

St. John the Evangelist – Jamaica Outreach

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

When is the trip held every year, and how much does it cost?

The six-night, seven-day Jamaica Outreach trip for ten volunteers is held in October, and the cost is approximately \$950 per person. The cost covers round-trip airfare from BWI on Southwest Airlines to the Donald Sangster International Airport in Montego Bay, Jamaica.

It also includes:

- Daily ground transportation courtesy of the Diocese of Mandeville, Jamaica
- Accommodations for six nights, including all meals, and security at Our Lady of Dunsinane, in Manchester, Jamaica

Note: If you are interested in going on this year's trip, send an e-mail to: outreach.jamaica@gmail.com before August 1st.

What will we do?

Over the years, much of the group's work has been done at and around the St. Margaret Mary Catholic Church and school in Lionel Town and at the St. Philomena Catholic Church and Basic School in Portland Cottage.

The work varies every year. It can be anything from building and painting pre-fab houses, to general maintenance work. All work in which the group participates is done in conjunction with -- and under the direction and guidance of -- a few workers from the diocese. It is also important to note that during October, the temperatures average in the high 80's-to-low 90's in both locations.

How do we get to these locations?

During the entire mission trip, Mr. Ronnie Simpson from the diocese is our driver and guide. The average driving time from where we stay at Our Lady of Dunsinane to Lionel Town and Portland Cottage in a 20-person van is approximately 90 minutes one way. While most of the roads are paved, random potholes, winding and hilly roads, as well as wayward goats make for some interesting road travel.

Do I need a valid U.S. Passport?

Yes. If you don't already have a current U.S. Passport, you can obtain one by picking up the forms at certain branches of U.S. Post Offices. Or, you can go online to: <http://travel.state.gov/passport>

Passports usually take six weeks to process. If you go on the trip, or for that matter any international vacation, photocopy all important documents and keep them in a hidden place separate from the originals. Leave another copy at home with someone you can easily get in contact with while you are in Jamaica.

What kind of clothing should I bring?

Whether it's building a pre-fab house, or painting, or doing general maintenance work, plan on bringing some older clothing, preferably tee-shirts, shorts, and sneakers while keeping in mind the hot and humid weather. On the other hand, while staying at Dunsinane, bring along casual clothing.

What about prescriptions and vaccinations?

Traveling on the Jamaica Outreach project does not require vaccinations. However, it is suggested that you go to www.cdc.gov for more information about traveling to Jamaica. If you have a personal health concern, be sure to check with your own physician.

Important Notice – Zika Virus Precaution

You may be aware of the mosquito-borne Zika virus that has affected Latin America and several countries in the Caribbean. Here is what you should know:

- **The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is urging women who are pregnant, and those who may become pregnant, to postpone travel to those countries. For other travelers, there is little risk.**

To read more about the Zika virus, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/index.html>

If you wear glasses or contact lenses, bring along an extra pair. If you have prescription medication, make sure you bring enough to last during your time abroad. Be sure to label your containers correctly so that they won't be mistaken for illegal drugs.

Is insurance provided?

Yes. Group coverage/medical coverage is provided by Seven Corners Travel.

How much money should I bring?

United States currency is acceptable at most tourist shops, hotels and airports. You will obtain the best rate of exchange by using a Visa/MasterCard for any purchase in Jamaica. Two or three times during the trip, our driver, Ronnie, drives us to the local *Mega Mart* supermarket where we can buy snacks and drinks. You should also bring some cash in small denominations, for any local tipping or small purchases. If you pay in cash, you will receive change in the local currency.

What about bring school supplies? Is it okay to bring gifts?

Several weeks before the trip, Suzette Anderson, the principal of the St. Philomena Basic School, sends the group a list of the supplies that she would like to have. In turn, an e-mail is sent to the Jamaica Outreach group asking for their assistance in collecting the items. About two weeks before the trip, the group meets and packs all of the supplies into suitcases, which will be checked through on the flight to Jamaica.

Bringing gifts is optional. We recommend school supplies, hygiene items, clothing, small toys, jump ropes, and soccer balls with pumps. These are just a few suggestions. Anything you bring will be gratefully received!

Will there be prayer and times for reflection during the trip?

Prayer and reflection are an important part of the mission experience. Mass is held every morning at Dunsinane. Time for reflection is offered every night after dinner. On Sunday, the group attends two morning masses: one at St. Margaret Mary Catholic Church in Lionel Town and one at the St. Philomena Catholic Church in Portland Cottage.

Is my mission trip payment tax deductible?

The expenses paid to attend your mission trip may be tax-deductible under Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(3). Please consult your accountant or tax advisor for more information.

For more information ..

For more information about Jamaica Outreach...

- Contact Kathy at 410-437-1965 or send an e-mail to: outreach.jamaica@gmail.com
- Visit our Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/jamaicaoutreach
- Join us for our monthly meetings (the first Wednesday of every month) at 7:00 p.m. in the Parish Center