

Family Mission Trip Guide

Holy Spirit – Maggotty, Jamaica



**Good Shepherd Roman Catholic Church
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814-238-2110**

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Mission Trips – Why do we go?

This Mission Trip is important not only because we will have the opportunity to “do for” others through work projects as the hands and feet of Christ, but it is an important opportunity to simply “be with” the people of Maggotty Jamaica. We can share Christ’s love through taking the time to talk and listen to the people of the Holy Spirit community and to learn of their frustrations and their hopes. Being a disciple of Christ calls us to be compassionate and reach out to those who struggle. Through new friendships, we hope to help Holy Spirit community members discover the gifts God has given them and help them find joy in sharing their God-given gifts with their community.

The “work” done on a Mission is the “work” God will do in our own hearts and lives—if we allow it. We need to recognize that this Mission experience is not only to the benefit of those we serve, but it can bring about a conversion within ourselves. This conversion may lead us to a fundamental change in the way we view our own lives: What we do, what we have, who we count on as friends, and what issues we pay attention to.

Although we may use painting, construction, medical services, and clean-up projects as a visual sign of Christ’s love, this is not the end all. Paint will eventually chip off, stories and games may be forgotten in time, but relationships you develop with community members is what brings Christ’s love alive—in you and those we serve.

Holy Spirit Parish Community

Father Marek arrived in Maggotty Jamaica in 1999. The Holy Spirit Mission Team includes Father Marek, for devout Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus order, and Marta, a teacher. This team works endless days to introduce and foster a Christian Community. Father Marek’s vision is for visiting Mission workers and community members to come to know Jesus Christ and to strive to live like Jesus—loving, respecting, and helping one another, so that we may bring joy to the lives of all community members. Therefore, the Mission participants must agree to abide by Father Marek’s community rules outlined in the Conduct Agreement.

The Holy Spirit staff has a multitude of projects in progress: educational tutoring for children and adults, teaching computer and trade classes, weekly religious education classes and in-home Bible Study gatherings, operating a medical clinic, management of agricultural projects, operating a meat-processing factory, and providing seasonal food basket distributions. The Mission work can be extremely varied.

A flexible mind and spirit are a must.

Trip Overview

This Mission Program is organized as a Family Mission Trip with minimum **age requirement of 13 years**. 13-20 year-olds youth need to be accompanied by a parent.

Passports Required:

- Passports are required to travel to Jamaica.
- Passports are typically needed to book air travel by computer. (You may be able to book air travel by phone if you are waiting to receive passport.)
- The non-stop flight is approximately 3-½ hours from Philadelphia or Baltimore to Montego Bay, Jamaica.
- We will then be transported by van to the Holy Spirit Community Center. (Travel time from the airport to Holy Spirit is approximately 1-½ to 2 hours.)

Trip Costs

The estimated costs for the trip to Jamaica are the following:

- Round trip airfare \$800 & up/person
 - One week room and board at Holy Spirit \$300/person
 - Traveling meals (on the road and at the airport) \$50/person
- Basic Expenses = \$1,150.00**

Other Expenses to be Considered

- One-night hotel stay in Philadelphia or Baltimore \$75-\$140/room
- Parking for one week at the hotel \$50/vehicle
- Souvenir Shopping TBD by individual
- Immunizations based on individual needs

Payment Schedule: These three payments cover your room-and-board costs.

- 1st initial payment with application due in September/October \$100
- **Purchase airline tickets in OCTOBER/NOVEMBER**
- 2nd payment January \$100
- 3rd payment February \$100

All Checks are made out to Good Shepherd Church.

Depending on group size, airline tickets may be arranged through group reservation with the airline, or participants may be asked to book their own flight (on a specific date). We must all be on the same flight. Our departure is most often out of Baltimore or Philadelphia. Mission Team members typically carpool to the hotel the night before departure. Hotel rooms can be shared to cut costs.

