



# El Refugio Fundación, A.C.

RFC: RFU 091208 GG1

## 2026 Participant Package

### About El Refugio Fundación, A.C.

#### The Mission of El Refugio Fundación

El Refugio Fundación, A.C. is located in Ensenada, Baja California, Mexico. We exist to **share God's love** and **hope** through action; providing resources and opportunities for children, teens, families and churches to grow in Christ. We partner with local churches to provide food to needy communities through our feeding program, and do visitation ministries of many sorts (prison, drug rehab, migrant camps, etc.) to provide whatever aid and support we can while sharing from the Word of God. We facilitate short term mission teams in various ministries including house builds, construction projects benefitting the community, and ministry outreaches in many different settings. Teams also have the opportunity to work alongside the girls at Casa Esther and pour into the girls lives during their time with us.

#### Our Goal

Our goal is to work through the local community leaders to affect change in their areas. We highly recommend the book "Helping Without Hurting in Short-Term Missions" by Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert as you prepare your team for your mission trip, as well as "Foreign to Familiar" by Sarah A Lanier. We want this to be a great experience for your group as well as the ministries you serve in!

#### Casa Esther

Our primary ministry is Casa Esther; a safe home for girls in a family setting located on the premise of El Refugio, for children, teenagers, and young adults who have been rescued from situations of violence, abuse, neglect, and/or prostitution/trafficking.

At Casa Esther our desire is to **provide a safe, supportive, and loving environment** where abandoned and at-risk children and teens are given the opportunity to get an education, receive counseling to resolve the pain they have suffered, learn invaluable life skills, and receive biblical training to help each individual grow and develop towards their full potential physically, emotionally, educationally, and spiritually. We want them to become upstanding citizens who love God and can affect change in their communities!

*"Let us not love with words or tongue, but with actions and in truth." - 1 John 3:18*



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## Ten Commandments for Mission Trip Participants

1. You shall not forget that you represent your home country and the **Lord Jesus Christ**.
1. You shall not expect that things will be the same as they are at home, for you have left your home to find different things.
2. You shall not take minor things too seriously. Accepting things as they are paves the way for a good mission trip.
3. You shall not judge all [Mexicans] by the one person with whom you have had trouble.
4. You shall not let other group members get on your nerves. You raised good money and set aside this time. So, enjoy yourself.
5. You shall not be overly worried. The person who worries has no pleasures. Few things people worry about are ever fatal.
6. Remember your passport (or other identification document) so that you know where it is at all times. A person without documents is a person without a country.
7. Blessed is the person who says "thank you" in any language. Verbal gratefulness is worth more than tips.
8. When in Mexico (Rome), do as the Mexicans (Romans) do. If in difficulty, use common sense and your native friendliness.
9. Remember, you are a guest in Mexico. He who treats his host with respect shall be treated as an honored guest.

Okay, so these aren't the 10 commandments given to Moses on Mt. Sinai. However, the principles enunciated here are foundational to success in short-term cross-cultural experiences. So, violating these 10 commandments (even if Moses didn't get them) can spoil your short-term experience and even tarnish your attempts to witness for Christ. And most of all, remember to be FLEXIBLE!

Adapted from [www.home.snu.edu](http://www.home.snu.edu)



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## FAQ

### **What is the preferred dress code for El Refugio/Casa Esther and the local ministries?**

There are two extremes in Mexico, between the ultra-conservative and the more modern, so a lot will depend on where your group goes to serve.

**Ministry Sites:** It is more culturally appropriate in some areas for the ladies to wear skirts to the knee or longer to the migrant camp and to church services. We suggest leggings underneath, especially if they are playing with children or the skirts are sheer. Until you know what area you will be serving in, plan on bringing at least two skirts to wear/rewear as necessary. Men will also possibly need pants, not shorts, for church services. We should know what is appropriate in advance and be able to pass that information on to you.

