



## Thank You!

First of all, how amazing you've made it this far! If you're reading this, that hopefully means you're serious about visiting us in the DR.

Did you know we're already asking God to send you? And, we're honestly looking forward to having you; **whether** it's your first time, or your tenth. Our program is founded on people coming to see us, allowing God to change their lives (and their perspectives) AND ours, and then getting involved in God's plan together!

So, thanks. We are seriously looking forward to having you.!

## Participant Handbook: Why bother?

You already know everything in here, right? This is your 4<sup>th</sup> MannaDR trip, or you've led a team *somewhere* or been on a mission trip *sometime*.

Well, maybe you do have everything covered. Read this anyway. We promise it will make your team's week *more* ... More moving, more impacting, more excellent for the kingdom and cause of Christ.

## Welcome ...

Welcome to MannaDR's youth mission program. We hope this experience will draw your team closer to God and help you better see the world the way Jesus sees it.

For one week, your team will be involved in ministries that focus on being Jesus to people in word and action. You will have an opportunity to reach hurting, needful people and demonstrate the love of Christ.

We pray that your team will see how God can, and will use your lives to make a real difference in a world of suffering and need. May God bless you richly as you dedicate your effort to His will.

- MannaDR Staff

# Why we 're here.

MannaDR Youth Mission Program exists to expand your view of

- **The World:** Experience life in a developing country.
- **The Kingdom:** Serve alongside missionaries and discover how (and where) your talents can make a difference.

**God:** Know His love more fully, and seek His desires for your life

## What will we do?

We'll work and we'll play. We'll reflect and pray and praise. Every week is different, but remember: *It's not about you.* It's about bringing glory to God's kingdom in the Dominican Republic.

Some experiences will resonate strongly; others will be difficult, times of stretching and growing. A synopsis of potential service opportunities is below. The MannaDR team will prepare and email a detailed schedule before your trip according to the needs and conditions at the time.

Life and ministry in a developing country is NOTHING if not flexible. We're not on your home turf.

So, be flexible.

- **Reflect.** Quiet time in the morning, and devotions at night.
- **Worship.** The local church worships at the Manna camp on Sunday mornings.
- **Teach.** Plan a VBS to teach children about God's love.
- **Work.** Paint, mix concrete or do simple construction at local homes, schools or churches.
- **Play.** The kids that live at the children's homes or in the village look forward to teams all year.
- **Commune.** Share a morning and a meal with a Dominican family in their home.
- **Comfort.** Sing, pray and visit with the suffering at the Puerto Plata Hospital.
- **Feed.** Provide a meal for the Haitians and Dominicans who live on the garbage dump.
- **Reach.** Participate in a youth night at the Christian Center in Rio San Juan.
- **Relax.** Shop in Rio San Juan, sunbathe and body surf at our favorite beach, Playa Grande.

# What do I need to do prepare?

Well, you are on a team. You're coming to a developing country to serve God. It's a big deal. A week like no other, but ... it's so important to prepare with your team.

Lives are changed here. The degree to which that happens, in large part, depends on how well you prepare.

Maybe you've done this before. Make it better, more excellent. Go the extra mile. Prepare with your team, call each other to a higher level. God will show up ... He will not disappoint. In ALL things, He deserves the best we can give Him, both at home *and* in the Dominican Republic.