Team Building

Working well together as a team is a vital aspect of Mission work. Getting to know one another and experiencing one another's gifts and talents is important and will enable us to work together effectively and respectfully. Understanding the Mission, the goals, and the expectations for the trip also helps us to function better as a team.

Therefore, there are:

Required Meetings to Prepare as a Mission Team

- * September: Group introductory meeting to review Mission Booklet and discuss time line. Application and \$100.00 initial payment due to hold your spot.
- * October/November: Booking of flights. Deposit to Mission coordinator for group flight OR information and notification of specific date that families are to book flights.
- * January: Two-hour Team-Building Meeting – **Mandatory** Date- TBA
- * February: Two-hour Team-Building Meeting – **Mandatory** Date- TBA
- * 3rd team meeting will be called for planning for a Vacation Bible School (VBS), If one is planned for that Mission Trip.

If you cannot attend a meeting, you must notify the Mission Team leader immediately.

DAILY SCHEDULE:

Sunday Mass is at 9:00 AM; dress is "Sunday best!" The Jamaican's dress up for church. Even if they have very little, they still wear their best for church. NO shorts or short skirts please! During the week, we wear to Mass what we will be wearing all day to work in. Father Marek will plan our daily activities.

A typical daily schedule is as follows:

~6:15 AM	Wake up
7:00 AM	Mass
8:00 AM	Breakfast & clean-up
9:00 AM	Begin day's activities
~12:00 PM	Lunch & clean up
1:00 PM	Afternoon duties
2:30-3:00 PM	Children arrive
3:00 – 4:30 PM	Work with children
4:30 – 5:30 PM	Review & plan for the next day
5:00-6:30 PM	Adults come for education
~6:30 PM	Dinner & clean-up

7:30 PM
10:30 PM

Reflection discussion with group in Church
Lights out

Contact Information:

The contact information includes

Father Marek's cell phone: 1-876-360-2624

Sister's convent phone: 1-876-963-9771

Email: holyspiritjamaica@yahoo.com

Verizon Cell Phone reception is very limited. AT& T international service is better. Internet connection is not consistent. Don't depend on it.

Health Concerns

When traveling internationally, there are many health concerns to take into consideration. It is very important to have the following immunizations up to date:

1. Tetanus (required every 10 years or TDap)
2. Chikungunya Virus—spread by mosquitoes. (<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/>)
3. Hepatitis A: The CDC recommends this vaccine because you can get hepatitis A, through contaminated food or water in Jamaica, regardless of where you are eating or staying.
4. Typhoid: You can get typhoid through contaminated food or water in Jamaica. The CDC recommends this vaccine for most travelers, especially if you are staying with friends or relatives, visiting smaller cities or rural areas, or if you are an adventurous eater.
5. COVID-19 vaccination and recommended boosters
Pack masks and a home test—in case of increased cases.

If you are unsure of the health concerns in Jamaica, please search the following web address for the updated information on immunizations necessary for travelers to other countries: <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/destinationJamaica.aspx>.

When in Jamaica, we drink only the water that has been put through a Brita filter. All participants must pack an empty water bottle.

Food in Jamaica: the only fruit or vegetables that are eaten are the ones that can be peeled and have been peeled at the community center. When off site, Father or Marta will let us know which foods are appropriate for consumption. Most evening meals are prepared by Jamaican woman at the community center kitchen.

Additional Considerations:

- Pack insect repellent.
- Utilize plenty of sunscreen and drink plenty of fluids to keep well hydrated.
- Do not handle or touch animals in Jamaica due to custom regulations.

- Imodium – some travelers may experience upset stomachs if eating foods that our systems are not accustomed to.
- Shoes should be worn at all times.

How to Dress

The dress for our trip to Jamaica will be that of “modest” dress. NO low-cut tank tops, halter tops, bare midriffs, short shorts, *etc.* All travelers will wear short sleeve t-shirts or sleeveless tops and shorts (**that are as long as your finger tips when your arms are down**) during the work day.