Shorts (if appropriate for the area) must be thumb length from the knee or longer. If anyone decides to wear leggings to any ministry site, we ask that they wear a shirt or dress long enough to cover their backside. We also ask that everyone wear shirts with sleeves to the ministry sites (short sleeves is fine), and a tank top underneath if appropriate.

Men and women should bring clothes without holes or obvious stains for ministry sites and church services.

**Construction Sites:** If you are doing construction, **closed toe shoes are a requirement**, no exceptions. We recommend you wear jeans, not shorts, as well. Muscle shirts and tank tops are prohibited. Your clothes will get stained or painted, so bring something to wear that is old or unwanted!

**Beach:** Tank tops are fine for both genders. We ask that that men do not wear speedos and ladies wear a modest bathing suit, or cover with a t-shirt. Men may wear muscle shirts at the beach only.

**Base:** Around the base, we ask that you dress modestly. Please refrain from wearing “short-shorts”, spaghetti strap/camisoles alone, or muscle shirts.

## **Required Documents**

You will need a passport to visit Mexico. Check your passport for the expiry date! Make certain it is valid for when you come. **We will need a copy in a minimum of 3 weeks in advance with your registration paperwork, to comply with laws regulating children’s homes.**

**Tourist Visa:** We require everyone apply for a tourist visa before arrival at the border of Mexico. This is to ensure that the Mexican government legally recognizes your presence here in case of emergency, thereby requiring them to aid. 7 days or less are free! Visas for 8+ days cost approximately \$45 USD, and are good for 6 months. We will stop at the border to fill out the visa paperwork. *Prices are subject to change by the Mexican government and the international exchange rate.* Further information, if needed, will be sent out closer to your date of arrival.



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## FAQ (continued)

### Spending money

Most places in Ensenada have places to exchange money or accept American cash, so it is okay to plan to bring US money. The team will most likely wish to bring money to buy some food in the airport, or for the taco stands! We most likely will stop at a fast-food restaurant before we cross into Mexico. Smaller bills are best to have on hand.

### Health

You will need some form of travel health insurance. If you are getting immunizations to visit Mexico, tetanus and Hepatitis A & B vaccines are generally recommended, but please check with your health insurance provider. Please check with your local public health or doctor to check on updated recommendations.

Please have an emergency plan on file with the group leader in case you need to be hospitalized or medically transported.

### Food Allergies

If a participant has food allergies, please make us aware on the individual registration forms! While we will do our best to accommodate what we can, **you need to bring food that is safe for you to consume** to supplement what we are able to provide. It is not yet possible to buy most specialty items in Mexico, ***including gluten free items.***

### Weather

It does get chilly here in the evenings, and it can be quite windy at El Refugio! Plan to bring warm clothing to sleep in and a jacket for the evenings, even in the summer. Mid-day can be quite warm. As with the majority of Mexican houses, the base does not have heat or A/C. Pack your suitcase accordingly!

### Gifts

Please do not bring gifts for the girls in Casa Esther without consulting El Refugio leadership. This includes donations of clothing, toiletries, etc. If you plan to leave clothing behind, please notify us before your departure from El Refugio so we can direct it to the girls or ministry areas that have the greatest need.



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## Helpful Spanish Words & Phrases

### Greetings & manners

Hello – Hola

Goodbye – Adios

I'm sorry – Lo siento

Yes – Sí

No – No

Please – Por favor

Thank you – Gracias

You're welcome – De nada

Excuse me (to pass someone) –

Con permiso

See you tomorrow! –

¡Hasta mañana!

