

PARTICIPANTS MANUAL

BELIZE MISSION TRIP

thirst 
MISSIONS
ThirstMissions.org



BELIZE



THIS MANUAL BELONGS TO:

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Arrival Flight 1:

Airline _____

Flight # _____

Departure City/Time _____

Arrival City/Time _____

Return Flight 1:

Airline _____

Flight # _____

Departure City/Time _____

Arrival City/Time _____

Arrival Flight 2 :

Airline _____

Flight # _____

Departure City/Time _____

Arrival City/Time _____

Return Flight 2:

Airline _____

Flight # _____

Departure City/Time _____

Arrival City/Time _____

Mainland Belize Lodging:

Location or Hotel _____

City _____

Phone # _____

Caye Caulker Lodging:

Hotel Name _____

Phone # _____

Your Group Leader:

Name _____

Phone # _____

Thirst Missions Trip Leader:

Name _____

Phone # _____

Thirst Missions Office:

21450 Forest Blvd. Suite 200

Forest Lake, MN 55025

651-464-2212

Thirst Missions Staff:

Name _____

Phone # _____

Name _____

Phone # _____

Name _____

Phone # _____

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NOTES

THE FIRST MISSIONS



ABOUT US

Thirst Missions, the world leader in short-term mission trips to Belize, is committed to leading high-quality mission trips for every group.

We take care of all the logistics and planning so your group can focus on ministry and relationships. On each trip, Thirst Missions has a staff of two to four with your group taking care of logistics and guiding you through the trip. It is our goal to partner with you to provide opportunities for your group to minister, keep everyone safe, guide the trip in cultural areas, and serve your group by taking care of all the behind the scenes details. Thirst Missions has led hundreds of trips since its inception, from most of the 50 States and Canada, comprising many denominations. In recent years we have led 40–50 groups per year covering thousands of participants, and expect to lead 75+ groups in Belize during 2018 as well as 20+ groups to Alaska and numerous groups to the Texas Gulf Coast.

Thirst Missions, LLC is led by Jason Pfingsten, founder and CEO.

Jason has been leading mission trips to Belize since 1991 and full-time since 2003. Thirst Missions was founded in 2008 to focus specifically on the country of Belize. Jason fell in love with the people and culture of Belize while in college at the University of Northwestern – St Paul ('92) and has been overseeing short-term mission teams to Belize ever since.

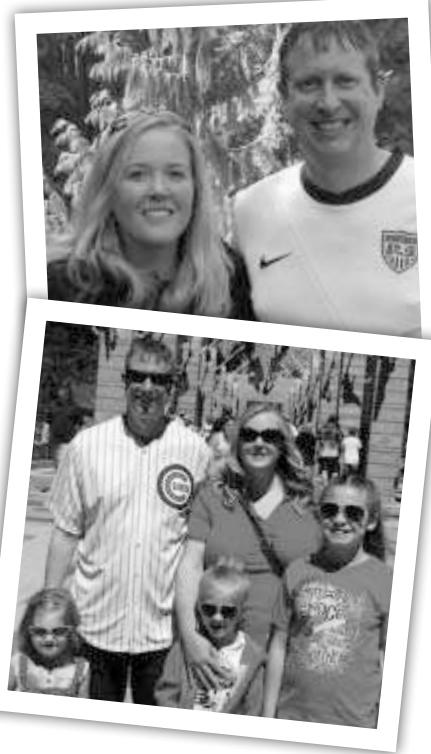
"I invite you to bring your group to Belize and join us in our effort to minister throughout the country of Belize. You will partner with local churches and have the opportunity to choose the ministries you'd like to participate in. Our prayer is that your group will be as blessed as the local churches will be whom you minister to and partner with during your trip. Our team invites you to come and serve alongside us." – JASON PFINGSTEN

Jason and his wife Addie live in Centerville, MN, with their three girls, Mallory (13), Marissa(9), and Julia (6). They keep busy in ministry, at church, have a passion for travel, spending time with family, and attending their children's numerous activities.

The Thirst Missions office is located in Forest Lake, MN. We have 10 staff members who serve from the United States and 20 Belizean staff members.

"I'm incredibly proud of our staff members. We truly are an extended family. They are hard working people of integrity who love the Lord and have passion for short-term missions. On every trip our staff members will lead your group and be with you every step of the way. We take the logistics on our shoulders so group members can focus on ministry. It's our prayer that your entire trip will be blessed by our staff members and their devotion to providing an amazing missions experience." – JASON PFINGSTEN

We invite you to join us in fulfilling Great Commission in a country in great need of Jesus Christ. As you do, you will be a blessing to the Belizeans and in return each group member will be equally blessed.



THEME VERSE

John 4:13-14

Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

Context: John 4:5-26

So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a drink?” (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?” (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)

Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.”

“Sir,” the woman said, “you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?”

Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.”

He told her, “Go, call your husband and come back.”

“I have no husband,” she replied.

Jesus said to her, “You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.”

“Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.”

Jesus declared, “Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers



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the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."

The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us."

Then Jesus declared, "I who speak to you am he."

OUR PHILOSOPHY OF MISSIONS

Mission Statement

When your group attends a mission trip with Thirst Missions, you aren't just going on another mission trip. You will be partnering with a local church and pastor who are looking for a mission team with your chosen ministries to serve alongside.

You choose the ministries from our menu of 14 available options, and we will place your group in partnership with a community, church, and pastor who have identified these ministries as needs they have.

You most likely will be the only mission team to partner with this church and pastor during the year you serve and beyond. Your group will be a huge support to the pastor and an encouragement to the congregation you serve alongside. Our trips are about quality over quantity. Quality of ministry, quality of relationships, and quality of congregations and pastors you will be partnering with.

These are real pastors on the frontlines in a developing country making a real difference for Jesus Christ. They need your encouragement desperately, and you will be serving alongside a local congregation and in a community with real needs. We have amazing pastors asking for

teams to partner with them and they would feel so blessed to work with you in ministry. Once these congregations find out you will be

coming, they spend months praying for the trip and preparing for your group to arrive. It is a huge deal for them. What a blessing to experience the worldwide body of Christ!

It is our prayer that all will be blessed through the friendships and partnerships made through ministry on your Thirst Missions trip.

Once your mission trip has concluded, our staff members will follow up with the pastor and congregations you have been partnered with. We check in to see how they are doing, encourage them to follow through with potential new members who came to the church during your trip, and work with them to develop ministry plans and ideas based on things they learned and experienced during your mission trip. We feel it is vital to follow up and stay in touch with the



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church and pastor.

This is an area that is severely neglected during most other mission organizations trips and is one key to sustaining long-term growth from your mission experience. You will also have the opportunity to encourage the church you partner with once you return home. From letters, email, Facebook, texting, and exchanging resources, the relationships that are developed in Belize can turn into lifelong relationships and fellowship with believers in Belize.

Long-Term Partnerships

We have experience with churches from North America developing long-term partnerships with congregations in Belize. Some US churches have gone back for eight-plus years straight to the same village, worked with the same pastor, and invested in their partner church. Thirst Missions is excited to be a part of lining up and following through on these long-term partnerships. If this type of longer-term ministry is part of your philosophy of ministry, we would love to work with you to partner long-term or short-term in ministry to the same community and congregation in Belize.

Statement Of Faith

1. We believe in the divine inspiration and authority of the whole canonical Scriptures as the inerrant Word of God.
2. We believe in the Trinity: God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
3. We believe in sin through the fall of man and need for repentance and regeneration.
4. We believe in the atonement of sin through the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ.
5. We believe in the doctrine of justification by faith.
6. We believe in the eternal life of the saved and the eternal punishment of the lost, as described in Scripture.



It is Thirst Missions' policy to work with churches and organizations that adhere to the basic tenets of the Christian faith as outlined above and expressed in one or more of the universally recognized Christian creeds/confessions/and covenants:

The Apostles' Creed (circa A.D. 175)

The Nicene Creed (A.D. 325)

The Augsburg Confession (A.D. 1530)

The Lausanne Covenant (July 1974)

This trip changed my life in regards to the calling I have for our Lord. It has also dramatically changed my son's life. He will continue to do missions work as he grows into a young man ... God gave us patience and love for others. We were able to give so many blessings and were given back just as much.

— SHAWNA

Dear Mission Trip Participant,

Thank you for registering for a mission trip to Belize. Thank you for stepping out in faith and trusting the Lord with your steps during this journey. Thank you for being willing to take the time away from your home and your life back home to give of yourself by serving overseas. You are an answer to prayer!

Some of Jesus's last words on this earth are known as The Great Commission. Matthew 28:18-20 reads: Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

These words from Jesus are just as applicable for us today as they were for the disciples. We are called to go and serve. In fact we are commanded to go. You have answered that command. There is something that happens in us when we step out in faith and serve others. God in His infinite wisdom knows that and thus Jesus chose to build the church through His people.

Starting with the disciples and up through our current generation, He is counting on us to build the church. We can build the church by going to Belize and encouraging those in ministry by helping them with projects and ideas and by bringing resources, praying for them, caring for them, and listening to them. We can show pastors and other ministry leaders that they are not alone. We can build on that encouragement by staying in touch with them during the year and returning for years to come. Rich relationships are built and ministries flourish when long-term partnerships are established.

As you prepare for your mission journey and then head to Belize, we are with you. We've been praying for your team since you signed up. We've been cultivating relationships in Belize for years (decades for some), and we will pass those relationships along to you to encourage. Our staff members will be with you on your trip every step of the way, guiding you and ministering alongside you.

Once you've gone on your trip you'll forever be a part of the Thirst Missions family. We love Belize and hope that you will love the people and the culture as much as we do. Soak it in. Get involved in the lives of the people and culture and the local ministry you are serving alongside. You are in our prayers and in my prayers. Thank you for going and serving. May God bless your faithfulness and hold you close during your journey.

In Christ,



Jason Pfingsten
Founder and CEO
Thirst Missions



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POLICY AGREEMENT (All participants will sign and agree to the following policies when filling out application form.)

- As a representative of Jesus Christ, the United States or Canada, and Thirst Missions, I will behave at all times in a manner that brings glory and honor to these institutions. I will also respect and follow the trip leaders and group leader and his/her decisions.
- I am aware that my every word and action is being watched during the entire mission trip experience. Therefore I agree to act and talk in a manner that glorifies the name of Jesus Christ. I want everything I do or say to draw people to Jesus.
- I am a guest in the country I am visiting. I will respect and follow the traditions of the local people and nationals.
- I have come to learn from the people I come in contact with. I will not criticize the culture, efficiency, work habits, food, or traditions of the people I come in contact with. I have come not to judge but to learn and to share the person of Jesus through my words, actions, and deeds.
- I agree to have a servant attitude at all times. When I am doing a task or ministry I don't particularly care for, I will put my best foot forward and be a witness in this activity and in everything I will participate in while on the trip. I will be flexible and will not complain, either outwardly or with my body language.
- I will use words that encourage and build up my team members and the nationals at all times. I will refrain from gossip or words that bring dissension and take focus away from the goals of the trip.
- I will have a positive attitude at all times. Every trip has its challenges and unforeseen circumstances. People could get sick, items lost, and plans changed. I realize that there are times I will need to "roll with the punches" and look at challenges as opportunities to be a witness for Jesus Christ.
- I will work with all members of the team. I will refrain from pursuing romantic relationships during the trip. If my spouse or significant other is on the trip with me, I will make every effort to spend time with each person of the group and interact with all team members.
- I will attend all team meetings and fulfill the responsibilities I have agreed to before, during, and after the trip. If I am not able to attend a meeting I will be in contact with my group leader as to what I missed.
- I will abstain from using, consuming, or possessing alcohol, tobacco products, and illegal drugs while on the trip. I will not steal or commit any crime or do anything illegal while on the trip. I will meet all medical, logistical, and legal travel requirements. I also will not talk negatively about United States or Canada politics or the host country's politics during the trip.
- If in the future I desire to return to Belize on a mission trip to visit any connections or ministry locations from this mission trip, I agree to do so through Thirst Missions or receive their written permission to do so. This will enable the overall vision and plans for the ministry as agreed upon through Thirst Missions connections in Belize to continue.
- I am responsible for knowing and following everything in the trip manual and explained at the team meetings. I will follow all import and export laws. I will not attempt to bring any item or good into the host country or back into the United States or Canada that is banned.
- If I break any of the rules listed above, at the discretion of a Thirst Missions representative and in conjunction with my group leader, my mission trip can be terminated and I can be sent home at my own expense. I realize that to attend this trip and represent Jesus Christ on the mission field is a privilege and abuse of that privilege constitutes the right for my trip to end prematurely.



The trip was far better than I expected, and I was expecting great ... I feel the need to keep investing myself there, like God isn't finished with my work there. I am looking at and planning for a future that doesn't revolve around myself and my own church, but is expanded.

— REBECCA

BELIZE



BELIZEAN CULTURE

Belize is a country of many contrasts. Though economically challenged, it is home to some of the greatest biodiversity in the world. Despite poverty, her people are resilient, resourceful, and cheerful. Home to jungles, miles of lush coastline, and the largest cave system in Central America, Belize has much to offer. Thirst Missions' aim in Belize is to strengthen the local church and show the people of Belize the hope of Christ while respecting their own cultures and traditions.

