



## FAQ

### What's the timeline for the application and acceptance process?

Applications are open for one month, from February 27-March 28. Interviews will take place as applications are received. The team will be selected and applicants notified shortly after.

### Will anything be asked or expected of me should I make the team?

Yes, the team will be expected to attend team training meetings, raise support to pay for the trip (\$2500), and participate in the planning as opportunities arise.

### How many people will be going to Brazil this summer?

Our team can accommodate up to 40 travelers, some of whom will be adults.

### Who will be the adult chaperones?

Menlo Staff and trained volunteers make up our leadership team for the trip.

### Are there luggage allowances or restrictions?

Each passenger can bring one free checked bag up to 50lb, one free carry-on bag up to 20lb, and one free personal item (purse, backpack) that fits under the seat in front of them. A second checked bag costs \$45 each direction.

### Is it safe?

This international mission trip is believed to be one of the safest. While we are aware of the dangers of travel in downtown areas such as Sao Paulo, our team will not spend any time there other than on the beltway leaving the airport. The team will not spend time in the downtown area of any Brazilian city. At no time will our group be on public transportation or walking along public streets. No one will be alone as we will always be part of a big group as we travel around.

### Where are we staying?

We will be in a hotel the first two nights and our last night, which is located in a very safe neighborhood equivalent to many of the cities we all live in here. During the week we will move to a retreat center much like Mount Hermon where we'll stay in dorm-like facilities. It is located in the relative countryside just outside of town.

### How will we be transported, and are the roads safe in Brazil?

Unlike many mission destinations, traffic flows are carefully controlled in Brazil with speed limits and well-marked modern roads that are heavily regulated by radars monitoring ridiculously low speed restrictions (which apparently is a good source of revenue as well). For all the ground transportation, students will be in large, secure, stable, air-conditioned buses with very cautious and experienced drivers. Our hosts use extreme caution when selecting the locations for getting on or off the bus which aids to ensure our safety.

### Are there any precautions we need to take with the kids and teens who live at Hope as we interact with them?

Despite their backgrounds, and largely due to the positive peer culture created at Hope, the youth there are incredibly sweet and respectful. These boys and girls have been living together for 30 years, and Hope has never had a trace of a problem. House parents keep close tabs on their small respective flocks. Everyone is always closely supervised. As visitors, our team will be carefully oriented into the dos and don'ts of interaction, even including the correct way to embrace. At all times, as visitors, we will be part of a group, in an enclosed area with clear line of sight for supervisors.





### Are there any required travel vaccines?

At the moment, no additional vaccines or medications are needed before we leave. Please be sure you are up to date on immunizations for your own safety and health.

### When are our flights?

Current departure/arrival times are as follows, but the airline reserves the right to change these details as needed. As we receive updates, we will share them with the team.

#### Itinerary for COPA

Friday, July 19					
	Flight	Departure	Time	Arrival	Time
	CM #383 Copa Compania Panamena	San Francisco Intl San Francisco	1:47 AM	Tocumen Intl Panama City	10:51 AM
	CM #701 Copa Compania Panamena	Tocumen Intl Panama City	12:05 PM	Guarulhos Intl Sao Paulo	9:00 PM
Saturday, July 20 - Saturday, July 27					
Please contact your agent if you would like to add any additional services.					
Sunday, July 28					
	Flight	Departure	Time	Arrival	Time
	CM #700 Copa Compania Panamena	Guarulhos Intl Sao Paulo	11:11 AM	Tocumen Intl Panama City	4:15 PM
	CM #382 Copa Compania Panamena	Tocumen Intl Panama City	6:12 PM	San Francisco Intl San Francisco	11:40 PM

In addition, Menlo will provide travel insurance for the team.

### Do we need to get travel visas?

Yes! New in 2024 for anyone traveling to Brazil with a US or Canadian passport is the requirement of a travel visa. Information on how to proceed will be provided to team members upon acceptance to the team.

### Do we need spending money?

Yes, and we will get that amount to you as soon as we are able. You will want money for our travel days and for any gifts or souvenirs you may want to buy along the way.

### Are there special rules we'll need to follow while staying at Hope?

So glad you asked! Below are Hope Unlimited's House Rules

Most of the children who live there have no viable parents of their own, so the Hope staff are the closest role models and parental figures they have. During our stay, we will be members of Hope's ministry team, so they ask that we please take this responsibility seriously and follow the following house rules.

