we have partnered with over 22,000 guests and none of our participants or staff has ever experienced any incidents involving violence. Ministry groups have been arriving and serving as usual despite media reports and we haven't seen any changes in the communities we serve.

We believe that our long-standing safety record is due to our prayerful safety policies:

1. We believe that God is in control!

Joshua 1:9 (NIV)

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."

2. AVM provides thoughtful, pre-trip manuals which indicate the safest travel routes, travel tips and well marked maps. The toll road to Ensenada skirts the edge of Tijuana and is well patrolled. The alternative Tecate border crossing adds only a few minutes commute south bound to Rancho Agua Viva and decreases travel time by 20 minutes when traveling north bound. This route is an enjoyable, leisurely drive through vineyard covered hills. The north-bound border crossing back to the states is a breeze!

3. AVM offers to meet groups before the border, escort through immigration, Tijuana and lead caravans all the way to Rancho Agua Viva.

4. AVM staff always accompanies groups at ministry sites.

5. AVM staff always accompanies groups in travel during the ministry week and chooses the safest travel routes and groups always travel in caravans.

6. We advise all guest vehicles to travel with walkie-talkies to keep in contact with others in their caravan with extra batteries at hand.

7. AVM staff always has local phone contact during ministry times and has emergency response training.

8. The accommodations at beautiful Agua Viva are on a safe, gated 143 acre compound 12 miles out of town.

9. We require that all participants register at the border with the Mexican immigration service.

On a personal note: the staff at AVM hasn't seen any incidents of violence nor felt personally at risk since most of the incidents have occurred in border towns and have dealt with the drug and turf wars. We cross both the Tijuana and Tecate border on a weekly basis without incident. We have chosen to raise our families here and we personally drive by ourselves on a daily basis. Rest assured, we would inform you in a heartbeat if there were any known risks. You not only are co-workers, we consider our guests as family.

Appendix E: Safety Policy Cont.

What do others say about the Mexico safety and security issues?

Troy Harris

Director of risk management from Westmont College, Santa Barbara, California

Westmont College brings over 250 students every spring break to Rancho Agua Viva for over a decade. Troy did a thorough investigation this year:

Sources Consulted

In addition to monitoring public news sources, we have spoken with knowledgeable people "on site" or with expert knowledge to help inform our decisions.

- Westmont alumni ministering in Ensenada
- Potter's Clay core team alumni living in Ensenada and Rosarito
- Several firms:

Crisis Consulting International

Corporate Risk International

Safe Travel Institute

United Educators

World Vision

and others specializing in international safety assessment

- Other schools and ministry programs serving Mexico (Azusa Pacific, Point Loma, et al)
- The US Consulate *Our Risk Manager met personally on 2/6/9 with the US Consul (Deputy Chief of American Citizen Services), whose recommendations for traveler safety are consistent with the plans we've put in place in Tijuana*

Their consistent recommendation is to travel by day and stay in groups, which we are committed to doing. They do not regard us as fitting the profile of the drug cartels' targets for violence, and none of them consider us to be facing a danger that would warrant cancelling the trip.

- Informed sources indicate that most of the violence occurs in the deep night, between midnight and 4am--when our students are inside the gated and locked Agua Viva, twelve miles east of the city.
- Azusa Pacific University, which runs a similar but much larger program in Ensenada, Mexicali and elsewhere (and that inspired Potter's Clay in 1977), monitors the situation closely and plans to proceed this year. Here are some recent announcements on their website: [2/9/9](#), [2/17/9](#)
- Although the Tijuana slayings are spectacular and thus garner media attention, it bears noting that Tijuana's murder rate of about 56 per 100,000 [for 2008] is still far below that of the deadliest U.S. city: New Orleans, which had about 95 killings per 100,000 inhabitants in 2007.
- The US State Dept has not recommended curtailing travel to or thru Tijuana, but instead says travelers must "understand the risks of travel to Mexico, how best to avoid dangerous situations, and whom to contact if one is a victim of crime."
http://www.westmont.edu/_offices/risk/TijuanaTurmoil.html

Appendix E: Safety Policy Cont.

Matt Bach

Sr. Coordinator of Church Relations

Mexico Outreach

“My recent time in Mexico - what I saw with my eyes, heard with my ears, and experienced by being there, showed something very different than what news reports reflect.

It reminded me of one last contrast: many reports are meant to target the millions of people that vacation and spring break (drinking, clubbing, partying) in Mexico. Their target audience is not people wanting to spread the Gospel. Had it been, perhaps the media would not sensationalize things as they do, or at the very least they would tell the bigger story. The story of a country similar to our own, where violence exists, but can be avoided by good judgment and common sense. I am more wary of traveling though certain areas of Detroit or Los Angeles than I am of Mexicali or Ensenada.”

