

Go Missions to Mexico

Devotional Guide

NAME: _____

SCHEDULE

SATURDAY

5:00pm Arrive at Go Missions to Mexico Ministry Base
7:00pm Welcome & Base Orientation Meeting

SUNDAY

7:30am Breakfast
8:15am Morning Devotion
9:00am Culture & Ministry Orientation Meeting
12:00pm Lunch
1:00pm Evangelism Outreach
5:00pm Community Outreach & VBS @ church
7:30pm Dinner (prepared by the women of the church)
10:00pm Lights out

MONDAY-THURSDAY

7:00am Breakfast
7:45am Morning Devotions
8:30am Depart to our ministry site
8:45-12:00 Work Projects & Evangelism/Visitation
12:00pm Lunch (prepared by the women of the church)
2:00-4:00pm VBS Outreach
4:00pm-10:00 Free Time/ Team Fellowship

WEDNESDAY EVENING - Optional

6:00-9:00pm Community Outreach

FRIDAY EVENING

Free Day
7:00pm Farewell/Debrief Meeting

SATURDAY

Depart for home

DAY 1 - SUNDAY

Blankets, sombreros, pottery, and other items you purchase while in Mexico will have this designation. “Made in Mexico,” an indication of the country of origin, but beyond that, the place where the idea behind the product was born. Someone conceived an idea that after much thought and labor made it to the marketplace as a finished product. The shaping of raw materials into finished ones requires the raw materials to be pulled, stretched, molded, chipped, sanded, and polished. All of these different processes are rather violent actions but all have the end result of making a beautiful finished product.

I suspect the design and plan that God has for each of our lives will become a little clearer as we expose ourselves to His shaping hands this spring in Mexico. I believe that He has a plan and dream for us that will take the time in Mexico to make it happen. As we put ourselves in tight travelling quarters the hands of the Master Potter squeeze the lump of clay that he wants to shape in his image. The different living conditions we will experience are another place where the finger is pressed into the impressionable clay of our lives. The potter continues to mold us into the image He has chosen as we labor with hammers, saws, and shovels. As we hug children, prepare a meal, or gratefully receive gifts offered to us, the process of shaping goes on. Our time of serving will impact our lives and change our outlook in ways profound enough that we will be able to say we have been “Hecho in Mexico.”

Writers of Scripture returned often to the image of the potter shaping clay. As God, the potter continues to work the

clay, a vessel of usefulness is created. A vessel that doesn't argue with its maker, but instead becomes a vessel of usefulness, fit for the work of the Kingdom. These images will be the focus of our devotional times during this week we are in Mexico.

Allow your impressions of this week to filter through the words you find in God's Word and in prayer ask God to burn them into your memory. Take some time and record daily impressions in the journal section for each day. What you write down you will always be able to refer to when wanting to review the work the potter is doing in your life. Read, watch, listen, pray, and write.

My Goals & Expectations for the week...

The reasons I want to be a part of the mission trip are:

What areas of my life I am hoping God will shape this week?

What are the things that I hope God will accomplish through me this week? _____

DAY 1 - SUNDAY

My Reflections for the day...

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DAY 2 - MONDAY

The Pot and the Potter - Isaiah 29:16

When a piece of pottery comes off the potter's wheel there is no question as to what the range of functions will be for that piece. There is no question as to why it is made, much like a tool that has been shaped and accomplishes the task for which it was designed. You pick up a hammer and know it was meant to pound nails. A saw is held and one knows it is created to cut wood. A piece of pottery is made and one knows that it was designed to hold something.

As a human being comes off the potter's wheel, the same thing should be true. Being shaped by the potter reminds us that our function and task is to be about His business, to be an extension of His nature, an ambassador of His Kingdom, and a proclaimer of His message. We should exit the potter's shop with no question as to why God made us. We will know our purpose.

This week in Mexico we will be in the potter's shop, on God's wheel, and He will be shaping us. Although we will likely do our share of resisting, just as a lump of clay resists shaping, but the hands of the potter will continue to mold us. He will add water to lubricate, keep us well centered on the wheel, and use tools to mold us into the shape He desires for us. By the end He will produce a vessel not only well shaped, but very functional.

Questions for Reflection:

1. Have you discovered God's purpose for you? What kind of pot He made you to be?
2. Do you find that your purpose is primarily for the things of God or your own agenda?
3. Are you allowing God to shape your life or do you find yourself resisting His shaping? Have you already told God on this trip, in words or actions that you are going to fight any change taking place in your life?
4. What tools might God use to shape you? Do you try to limit God in the tools he chooses to use in shaping you? Do you resist being close to the people, situations, or truth that might bring about the end product God desires?

***Time on God's potter's wheel will clarify
and define your purpose.
There is no greater reward than to have allowed
God's hand to touch the clay.***

DAY 2 - MONDAY

My Reflections for the day...

