

Missions Partnership Experience  
Group Leaders' Manual  
A Practical Guide for Preparing for Ministry  
Revised November 2014



AGUA VIVA  
**MINISTRIES**

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# A Special Message to Ministry Team Leaders

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Dear Leader,

We want to take this time to thank you for your desire to serve and love Mexico and for your decision to partner with us here at Agua Viva Ministries. We are excited to get to know you and work alongside you during your time with us. Our prayer is to see you and your group not only serve the community well, but learn about the Mexican culture and people, how to love them well, and through that come to know our loving Creator on a deeper level.

This Leaders' Manual has been designed to give you some additional guidance to help you in the process of preparing for your ministry in Mexico with Agua Viva Ministries. Our desire is that it will be thought provoking and will contribute to an effective overall ministry experience for your team. Convinced more than ever of the importance and seriousness of the task to which we have been called to by our God, we ask that you prayerfully read and consider what this manual contains.

We also invite you to do extra research on how to do healthy short-term trips. A book that we have found incredibly educational and helpful is *Helping without Hurting in Short-Term Missions: Leader's Guide* by Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert. We encourage you to read through it and use the participants guide in the back for your pre-trip meetings.

You and your group are in our prayers as you prepare to make the trek down to Ensenada and we are excited for what God is going to do in and through you!

Muchas gracias,  
The Short Term Missions Department  
Agua Viva Ministries

# Initial Presentation and Invitation

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From the initial presentation to your church/group, this ministry opportunity needs to be kept in proper perspective. It is important to generate excitement and enthusiasm while stressing the costs, sacrifices and responsibilities inherent in such a project. This should *not* be represented as just another camp activity on your group's calendar. It is true that when the stakes are high you will not attract as many participants, but the involvement of a few well-informed people who desire to serve as missionaries is far more important than large numbers.

## *The Role of Ministry Team Leaders*

We have found that the tone for your ministry experience is set:

1. *Before* the team ever enters Mexico, and...
2. By the enthusiasm of the Ministry Team Leaders in charge. We realize that this places a tremendous responsibility on your shoulders, but we are counting on you to be faithful to the role you have accepted. The following sections will help to define your responsibilities as a Ministry Team Leader.

## *Defining the Vision*

The best place to begin your planning is to define what it is you hope to accomplish during your time with Agua Viva. What is your ministry vision? How do you see this vision partnered with an existing ministry in Mexico? Please feel free to discuss this with us as we have relationships with new and existing churches and their outreach ministries. Consider whether you are willing and able to dedicate the time, resources and energy that will be required to see this vision fulfilled.

For example, suppose your vision is to expose your group to another country and to experience the differences and challenges people in other lands face. In addition, you want them to be stretched by doing physical labor at the camp and evangelistic outreach in the community. At the same time, you would like to see unity and quality relationships develop within your group through serving together on this project.

In the defining of your ministry vision, it's important for us all to remember it's not about us, it's about Him! May we also suggest a vision that is focused on the people of Mexico. A vision where you build a relationship with a church in Mexico, coming alongside them to support them in the ministry God is already doing through them.

These are great goals, but they carry a high price tag and are not achieved by chance. Take a moment to evaluate--with everything in which your church/group is currently participating and planning for the future, can you commit to do what it takes to design and execute a *quality* and *effective* program in Mexico? ***Can you prepare a program that you would be proud to conduct in your own church?***

If you cannot answer a resounding "Yes!" to the two previous questions, would you consider one of two options?

1. Adjust your overall schedule so that you and your group can accommodate the necessary time for prayer, planning and preparation for your ministry trip, or
2. Call our office, (619) 330-2224, and ask that your name be taken off our calendar for this year because you will not be able to adequately prepare.

If you *can* answer "Yes!" to the above questions, get excited about how God will use your group to further His kingdom. He will give you His eyes to see the needs and His hands to meet those needs. Share your ministry vision with us, the staff of Agua Viva Ministries, so that we can pray and prepare for your time with us. Continue reading for more details on preparing for your ministry trip!

## Preparing your Ministry Team

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Careful preparation, and the results it produces, communicates a strong and important message. It says, "We *value* the people who will receive this program; they are *worth* what it requires to do our best."

### *Planning Your Ministry*

Before you begin to plan the actual activities, share your vision and goals with the entire team and come to a mutual agreement and commitment as to what they are. Again, please be sure there is a balance in this vision between the goals your group hopes to accomplish, and the needs of the Mexican people God will be ministering to through you.

Next, the essence of your actual planning can be summed up in one word...***delegation***. What was said earlier about you as the Leader "setting the tone" for ministry, should not be confused with you as the Leader "doing" the whole ministry. People will learn more and feel more responsible to the overall goal if they are directly involved with its success or failure.

Tasks can be divided on a daily basis or on an activity basis. Each person in charge will need a committee working with them, and those people may need to meet separately from team meetings to plan, practice and pray. These committees will require follow-up on your part to assure that they are completing their assigned tasks.

The Agua Viva Ministries Group Training Manual is designed to give help and suggestions in the specific areas of planning the logistics of the ministry. We encourage you to take full advantage of this training resource by working through it as designed, one lesson each week. Above all else, the attitudes of humility and servant-hood are essential for an effective program. We have seen that all the elements will fall into place and true ministry will happen if these preliminary attitudes are defined and adopted by all team members as a foundation for ministry.

## Training Timeline

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We recommend the following timeline to prepare your team for their week of ministry with Agua Viva.

\* We have detailed checklists for interested leaders

<p><b>6-8 Months before the trip</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Give initial presentation and invitation. (Promo posters available upon request)</li> <li>❑ Determine best week for your group.</li> <li>❑ Reserve the week by calling the Agua Viva message line, (619) 330-2224) or emailing the programming department at <a href="mailto:program4jesus@aguaviva.com">program4jesus@aguaviva.com</a> and sending in the deposit.</li> <li>❑ Decide with the help of the Agua Viva Ministries Programming Director what kind of ministry you will prepare for.</li> <li>❑ Group members needing passports should apply now! Update passports for others, if necessary. <a href="http://www.usps.com/passport">www.usps.com/passport</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>3 Months before the trip</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Begin mandatory weekly training.</li> <li>❑ Work through one lesson of the Group Training Manual each week.</li> <li>❑ Begin gathering needed materials.</li> </ul>

<p>3 Months before the trip (cont.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Make rental arrangements, if necessary.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Make flight arrangements, if necessary.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Share your plans with your church.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Begin collecting photocopies of passports.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Begin obtaining notarized permission slips for minors, signed by <b>BOTH</b> parents.</li> </ul>
<p>1 Month before the trip</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Make appointments to get travel shots, if recommended by your doctor.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Make emergency contact place.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Make photocopies of passports and permission slips for minors. Send these photocopies to Agua Viva Ministries (by fax: 619-330-2224 or mail). Please include an alphabetized list of names with countries of citizenship with this packet (we will send you an Immigration Template for this). The Mexican Immigration Department will not issue a permit without this list. <i>You must bring the <b>original</b> with you when you cross the border.</i></li> </ul>
<p>1 Week before the trip</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Get travel shots, if recommended by your doctor.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Begin packing.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Finalize travel plans.</li> </ul>
<p>1 Day before the trip</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Review packing checklist.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Go to bed early!</li> </ul>

# How to Build a Dynamic Team

By Adele Calhoun

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As a church staff member, I spend most of my time working with people in one-hour weekly time slots. But once or twice a year I actually eat with them, stir concrete with them, and clean latrines with them. This wonderful time of genuine community occurs on our church's short-term mission trips.

