

FLM MISSION TEAM HANDBOOK

2026



POR LOS NIÑOS | FAMILY PRESERVATION | FOSTER CARE

USA | HONDURAS

www.familylifemissions.org

Dear Mission Team,

Welcome! ¡Bienvenidos! Thank you for serving the vulnerable children and families in Catacamas, Honduras. This year's theme is "Plant. Water. Grow." from 1 Corinthians 3:6."

"I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth."

We are excited that you will be joining us in planting and watering seeds in our **Family Preservation** and Entrepreneurship programs (*Building Dreams* and *Inspiring Hope*), **Foster Care**, and our **Por Los Niños Christian School**.

You will work closely with our National Director, José Chinchilla, the Director of Programs, Karla Ponce, as well as other members of our FLM staff. I am available to answer any questions as you prepare your team. You will renovate homes for families in the "Building Dreams" program, teach Bible lessons to children in the community and at our PLN Christian School, and host a Health and Wellness event in a community. We know your giving hearts and hands will bless many. We also know that you will receive a great blessing when you serve our children and families.



Our work at Family Life Missions includes partnering with local churches in Catacamas, and you will be working with them as well, as we know that the only way we can sustain our growth is through God, with the church leading the way. Our desire is for your team to grow spiritually during your visit and become more knowledgeable about our global world as we reach others through the love of Christ.

This handbook serves as a deeper dive to guide you as you prepare for your mission.

All required FLM forms for your group are available online via the QR codes at the end of this packet.

Thank you for giving your time and resources. Enjoy the beauty of Honduras and the people we serve. Your leadership, prayers, and support are priceless to the vulnerable children and families of Honduras.

Grace and Peace,



Lisa Steele
Chief Executive Officer
Family Life Missions
lisas@familylifemissions.org

What We Do at Family Life Missions



Family Life Missions (FLM) operates three programs in Catacamas, Honduras. Our **Family Preservation Program** supports families in the local community in various ways. Families are kept together or reunited through building or renovating a house with aid from FLM staff, the local church, the family, and our generous donors through “Building Dreams”. We also provide training and seed money to help families start their own businesses, become economically sustainable, and meet basic needs through our entrepreneurship program, “Inspiring Hope”. Our **Comprehensive Care Center** on our campus provides family training and resources to local churches. Our staff is trained in TBRI (Trust-Based Relational Intervention), which is designed to meet the needs of vulnerable children. We also offer family workshops on child protection, sexual abuse, and health and nutrition. When we preserve families, we are not only helping the children we serve today but also helping future generations.

On our beautiful 8-acre campus, we operate an award-winning **Christian Bilingual School for Pre-K (Montessori) through 11th grade**, open to children in the community. Parents attend our Parents’ School, which features guest speakers on homework help, positive parenting, and other helpful themes.



Our **Foster Care Program**, one of the first in the country, places abandoned, abused, or vulnerable children with loving, volunteer foster families from local churches in the community who have undergone our intensive training and accreditation program. We support these families with visits, home improvements, workshops, spiritual guidance, and financial support.



What You Will Do at Family Life Missions

Each group will have a specific schedule that serves one or two families in our Family Preservation Program. Families apply for home renovations through their local church during



their year-long training in our program. With the help of our staff and local workers, groups will renovate a home, provide a VBS-style outreach to the community, participate in a Health and Wellness Fair and Worship Service, and have a day as tourists in Catacamas! Our staff will work with your Team Leader to prepare the trip schedule to be shared with the group.

At the end of each home renovation, we celebrate with the family and give thanks to God. We have an official ribbon cutting for the new home and we share a meal with the family and the community so you can spend time with your new friends!



During the Health and Wellness Fair, teams will help staff members in learning modules and hand out 100 packets to the community. All supplies (except the Bibles) will be purchased in Honduras and ready for assembly when you arrive. The Bibles will be shipped to the leader's home a month before your mission. They will need to be distributed among your team to bring in their luggage to Honduras.