Language

English is the official language of Belize but other languages are spoken as well.

Spanish is prevalent and is more widely used every year. It is not uncommon for groups to be placed in predominantly Spanish-speaking communities or churches. At the very least everyone on a trip to Belize will come across many people whose primary language is Spanish. A Spanish intro or refresher course would be a welcome addition to the planning process when visiting Belize. Thirst Missions will have Spanish translators on every team in case translation is necessary.

Belize has Spanish-speaking neighbors in Mexico to the north and northwest and Guatemala to the west and southwest. All schools teach in English, but many people – especially those who live near the borders of Mexico and Guatemala – speak Spanish as their native language. Many Belizean adults are bilingual and as a result, many church services feature a mix of English and Spanish.

Kriol is widely spoken throughout Belize as well. About 75% of Belizeans speak this unwritten form of English in which words are chopped and shortened, and a meaning all of its own is derived. We encourage you to try to pick up a few Kriol phrases while you are in Belize.

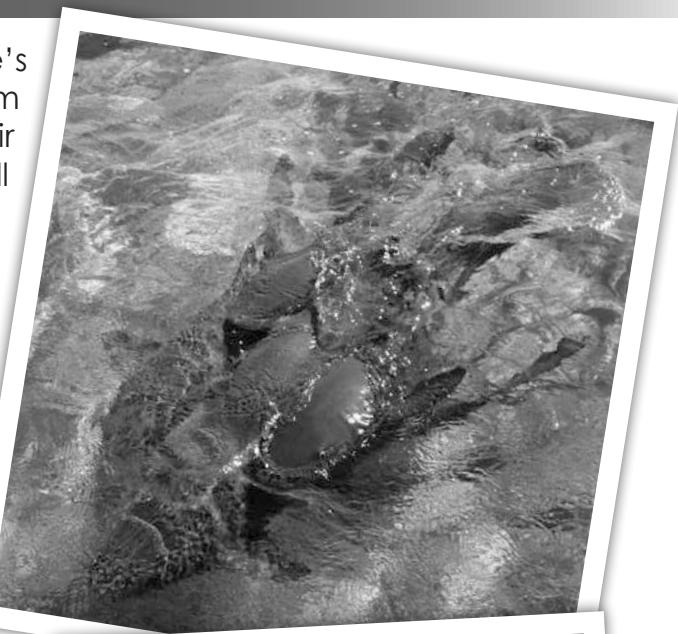
Cultural Curiosities

- Belizeans are polite and want to please. They will often say yes when they really mean no because they don't want to offend the person asking. Don't be offended if they don't follow through after first telling you yes.
- In Belize, as in most of Latin America, the overall attitude that men are superior to women still prevails.
- When greeting someone it is not polite to hug a member of the opposite sex.
- Most of Belize runs on "Belize time." Meaning things start when they are ready to start. People are generally not in a hurry and not tied to the clock. So relax and enjoy the opportunity to not be in a hurry.
- Belizeans generally talk in soft voices and being too loud is considered disrespectful.
- Dogs are often used to guard houses. Theft is a big issue in Belize. Always keep your valuables with you and be careful so as to not become a victim of theft.



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- It is considered polite in Belize to drop by people's homes unannounced. Belizeans will often yell from the street or honk their car horn to announce their arrival and it is expected that the person home will emerge from their house to communicate.
- Dinner is the main meal of the day; it is the largest meal, and is served at midday.
- It is appropriate to shake hands when greeting someone in Belize. Belizeans are informal, as are people from the United States, and greet people by their first names.
- Sunday is considered a day of rest in Belize. Most shops and restaurants are closed.
- Most pastors are bivocational. They have other full-time jobs besides pastoring.
- Prayer is allowed and freely accepted in both government and private schools.
- Students are only required to go to school through the equivalent of 8th grade.
- Most students need to pay for part of their education every year. In high school, they pay a substantial amount. It is a big accomplishment to graduate from high school.
- Belizeans generally pace themselves and move more slowly than we are used to because of the heat. Siestas are often taken for an hour after a midday meal.
- As a Christian in Belize, it is not okay to drink alcohol or smoke. Those activities are considered sinful by most churches in Belizean culture.
- The Belizean minimum drinking age is 18. We refrain from drinking alcohol on our mission trips regardless of age.
- An accepted rate for tipping in restaurants is 10%, where it is 15-20% in the USA.
- When driving in Belize you will see Belizeans help each other out by putting on a turn signal to let another driver know when it's okay to pass.
- Belize is full of speed bumps. They are often referred to as "sleeping policemen" and need to be watched out for. When walking, be careful of drivers who approach you at speed bumps or crosswalks. They don't put pedestrians first like we do in the US and Canada.
- Belizeans generally wear seatbelts only on the main highways and not in towns or villages.
- Please cover your visible tattoos as best as possible. They are not as widely accepted in Belize.
- Most stores and destinations within each town or village are a walkable distance.
- US Dollars are accepted everywhere, but they must not be torn or cracked.
- Soccer is referred to as football. Our football is referred to as American football.
- Belizeans are generally shy when they first meet Americans. You might feel like you aren't
- If you go to a church service in Belize, you will mostly see women. Many men aren't as involved in bringing their families to church as they could be. It's good to try to get men involved in churches in Belize. The church sometimes doesn't appeal as much to men.



- Many men will feel like they have to be perfect to go to church or they will be judged. So they will often just stay home. They are also often tired from their six-day work week, so they want to stay home and rest.
- When people go to church, they often look up to the pastor and expect him to make decisions for them.
- On Thirst Missions trips, we will have a closing service at the end of the trip. Teams should be clear if they are leaving a donation if that donation is specifically for the pastor or if it is for the church. If you are giving a gift specifically to the pastor give it to him privately. If the group is donating something, some pastors want groups to stand up and tell the church who they are leaving the gift for.
- The man is the head of the family in Belize, but the man doesn't have as much involvement at home. His role is to earn the money, and the wife's role is to run the family.
- Globalization is big, so Belizeans listen to a lot of American and Caribbean music.
- Sugar cane farming is a major industry in northern Belize. There are 6,000 cane farmers and they generally all hire at least 5 workers. There are also sugar cane factories that have many employees.
- Hot sauce in Belize is a staple. Marie Sharp's is a great brand – try it!

Belizean Kriol

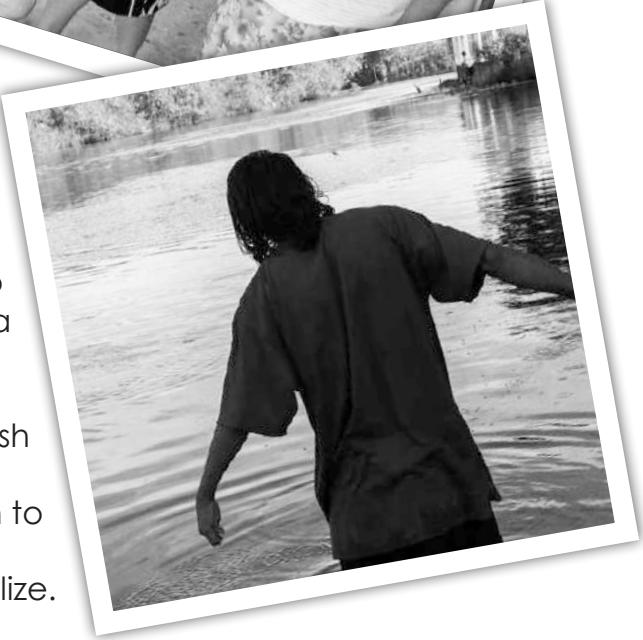
Although English is the official language of Belize you may encounter some Belizeans speaking Kriol. Kriol is a language which emerged from the contact of English landowners and their West African slaves to ensure basic communication. Here are a few Belizean Kriol sayings for you to practice.

1. Weh di guh wan? – What's going on?
2. Wat we wah eat? – What are we going to eat?
3. Lesgo da choch. – Let's go to church.
4. Manin - Good morning.
5. Aftanun – Good afternoon.
6. Wadup? – What's up?
7. Weh yuh di do? – What are you doing?
8. Uno guh sleep. – You guys go to sleep.
9. Out di light.- Turn off the light.
10. Weh u mi deh? – Where were you?
11. Lota pikni fu vbs. – There were a lot of kids for VBS.



welcome at first. Belizeans are just shy but will warm up to you quickly. Feel free to reach out and start conversations to break the ice.

- Belizean culture is generally conservative compared to the United States and Canada.
- It is appropriate to exchange small gifts. Elaborate gifts are not considered appropriate.
- You will hear Belizean men refer to the fact that they “catch and kill.” This means that they are willing to do any sort of job to put food on the table for their family.
- In most churches, the main service on Sunday is at night. Sunday school is in the morning. And there often are 1-3 other services throughout the week, including Wednesday night.
- Belizeans prefer US currency to the Belizean dollar. There is no need to exchange money in Belize. The standard and fixed rate is \$1 US = \$2 BZ.
- Because of unsteady jobs Belizeans generally have a hard time getting loans. So they will start a project and do as much as they can with the money they have. Then when they receive more money, they will continue the project. You will see lots of unfinished construction projects in Belize for just this reason.
- Belizeans generally view US and Canadian citizens as having a lot of money. Be prepared to be asked to help financially with many needs you will see and be told about. It is best to always run those donations through the Thirst Missions staff and host pastor.
- Red and navy blue are affiliated with the two political parties in Belize. Try to avoid those colored shirts so as to not offend or unintentionally make a statement.
- You will encounter beggars in Belize. Feel free to donate to them if you desire, or buy them a meal or a snack. But also feel free to politely decline.
- Most homes have unattached latrines or outhouses.
- Don't flush your toilet paper in Belize. Put it in the trash can next to the toilet.
- Belizeans drink a lot of coffee and tea. It is common to have one or the other for breakfast and supper.
- Rice and beans is the unofficial national meal of Belize.



BELIZE

This includes chicken, rice, beans, coleslaw, and juice. Expect to have lots of rice and beans in Belize!

- It is not considered polite to throw away plates full of food in Belize. It can offend the cook if you throw their food away. Take only what you will eat.
- Belizeans are proud of their country. Ask them about it!
- Belizeans have their own way of doing things. Immerse yourself in their lifestyle and culture and try to learn to appreciate the way they do things instead of trying to teach them the "right way." We can learn a lot from Belizeans!
- And this tip comes from a pastor in Belize. Whenever you come to a stairway, start moving, because the stairs won't move. They don't have escalators in Belize!
- Some people in Belize speak softly because they are afraid they are not saying the word correctly and don't want to be made fun of. Be sensitive to that.
- Most of the adults in the villages speak more Spanish than English because they have immigrated to Belize from a Spanish-speaking country. They do, however, understand quite a bit of English. Younger people in villages learn English in school.
- Families in Belize are more open to having children wander in the village with their friends. Kids in Belize are more "free range" than American children.



- The school day is generally longer in Belize and that allows an hour-and-a-half lunch break for the kids to walk or ride their bikes home and have lunch with their families.
- Some churches in Belize don't have instruments. Those that don't will play a CD or just sing and clap.
- Belizean churches are much smaller and have fewer resources. The average church may worship 30 – 40 people with main services on Sunday nights and Wednesday nights.
- Youth groups at churches are often small (because the church is small). "Youth" in Belize vary in age from 15 – 25.
- Youth aren't engaged in Belizean churches as much as they are in America. Most are working from an early age.
- When you are worshipping in a Belizean church they will pass a basket for offering or you can bring something up front. It's

appropriate to give a small donation if you desire.

- Dancing is more common in church in Belize. Christians generally don't go dancing at clubs in Belize.
- Church services are loud in Belize!
- Futbol (soccer) is the main sport in Belize, followed by basketball and volleyball. (If you are bringing volleyball to Belize, you'll need to bring a net!)
- If you are eating a snack in front of Belizean kids they will ask for some. If you give to one kid, you will soon have 10 asking you for some, so be prepared for that.
- Churches in Belize are mostly focused inward because they are trying to survive. It is hard for them to focus outward on the needy in their communities. That is one way we can help the Belizean churches.
- There are sometimes kids who are acting out or not behaving appropriately. If the pastor or a trip leader confronts them and sends them home, what they are doing is appropriate.
- Don't feel bad about eating the lunch provided for you if you see kids outside looking in. You can ask your trip leader if it's OK to give a kid food. If there's extra food, the cooks typically feed the kids after the group has gone back out to do ministries.
- If a Belizean calls you "gringo" don't take offense. It's just another word for American.
- Belizean dogs eat the leftover food from missions trips. Don't be surprised when your leftovers are fed to dogs. Don't throw your plate away if you didn't eat a lot of food. If you don't think you are going to eat a lot, let them know when being served. Only accept the type and amount of food you will actually eat. (We serve buffet style meals so you can choose the food you want.)
- Belizeans don't always use silverware. They will often use one type of food to scoop up another one.
- If they tell you that that tap water will get you sick, *it will get you sick*. Tap water in Belize is not safe to drink, so only drink bottled water, and be careful about where your ice comes from.
- Dogs are very common in Belize. Some dogs guard houses, and other dogs have owners who don't watch over them carefully. Be careful about dogs in Belize as they often don't have shots and may be diseased.
- Speed limits in the village are 25 miles per hour for cars and 15 for trucks or buses. Speed limits on highways are 55 miles per hour because the roads and vehicles aren't generally as well maintained.
- Playing cards or Dominos in church is offensive. Uno or Dutch Blitz is OK, but poker is associated with drinking and gambling. Gambling is frowned upon in Belize for Christians.
- Belizeans don't have as many entertainment options. There's only one movie theater in the country and it isn't always running, so many Belizeans will watch TV, play soccer, or just hang out.



