

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

If you choose to volunteer your time and energy to assist in the ongoing ministry of the Morning Star Children's Home and Strong Tower Christian School, you will more than likely find yourself immersed in surroundings and situations which will be very different from your day to day lifestyle. To better prepare you for this experience we have prepared answers to questions posed by many of our volunteers. Please be aware that this will be a challenging experience that will in many aspects stretch your comfort zone, possibly unsettle preconceived notions of service and give you a excellent opportunity to serve God and others in very real and practical ways.

What is the average weather like?

Located on the stretch of dessert that lines Peru's western coast, there is very little rainfall and very low humidity. Summer is from December to March, with temperatures ranging from the low 70's to the mid 80's. Winter is from June to August and temperatures will range from the low 50's to mid 70's. The remaining months are a gradual adjustment between those ranges. The sun will be out almost every day.

Are there cultural or mission dress standards?

Peru adheres to modern western dress standards, obviously as a spiritual mission we encourage modesty and propriety, yet don't establish legalistic rules or dress codes. The school dress requirement will be enforced if you are involved in a regular teaching schedule in the Christian school, at which time men will wear black pants and women black skirts the length of which can be anywhere below the knee. The blouse/shirt to go with those will be provided here to insure uniformity.

What are the accommodations like?

You will most likely be housed at the Morning Star facility, either in the same rooms as some of the children or in a separate room for volunteers. Most likely you will not have a private room, and will have to share a bathroom. In some cases you may be housed off campus, these details will be addressed once the time frame for your participation is established according to what housing is available at that time.

What kind of personal items should I bring besides clothes?

Sunscreen, insect repellent, toiletry items of your personal preference and any routine medication are recommended. Check with your airline regarding safety requirements for packaging.

What kind of medical care is available?

Local private physicians and clinics maintain an acceptable standard of medical care. Should you have any specific ongoing medical needs, please advise us and we can research their availability.

Are there any items we could bring down to help?

Specific needs of either program can be addressed once the date for your arrival is established.

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We would like to bring gifts or items for the kids. What would be appropriate?

Small toys such as stuffed animals, coloring books, durable items like Matchbox cars etc, avoid complex electronic items or delicate and breakable ones.

How many kids are there/how much to bring?

Specific amounts would depend on your time of arrival as the enrollment in both the Home and School may vary.

What is the best way to access funds from abroad in Peru?

There are ATM's readily available affiliated to every major ATM network in the world. Both U.S. dollars and EU Euros can be easily exchanged for the Peruvian currency, the Nuevo Sol.

Exchange rates vary from day to day, but in a minimal fashion. Of course Travelers Checks are accepted but entail waiting in line at a bank and getting a lesser exchange rate. Our recommendation is to arrive in Peru with about \$200 cash (US). From then on you can use the local ATM's.

How far is the children's home from the airport?

Your international flight will arrive in Lima. Chiclayo is located 320 miles to the north. Your choices are a 1 hour flight on a regular commercial aircraft, or a 12 hour bus ride. The bus ride is more comfortable than the average plane ride, & approx 1/3 the cost. All in country travel arrangements will be dealt with on an individual basis once your arrival date and flight schedule has been chosen.

Are there any special requirements for entering the country?

No. Upon arrival in Lima you will pass through immigrations, where you will be granted a 90 day tourism visa. If your stay extends beyond that time frame, various possibilities come into play which can be arranged once you are in the country.

What shots should we get?

Although your local physician may recommend certain "tropical" vaccinations, there are no requirements for entry to the country and the vaccinations you received as a child are sufficient. You should not need any additional medical preparations.

What would be a typical day's routine?

Awake at 6 AM; assist in bathing the children in the home, feeding them breakfast and getting ready for school. School begins at 8:00 AM, where you will likely be teaching English at various levels, depending on your classrooms assignment. School is out at 1:30 PM, at which time you will have lunch, some quiet time to rest afterwards, then depending on the assignment, you may teach English again in the community, play with the children or be involved in some form of community outreach for several hours in the afternoon. Supper will be from 6-7 PM depending on the day, and evening schedules will vary also according to the bigger picture.

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What are your expectations on teaching English to the kids? What is a typical lesson? How would I be fitting in?

Our goal is to achieve bilingual status for the children housed at Morning Star as well as the students of Strong Tower Christian School. By simply using English as the primary language in your day to day communication, part of that goal is achieved. In addition, the Strong Tower schedule is structured as follows.

2-3 year olds – Their entire “school” experience is carried out in a day care setting, where they spend the morning in a classroom and on the playground where only English is spoken and by simple exposure pick up and perfect their bilingual language skills. So in this setting all you have to do is talk in your native language.

4 & 5 year olds – They have a specific class period assigned to learning English. The course material is prepared and provided by us, and minimal teaching skills are required, as long as you have a desire to serve and can learn some basic teaching techniques when you arrive. Any past teaching experience will of course prepare you better for dealing with children in a classroom environment.

Do I need to know Spanish?

Obviously, the more fluent you are in Spanish, the more options you will have to serve and communicate, and the more comfortable you’ll be on a day to day basis. However it’s not a requirement, since much of the time you’ll be focused on using your English language skills. It is however an excellent opportunity to sharpen your Spanish language skills, we recommend you at least have a desire to learn Spanish, both before you come as well as during your stay.

What tourist sites or places would you recommend we see during our visit to Peru?

Depending on your budget and interests, local sites range from beach settings to Pre-Columbian ruins and archeological sites. (Google “Señor de Sipan” “Tucume” “Sican”) Weekend trips to the Amazon jungle and the Andean Mountains can be scheduled according to your

Specific schedules and finances. A flight to Cuzco and the Macchu Picchu Inca ruins either at the beginning or end of your stay is highly recommended if you can afford the \$600 - \$800 price tag.

Would there be any safety concerns or things we should consider for us traveling?

As with any international travel, the basic concerns are point to point arranged accommodations, avoid spontaneous travel with unknown services or individuals, and keep your luggage and belongings as contained as possible. Avoid small loose items and things dangling off you. The ideal is one or two pieces of luggage with no loose items attached to it or your person. Once your arrival dates have been set, we will in most cases insure that you will be met at the Lima airport and escorted from that point on depending on the particulars of your travel plans.