

Preparation Guidelines

Sister Parish North to South Delegations



FOR NORTHERN CHURCH

1. The first step when you decide to have a delegation is to **determine who will be the main contact person** for setting up the delegation and let Sister Parish staff know. **This process should start at least 9 months before the delegation.**
2. Sister Parish staff will send **Preparation guidelines for North to South Delegation** (this document) and the **Orientation Manual** to the main contact person. These contain important information about setting up and preparing for the delegation. You can also visit [our website](#) for more information.

Delegate recruitment

3. Begin recruiting delegates **9 months before** with proposed dates for the delegation (which are simultaneously determined with Southern community and staff).
4. We require a **minimum of 5 delegates** and recommend a **maximum of 12 delegates** (If the number of delegates willing to participate are more or less than these, contact the coordinator assigned, and they'll help you to find alternatives).
5. Hold 1-3 meetings over the next three months for those interested (no commitment required yet).
6. Show [Sister Parish intro video](#) or [slide show](#), if helpful (available on our website).
7. Questions and answers with people who have been on a delegation before, you can help yourself by sharing this [Summary of What is Sister Parish & FAQ](#).
8. Keep these meetings positive and focused on the benefits of participating (the preparation for other aspects of the trip will come during orientation).
9. Frank discussion of delegation costs and the plan for paying (church subsidizing, collective fund raising, etc.)
10. Verify that the minimum number of delegates are committed and **set final dates** based on the availability of confirmed delegates, Southern community, and staff. **This process is recommended to be confirmed at least 6 months**

before the delegation. If you cannot get the minimum of 5 delegates by this time, discuss options with Sister Parish staff or consider postponing the delegation.

11. Send in \$500 deposit to reserve dates, we recommend to do it **6 months before delegation** to save the date and it doesn't overlaps with another delegation willing to come at the same time.
 - Send the check to: **Sister Parish Financial Office: P.O. Box 5202, Fargo, ND 58105**
 - Written to "**Sister Parish, Inc.**" with "**Delegation**" in the memo line.
 - If you prefer to do a Transfer directly to the Sister Parish Inc bank account, please ask to the coordinator for the **bank account information.**
12. Determine **who will lead orientation** sessions. This person should distribute the **Orientation Manual** to all of the delegates (electronically or hard copy), coordinate dates, and begin preparing the sessions.
13. Delegates interested in Hepatitis A & B vaccines should start the consultation with their medics **at least 6 months before the delegation.**
14. Delegates who do not have a **passport** or need to renew theirs should submit the application **at least 4 months before** the delegation. US Citizens do not need a visa to travel to Guatemala or El Salvador. To enter to El Salvador, US citizens need to pay a fee when arriving to El Salvador's international Airport. Non-US citizens should investigate whether or not they need a visa.
15. As a community (not only the delegates), talk about your **hopes and goals for the delegation** and how it will strengthen your relationship, **this conversation are recommended to start 4-5 months before while preparing for the delegation.** Share them with the Sister Parish coordinator who will then share them with your partner community in Guatemala/El Salvador. Let the coordinator know if there are specific requests for activities on the delegation. Please discuss with the Sister Parish team, the safe church policies we need to keep in mind to appropriately coordinate activities.
16. Begin **Orientation Sessions** from our Orientation Manual at least **10 weeks before** delegation. It is very important to go through this orientation to adequately prepare delegates for the experience.
 - Schedule according to delegates' calendars, but emphasize that attendance at all orientation sessions is required.
 - Coordinate with the Sister Parish responsible, for a Videocall (Zoom/Google Meets) or call into one of the sessions.

17. Parish staff will send the **billing** for the delegation. Send in the check at least **10 weeks before delegation**.
- Costs: \$525 administrative fee per person, plus \$100 per person per day (including travel days) for delegation of 8-12 people - \$125 per person per day for delegation of 5-7 people. **These amounts can vary depending on the location of the community, the number of delegates and special activities the delegates request to participate and they are not common on a Sister Parish Delegation.**
 - Send the check to: Sister Parish financial office: P.O. Box 5202, Fargo, ND 58105. "Delegation" in the memo line.
18. As a group, **purchase plane tickets** together at least **2 months before**. Send the flight information to Sister Parish staff. **Sister Parish requires the delegates to have health insurance coverage** for the delegation. Delegates should ask their provider if they are covered in Guatemala/ El Salvador or purchase individual travel health insurance. If needed, you can buy insurance when you buy plane tickets or later with a different provider like www.worldnomads.com.
19. **Take photos of the delegates**, and send to Sister Parish staff along with names and brief biographical info and why they're excited to go. Staff will share this with the community in Guatemala or El Salvador. **The profiles should be sent 2 months before, to share with the community and prepare the families who will be hosting.**
20. Sister Parish staff will send the lead contact person **health forms and release forms** for all delegates. [Health forms can be filled out online](#). **Release forms can be filled out, signed, scanned and emailed** to usoffice@sisterparish.org. This information must be sent **2 months before the delegation**.
21. Determine **who will lead reflections** on the trip, decide if one of the delegates will do it, or if the Sister Parish responsible will do it. We are always happy to lead those. If a delegate or others from the church would like to plan the daily reflections, please plan on staff facilitating at least two of our planned reflections during the visit. Also discuss who will take on other roles ([check the Orientation Manual](#)).
22. **Review packing lists and get ready for a great time!** Remember to bring a photocopy of your passport and health insurance information. All other preparation information is in the **Orientation Manual** or will be shared by the staff contact in advance of the trip. Good preparation is the key to a successful delegation experience.

Please reach out to your Sister Parish Coordinator at any point throughout this process with questions and/or requests for assistance. We are grateful to you for the time and effort that you are putting into making this delegation

happen. It is an important way to maintain the relationship you have with your brothers and sisters in the South!

See our website for other helpful information: www.sisterparish.org

The purpose of both south-to-north and north-to-south delegation visits: To raise consciousness about each others' reality; to increase the sense of solidarity, to experience ecumenism; and to bring about reconciliation- in general- to strengthen the long-term partner relationship between the two communities.