

*Then it came about as they were going along & talking, that behold, there appeared a chariot of fire & horses of fire which separated the two of them, & Elijah went up by a whirlwind to heaven.
2 Kings 2:11*



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CELEBRANDO NAVIDAD
GROUP INFORMATION

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JUST SOME NOTES!

We are so excited that you are wanting to come visit us and spend time ministering in areas surrounding Reynosa, Mexico. The areas that we work in are very poor BUT very loving and eagerly awaiting to hear the Good News of Jesus Christ.

If you're flying - McAllen is just 20 minutes away and Harlingen is 35. Either one will be fine. Keep in mind when you fly out we'll need to be there a minimum of 90 minutes before takeoff.

Questions always arise about the safety of working in Mexico (mostly from parents). In our 8 years of mission work we have never been fearful of the neighborhoods or people. When with a team we always come back to the stateside before dark. Our goal is to minister when we know the people will be home. Many of the men may be out for work so it's a day to day decision .

THIS CAN CAUSE PROBLEMS

PLEASE do not make promises to the nationals that you cannot keep. You may have the best intentions in the world but they could still fall through. When you tell them 'maybe we can build you a church' or 'we'll send some money' or 'we'll send money for presents for the kids'...you are setting yourself up for a broken heart when it doesn't go through. It would be better for them to be surprised than to build their hopes up.

Offer to pray for their needs but make no promises. Refer to above paragraph. Why do I go into such detail.....we've seen it over & over & really want to make sure the Lord leads rather than our emotional being.

JUST A NOTE: Perhaps you would be willing to use your van/bus to go back & forth across the border. Many of the insurance companies I've checked out allows you to go up to 25 miles across the border & still receive coverage. Talk to your company & see what they say. Border insurance is also available at a very reasonable rate for the time you are here.

PASSPORT UPDATE

Note: Beginning June 1, 2009, U.S. and Canadian citizen children UNDER AGE 16 arriving by land or sea from contiguous territory may also present an original or copy of his or her birth certificate, a Consular Report of Birth Abroad, a Naturalization Certificate, or a Canadian Citizenship Card.

Beginning June 1, 2009, U.S. and Canadian citizen children UNDER AGE 19 arriving by land or sea from contiguous territory and traveling with a school group, religious group, social or cultural organization, or sports team, may also present an original or copy of his or her birth certificate, a Consular Report of Birth Abroad, a Naturalization Certificate, or a Canadian Citizenship Card.

The group should be prepared to present a letter on organizational letterhead with

the following information:

- The name of the group and supervising adult;
- A list of the children on the trip, and the primary address, phone number, date of birth, place of birth, and name of at least one parent or legal guardian for each child; and
- A written and signed statement of the supervising adult certifying that he or she has obtained parental or legal guardian consent for each participating child.

DAILY SCHEDULE

SCHEDULE -The 27th will start with breakfast at 8 a.m. with the rest of the day spent organizing supplies, baking cupcakes, making and counting KID BAGS, putting together raffle bags, learning face painting, going to Mexico to hand out flyers, one on one witnessing, possibly a construction project. On the 28th we will be setting up the field, witnessing door to door AND project work. The local pastors will be locating either some houses needing paint or other quick projects for us to do that day. We want to be able to give of ourselves physically, spiritually and prayerfully! The 29th is FIESTA TIME!

BREAKDOWN OF FIESTA - Our WHOLE purpose for CELEBRANDO is to SHARE JESUS WITH THE LOST. All day there will be preaching, testimony, music and a GODLY RAFFLE (bait to get folks to come). In the other areas of the field there will be various games, popcorn, face/fingernail painting, bean & hot dog cooking. Some of our Dump Church sisters have agreed to come over from Reynosa to head up the bean cooking. This past summer we had different ladies from assorted communities make charro beans & NO ONE made them like our sisters so why mess with perfection?

