

# Essential Guatemala Info

## The Location

A beautiful land of mountains, volcanoes and lakes with ancient colonial villages and Mayan ruins. You will see many Indians who still wear their traditional garb of beautiful handwoven, colorful garb. Our team will serve primarily in Guatemala City and nearby villages.

## The Condition

Thousands live in over crowded shanty barrios with many living on garbage dumps. Guatemalans mostly speak Spanish, but with 19 people groups, there are 41 different languages! Unfortunately, while many Guatemalans consider themselves Christians because of their traditional Catholic upbringing, only a small percent personally know Jesus. Many have still not even heard the Gospel! The big need is to demonstrate what it looks like to have a personal relationship with God. Though they're very devout and religious, most Guatemalans don't know Him!

## The Strategy

Friendly by nature, it's easy to meet people and initiate conversations in Guatemala. When sharing your faith, make sure to explain a personal relationship with Jesus, not religion. Recognize that in Guatemala, Christianity (or Catholicism) is more of a culture than a faith. Don't ask if people are Christians. Skip that question and instead ask if they know Jesus personally. If you've performed the drama, ask what parts of the presentation relate to their life or the lives of people they know. Poverty and alcohol are big issues down there, as are depression and a longing for something more. As you talk, ask questions about their lives and answer questions about your own. Strategically use your personal testimony to show them what a personal relationship with Jesus looks like. Briefly and honestly share your struggles (but don't glorify them), and then focus on how Jesus saved you, changed you, healed you or gave you hope!

Also, **practice your Spanish!** A strong and immediate bridge can be built with your new Guatemalan friends if you know just a few phrases in their language. The fact that you made an attempt will mean a lot. You'll develop a close rapport almost immediately!

## **Challenges for Prayer**

Begin to pray daily for Guatemala. Specifically pray for retention of converts and the follow up work our ministry partners will be doing. People are often willing to accept Jesus, but religion is more of a cultural ideal than a personal lifestyle in Guatemala. Many who convert never connect with a local church, grow and serve there. Pray that God would orchestrate ways for new believers to connect to the Christian community after you go home.

Finally, pray for churches in Guatemala to cultivate a missional vision. In just the last decade, Guatemalan Christians have started sending their own missionaries to other countries to share the Gospel and their desire for missions is on fire. Pray for this to grow and increase as more and more Guatemalan missionaries are called, trained and deployed to the nations!

## **Our Ministry Schedule**

As we worship and serve together, our team will bring light into the spiritual darkness and help the truth of the Gospel shine brighter than ever!! The two weeks will include:

- Community development projects
- Performing Gospel presentations in schools
- Church services, home visits, feedings or sports ministry (baseball/basketball)
- Adventure Day – Climb a volcano, shop local artisan markets and more...