### Verbs

Pray – Orar

Come – Ven

Play – Jugar

Join – Unir

Build – Construir

Color – Colorear

Love – amar

Repeat – Repita

Sit down – Sientense

Stand up – Ponganse de pie

Listen – Escucha

Line up – Formanse

### Nouns

House - Casa

Church – Iglesia

Bible – Biblia

Family – familia

Friend – amigo

Paper – Papel

Pen – Bolígrafo

Pencil – Lápiz

Crayon – Crayola

Glue – Pegamento

Scissors – Tijeras

### Colors

Red – Rojo

Orange – Anaranjado

Yellow – Amarillo

Green – Verde

Blue – Azul

Purple – Morado

White – Blanco

Black – Negro

Brown – Café

Grey – Gris

### Time

Tomorrow – Mañana

Today – Hoy

Yesterday – Ayer

Hour – Hora

### Numbers

One – Uno

Two – Dos

Three – Tres

Four – Cuatro

Five – Cinco

Six – Seis

Seven – Siete

Eight – Ocho

Nine – Nueve

Ten – Diez

Eleven – Once

Twelve – Doce

Thirteen – Trece

Fourteen – Catorce

Fifteen – Quince

Sixteen – Dieciséis

Seventeen – Diecisiete

Eighteen – Dieciocho

Nineteen – Diecinueve

Twenty – Veinte

### Phrases for every day

My name is... - Me llamo...

What is your name? - ¿Cómo te llamas?

Where is the...? – ¿Dónde está el/la...?

How much does it cost? – ¿Cuánto cuesta?

I want \_\_\_\_\_, please. –

Quiero \_\_\_\_\_, por favor.

Do you want ...? - ¿Quieres...?

Can you speak more slowly, please? –

Hable despacio, por favor.

I'm sorry, I don't understand. –

Lo siento, no entiendo.

Do you speak English? – ¿Hablas inglés?

### Phrases for ministry

God bless you (more than one person) -

Dios les bendiga

God loves you. - Dios te ama.

Do you want to pray with us? –

¿Quieres orar con nosotros?

We are here to minister to the children. –

Estamos aquí para ministrar a los niños.

You are invited to eat. – Estás invitado a comer.

I'm from... - Soy de... (los Estados Unidos/ Canadá)

Do you have siblings? - ¿Tienes hermanos?

How old are you? ¿Cuántos años tienes?

Do you go to school? - ¿Asistas a la escuela?

What grade are you in? –

¿Cuál grado estás cursando?

Take out the paper – Sacan el papel

Quiet, please! – ¡Guarden silencio, por favor!



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## Preparing a Devotion or Sharing Your Testimony

Discussion: Think of a time when you had a devotion that really spoke to your heart and that you remember? Why do you remember this devotion? How did it impact you?

*Purpose of a devotion.*

- Challenge ourselves and others to radical intimacy with God
- To meditate on God's word
- Provide an invitation to make a change
- Provide a learning opportunity about who God is.
- To show how the Bible is relevant and applies to us today
- To show appreciation of who God is

### **Tell a story about a time when:**

- I was aware of God's presence.
- I grew closer in my relationship with God.
- I felt that God helped me.
- God was watching over me or protecting me.
- I made an important decision about my faith journey.
- I experienced God's love.

### **Other ideas:**

- Thoughts from my journal and how God is working in my life
- Share a favorite verse and how it has impacted me
- Ask questions that challenge people to think and reevaluate.
- If it's relevant for me, others will benefit as well.
- Take a devotion that was meaningful to me...research more about the thought for the day. What other verses relate to this devotion? How does it apply to you?

*How will people remember God's word or be challenged by what I share?*

- **Pray.** Pray that God will use what you have to say to touch someone's life and make a difference.
- Offer time for discussion...for people to share what the passage means to them

*God, help me to prepare my heart so that I can hear your Word and be a living testimony to your work in my life.*



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## Packing List Suggestions

### **CARRY ON:**

**Follow the 3/1/1 rule for liquids and powders: 3.4 oz/100 ml in 1 quart bag for 1 person.**

- Vitamins/Prescriptions
- Toothpaste/Toothbrush
- Deodorant
- ONE full change of clothes
- TWO changes of undergarments
- Brush/Comb
- Reusable water bottle
- Cosmetics (Keep to a minimum/Check with your airline for restrictions)
- Small notebook/journal/pen/Bible
- Snacks
- Feminine hygiene items
- Band-Aids
- Tissues