GODLY RAFFLE - Please refer to handout for ideas of items that would work wonderful as raffle items. Try to think of practical, useful items. We pray there will be enough to give away throughout the day. At the moment we do not have a **BIG TICKET ITEM** to save for the last - let us know if you've got some ideas!

KID BAGS - Lots and lots and lots of KID BAGS needed. IF AT ALL POSSIBLE - bring them already filled (to the top) with yarn attached. Check out the revised KID BAG flyer.

GAMES - Please take a look at the games we've thought of and if you have any more ideas please let us know. If you see anything on the list that you actually have the items that you're willing to share - BRING THEM (just let us know).

NO REGRETS... Nathan always encourages EVERYONE to go home with NO REGRETS! Don't head out & think...Gee, I wished I would have.... Shared my testimony, presented the gospel, etc. If you have never given your testimony, go over the next couple of pages for an example of how to do it. Keep in mind - what you would say in the U.S. wouldn't necessarily work in Mexico...Church camp? Walk the aisle? Where you live in the U.S.? Most of that would have zero meaning to someone who lives in a dump type situation!

HOW TO SHARE THE GOOD NEWS THROUGH YOUR TESTIMONY

by Rick Warren

God has put a life message within you. When you became a believer you also became God's messenger. God wants to speak to the world through you. Paul said, "... we speak the truth before God, as messengers of God." You may feel you don't have anything to share, but that's the Devil trying to keep you silent. You have a storehouse of experiences that God wants to use to bring others into his family. The Bible says, "Those who believe in the Son of God have the testimony of God in them." (1 John 5:10a GW)

Your testimony is the story of how Christ has made a difference in your life. Peter tells us that we were chosen by God "to do his work and speak out for him, to tell others of the night-and-day difference he made for you." (1 Peter 2:9 MSG) This is the essence of witnessing - simply reporting your personal experiences with the Lord. In a courtroom, a witness isn't expected to argue the case, prove the truth, or press for a verdict; that is the job of attorneys. Witnesses just tell what happened to them. Jesus said, "You will be my witnesses." (Acts 1:8 NIV) He did not say, "You must be my attorney." He wants you to tell your story to others. Sharing your testimony is an essential part of your mission on Earth.

First, it is unique. There's no other story just like yours, so only you can share it, and if you don't, it will be lost forever. You may not be a Bible scholar, but you are the authority on your life, and it's hard to argue with personal experience. Actually, your personal testimony is more effective than a sermon because unbelievers see pastors as paid salesmen but see you as a satisfied customer, so they give you more credibility. Personal stories are also easier to relate to than principles, and people love to hear them; they capture our attention, and we remember them longer. Unbelievers would probably lose interest if you started quoting theologians, but they have a natural curiosity about experiences they've never had. Shared stories build a relational bridge that Jesus can walk across from your heart to theirs.

Another value of your testimony is that it bypasses intellectual defenses. Many people who won't accept the authority of the Bible will listen to a humble, personal story. That's why on six different occasions Paul used his testimony to share the Gospel instead of quoting Scripture. (Acts 22 to Acts 26) The Bible says, "Be ready at all times to answer anyone who asks you to explain the hope you have in you, but do it with gentleness and respect." (1 Peter 3:15-16 TEV)

The best way to "be ready" is to write out your testimony and then memorize the main points.

Divide it into four parts:

- What my life was like before I met Jesus?
- How did I realize I needed Jesus?
- How did I commit my life to Jesus?
- What difference has Jesus made in my life?

Of course, you have many other testimonies besides your salvation story. You have a story for every experience where God has helped you. You should make list of all the problems, circumstances, and crises that God has brought you through. Then be sensitive and use the story that your unbelieving friend will best relate to.

Questions To Consider (Ideas for sharing a brief testimony)

1. **The Story Of Your Life**—Tell us a little bit about yourself (birthplace, parents/siblings, interests, etc.).
2. **2.The Story Of Your Faith**—What was your life like before knowing God personally? How did you come to know Jesus in your life? How are things different today?
3. **Coming To Grace**--When you moved into this area, how you ended up at this new church, what you like best, why you stayed, got involved, etc
4. **Stories Of Grace**—What has God been teaching you through his Word? How has He been providing for you, your family, etc? What have you learned about serving God, living out your faith in daily life, or loving others? How do you hope to continuing growing in faith and serving God in the future? What plans or desires do you have?

NOTE: Remember to keep in mind when you're on a foreign mission trip what I said about them not understanding some of our U.S. experiences.

If you have any ideas different than below...let us know. If you can put it together - that would be great!

GAME IDEAS

- *Cupcake/Cookie Walk (you're WELCOME to bring either of these items)
- *Fingernails (I've got a tackle box full of this)
- *Face Painting
- *Duck Pond (my duckies swam home)
- *Bowling
- *Ring Toss
- *Football Throw

ALSO

- *READING GLASSES area
- *Popcorn area
- *Water & Ticket handout area (coffee or hot chocolate if it's cold!)
- *Raffle Item Guards
- *Evangicube/Witnessing
- *Food Preparation (chopping, bean & hot dog cooking)

SUGGESTED RAFFLE ITEMS

Folding Chairs	Bicycle Tires	Stainless Steel Pots
Rice	Beans	Socket Sets
Extension Cords	Curtains	Fabric/Thread
Metal Cooking Utensils	Diapers	Space Heater
Blankets	Bicycles	Tarps
\$1600.00 to build house	Donated Car	Baby Stroller
Sewing Machines (include needles/bobbins)	Gift Basket (hygiene products)	Flashlights
		Flour/Sugar/Coffee

We so appreciate everything you provide but we've found we do have limitations such as...no storage space...or...some things we just can't get across the border. While items may be valuable in the states it's possible they're not in Mexico. Loose toys, fabric scraps, glass dishes, etc. 'Like New' and 'New' - generally we can get that across. Call to ask!

Looking for a BIG raffle item such as \$\$\$ to build a Mexican house or donate a used vehicle.

Personal Necessities to Bring

- *Photo ID for Border and original Birth Certificate (not adults) OR passport
- *Bible
- *Toiletries
- *Pillow
- *Sleeping Bag or Sheets and Blanket (dorm) OR AIR MATTRESS for the gym
- *Towels and Wash Clothes
- *Flashlight
- *Bug Spray/Sunscreen
- *Gum/Candy (to give away) (throw some chocolate in for me!)
- *Personal Medicine
- *Camera
- *Money - for Cokes in Mexico or shopping in Progreso
- *Baby Wipes/Hand Sanitizer - to clean up with in Mexico
- *Alarm Clock
- *Flash Drive - for downloading everyone's pictures

Dress Code for All Camps

- *Tennis Shoes (Bring comfortable shoes you don't mind getting dirty or muddy - you might bring 2 pairs. We highly recommend tennis or closed toe shoes for Mexico).
- *Flip Flops - for shower
- *Girls - Jeans, Capri's, Skirts, T Shirt
- *Guys - Jeans, T Shirt
- *Shorts - decent length, (like at your knee) to be worn in the U.S. camp only

NO spaghetti straps, no low cut tops, muscle tank tops, short shorts or shirts that expose the belly button.

Come dressed to represent Christ. Please advise your kids to dress conservatively and if you see someone who needs to change - ask them to do so!

WE ENCOURAGE GROUP MEMBERS TO LEAVE THESE AT HOME!

**CELL PHONES
IPOD PLAYERS
LAPTOPS
(KEEP THEM FOR BEFORE OR AFTER MINISTERING)**

**THIS WEEK IS FOR FOCUSING ON THE LORD
AND NOT ON OURSELVES!**

Medical Information

(To Be Kept With the Sponsors)

Name _____

Address _____ City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____ Home Phone _____

Work Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

Emergency Name & Number _____

Doctor Name _____ Phone _____

Insurance Company _____

Phone Number _____ Policy Number _____

Medication Intake _____

Allergies _____

Diabetic ____ yes ____ no