Your team will also prepare and give devotionals each morning to the 130 students at our Por Los Niños Christian School.



Family Life Missions Visitor's Policy

Family Life Missions seeks to provide a safe family environment where vulnerable children and families can learn who God is and form a strong attachment to Him. Every child and family is spiritually, physically, emotionally, socially, and psychologically supported.

The following visitor guidelines are based on what we believe is best for the children in our school and the children and families in the community, and on a code of conduct for those visiting our campus and community. National and foreign visitors must follow this policy while serving at FLM and in the Catacamas community.

Guidelines for Volunteers Visiting FLM

1. Group members must be 16 or older, and at least two adult volunteers must be present for each minor. The size of the group is at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer.
2. Visiting groups will be under the direct supervision of the National Director in Honduras.
3. Groups will be able to tour several areas of Catacamas and enjoy local scenery, food, and culture with an FLM guide.
4. When interacting with children, all visitors must remain in a group. No one-on-one visits are ever allowed with the children. Visitors may interact with the children in a kind and civil manner. For example, acknowledging the children, smiling, or giving a quick high-five are acceptable and standard ways to interact with them. A question about school or a comment on a child's beautiful drawing is also normal and acceptable. Children should be treated with the exact boundaries you typically use to interact with a child you do not know well in your church. You can chat casually and kindly with that child, but maintain a certain respectful distance.
5. Inappropriate interactions with the children include but are not limited to, kisses, overuse of close hugs, saying "I love you," spending an extended period with any one child or group of children, or singling out a child or group of children for special attention. These interactions may lead a vulnerable child to misunderstand your relationship with them and confuse the child.
6. Volunteers are expected to show modesty in their dress while wearing pants, skirts at or below the knee, longer shorts (such as Bermuda length), Capri pants, and shirts that are not



revealing. **Shirts should not cover shorts.** Please do not wear t-shirts with images or phrases that are inappropriate for our Christian values.

7. When working on a construction site, men must always leave their shirts on.
8. Consumption of drugs, alcohol, or tobacco is not permitted at any time during your visit to Honduras.
9. **Drink only bottled water and avoid ice while in Honduras.** If in doubt—do not eat or drink it! This includes brushing your teeth. Use bottled water. It is safe to take a shower and wash in the water, but do not open your mouth in the shower.
10. Do not allow anyone in your group to walk alone in Catacamas or Tegucigalpa. Only go out with the National Director's permission.
11. Groups can only go out after dark if they are with adult leaders and supervised by an FLM staff member.
12. Leaders should keep a copy of each member's passport in a safe place.
13. Report any injuries or illnesses to an FLM staff member.
14. When taking photos at PLN, only take group pictures that include two or more children. Before posting any photos to social media that include children, obtain permission from the CEO or the National Director, as some images of children cannot be published.
15. Each team member over 18 years of age must have a recent background check completed before traveling to Honduras.

When working with vulnerable children, we are responsible for assuring that volunteers serving with the children are safe and not causing any danger.

Group leaders should tell the FLM Chief Executive Officer when these checks have been completed.