1. Treat the youth as you would anyone else. Their difficult pasts are behind them, and they have new identities. Avoid asking personal questions about their pasts or using terms like "street children" or "orphans."
2. Remember that the youth are in a structured program. Do not unintentionally encourage them to break the rules or deviate from schedules. (They may claim to have your permission.)
3. Generally observe the same house rules and manners you have in your home. Do not set a bad example (e.g. caps and sunglasses must be removed during meals; be on time for activities and events; clean up your messes; no roughhousing inside).
4. While being a friend, keep physical interaction to a minimum, including roughhousing, wrestling and prolonged embracing. inside).
5. Do not behave in a manner which would suggest to a student or observer that you are flirting—even if a student initiates.
6. Do not enter dormitories or cottages without permission or unaccompanied by staff.
7. Be careful in reacting to comments made by Hope's youth. Due to their backgrounds, they sometimes have an emotional need to shock, lie, invoke sympathy or otherwise attract attention however they can. Helping them learn that manipulation is not acceptable is part of their healing therapy. If you think this is happening, please notify a staff person.
8. Be careful about showing favoritism. Often, your favorites are everyone's favorites; this can lead to unfair parenting in the long run. Try to pick out a quieter and more reserved student to befriend. If you think this is happening, please notify a staff person.
9. Don't give presents of any kind to any individual youth. If you have enough for all the children, give them to a staff member to be distributed at the proper time.
10. Dress modestly. (see packing instructions)
11. Do not make any promises to students, even in jest, without first checking with a staff member. Especially, do NOT promise to bring a youth back to your country. Avoid promises to write, send presents, come again, etc. Our good intentions can be forgotten, but the child has to live with the disappointment. Just let your next visit or letter be a surprise!
12. Volunteers must respect the Hope Unlimited for Children Statement of Faith and not engage in activities or discussions which offend or contradict local Christian beliefs or customs. Christians in Brazil are especially sensitive to occult activity (tarot cards, fortune telling, etc.) and certain types of secular music. If you are not sure if something is acceptable, check with a staff leader.
13. Do not provide tempting opportunities for theft by leaving valuables unattended. We often have new students with us. It would be tragic to lose a kid back to the streets because he/she gave into temptation and ran off with something valuable.
14. All visitors are subject to the rules of each Hope program and the authority of the local ministry leadership. Please do nothing to undermine this authority.
15. Feel free to take a lot of photographs. However, it is best to get to know the kids a bit first – then they will ask you to take their pictures. We also ask that you do not post any photos of the children on social media, due to their sensitive backgrounds.

16. Any illegal interaction between a visitor and a student in the program will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

17. Don't make plans with students (activities, outings, special treats, etc.) without getting approval from a staff leader. This helps maintain the order and routine of the program and reinforces the role of the leaders.

18. Finally, please ask staff to explain any policy or rule that is unclear. There is a reason for every rule we have, and understanding the rationale will help you appreciate the structured programs we operate.

### What does our schedule for the week look like?

The first and final days are spent immersing ourselves in the culture and beauty of Brazil. During the week, we will be attending and helping run aspects of a week-long camp for children nursery through 18.

### Any other "need to know's" before we travel?

#### Time

Be flexible when it comes to the clock. Please be on time, but recognize that things may not start on time.

#### Food

One of the best ways to experience Brazilian culture is through the food! You'll have many unforgettable meals throughout your trip and have fun trying a variety of dishes on campus and at restaurants.

#### Language Gap

Don't be shy about attempting to speak Portuguese. Brazilians will love every word you try! They will be thrilled that you want to learn their language and will be forgiving of your mistakes.

#### Manners

Remember that everything you need to know in Brazil you learned in kindergarten. Ask questions about things you don't know, smile often, and cross the street together.

#### Personal Space

Your personal space will be much smaller. Brazilians stand and sit much closer to each other than most Americans are used to. They are very social and like to stand right next to you and talk to you. Sometimes a male speaking with another male will even tug lightly on his friend's shirt or play with his buttons as he talks.

#### Affection

Brazilians hug, kiss, and generally love to demonstrate affection. The children will likely be very demonstrative and excited to see you as well. Try to be understanding of their culture and backgrounds and always ask for assistance from staff if you're unsure of how to react.

If you still have questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to us at [students@menlo.church](mailto:students@menlo.church) with your unanswered questions.