

Heartland Vineyard Church Haiti Mission Trip FAQs

NOTE: Keep in mind that these answers to Frequently Asked Questions apply to trips taken from the Cedar Falls Heartland Vineyard Church. If you are joining a trip from another location, details may be different for you. For example, we obviously would not ask you to attend pre-trip meetings in Cedar Falls, etc.

1. **Where are we going?** We will be going to an orphanage just outside of Port Au Prince, near Croix des Bouquet, Haiti. The orphanage is managed by Imagine Missions, which is based in Dennison, Ohio and we are privileged to partner with them to share the love of Jesus Christ in the orphanage and surrounding village. Check out Imagine Missions webpage for core values, photos, etc.

2. **When are we going?**

March 10-19, 2017

First deadline: December 4, 2017

3. **Who can go on the trips?** Upon approval of application, anyone can go on the trips with Heartland Vineyard. Under 16 must be accompanied by a parent or adult guardian. Under 18 if not accompanied by a parent must have a notarized letter from both parents giving permission to leave the country with Heartland Vineyard Church (See form 1 attached). If there are questions about your physical condition, you must provide a doctor's written permission. Because we are working with children at the orphanage, everyone must submit to a background check as part of the application, which will be run by Imagine Missions.

4. **What if I do not speak the language?** The children speak primarily Haitian Creole but they study French, Spanish and English in school. Do not worry about the language. Most of them have enough English to get by and if not, a smile goes a long way. Most important, the Holy Spirit fills in the gaps and we seem able to communicate with each other beautifully.

5. **How much does it cost** to join a trip to the Imagine Missions Orphanage in Haiti? The APPROXIMATE trip costs are as follows:

\$40 per night in Haiti for food and lodging

\$8 per day, including travel days, for travel insurance

\$200 per week to buy project supplies or building materials depending on the project plans for your specific trip (Any remainder of this not used for project supplies will be donated direct to the food budget for the orphanage)

\$40 baggage fee for a second suitcase

Plus airfare, which usually ranges from \$700-\$900, depending on the date purchased. So for a one week trip, the cost is usually APPROXIMATELY \$1,500. This does not cover food at the airport during travel days or souvenirs.

6. **Are there fundraisers in which I can participate?** There are no organized fundraisers for the trip expenses. However, attached to this is a form of fundraiser letter you may individualize and send to friends, family, business acquaintances, etc. Many people are willing to help support a mission trip.

7. **Do I need a passport?** Yes. You must have a passport that is valid until six months after your return to the United States.

8. How do I sign up? An application (which can be found on the missions page of the Heartland Vineyard website or obtain a copy from Tanya Robinson) must be completed and the nonrefundable \$800 deposit must be paid. This deposit goes toward the total cost of your trip and will be used toward purchasing the airline ticket. Deadlines for deposits are posted on the Heartland Vineyard website as well.

9. What is expected of me if I join the trip? If you are local to Cedar Falls, there will be three team meetings prior to the trip. These are not mandatory but we strongly suggest attending. It is not just a time to talk about logistics but an important time to build relationships with each other and pray together for unity and for God's wisdom as we plan. In addition, work projects for the teams will be decided on during these meetings. If you are joining an Imagine Missions trip from another location, you can attend these meetings via Skype or some other arrangements can be made.

Everyone is expected to participate in the work projects, keep a good attitude and remain flexible. There will be times when we are hot, tired, hungry, inconvenienced or all the above. Remember that we are God's ambassadors. We want to be testimonies of His goodness and keep a grateful attitude with our teammates, workers at airports, and the people in Haiti.

Last, as a member of the team you will be expected to stay within the guidelines set by the trip leaders. We will be respectful of the Haitian culture and try our best to act as a guest, a learner and a servant in their country.

10. What do we do on a mission trip to the Imagine Missions Orphanage in Haiti? Every team is a little different. But typically, our mornings begin with breakfast at 7:00am and team prayer. We will begin work projects early while it is still somewhat cooler and the children are in school. Around noon we will go back to the team house for lunch, showers, water bottle refills, etc. and then back to the orphanage for the afternoon. The children are out of school by 1:00 so we will do more kid friendly activities or teach them to help with the projects. Around 5:30 we will head back to the team house for dinner, more showers and an evening of devotion, reflection and team building. We suggest early to bed since the roosters begin their wakeup call around 3:30am.