Packing List

Clothing:

- One dress-up outfit for Sunday Mass
 - Women may wear dress, skirts or Capri’s; nice pants and top.
 - Men may wear short sleeve shirts and slacks.
- Casual clothes for work and for touring, including shorts and light-weight pants, light-weight long sleeve shirts and hats for protection from mosquitoes.
(depending upon the work we do, we can get quite dirty).
 - We can wear our work clothes to the weekday Mass.
- Shoes should be sturdy closed toe shoes (lots of rough terrain & field work).
- Bathing suit – one-piece suit or t-shirt to wear over 2 piece. Cover up and beach towel for possible water excursion (usually one afternoon of recreation).

Personal Items:

- Soap and wash cloth (a bath towel is provided)
- Toothbrush/toothpaste
- Shaving equipment
- Shampoo/conditioner
- Deodorant
- Foot care
- Sunscreen and bug spray.
- First-aid kit
- Sunglasses
- Water bottle (quart size to carry with you all day)
- Flashlight
- Medications—prescription; Advil; Tylenol; Imodium; Tums, *etc.*

REMEMBER: pack liquids and gels 3 oz. or less on your carryon bag.

Electrical outlets are the same as U.S. current for electronics.

Poverty

While in Jamaica, you will encounter situations and people of extreme poverty and you may feel led to give money, clothing, food, *etc.* to the people of the local community. The programs and rules that Father Marek and his staff have established strive to answer these needs in ways that foster independence and personal responsibility rather than begging and dependence upon us. We “whiteys” have the reputation of being wealthy in excess (which we are), so we must be sensitive and cautious. We do not want to display symbols of wealth as this only increases the temptation for the local people to beg or steal, a common way of life for most Jamaicans.

Father Marek teaches his community members that begging is not a good, normal, or healthy way of life. If given the chance, many people will utilize any money for alcohol or drugs and not the necessities of life that their family may need.

Therefore:

1. Leave your valuables at home. No need for fancy jewelry or electronics.
2. Do not give or promise any money or material goods, clothing, toys, *etc.* to individuals. Submit all donations through Father Marek & Marta.
3. Do not give special privileges, such as feeding individuals, or allowing local people into lodging rooms. Dorm rooms are always locked.
4. When asked for clothing, photographs, food, or money, always go through Father Marek. He has worked very hard to get the community where they are today, and it would only cause many steps backward.
5. Never give out your personal phone number or home address as this has posed many problems in the past. Letters may be mailed via church address.

Personal Conduct

Personal conduct expectations are outlined below. It is important that you read all this information completely—in order to make an informed decision. Once committed to this agreement, please sign on the designated line on trip application.

We have chosen to outline both the rules and the reasoning behind the rules—in order for all to understand the heart, focus, and direction of this Mission Trip.

Understanding that this Mission is to foster and model Christ’s message, to be helpful and caring and respectful to others, we need to commit to act in God’s way, with our hands and feet and in the words we use.

**Good Shepherd Roman Catholic Church
867 Gray's Woods Boulevard
State College, PA 16803
(814) 238-2110**

CODE OF CONDUCT AGREEMENT

I, _____ agree to abide by all of the following guidelines during the Good Shepherd Parish Family Jamaica Mission Trip to Maggotty, Jamaica from _____ to _____.