BELIZE

12. Mek we pray suh we munch up. – Let us pray so we can eat.
13. Drink lotsa waata. – Drinks lots of water.
14. Bring yuh bug spray caz lotsa mosquito out deh. – Bring your bug spray because there are a lot of mosquitos out there.
15. Mek we geh di pepa? – Can I please have the hot sauce?

BELIZE PROFILE

BACKGROUND

Belize was the site of several Mayan city states until their decline at the end of the first millennium AD. The British and Spanish disputed the region in the 17th and 18th centuries; it formally became the colony of British Honduras in 1854. Territorial disputes between the UK and Guatemala delayed the independence of Belize until 1981. Guatemala refused to recognize the new nation until 1992 and the two countries are involved in an ongoing border dispute. Guatemala and Belize plan to hold a simultaneous referendum to determine if this dispute will go before the International Court of Justice at The Hague, though they have not yet set a date. Tourism has become the mainstay of the economy. Current concerns include the country's heavy foreign debt burden, high unemployment, growing involvement in the Mexican and South American drug trade, high crime rates, and one of the highest rates of HIV/AIDS in Central America.

FACTS AND FIGURES

Location: Central America, bordering the Caribbean Sea, between Guatemala and Mexico

Area: Slightly smaller than Massachusetts

Largest City: Belize City, 70,000

Border countries: Guatemala 165 miles, Mexico 155 miles

Coastline: 240 miles

Climate: Tropical; very hot and humid. Rainy season from May to November, dry season February to May.

Terrain: Flat, swampy coastal plain with low mountains in south

Elevation extremes: Lowest point: Caribbean Sea 0 feet. Highest point: Doyle's Delight 3,805 feet.

Natural resources: Arable land potential, timber, fish, hydropower

Geography challenges: Frequent devastating hurricanes (August to November) and coastal flooding (especially in south)

Geography note: Belize is the only country in Central America without a coastline on the Pacific Ocean



BELIZE OVERVIEW

- Belize has the lowest population density in Central America and one of the lowest in the world, but it has the highest growth rate in the Western Hemisphere.
- Belize has wonderful rainforests, trees, fruit, and flowers.
- Wildlife includes jaguars, howler monkeys, snakes, lizards, crocodiles, birds, toucans, storks, and sea life.
- 20 miles offshore, and near many of the cayes, lies the longest barrier reef in the Western Hemisphere. Diving and snorkeling opportunities are plentiful out on the reef.
- The average rainfall is 50 inches in the north to over 150 inches in southern Belize. (Seattle gets 38 inches per year.)
- Rain falls almost every day, except during the dry season from February to May.
- More than half the population resides in the seven largest towns. These include: Belize City, Belmopan, Orange Walk, Corozal, Dangriga, San Ignacio, and San Pedro.
- Belize City is the center for the fishing industry, shipping, lumber, coconuts, sugar, and lobsters.
- Belize struggles to raise enough food to feed its population. It depends heavily upon imported food and goods.
- Belize is the most expensive country to live in or visit in Central America.
- Agricultural exports – mostly sugar, citrus fruits, and bananas – provide over half the nation's foreign exchange.
- Belize has increased their tourism in the cruise industry in the past 10 years. It is not uncommon to see a cruise ship or two docked a short boat ride from Belize City.
- Belize is the most ethnically and culturally diverse nation in Central America. Creoles, Mayan Indians, Garifunas, Mestizos, Mennonites, and Chinese dot the landscape.
- Belize is predominantly a Christian society. Religious freedom is guaranteed. Roman Catholicism is accepted by almost half the country and Protestantism by about one quarter.
- Mennonite communities populate Belize and they live in their own sheltered communities.
- Jehovah's Witness and LDS have gained a following in recent years.
- Belize faces social problems due to the crumbling of family life and lack of male leadership in the homes and churches.
- Belize's population is very young, with over half the people under 18.
- To support their families, many Belizeans have had to leave the country to find work. There are now more Belizeans living in the United States than in Belize. They call this "the great brain drain."



PEOPLE

Ethnic groups: Mestizo 52.9%, Creole 25.9%, Maya 11.3%, Garifuna 6.1%, East Indian 3.9%, Mennonite 3.6%, White 1.2%, Asian 1%

Languages: English 62.9% (official), Spanish 56.6%, Kriol 44.6%, Maya 10.5%, German 3.2%, Garifuna 2.9%

Religions: Roman Catholic 40.1%, Protestant 31.5% (includes Pentecostal 8.4%, Seventh Day Adventist 5.4%, Anglican 4.7%, Mennonite 3.7%, Baptist 3.6%, Methodist 2.9%, Nazarene 2.8%), Jehovah's Witness 1.7%, other 10.5% (includes Baha'i, Buddhist, Hindu, Mormon, Muslim, Rastafarian)

Population: 347,369 (July 2015 estimate)

GOVERNMENT

Parliamentary Democracy

Capital: Belmopan

Time difference: UTC-6 (1 hour behind EST during Standard Time) 2 hours behind EST during the summer months

Administrative divisions: 6 districts: Belize, Cayo, Corozal, Orange Walk, Stann Creek, Toledo

Independence Day: September 21, 1981 (from the UK)

Legal system: English common law

Suffrage: 18 years of age

Executive branch: Chief of State: Queen Elizabeth II (since 6 February 1952)

Head of government: Prime Minister: Dean Barrow (since 2008)

Cabinet: Cabinet appointed by the governor general on the advice of the prime minister from the general assembly elections; the monarchy is hereditary; governor general appointed by the monarch; following legislative elections, the leader of the majority party or the leader of the majority coalition usually appointed prime minister by the governor general; prime minister recommends the deputy prime minister

Legislative branch: Bicameral national assembly consists of the Senate (12 seats; members appointed by the governor general - 6 on the advice of the prime minister, 3 on the advice of the leader of the opposition, and 1 each on the advice of the Belize Council of Churches and Evangelical Association of Churches, the Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Belize Better Business Bureau, and the National Trade Union Congress and the Civil Society Steering Committee; to serve five-year terms) and the House of Representatives (31 seats; members are elected by direct popular vote to serve five-year terms)



ECONOMY

Tourism is the number one foreign exchange earner in this small economy, followed by exports of marine products, citrus, cane sugar, bananas, and garments. The sizable trade deficit and heavy foreign debt burden continue to be major concerns

GDP – per capita: \$4,719 (2014 estimate)

Unemployment rate: 12.9% (2014 estimate)

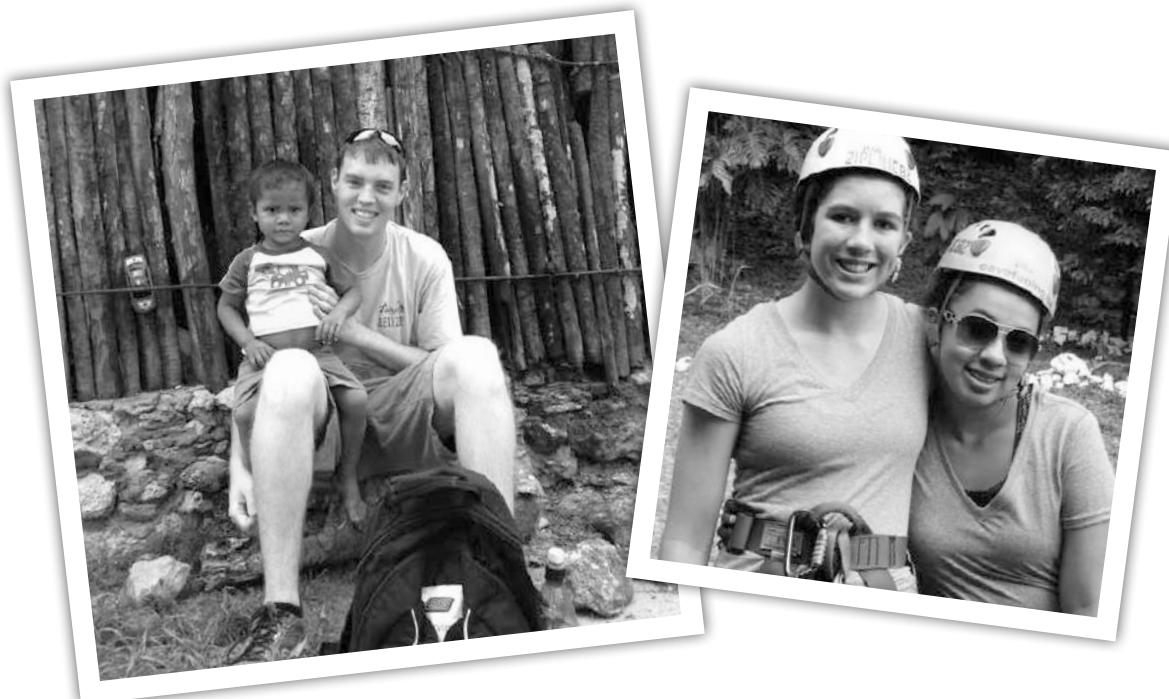
Population below poverty line: 41% (2013 estimate)



MILITARY

Military branches: Belize Defense Force (BDF): Army, BDF Air Wing. Military service age and obligation: 18 years of age for voluntary military service; law allows for conscription only if volunteers are insufficient; conscription has never been implemented; volunteers typically outnumber available positions by 3:1

*Belize Profile information taken from cia.gov



TOP 10 POOREST COUNTRIES IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

By GDP per capita (according to World Bank)

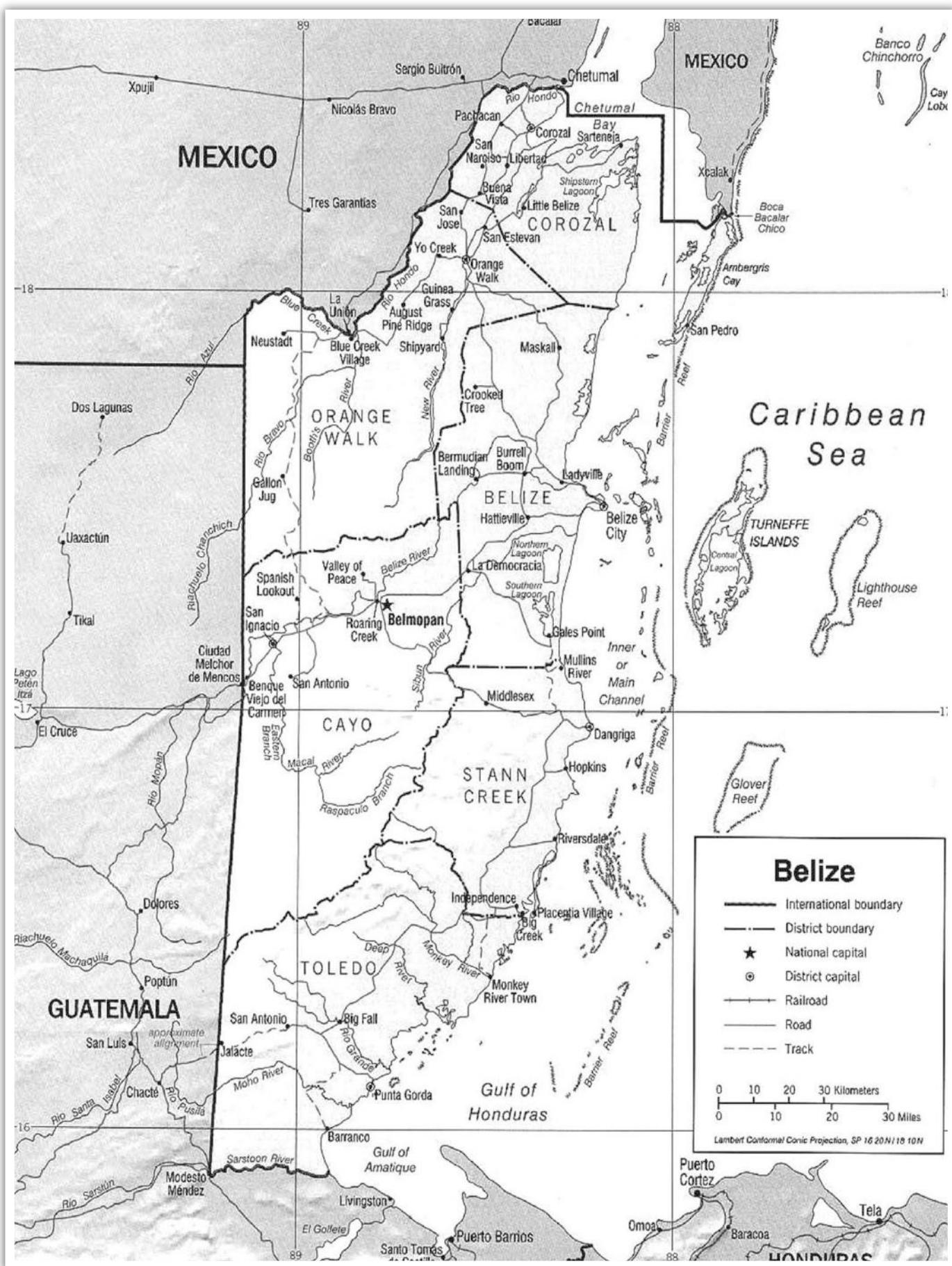
1. Haiti - \$824
2. Nicaragua - \$1,963
3. Honduras - \$2,434
4. Bolivia - \$3,236
5. Guatemala - \$3,667
6. El Salvador - \$4,129
7. Guyana - \$4,262
8. **BELIZE** - \$4,719
9. Paraguay - \$4,729
10. Ecuador - \$6,322

Others:

Mexico: \$10,230
Canada - \$50,271
United States - \$54,629



BELIZE





“Through my missions trip through Thirst Missions, I found an opportunity not just to serve the wonderful and loving people of Belize, but to learn from them how to live a life of faith and dependence on God.”

