

## 2026 BAJA TRIP GUIDE

*OUR MISSION // We transform the world by inspiring people to follow Jesus, deepen their faith and reflect God's heart through tangible acts of kindness.*

*OUR VISION // We exist to provide transformative experiences that serve others and inspire everyone to take a next step on their spiritual journey.*

### OUR VALUES

- *We value loving others and sharing Jesus with them.*
- *We believe the best way to do this around the world is to partner with high-capacity national leaders committed to the ministry of the local church.*
- *We champion global partners who are effectively reaching their communities, meeting spiritual, physical, and emotional needs.*
- *We believe that investing in a child's life is our best hope for the future.*
- *We value and pursue sustainability.*
- *We believe Global Compassion trips are a catalyst for spiritual growth.*
- *We value acts of service that honor God and create a heightened desire in others to consider Jesus' invitation to follow Him.*

### WELCOME TO GLOBAL COMPASSION!

#### A NOTE FROM GENE APPEL

Thank you for unleashing compassion on a Global Compassion adventure with Eastside. This is so much more than a weekend trip. Our prayer is that this trip will be catalytic as God reveals His plans and purposes. And that He will give you a new vision for how you can be a light back home.

So many Eastsiders look back at trips like these as defining moments in their spiritual walks. As we often say around here, before God can do something through us, He's got to do something in us. This trip may be the vehicle that God uses to give you a vision of his plans and purposes for your life, as you see what He is doing right across the border.

I'm confident that God will overwhelm your heart as you unleash compassion. May He open your eyes in fresh ways as He uses your gifting to impact the surrounding communities of Rosarito. Are you ready?

### OUR MINISTRY PARTER

Tijuana Christian Mission (TCM) was started in 1965 as a church plant in Tijuana, Mexico. At the request of a church in the San Diego area, Sergio and Marta Gomez moved from southern Mexico to serve as pastors of a new church plant in Tijuana. It soon became apparent that there was a need for a children's home in the neighborhood in which they were living. In 1972 the City of Refuge Children's Home (Ciudad de Refugio) opened. Since that time, it has truly been a refuge for the needy children of Tijuana. In 2006, the doors of the Rosarito campus, Hacienda Victoria, were opened. An average of 75 children, plus staff, call TCM home.

### **CONSIDERING A TRIP**

Considering a family-friendly beyond borders experience over a long weekend? Our trips to Rosarito might be perfect for you! Just a few hours away along the coastal route between Tijuana and Ensenada, The City of Refuge Children's Home has served hundreds of orphaned and abandoned children for over fifty years. For more than 20 years, thousands of Eastsiders just like you have served to build and enhance this center and the surrounding community. On our trips, you will take part in building projects, children's programming, and reaching out to the community all while making new friends you may keep for a lifetime. Our trips are a great way for anyone, young or old, to experience God in a cross-cultural setting.

### **TRIP INFORMATION**

Cost | \$130 adults and teens. \$90 for Children 5-12. Due to the uneven ground and property hazards, children under 5 are not recommended. Fee includes on-site meal and on-site accommodations. Optional hotel fees are additional and are arranged by the traveler.

Age Requirements | All ages welcome with parents. NOTE: There are few paved areas. Ground is uneven. Programs and experiences are not geared toward preschool children.

Physical Requirements | Can handle mostly unpaved, uneven terrain, some walking up and downhill and lifting. Comfortable coastal climate but no A/C.

Transportation | This is a 300-mile round trip. You are responsible for driving yourself to and from Rosarito. We caravan across the border to make the navigation as worry-free as possible.

### **SAFETY**

There is an inherent risk with international travel. We encourage travelers to be fully informed by visiting [travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov) for current recommendations by the US Department of State regarding travel to the state of Baja, Mexico. The State Department regularly updates its recommendations and precautions for travel. While Eastside cannot guarantee your safety, we are in constant communication with our in-country partners. We trust their judgment regarding visitation and will heed their advice.