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DAY 3 - TUESDAY

Treasure in Jars of Clay - 2 Corinthians 4:1-9

When a potter bakes a pot, he checks its solidity by pulling it out of the oven and thumping it. If it “sings,” it’s ready. If it “thuds,” it’s placed back in the oven. The character of a person is also checked by thumping. Been thumped lately? Late nights, people not doing their share of the work, people complaining, you have garbage duty while everyone else kicks back, no one understands what you are feeling. Those are thumps. How do you respond? Do you sing? Or do you thud? There’s nothing like a good thump to reveal the nature of your heart (see what Jesus says in Luke 6:45).

There’s another thing that affects the sounds of a pot – its contents. An empty pot sounds a lot different than a full one. In 2 Corinthians 4, Paul says that our pot/jar is full. Not just full of stuff, but of God (see vv7-9)! You see, God doesn’t just want to make a pot that looks good and sounds good, but one that is going to last and get the job done as well. “Therefore, since through God’s mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart.” What ministry? The one God has made us for and filled us for – to let him love through us, touch through us, speak through us, serve through us, and give through us.

Questions for Reflection:

1. What are some of the “thumps” you’ve felt in the last couple of days?
2. Read James 1:2-4. Why does God allow even experiences in our lives?
3. According to 2 Corinthians 4:6 where does light for the darkness come from?
4. Verse 7 says there is a purpose for the treasure in our lives. What is it?
5. How is your pot/jar holding up? If we try to do it out of our own strength we will find the going tough. The potter provides the strength and power to do what he wants us to do. Do you feel like you’re working out of power or weakness?
6. Take time to pray together and ask Jesus to work through you instead of you working for him.

Remember, no thump is disastrous. All thumps work for good if we are loving and obeying God.

DAY 3 - TUESDAY

My Reflections for the day...

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DAY 4 - WEDNESDAY

The Contents Get Loose - John 12:1-8

For the last couple of days we have been seeing that God has designed us for a function and that he fills us so that we can be used. There is no doubt that many kinds of pottery are designed for storage of some kind. Water, wheat, and a number of things may be stored in a jar. Yet, there is a more functional role that a pot plays, that of being able to take the contents to a place and then pour them out to be used. An underground tank can store water but can take its contents nowhere.

John tells us a story in the 12th chapter of his gospel that shows a jar or vessel being used in his service. Mary, who loves Jesus, longs to show her adoration. She takes a jar filled with a pint of expensive perfume, opens it, pours it on Jesus' feet, and wipes His feet with her hair. A striking thing is said of the aroma of the perfume, (v.3) "and the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume." The jar had been well sealed prior to Mary's breaking it open. In that condition it was full, it was carrying out a role, it may have been beautiful, but no one was aware of the incredible contents until the seal was broken.

God has created us not only to hold a treasure, but to be broken open to allow the contents of our lives to spill out and "fill the whole room."

Questions for Reflection:

1. How are you allowing your jar to be used this week?
2. What have people been able to see in your life this week? Your beautiful jar (you) or its contents (Jesus)?
3. Have you allowed God to break open your pot so that its true contents (Jesus) can be spilled out?
4. What does brokenness mean in what we do here in Mexico?
5. We all sacrificed financially to be here in Mexico. Our hosts are aware of how far we have traveled and what it costs us. Yet the greater sacrifice lies in allowing the vessel of our lives to be used to its potential while we are here. Are there people you need to be broken open for (either in our group or here in Mexico)? The contents of our life are your real gift, not the work we do on a building.

"And the house (Mexico) was filled with the fragrance of the perfume (Jesus)."

DAY 4 - WEDNESDAY

My Reflections for the day...

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DAY 5 - THURSDAY

On the Wheel - I Peter 1:6-9

The potter knows the kind of vessel he wants. Taller, flatter, wider, with a small opening, with a large opening, etc. His left hand continues to shape while the right fashions a handle to be used to pour out the contents when the time is right. For some of us the process of getting on the potter's wheel has been hard. We had already cast our lives in our own image, and even though it was not as beautiful as the one the Master Potter is shaping, it was one we were used to. To be recast is a disrupting process. The oven is not fun, but the newly shaped image gains strength and "sings" a new song when thumped. To be remade is hard but is a wonderful process.

Many instruments used in shaping and finishing of products are instruments of violence to the creation. Sanding begins with course grit that tears away wood and leaves marks of its own only to be removed by finer and finer grits until the wood is as smooth as glass. Rocks rumble for days in sand until polished to perfection. A grinder takes an uneven weld and smoothes it to the point of being invisible. The finish work on the potter's wheel is not to be avoided; it's to be experienced. It is a time that reminds us of who we are and who God is. To escape this time is to escape God.