**The following is what you MUST have prepared.**

# Prepare for the week.

- **Meet.** Your team should meet regularly to pray, plan, and practice for their mission and ministry in the Dominican Republic. Learn about the history and culture of the country you're traveling to. Know basic Spanish phrases. Hold each other accountable. Delegate and divide into smaller teams to prepare worship, VBS and Christian Center times. Again, call each other to a higher level. You're coming to the Dominican to share and show the love of Jesus. Share it well.
- **Morning quiet time & evening devotions:** Have team members bring a journal and a Bible for morning quiet times. Choose someone (before you leave) to guide the praise and discussion at nightly devotionals. Questions such as "For what moment today am I most grateful? Least grateful? When did I feel most alive today? Least alive?" (*Sleeping with Bread*, Linn, 1996.) Or "Where did you see Jesus today?" **all help** reflect on the day's experiences.
- **Sunday worship:** Choose someone to prepare and share the message. Think Bible class not sermon. Interaction and discussion are welcome, and a translator will be available. Also, it's a great encouragement when teams share songs and readings in Spanish and English.
- **VBS.** Coordinating with the MannaDR staff, choose a theme. Perhaps a Bible story or a focus on a Christian value. Teams are encouraged to choose a theme that draws upon the theme set for each summer.
  - Prepare drama, skits, puppets, stories and songs to bring the message to life. Speakers need to be comfortable with the Spanish words. Or, have a Spanish speaker record audio track beforehand. Bring everything you will need for your lesson(s) with you. If you have a special need please check with MannaDR staff several weeks before your arrival.
  - Prepare games and crafts to compliment the theme. Dominican children love art and expressing themselves creatively, so going the extra mile on the crafts will be worth it. Bring all supplies with you, including a snack (crackers, cookies or candy) to hand out at the end. Emphasize the importance of connecting with the children – helping them with crafts or playing or singing together.
  - The VBS should last an hour and a half, start to finish. Most teams will do the same VBS a total of 2 times for different children. Prepare for at least 100 children at each VBS. Check with MannaDR staff for closer estimates.
  - Okay. Deep breath. We're raising the bar here. **New requirement:** Perform your VBS for your church, youth group, or children's ministry before you come.

# Prepare for the week. (cont'd)

- **Hospital & Dump.**
  - Be prepared to connect with people, pray with them and bless them in Spanish or English. Don't be afraid to touch those in the hospital or at the dump. Touch has healing power. Key Spanish phrases are included in this handbook.
  - Prepare care packs for adults filled with travel toiletries, pen, paper, and/or small Spanish Bibles. Prepare for children by adding small toys and/or crayons. Teams will hand out care packs at the hospital and at the dump. Prepare approximately 200 care packs for adults and 100 children. Asking for your church's help collecting and assembling supplies is a great way to involve them.
- **Christian Center.** Prepare fun youth group activities for the Rio San Juan teens. Think youth group, not Sunday night church. Skits and talents with a Biblical application are awesome. Check with MannaDR staff before you head to the DR for culture cues.
- **Attire.**
  - Closed shoes are mandatory for work projects, hospital and dump visits. No sandals, not even Keens. Bring work gloves for work projects. It's a good idea to bring extra closed toed shoes in case it rains on work or dump day.
  - Boys should bring long pants, girls bring (at least knee length) skirts and short-sleeve shirts for church, and VBS. Modest shorts (no shorter than finger tip length) or capris and t-shirts or sleeveless tops (NO tank tops, spaghetti straps) are fine for most other times. At the hospital and dump visits, it is best everyone to wear lightweight, long pants due to insects. For beach day, swim trunks for boys, one-pieces or tankinis for girls. Ladies, please do not wear anything that reveals your midriff or a lot of cleavage.
  - MannaDR staff will remind your team before each day what to wear and bring, and will ask team members to change if necessary.
  - With paint projects and concrete mixing (etc.), often times clothes get ruined. Please bring work clothes that can be discarded or donated locally. **Trust us on this one ... you will not want to take them home with you!**
- **Breakfast & Snack Food.** Each team member needs to bring personal breakfast and snack food. Lunch and dinner are provided, and there is coffee and at times, seasonal fresh fruit at breakfast. The MannaDR camp is in the country. You will not be able to shop for food after arrival. If you think you might get hungry, bring food. All food will be stored in the kitchen – please bring Zip-Lock bags to keep it fresh and critter-free.