The team will decide what work projects to do based on the talents and skills of the team members. There is an endless list of building and repair projects at the orphanage and team house but we could also choose to do cleaning/organizing supplies, building construction projects, working with the children on math or English, doing community outreach projects with the older children from the orphanage, planting garden and trees (October through December only), teaching trade skills, painting, working with the medical clinic, cooking demonstrations, Vacation Bible School activities, etc. Possibilities are truly endless. Most important, we want to share the love of Jesus with the children and people in the village.

11. What is the project money for? The \$200 per person project money will be spent for wood, nails, paint, concrete, screen, fencing, plants for the garden, etc. depending on the work projects the team chooses. The remainder of this money not spent on supplies will go direct to the food budget for the orphanage.

12. How will we get there? We will fly on American Airlines or United either from Chicago, Moline, Minneapolis or Cedar Rapids to Port-au-Prince. At the airport in Haiti we will be met by Imagine

Missions directors and we will ride in the back of a pickup truck to the team house. Most likely we will spend overnight in an airport either on the way down, the way home, or both.

13. What should I expect at the airport and going through customs?

We will each check one or two suitcases (no larger than 62 all around inches, weighing no more than 50 pounds) at the airport. These will be full of supplies for the orphanage. Our own personal items will be carried on the plane with us. Carryon bags have a limit size of 22x14x9 and, of course, must fit in the overhead bins or under the seat in front of you. We are allowed one carryon and a purse of some sort, which can include a backpack. Liquids and creams are not allowed in carryon bags unless they are 3 ounces or smaller and they need to be in a Ziploc-style baggie. This includes toothpaste, hand cream, etc.

All bags will be searched and we will all go through metal detectors and scanning devices numerous times before we reach Haiti. Do not be nervous about this procedure. It is inconvenient but it is nothing to be feared. Try not to wear large metal belt buckles or carry bulky keys. You must take your shoes off at each security checkpoint also. This is just a good chance to practice grace and patience!! Obviously, do not joke with the guards about carrying weapons or so forth. Scissors or knives of any kind – even sewing scissors or pocket knives – will be confiscated so do not carry them. Shaving razors are allowed if they are disposable or razor cartridges. You may not carry a straight edge razor. And if you buy a soda or other drink at the airport, buy it after the security checkpoint or they will gladly dispose of it for you.

In the Haiti airport, men will try to carry your suitcase for you. They are very persuasive. Do not let them help you unless you are prepared to give a tip. Imagine Missions will have someone there to help us with our bags. Keep your bags in your hand until we see the Imagine Missions sign. We will all stay together as best as possible to help with this also.

14. Do I have to get shots? Check with your personal physician. It is recommended that you have Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B vaccinations as well as the live vaccine for Typhoid. In addition, if you are under 18 on an Imagine Missions trip you must take the anti-malaria medications or have a note from your parents stating that you do not have to take it. If you are over 18 you can choose whether to take the anti-malaria pills but be aware that malaria is a risk in Haiti because of the great number of mosquitoes. Most importantly, you should check with your physician for his/her recommendations.

15. Where do we stay? Imagine Missions owns a house that is within walking distance from the orphanage. It is referred to as “The Team House” and has a common room, a kitchen, dining room and indoor bathrooms. There are separate bedrooms for guys and gals with metal bunk beds or thin mattresses on the floor. Some people prefer to sleep in the screened-in room on the roof as it is much cooler. Bedding and towels are provided. There are some fans to circulate the air (if electricity is working) but no air conditioning and no water heater (cold showers!). There is no smoking or alcohol allowed at the team house or orphanage. It is not like a luxury hotel here in the United States and at times it is noisy, hot and crowded. But it is a clean, dry and safe place to rest at night and a great place to gather and talk about God’s wonderful blessings.

Mixed company appropriate pajamas and lounge wear are a MUST! There may not be a lot of privacy, other than showers and toilet areas. We may be crowded at the team house so it is expected that you will keep your personal belongings in your bag and keep your area neat. Everyone will appreciate walkways and doorways that are kept clear and bathrooms kept free of clutter.

16. What about the food? The team will eat three meals a day at the team house. Macula and Yppolene prepare wonderful meals for us but these meals need to feed a lot of people. Please plan to take moderate portions and not “super size” it. We attempt to accommodate those who are vegetarians or have food allergies but if this applies to you, we recommend you consider bringing along nonperishable snacks just in case.

There are no between-meal or bedtime snacks unless you provide them. If you are a hearty eater or need snacks throughout the day, you should plan to bring granola bars or something that does not need refrigeration. Any snacks you bring should be in a well-sealed container as we do not want to encourage critters in the team house.

