



Tuesday, January 16, 2018

Dear Students and Parents,

Grace Ministries International (GMI) has invited teens from around the United States to partner together during the EXITE youth mission trip to Bonaire and Curacao from July 9 to July 25.

This is an exciting opportunity for us as a group, as well as an excellent chance to partner with students from around the country and grow new relationships as we build upon those among our Berean youth. GMI has posted trip specific details on their website (<https://gracem.org/exite/>).

Ordinarily, this trip coincides with our regional camp, so we have not been able to participate. I am excited with the potential of what the future holds for this partnership, and also for the powerful experience this can bring to our students and their families.

There will be a brief parent meeting on Wednesday, January 24 from 5:50-6:30 to discuss the trip and how participants can work together for fund raising and support, and also how we can fulfill the required pre-trip training to which GMI is asking each participant be dedicated.

TRIP INFORMATION

- July 8 – Travel to Grand Rapids, MI. Pastor Kevin will fly with the Seattle students to Grand Rapids. Our lodging in GR will be at Grace Bible College.
- July 9-12 – Boot Camp at Grace Bible College. Meals are included.
- July 12 – Travel to Curacao.
- July 21 – Travel to Bonaire.
- July 25 – Return to Seattle (flying directly from Curacao).

COST

The estimated out-of-pocket cost for the trip is \$2100 per person, plus pocket money for shopping and souvenirs. Each individual is responsible for their portion of the total cost for the trip. The breakdown of costs is:

- \$850 – EXITE fees (room & board, local transportation, boot camp costs, project donations, etc.)
- \$800* – Estimated round-trip plane fare to Curacao
- \$300* – Estimated airfare to Grand Rapids
- \$150* – Estimated airfare to Bonaire
- \$2100 – Approximate total cost

*These amounts are estimates, only. The final total cost is subject to change.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

I have spoken with Don Ten Hoeve, the EXITE Team Coordinator about trip specifics which are not on the website or FAQ page.

- At present, the cap for student team members is 9-14. Three adult male leaders (including myself) and two adult female leaders will be accompanying the students during the entire trip.

- EXITE requires only a tetanus vaccine. The CDC recommends a Hep A and Typhoid vaccine but they are not required. There is such a wide spectrum of opinions on the value of vaccinations today. Each parent can decide about vaccines for their student.
- We do require that each student have health insurance that will cover them while in Curacao and Bonaire. EXITE will cover all medical costs during the trip but will need to be reimbursed by the family afterwards. If the family medical insurance does not have overseas coverage, there are very economical short term travel plans that are available through companies like IMG.
- If they do not already have one, **students will need to order their passport right away** (at their own expense) after they send in their EXITE application. GMI will need a copy of their passport by the time I buy our plane tickets. If they have a passport, it must have an expiration date no earlier than Feb 6, 2019. In other words, everyone's passport must be valid for 6 months after our trip.
- Every student must be willing and able to do a daily devotional for 6 weeks before the trip and then meet with an adult mentor in their church once/week to discuss the weekly study and pray together. EXITE will provide the study guides and the student will select his/her mentor.

RAISING FUNDS

As previously stated, each family is responsible for the total cost of the trip. I am committed to assist families who apply for the trip by exploring scholarship and fundraising opportunities to help offset the total cost. In the past, we have found ways which relieved a significant portion of the out of pocket expenses. We encourage individuals to also find creative ways to help supplement the total cost.. Various ways which we can partner together are listed below with an asterisk (*), as well as creative suggestions for students to be proactive toward securing funds.

- *Request scholarship assistance from the Berean Mission Committee.
- *Support letters.
- *Sunday morning pastry sales.
- *Youth Basketball concessions.
- *Youth room pop sales.
- Family garage sale.
- Student contribution from job/neighborhood service projects.
- Other? Be creative!

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

If, after prayerful consideration, you feel God's call upon your heart to join the team in Curacao and Bonaire, log on to <https://gracem.org/exite-application/> and complete the online registration, and send your \$100 deposit in the form of a personal check or money order made payable to:

Grace Ministries International
PO Box 9405
Grand Rapids, MI 49509

Please forward any questions or areas which require clarity to me before the January 24 meeting to help insure the most productive time for us. I am looking forward to seeing the positive impact this opportunity will have upon our students and families!

~Pastor Kevin