- **Helping the MannaDR mission** Supplies for the Children's Home Library Learning Center or Rio San Juan Christian Center: school and craft supplies, Spanish books, and/or good, clean DVD's with Spanish Language AUDIO (subtitles won't work nor will VHS tapes) are always welcome gifts. Check with MannaDR staff for current needs.
- **Comforts.** You in essence need to prepare as though you were going on a rough camp outing with minimal access to electricity.
  - The Dominican Republic is very hot, especially during the summer. Floor fans are provided for a few hours before bedtime, but if you are particularly sensitive to heat, you might want to consider a personal small battery operated fan. Electricity IS NOT available to plug fans or other items into. **These type items** need to be battery operated.
  - Mosquitoes are always a challenge and you need appropriate preparedness to ward them off. (All beds are furnished with mosquito nets.) The sun is strong; bring sunscreen.
  - The humidity is often high, and fatigue can set in very quickly especially during the summer months. Bring lots of snacks that can refurbish your energy like high protein or high complex carb content. The work is hard, but almost always enjoyable when it's done together serving the Lord.
  - Water is conserved at all times, including **military style showers** etc.
  - No A/C or hot water, or readily available comforts such as ice or convenience store items **are available.**
  - We will have a larger variety of cold drinks (sodas, box juices, bottle waters, etc. on ice) at the camp, but we spend much of the time away from the camp compound.
  - **Water bottles are a must!** Bring a good large water bottle for refilling. Keeping well hydrated is critical to a good experience. **You will need to drink lots of water, so all are encouraged to bring Gatorade/Poweraide rehydration type drink additives.**
  - The weather in the DR can be very unpredictable; often you are faced with daily rain and mud or at times, little or no rain. Summer months can be wet and it's hard to dry out clothing/shoes during rainy seasons. Try to get a weather forecast for the week before you come.
  - **Remain flexible.** Adjust accordingly and prepare for the unexpected!
- **Donations:** At the end of your trip (and while you're planning) consider bring things that can be left for the local ministry. Used clothing, or linens, or shoes, or whatever might be discarded or old to you in the US can be a great blessing to the local population. Please consider packing with the intention of donating much of what you brought at the end of your trip. (Note: Most Dominicans in need are much much smaller than the normal US citizen, so large clothing is less helpful. Children/adolescent items are also very helpful.)
  - During workday projects, plan on your clothing possibly getting ruined. You will probably sweat a lot, so bring the appropriate amount of clothing. Access to clothes washing facilities does not exist.

- **For the ladies**, dresses are less a requirement than in the past; capris and other appropriate styles generally work well for most events. White clothes for men and women, though cool, can get very soiled. If it rains or otherwise gets wet, white t-shirts are a problem. **With all clothing, err on the side of conservative but comfortable.**
- **Security:** For the protection of our visitors we ask that you deposit your passports and excess monies with us when you arrive. There will be times when you can use money at convenience stores and shops, but the dormitories are not Fort Knox. We have safe boxes and other more secure locations if you wish to take advantage of them. Cameras and electronic equipment must be watched closely and kept reasonably out of sight.
- **Working Together:** Each team member is expected to fulfill chores around the camp area each day. This generally includes cleaning, loading vehicles with supplies, food preparation, and other duties as assigned. The day you leave, you are asked to leave the camp in better condition than you found it. Please be sure you contribute your fair share of help to this effort.
- **Interns:** The camp generally has 4 or more interns from US universities each summer. **Summer interns are there to help facilitate the summer program and to make your team experience more complete.** Interns do not serve during other times of the year. Outside of the summer months, you are expected to contribute even more help to the visit by assisting with duties normally assigned to interns such as preparing for outings, safety watch duties, counseling of visitors, preparing of activities, etc.
- **Camp Employees:** We have local employees that are there to help prepare meals, keep the camp clean, etc. Spend some time getting to know them, **encouraging them** and expressing your appreciation for their work.
- **Wanting to Help:** As you see needs, please consult with the local missionaries about the best way to help. Often times, locals are accustomed to visitors and know how to express very compelling needs, even when the needs are not so compelling. There are many needy people in the DR; we can help you connect with those people. The average Dominican makes about \$150 per month, so their lifestyle and their culture is very different. If they are presented with resources or opportunities outside of their culture, the ability to make wise decisions is often hampered. **Please be very aware of how you want to help and how you come across.** Sometimes your words of encouragement are misread as commitments or promises. Use words that don't speak of future help unless you are committed to that help, and then, only after you've consulted with an on-site missionary. Words like "might" or "possible" can be heard very differently.
- **Preparedness:** Start planning and working early. The language learning and adapting to a developing country VBS and a new culture challenges many people. **Start preparing as early as possible.** Focus on about 5-10 simple Spanish Christian songs you can sing with the local groups. Learn basic Spanish greetings (see attached) like hello, how are you, thank you, what is your name, my name is... etc. As mentioned above, **study a little Dominican culture.** Make your activities as simple to understand as possible. We often get comments that the teams feel less prepared, but much of that depends on each team and team member starting to prepare early.