17. Is the water safe to drink? Yes, the team house and the orphanage have chlorination systems. We suggest bringing an empty water bottle or two to fill at the team house and carry with you during the day. Some people like to bring flavor mix to add to the water. Coca Cola and 7-Up is available at the team house for \$1.00 per bottle. Keep in mind that ice cold drinks are a luxury that we may not have during the week.

18. What should I wear? Guys can wear shorts and t-shirts for work and wear long pants and a nice shirt to church. Girls can wear capris or very long shorts for working but must wear a skirt or dress the rest of the time. Girls should not wear spaghetti straps, low necklines or running shorts. Bare shoulders are not allowed in church. Keep in mind that work clothes will get very dirty and possibly ruined.

It is probably best to work in tennis shoes but crock-style shoes or flip flops are nice because they are cool and washable. You should have at least two pair of shoes because if it rains we will be walking and working in mud. Remember there will be a lot of togetherness at the team house. Modest, mixed-company pajamas are an absolute requirement. One piece swim suits are mandatory for girls (if a trip to the beach is in your plans). A light jacket may be useful as it can be cool in the airport and on the planes. But it will always be quite warm (Okay... HOT) in Haiti.

19. Are laundry facilities available? Feel free to hand wash in the shower and hang things on the line. The sun dries the laundry very quickly. You may ask Macula or Yppolene to wash some of your laundry for you. If they do laundry for you, we suggest it would be courteous to tip for that service as they are quite busy working for us while we are there. There may or may not be an electric washer available.

20. Will we go to church? Yes. We will attend church with the kids at the orphanage on Sunday morning and help with the mid-week services. It is a wonderful experience to worship God with the people there. They know God is their redeemer and provider and it shows in their worship. **What is the main religion in Haiti?** Voodoo. But thankfully the children in the orphanage have been raised hearing about Jesus and the Bible and most are believers. The directors and pastors at the orphanage and church are all Bible believing Christians.

21. What about my prescription medications? Be sure to carry whatever medications you may need for the week. There are no drugstores or pharmacies or stores of any kind nearby. All prescription medications should be brought down in original bottles or with the dosage instructions attached.

22. Does my cell phone work in Haiti or is there internet access? Probably not. But check with your cell phone coverage provider. Or you can borrow the director’s computer to send a brief email (if

electricity and the internet are running). Best idea: tell your friends and family “No news is good news!”

23. Is **there an emergency contact for my family while I am gone**? For emergencies, your family can contact the Heartland Vineyard Church office at 319-266-4673. They will get in touch with us as soon as possible. Try to remember it is difficult to make calls in Haiti. Again, please tell your family that no news is good news!!!

24. **Will I be safe**? Although bad things can happen anywhere at any time, we can say that we have made numerous trips to Haiti and have never felt threatened in any way. We will use common sense and wisdom by not going out at night and never going out alone. We will always travel with someone who knows the area and speaks the language, and we do not go to the places the directors deem unsafe. There are night guards posted at the team house and orphanage.

25. **Will my valuables be safe while I am there**? Please do not bring anything valuable to Haiti. We do not want to draw attention by wearing gemstones or “bling”. We can leave passports, cameras, etc. at the team house where they will be safe but there is no reason to carry excessive cash or valuables.

26. **Should I bring a camera**? That is a personal choice. The camera will get dirty so we recommend purchasing an inexpensive camera for your trip and leaving your valuable camera at home. The children love to have their photos taken, especially if it is digital and they can see themselves on the screen. The children will ask to borrow your camera. Many team members have lost their photos because the kids like to push buttons! We recommend you take photos and show them but keep the camera around your neck and not hand it over to the kids.

27. **Do I need any cash while I am there**? Your trip cost includes airfare and food and lodging while in Haiti. It does not include any souvenirs, food/snacks you may wish to purchase on travel days and, of course, the Coca Cola at the team house. There will be very little opportunity for shopping while in Haiti but a few local artisans will bring their beautiful goods to the team house should you wish to purchase souvenirs. The souvenirs generally range in price from \$3.00-\$60.00.

Last, it is not required but we suggest leaving a tip for the people who help us all week. For example, if the housekeeper does any laundry for you during the week you should consider leaving a tip. The housekeeper, cook, the directors, the dorm father, and the house/gate guards and many others work long and hard all day and every day for the children and for us while we are there. You may choose to combine with other team members to leave a tip for everyone that helped. Or there may be someone who helped you specifically and you may choose to leave them a thank you note or a tip.