– DAVE

PRE-TRIP



MISSION TRIP CHECKLIST

- Raise necessary funds and pay your group leader on time.
- Apply for and receive your passport.
- Visit a travel clinic or doctor to acquire the necessary vaccinations and medications.
- Attend team meetings.
- Recruit 5 or more prayer partners to pray daily for your trip.
- Plan ministries with your team.
- Purchase needed supplies and clothing.
- Write out and practice your testimony/life story with others.
- Pack using the list in this manual.
- Make 2 copies of your passport. Give one to your group leader and leave one with a family member back home.
- Give emergency contact info and flight details to a family member and your group leader.

PASSPORTS

Everyone traveling to and from Belize is required to have a passport and a round-trip airline ticket.

United States Citizens

To obtain a passport for the first time, you'll need to visit one of 6,000+ passport acceptance facilities located throughout the United States with proof of US citizenship and a valid form of photo identification, such as a driver's license. Acceptance facilities include many federal, state, and probate courts; post offices; some public libraries; and a number of county and municipal offices. Visit the United States government website for more details and locations to obtain your passport at travel.state.gov/passport.



You'll need to apply in person if you are applying for a US passport for the first time. Passports usually take at 6-8 weeks for delivery, so allow plenty of lead time to secure your passport. If you currently have a passport, please check to make sure that the date of expiration is not within 6 months of the time you will be departing the country you'll be visiting on your mission trip. If it is, you will need to renew your passport prior to your trip.

Obtaining a passport is an investment in your travel future. The US government is now requiring passports to visit Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean, as well as almost all other countries around the globe. One of the blessings of having a US passport is that it now becomes your most official form of identification and is accepted worldwide.

Canadian Citizens

A Canadian passport is the internationally accepted evidence of Canadian citizenship. All Canadian citizens traveling to Belize must carry a passport valid for at least six months beyond your expected return date. Children, including newborns, can no longer be listed on a parent's passport, and must have their own Canadian passport. A separate passport application must be submitted for each child.

You can pick up a Canadian passport application online, at a Canadian post office outlet, Service Canada Centre, or at a Canadian passport office.

MEDICATIONS AND IMMUNIZATION

Thirst Missions does not require any specific medications or vaccinations to attend our trips. Instead we ask that each participant visit their own doctor or travel nurse, bring along this sheet as a reference, and decide in consultation with their medical professional what is needed for each individual's situation. Please see your health professional for advice on your specific situation.

Following is a list of suggested medications and immunizations.

Medications

Traveler's diarrhea is the most common travel-related ailment. All travelers should bring along an antibiotic and an antidiarrheal drug to be started promptly if significant diarrhea occurs. An antibiotic is usually prescribed: either Ciprofloxacin (Cipro) (PDF) 500 mg twice daily or Levofloxacin (Levaquin) (PDF) 500 mg once daily for a total of three days. Most cases of traveler's diarrhea are mild and do not require either antibiotics or antidiarrheal drugs.

Adequate fluid intake is essential.

Malaria in Belize: The drug of choice is Chloroquine. It should be taken once weekly in a dosage of 500 mg, starting one to two weeks before arrival and continuing throughout the trip and for four weeks after departure. Chloroquine may cause mild adverse reactions, including gastrointestinal disturbance, headache, dizziness, blurred vision, and itching, but severe reactions are uncommon. Insect protection measures are essential.



Immunizations

Hepatitis A vaccine is recommended for all travelers over age two. It should be given at least two weeks (preferably four weeks or more) before departure. A booster should be given 6-12 months later to confer long-term immunity.

Typhoid vaccine is recommended for all travelers. It is generally given in an oral form (Vivotif Berna) consisting of four capsules taken on alternate days until completed.

Tetanus-diphtheria vaccine is recommended for all travelers who have not received a tetanus-diphtheria immunization within the last 10 years.

Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR) vaccine is recommended for any traveler born after 1956 who does not have either a history of two documented

PRE-TRIP

measles immunizations or a blood test showing immunity. Many adults who had only one vaccination show immunity when tested and do not need the second vaccination. Measles vaccine should not be given to pregnant or severely immunocompromised individuals.

Information taken from mdtravelhealth.com and cdc.gov.

PRE-TRIP RESEARCH

The website for Thirst Missions, your ministry partner and Belize short-term mission specialist, is thirstmissions.org. Our Facebook page is facebook.com/thirstmissionsbelize.

Belize

- General Belize information at belize.com
- The official Caye Caulker website is gocayecaualker.com
- The Belize tourist board website is travelbelize.org

Government

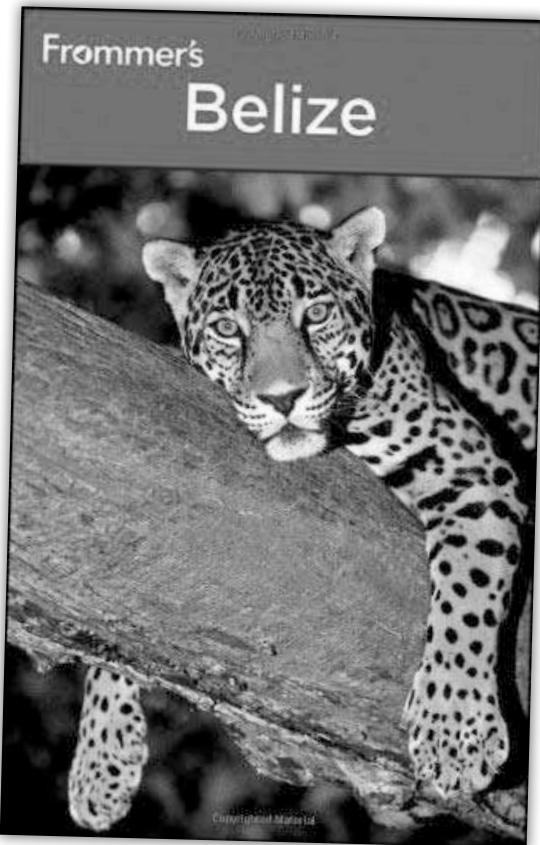
- The United States State Department homepage includes information on international travel as well as passport information at state.gov
- Passport information in Canada at ppt.gc.ca/index.aspx

Packing

- Suggestions for packing efficiently and lightly can be found at onebag.com

Travel

- Pick up a travel guide on Belize at your local bookstore or at amazon.com
- The Lonely Planet has fantastic travel guides and great traveler's information at lonelyplanet.com
- Frommers, known worldwide for their travel guides, has online information on Belize at frommers.com/destinations/belize
- Practical travel information can be found at worldtravelguide.net



Weather

- Up-to-date world weather can be found at weather.com
- Type in Belize on this international travel site for information on weather, forecasts, holidays, etc. at intellicast.com

MY PRAYER PARTNERS

Each group member is expected to find at least five people who will pray for them, the trip, other group members, ministries, safety, and the Belizean people each day of the trip. You are also encouraged to invite these vital members of the team—these prayer warriors—to your reunion after the trip as a celebration and to say thank you for all God has done through them and you.

	NAME	PHONE	EMAIL
1)			
2)			
3)			
4)			
5)			
6)			
7)			

SAMPLE FUNDRAISING LETTER

Who should I send to?

Immediate family	Close relatives	Distant relatives
Neighbors	Friends and their parents	Coaches
Teachers	Sunday school teachers	Businesspeople
Church members	Doctor and dentist	People at work
Civic clubs	Acquaintances	People at school



Dear _____,

I am writing to let you know that I have the opportunity to go on a short-term mission trip on DATE, YEAR with our church through Thirst Missions.

We will be doing service projects, vacation Bible school, outreach, sports ministry, and mercy ministry.

The people of Belize have many needs, both physical and spiritual. There are many children born to single mothers, poverty is everywhere, Christian materials are scarce, and the church needs help to reach out to show communities the love of Christ. Our goal is to go with servant hearts, ready to show Christ through our actions as well as our words, while at the same time having open minds to get to know the Belizeans and learn about Belizean culture.

I know this will be a stretching and challenging experience for me, but I also know that I will be blessed by the experience as I see God at work in Belize!

I need people to partner with me both financially and in prayer. The total trip cost is \$_____ which I need to raise by _____. (I will be working to raise some of the money myself through work projects as well.) You can be praying for our group, our ministries, safety, and that God would work in us and through us to bless the people of Belize.

Would you please consider partnering with me in this opportunity? If you'd like to partner with me financially, please send checks to me which are payable to (my church). The donations are tax-deductible as long as my name is not on the check anywhere.

Thank you for your support! I will let you know how trip preparation is going over the coming months and will send an email to supporters telling the story of the trip when I get back.

In Christ,
John

____ Yes, I will support you financially in the amount of _____.
____ Yes, I will support you in prayer each day of your trip.

SAMPLE ITINERARY

Ministries Chosen: Church, Children's Ministry, Service Projects, Home Ministry, Sports Ministry, Mercy Ministry

PRE-TRIP

	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
7:00 AM	Fly to Belize	Breakfast Devotions/Journal	Breakfast Devotions/Journal	Sleep	Breakfast Devotions/Journal	Breakfast Devotions/Journal	Sleep	Sleep
8:00 AM		Travel to Ministry Site	Travel to Ministry Site	Breakfast/Devos Drive to Church	Travel to Ministry Site	Bus to Belize City Devotions/Journal	Breakfast Devotions/Journal	
9:00 AM		Paint/Construction	Paint/Construction	Home Ministry	Sunday School	Paint/Construction	Bus to Belize City	Water Taxi to Belize City
10:00 AM		Paint/Construction	Paint/Construction	Home Ministry	Church	Paint/Construction	Water Taxi to Caye Caulker	Bus to Airport
11:00 AM		Paint/Construction	Paint/Construction	Home Ministry	Church	Sport Ministry	Snorkeling Trip	Arrive Airport
12:00 PM	Arrive Belize	Paint/Construction	Paint/Construction	Home Ministry	Lunch	Sports Ministry	Snorkeling Trip/ Recreation	Airport
1:00 PM	Bus to Village	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Travel to Mayan Ruins	Lunch	Check into Hotel	Fly Home
2:00 PM	Bus to Village	Free Time	Sports Ministry	Visit Hospital	Mayan Ruins	Visit Old Folks Home	Explore/Relax	
3:00 PM	Settle In	VBS Invites	Sports Ministry	Visit Hospital	Mayan Ruins	Visit Old Folks Home	Explore/Relax	
4:00 PM	Team Meeting and Orientation	VBS	VBS	VBS	Mayan Ruins	VBS	Explore/Relax	
5:00 PM	Supper	VBS	VBS	VBS	Return from Mayan Ruins	VBS	Explore/Relax	
6:00 PM	Travel	Free Time	Supper	Free Time	Supper	Free Time	Team Meeting and Debriefing	
7:00 PM	Welcome Church Service	Supper	Home Visits	Supper	Lead Church Service	Supper	Team Meeting and Debriefing	Arrive Home
8:00 PM	Church Service	Team Meeting	Home Visits	Team Meeting	Lead Church Service	Team Meeting	Supper w/group	
9:00 PM	Rest	Cultural Training	Team Meeting	Free Time	Team Meeting	Free Time	Free Time	
10:00 PM	Get Ready for Bed/ Sleep	Get Ready for Bed/ Sleep	Get Ready for Bed/ Sleep	Get Ready for Bed/ Sleep	Get Ready for Bed/ Sleep	Get Ready for Bed/ Sleep	Get Ready for Bed/ Sleep	
11:00 PM	Lights Out	Lights Out	Lights Out	Lights Out	Lights Out	Lights Out	Lights Out	

PRE-TRIP



TRIP INFORMATION



TRIP INFORMATION

Packing List

- Bible and a pen
- Passport
- Trip manual
- Flight information
- Medical information/insurance card
- Ministry supplies
- Donated supplies
- Reusable water bottle with large opening
- Backpack or small duffel bag as your carry-on
(to be used traveling to Caye Caulker)
- Clothing (see clothing list for details)
- Hat/Baseball cap
- Work gloves
- Watch (inexpensive)
- Contact lenses, glasses, and extra pair of glasses
- Flashlight
- Medications
- Pepto Bismol and Imodium
- Insect repellent
- Antibacterial hand sanitizer
- Sunscreen and chapstick
- Toilet Paper
- Band-aids and Neosporin
- Sunburn medication and lotion
- Sunglasses

- Multi-tool
- Razor/shaving cream
- Soap and shampoo
- Deodorant
- Feminine hygiene products
- Personal items/toiletries
- Comb/brush/toothbrush/paste/floss
- Beach towel and washcloth
- Ear plugs
- Battery-operated alarm clock
- Dirty clothes bag
- Shower shoes
- Nail file and clippers
- Personal snacks
- Spending money and travel meal money
- Money belt
- Wet wipes
- Ziploc bags
- Battery-powered fan

If you are sleeping on the floor: pillow, air mattress, air pump, and sheet

Phones should be kept in airplane mode and used as your personal camera if you choose to do so. We ask that you refrain from going online during your time in Belize. This is a time to be present where you are.

PACKING & TRAVEL SUGGESTIONS

- Each person will have one checked suitcase and a small backpack as their carry-on for their own clothing and personal items. Plan to carry another checked suitcase for the group with ministry materials or donated items.
- Mark your suitcases with a unique tag or ribbon, making them easy to spot at the airport. Remember to attach a luggage tag with your address information to each bag.
- Stick with a partner in the airport, and have all flight information and contact information with you in case you get separated.
- Come into the trip well rested and in good health! Get a good night's rest in the days leading up to the trip. Do not pull an all-



TRIP INFORMATION

nigher prior to the trip; you will not have the chance to catch up on sleep during the week. Come in well rested for ministry and health reasons.

- Pack lightly and efficiently. For example, don't bring anything in your wallet or purse that isn't necessary. Stuff your shoes with socks or underwear, your clothes to save space, etc. You'll be carrying whatever you bring!
- Bring travel-sized containers of things like shampoo and toothpaste.
- Bring luggage with you that you won't mind getting damaged. Older suitcases and duffel bags are suggested.
- Carry one change of clothes and any essential items with you on the plane. If your luggage gets lost or delayed you will have the necessary items with you as a carry-on.
- Don't bring knives, scissors, or other objects that could be used as weapons in your carry-on luggage.
- Wear a money belt under your clothing and keep your passport and cash in a Ziploc bag. These things should be with you at all times.
- Bring Ziploc bags for food items, personal items, etc.
- Leave enough room in your suitcase for souvenirs.
- Bring a pillowcase to use as a laundry bag.
- Bring older clothes and other items. Don't wear your best stuff.
- Don't wear shoes or boots for the first time on the trip. Break them in beforehand to avoid blisters.
- Bring extra of the antibiotics or current prescriptions you are taking. Bring them in the prescribed bottles.
- If you get motion sickness or seasick, bring medication or sea bands.
- Adults may want to bring a credit card with them as a precaution.
- Assume laundry facilities will not be available. Plan your packing accordingly.
- Leave a copy of your itinerary and emergency contact information with a family member or close friend at home.
- Don't plan on calling or emailing home. Our policy is "no news is good news" while on the trip.

Clothing

It is the Belizean pastors' desire and our clothing philosophy to dress in a manner at all times that does not distract from the message of Jesus Christ. Therefore, wearing dressier and more conservative clothing is required as a general rule. Washing facilities will not be available, so please pack accordingly. Pack with the knowledge that the sun and temperature will be very hot.

Ministry

(examples are visiting homes, leading VBS, visiting a hospital, or seniors home)

Men: Dress shorts or long athletic shorts, T-shirt, tennis shoes

Women: Knee-length skirt, sundress with sleeves, lightweight pants or capris, modest length shorts with a T-shirt, tennis shoes or closed toe shoes



TRIP INFORMATION

Church (wear your Sunday best)

Men: Dress pants and shirt, dress shoes

Women: Knee-length skirt, sundress with sleeves, dress, lightweight dress pants or capris, long shorts with a blouse, nice top or shirt, and dress shoes

Work projects

Men and women: Modest length shorts, lightweight pants, T-shirts, tennis shoes or work shoes/boots, closed toe shoes

Other items to bring

Swimsuit (one piece for women), hat or baseball cap, socks, undergarments, lightweight sleepwear, sunglasses, raincoat, lightweight pants, Thirst Missions T-shirt

Other clothing tips

The only jewelry allowed is a wedding ring, small stud earrings, and an inexpensive watch. No tank tops, tankinis, bikinis, or short shorts. No lycra, spandex, yoga pants bottoms or shorts. No jeggings, leggings, or clingy stretch bottoms or tops.

Don't pack too many clothes. Make sure you will wear everything you pack.

You will need to be hauling your suitcase all over, so pack light.

ACCOMODATIONS

Our lodging facilities in Belize, for those who choose not to stay in hotels, will usually take place in a school, church, camp, or community center. We will be staying in or near the village you will be ministering in and working with during the week. We will have separate rooms for men and women and each person should expect to sleep on the floor. This usually means sleeping on the cement floors in an un-airconditioned building. You will need to bring an air mattress or sleeping pad, pillow, and sheet. Some other suggestions for a better night's sleep would be to bring earplugs, a battery-operated fan, and lightweight sleeping attire. Don't forget to bring a flashlight and a battery-operated alarm clock. For each trip, we will let your group leader know exactly where you will be staying ahead of time to aid in your preparation for your trip.

HOTEL OPTION

We provide the option of staying in air-conditioned hotels. These hotels are not fancy by any means but will have air conditioning, a shower, and a bathroom in each room. The hotel rooms allow 4 people to sleep per room, with two people per double bed. All rooms are either male or female. There is no mixing of genders. Your roommates will be assigned by your group leader in conjunction with a Thirst Missions representative prior to the trip. Please know that if you are traveling with your spouse, couples will be divided into gender-specific rooms. Families may stay together in their own room, provided each family has at least 3 people attending.

TRANSPORTATION

Most of our transportation during the week will be via bus. We will be chauffeured around in a bus as we drive to church, ministry sites, supper, and to our recreational activities. We will also

TRIP INFORMATION

do a fair amount of walking during the trip, so bring good walking shoes. We do have a smaller vehicle that we also drive everywhere for those who are not up to walking or need a break to get in air conditioning. Just let us know; we're here to serve you!

FOOD

The cuisine is usually one of the highlights for our participants. We strive to provide a wide variety of options that will nourish and sustain all participants. We try to provide a good mix of Belizean food and American food.

Breakfast is usually served at the place where you are staying. Some examples of breakfast food include eggs, toast, fruit, fry jacks, johnny cakes, pancakes, cereal bars, coffee, tea, juice, and water.

Lunch is usually provided by local women at the ministry site. Chicken, rice, coleslaw, beans, and juice is one example of a typical meal you can expect. Fish, pork, hamburgers, and sandwiches are all other lunch staples which may be served to you while on the mission trip.

Supper could include such things as burritos, pizza, Chinese food, chicken, seafood, spaghetti, beef, and pork. Don't worry—we won't eat all these foods at one meal!

All your food and water are provided as part of your trip. If you wish to bring a few nonperishable snacks for yourself in your suitcase you are welcome to do that. Just remember to put them in Ziploc bags to keep any critters away and to keep things fresh. If you have known food allergies or a specific diet, please make sure to list those items or explain your diet on the registration form. We will make every effort to meet your specific dietary need.



HEALTH GUIDELINES WHILE IN BELIZE

1. Drink water that you know is safe. This means drinking bottled or filtered water. We provide as much water as you can drink. Bring a water bottle (with a large mouth opening) to have refilled and keep it with you. Drink water early in the day and often throughout the day.
2. When you are drinking other liquids look for the word "purified" or "pasteurized" on the container. When you have ice, make sure it is from purified or filtered water.
3. Wash your hands or use antibacterial gel frequently but inconspicuously before every meal. Avoid fruit that cannot be peeled, uncooked vegetables, salads, fruit juices, raw eggs, ice cream, and uncooked meat or unprocessed cheese.
4. Bring medications with you in their original bottles and take them as directed.
5. Be aware of the intensity of the sun and temperature. Apply sunblock frequently and dress at all times to avoid sunburn and heatstroke. Do not take unnecessary physical risks. Wear shoes at all times and gloves when necessary.
6. Do not drink out of anyone else's water bottle. The local children may want to drink from your water bottle: instead find a cup to give them water in.
7. Always take a partner with you when you are away from the group and communicate where you will be with the team leader. Be aware of your location and the people around you at all times.
8. Notify the team leader or seek professional help if you experience physical problems. These could include diarrhea lasting more than 48 hours, persistent cramps or vomiting, severe chills, or any other symptoms that are of medical concern.

TRIP INFORMATION

9. Please stay away from and do not pet or touch any local animals including insects, lizards, dogs, cats, and other pets. Animals are not vaccinated like our pets are in the US and Canada and they could carry rabies.
10. Be conservative with physical limitations. Nobody should be a "hero." Do not push yourself too hard. Take frequent water breaks and get enough sleep.
11. Keep your passport and valuables with you at all times.
12. Bandage up your cuts and don't touch anyone's cuts that are bleeding. We have first aid kits available – use them!
13. Zip up your belongings before leaving your lodging facility. Keep your area neat.
14. Use bottled water to brush your teeth. Close your mouth while showering.
15. Use a straw whenever possible when drinking soda pop.
16. When eating, use moderation and be conservative when trying foods that you don't normally eat at home.
17. Use insect repellent liberally throughout the day. Reapply a few times daily. No mosquito bites!

MAINLAND BELIZE RECREATION

During the week your group will have the opportunity to participate in a half day of recreation. Each group may choose one recreation option for the entire group.

Please talk through your preferences with your Thirst Missions consultant so they can add it into your trip schedule and any additional cost will be added to your final invoice.

Complimentary

Mayan Ruins of Lamanai, Altun Ha, or Xunantunich

Included in your trip price is a tour of the Mayan ruins. We will visit the Mayan ruins closest to your ministry location.

The Mayan ruins of Belize include a number of well-known and historical Mayan archaeological sites. Your guided tour through the ruins will take you through well-designed and impressively built ancient cities and give you the opportunity to climb the high temple. The experience will definitely give you an appreciation for the Mayan culture in Belize!

Half-day tour. Bus transportation, lunch, national park entrance, and guided tour included.

Additional Options

If your group has been to the Mayan Ruins before or would just like to spend your half-day of recreation experiencing another cultural option, here are some opportunities to consider.

Boat Eco Tour to Lamanai

If Lamanai is your Mayan ruins destination, we recommend taking an eco tour to the ruins instead of the included bus tour. This boat tour will bring you down a jungle river with many wildlife viewing opportunities, including the potential to see monkeys, crocodiles, toucans, and more. While stopping to view flora and fauna, this trip provides a smooth and fun way to visit Lamanai. Half-day tour.

Transportation, lunch, national park entrance, guided tour included. Minimum eight people, \$40/person.



TRIP INFORMATION

Belize Zoo Tour

The Belize Zoo is 30 acres of tropical savanna that hosts over 45 different species, all native to Belize. A visit to the zoo is the best way to get an introduction to the animals of Belize, and to understand why it is important to protect the habitats that sustain them. Half-day tour.

Transportation, lunch, zoo entrance, guided tour included. Minimum eight people, \$55/person.

Blue Hole National Park and St. Herman's Cave Tour

St. Herman's Cave was used by the Maya during the Classic Period, as evidenced by Mayan pottery vessels, spears, and torches found there. Upon arriving at the cave, you can walk on a concrete path with steps for more than 1 mile underground. Flashlight provided. Two miles from St. Herman's Cave is the Blue Hole, an azure swimming hole fringed with vines and ferns and fed by a stream from St. Herman's Cave. The area is surrounded by moss and lush vegetation.

Half-day tour. Transportation, lunch, park entrance, guided tour included. Minimum eight people, \$65/person.

Cave Tubing

A bus trip to Caves Branch National Park, just east of Belmopan, will bring you to the jungle and an amazing cave system. Guided by experienced Belizean tour guides, you will hike for about 30 minutes through the Belizean rainforest, then tube down the refreshing Caves Branch River making your way through spectacular cave systems.

Half-day tour. Transportation, national park fees, life vest, tube, head lamp, tour guide, barbecue chicken lunch. Minimum eight people, \$55/person.

Zip Lining

The zip line adventure begins with a 10-minute hike through the Belizean rainforest. You'll be fitted into a harness and enjoy flying through the rainforest canopy on seven runs ranging from 200 to 600 feet between treetop platforms. There will be a guide on each platform to assist you with landing and taking off.