**LUGGAGE:** 50 lbs. max. (double check with your airline)

- One to two sets of work clothes/work gloves
  - Casual clothes (shirts & pants/skirts/dresses)
  - Plan for warm and cool weather year-round
  - Sleepwear
  - Undergarments for each day
  - One pair of shoes/sandals in addition to the ones you are wearing.
  - Garbage bag for dirty laundry and Ziploc bags
  - Hat
  - Sunscreen/sunburn remedies
  - Insect Repellent
  - Shampoo/conditioner
  - Small towel/bath towel/face cloths
  - One light jacket
  - One sweatshirt/sweater
  - Dress shirt/pants/skirt for church
- OPTIONAL:**
- Work Boots
  - Work gloves
  - Hammer/Tool belt/Measuring tape
  - Rain Poncho (Disposable)
  - Flip Flops (For shower)
  - Flashlight and batteries
  - Simple gifts
  - Contact lens kit
  - Baby/Talcum powder
  - Modest swimwear
  - Beach Towel
  - Pepto/Tums/Imodium

### **IMPORTANT:**

**Photocopy your passport and keep a copy at home in a safe place and the original in your carry on.**



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## EL REFUGIO Registration Form

Please print clearly

Group Name or Leader: \_\_\_\_\_ Dates at El Refugio: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Please circle one: Male/Female

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Province/State \_\_\_\_\_ Postal/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

Parents Names \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

(if under 18)

Parents Address \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

Emergency Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

**MEDICAL** \*All individuals must have out of country travel insurance\*

Health Insurance Company \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Policy # \_\_\_\_\_

Name of insured \_\_\_\_\_

Family Doctor \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Date of last tetanus shot (must be current) \_\_\_\_\_

Check with your public health center for any other concerns or vaccinations they recommend.

If you have had any medical problems, special medications, **food allergies**, or allergies to medications, please note them below.  
(Please use back if more space is required)

**If you have special dietary needs, please note them above! We will do our best to accommodate minor allergies and gluten-free diets, however, you are responsible for your own health and we are unable to accommodate extensive issues. Please plan accordingly and contact us if necessary! Special foods, including gluten-free, are very difficult to find in Mexico.**

Note: If you are bringing a prescription into the US or Mexico you will need to have the prescription label on the medicine that you are carrying.

\*\*\*\*\*

Could you serve as an interpreter? Yes No

Please list skills that you would be willing to use to help in the ministry while you are here (sewing, construction, crafts, cooking, hairdressing, computer skills etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_



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Do you have the proper documentation/passport to travel in and out of US and Mexico? Yes No

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*Please print clearly*

Name of team member \_\_\_\_\_

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## LIABILITY, PHOTO, and VIDEO RELEASE

I/we, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby release **EL REFUGIO FUNDACIÓN A.C.**, its officers, directors, employees, agents, volunteers, and directors Randy and Sandra Huebert from any and all liability whatsoever arising out of any injury, damage, or loss which may be sustained by the applicant named on this form during their participation with **EL REFUGIO FUNDACIÓN A.C.**, including travel in vehicles owned or used by El Refugio Fundación, A.C. or Randy and Sandra Huebert to and from San Diego, to and from ministry sites, and/or construction sites and all other activities.

In the event of an injury or illness, I/we hereby give **EL REFUGIO FUNDACIÓN A.C.** directors, staff and/or volunteers permission to secure necessary medical treatment, and I/we relieve **EL REFUGIO FUNDACIÓN A.C.** of any and all liability in such an event. I/we assume total cost for all medical and emergency costs incurred during the trip. I/we understand that I/we are responsible for obtaining proper medical and travel insurance.

I/we, \_\_\_\_\_, also authorize **EL REFUGIO FUNDACIÓN A.C.**, its officers, directors, employees, agents, and volunteers the right and permission to use, reproduce and/ or publish, without compensation, photographs and/or video taken that may pertain to myself or in the case of a minor, my child \_\_\_\_\_.

Applicant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

If team member is under 18 years:

Parent's Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Signature (if under 18) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



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