

***Religion that God accepts as pure and without fault is this:
Reach out to the homeless and loveless in their plight, and do not let this world make you evil.
James 1:27***

Hello friends . . . grace and peace,

It's quite simple really: if there's something wrong in the world, the mission of God is to set it right. And, as people who follow the person who showed us exactly what "setting things right" looks like – Jesus – we as Jesus followers ought to do all we can to partner with God to help make that happen.

To put it more simply: when we see a need, we help. That means we say, "Why WOULDN'T we help?" before we say, "No, we can't do that."

Lots of us love the "Big Cities" in our country because, let's face it, they're great. There's a ton to do, so much to see, and even if you wouldn't want to live there, spending time there with friends and family is always a wonderful time in cities like New York, Washington DC, San Francisco, Houston, Chicago, Nashville, and more. But what you may not realize is that most of us, when we go to those cities, we stay in areas that typically aren't afflicted by the things that every big city is afflicted by: poverty and inequality.

Help has come in many ways to many of these places. There are many opportunities in all of those cities listed above to be a part of what God is doing, to be the hands and feet of Christ, to help individuals and families to get a meal, find shelter, and instead of simply getting a "hand out", receive a "hand up".

But there is so much to do. Because of the sheer number of people in these cities, help comes in waves, and the need never ever goes away. Families in need of assistance are sometimes forced to wait in long lines or even, never receive the help they desperately need.

So, we're going to go to one of these cities that's not exactly very far away. We're saying, "Yes, Chicago, we can help!" We're going to let our brothers and sisters in The Windy City know that we care and that we want to bring as much help as is needed. We're going to follow Jesus and by doing so, we're going to change the world.

You wanna join us? You're invited. Assuming you are going to be entering 7th grade in the fall of 2020 up through a current high school student or young adult, you are invited.

Here are some details:

Who?

Any and all current 6th – 12th graders and young adults who feel a desire and call to be a part of the Jesus Movement.

What?

A mission trip – aka "Love Journey" – to Chicago in order to help spread God's love and mission by providing help and assistance to families living in systemic poverty.

Where?

Chicago, Illinois, USA.

When?

July 12-18, 2020, ***PLUS*** 3 required team gatherings: Saturday, March 28 from 1 – 4 pm, Saturday, May 30 from 1 – 4 pm, and Wednesday, July 8 from 7 am – 7 pm.

Why?

Because the Jesus Movement is real . . . and because there is no limit to where God calls us to share God's never ending and never-failing Love.

With Whom?

We will be partnering with several different churches and organizations while we are in Chicago, including, my not limited to, Cornerstone Community Outreach (www.ccolife.org), The Greater Chicago Food Depository (www.chicagosfoodbank.org), and San Lucas United Church of Christ (www.sanlucasuccchicago.org). These organizations have been working and serving in the Chicago area for decades. They are aware of what the needs are, understand what God is doing, and are working to work alongside one another to accomplish God's restorative mission in the world. We will be housed in a large residential home with beds and facilities.

What Will We Do?

All of the organizations we will partner with have various ways they go about their mission. Our duties will be to do whatever those organizations need us to do... prepare or serve food, spend time with people as they eat, as well as learn about the culture of those in need in Chicago. Sometimes our group may be split up between two different activities or locations, sometimes we may be all together. The bottom line is we'll be serving others in the name of God, in Christ.

How Much?

The cost is \$900 per person. BUT, because of our partnership with Lambeau Field and Delaware North and the fundraising we've already done, that cost drops down to only \$250 per person.

Fundraisers?

As mentioned above, we have already raised thousands of dollars through Lambeau Field and Delaware North. We will also do a couple of other fundraisers that have proved successful over the years like a car wash and a hot dog sale.

Support Letters?

The other main way that you will raise money is by writing support letters to family and friends, letting them know what you're doing, why you're doing it, and asking them to pray for you and help support this trip. We will teach you how to write support letters. *If you choose not to write support letters then we ask that you personally contribute your entire cost (\$250) of the trip as well as participate in other fundraisers.*

What Do I Have To Do Now?

Pray. Think. And pray some more. Talk to family and friends. Listen to God. Ask questions. Oh, and be in prayer! (did we mention prayer yet?) Official sign up will take place online starting Monday, November 11, 2019 at www.styg.com/signup or www.styg.com/lovejourney Registration will close Saturday, February 29, 2020.

More Questions?

Call/Text/Message/Email/Snap/Insta/Tweet/FaceTime your questions to Aran. Heck you could even make a musical.ly with questions in it!! (lol) No question is bad or wrong. If you have thoughts, comments, questions, anything . . . reach out. Use any and all contact methods listed below.

After a summers where we went outside of the country (Ciudad Juarez, Mexico in 2017), then flew to an island in The United States (Puerto Rico in 2018), and then drove for 2 days (Appalachia 2019), we are excited to be doing a mission trip – aka "Love Journey" – a little closer to home. We are excited to invite you to be a part of The Jesus Movement as we participate in God's Love and Mission. We are excited about the possibility of you jumping on board with what God is doing at St. Thomas, in Chicago, and more.

peace to you



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