Half-day tour. Transportation, national park fees, tour guide, helmet, harness, gloves, and barbecue chicken lunch. Minimum eight people, \$55/person.

Cave Tubing and Zip Lining

Combined adventure of cave tubing and zip lining. These activities are located near each other in Caves Branch National Park. See details above.

Half-day tour. \$80/person.



CAYE CAULKER TOURS

SNORKELING TOURS

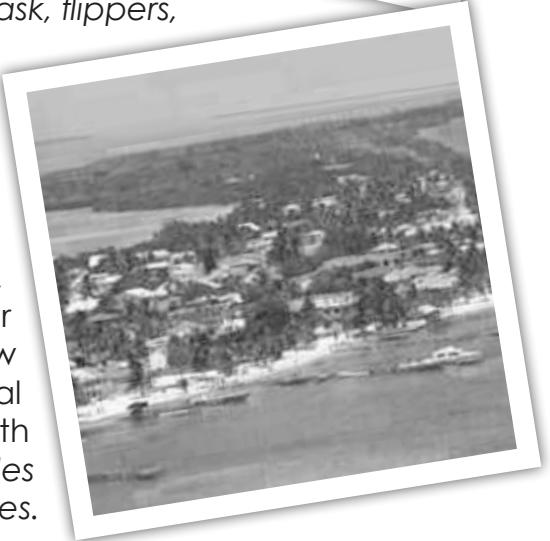
Caye Caulker Marine Reserve Tour

Snorkel along the longest reef in the Western Hemisphere as you enjoy a three-hour outing in the Caye Caulker Marine Reserve. This tour consists of three snorkeling areas: the Caye Caulker Coral Gardens, South Channel, and Shark-Ray Alley. Spectacular fish and marine life, along with the occasional school of colorful fish and other sea creatures, are often seen and enjoyed. This tour now includes a stop to see tarpon and seahorses in their natural habitat. This tour is a professionally guided snorkel trip with experienced and licensed boat captains. *Tour price includes snorkel, mask, flippers, fruit, ice water, and park reserve fees. Six people minimum, \$40/person.*



Mitchell Rocks and the Barge Tour

This four-hour snorkeling tour on the north end of Caye Caulker includes stops at Mitchell Rocks, the Barge, North Cut, and Shark-Ray Alley. Spectacular fish and marine life, along with the occasional school of colorful fish and other sea creatures, are often seen and enjoyed. This tour now includes a stop to see tarpon and seahorses in their natural habitat. This tour is a professionally guided snorkel trip with experienced and licensed boat captains. *Tour price includes snorkel, mask, flippers, fruit, ice water, and park reserve fees. Six people minimum, \$55/person.*



Hol Chan Marine Reserve Tour

Snorkel along the longest reef



in the Western Hemisphere with this 4-5 hour snorkeling tour at the Hol Chan Marine Reserve off Ambergris Caye. Each group will snorkel Hol Chan Coral Garden, Hol Chan Shark-Ray Alley, and Hol Chan Channel. Sea turtles are seen on most trips and snorkelers often spot schools of fish and other marine life. This tour now includes a stop to see tarpon and seahorses in their natural habitat. This is a professionally guided snorkel trip with experienced and licensed boat captains. *Tour price includes snorkel, mask, flippers, fruit, ice water, and park reserve fees. Six people minimum, \$70/person.*

TRIP INFORMATION

Night Snorkeling

This amazing night snorkeling tour lasts three hours as you travel along Caye Caulker's South Channel. See the marine life that only comes out after dark like octopus, sea turtles, lobster, and squid. The tour leaves at nightfall and returns around 9:00 p.m. This is a professionally guided snorkel trip with experienced and licensed boat captains. Tour price includes snorkel, mask, flippers, flashlight, fruit, ice water, and park reserve fees. Six people minimum, \$55/person.



BOAT TOURS

Sunset Cruise

This tour consists of a two-hour boat excursion around the beautiful island of Caye Caulker, including the famous split, starting about an hour before sunset. You will visit the mangrove areas of the island where you will get to view the American saltwater crocodiles in their natural habitat. You will then get a rare view of the tarpon and sea horses in their natural environment. This trip concludes with the sun setting in the western sky over the beautiful Caribbean Sea. This trip is professionally led by a licensed and experienced boat captain. Fruit, soda, and ice water provided. Six people minimum, \$35/person.



Reef Fishing Trip

Enjoy a professionally guided fishing trip for three to four hours just inside or just outside of the Western Hemisphere's longest barrier reef. Based on your interest and experience level, you may request a deep sea trip or a reef trip where the fishing is mostly done in calm water. If it's your first time, you will be shown how to catch snapper, grouper, jack, or barracuda. This is a guided trip with all fishing equipment and bait provided. Fruit and ice water are also included. Two to five people per boat, \$250/boat.



Please reserve your tours at least one month prior to your mission trip by calling the Thirst Missions office.

TRIP INFORMATION

Bacab Eco Park

Bacab Eco Park welcomes you to a lush jungle playground. The park proudly boasts over 200 species of tropical flowering plants, towering hardwood trees, palms, and different species of ferns as well as a great population of wildlife. The largest swimming pool in Belize – complete with water slide, palm trees, lounge chairs, large palapa huts, changing rooms, and a great restaurant – is a refreshing highlight for all.

Half-day tour. Park entrance fee, swimming pool entrance, transportation, chicken or hamburger basket lunch provided. \$40/person. *This tour may be added to any tour, other than Mayan Ruins, for \$25/person



CAYE CAULKER

You will have the opportunity to travel by water taxi to Caye Caulker to spend your last night in Belize. Usually, we will have about 24 hours on the caye. You will be staying at a hotel with air conditioning, be able to get a refreshing shower, and have time to relax and enjoy another side of Belize, the cayes! On Caye Caulker, you will have time to go snorkeling and/or swimming, relax by the ocean, shop, etc.

The caye is the most likely place to find shops with souvenirs during the week. We will have time on the Caye for lunch and to do some shopping, relaxing in a hammock, playing volleyball, renting a bike, sitting on a dock, reading, or catching a nap. Later in the day we will have a longer time of debriefing and worship and a final meal together.

If you choose this option, you'll have the opportunity to snorkel the Western Hemisphere's longest barrier reef, to swim, shop for souvenirs, relax in a hammock on the beach, and explore the sandy streets by foot or bicycle. In the evening we have a time of worship, celebrating all God has done throughout the trip, as we share, pray, and begin the re-entry process. A relaxing final meal together closes out the evening.

SPENDING MONEY

The only things you will need money for on the trip are souvenirs, snorkeling or other additional recreation, offerings in church, extra snacks or desserts, and travel money for meals at the airports in North America and Belize. That's it. If you want a suggested dollar amount, \$100 will more than cover what you will need. Feel free to bring a credit card if you feel you will want to purchase more expensive souvenirs. Most tourist and souvenir shops accept credit cards. Incidentally, you can use American dollars everywhere in Belize. There will be little need to exchange money on your mission trip.



T-SHIRTS

Your Thirst Missions T-shirt will arrive prior to your trip. Please wear it as you arrive so we can more easily spot you at the airport.



CALLING HOME

Our philosophy is “no news is good news.” Our trips are short, and we request that you don’t plan on calling or emailing home during the trip. Public phones are not commonplace, and email facilities are even rarer. More importantly, though, we find that the missions experience is enhanced by full immersion in the culture. That being said, if you have an emergency or unique situation and have to call/email home, please see your Thirst Missions trip leader and we will try to accommodate you.

Prior to the trip you will be given emergency contact information. If someone from back home needs to contact you in the case of an emergency, by all means have them call us and we’ll get you in immediate contact with them.

We will be updating the Thirst Missions Facebook page daily so that loved ones can have a few trip updates while you are gone. [Facebook.com/thirstmissionsbeize](https://www.facebook.com/thirstmissionsbeize)

SAFETY FIRST

On all Thirst Missions trips, safety is our first priority. Belize in particular and our mission trips specifically are very safe. Nothing is guaranteed, but over many years of going to Belize and seeing thousands of participants on trips, not one person has ever had a safety issue. A few notes on safety:

- Belize is a stable democracy.
- Belizeans look up to and admire Americans. We have found that they naturally take care of people from the US and Canada.
- Tourism, particularly on the cayes, is a major part of their economy. So they take pride in the safety of foreigners.
- We travel in groups at all times, we sleep in the same building – safety in numbers is a big factor.



- We partner with local churches who watch out for our group. People from the church and community we partner with would be devastated if something happened to one of us. We are family while we are there.
- We have Belizeans on our staff who are with the group. They have knowledge and experience in Belizean safety precautions.
- Our staff members have Belizean cell phones on them, know where the nearest hospitals are, and have plans in place for unique circumstances.
- We travel by bus with a professional bus driver. We also have a Thirst Missions vehicle with each group.

TRIP INFORMATION

- We rarely travel at night. If there is a risky time of day, it would be after dark.
- We suggest a 5-1 student to adult ratio. Overseeing and supporting our participants is a priority.
- Training is provided regarding what the group members should eat and drink, what things they should be aware of in the environment and culture, and how to conduct themselves on the trip.
- We take care in providing safe meals, snacks, and plenty of water to all trip members.
- Prayer. We place tremendous value on the power of prayer on each trip and for each person. We ask that each participant on the trip find at least 5 prayer partners to cover them in prayer during the trip.

We have many years of experience in Belize. We know how to travel, what to look out for, and how to handle things. We have never had an issue and certainly endeavor to take every safety precaution with every group. Belize is a very safe country to travel to, especially as a group member. We pray that the Lord will bless our preparations and the precautions we take as we attempt to minister to the people of Belize and members of our group. The majority of our staff are certified in CPR. We take the safety of our participants seriously!



TRIP INFORMATION

SAMPLE



WELCOME TO BELIZE CUSTOMS AND EXCISE DEPARTMENT CUSTOMS DECLARATION

Every person arriving in Belize must provide the following information. (Only one written declaration per family is required):

1. Name: _____
Last _____ First _____ Middle Initial _____
2. Passport: _____
Number _____ Country of Issue _____
3. Mode of Transport (Air, Sea, Land)
Airline/Flt. No., Vessel Name,
Vehicle Lic. Plate No.: _____
4. Number of Family members travelling with you: _____
5. Number of pieces of Baggage: _____
6. Country of Residence: _____
7. Expected Length of Stay
(If you do not Reside in Belize)
8. The purpose of my visit is or was:
 Business Pleasure Official
9. Are you bringing Plants, Fruits,
Vegetables, Meats, Live Animals?
 Yes No
10. Are you bringing any arms or ammunition?
 Yes No
11. Are you carrying more than \$10,000.00 Belize
or its equivalent in other currencies?
(Currency includes all forms of currency,
i.e. Coined money, banknotes or other paper
money of any country in the world.)
 Yes No
12. The total value of merchandise I/We purchased or acquired abroad
and am/are bringing to Belize is: _____
VALUE (indicate currency)
(See instruction on reverse side under the heading, MERCHANDISE)

SIGN ON THE REVERSE SIDE AFTER YOU READ THE WARNING

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Name of Examiner	Stamp
Signature	

CUSTOMS FORM C200

IMPORTATION OF CURRENCY

Under the Customs Laws of Belize, all persons entering Belize are required to declare any currency in their possession in excess of \$10,000.00 Bz or foreign currency equivalent. No duties are payable on the importation of currency. If you are carrying currency in excess of \$10,000.00 Bz or foreign currency equivalent you must complete a "Report of Currency Importation" Form C300, to be supplied by a Customs Officer.

LIST OF DUTY EXEMPTIONS

As an arriving passenger, you are entitled to the following exemptions:

- 1) A. Wearing apparel, Jewelry, Toilet Requisites and any portable articles in your accompanied baggage or on your person, which you might reasonably be expected to carry with you for your own regular and private use.
B. If you are 18 years or older (and not returning from a visit to a neighbouring Border Town or City):
One litre *total* of wine or spirits and 250 grams tobacco or 50 cigar or 200 cigarettes.
- 2) If you are a Belizean:
In addition to the above, you can claim duty exemption on accompanied goods acquired abroad for personal or household use or as souvenirs or gifts, with an aggregate value of \$200.00 Bz twice a year through an International Airport and \$50.00 Bz once a month through other ports or places of entry.

MERCHANDISE

Under the Customs Laws of Belize, every person importing any goods whether for commercial, personal or any other use, must declare such goods to customs and pay the appropriate duties. The total value of all items acquired abroad whether new or used, dutiable or not or acquired as souvenirs or gifts, must be declared. If the value declared at 12 overleaf exceeds \$400.00 Bz per person arriving through an International Airport and \$200.00 Bz per person through other ports or places of entry, list below those items valued at \$100.00 Bz or more:

DESCRIPTION OF ITEMS	PRICE	OFFICIAL USE
TOTAL		

The amount of duty to be paid will be determined by a Customs Officer. It is a serious offence to evade or attempt to evade customs duties. There are severe penalties in addition to forfeiture of the goods in respect of which the offence is committed.