Short-term missions and, more specifically, the team training that occurs before each trip are the best parts of my job! I know of no tool so suited of discipleship, so geared to leadership development, so instructive to missions awareness and so conducive to Body life as preparing and sending a mission team. Short-term teams graphically reveal my weaknesses, my physical endurance, my hot buttons and just how "spiritual" I really am. In short order everyone knows whether I'm trying to prove something or to serve someone. My professional status evaporates—as does everyone else's—when personality, temperament, idiosyncrasies and character are fused into the raw material of missions.

## *Building a Healthy Body*

How does a diverse group of strangers become a serving community? The process begins the moment you first sit down as a team. The Spirit does something wonderfully supernatural. He begins to shape a team that will say and do things that could not be heard or done if we acted individually. And in the process, team members can begin to see what belonging to the diverse yet unified Body of Christ is all about.

At your team's first gathering, the most important agenda item for some will be to get information. For others, getting to know each other will be top priority. Acknowledge this from the outset. Let people know that at every meeting there will be time for information about the doing, as well as activities and discussions, which engender belonging.

Get an early start on discussing team member expectations, such as meeting attendance and outside preparation. Ask each person to trust teammates to honor their commitments to these responsibilities. Trust starts at this first meeting.

Pay attention to God's work among the team members. Offer opportunities for self-revelation and trust-building in each meeting. Become a student of the body language, tension, conflict, interaction and personal nuances of team members. Remember, you're helping to midwife a community with a mission.

The following are suggestions to help you as you mold your group into a team:

## *Share Testimonies*

In the early weeks of training, give each team member 10 minutes to tell his or her “story”- a description of their pasts and themselves, and a testimony of what has brought them to this point. Listen well to the stories, allowing time for people to respond with questions and prayer. Encourage the team to recognize the ways in which God has uniquely composed this team for this mission.

## *Pray Together*

Assign prayer partners on a rotating basis. Ask them to contact each other by phone at least once between meetings for encouragement and prayer support. This allows individual relationships to take root. Some of these prayer partnerships can endure for years.

## *Ask Questions*

Throughout the training period, have team members answer revealing questions. What are their pet peeves? How do they respond when they’re not in control? Do they like to work alone, be in charge or follow? How do they handle conflict? Discomfort? Inconvenience? These questions keep the group honest and prepare them to expect and resolve conflict.

A short-term team is a veritable workshop for molding character. When iron sharpens iron, the sparks can fly. A team isn’t made of perfect people, but broken people. So practice genuine communication. Speak the truth in love. Then watch out; the miracle of unity will be born!

## *Tackle Prejudices*

Address the specific needs of intergenerational or racially mixed teams. In training, ask questions like “What stereotypes are common for the generations/races represented on this team?” “Do you have friends outside your generation/race?” “Do you trust people of the other ethnic groups/other age groups?”

## *Work Together*

Work together before the trip. Do a service project. Arrange a fundraising event. Spend a day as a team on a ropes course.

Providing these situations where people learn to rely on one another encourages them to try things they’ve never done before. One day can go a long way toward building a trusting community.

### *Go on a Retreat*

Plan a weekend retreat. In a retreat setting, you can create an environment where team members experience the loss of control that is inherent on short-term missions.

Ask people to turn in their watches. Prepare a meal without enough food. Share space, bathrooms, chores and limited resources. How do team members respond? This three-day preparation is a wonderful laboratory for cultivating the seeds of community.

### *Use People's Gifts*

Encourage your team members to name and discover their gifts. Then assign responsibilities that fit the person and his or her gift. Also find out who wants to try out something new. Does the computer whiz want to work with children?

Give each team member a valuable identity on the team. Someone can develop the team's musical ability. Someone can act as an interpreter. Team members can take turns leading daily devotions.

### *Value Each Other*

Agree not to judge one another. On short-term teams, people are distilled down to their basic identities. Profession, assets and success are inconsequential.

Team members must be prepared to function without these props. They must know they are valued for who they are (imperfections and all) and not just for what they produce.

### *Finish Well*

Once the mission is over, conduct adequate debriefings. Discuss what you can learn from your experience and how this team can help prepare the next team. What issues need to be resolved so the community can continue to function back in the home church setting?

### *Team Dynamics in Action*

Once a team is trained in group dynamics, situations which could create conflict can actually become building blocks for greater community.

In one team meeting, Ben confessed to being overbearing and irritable when he didn't know what was coming next. Team members agreed to brief Ben ahead of time when possible. When this was not possible, people came alongside to encourage his patience and trust.

An intergenerational team struggled because the teens wanted to walk fast while those past 60 couldn't keep up. The team decided that at times they could function in two groups. At

other times the teens were encouraged to walk with those who were slower and try to understand what it felt like to have to slow down.

On another team, George grabbed a trowel every morning and spent the day laying cement block. Then Jackie mentioned at the daily team meeting that people were not sharing tasks or tools. She encouraged people to take their turn mixing cement, carrying block and shoveling dirt. That was all that needed to be said.

Short-term mission teams are a blend of task and relationship. Regardless of the task, the team's most lasting legacy is the relationships that are formed. A group's dynamics will be remembered long after the task is done. As team members recall their short-term mission, they will remember God at work among imperfect people.

# Programming Policies

Philosophy: How and why we minister as we do with American groups.

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As a ministry, we are committed to excellence and simplicity in ministry. Our desire is to radically change for the better the spiritual climate in Ensenada and Mexico. We are committed to minister to the people of Ensenada and the surrounding areas with the help of our American brothers and sisters, as well as to educate our American brothers and sisters in the areas of missions, sacrifice and service. We are committed to having the best Christian camping facilities in Baja California in order to help facilitate spiritual growth for the national people of Mexico.

With concern for the overall spiritual climate, excellence in ministry, mission education and for providing the best Christian camping experience in Baja California, the following policies were put into place:

1. To insure that the people in Ensenada are ministered to in an effective and culturally sensitive way, all groups that come through Agua Viva Ministries must do so using all of the complete guidance programs that Agua Viva provides. This implies that the camp, when being used by Americans, cannot just be rented so that the group can do their own ministry.
2. All groups coming through us will pay the amount listed in our booking information for the present year. There will be no exceptions or discounts. We have established the lowest prices possible to give you the best value for your dollar—"the biggest bang for your buck."☺
3. Cost for medical groups will be the same for their stay as other groups, plus the added expense of medicines, doctors and site fee. (Complete medical packet available upon request)
4. Costs for construction groups will be the same for their stay as other groups, plus the added expense of the material costs.
5. Each group that does a building project and uses Agua Viva tools will be required to pay a tool fee; this helps us replace broken tools, dulled saw blades, etc. so we can maintain an adequate supply of tools on hand.
6. Each American group coming with Agua Viva Ministries will have one ministry site set up for them for every 30-35 people in the group. Also, there will be a minimum of one Agua Viva staff person for every 30-35 people in the group. Each site will be provided with at least 1 translator; of which could also be the above staff person if he/she is bilingual. Ministries requiring additional translators for each 30-35 people will be charged \$40 per day for each additional translator.
7. Each project will have a project sheet filled out and plans drawn up ahead of time. If the money is available before the arrival of the group, the materials will also be

purchased and delivered ahead of time. Agua Viva Ministries cannot advance funds to groups for projects.

