

Grace Chapel Cross Cultural Learning Experience

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **How do I apply for a cross cultural learning experience?**

Apply online at www.grace.org/ccle

2. **Do I need to be a member or regular attender of Grace Chapel?**

Preference will be given to members and regular attenders. Others are welcome to apply but will be expected to: attend all the pre- and post-trip team meetings, pay or fundraise the full cost of the mission's experience, which includes travel, lodging, ministry expenses, medical insurance and the missions training retreat or urban missions training day (national CCLE's).

3. **Do I need to have any previous mission's experience?**

No. You do not have to have any previous experience. Some cross-cultural learning experiences require specific skills or professional knowledge (e.g. dental professionals or jazz musicians). Others are better suited for those with prior cross-cultural ministry experience. Cross-cultural mission experiences are open to anyone who would like to apply.

4. **What do you do on a cross-cultural learning experience?**

While many of the goals are similar, each missions experience is different. You will need to contact the team leader listed on our website to find out the specifics. Generally, we seek to work alongside our ministry partners around the world. This could involve using your God-given skills (e.g. using your finance background to lead seminars for business people; doctors/nurses practicing medicine) or a variety of other activities like teaching English classes, serving at an orphanage, general construction, facility repair or cleaning, leading a Vacation Bible School (VBS), meeting new people and talking to them about their faith and having opportunities to share yours, etc.

5. **What kind of preparation is provided?**

Grace Chapel hosts a *mandatory* training retreat or urban training day for state side trips, during the Spring. We cover topics such as raising financial and prayer support and cross-cultural training. Attendance is *required* in order to help prepare participants for a faith-stretching cross-cultural experience. During this training, your team will have opportunities to meet so you can build team unity and discuss specifics about your mission's experience. Only a small minority of Grace Chapel members and attendees are able to go on a cross cultural learning experience each year. The nature of the work makes it a huge privilege to participate in a cross cultural learning experience. If you cannot make the commitment of attending the retreat and the preparation sessions for your team, then we ask that you prayerfully consider applying again another year.

6. **How do I pay for the cross cultural learning experience?**

Each team member has the opportunity to raise his or her own financial support in order to go on a mission's experience. While this task may seem daunting, it is a unique opportunity to see God provide in ways that will strengthen the faith of those going on the mission's experience. Each person will be thoroughly equipped and prepared in how to raise support. This is typically done through writing letters, asking people to contribute toward the mission's experience, or through corporate matching gifts.

7. **How is the cost determined?**

Each team budget contains major expense categories including: economy class airfare or other transportation; medical insurance; vehicle rental and gasoline; housing costs; food; shipping costs; visas and work permits; training materials and translators; ministry materials for VBS, youth programs, construction materials; and much more. Every effort is made to minimize costs without jeopardizing the quality, effectiveness, or safety of the ministry.

8. **Is financial support available from the church?**

Grace Chapel will cover the cost of the training weekend, basic medical insurance for the duration of the mission's experience and pays for the participation of church staff who provide leadership for cross cultural learning experiences. However, the church does not provide finances to cover the amount you have to raise for the cross cultural learning experience. In fact, Grace Chapel views this as a critical part of participating in a cross cultural learning experience. It's an important opportunity to grow our faith and see God provide for us through his people. We have found that most of the time when prayer letters are sent out on schedule to at least 50 family members and/or friends who know you personally, all the funds come in.

9. **Are peoples' gifts tax-deductible?**

Yes. Grace Chapel is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization. We strongly prefer that people donate to your CCLE through "*Managed Missions*," an on-line giving service. Once you are accepted on a team, an account will be set up for you on Managed Missions. You will be given a link for people to contribute directly towards your fund-raising goal. Through Managed Missions, you can also see who has given and can measure your progress towards your goal. **Alternatively, people can donate via checks made out to "Grace Chapel."**

Tax Receipts: Tax receipts are available for all financial contributions given to "Grace Chapel. Online donors who give via credit card on the Manage Missions website will be emailed their tax receipt directly following their donation. Grace Chapel members who donate via checks, will have their financial contribution added to their annual Grace Chapel giving and sent a year end giving statement. Nonmembers who give via checks will also receive a financial statement from Grace Chapel.

Year-end gifts: Gifts mailed at the end of December must be post-marked to reflect the appropriate year.

During the mission training retreat, fund-raising how-to's, links and specific information will be disseminated.