We also exercise the following precautions on every trip:

1. We travel during daylight hours.
2. We caravan as a group from San Diego to the City of Refuge.
3. We do not make any stops between the border and the City of Refuge.
4. We travel on toll roads.

5. We do not authorize any nighttime activity outside the City of Refuge which is a fenced and secure property.

### **ACCOMMODATIONS. THERE ARE THREE OPTIONS:**

1. Tent or RV camping facilities at the City of Refuge include a group campsite with restrooms and showers. There are spaces for tents and a few RV spaces. If you camp, you are responsible for your own equipment. Campsites are reserved on a first-come-first-served basis. There is no additional cost for camping.
2. A 40+ bed bunkhouse is available on a first-come-first-served basis. Bunkers sleep by gender, one floor for females, one for males. You are responsible for your own bedding or sleeping bag. There is no additional cost for the bunkhouse.
3. The Puerto Nuevo Baja Hotel and Villas. The hotel and Villas are located approximately 8 miles from the City of Refuge. You can reserve a room by clicking here. ([puertonuevohotelyvillas.com](http://puertonuevohotelyvillas.com)). Enter the promo code EASTSIDE2025 at checkout. There is additional cost for staying at the hotel.

Tent / RV spaces or a bed in the bunkhouse are reserved through our registration system after signing up.

### **REQUIREMENTS**

- Background Check for each adult traveler.
- Passport or passport card. There are some exceptions for minors.
- Mexican Liability Auto Insurance - Mexican law requires liability coverage for each vehicle. Auto insurance can be obtained here ([mexicoinsurance.com](http://mexicoinsurance.com)). Each traveler is responsible to obtain insurance and the associated cost.

By submitting your registration, you are agreeing to these terms.

### **DAY TO DAY ITINERARY - 4 DAY WEEKEND EXPERIENCE (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)**

#### **Thursday**

Meet at the U.S./Mexico border at 1pm. Caravan to site

Orientation

Dinner-Shared meal with ministry partners.

Shared worship and campfire with ministry partners. Testimony from a ministry graduate.

Briefing for Friday workday - what, why, who, how.

#### **Friday**

Morning devotion (collectively or individually)

Breakfast

Workday Project orientation

*Projects will usually include: build project(s)-build a home for a family in need, complete projects for the local church or school; community outreach (bringing food baskets for needy families), hosting events like a carnival, birthday celebration, sports/rec activities or beach outings.*

(Break for lunch then continue projects)

Dinner

Campfire: Worship, Devotion, Debrief and Saturday briefing

### **Saturday**

Morning devotion (collectively or individually)

Breakfast

Workday orientation (see above)

Build project(s) + Additional project(s)

Break for lunch

Community outreach

Kids programming

Continue projects

Closing Gathering - Devotion/Debrief and final briefing

Dinner

Optional Campfire or Departure before dark

### **Sunday**

Pack-up and depart for the border as early as possible

### **REGISTRATION**

Registration closes 2 weeks prior to each trip. All registration fees are considered a donation and are not refundable. If for any reason you are not able to travel, your fees will be applied to the ongoing ministry in Mexico.

GO TO [EASTSIDE.COM/GLOBAL](http://EASTSIDE.COM/GLOBAL) TO REGISTER

### **I'M REGISTERED NOW WHAT?**

Check your passport status. All travelers need a passport or passport card, valid for at least six months past the anticipated date of return. If you already have a passport, check the expiration date TODAY. If you don't have a passport or a passport card, apply for one immediately. Click [here](http://travel.state.gov) to begin the process ([travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov)).

An exception can be made for some minors:

- "U.S. citizen children under the age of 16 arriving by land or sea from Canada or Mexico may present an original or copy of their birth certificate, a Consular Report of Birth Abroad, or a Naturalization Certificate."
- Unless the child is accompanied by a parent, the child must have a letter from both parents stating, "I acknowledge that my son/daughter is traveling outside the country with [the name of the adult] with my permission." - US Customs and Border Protection. Include a copy of both parent's driver's licenses on the letter.