8. After arriving at the camp, groups must be accompanied by an Agua Viva staff member (coordinator, translator, or summer staff) at all times. This is for your protection and safety. Groups or members of groups should not leave Agua Viva facilities without a staff member.
9. To insure that Agua Viva staff members have time to attend to their other duties as well as insure staff longevity, groups may only have ministry planned for ONE NIGHT of the week. Typically this is the mid-week church service. This does not include the Special Dinner evening.
10. Each group will have the proper immigration papers in order to minister in Mexico, as we desire to be in good standing with the Mexican government and our Lord. This includes obtaining your tourist visas upon entering Mexico at the border (More details later – see section on Immigration Procedures, page 17). We also in no way want to jeopardize the group or the pastors at their ministry site during their stay.
11. In an effort to spread the blessing of the American groups around the community, no more than three American groups will be sent to the same ministry during a 12-month period. We recommend groups to change sites every 5 years for freshness and to help avoid creating an unhealthy dependency. Our goal is to serve as a hand-up to ministries in the foundational stages of ministry with the desire to see them grow into a self-sustaining, self-governing, and self-producing ministry.

## Border Crossing

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Crossing the border will be the beginning of your adventure into Mexico! There is no reason to fear this crossing. Mexico, especially in the northern states, is quite accommodating to its tourists. Still, it is important when entering to keep in mind several things: remember that you **are** entering a foreign country. Keep in mind that the border officials are fulfilling a duty to their country and it is their job to make sure that everyone crossing the border meets the same standards. They cannot and will not make exceptions for groups, even groups whose purpose is to help the Mexican people. It is important to respect the authority of the officials and to treat them courteously.

Preparation for crossing the border is important, and if overlooked can result in frustration and lengthy delays. We hope the information provided will help you to have a pleasant border crossing. Remember that prayer and preparation are the keys.

## *Leader/Driver Responsibilities*

As the Group Leader and/or the Driver it is important to always maintain an attitude that reflects integrity. You not only represent yourself as an individual, you also represent those in your group, your car, your church, your country and Christ.

Due to changes in the immigration policies, the officials we at Agua Viva work with directly in Ensenada have asked us to have all groups get tourist visas. Therefore you will need to go through the “declaration” lane in order to park and obtain your visas. See page 17 for more information on Immigration Procedures and Appendix D, starting on page 24 for detailed maps.

If you are carrying supplies, it is important to have a detailed list of those items and their value. If receipts are available for new items, bring them. Personal luggage and personal items cannot be taxed, but it is a good idea to know what is personal and what is not for quick identification and inspection if needed. Unloading the entire vehicle is not a fun thing to do.

Leaders must make sure that a pre-planned area is designated if the group should get separated. Supply all drivers with maps and phone numbers so they can find their way. A good place to rendezvous is at the first tollbooth, down the peninsular highway about five miles. We highly suggest that you have a detailed drivers’ meeting before you begin your journey.

We highly recommend that you have portable radios with extra batteries for each vehicle.

\*\*For your convenience AVM offers a border crossing escort service (See Appendix E)

## *Paying Taxes on Supplies*

\*\* In recent years we have encouraged our guests to pre-pay AVM for ministry supplies, such as construction material and medications for medical clinics to avert unforeseen border complications. However, below are the legal policies and information regarding major importation.

Many Americans coming into Mexico are fearful about the exchange of money at the border, and either feel they must bribe their way through or refuse to hand over any money at all. In recent years there has been a “clean up” of corruption at the border crossing, and currently we are seeing a great deal of forthrightness and integrity practiced on the part of the border officials.

When bringing supplies across the border, it is important to declare *non-personal* items. Personal items are those things that individuals will be using during the trip such as personal

clothing, personal effects such as soap, deodorant, etc., personal prescription medication, personal CD's (there is a limit per person), etc. These do not need to be declared.

To declare items at the border, you must use the *Declaration Lane*. This lane will take you into a parking lot to the right of and BEFORE crossing the border. It is advised to have a list made up of everything you want to declare and what the value is. If you can, bring the original receipts, otherwise you can write a letter on church letterhead with an itemized list of the things you want to declare and what their value is. This letter can be in English.

The importation tax is calculated using the following formula:

1. Add up the total value of everything you are declaring in the vehicle. Each vehicle is calculated separately.
2. Subtract \$75 per person in the vehicle from the total value, to the limit of the customs officer, calculated in step 1. This is your adjusted value.
3. The import tax is 16%-25% of the adjusted value calculated in step 2 and at the discretion of the border officials. Please note that when you pay the import tax it may vary slightly from 16% because of the exchange rate.

The border agents will be in the parking lot. Tell them you have items to declare and they will either sign your list and send you to a window to get the paperwork done, or they may do the paperwork on a triplicate and hand it to you. Once you get the paperwork, you will be asked to sign it. Once you sign the paperwork, you take that paperwork to the bank, which is inside the building (the office where you go to get visas is in this same building). They will point it out to you. You pay the import tax at the bank and the bank will stamp the paperwork. Go back to your vehicles and drive to the exit, which leads to the lanes that take you across the border. When you drive to the gate, wait for the "advance" to go through. You will then get either a green light or a red light with a letter/number combination (such as B-4). If you get a red light, proceed to the parking spot indicated by the letter/number combination and the agent will inspect your vehicle. If they want to inspect your vehicle, you can show them the paperwork you received from the other agent. The agent is looking for anything that you did not declare that you should have. Once you have been inspected will be told that you are free to go. If you get a green light, you are free to proceed through the crossing. The highway entrance for "Playas de Tijuana/Rosarito/Ensenada" will be on the far right.

Honesty is the key. Answer all questions, be willing to let the officials inspect your vehicles, and **never offer a bribe**. Offering a bribe will only encourage corruption, while paying taxes will help the Mexican economy. Besides, paying taxes is the law!

We understand that declaring items is an inconvenience. Many people tell us that they have been able to cross items without declaring them by simply driving through the "Nothing to Declare" lanes. ***We strongly encourage you to not attempt this.*** If you are caught driving

through with items that must be declared, your vehicle may be impounded and in some cases the driver and passengers may be arrested.

Personal items usually are never a problem. If an individual needs prescription medication, it is best to have the original container with the prescription on it. Drugs and armed weapons are illegal in Mexico. It is the leaders' responsibility to see that no one is trying to bring in either of these.

## *Major Imports*

When bringing items across the border, please keep in mind that the San Ysidro/Tijuana border is for tourists. Major imports are not allowed through this border. If you are bringing bulk supplies, you may be turned away. If you drive through the Declaration Lane and declare bulk supplies you will be told to go back to the United States. If you drive through the Nothing to Declare lane with bulk supplies and are caught, your vehicle will be impounded and you may be imprisoned. Please do not attempt to cross the border with supplies without driving through the Declaration Lane.

Major imports are handled at the Otay Mesa border crossing. If you believe that you may need to use this border crossing, please contact Agua Viva Ministries. We will arrange to meet you to be with you during the importation. Please contact us by phone at 619-330-2224 (voicemail) or e-mail us at [program4jesus@aguaviva.com](mailto:program4jesus@aguaviva.com).