28. **Do I need to change money to Haitian dollars**? No. We will be doing little if any shopping other than visiting a grocery store and some local artisans. American dollars are accepted by both.

29. **What should I pack**? Be sure to have everything you need because there are no Wal-marts or 24-hour convenience stores in Haiti. Be sure to have your valid passport and four rolls of toilet paper in addition to the following. This is *just a packing suggestion* list to help you get to Haiti with everything

you might need:

PASSPORT

Please bring four rolls of toilet paper
Mosquito netting
Cash for travel-day food or souvenirs, if you wish
Cash to tip the team house workers, if you wish
Light, comfortable work clothing and undergarments
Church appropriate clothing (See paragraph #18 above)
Extra shoes in case of mud/water
Plenty of bug spray and sunscreen (non-aerosol)
Mixed company appropriate pajamas and personal toiletry items/feminine products
Hand sanitizer (travel sizes) and/or baby wipes
Prescription medications or OTC drugs IN ORIGINAL PACKAGING or with dosage labels
Extra glasses or contacts and solutions
Sunglasses, visor or hat
Snacks if you want them IN SEALABLE CONTAINERS/drink mix if you want
An empty water bottle or two to fill and use while working
Swimsuit (one piece for gals)
Travel or neck pillow, if you wish
Bible/journal/pen
Camera/extra batteries/memory cards
Back pack or similar bag to carry anything you might want while working
Plastic Wal-Mart style bags in which to keep laundry or wet items
Imodium AD and motion sickness medication (if you are prone to sickness on the airplane)
Earplugs if you are a light sleeper
Stationery or note cards for Thank Yous to the staff or letters to the children, if you wish
Flash light with extra batteries

30. Were the children in the orphanage orphaned in the earthquake? Most of these children were not orphaned by the earthquake. Some are orphans but most of them are not. Many parents give up their children to the orphanage because they are unable to provide adequate food. Some parents put their children in the orphanage so they can receive an education.

31. Why are there still “children” over the age of 18 at the orphanage? Until Imagine Missions was formed a few years ago, education was not a priority at the orphanage. Many children had never been to school or had not been for several years. The young children are now on track and the older children are starting to get caught up with general education or are being taught a trade. God has been doing miraculous things through Imagine Missions. We are thrilled to be partnering with them.

32. What if I have questions not answered here? Please call Mark and Tanya Robinson at 319-396-9664 or email tjrobinson@juno.com and we will be glad to try to answer any questions, any time.

Attachment 1 – Sample fundraiser letter

Attachment 2 – Parent permission form

Attachment 3 – List of items currently being collected

Attachment 1
Sample fundraiser letter

Dear *,

Hello from *. I am writing this letter for myself and a group of people who are going on a short-term mission trip to Despinos, Haiti, not too far from Port Au Prince.

I wanted to write and ask you to pray about this upcoming trip. We will be leaving on *, 2017 and returning on *, 2017. I am trying to raise the necessary funds to go with a group of people from our church on this exciting ministry trip. We will be working with Imagine Missions at an orphanage of approximately 105 children and working with the Heartland Vineyard Church to establish relationship in the village of Despinos.

We will be working directly with the children, doing miscellaneous building/maintenance projects at the orphanage, and sharing the love of Jesus to those in the surrounding village.

I am asking you to pray for me and the group during the time we are gone. I would also like you to consider financially supporting me by helping with the \$1,500+ I need to raise. Please do not feel any pressure. And please pray for our team and the people in Haiti who will be hearing about Jesus.

Thank you,

Attachment 2
Sample parent permission form

To whom it may concern:

I, _____, am the birth mother of _____. I give permission for _____, my son/daughter, to travel out of the United States with Mark or Tanya Robinson and Heartland Vineyard Church to the Country of Haiti during the time of _____ through _____.

DATED: _____

Notarized this ____ day of _____, 20____,
In the county of _____, State of _____.

My commission expires: _____

I, _____, am the father of _____. I give permission for _____, my son/daughter, to travel out of the United States with Mark or Tanya Robinson and Heartland Vineyard Church to the Country of Haiti during the time of _____ through _____.

DATED: _____

Notarized this ____ day of _____, 20____,
In the county of _____, State of _____.