10. **What if more money comes in for me than what I need?**

Throughout this ministry you will function as part of a team. Your effectiveness is determined not just from an individual standpoint, but also as a team. Also, each person's ability to raise funds varies depending on who they know, how many people they know, their ability to communicate effectively, etc. Therefore, since the goal is to fund the entire team, any monies given beyond what you will need will go to support other team members who are struggling with their funds. Keep in mind the amount you are raising is less than the actual cost of the experience. Surplus funds will be distributed by the team leader in consultation with the mission's pastor to support underfunded team members and/or reduce the financial burden borne by our mission's budget. You cannot "designate" surplus funds to a friend on your team or an individual on another team.

11. **What if less money comes in for me?**

The guideline we follow is that a participant must have 100% raised 30 days before departure. If this does not occur, please discuss it with your team leader and you will be given the option of paying the

difference or postponing your involvement. We will also not purchase airfare for the team *unless the amount fundraised by each person equals or exceeds the desired trip airfare per person*. If the participant chooses to postpone their involvement, we cannot guarantee airfare will be refunded. As previously mentioned, any surplus funds raised by other team members will go to help support team members who are under-supported and/or defray costs to the mission's budget.

12. **If I decide to cancel my involvement in the CCLE can I get my money back?**

According to Grace Chapel's interpretation of the tax codes and applicable laws, tax-deductible contributions are non-refundable. These funds will, however, stay in the cross-cultural learning experience fund and assist *other* Grace Chapel sponsored mission's experiences. If you cancel your involvement after travel documents are purchased by Grace Chapel (airfare, insurance, etc.) you will be expected to cover all of the fees, penalties and losses incurred at that point.

13. **How many people will be on a cross cultural learning experience team?**

Please contact the team leader of the cross cultural learning experience you are interested in going on for that information. Adult CCLE's usually range anywhere between 6-16 people.

14. **Will I need shots?**

Some of the places we go to do recommend immunizations. In some instances, we may go to a country that "requires" immunization against a particular disease. If an immunization is required, you must have proof of that immunization to enter the country or to return to the United States. For the most up to date information on what is needed for the country you will visit, contact Centers for Disease Control (www.cdc.gov) or a local travel clinic. Your team leader will provide this information as well. You are personally responsible to pay any pre-cross cultural learning experience medical costs such as immunizations, anti-malarial medication etc.

15. **What is a visa? Will I need one?**

A visa is an entry requirement required by a foreign government in addition to your passport. Not all foreign governments require a visa. Your team leader will check the Foreign Entry Requirements for the country you plan to visit. A visa may be stamped on your passport or a paper visa may be affixed to your passport. Most visa applications require two-three passport-size photos along with an application form. [Note: if you are not a U.S. citizen, please make sure that the team leader and the Missions Department know this information. It may mean a different visa process for you.] If you do not have a passport, we recommend that you begin the process immediately. Most countries require that travelers' passports not expire within six months of the end of travel. Please check your passport immediately. If it is set to expire within six months at the end of this CCLE, please begin the process to renew it now. You are responsible for all passport expenses.

16. **What about travel insurance?**

Grace Chapel will provide coverage for basic emergency medical evacuation/transportation; accidental death and dismemberment coverage.

17. **Might my CCLE get canceled or postponed? Who determines this and why might that happen?**

Some of our partners serve in hard places which include material poverty, political uncertainty etc. It's never our intention to put any of our cross cultural learning experience participants in intentionally risky situations; however, domestically or abroad, there can be circumstances outside our control.

The US government regularly posts, "travel alerts" and "travel warnings."

<http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/alertswarnings.html>. The warnings have sometimes been in place for years. In the event of a State Department issued "travel warning," we will consult with

our ministry partner to determine the advisability of traveling to their country as a mission's experience. They live in the context and know first-hand about safety and other issues that might affect us as visitors. If the State Department has withdrawn non-essential US Embassy personnel, the missions experience is automatically cancelled and/or postponed because our government will not have personnel available to assist American citizens in case of an emergency. The pastor of Global and Regional Outreach, in consultation with the Outreach pastor and Executive pastor will discuss any cross cultural learning experience(s) to potentially difficult locations. They will make an executive decision about whether a team will go or not. In some situations, we may purchase higher cost refundable or transferable tickets to allow for greater flexibility if a CCLE needs to be postponed.