### **PURCHASE**

Mexican Auto Insurance. Mexican law requires this additional coverage for each vehicle. Auto insurance can be obtained here ([mexicoinsurance.com](http://mexicoinsurance.com)). Each traveler is responsible to obtain insurance and the associated cost.

For those wishing to donate items to TCM, please click [here](#) for a list the ministry updates and maintains. Please do not bring any items other than those listed on their website.

## LEARN SOME SPANISH PHRASES

### Useful Phrases

Your efforts to communicate in Spanish will be welcomed and appreciated!

- Welcome - Bienvenido (sg) Bienvenidos (pl)
- Hello - ¡Hola!
- How are you? - ¿Cómo está usted? (frm) ¿Cómo estás? (inf)
- I'm fine, thanks. And you? - Bien gracias, ¿y usted? (frm) Bien gracias, ¿y tú?
- What's your name? -¿Cómo te llamas? (inf) ¿Cómo se llama Usted?
- My name is ... - Me llamo ..., Mi nombre es ..., Soy...
- Where are you from? -¿De dónde eres? (inf) ¿De dónde es usted? (frm)
- I'm from California - Soy de California, etc.
- Pleased to meet you - Mucho gusto o Encantado(a)
- Good morning - Buenos días
- Good afternoon/evening - Buenas tardes
- Good night/evening - Buenas noches
- Goodbye – Adios o Hasta luego, Hasta mañana
- Have a nice day -¡Que pase un buen día!
- Please write it down -¿Puede escribirlo, por favor?
- I don't understand. - No entiendo
- Please speak more slowly - Por favor hable (frm) más lento
- Bon appetit -¡Buen provecho!
- Have a good trip -¡Buen viaje!
- Do you speak English? -¿Habla Usted inglés? (frm) ¿Hablas (tú) inglés?
- Do you speak Spanish? -¿Hablas Español?
- Yes, a little - Sí, un poco
- How do you say \_\_\_\_\_ in Spanish? -¿Cómo se dice ... en español?
- Excuse me -¡Perdón! ¡Disculpe!
- How much is this? -¿Cuánto vale? ¿Cuánto vale esto?
- Sorry - ¡Lo siento! ¡Perdón! ¡Perdone!
- Thank you - Gracias / Muchas gracias
- You're welcome / it was nothing - De nada / No hay de qué
- Where's the toilet? -¿Dónde está el baño?
- How did you sleep? -¿Cómo dormiste?
- What happened to you? Are you okay? -¿Qué te pasó? ¿Estás bien?
- Praise the Lord. - Alabado sea el Señor.
- God bless you. -(Que) Dios le (te) bendiga.
- In Jesus' name we pray. - En el nombre de Cristo oramos.
- Let's pray - Oremos.
- The Lord be you - El Señor esté con ustedes.

- How can we pray for you? -¿Cómo podemos orar por ti?

### **BE WELL INFORMED**

For safety purposes, stay on the orphanage grounds unless you're involved in a neighborhood project.

Use common sense. Don't be in an isolated situation with a child or a national, and remain in public areas. Do not enter the dorm rooms.

If you're staying in the hotel, do not go off the grounds at night. Use the buddy system whenever you leave your room.

### **ETIQUETTE**

Always take the time to greet and say goodbye to someone properly when they arrive and before leaving. A hasty exit can imply that you did not enjoy their company.

Show heightened respect to those that are noticeably older than yourself. Give way to them in public, and allow them to be served first or take your seat if all are full.

Do not toss someone an object to pass it to them. Hand it to them directly and respectfully. Expect meals to last quite a long time, especially if there are multiple dishes and servings. Preference is to socialize over meals, and not to be rushed when eating.

Ask to be excused before leaving a table momentarily (con permiso).

