

Preparation Guidelines

Sister Parish North to South Delegations

FOR NORTHERN CHURCH

- Determine who will be the **main contact person** for setting up the delegation and let Sister Parish staff know. **9 months before the proposed delegation dates**
- Sister Parish staff will send **Preparation guidelines for North to South Delegation** document (this one) and **Orientation Manual** to main contact person. These contain important information about setting up and preparing for the delegation. Please be sure to distribute the **Orientation Manual** to anyone who is considering coming on the delegation and encourage them to read it.
- Delegate recruitment
 - Begin recruiting delegates **9 months before** with proposed dates for the delegation (which are simultaneously determined with Southern community and staff).
 - Hold monthly meetings for the next three months for those interested (no commitment required yet)
 - Can use Sister Parish video or slide show (available on our website)
 - Questions and answers with people who have been on a delegation before
 - Frank discussion of delegation costs and the plan for paying (church subsidizing, collective fund raising, etc.)
 - We require a **minimum of 5 delegates** and recommend a **maximum of 12 delegates**.
- Verify that the minimum number of delegates are committed and **set final dates** based on the availability of confirmed delegates, Southern community, and staff. **6 months before**. If you cannot get the minimum of 5 delegates, discuss options with Sister Parish staff or consider postponing the delegation.
- Send in \$500 deposit to reserve dates. **6 months before delegation**
 - Sister Parish Financial Office: P.O. Box 5202, Fargo, ND 58105
 - Written to “Sister Parish, Inc.” with “Delegation” in the memo line
- Determine **who will lead orientation** sessions. This person should distribute the Orientation Manual to all of the delegates (electronically or hard copy), coordinate dates, and begin preparing the sessions.
- Delegates interested in Hepatitis A & B vaccines should start. **At least 6 months before**
- As a community (not only the delegates), talk about your **hopes and goals for the delegation** as it relates to the hermanamiento. Share them with the Sister Parish staff who will then share them with your hermanamiento in Guatemala/El Salvador and keep them in mind while preparing the agenda. Let staff know if there are specific requests for activities on the delegation. Please discuss with staff the safe church policies we need to keep in mind. We will honor your church’s policies. It is helpful to know in advance in order to coordinate activities and home stays appropriately. **4-5 months before**

- Delegates who do not have a **passport** or need to renew theirs should submit the application **at least 3 months before** the dates of the delegation. US Citizens do not need a visa to travel to Guatemala or El Salvador. Non-US citizens should investigate whether or not they will need a visa.
- Begin **Orientation Sessions** from our Orientation Manual at least **10 weeks before** delegation. It is very important to go through this orientation to adequately prepare delegates for the experience.
 - Schedule according to delegates' calendars, but emphasize that attendance at all orientation sessions is required.
 - Coordinate with Sister Parish staff person to Skype or call into the 4th session.
- Sister Parish staff will send the **billing** for the delegation. Send in the check at least **10 weeks before delegation**
 - Costs: \$525 administrative fee per person, plus \$65 per person per day (including travel days) for delegation of 8-12 people - \$75 per person per day for delegation of 5-7 people.
 - Sister Parish financial office: P.O. Box 5202, Fargo, ND 58105. "Delegation" in memo line.
- As a group, **purchase plane tickets** together. Send the flight information to Sister Parish staff.
- **Take photos of the group of delegates**, and send to Sister Parish staff along with names and biographical info, why they're excited to go, etc. Staff will share this with your brothers and sisters in Guatemala or El Salvador to help them get excited and prepared for the visit. **2 months before**
- Sister Parish staff will send the lead contact person **health forms and release forms** for all delegates. Fill out and sign the forms and mail them to the Sister Parish US Office or scan and email them to usoffice@sisterparish.org. **2 months before**
- Delegates should consider purchasing individual **international travel health insurance** for the dates of the delegation. **1-2 months before**
- Determine **who will lead reflections** on the trip- one of the delegates or Sister Parish staff? Staff is always happy to lead those. If a delegate or others from the church would like to plan the daily reflections, please plan on staff facilitating at least two of our planned reflections during the visit. Who will take on other roles (pg. 91 in Orientation Manual)? Communicate with staff.
- **Review packing lists and get ready for a great time!** Remember to bring a photocopy of your passport and appropriate gear if it is going to be the rainy season. All other preparation information is in the Orientation Manual. Good preparation is the key to a successful delegation experience.

Feel free to be in touch with your Sister Parish staff person at any point throughout this process with any questions or assistance you may need! We are grateful to you for the time and effort that you are putting into making this delegation happen. It is an important way to maintain the relationship you have with your brothers and sisters in the South!

See our website for other helpful information: www.sisterparish.org

The purpose of both south-to-north and north-to-south delegation visits is similar: To raise consciousness about each others' reality; to increase the sense of solidarity, to experience ecumenism; and to bring about reconciliation- in general- to strengthen the hermanamiento.