# Prepare to travel.

- **Schedule.** To begin securing a date for your team, your team leader must email Tom Martin [tom@mannadr.org](mailto:tom@mannadr.org), MannaDR's program coordinator. MannaDR staff will do their best to accommodate the scheduling concerns of all groups, but please remember that whole *flexibility* thing... To secure the date, Tom must receive a **non-refundable deposit** of \$1000.
- Checks must be made **payable to Manna Dominican Republic**, and sent to:  

**Tom Martin**  
*MannaDR Program Coordinator*  
PO Box 1875  
Searcy, AR 72145-1875  
501.278.1431 (cell / voice mail)
- **Passports.** You must have a passport to travel to the Dominican Republic and re-enter the US. If there is someone on your team who does not have a passport, they need to begin the process NOW! Depending on demand, it could take up to 3 months to receive a passport. Go to: [travel.state.gov/passport](http://travel.state.gov/passport) to learn how to obtain a passport. If you already have a passport, please check the expiration date. Your passport must not expire within 6 months of your trip.
- **Medical.** Please help your team leader to assure the medical wellbeing of each team member by doing the following.
  - MannaDR recommends that each team member fill out the Health History and Permission to Treat Minor forms included in this packet. As team leader, make 2 sets of copies of the forms, including copies of passports and insurance cards. Leave one set with a contact in America, and bring one set with you.
  - It is a good idea to purchase medical travel insurance. This can be purchased through the airline you are traveling on or another provider.
  - For shots and vaccinations, MannaDR recommends that team members be current on tetanus, school vaccines, Hepatitis series and CDC recommendations [cdc.gov/travel](http://cdc.gov/travel).
  - **Please, bring ALL your personal medications in your carry-on baggage.** If a member of your team has special medical needs (i.e. diabetes, heart condition, severe allergies etc.), please notify the MannaDR staff in advance of your trip and again **on** the day you arrive to insure they are well aware of the need. MannaDR is not a food allergy free zone. Please have members with food allergies carry the appropriate medication with them at all times and bring food alternatives to use when necessary.
- **Flights.** Your team is responsible for making and paying for its own flight arrangements. Your leader must communicate the itinerary to the MannaDR staff before booking. This ensures that all parties are on the same page, and provides space to iron out potential scheduling conflicts. Book all flights, round trip through the Puerto Plata Airport (POP).

- o **Packing.** Each team member should pack enough clothing and supplies for a full week. See suggestions above. Please, bring at least one change of clothes in your carry on bag due to the fact that baggage to the DR is often delayed. See attached packing list for details.
  
- o **Money.** Raising money to make this mission trip possible bonds and unifies your team. Get creative. Have a babysitting night, garage sale, pink flamingos – whatever your team comes up with, donations always accepted. Tired of the same stuff - see [ABC's of fundraising](#) for hundreds of zany ideas. Set a fundraising timeline with workable goals (deposit, 50%, 100% due by date). MannaDR recommends you have all funds in hand no later than 1 month before your departure date. The total cost per team member averages \$1250-\$1500, depending on airfare. Keep the following items in mind as your team prepares a budget.
  - The 2010, per team member Camp fee are **\$300** and are **due** (*in cash*) to MannaDR staff upon arrival at the camp. This covers room and board, transportation, and work projects.
  - Supplies for VBS, teaching materials or care packs
  - Travel and/or medical travel insurance
  - Passport and/or vaccination fees.
  - En route meals and/or hotel if necessary.
  - Round trip airfare to Puerto Plata (POP).
  - Tourist visa for Dominican Republic purchased at airport ( as of 09/09 \$10/person).
  - Spending money for souvenirs

**Consider before you Commit:**

We offer a very fun and unique adventure in God's world, but it's not always easy and sometimes it's very hard. This program has been developed specifically for young adults and teens **from the United States** to discover and share their talents **in ways that** can be used for God. However, adults have often had amazing life changing experiences as well.

If you are not in relatively good shape, do not adapt to camping conditions, have a low tolerance to different foods, don't like rice (you'll eat a lot of it!), don't sleep well in camp bunk beds, need ice cold drinks frequently, sensitive to the usual camp odors, or have other considerations that might not match our experience, please consider if this is the right format for your service. On the other hand, many folks that thought they were not in good shape or were not cut out for this type of experience end up having an amazing time and come back often. **We want each of you to be well informed as you consider and make your decision.**

Most important, your flexibility and positive attitude, when things are tough, (and they will be) are the most important things you can bring with you.

Please be aware that as of 2009 we initiated a survey that is being filled out by all attendees just before the end of their trips. For the 2009-year, we learned that there are still many things that we as the MannaDR staff need to do to improve our hosting. Please be assured that we have read (and discussed) the surveys and are planning our 2010 experience to include consideration of the surveys. At some levels, visiting groups need to understand the condition, target audience, and intent of our program, but we also have many opportunities to improve your experience; we plan on focusing on those opportunities to serve our groups in 2010.