1. Each participant shall refrain from any behavior inconsistent with Catholic teachings, including but not limited to offensive language; inappropriate displays of affection; disrespectful conduct toward leaders, peers, parents, or Jamaicans; any use or possession of cigarettes, alcohol, or illegal drugs. (Attending parents are solely responsible for the possession and administering of any prescription drug needed by his/her child.)
2. The purpose of this Mission Trip is to serve the people of Maggotty, Jamaica. Each participant agrees to *enthusiastically* join in on all of the Mission Team's endeavors, including but not limited to work projects, team-building meetings, after-school care programs, meal preparation, cleaning, prayer services, and Mass attendance.
3. As a Mission Trip, the Mission Team seeks to share the Gospel and Gospel principles with others. Each participant shall be respectful of their fellow Mission Team members, of the people for whom they are serving, and toward the Jamaican customs, culture, and traditions.
4. Each participant agrees to follow the instructions of the Mission Team leaders and of the host parish leadership (Father Marek Bzinkowski).
5. Each participant agrees to wear modest clothing on the trip so that they demonstrate respect for self and others. ***Please review specific dress code guidelines.***
6. Lodging arrangements will be in common female or common male dormitories. Each participant will stay in the dormitory with peers and respect lights-out time.
7. Each participant agrees to remain with the group ALWAYS and under no circumstances will anyone go anywhere during any stage of the trip, without the supervision, permission, and/or company of Mission Team or host parish leadership.
8. Each participant agrees to refrain from giving or promising any money or material goods, clothing, toys, etc. to individuals. Submit all donations through Farther Marek and Marta.
9. Each participant agrees to abide by any additional rules provided by the Mission Team and/or host parish leaders.

(Signature of participant)

(Date)

(Signature of parent or legal guardian, if a minor)

(Date)

Sample Support Letters

Dear _____.

My name is.....(tell a little about yourself). I am a member of Good Shepherd Parish and our church is planning to take families that are interested in going to Jamaica for a Mission Trip to our sister parish in Maggotty, Jamaica. (Then explain what you might be doing on your trip.)

Tell them when the trip is and how long it will last. Estimate the total cost of the trip will be, and explain what the funds cover. Also explain why you think this is a worthwhile trip.

The letter should be about three paragraphs in total to explain who you are, where you are going, why you are going, what you need friends and family to do for you, and what you will do for them!

Thank you for your help,

Provide your name and phone number in case they have questions. Also don't forget to follow up with thank-you notes when you come back! Sometimes a photo from Jamaica in the thank-you card is much appreciated!

**Application for Mission Trip
Holy Spirit Parish Community
Maggotty, Jamaica**

SUBMIT / MAIL TO:
Good Shepherd Church
867 Gray's Woods Boulevard
Port Matilda, Pa 16870
Phone: (814) 238-2110

Contact: JoAnn Vautour – 814-880-9322 / Email: jorayv@gmail.com
OR Bill Zierke 814-933-9870 / Email: billzierke@comcast.net

Name: _____ Birth Date: _____
(Exactly as it appears on your passport)

Passport #: _____

Address: _____

Cell #: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Emergency Contact in U.S.:

Emergency contact phone #:

The priest of Holy Spirit Parish will be assigning our group a wide variety of work projects. We will begin every day with 7am Mass, followed by a full day of work. Please detail any health issues or physical limitations so that Father Marek may plan work projects appropriately. Please let us know if you have any other special needs.

Brief Questionnaire

To help in the planning for this year's trip, please complete the following questions:

1. What do you hope to gain from this trip? Why do you want to go?
2. Please list any ministry activities in which you are currently involved and your role in them.
3. List any talents, skills, abilities, experiences, or gifts that you believe would be useful on this trip. (Music, dance, crafts, construction experience, teaching, leadership, *etc.*)
4. Please explain any previous experience you have had in another culture. What did you like? What was challenging?

Having read & understood the "Code of Conduct", I commit to following it in its entirety while on this Mission Trip at Holy Spirit Parish in Maggotty, Jamaica.

(Signed)

(Date)

Having read & understood the team building, meeting requirements & payment procedures, I commit to submitting the required funds by the deadlines.

(Signed)

(Date)

Please submit this application, with a \$50.00 deposit by the 1st Sunday in September.

Checks should be made payable to: **Good Shepherd Catholic Church**

Please do not hesitate to call or e-mail JoAnn or Bill with any questions.