I hereby declare that I have made a truthful declaration.

Signature _____

/ /
(Day/Month/Year)

WARNING

It is a serious offence to make a false declaration. Accuracy of your declaration may be verified through questioning and physical search.

CUSTOMS FORM C200

Printed in Belize by the Government Printer

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the difference between hotel and local lodging options?

Hotel: Three to four people per room, air conditioning, bathrooms in every room, close to ministry site. Local lodging: Sleep in a church, school, or community center. No air conditioning. Stay in the community where you are serving. Sleep on cement floor. Showers and running water restrooms usually available. Bring your own air mattress and pillow. This option is less expensive than the hotel option.



What are your minimum and maximum group sizes?

Our minimum group size is ten people and we have no maximum. Every year we host groups of 50+ people.

What can you tell me about church partnerships in Belize?

Each group attending one of our mission trips is partnered with a local Belizean church. We do this because we believe the local church is God's biblical design and we want to encourage the local churches. Another reason we partner teams with local churches is so the team can follow up on ministry started during their mission trip. The specific church we partner you with depends on a few factors: Did you want to minister in a city, town, or village? What ministries did you select? What are the goals of your trip? What type of accommodations are you choosing? What denomination of church are you comfortable with? Is the Belizean church available? We pray over the specific church to partner you with, take these issues into consideration, and then let you know our partnership suggestion. If it ends up not seeming right, we can come up with other options.

Is Belize safe?

Yes! Of course we can't offer guarantees, but, we have never had a safety incident with one of our team members. Please see our section on safety on page 41 for more information on the safety of our trips.

What denominations do you work with?

We work every year with a wide variety of denominations in the United States and Canada, partnering groups with Belizean churches they are comfortable working with.

What medication and shots are needed?

We ask that each person visit their own doctor or travel nurse to see what is needed to stay up to date. We have a list of recommended medications for those traveling to Belize in our trip handbook, but nothing is required by Thirst Missions. Generally Belize is a very safe and healthy country to visit.

What travel documents are required to enter Belize?

Each person needs a valid passport, but no entry visa is required for citizens of the US or Canada. Anyone under 18 years of age needs to have a notarized permission form signed by both parents to leave the USA or Canada and be permitted into Belize.

Is airfare included in the trip cost?

No, but the cost per person per day is all inclusive from arrival in Belize until departure from Belize. The cost of airfare varies too greatly depending on when you are



TRIP INFORMATION

flying and where you are flying from for us to be able to include airfare in the trip cost.

Can I make contact with loved ones back home while on my trip?

Typically only the group leader is allowed to call back home. Our philosophy is "no news is good news." We provide the group leader unlimited calling from our staff members' cell phones and internet access when needed to contact people back home, check in, and send trip updates. In the event of an emergency, however, we have open and direct lines of immediate communication on every trip.

I have special dietary needs. Can these needs be met?

Yes! We will do our very best to meet the dietary needs or any other special needs of anyone attending our trips. Just communicate these needs ahead of time on your registration form.

Can I upgrade my hotel stay to two people per room or private rooms?

Yes, as long as the hotel has space. There will be an additional charge for the extra rooms needed.

How do I select the ministries we desire?

Each group leader will have a missions consultant from the Thirst Missions staff assigned to them. All group leaders will have three scheduled conference calls to discuss various areas of their trip. Group leaders may feel free to call their missions consultant with other questions that may arise.

What can I expect for our group's transportation?

Most of our transportation during the week will be via bus. We will be chauffeured around in a bus as we drive to church, ministry sites, to our recreational activities, and so on. We will also do a fair amount of walking during the trip, so bring good walking shoes. We do have a smaller vehicle that we also drive everywhere for those who are not up to walking or need a break to get in air conditioning. Just let us know, we're here to serve you!

Are ministry materials provided?

Except in the case of the 'Red Package' and 'Purple Package', ministry materials are not included in the price of the trip. Each group chooses the ministries they would like to lead while in Belize and then brings appropriate materials and plans to carry out those ministries. Thirst Missions provides the ministry location, promotion prior to the trip, and any necessary local provisions. Most ministries require little in the way of materials. You can ask your missions consultant about suggestions for materials and ministry plans. Examples of ministry materials include VBS curriculum and supplies, sports equipment, and Bibles.

Are construction supplies included in the cost of the trip?

No. If you choose Construction Projects, a flat fee of \$200/person will be added to your invoice to cover material costs. You may provide additional funds for larger projects if you desire. Exceptions are the Red and Purple Packages.



TRIP INFORMATION

What additional costs are there?

The only things you will need money for on the trip are souvenirs, offerings in church, extra snacks or desserts, and travel money for meals at the airports in North America and Belize. That's it. Feel free to bring a credit card if you feel you will want to purchase more expensive souvenirs. Most tourist and souvenir shops accept credit cards. Incidentally, you can use American dollars everywhere in Belize. There will be little need to exchange money on your mission trip.

How do we pay for recreation?

Payment and reservations for recreation on Mainland Belize and Caye Caulker are invoiced prior to trip, and not paid for or reserved in Belize.

What can you tell us about the food provided?

The cuisine is usually one of the highlights for our participants. We provide a wide variety of options that will nourish and sustain all participants. We try to provide a good mix of Belizean food and American food. Breakfast is usually served at the place where you are staying.

Some examples of breakfast food include eggs, toast, fruit, fry jacks, johnny cakes, pancakes, coffee, tea, juice, and water. Lunch is usually provided by local women at the ministry site. Chicken, rice, coleslaw, beans, and juice is one example of a typical meal you can expect. Fish, pork, hamburgers, and sandwiches are all other lunch staples which may be served to you while on the mission trip.

Supper could include such things as burritos, pizza, Chinese food, chicken, seafood, spaghetti, beef, and pork. Don't worry—we won't eat all these foods at one meal!

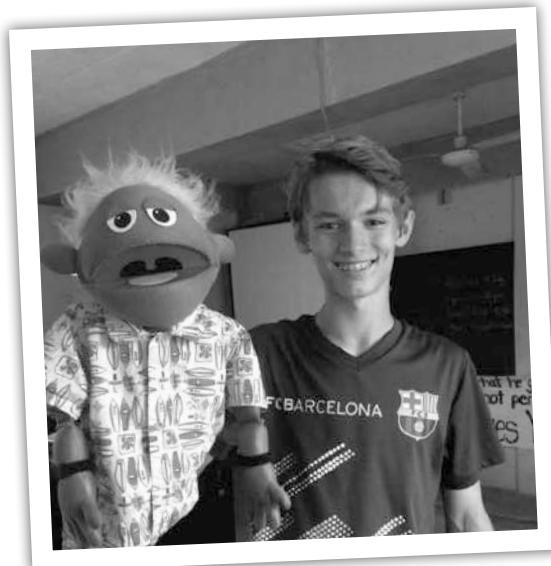
All your food and water are provided as part of your trip. If you wish to bring a few nonperishable snacks for yourself in your suitcase, you are welcome to do that. Just remember to put them in Ziploc bags to keep any critters away and to keep things fresh.

Can I stay in contact with people I meet once I return home?

Yes! Please stay in contact with the new friends you have met in Belize. Facebook, letters, and phone calls are great ways to stay connected.

What are some outreach ministry ideas?

Volleyball, movie nights, hot dog roasts, worship celebrations, or puppet ministry, just to name a few. Whatever you come up with, let's do it!



MINISTRY



TESTIMONY / FAITH STORY

The likelihood exists that you will have opportunities to share your testimony/faith story on the mission trip. You need to look for these opportunities and jump at the chance to point to Jesus as our reason for life and for being a member on this trip.

These opportunities could take place in a church, to children, in a nursing home or orphanage, or in a home. You will be most effective if you know what you want to share ahead of time and have practiced it prior to the trip. This preparation will enable you to be more effective and focus on the people during the trip rather than slipping away to practice what you are going to say while on the trip.

Possible themes:

- Your life story with an emphasis on your walk with Jesus
- Your faith journey through the years
- Your conversion experience
- Something God is teaching you now or has taught you in the past
- Personalize a Bible story
- A couple of incidents or brief stories that highlight a biblical concept or point

Things to remember and consider:

- Your testimony should be in the range of 4-8 minutes long
- Write it out on a notecard and keep it with you throughout the trip
- Smile, relax, and share from your heart
- Come across as a real person, not necessarily as the perfect Christian
- Have a solid opening and closing
- Eliminate anything that doesn't enhance the point
- Remember the culture and audience
- Stay away from comparisons of your culture and the Belizean culture
- Avoid sharing about material possessions
- Avoid suggestions on how they can improve their church or country
- Don't use humor that will only be understood by your team or your culture
- When you're finished, stop
- Know what you are trying to communicate and why
- Speak loudly as you may not have a microphone
- Dress conservatively and nicely
- Be ready to share at any time on the trip
- Practice
- Be humble



MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES

Each group may choose 4-8 of the following ministries

Children's Ministry	Vacation Bible School or kids club
*Service Projects	Construction, repair work, painting, clean-up work
Church Ministry	Attend, participate, or lead church and/or Sunday school
Sports Ministry	Soccer, football, baseball, basketball, volleyball, etc.
Spanish Ministry	Although the official language of Belize is English, we would be glad to partner you with Spanish-speaking churches and villages
Outreach Nights	Game nights, concerts, youth night, family night, love feasts
Home Ministry	Provide blessings to individual families. This could include service projects, clean-up, Bible studies, food provisions, and anything that helps to build cross-cultural friendships and relationships
Prayer Ministry	Prayer walking or prayer meetings
School Ministry	Observe classes, lead chapel, participate in recess activities
Mercy Ministry	Senior citizen centers, hospitals, prisons, orphanages, visits to shut-ins
Evangelism	Large group gatherings, door-to-door ministry, street ministry
Youth Ministry	Lead youth gatherings and provide teaching, worship, fellowship activities
Adult Ministry	Parenting classes, Bible studies, topical studies
Medical and Dental Ministry	Teams of licensed medical professionals are needed to provide care in underserved villages throughout Belize.

***Service/Construction Projects: If you choose this ministry your chosen donation amount for materials will be added to your final invoice. \$100-\$200 per person.**

Through my missions trip through Thirst Missions, I found an opportunity not just to serve the wonderful and loving people of Belize, but to learn from them how to live a life of faith and dependence on God.

– DAVE

MINISTRY PLANNING SHEET

MINISTRIES

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)
- 6)

Ministries are determined by your group. For each ministry, please answer and work through the following questions:

- Description of ministry?
- Target audience?
- Days the ministry will be held?
- Timeframe each day?
- Who is involved?
- What is each person's role?
- Supplies needed?
- Who's praying for this ministry?
- Who's gathering the supplies?
- Who's transporting the supplies to the host country?
- How many meetings are needed to prepare the ministry prior to the trip and when are they scheduled?

There will be very little time to prepare ministries during the course of the trip, so all the planning should be done before your group leaves. This will allow the group members to relax and feel prepared to share about Jesus Christ's love during the trip.

As with all ministry preparation for missions trips, please realize that scheduling may change and that unforeseen circumstances will affect ministry. We believe that ministries that are prepared in advance are best able to adapt to unforeseen circumstances in developing countries with different cultures.

MINISTRY

MINISTRY DELEGATION GRID

MINISTRY_____

LEADER_____

NAME

RESPONSIBILITIES

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NOTES:

MINISTRY

MINISTRY DELEGATION GRID

MINISTRY_____

LEADER_____

NAME

RESPONSIBILITIES

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NOTES:

MINISTRY

MINISTRY DELEGATION GRID

MINISTRY _____ LEADER _____

NAME

RESPONSIBILITIES

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NOTES:

MINISTRY

MINISTRY DELEGATION GRID

MINISTRY _____ LEADER _____

NAME**RESPONSIBILITIES**

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NOTES:

MINISTRY

MINISTRY DELEGATION GRID

MINISTRY _____ LEADER _____

	NAME	RESPONSIBILITIES
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NOTES:

BELIZEAN CHURCH PARTNER

Host church:

Denomination:

Address:

Host pastor:

Pastor's family members:

Average church attendance:

Church service days & times:

Church ministries:

Material needs of the church:

Church construction needs:

Church body spiritual needs:

Sunday school information:

Town/Village info

Size:

Main source of income:

Primary language:

Other:



JOURNAL



JOURNAL

Before you fly to Belize, please take some time to reflect, read, pray, and contemplate the trip ahead using the devotion below.

Date _____

"The Great Commission is not an option to be considered; it is a command to be obeyed." – Hudson Taylor

Read: Philippians 4:4-20

Contemplate:

How are you feeling about your trip to Belize?

What plans do you have for your time in Belize?

What expectations do you have of yourself during your mission trip?

Are you ready to let go of your expectations? Why or why not?

Who is praying for you at home?

How do the verses you read relate to your upcoming missions experience? Plans?

How does the quote listed above affect your mission trip plans and thoughts?

Action:

Take time to pray for your team, the people you are going to serve, and for God to work in your heart during this trip. Write your prayers in your journal.