Questions for Reflection:

1. What ways have you noticed God shaping you this week in Mexico? What changes have you noticed in yourself?
2. What grit sandpaper is God using on you right now (50-course, 100-medium, 150-fine, 200-very fine, 400-polish time)?
3. How do you think the changes experienced here in Mexico will help equip you for life at home?
4. Sometimes we get anxious for others to change and try to do that shaping ourselves. Why is it hard to let the potter shape their lives in His timing?
5. Have you discovered this week more of God's purpose for your life? What is it?

When God puts you on the potter's wheel, be thankful. It means He thinks you're worth reshaping.

DAY 5 - THURSDAY

My Reflections for the day...

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At the Potter's House - Jeremiah 18:1-4

Ah, to be your instrument, O God, like Paul to the Gentiles, like Philip to the Ethiopian, like Jesus to the world...to be your instrument, to be like the scapel in the gentle hands of a surgeon, healing and mending, to be like a plow in the weathered hands of a farmer, sowing and tending, to be like a scythe in the sweeping hands of a reaper, gathering and using, to be...and instrument for noble purposes, to be honed and tuned, in sync with your will, sensitive to your touch. This, God, is my prayer. Draw me to your studio, for me on your wheel, shape me with your hands, and let me be your vessel. (Adapted from “An Instrument for Noble Purposes” by Max Lucado)

Read Jeremiah 18:1-4 and 2 Timothy 2:21 and reflect on this week and any new insights you have discovered about being God's vessel.

My Final Reflections...

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Customs & Culture of Mexico

BOY/GIRL RELATIONSHIPS: Mexican people are very reserved. Girls should not spend time alone with the Mexican men. Boys likewise, should not pay more than polite attention to the Mexican girls. Teenage boys are relatively free to come and go. Their friendliness to American girls might be termed “forward.” The best plan: American boys work with Mexican boys. American girls work with Mexican girls. Couples, even married couples, should be very reserved in their displays of affection.

CLOTHING: Remember the way you dress makes a strong statement to Mexicans. If you dress in a way that respects their culture, all that you do will be better received. Mexican clothing standards are generally much more conservative than ours, particularly among Christians. We will make it a point to dress conservatively while in Mexico. It is a chance for us to model a servant attitude.

PICTURES: Be careful not to take too many pictures in the first couple of days. Wait until you have developed relationships with them and then they will be deeply honored. Many Mexicans are afraid you will take pictures home with you and use them to ridicule them before your rich American friends. This is especially true of taking pictures of things which might be repulsive to you. Take such pictures only if you are sure you are not seen.

GIFTS: Please refrain from giving gifts to people. If you have something to give, it is best to give it to the host pastor to use in his ministry as he sees fit.

Courtesies & Manners in Mexico

1. Chit-chat is extremely important. Show concern & interest by spending as much time as possible with them. Make conversation. Share about family, show pictures, etc.
2. Always shake hands with everyone. When someone comes in late, shake hands.
3. Greet (saludar) people when you arrive or leave.
4. Manners are important. Be very careful to maintain a very high moral standard in front of them.
5. Women should be invited to have the seats and be first in line for meals, etc.
6. When greeting older people, be sure to stand up if you happen to be seated. To greet them sitting down is a sign of disrespect.
7. To speak English in front of Mexican people is mal educado (bad manners). They can misinterpret this as though you were speaking about them.
8. When treats are passed out, everyone must share in eating it. Try everything that you are offered to eat unless you think it is unsafe.
9. Be gracious as you visit with people. Accept invitations to visit homes. If offered a gift, or food receive it.
10. Do your best to use whatever Spanish you can. Learn some phrases and put them to use. Mexicans appreciate every effort we make.
11. Do not be loud and boisterous in church. Church is highly esteemed and often people will come early to kneel and pray at the altar.
12. Be flexible with changing or late schedules. Mexicans are often not on time.

SPANISH PHRASES

What's your name	Como te llamas
My name is	Me llamo _____
It's good to meet you	Mucho gusto
Hello	Hola
Goodbye	Adiós
Thank you	Gracias
Your welcome	De nada
I don't understand	No comprendo
God bless you	Dios le bendiga
Jesus loves you	Jesus te ama
Good morning	Buenos dias
Good afternoon	Buenas tardes
Good evening/night	Buenas noches
Where's the bathroom	Donde está el baño?
Very delicious	Muy delicioso
Smile	Sonrisa
Come here	Ven!
Let's play	Vamos a jugar
Run!	Correle!
Very good!	Muy bien!
Attention please	Atención por favor
Sit down	Siéntense
Stand up	Ponganse de pie
Be quiet please	Guarden silencio por favor
Stop doing that	Deja de hacer eso
That's all for now	Es todo por ahora
Come back tomorrow	Vuélvase mañana
See you later	Hasta luego
Until tomorrow	Hasta mañana