**Medication for clinics** requires documentation from the government. It is vital that you begin the process 8 weeks before you arrive. It is possible that your medical supplies will need to arrive two days before you actually cross the border to allow time for inspection of the supplies. Again it is important that you cross only the items that are on the list. Last minute items cannot be added to a pre-approved amount. It is best and it will save time if every box contains a list of exactly what is inside the box, and markings on the outside to identify it. Expired medication will be denied crossing.

**Lumber** may also need special documentation so that taxes will not be imposed on it, which can be extremely costly. Again, begin the process of obtaining this documentation 8 weeks before your arrival. If the documentation is not approved, let Agua Viva Ministries run a price comparison to see if it is cheaper to purchase the lumber here in Ensenada. Lumber may be less expensive in the US, but consider the possible taxes involved and the extra handling and gas.

If you have any questions about declaring items, paying the importation tax, or need help deciding what needs to be declared, please contact us. We are ready to help!

# Immigration Procedures

1. Starting in 2007 everyone traveling in and out of the U.S. will be required to travel with a passport. Mexico has jumped on board with this requirement. The process for obtaining your passport takes several months. We recommend that you start the process now! Don't let time slip by and miss out on a life changing trip to Mexico because of this detail! For more details look online at <http://travel.state.gov/passport>
2. One month before your scheduled arrival send **copies** (only) of passports of each person you have signed up to come. Also include copies of all the notarized permission slips (explained below). Please do not send the originals.
3. You must fill out an alphabetized list of your team members to accompany the copies of passports. This list must include the following categories: name, age, passport number, and permission slip. Please contact the programming director at [program4jesus@aguaviva.com](mailto:program4jesus@aguaviva.com) for form. This should be sent at the same time as the immigration documents. *Group members should not be added after this documentation is sent.*
4. Due to changes in the immigration policies, it is asked that your team obtain tourist visas. You may hear from some officials that this is not needed, however, the officials we at Agua Viva work with directly in Ensenada have asked us to have all groups get tourist visas. If an official tells you it is not needed, insist that you would like to purchase one. There are two options for tourist visas:
  1. Pay \$25 for a 6-month tourist visa. This will not have to be turned in when you leave Mexico.
  2. You are also able to get a free tourist visa. This is good for 7 days and doesn't cost you anything to obtain. At the end of your trip, when you go home, you will have to go through the Tecate border crossing and turn the visas back into the office there. If you do not return your visas you will be fined the next time you come across the border.
5. Also, to secure entry into Mexico and re-entry into the United States each person under the age of 18 needs to have a notarized permission slip signed by both parents/guardians, which should accompany their passport and tourist visa at all times. Please contact programming director for permission slip if needed.

**HELPFUL HINT:** As soon as you are committed to bringing a group to Agua Viva Ministries, let each member know that they need to apply for and get you a copy of their passport and permission slips (for those under 18 years old), so you can have them ready to send to our office by the required date.

## *Final Thoughts on Border Crossings*

It is important to us that your border crossing be a blessed experience. Please contact us if you have any further questions. We're happy to help you. We offer the service of a border escort. We will meet your group on the U.S. side, accompany you through immigration, and caravan with your team all the way to Agua Viva. Please contact the programming director for current costs of this service (also see Appendix E).

\* Please note that these are the current immigration procedures. The procedures may change approximately every 2 years as the Director of Immigration changes.

## A Final Word

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We, the staff of Agua Viva Ministries, are committed to *quality* ministry. The time we have spent living in Mexico and what we have learned has not made us experts, but rather has given us a tremendous vision for and conviction about how ministry in Mexico should be approached and conducted.

Over the years, we have developed a program for cross-cultural ministry, and more importantly, have nurtured relationships with many local churches and individuals here in Ensenada to facilitate this ministry. We highly value these friends and resources, and it is our desire to preserve and protect them; this motivates us to require and expect so much from our visiting groups. With this in mind, we ask your understanding and cooperation as we reserve the right to modify or cancel any activity or program which we feel is unprepared, insensitive, offensive or in any other way a hindrance to the goals and convictions of Agua Viva Ministries.

We trust that right attitudes, careful preparation, and open communication will serve to facilitate the corporate ministry that MPE was designed to promote. We anticipate with joy what God will do through us together for the sake of His Kingdom.

# Appendix A: General Information

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The following chart will aid you in organizing the information you will need as the group leader. Feel free to make as many copies as necessary.

General Information, Roster, Responsibilities, etc.	
Important Phone Numbers and Email Addresses	Agua Viva Ministries (619) 330-2224 voicemail and fax <a href="mailto:program4jesus@aguaviva.com">program4jesus@aguaviva.com</a> email
Dates Reserved at RAV	
Ministry Plan (VBS, Construction, etc.)	
Travel Information (Flight #'s, Rentals, etc.)	
Estimated # of People	
Final Count of People	
Cost per Person	
Total Cost	

## Appendix B: Recommended Rental and Insurance

Rental Vans				
Company	Size	Cost	Website	Mex. Ins.
Enterprise Many Locations (619)294-3313	15 Passenger	Approx. \$130/day	<a href="http://www.enterprise.com">www.enterprise.com</a>	Not sold at Enterprise
	12 Passenger	Approx. \$730/wk		
	Cargo Van Mini-Van	Approx. \$360/wk		
Budget Rental 1-800-527-0700	15 Passenger	\$630/wk	<a href="http://www.budget.com">www.budget.com</a>	Not sold at Budget Rental
	7 Passenger	\$430/wk		
Hertz 1-800-654-3131 (619)220-5222	7 Passenger	Approx. \$460/wk	<a href="http://www.hertz.com">www.hertz.com</a>	Not sold at Hertz
All Star Rent A Van (866) 513-2958	15 Passenger	\$510/wk	<a href="http://www.asrentavan.com">www.asrentavan.com</a>	\$30/day
	12 Passenger	\$510/wk		

\*\*We recommend that you reserve your vans as soon as possible.

Mexican Auto Insurance		
You can choose to use any of the below insurance agencies, but we have also found that it is easy to order your Mexican Insurance over the internet. Most companies encourage buying insurance online.		
Company	Location	Phone Number
International Gateway	<a href="http://www.igib.com">www.igib.com</a>	(619) 271-0572
Oscar Padilla	<a href="http://www.mexicaninsurance.com">www.mexicaninsurance.com</a>	(760) 357-4883
Baja Bound Mexican Ins.	<a href="http://www.bajabound.com">www.bajabound.com</a>	(619) 702-4292
Mex-Insur	<a href="http://www.mexinsur.com">www.mexinsur.com</a>	(619) 425-2390

\*\*\* Make copies of your insurance policy and file in a safe place, not in the rental vehicle. Carry the original policy with the leader in that vehicle\*\*\*