### **FOR YOUR INFORMATION:**

Time Zone: PST

Country Code: 52

Currency: Mexican Peso

Electrical Outlets: 110V (same as USA)

### **PREPARING TO TRAVEL**

#### **PLAN AHEAD**

Pick up the Devotional Guide for each person traveling at the Compassion Counter on your campus, one week before your trip.

Meet at the Home Depot in San Diego at 2:00 PM on Thursday (950 Dennery Road. San Diego, CA 92154).

Departure from Rosarito is Saturday evening or Sunday morning. We recommend leaving immediately after dinner on Saturday or as early Sunday morning as possible (ie 4 or 5am). Sunday tends to have shorter border lines than Saturday nights so please be forewarned if you choose to depart Saturday.

For phone use, consult with your carrier for international calling rates/plans. Don't forget to turn off your data roaming before entering Mexico to avoid charges.

We will be traveling on a toll road in Mexico. You will need about \$10-15 dollars. No larger bill than \$20 is accepted.

## **PACK**

Clothing Guidelines: Modesty is of extreme importance. No underwear can be showing, no bare midriffs and nothing form-fitting. No low necklines for gals.

Work Clothing: Jeans, shorts or activewear. Long shorts are permitted for men and women. Tank tops are not. Closed-toed, sturdy shoes. T-shirts or basic crew necks. No short shorts or sleeveless/tank tops. Any writing on shirts should not contain anything offensive, crude, provocative, political or occultic.

Casual Clothing: Comfortable, warm clothes for after work. The temperature drops as the sun goes down. Make sure you bring a sweatshirt for worship time after dinner.

## **PACKING LIST**

### Necessities

- Clothing (See guidelines above)
- Sweatshirt/jacket
- Hat
- Sunscreen
- Closed-toed shoes
- Toiletries
- Towel
- Work gloves
- Camp chair
- Ear plugs (barking dogs)
- A refillable water bottle, labeled with name, for each family member. Purified water is provided.
- The weekend MAY include a trip to a swimming pool and/or the beach. (Teens and adults: if wearing a swimsuit, also wear shorts and dark shirt.)
- Do NOT bring firearms/ammunition, slingshots, fireworks, pets, alcohol, illegal drugs, tobacco, marijuana products, or valuables. (Eastside cannot be held responsible for loss of items.)
- Dietary supplements (Note: due to the large size of the group, we cannot accommodate any dietary preferences.)

Optional (Depending Upon Your Accommodations)

- Camping equipment (tent, ground cover, lantern, sleeping bags, air mattress/cots, flashlights, etc.)
- Sleeping bag and pillow (camping and bunkhouse)

To present at check in at Home Depot Thursday afternoon.

- Valid passport/passport card for each person in your family. If applicable, the birth certificate for children under 16 and a letter of permission if traveling without parents.
- Proof of Mexico car insurance.

### **ON SITE**

The orphanage does not have Wi-Fi and cell reception is spotty. The hotel may have Wi-Fi. Toilet paper cannot be flushed at the City of Refuge and most parts of Mexico. If you are camping, please take quick showers.

Tap water in Mexico is not drinkable. Don't swallow it in the shower or use it to brush your teeth/rinse your toothbrush. This includes the hotel. Purified water is provided. Please help to keep the common areas clean by participating in your OTS (Opportunity To Serve) assignments. There is no housekeeping staff on the premises.

### **CHILD SPONSORSHIP**

For \$50 a month, you can change a child's life! On this trip, you will meet children whose lives are greatly enriched through this simple act. The monthly amount helps cover meals, education, Christian staffing, clothes/uniforms, and more. Plus you get the chance to meet your child when you travel to Mexico! Be sure to type Eastside Christian Church in the "Note or Special Instructions" box.

Visit [eastside.com/global](http://eastside.com/global) to sponsor a child in Baja, Mexico!

Meeting Your Sponsored Child-While your child will be happy to receive any gifts you may bring, keep in my mind that your presence, love, attention and respect are far more important. So, when you first meet him or her, take a few minutes to talk and bond before you present any gifts.