JOURNAL



JOURNAL

Each day while you are in Belize, please take some time to reflect, read, pray, and contemplate your experiences by using the journal and devotional guides which follow.

Date _____

"God isn't looking for people of great faith, but for individuals ready to follow Him." – Hudson Taylor

Read: Matthew 28

Contemplate:

Did you do something today that surprised you?

How did you feel after stepping out of your comfort zone?

Did you see something today that was discouraging? How did you respond and grow from it?

What have you done today to encourage another member of your group?

Has anyone from your group done something today that encouraged you?

What was a highlight from your day?

How do the verses you read relate to your experiences today?

How does the quote listed above relate to you and your life?

Action:

Write the answers to these questions, your prayers, reflections, and anything else on your mind in the space below.

JOURNAL



JOURNAL

Date _____

"He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose."

– Jim Elliot, missionary martyr who lost his life in the late 1950s trying to reach the Auca Indians of Ecuador

Read: John 14

Contemplate:

How did you see God being glorified today?

Did you have an opportunity to share about Jesus with someone today?

How did God help you through today? Did He use people, His creation, or bring His Word to your mind?

How did you see God working in the town/village you are in today?

Is there something that you would like to see happen on this trip? Ask God to do it.

What have you learned about the Belizean culture today that brings glory to God?

How do the verses you read relate to your experiences today?

How does Jim Elliott's quote relate to your missions experience so far?

Action:

Write the answers to these questions, your prayers, reflections, and anything else on your mind in the space below.

JOURNAL



JOURNAL

Date _____

"Sympathy is no substitute for action." – David Livingstone, missionary to Africa

Read: 2 Timothy 2

Contemplate:

What did you eat today?

How are you seeing God's faithfulness today?

Do you feel qualified to share about Jesus with others? Why or why not?

What does it mean to work like a soldier, a farmer, or an athlete? Are you working like that?

Have you had the chance to see the love of a child this week? How would you describe it?

How is your relationship with God changing?

How do the verses you read relate to your experiences today?

How have your actions today really helped people?

Action:

Write the answers to these questions, your prayers, reflections, and anything else on your mind in the space below.

JOURNAL



JOURNAL

Date _____

"If God calls you to be a missionary, don't stoop to be a king." – Jordan Grooms

Read: Psalm 18:20-36

Contemplate:

What did you do today?

Who did you meet today?

How is God your strength today?

Were you encouraged by any of the people you are serving today?

How have you been an encouragement to the people you are serving?

How have your expectations of your trip changed? What has stayed the same?

How do the verses you read relate to your experiences today?

How is being a missionary more important than being a king?

Action:

Write the answers to these questions, your prayers, reflections, and anything else on your mind in the space below.

JOURNAL



JOURNAL

Date _____

"In our lifetime, wouldn't it be sad if we spent more time washing dishes or swatting flies or mowing the yard or watching television than praying for world missions?" – Dave Davidson

Read: Galatians 6:1-10

Contemplate:

Have you seen any members of your group represent Jesus during the week? What did they do/say?

How can you support that group member?

Are you starting to get tired? What energizes you?

What Bible verse was brought to your attention today?

Have you been spending time in prayer? How is your prayer life affecting your trip?

What is the most interesting thing you have learned about Belize so far?

How do the verses you read relate to your experiences today?

How has your prayer life increased this week?

How will you pray differently when you return home?

Action:

Write the answers to these questions, your prayers, reflections, and anything else on your mind in the space below.

JOURNAL



JOURNAL

Date _____

"The mission of the church is missions." – Oswald J. Smith

Read: 2 Timothy 1:1-13

Contemplate:

Who on this trip has brought you joy? Who brings you joy at home?

Is there anything that you have been timid about during this trip?

What can you do to remind yourself that the Holy Spirit will be your strength?

How can you put the skills that you learned in Belize into practice at home?

Who will encourage you? Is it someone on the trip with you?

How has God worked in your life today?

How do the verses you read relate to your experiences today?

How does your church reflect the quote above?

How are you carrying out that quote this week?

Action:

Write the answers to these questions, your prayers, reflections, and anything else on your mind in the space below.

JOURNAL



JOURNAL

Date _____

"The Bible is not the basis of missions; missions is the basis of the Bible."

– Ralph Winter, US Center for World Mission

Read: 1 Peter 3:8-22

Contemplate:

Do you know anyone who has the hope of Christ in them?

Have you ever asked them where their hope comes from? What was their answer?

Is there someone on this trip who seems to have the hope of Christ in them?

Do you have the hope of Christ?

What would you say if someone asked you where your hope comes from?

What will you tell people about your trip when you get home?

Can you use your experiences as a tool to share Jesus with them?

How do the verses you read relate to your experiences today?

How is missions the basis for the Bible? How are you carrying that out this week?

Action:

Write the answers to these questions, your prayers, reflections, and anything else on your mind in the space below.

JOURNAL



JOURNAL

Date _____

"God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supply." — Hudson Taylor

Read: Colossians 3:1-16

Contemplate:

How have you changed this week?

How can make these changes a part of your life?

What can you do to remind yourself to pray for the people you have met in Belize?

Are you thankful for what you have? Your friends and family? Your experiences?

How can you encourage your church when you get home?

How do the verses you read relate to your experiences today?

How have you seen God supply answers this week?

Action:

Write the answers to these questions, your prayers, reflections, and anything else on your mind in the space below.

JOURNAL



JOURNAL

Date _____

"Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God."
– William Carey, known as the father of modern missions

Read: John 16:16-33

Contemplate:

What will you miss most when you return home?

What stretched you the most on this mission trip?

Did you meet the expectations that you had for yourself on this trip?

What surprised you?

How do you feel about returning home?

What was your highlight from your trip?

How do the verses you read relate to your experiences today?

How did you attempt great things for God this week?

What expectations were met or exceeded by God this week?

Action:

Write the answers to these questions, your prayers, reflections, and anything else on your mind in the space below.

JOURNAL



JOURNAL

JOURNAL

JOURNAL

POST-TRIP



POST-TRIP CHECK LIST

- Send thank-you letters to financial supporters
- Send thank-you letters to prayer supporters
- Share my pictures with others by posting them on a website or blog
- Send letters or emails to the Belizeans I met
- Attend a trip reunion
- Spend time each day in prayer
- Send a story and picture to my local newspaper
- Daily devotions
- Read the Bible regularly
- Share my trip experiences at school, church, or work
- Attend church
- Attend a youth group
- Join a Bible study or small group
- Pay it forward - contribute financially to other people's mission trips
- Make plans to attend a future mission trip
- Find a way to get involved in your community
- Use this trip to share about Jesus Christ with people who don't know Him

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

A letter of thanks to God for the ways I have seen Him work in me this week.

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS (CONT.)

A letter of thanks to God for the ways I have seen Him work in me this week.

SHARING MY MISSIONS TRIP EXPERIENCE

What ministry event was most meaningful to me? Why?

Who had a big impact on me? Why?

What did I see that shocked me?

How did I meet God this week?

SHARING MY MISSIONS TRIP EXPERIENCE (CONT.)

What funny things happened on the trip?

Why would I recommend a short-term mission trip to others?

What do I appreciate more about my life in North America than before I left?

Other Thoughts

BRINGING MY MISSIONS EXPERIENCE HOME

What ministries did I participate in this week?

What ministries can I become involved in when I get back home?

Ministry

Plan

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

PERSONAL GOALS

What are your personal goals upon returning from this mission trip?

Family

Church

Friends

Work

School

Finances

Personal Faith

Missions

Media

Other

GOING HOME

What things will I do differently upon returning home?

What are some lessons I learned or things I saw on this mission trip that I will never want to forget and which I can apply to my life back home?

Why do I think God sent me on this mission trip?

What are some goals for the rest of my life that God has revealed to me on this trip?

In what ways have I grown in my faith?

POST-TRIP

WHO DID I MEET THIS WEEK?

Name

Address

Email

NOTES

POST-TRIP

TRIP FOLLOW-UP

Thank you for coming to Belize with Thirst Missions! We hope that you experienced a wonderful week of service and that you will continue to serve Christ at home.

We want to stay connected with you and we have a variety of options!

Website: Our website is thirstmissions.org. It is easy to contact us through our website.

Blog: Our blog is at thirstmissions.org/blog. Check it out to see what God is doing in Belize, Alaska, and on the Texas Gulf Coast!

facebook Please like our page. We will be posting the pictures that our staff took of your trip. Feel free to comment or add your own! The web address is [facebook.com/ThirstMissions](https://www.facebook.com/ThirstMissions)

Instagram: You can find us on Instagram at [instagram.com/thirstmissions/](https://www.instagram.com/thirstmissions/)

twitter Follow us at twitter.com/thirstmissions

Survey: We would like to hear how your trip went. When you get home you will receive an email from Thirst Missions that will ask you to fill out a survey. If you do not receive the email please contact us at info@thirstmissions.org so we can send the link to you.

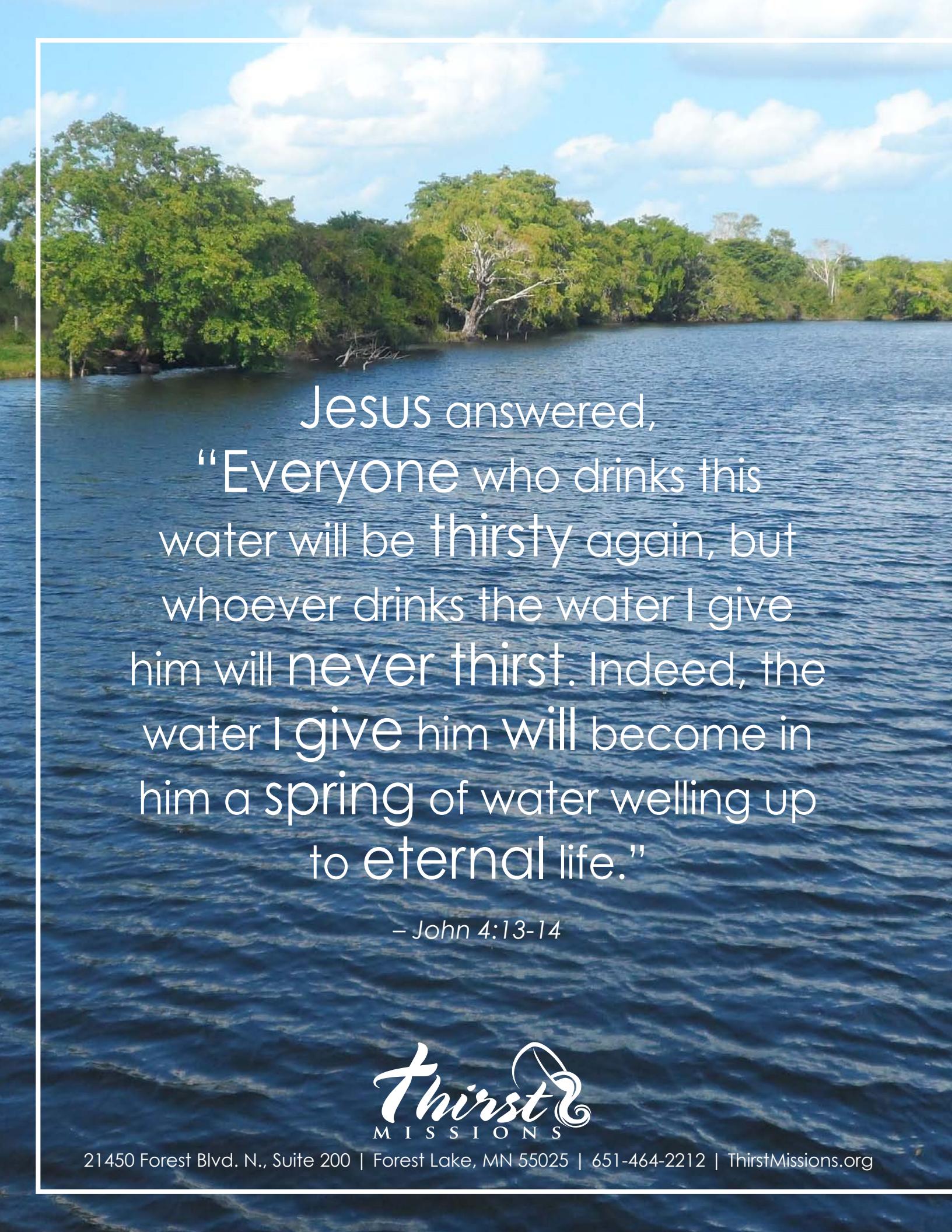
We invite you to prayerfully consider returning to Belize on another mission trip to continue working in the same location and with the same people you served this week.

We are always looking for qualified past trip participants to join our staff as assistant leaders or college-aged interns in future years. If you would like more information on these opportunities, please email us at info@thirstmissions.org.



May God bless you as you return home.

Again, thank you for serving with us in Belize! We hope to see you soon.



Jesus answered,
“Everyone who drinks this
water will be thirsty again, but
whoever drinks the water I give
him will never thirst. Indeed, the
water I give him will become in
him a spring of water welling up
to eternal life.”

– John 4:13-14



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