## Appendix C: Maps to Rancho Agua Viva

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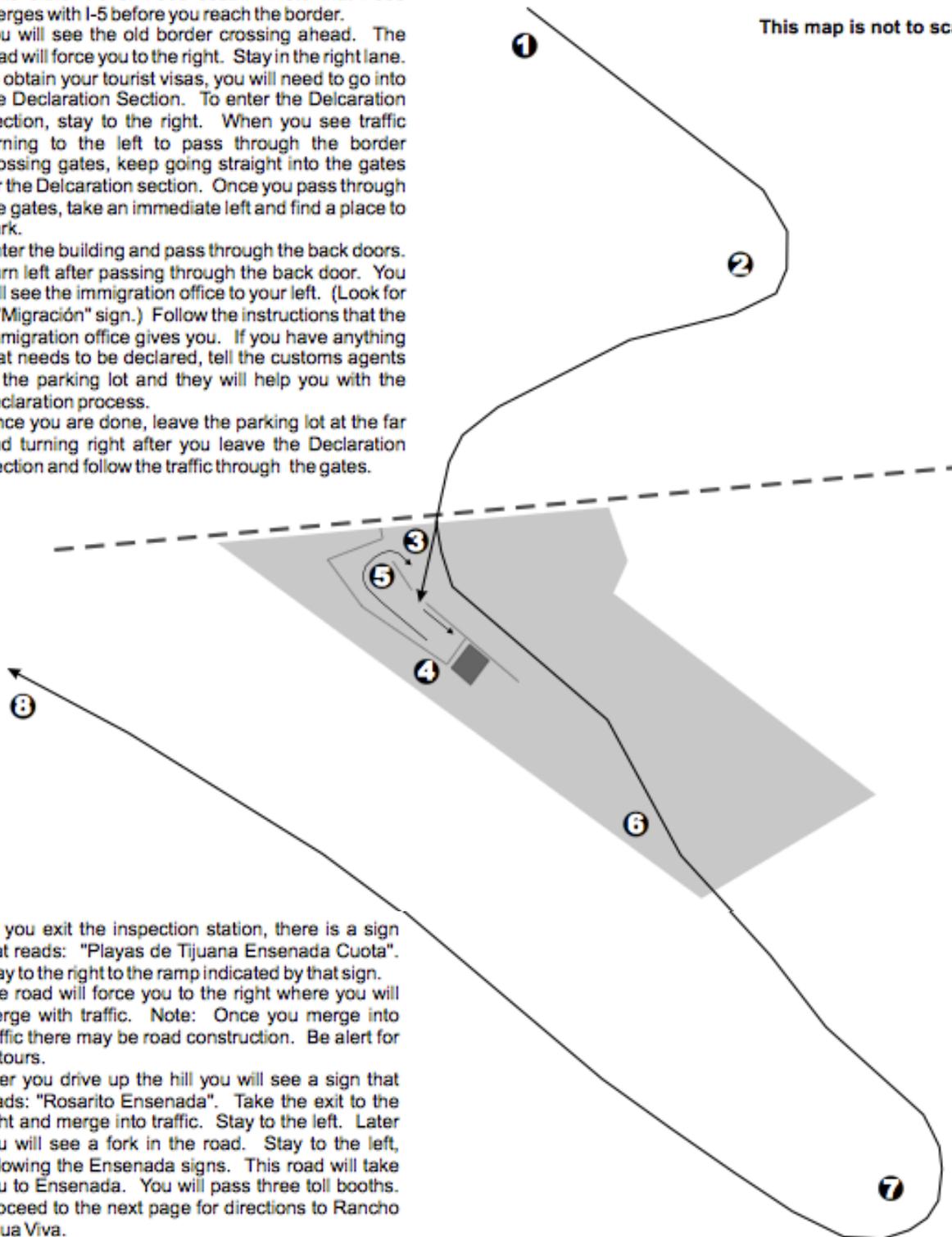
The following pages contain important maps that you will need to find Ensenada and Agua Viva. The maps also provide important instructions for obtaining your FMT tourist visas at the border. We recommend that you make copies of the maps and distribute them to each of your drivers. You may also want to appoint a person for each driver that will assist the driver by providing the instructions as he/she drives.

We recommend that you review the maps ahead of time. If you have any questions about any of the information provided in the maps, please feel free to contact us ahead of time.

# TJ Border Crossing

This map is not to scale.

1. Take either I-5 or I-805 south. Note that I-805 merges with I-5 before you reach the border.
2. You will see the old border crossing ahead. The road will force you to the right. Stay in the right lane.
3. To obtain your tourist visas, you will need to go into the Declaration Section. To enter the Declaration Section, stay to the right. When you see traffic turning to the left to pass through the border crossing gates, keep going straight into the gates for the Declaration section. Once you pass through the gates, take an immediate left and find a place to park.
4. Enter the building and pass through the back doors. Turn left after passing through the back door. You will see the immigration office to your left. (Look for a "Migración" sign.) Follow the instructions that the immigration office gives you. If you have anything that needs to be declared, tell the customs agents in the parking lot and they will help you with the declaration process.
5. Once you are done, leave the parking lot at the far end turning right after you leave the Declaration Section and follow the traffic through the gates.