### **Conversation Starters**

- Tell me about your friends and what you enjoy doing together.
- Do you have a favorite bible verse? (Share yours!)
- What is a typical day like? (Tell about yours.)
- What subjects do you enjoy most in school?
- What are some of your hopes and dreams for when you grow older?

### **Important Reminders**

- The security of our sponsored children and their families is very important to us. For this reason, keep your future correspondence within the protocols of Eastside.

- Do not exchange your personal contact or social media information.
- Do not give money to children, parents/caregivers or staff. For the sake of security and financial integrity, all monetary gifts should be given through normal giving channels of the sponsoring organization. For questions email: [sponsor@tijuanchristianmission.org](mailto:sponsor@tijuanchristianmission.org)

#### Activity Ideas

- Bring blank paper and draw, color, play tic-tac-toe, etc.
- Play! Kick a soccer ball, toss a frisbee, jump rope, paint each other's nails — have fun!
- Take a picture and enjoy looking at them together.
- Finally, pray with your child before you leave. Pray about the family, friends, hopes and concerns that he or she shared during your time together.

#### **DIRECTIONS**

Detailed driving directions to/from the U.S./Mexico border to the City of Refuge is available in a separate document.

#### **TEAM AGREEMENT**

Out of respect for the Tijuana Christian Mission/City of Refuge ministry, and in order to serve those Beyond Borders in Jesus' name, we ask that all participants in a Beyond Borders Mexico trip conduct themselves in a way that is in agreement with the following statements. [Click here to watch the video.](#)

I recognize and accept the following terms and conditions which will further the effectiveness of the Global Compassion Team. If accepted I promise to abide by the policies and principles set forth in this document.

1. I AGREE... to attend all required trainings and meetings, small group meetings and service projects, to participate fully and be on time.
2. I AGREE... to expeditiously follow up on all requirements for passport, financial obligations, vaccinations and other documentation as requested and to observe all deadlines for such.
3. I AGREE... to submit to the authority of the team leader(s) and staff, promising to abide by their decisions as they concern the project, remaining flexible to changes that may occur.
4. I AGREE... to guard my words at all times, refrain from obscene or insensitive humor and to abstain from making derogatory comments or arguments regarding people, politics, sports, religion, race, or traditions.
5. I AGREE... while on the field to avoid any situation where I might be alone and in a compromising situation with a member of my team (apart from members of my immediate family), or a national of our host country, and to avoid any actions which might be perceived as amorous attentions towards another.
6. I AGREE... while on the field to use separate accommodations if we are not living out the biblical ethic which encourages full sexual expression between a man and woman in the context of marriage.

7. I AGREE... to participate in the worship service experience as is appropriate to where I am at in my spiritual journey.
8. I AGREE... to travel with the rest of the team, interact with members of my team, remain a part of the group at all times and not wander off.
9. I AGREE... to dress modestly (No short shorts, tank tops, low cut tops or exposed stomachs; Guys - wear a shirt at all times).
10. I AGREE... not to accept an invitation from a national to participate in an activity apart from the group without checking first with team leadership.
11. I AGREE... to have a positive attitude and be willing to do whatever it takes to serve.
12. I AGREE... as a participant in an Eastside global trip, I am required to raise the necessary funds to cover my expenses as well as my team's ministry costs. All funds given are tax deductible donations and need to be handled in accordance with IRS standards. If I am unable to participate on a given trip for any reason, because funds raised are donations to the ministry, they will not be refunded nor held on account for a future trip. Should the trip be canceled, the funds will be used for other similar ministry activities, at the discretion of church leadership.

**By registering for this trip, you are agreeing to these statements.**

“Let me tell you why you are here. You’re here to be salt-seasoning that brings out the God flavors of this earth. If you lose your saltiness, how will people taste godliness? You’ve lost your usefulness and will end up in the garbage. Here’s another way to put it: You’re here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We’re going public with this, as public as a city on a hill.” - Matthew 5:13-15 (MSG)