Interesting Facts about Honduras

- It has a population of over 10 million
- The official language is Spanish.
- The capital is Tegucigalpa.
- The official currency is the Honduran Lempira (about 26:1 to the U.S. dollar). You can exchange your U.S. dollars for Lempira for snacks and souvenirs when you arrive.
- Honduras is the second-poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, with 66% of the population living below the poverty line, earning about \$5.60 per day. Approximately one out of five Hondurans lives in extreme poverty in rural areas on less than \$1.90 per day.
- Honduras is the second-largest country in Central America.
- Honduras is the only country that touches three Central American countries: Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua.
- Soccer is the primary sport in Honduras (called fútbol in Spanish).
- The stars on their flag represent the five original countries of Central America.
- September 15th is celebrated as Independence Day in Honduras.
- The leading export goods are coffee, bananas, and wood. And the coffee is so good!
- Children's Day/Día del Niño is celebrated every September 10.
- 48% of the population identify as Roman Catholic; 35% are Evangelicals; 15% identify with no religious beliefs; and the rest are other religions, such as Mormon, Jewish, and Baha'i.
- Education is free and compulsory through 6th grade in Honduras; however, families must pay for uniforms, registration, supplies, books, and transportation. Many families need help to afford these costs, and children often drop out of school before 6th grade.
- Honduras was devastated by Hurricane Mitch in 1998. At least 10,000 people were killed, and millions were left destitute. The damage was estimated at \$3 billion and set development back by decades. Two back-to-back hurricanes hit Honduras in November 2020, causing more families to lose their homes or jobs.
- COVID-19 hit Honduras hard as there was a lack of vaccines and proper medical care for those who contracted the virus.
- The weather in Honduras during the summer is HOT! **Pack sunscreen and a hat!**
- Honduras is in the Central Standard Time Zone (CST). It does not have daylight saving time, so it is one hour behind CST during summer.

Read about Honduras at these helpful websites:

U.S. State Department: <https://www.state.gov/countries-areas/honduras/>

U.S. Embassy in Honduras: <https://hn.usembassy.gov/>

Wiki Travel-Honduras: <https://wikitravel.org/en/Honduras>

CDC (Center for Disease Control) Health info for Honduras travelers:

https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/honduras?s_cid=nceqid-dgmq-travel-single-001

Online Currency Converter: <https://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/>

Travel Basics for the Trip

The team will arrive at the Palmerola airport in Comayagua. Airlines that currently service Honduras are American, United, and Spirit. The earlier the tickets are purchased, the cheaper the airfare. The group leader is responsible for making airline reservations for the group.

Everyone must have a valid passport to travel to Honduras. **Passports MUST be valid (not expired) for three months after entry into Honduras.** If a participant does not have a passport, begin the process immediately! Each team member needs to make two copies of their passport, put one in their luggage, and give one copy to the team leader.



Checked Luggage

Luggage is limited depending on the airline. Some allow one bag (50 lb. max), while others charge for the first bag. The group leader will inform the team of the luggage limit. Team members will be asked to carry Bibles for the Health and Wellness Fair.

Luggage should be labeled so that it can be easily identified. Many groups use a color theme and tie ribbons on their luggage to make it easy to find.

Carry-on Luggage

On most airlines, you may take one carry-on bag and one personal item (purse, pillow, etc.). Personal items must fit under the seat. Check with your airline for specific luggage sizes.

Everyone can bring one quart-sized bag, no more than 3 oz. of liquid per container, in a carry-on. Any other liquids will be confiscated during the airport security check-in and will not be returned. If there are medical needs that require liquids, please check with the airline, as there are exceptions for medicines.

Health Info

No vaccines are required to enter Honduras. However, you can check the CDC website for recommended immunizations and medications.

It is not required, but it is prudent to ensure your Tetanus vaccine is up to date.

It is advisable to bring OTC medicines such as **Pepto-Bismol tablets** (2 every morning coats your stomach!) and **Imodium** (for diarrhea).

Medicines you may want to bring that require a prescription:

- Cipro antibiotic
- Lomotil (for heavy diarrhea) and Phenergan or Zofran, or other medicine for nausea.

FAQ's (or all the misc. info you need to know!)

- When you leave the airport in Comayagua, team members may be asked where they will spend most of their time. The answer is Family Life Missions, Catacamas, Olancho. Your contact is José Francisco Chinchilla Zelaya. The customs officers have the right to open your bags.
- You will need to fill out a customs form online before you arrive and before you leave Honduras. **The Customs QR code for this form is at the end of this handbook.**
- **Keep baggage claim tickets until you have exited the airport.** It is very important to have them readily available, as a person may match the number on your luggage to the number on your ticket.
- **Do not drink the water!** The water is not purified, so you must only drink bottled water. This includes using only bottled water when brushing your teeth and rinsing your toothbrush. Do not open your mouth in the shower! We will provide bottled water.
- Eat only food cooked and served hot, or fruit from which you have removed the peel (not someone else, as they may have rinsed the food in water). Do not eat lettuce or other raw vegetables.
- **Do not flush any of your toilet paper in the toilet!** Use the waste can next to the toilet. Paper clogs the drainage systems and causes significant problems in Honduras.