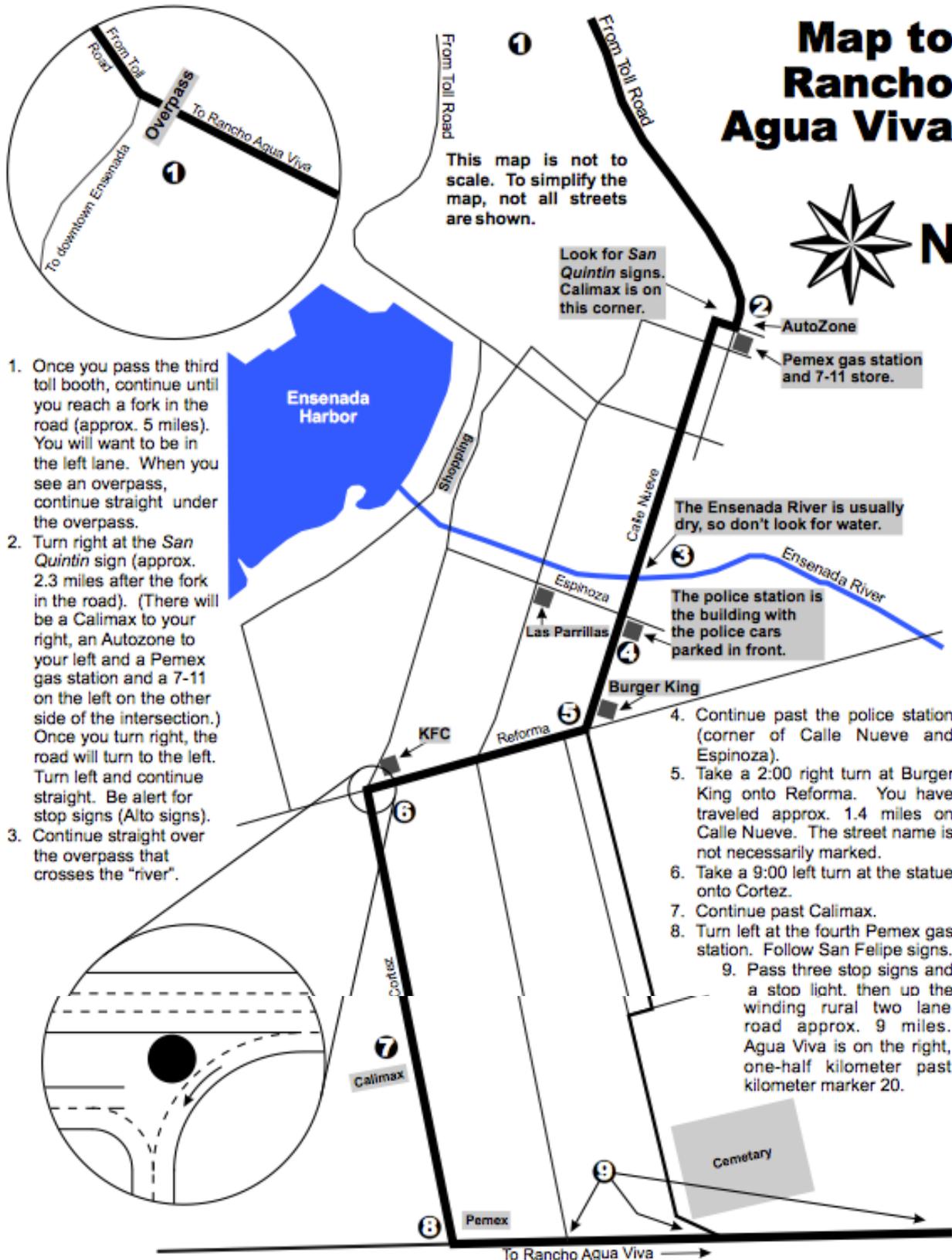


6. As you exit the inspection station, there is a sign that reads: "Playas de Tijuana Ensenada Cuota". Stay to the right to the ramp indicated by that sign.
7. The road will force you to the right where you will merge with traffic. Note: Once you merge into traffic there may be road construction. Be alert for detours.
8. After you drive up the hill you will see a sign that reads: "Rosarito Ensenada". Take the exit to the right and merge into traffic. Stay to the left. Later you will see a fork in the road. Stay to the left, following the Ensenada signs. This road will take you to Ensenada. You will pass three toll booths. Proceed to the next page for directions to Rancho Agua Viva.

# Map to Rancho Agua Viva



This map is not to scale. To simplify the map, not all streets are shown.



1. Once you pass the third toll booth, continue until you reach a fork in the road (approx. 5 miles). You will want to be in the left lane. When you see an overpass, continue straight under the overpass.
2. Turn right at the *San Quintin* sign (approx. 2.3 miles after the fork in the road). (There will be a Calimax to your right, an Autozone to your left and a Pemex gas station and a 7-11 on the left on the other side of the intersection.) Once you turn right, the road will turn to the left. Turn left and continue straight. Be alert for stop signs (Alto signs).
3. Continue straight over the overpass that crosses the "river".

4. Continue past the police station (corner of Calle Nueve and Espinoza).
5. Take a 2:00 right turn at Burger King onto Reforma. You have traveled approx. 1.4 miles on Calle Nueve. The street name is not necessarily marked.
6. Take a 9:00 left turn at the statue onto Cortez.
7. Continue past Calimax.
8. Turn left at the fourth Pemex gas station. Follow San Felipe signs.
9. Pass three stop signs and a stop light, then up the winding rural two lane road approx. 9 miles. Agua Viva is on the right, one-half kilometer past kilometer marker 20.

## Appendix D: Border Escort

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At AVM we understand your concern with driving through Tijuana, especially if this is your first time ministering with us. We are now offering an escort that would accompany you through the border all the way to Agua Viva.

One of our staff members will meet you on the U.S. side of the border, accompany you through the visa and immigration process, and guide you all the way to Rancho Agua Viva. We also will gladly escort you back to the U.S. from Agua Viva as well. We take your safety concerns seriously.

There is a service cost each way. We are not requiring groups to sign up for this service, but are gladly offering it if groups are interested. If you are interested contact the programming director for current costs and fees.

## Appendix E: Helpful Hints

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### *Fundraising*

Here are some suggestions we have to fundraise for your group's trip. These are just suggestions, and we have a more detailed list of fundraising ideas if you are interested. Many of these fundraising tips are geared for youth. Contact us if you would like more ideas.

#### *Pie Sale*

The weekend before Thanksgiving, our youth group takes orders for pies (pumpkin, pecan, creamy peanut butter, rhubarb). We get donations for the ingredients and spend two days making homemade crusts and baking pies. Since the ingredients are all donated, this event is 100 percent profit. We have a large grocery chain reclaim center in our town that generally donates several hundred pounds of flour, sugar, spices, and other ingredients. For any other ingredients we need, we ask for donations.

*Jacky D. - Wisconsin*

#### *Rent-a-Youth*

Our youth group invited the congregation to sign up to "rent a youth" for any "reasonable" job and at a time that suited them. We indicated that youth should be hired at \$5 to \$10 per hour depending on the job and asked for funds to be paid directly to the youth leader.

*Janet C. - Kansas*

## *Spaghetti Dinner*

Our group had an All-U-Can-Eat Spaghetti Dinner, which was open to the public and advertised in the paper. All of our dinner supplies were donated by local businesses— sauce, meatballs, noodles, bread, and dessert—so our only cost was the ad and the paper products. We set up in our fellowship hall using long tables with fabric tablecloths, fresh flowers, and candles for family-style dining, and some small tables for couples. The youth group served, and some of our talented youth played dinner music on the piano. We asked for a \$10 donation per person, \$5 per child under 12.

*Vanessa S. - Maryland Robert G. - Illinois*

## *The Pink Flamingos*

For one month each year, pink flamingos land in the lawns of church members! The flamingos are made of plastic (available at lawn and garden stores), and about 20 get stuck into a person's yard. Members can purchase flamingo insurance to prevent the flamingos from landing in their yard. Those members who decide not to purchase the insurance are subject to a flamingo landing. When the flamingos land in a church member's yard, they must call the church to have them picked up by a youth. The church member then gets to tell the church office where the flamingos will land next. The youth are responsible for picking the flamingos up and dropping them off.

*Dee E. - Minnesota*

\*\*For a complete list of fundraising ideas, email the programming director

## *Travel Tips*

### **1. GET DIRECTIONS WELL IN ADVANCE.**

Double-check online directions with other web sites and with road atlases. Best to be extra careful than get lost in unfamiliar territory with tired/hungry teenagers.

### **2. FIGURE YOUR TRAVEL TIME CAREFULLY.**

The more team members you have, and the younger the group is, the more time it takes to unload and load at each stop. Also figure you'll need to stop every couple hours or so for bathroom breaks. It's wise to build in a little "fudge time" for the unexpected. Having a realistic timeline for your trip allows you to plan for accurate arrival times at your destination and build in fun stops along the way!

### **3. MAKE SURE YOUR DRIVERS ARE WELL-RESTED.**

If you hire a bus company, there are laws that require certain amounts of rest-time to driving-time. Make sure you account for this. If you and other adults will be driving, make sure everyone has rest. And please, please, please...don't ever plan to drive all night.

### **4. PRINT A DETAILED ITINERARY FOR YOUR DRIVERS AND FOR FAMILY MEMBERS.**

Distribute your itinerary far in advance. The details you need in the itinerary: what times you leave and arrive at each stop, contact name, address, and phone number for each overnight stop, and the mobile phone numbers of you and/or adult leaders going on the trip (for emergencies).

### **5. SET A SPECIFIC TIME FOR LOADING THE VEHICLES AT THE CHURCH AND THE DEPARTURE TIME.**

Allow an hour or so for loading. Emphasize this to everyone. One family that doesn't take this seriously and arrives with a ton of luggage just as you're leaving can put your group way behind and start your trip on a bad note. Promise to leave without anyone who doesn't show up on time.

### **6. GATHER YOUR TROOPS TOGETHER BEFORE EVERYONE BOARDS THE VEHICLES THE FIRST DAY.**

Invite your pastor to bless everyone and give you a send off with prayer. It also doesn't hurt to remind them of the basic behavior expectations and what will happen if these are violated. Follow through on any consequences you set.

### **7. HAVE YOUR TEAM PACK AN OVERNIGHT BAG.**

They can access easily if you're stopping for the night on the way to or from AVM. That way you don't have to unload everything along the way. (Mention this in the itinerary.)

### **8. SPEND YOUR TRAVEL TIME BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUR TEAM.**

Rotate different team members as you drive. When you're not driving get in the back to meet with your team members. When you stop for meals, sit with your kids. Encourage other leaders to do the same: spread out among your team. This trip is all about them.

### **9. ALLOW TIME ON THE WAY TO AVM FOR SPIRITUAL PREPARATION.**

Before you get to AVM, make sure your entire group has time to get into the right frame of mind. This could be as simple as letting everyone share how they're feeling before they get there, or it could be as elaborate as specific devotion activities for each van along the way.

Whatever you do, make sure you take the time to remind everyone what this trip is all about and why you're going.

#### **10. REMEMBER: SAFETY FIRST!**

That means seat belts, observing speed limits, and driving defensively. It also means the driver controls the music volume.

#### **11. HAVE A FIRST AID KIT AND A FILE FOLDER WITH EACH TEAM MEMBER HEALTH INFORMATION AND PERMISSION SLIPS IN EVERY VEHICLE.**

If a vehicle gets lost or breaks down, that driver will have everyone's important information for emergencies.

#### **12. ALLOW TIME ON THE WAY HOME FOR RE-ENTRY.**

It can be a bit of culture shock to take the team directly from the missions experience and plop them right back into their home lives. They need a bit of time to process what happened at camp and transition to home. Help them think about what happened and what that means for their home lives. Celebrate the trip. Talk about upcoming ministry opportunities in your church.

#### **13. RECRUIT SOME CHURCH MEMBERS TO PLAN A WELCOME HOME CELEBRATION**

for your group when you pull into the church parking lot after the trip. Get balloons, signs, a brass band... whatever it takes to welcome your group home like the heroes they are. You'd be surprised how good this feels.

#### **14. GATHER CHURCH MEMBERS AND YOUTH IN A BIG CIRCLE IN THE PARKING LOT.**

Hold hands (after the vehicles are unloaded and before everyone leaves). Tell the church how great their team was and how proud they should be of them. Sing a worship song and lead a closing prayer. This puts that nice finishing touch on the whole experience.

## *Supplies*

Oriental Trading is a great company that sells generic craft supplies in bulk:

[www.orientaltrading.com](http://www.orientaltrading.com)

# *Involving Your Church*

## *(Geared for youth groups)*

The first step in enabling your youth group to go on a mission trip is gaining the active support of your pastor, key leaders of the church, parents, and the general congregation. If this is a first-time effort, some careful communication will help...here are some ideas:

First, meet with your senior pastor. Share why the following reasons a mission trip would be a positive experience for your youth group. Your youth group members may:

- Experience genuine spiritual growth
- Discover new places, cultures, and situations outside their comfort zone
- Enhance their understanding of Christian discipleship
- Fulfill community service requirements often needed for graduation in many school districts
- Achieve a deeper understanding of faith in action
- Interact with individuals and families whose lives are different from their own
- Provide a needed community service-and a meaningful Christian witness
- Make new friends from other church groups
- Develop many character-building qualities, including an attitude of servant hood, an appreciation for the value of sacrifice, and greater personal and physical confidence
- Develop closer relationships with you and their team members...returning home with a new sense of unity, teamwork, and respect for each other.
  - Creating a servant's heart
  - Creating passion for the lost
  - Experience sharing their faith
  - Developing a heart of compassion for others

Ask for your pastor's ideas about how participation in a mission experience could strengthen the church's youth program. And, keep your pastor involved! Here are some ideas to keep him/her included:

Invite your pastor to help you get the young people excited and then enlist the congregation's support

- Invite your pastor to go on the mission with your students
- Talk with your pastor about how the experiences of the group at this event fit into an overall plan for the coming year's youth ministry
- If it's necessary in your church, ask your pastor to place your group's request to attend the mission trip on the agenda of the appropriate board, committee, or council where lay leadership is represented.

- Present the request (with the pastor backing you) and ask for the lay members' support. Tell them you will also give them a "results report" when you return home. Be prepared to answer questions concerning fundraising, safety, insurance, and the rationale for going on a mission trip.

After introducing the mission concept to your pastor, key church leaders, and your group, you'll want to plan opportunities to inform and enlist the assistance of youth group parents and the general congregation. Gaining the support of these groups is essential to your success. As your church members begin to understand the powerful impact of this faith building experience, they'll naturally be supportive with their time and resources. It may take several presentations and careful explanations of the benefits to complete this essential step. Here are some ideas that can help get parents and the entire congregation to support the effort:

- Send out a flier inviting significant others or parents to an informational meeting just for them about the mission experience
  - Invite your pastor to this meeting, and ask him or her to explain the spiritual value of this event
- Serve coffee and fruit or dessert. Have your youth group members help prepare and serve these refreshments
- Present any information you've requested or prepared about your mission in this meeting to present a vivid picture of the experience
- Share the benefits listed above in the "Pastor's Support" section
- Show parents a fundraising plan prepared by a committee of young people and adults. (Fundraising ideas are also available at [www.youthministry.com](http://www.youthministry.com).) It's a good idea to show the estimated income from each idea and total them to match your estimated budget. Emphasize that the youth group members can raise money for most or all of their expenses if they participate in the fundraising activities the committee has planned.
- Answer their questions to the best of your ability (Take notes on those you can't answer and tell them you will follow up)
- Have two or three enthusiastic youth group members help with various aspects of the program. (They could present the fundraising plan complete with posters depicting your goals.) At the conclusion of the meeting, ask parents to support the program and enlist the support of key people and friends in the congregation. Encourage parents to share ideas or concerns with you at every step of the planning process.

After meeting with parents and getting their support, start a campaign to inform the general congregation. Here are some ideas to begin:

- Explain the mission idea in the worship bulletin and make the announcement in the worship service. This can be done in a number of ways:

- The youth minister or director can make the announcement;
  - The senior pastor can make the announcement or make a short comment of support following the youth minister's announcement; or
  - A team of two or three youth group members can make the announcement, followed by the pastor's supportive comments.
- Arrange a special screening of their promotional video at an all-church dinner or meeting
  - Put up posters around the church or make a display with pictures and posters
  - Make a map with a piece of yarn stretching from your town to the location of your chosen mission location to attract interest. (This is an excellent opportunity to let your youth group members use their creative abilities in publicizing the mission project.)
  - Ask the Christian education staff to allow you to present the event to each church school or Sunday school class. Try to keep the presentations short and to the point. Teams of youth who have been well coached can be effective here. Encourage them to be creative by using clowns, puppets, or other presentation methods.

**NOTE:** Stretch these various methods of spreading the word over a few weeks. Then when you begin to announce fundraising events, church members should be well aware of the importance of this youth-enriching event.

## *Journaling*

A great way to help your group reflect on their upcoming trip is to encourage journaling before, during, and after the experience. Here are a few helpful sites that have great tips and prompts and material for journaling.

<http://www.amazon.com/Deep-Justice-Broken-World-Specialties/dp/0310273773>

<http://www.missionsresources.com/product/437.htm>

[http://www.missionsresources.com/category/Mission\\_Trip\\_Devotionals.htm](http://www.missionsresources.com/category/Mission_Trip_Devotionals.htm)

**Release of Liability**  
(All team members must sign this release form)

I, \_\_\_\_\_, plan to participate in the Agua Viva Ministries Mission  
(Name of Team Member)

Trip from \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name of Church)

I understand that this mission trip requires being trained for and participating in Christian ministry (Sports, VBS, or Medical/Dental clinic), flying by plane and/or driving in a van, crossing the USA/Mexican border, being in Mexico from \_\_\_\_\_, eating Mexican food, driving to and from ministry sites  
(Dates)

in van, and doing a construction/work project. I recognize that participation in such activities may be hazardous and dangerous.

Now therefore, in consideration of the privilege to participate in the AVM Mission Trip, I do hereby, for myself, my heirs, executor, and/or administrator, remise, release and forever discharge all of the churches involved in the Mission Trip dated above and their representatives as well as the Church leaders, Team leaders, including Agua Viva Ministries and their staff from any and all actions, causes of action, claims and demands for, upon, or by reason of any injury, damage, loss or death which may occur from any cause including, but not limited to any accident while participating individually or with others on the AVM mission trip.

**(CAUTION: Read above before signing)**  
**I HAVE READ AND AGREE TO THIS RELEASE**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Team Member  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature REQUIRED if Team member will not be 18 by \_\_\_\_\_  
\*\*\*\*\*

**Permission Slip to Travel to Mexico**  
(REQUIRED if Team Member is not 18 by \_\_\_\_\_)

If the Team Member is **under the age of 18**, parental authorization is **required** to allow the Team Member to travel outside the United States to the Nation of Mexico. This sheet of paper needs to be signed by both parents of the team member and **notarized** by a notary in order for consent to travel to Mexico to be valid.

**I HAVE READ AND AGREE TO THIS RELEASE AND DO HEREBY AUTHORIZE THE TEAM MEMBER TO TRAVEL OUTSIDE OF THE UNITED STATES TO THE NATION OF MEXICO.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Mother/Guardian (Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Father/Guardian (print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Mother/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Father/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Public Name (print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Public (signature)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Place Notary Seal Above

# Health Form

I, \_\_\_\_\_ as (circle one) the parent/the guardian/the team member, do hereby authorize the \_\_\_\_\_ and/or AVM Team Leaders, acting as the Team Member's agents, to consent to any x-ray, (Name of Church/Organization) examination, anesthetic, or surgical diagnosis, or treatment and hospital care or service, which is deemed advisable and is rendered under the general or specific supervision of any licensed physician and surgeon, or the medical staff of a licensed hospital, whether such diagnosis or treatment is rendered at the office of said physician or at said hospital. It is understood that this authorization is given in advance of any specific diagnosis, treatment, or hospital care being rendered, but is given to provide authority and power on the part of the \_\_\_\_\_ and/or AVM Team Leaders to give specific (Name of Church/Organization) consent to any and all such diagnosis, treatment, or hospital care which the above mentioned physician, in the exercise of his/her best judgment, may deem advisable. I hereby authorize any hospital which has provided treatment to the Team Member to surrender physical custody of the Team member to the \_\_\_\_\_ and/or AVM Team Leaders (Name of Church/Organization) upon completion of treatment. These authorizations shall remain effective through the below period unless sooner revoked in writing and delivered to the \_\_\_\_\_ and AVM Team Leaders. (Name of Church/Organization)

Effective dates	Team Member Signature	Signature (Parent/Guardian of Team Member) Required if Team Member will not be 18 by _____	Date
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\*\*\*\*\*

**Medical Information:** (please print legibly)

Team Member's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Passport Number \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdate \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Date of last Tetanus Injection \_\_\_\_\_ Blood Type \_\_\_\_\_

Doctor's Name and Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Please list any allergies, medications, illnesses or disabilities of the Team Member: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Medical Insurance:**

Company \_\_\_\_\_ Policy Number \_\_\_\_\_

(\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Claim Office Address \_\_\_\_\_

**Emergency Contact Information :**

Name and Relationship to team member	Name and Relationship to team member Address
Address	Address
City State Zip	City State Zip
Home Phone Work Phone	Home Phone Work Phone
Cell Phone	Cell Phone



# Appendix G: Safety Policy

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## *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 Rancho 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 borders 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.

## *STEP: Smart Traveller Enrollment Program*

The Bureau of Consular Affairs offers a service called Smart Traveler Enrollment Plan (STEP) that provides alerts and warnings as well as facilitating communication between family members should any emergency arise. Register your trip online at [www.step.state.gov/step/](http://www.step.state.gov/step/).

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

### Troy Harris Director of risk management from Westmont College, Santa Barbara, California (written 2010)

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.

1. Westmont alumni ministering in Ensenada
2. Potter's Clay core team alumni living in Ensenada and Rosarito
3. Several firms:
  - a. *Crisis Consulting International*
  - b. *Corporate Risk International*
  - c. *Safe Travel Institute United Educators*
  - d. *World Vision*
  - e. *and others* specializing in international safety assessment

4. Other schools and ministry programs serving Mexico (Azusa Pacific, Point Loma, et al)
5. 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.
6. 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 Rancho Agua Viva, twelve miles east of the city.
7. 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
8. 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.
9. 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](http://www.westmont.edu/_offices/risk/TijuanaTurmoil.html)

## Matt Bach

### Sr. Coordinator of Church Relations

#### Mexico Outreach (written 2010)

"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 travelling 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 (written 2010)*

"I have felt safe crossing the border for a few reasons. First, RAV 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 RAV.
- 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 RAV - 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."

## *My View on Mexico Safety*

### *By Allyson Searway (2010)*

"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 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.

## Appendix H: Medical Clinic Information

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### *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 medical, dental and optometry providers from the US and Canada with underserved, remote communities surrounding the Ensenada, Mexico area. Agua Viva Ministries 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. Make-shift 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/or 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.

AVM provides you with room and board, training materials, interpreters and missionary guides to accompany teams as they minister. All sites are programmed before your arrival including purchasing of essential medications and promotion of the clinics in the community.

AVM offers to meet your group state-side and provide a border escort to guide you through the Mexican immigration for proper visa acquisition, assist you through customs and to lead your caravan safely all the way down to Rancho Agua Viva.

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 delicious authentic Mexican meals served.

## *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
- Interpreters
- On-site consultation with local Christian medical and dental providers to facilitate proper imaging, lab follow up and proper umbrella coverage
- Charting for chronically ill patients to ensure continuity of care
- Housing in our safe, gated, 142 acre compound in the beautiful, rural, hill country east of Ensenada, Mexico
- Authentic Mexican meals
- Experience as missionary guides since 1986

**Costs:** Varies depending on the size of your team and the number of days serving.

Students, Instructors and family members are welcome!

Please contact [program4jesus@aguaviva.com](mailto:program4jesus@aguaviva.com) for more details.  
Check out our website: [www.aguaviva.com](http://www.aguaviva.com) .