<http://www.apu.edu/iom/mexout/announcements/13398/>

Linda Sommerville

Pastor of Adult Ministries

Bayside of West Roseville

“I have felt safe crossing the border for a few reasons. First, AVM did a good job of prepping us for what to expect at the border. And second, we never stopped in Tijuana, just drove through on the way to Ensenada. And third, we drove in a caravan to ensure a safer trip.”

“We have never had a problem traveling through Tijuana. Basically, you're in and out of Tijuana in the blink of an eye and if you take the main highway, you never actually go through Tijuana, just on the outskirts.”

“We do several things to ensure the safety of our group.

- 1) We always travel in a caravan on the trip to and from AVM.
- 2) We make sure every vehicle has a walkie talkie (with extra batteries!), all set for the same channel.
- 3) After every check point, we use the walkie talkies to check in and make sure each vehicle made it through okay.
- 4) Everyone also carries cell phones as an added precaution in case walkie talkies don't work. We make sure each vehicle has the cell numbers of all the other vehicles.
- 5) We make sure each vehicle has copies of all the (excellent!) maps provided by AVM - this saves lots of headaches, especially making the quick turn onto the highway in Tijuana and when we travel through Ensenada where it's likely to get separated by traffic lights.
- 6) We make sure each vehicle has all the passports of each person riding in that vehicle in case they get pulled over by police or have an accident.
- 7) Most importantly, we pray and trust that our great big God is in charge; and we continually remind ourselves of the fact that every day of our lives is ultimately in His loving and powerful hands.”

Appendix E: Safety Policy Cont.

My View on Mexico Safety By Allyson Searway

“Hi Allyson,” said my friend over the phone. “Hey, my church’s youth group is planning a trip to Mexico this spring and I told them I’d call you and ask whether the violence we’re seeing in the news up here is what you are really seeing down there.” Our family has lived in Ensenada for 15 years now and in those years we’ve tried to be aware of the risks and wise about our approach to them. My son, Justin, was 3 years old and my daughter, Emily, 4 months old when we arrived. When I’m watching out for their safety, even now at the ages of 18 and 15, I’m looking at a couple of factors. First, I’m looking at what I myself see. Do I see any increase in violence or the need for heightened security around me? Second, I’m listening to what my Mexican friends are saying. I know that they can perceive a level of insecurity that I am still not sensitive to. And along with all that, I pay attention to what the American government agencies are saying.

In the first case, I’m personally not seeing anything alarming. My kids go to school and church in the city of Ensenada. My son is working in an outlying neighborhood, doing a service project. My kids go to the movies with their friends and spend some time at the mall in our city. They drive themselves to and from these activities, and they don’t have any trouble. I don’t see violence around them and I’m not worried. (I might add that Justin and a car full of teenage boys went out in the middle of the night serenading girls from their class, without incident.)

Along the same lines, when I drive and do errands around the city, I feel as safe as I ever have. If anything, I feel that the Ensenada police force has been beefed up, and their presence more clearly felt. American groups are about to arrive, and I have no hesitation about helping to translate. I feel that I am going to be safe, and that ministry is going to happen as successfully and safely as it always has.

Second, my Mexican friends are still allowing their children to go places and do things, and are not alarmed. Ministry through our local church has not been curtailed in any way. A group of youth, for example, regularly goes to evangelize, pray for, and comfort families waiting inside and outside the local hospitals, without incident. (They *are* having a lot of minor miracles happen in the prayer ministry, but no safety issues to speak of.)

One factor that does seem to have changed: my Mexican friends are being more careful about trips into Tijuana. Our Mexican friends have always felt it important to not travel at night in Mexico when it can be avoided, and I am being more cautious about that. I certainly travel around Ensenada without fear, even after the sun goes down, but we are being more cautious about passing through/around Tijuana. We prefer to take the safer toll roads. Still, we personally have seen nothing that alarms us.

Finally, what does the American government say? Brent and I believe that the safety precautions that the US government has pointed out are valid and not excessive. Those reports are saying that travel is considered reasonably safe while taking the necessary precautions.

As your co-worker on Mexican soil and as your friend, I encourage you to continue on in ministry in Mexico. There are still plenty of houses that need building, teeth that need filling, kids that need to be hear your Bible lessons. But if you decide not to come, I encourage you to remember Mexico in other ways. Pray! Send encouragement! We always appreciate your faithful partnership.