- If you are in a public restroom and the toilet will not flush, there may be a bucket nearby that you will need to fill with water from the sink and manually flush the toilet.
- The electrical voltage in Honduras is the same as in the U.S. You do not need a converter.
- Cell phones work well in Honduras. Check with your carrier before you if you want an international plan. Hotels offer free Wi-Fi, and it is available free on our campus.
- You can download the **free app, WhatsApp**, and send free text messages via Wi-Fi anywhere in the world. A videophone is available on this app. A WhatsApp group will be set up for communication within your group while in Honduras.
- Tell your group leader immediately if you become ill, feel sick, or are injured. We can access Predisan Clinic in Catacamas, which has excellent medical staff if needed.
- Remember—do not go out at night unless you are with the entire group.
- Only bring something with you that can be replaced.
- Show respect for the culture and country you are visiting. Remember that English is not their language; however, many Hondurans speak English, so do not assume they cannot understand what you say. Interpreters are provided during your stay.
- Know a little Spanish? Use it! Your effort will be appreciated, and you may learn some new words!
- Being flexible should allow last-minute changes to the schedule.
- Be aware of the time and be ready to depart at the scheduled time.
- Avoid attitudes or actions that give the impression that you are here to “help out these poor people.” Treat everyone with respect in a Christ-like manner.
- Avoid giving candy to children. Before the trip, you will receive a list of needed clothing and shoes for the families you will be serving.
- Watch for cars and motorcycles! They do not slow down, and pedestrians do not have the right-of-way as in the U.S.
- Always keep your passport secure (with your group leader or on your person). Make an extra copy and give it to your group leader.
- Be discreet when exchanging currency in public or when making purchases.
- As cute as cats and dogs are, do not pet them! They may bite you. If you do touch an animal, wash your hands well.
- Ask permission before you take someone’s photo.



For Group Leaders

Below is a list of things to do as the leader of your mission group:

- Schedule team meetings and discuss the information in this handbook, including your agenda and the families you will be serving. Go over the Travel Basics with your group.
- At your request, a staff member can visit your team in person or via Zoom at one of your scheduled team meetings. You can email Lisa Steele at lisas@familylifemissions.org to submit the request.
- You are the communication connection between your group and FLM. You will have direct contact with the FLM Chief Executive Officer and Honduras National Director as you make plans.
- Book the airline flights for your group—the sooner, the cheaper! Airline reservations need to be made through United (via Houston) or American (via Miami) for arrival at Comayagua's Palmerola International Airport (XPL). Once made, send your airline information to Lisa Steele.
- Send a list of team members, ages, gender, and any special requests to Lisas@familylifemissions.org at least one month before your visit.
- **Anyone under 21** and not traveling with **both** parents **MUST** complete the letter (in this package), signed and notarized by both parents. You must be under 21 and have this to **be allowed to exit the county**. See the Forms page for the QR code to this letter.
- Register each member of your group using the form provided on the U.S. State Department site at <https://step.state.gov/STEP/Pages/Common/Citizenship.aspx>. Enrolling in the program allows the State Department to contact you with safety conditions during an emergency, natural disaster, civil unrest, or family emergency, and to help family and friends contact you in an emergency.
- **Make sure every team member has a valid passport that will not expire for at least 3 months after the end of your trip, with at least 1 blank page.**
- Set a transportation plan for when everyone should arrive at the airport for departure. The Honduras National Director and FLM staff will handle all transportation needs in Honduras.
- Encourage your team to learn basic phrases in Spanish! **Duolingo** is a great app to use and is free!
- Family Life Missions will provide a first-aid kit.
- Lodging and food costs include all meals, hotel, t-shirt, and ground transportation.
- Groups will stay on campus in a secure dorm-style home (Casa Misionera). Lodging in Tegucigalpa (the night before departure) will be in a safe, secure condominium reserved by FLM. Meals will be provided by our FLM cooking staff or at select restaurants.
- **We ask the sponsoring church to donate \$6,000** to cover the costs of the house renovations. FLM will cover any costs above that amount. Our FLM staff will have all materials at the worksite. We have most tools, but we can always use extra. If you have construction tools you can donate or purchase, please speak to Lisa Steele.
- Each team member is responsible for souvenirs and airport food.