We want to insure that the experience MannaDR offers, and your desire to serve and visit in the Dominican Republic are a good match. Therefore, we are asking that **each team member** read this document and sign a statement that they have read the document and the team leader collect those statements.

**Out of Touch:** Unless it's an emergency or preplanned event, you will likely have limited or no Internet or telephone access while here. In an emergency or for a planned event, the MannaDR staff can be reached from the USA 24/7 via Tom Martin or other prearranged contact numbers/emails in the DR.

If you are considering but have more questions, please do not hesitate to contact Tom Martin or the MannaDR team. We'll be happy to describe the experience we offer in more detail. We truly want the experience to be a positive life-changing event. It has been for many others!

## In Closing

We're thrilled to partner with you as we join what God is doing in this little corner of the world. We'll be in close touch. Our thoughts and prayers are with you as you prepare your team. For more information about the MannaDR ministries and staff visit <http://www.mannadr.org/>

### Tom Martin

*MannaDR Program Coordinator*

PO Box 1875

Searcy, AR 72145-1875

501.278.1431 (cell / voice mail)

[tom@mannadr.org](mailto:tom@mannadr.org) (Tom will answer emails within 48 hours.)

# Dominican Republic 101

So you're coming to the Dominican Republic, huh? Wanna know some cool stuff about the place?

- When Columbus sailed the ocean blue, guess where he landed? That's right - the Dominican!
- It's on Hispaniola, the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest Caribbean island, and is located between Cuba and Puerto Rico.
- The Dominican Republic shares the island with Haiti.
- Dominicans speak Spanish and are mostly (in name only) Catholic.
- Captain Jack Sparrow was never here, but there's a long history of pirates and treasure hunters.
- Several times in its history, the Dominican Republic has been a U.S. territory.
- The first roads, university, and cathedral in the New World were built in the Dominican Republic.
- Population is approximately 8.5 million, with 2.5 million in the capital city, Santo Domingo. Estimates put the number of Dominican immigrants in New York at *over 1 million*.
- Dominicans eat so much rice and red beans, they joke that they should be on the country's flag.
- For fun? Dominoes, cock fighting, baseball, merengue music and going to the river are big.
- Tourism accounts for more than \$1.3 billion in annual earnings. Money *sent* to Dominicans from Dominicans living abroad is *also* estimated to be about \$1.3 billion per year.

## Spanish 101

**Please** : por favor

**Thank you** : gracias

**Good** : bien

**Bad** : mal

**Help** : ayuda

**Bathroom** : el baño

**Where?** : ¿donde?

**How much?** : ¿cuanto?

**How are you ?** : ¿como estás?

**My name is** : me llamo

**What's your name?** : ¿como se llama?

**How old are you?** : ¿cuantos años tiene?

**I'm from the United States** : soy de los estados unidos.

**God bless** : Dios te bendiga

**What hurts?** ¿que le duele?

**Prayer:** Padre Nuestro, bendice esta gente. Gracias por amarnos. En el nombre de su hijo, Amen.

# Packing 101

## Bring it:

- Twin sheets, pillow
- Towel, washcloth, beach towel
- Flashlight
- Clothes for a week; several will get soiled with paint or work activities; many get wet because of hot/humid conditions or rain; plan accordingly
- Tennis shoes; they get wet; need easy cleaning/drying material
- Toiletries, including any personal medications
- Breakfast and snack food (high protein; high in complex carbs)
- Bible, pen, journal
- Backpack / camera
- Water bottle (quart / liter size)

## Comes in handy:

- Extra memory card for camera
- Cameras with video/audio capability
- Extra batteries for camera, flashlight
- Sunglasses, hat
- Zip-lock bags
- Treats to share with children (candy, balloons, toys - always check with MannaDR staff first)(no chocolate – melts too easily)
- Rainwear
- Individual drink mixes for water bottles
- Bug spray; sunscreen
- Extra snacks to share
- Shower shoes
- Hiking boots
- Wet wipes or hand sanitizer
- Extra closed toed shoes in case of rain
- Battery operated personal fan (no access to 24/7 electricity in dorms)
- Light blanket if nights are cool

## Don ' t even think about it.

- Hair dryer, curling iron or anything electronic
- iPods, video games, cell phones – okay during travel, but not while you're in the Dominican, please.

Electronics and valuables will be locked in the camp safe and returned to their owners on beach day