My commission expires: _____

Supplies currently being collected for Haiti
Imagine Missions Orphanages
(Approximately 100 children and over 20 staff members/teachers)

Personal/toiletry items needed

Solid or roll-on non-aerosol deodorants
Bar soap and shower gel
Shampoo
Petroleum jelly (like Vaseline)
Hand creams/body lotion (dry skin is a real problem for the kids at the orphanage)
Non-aerosol mosquito spray (Very expensive to buy in Haiti)
Diapers and pull-ups
Baby wipes
Feminine hygiene pads (not tampons)
Toilet paper
Baby powder or body talcs
Manicure sets/pedicure clippers
Razors and shaving cream
Tooth brushes, tooth paste and dental floss
Zippered personal size toiletry bags

Clothing items needed

Men's socks (dark socks for dress or athletic socks)
Men's belts (Small only)
Men's tennis shoes or black dress shoes (wide sizes)
Men's crotch-style shoes or sandals
Men's dress slacks and blue jeans (No bigger than 28 waist) (Think tall and skinny!!)
Men's dress shirts, polo shirts (Small only)
Men's SMALL underwear
Men's SMALL athletic shorts
Boys' socks
Boys' tennis shoes or black dress shoes (wide sizes)
Boys' crotch-style shoes or sandals
Boys' dress slacks and blue jeans (Desperate need for 8 slim, 10slim, 12 slim, 14 slim)
Boys' dress shirts, polo shirts and t-shirts
Boys' underwear
Boys' athletic shorts
Boys' pajamas
Girls' skirts, tops and dresses (up to size Girls' 14/16)
Girls' small bras and training bras
Girls' underwear
Girls' pajamas
Junior size skirts, tops or dresses (Size 0, 1 and 2)
Women's bras
Women's dress sandals (Desperate need for wide sizes 6, 7, 8, 9 wide)

Women's flat black dress shoes (Desperate need for wide sizes 6, 7, 8, 9)
Women's SMALL bikini underwear
Women's skirts, dresses or tops (SMALL only)
Girls' and boys' tennis shoes (wide sizes)
"Crocks" style shoes – any size and color
Soccer shoes – any size
Soccer uniforms and shin guards
Soccer balls
ONE PIECE swim suits for girls
Swim trunks for boys

School supplies needed

School Back packs or drawstring bags
Calculators and rechargeable batteries
Copy paper/Printer paper
Composition notebooks – no wire-bound please
Tempera paints and artist brushes
Sketch books
Atlas books/maps/globes
Chalk for teachers/blackboard erasers
Scotch tape/scissors/glue

Other items needed

Flash lights
AA and AAA batteries
Rechargeable batteries/battery chargers
Bibles in French or Creole
Bible Story books in French or Creole
French to English dictionaries
Creole to English dictionaries
Sunglasses
Tupperware/Rubbermaid, etc. containers with lids
Roach poison or traps
Mouse/rat poison
Mosquito nets
Clothes pins
Dish cloths and Dish towels
Screwdriver sets
18 volt DeWalt hammer drill
18 volt DeWalt cordless impact
Organizing bins for screws/nails/bolts
1" or 2" chlorine tablets (for water treatment)
Twin sheets/towels/wash cloths

Supplies for medical clinic:

Cotton balls and Q-tips
Flexible fabric Band aids (the other types fall off)

Chewable children and adult vitamins - Not gummy please-they melt
Creams for cracked heels and feet
Adult and children cough/cold medicines
Adult and children Ibuprofen (chewable is better than liquid)
Aleve (Generic brands are fine)
Advil or Tylenol (Generic brands are fine)
Antifungal creams such as Lotrimin
Athlete's foot cream and powders
Vaginal antifungal creams
Hydrogen peroxide
Hydrocortisone creams
Antibiotic Ointments (such as Neosporin or generic brands)
Ace wraps/Ice packs
Minor laceration trays
Non-sterile gloves
Scotch magic tape
Sandwich & quart sized baggies with zip closures
Rubbermaid tubs or plastic footlockers with divider bins (like those used for tools)
Large plastic containers with lids (very hard to find and expensive in Haiti)
Coolers (large or small) Water cooler needed for dispensing medications.
D cell batteries
Lights (halogen type that can be directed for suturing/etc.)
Oscillating fans

Of course, the need for food is HUGE and ongoing. Shipping restrictions are VERY strict. We gladly accept monetary donations to purchase food in Haiti, to help pay for the shipping of these items from the United States or to pay airline fees when teams carry extra suitcases of supplies/food. Thank you so very much for any help you can be. Spread the word!!!