Individual Trip Costs

ITEM	COST
Airline ticket	\$800-\$1200
Food & Lodging	\$650 (includes all meals, lodging, transportation, and team shirt)
Health & Wellness Fair Bags/Bibles	\$56
TOTAL per person	\$1506-\$1906

Website: www.familylifemissions.org.

On our website, be sure to check out “Our Team” under the **About** tab. You will meet all of our staff on your visit!

Facebook (several updates will be posted during the trip): www.facebook.com/flmhonduras

Instagram: @flmhonduras

Packing List

- ☐ Clothing for working outdoors and every day (jeans, longer shorts, capris, short-sleeve, and long-sleeve shirts).
- ☐ Clothes for Sunday: We will worship with the community in an outdoor park prior to the Health and Wellness Fair. This is an ideal time to wear your FLM team shirt you receive upon arrival. Hats are usually a good idea as the sun can be very strong.
- ☐ Rain poncho (weather is unpredictable)
- ☐ Shoes: closed-toe sturdy shoes you can get muddy, sturdy sandals, tennis shoes
- ☐ Gloves (sturdy work gloves) for construction
- ☐ Insect repellent (with DEET or equivalent; mosquitoes are a problem); put in checked luggage (no aerosols) unless 3 oz. or less or use insect repellent wipes (can purchase on Amazon)
- ☐ Sunscreen (the higher the number, the better!)
- ☐ Hat or cap for sun protection
- ☐ Sunglasses
- ☐ Personal hygiene items
- ☐ Personal medicines
- ☐ Bible and journal
- ☐ Snacks (stay away from chocolate or anything that will melt!) We will also provide snacks at the house where you will be staying
- ☐ Money for personal use
- ☐ Hand sanitizer
- ☐ Do not wear any camo clothing or army fatigues. It is not culturally appropriate.
- ☐ Men must wear a shirt at all times, including at work sites.
- ☐ Shorts can be worn at the work site, but must be to the knees, and a shirt cannot cover them.

Any liquids in your carry-on must fit in a quart-sized bag, and each item can be no more than 3 ounces. Follow the 3-1-1 rule:



Required Forms

Use these QR codes or use the link to fill out these forms. Everyone must complete the first three forms one month before your trip. Parents of minors must complete the last form.

FLM Child Protection Policy



FLM Liability/Social Media Form



Medical Release Form



Minor Child Travel Consent Form (for anyone under 21 years of age)



*This form must be downloaded and a hard copy printed and signed with a Notary. If one parent is on the trip, the other must sign. If neither parent is on the trip, both parents must sign it.

One week prior to your flight, everyone must fill out an electronic customs form. You must fill this out to enter the country. You will also fill it out before you leave.

In the white box at the top of the form, you can click on it and choose **en_US** to change the form to English.

Customs Form:

https://sisglobal.aduanas.gob.hn/Pech/#/plataforma/otra_gestiones/formularioDJRV



IMPORTANT: Only one form per family

***** Take a picture of the QR code or print a copy once you fill out the form as it will be scanned.** You cannot enter or leave the country without filling out this form.

We hope to see you soon!

Emergency Contacts:

Lisa Steele, CEO 615-881-6688 Lisas@familylifemissions.org

José Chinchilla, *HN National Director* 504-9921-7109 jose@familylifemissions.org

Your Team Leader: