WELCOME PACKET

TRANSFORM TRIP 2025

Amor Ministries
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

WELCOME TO THE TRANSFORM TRIP 3
REGISTRATION PROCESS 4

About Amor Ministries 5
Our Story
The Families
Where We Serve
The Building Process

What to Expect 6
Camp
Bathrooms & Showers
Worksite

The Family 7
How the Family is Selected
Interacting with the Family
Communicating with the Family

Tentative Itinerary 8
Tentative Itinerary Continued 9

Border Crossing, La Cocina, Sleeping Tents 10
Going into Mexico
Going into the US
La Cocina
Sleeping Tents

Packing List 11

FMME Instructions 12

Camp Rules/Worksite Rules 13

TRANSFORM TRIP

WELCOME!

We are excited to have you join us on the Transform Trip and we look forward to serving with you soon!

Our trip will begin on **Monday, May 12th** with two options for pick-up:

- 1PM: San Diego International Airport
- 2PM: Best Western Americana Inn (815 W San Ysidro Blvd, San Diego, CA 92173, (619) 428-5521).

For those traveling from out of town, the Best Western is offering discounted rates for our group. If you would like to take advantage of this, please call the Best Western directly and mention that you are part of the Amor Ministries group.

If you need to leave your car parked somewhere during the trip, they have a large parking area adjacent to the hotel where you can park. It's $20/day/vehicle. Please send your vehicle details to Amor/Emily within 2 weeks of arrival (the hotel asks for this info ahead of time). You will need to arrange payment directly with the hotel when you arrive, should you be interested.

As you are making your travel arrangements, please remember we cannot guarantee our arrival time back to the US. We are crossing an international border and the amount of time that it takes to do this is out of our control. We will try to be back to San Diego by early afternoon on Monday, May 19th but there is no guarantee of this. If you are planning flights, please take this into consideration and leave yourself enough time. We do not recommend booking a flight home before 4PM.

You are responsible for getting yourself to either the San Diego International Airport by 1PM or the Best Western Americana Inn by 2PM on Monday, May 12th. On Monday, May 19th we will make one drop-off at the Best Western Americana Inn and one drop-off at the San Diego International Airport.

The heart of our ministry is about transformation. Our desire for our participants and for the families we serve alongside is that something shifts in our hearts and minds when we serve together When you encounter a different culture or a different perspective, your heart is opened to listening and learning in a new way. We want this trip to be about that posture—to learn and listen from others who may not think, believe or act in the same ways we do. We believe there's a seat at the table for everyone and we're better together.

Serving together,
Amor Ministries

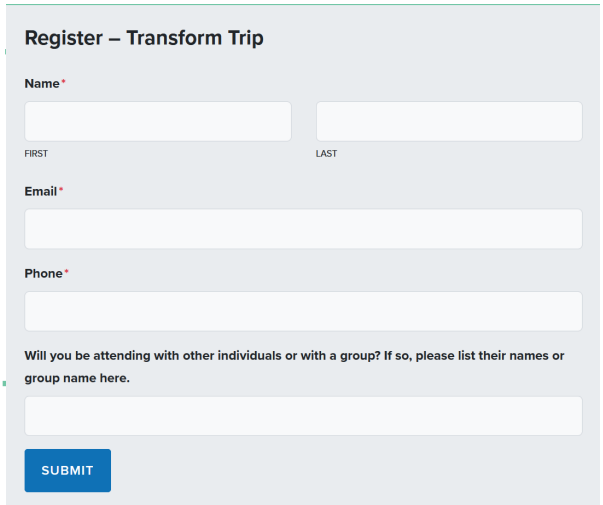
REGISTRATION PROCESS

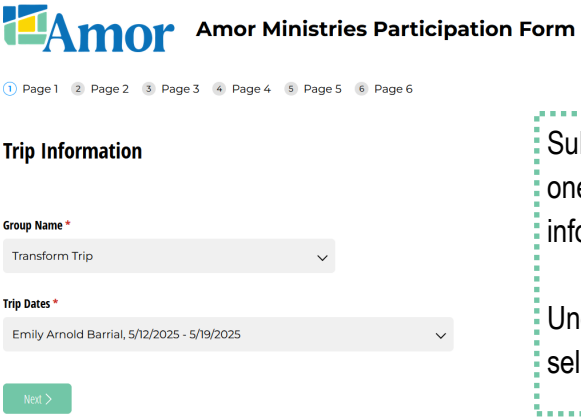
AMOR.ORG/TRIPS/TRANSFORM

STEP 1

You'll begin the process by completing a short form on our website. You'll write your contact information, tell us if you're traveling with anyone else and select the trip dates.

After completing this form, you'll receive an email titled 'Amor Transform Trip Welcome Packet'. Check your spam folder!





STEP 2

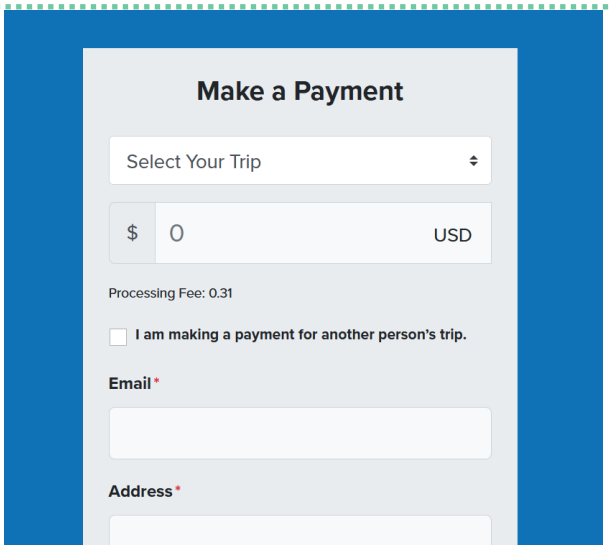
Submit your participation form (the link is in the email you receive after step one). This is a longer form that will ask for more details like your passport information, allergies, etc.

Under 'Group Name', you'll select 'Transform Trip. Under 'Trip Dates', you'll select the dates.

STEP 3

Pay your trip fees ($800/person) in full by March 31st. You can pay by…

- Check made out to Amor Ministries with your name in the memo. Mailed to our address: 3911 Cleveland Ave, PO Box 3279, San Diego, CA 92163
- Credit card on our website. Select 'Transform Trip' in the dropdown menu.
- Wire transfer or ACH. Contact us for more information.



STEPS 1-3 MUST BE COMPLETE BY MARCH 31, 2025

AMOR MINISTRIES

Est. 1980

Our Story...

When Amor Ministries began, many of the poorest families were sending their children away to orphanages because they could not provide for them. Orphanages were filling up with children whose parents loved them but lacked the resources to take care of their general needs.

Amor's Founders, Scott & Gayla Congdon, decided to offer an alternative; provide adequate housing to keep families together.

The Families...

Amor partners with the local community of pastors in Mexico, called the Ministry Planning Board. The pastors will nominate the family, present them to the board to decide on them receiving a home. Our Baja pastors are pictured.

The pastors live and work in the communities we build in so they know the need better than we ever could. After the home is built, the pastor is there to follow up with the family and continue a relationship with them.

Where We Serve...

We serve in the Baja California area and Puerto Peñasco (across the Arizona border). Baja California includes:

- ◊ Tijuana (open year-round)
- ◊ Tecate*(open for a few weeks in spring)
- ◊ Rosarito* (open for a few weeks in summer)

We place our groups to build where there is the greatest need, but also do our best to meet a group's needs and requests.

*These camps will not be open for the foreseeable future.

The Building Process...

We generally recommend 15-25 people per single worksite in order to complete the home in about 3 days. Our homes are 11' X 22' simple builds that contain two rooms, with two windows and one door.

We recommend checking out our building resources on our website to have an idea of what to expect but we provide the support staff to help guide you along in the building process.

Camp

- Our camp is an open spaces of gravel and dirt. It's minimal, giving you a taste of the culture of Mexico and some realities of poverty.
- Our camp caretakers, people hired by Amor, are in camp 24 hours/day to prevent unauthorized entry into and departure from the camp.
- You will be given a designated area to camp—do not enter into another group's area without invitation.
- Our camp has an Amor Store where you can purchase snacks, merch, and toiletries. USD and credit/debit cards accepted. Camp hours are 5pm-8pm.
-

Bathrooms & Showers

- A bathroom is called a baño (bahn-yo) and it resembles an outhouse. They are cleaned and disinfected daily, stocked with toilet paper.
- Amor camps use bucket showers with separate, enclosed structures, marked "boys" and "girls".
- Water is provided in water barrels just outside the showers. Bring your own shower apparatus like a camping solar shower or a bucket. ***Keep your shower apparatus in your campsite, not near the enclosed shower structures.***
- It is required to wear bathing suits in the showers. Please exercise modesty while walking from campsites to the showers.

Worksite

- The worksite is the family's property that we've been invited into. Please respect their area and do not invite other community members, neighbors or children onto the worksite.
- Your Amor rep will work alongside your group; they will help make decisions, show more effective ways of working, and generally assist in any way possible.
- A t-shirt, long pants, and a pair of closed-toed shoes are the minimum dress code requirement.
- No power tools are allowed on the worksite. A battery-powered drill for the door is acceptable.
- The building process is important but take time to serve those around you!

How Families are Selected

- Amor works alongside a team of pastors and community leaders who nominate families in their communities to receive a home.
- The only requirement for a family to receive an Amor home is that they own the property or are making payments to own it.
- Amor then assigns groups based upon need—you may not receive a family you requested (like one with children) but we appreciate your willingness to help anyone in need.
- Families are notified via Amor and the pastors that they'll be receiving a home.
- Pictured: a woman learning that she's been selected to receive a home.

Interacting w/ the Family

- The Mexican family may not be present or as interactive as you may like. We ask that you respect their boundaries. Remember that this is their space that we've been invited into.
- On the other hand, we encourage you to interact with the family if they are present and invite them to participate in your building.
- ¡Hola! Don't be afraid to try Spanish with the family. Learning a few phrases can be a great way to connect.
- Please do not give monetary gifts to the families; it can create issues for the family and ministry (as it's not fair that all families do not receive similar gifts). If you'd like to give monetarily, we recommend our Pastor's Fund which helps fund the Food Bank and school supply ministry that helps families.

Contacting the Family

- Many families will want to connect with you after your trip (whether that be through Facebook, sharing email, phone numbers, etc.).
- Communication is great but we discourage conversation about giving money, bringing donations in the future, and setting expectations.
- It's important to remember that we want to support the pastors and their ministry to the family. We don't want our interaction or communication to interfere with the pastor's continued relationship with the family.

TENTATIVE ITINERARY

Day 1 & 2

1:00PM—Pick-up at San Diego International Airport
2:00PM—Pick-up at Best Western Americana Inn
3:00PM—Cross into Mexico, settle into camp, unpack
5:30PM—Dinner in camp, speakers, free time, Amor Store, worship, campfire, sleep!

7:00AM—Breakfast and pack lunches
8:00AM—Head to worksite, continue building
12:00PM—Break for lunch then continue building
4:00PM—Head to camp for the evening
5:00PM—Showers, dinner, speakers, free time, Amor Store, worship, campfire, sleep!

Building goals: frame all walls and roof pieces, stand everything up, begin bailing wire, tar paper and chicken wire.

Day 3 & 4

7:00AM—Breakfast and pack lunches
8:00AM—Head to worksite, continue building
12:00PM—Break for lunch then continue building
4:00PM—Head to camp for the evening
5:00PM—Showers, dinner, speakers, free time, Amor Store, worship, campfire, sleep!

Building goals: walls and roof on and up, complete bailing wire, tar paper and chicken wire, at least one coat of stucco.

8:30AM—Breakfast
9:30AM—Cooking class at camp
12:00PM—Serve lunch to local ministry
2:00PM—Visit to local ministry
5:00PM—Dinner out
7:00PM—Church service
9:00PM—Back to camp

Day 5 & 6

7:00AM—Breakfast and pack lunches
8:00AM—Head to worksite, continue building
12:00PM—Break for lunch then continue building
4:00PM—Head to camp for the evening
5:00PM—Showers, dinner, speakers, free time, Amor Store, worship, campfire, sleep!

Building goal: 1 coat of stucco

8:00AM—Breakfast
9:30AM—Visits with government agencies
12:00PM—Lunch out
2:00PM—Visit to local ministry
5:00PM—Dinner in camp
6:00PM—Showers, speakers, free time, Amor Store, worship, campfire, sleep!

TENTATIVE ITINERARY CONT.

Day 7

8:00AM—Breakfast in camp
10:00AM—CECUT museum
12:00PM—Lunch out
1:00PM—Border church
2:30PM—Afternoon in Playas
5:00PM—Head to camp for the evening
6:00PM—Showers, speakers, free time, Amor Store open, sleep!

Day 8

8:00AM—Breakfast and pack up
10:00AM—Depart for San Diego, cross the border**
TBD—Drop off at Best Western Americana Inn
TBD—Drop off at San Diego International Airport

**Since we are crossing an international border, there is no guarantee on the time that it will take to cross. It can take several hours, depending on traffic and procedures for the day.

Please do not book a departure flight prior to 4PM as to give yourself plenty of time.

TENTATIVE?

This schedule is tentative and subject to change.

There's a phrase commonly used on our trips that, "a trip to Mexico, requires you to be flexico" meaning there has to be some flexibility in the possibility that things will change or timing will not be exact.

When it comes to ministry opportunities and government agencies, these are some of the places we've served with and visited in the past: HIV/AIDS shelter, migrant shelter, children's home for special needs, a feeding program for children, and the US consulate. All of these are options for this year as well as others.

We will give you a more detailed schedule on your arrival but we appreciate your flexibility and patience as some plans may change.

BORDER CROSSING

Going into Mexico

1. You'll need to have your passport and printed FMME easily accessible. FMME instructions are on page 11.
2. You may be required to exit your vehicle with all of your belongings and enter the building. Pack what you can carry!
3. You will walk through Mexican Customs and present your passport and FMME. If you were unable to complete the FMME ahead of time, you'll fill it out while in line. You'll need a pen to write on the form.
4. You'll walk into the next room to have your luggage x-rayed then exit the building.
5. You will wait for the entire group to be finished and then everyone will walk back to the vehicle.

Going into the US

1. You'll need to have your passport accessible.
2. You may have to exit your vehicle with your belongings and get into the pedestrian line. You may need to wait, depending on the line.
3. You'll enter into the US Customs building where you'll present your passport and have your luggage x-rayed.
4. You'll then exit the US Customs building and walk to the vehicle. Once everyone is back, the vehicle will head back to the Best Western Americana Inn then to San Diego International Airport.

LA COCINA & SLEEPING TENTS

La Cocina

Our food program that you'll be eating your meals with is called La Cocina (law co-see-nuh). Our La Cocina team is comprised of local Mexicans who are employed by Amor. They prepare and share some of their favorite meals which allows you to enjoy Mexican cuisine all weekend!

You will have a designated eating area with tables, chairs and a drink station. The drink station will have water, Gatorade and hot water (for tea, coffee and hot chocolate). We highly recommend bringing your own reusable water bottle or thermos to cut down on paper waste. You will have access to the drinking station at all times—it's important to stay hydrated!

If you have a dietary restriction or allergy, please note it in your online participation/registration form. If you did not put details in your form, please email us directly to ensure we can provide alternative food options for you.

Sleeping Tents

We will provide tents that sleep 2-3 people. If you are traveling with a friend, please let us know so we can place you together in tent assignments. If you prefer your own tent, please note that in your registration form.

You are responsible for bringing your own sleeping bag, pillow and sleeping pad.

PERSONAL PACKING LIST

ITEM	HAVE	PACKED
ONLINE PARTICIPATION FORM COMPLETED (no need to print)		
PASSPORT OR PASSPORT CARD		
FMME FORM (completed online then must be printed)		
Sleeping bag, blanket, & pillow		
Foam or air mattress and/or cot		
Toiletries (toothbrush, toothpaste, brush, soap, deodorant)		
Towel(s) & wash cloth		
Flashlight, headlamp, or lantern		
Water bottle or canteen		
Camp chair		
Sunglasses & hat		
Sunscreen & lip balm		
Insect repellent		
Work gloves (two pairs)		
Work shoes (closed-toed)		
Work clothes (no dresses, shorts, capris; must be long pants)		
Clothing/shoes for church and ministry activities (2-3 outfits)		
Bathing suit & cover for showers		
Camp/warm clothes for evenings		
Camp shoes		
Solar shower & shower shoes		
Jacket & sweatshirt		
Rain gear		
Spending money (US cash or credit card for the Amor Store)		
Kleenex, handwipes, sanitizer, first aid items		
Personal tool belt (a simple canvas one from Home Depot is helpful)		

Optional: Tools are going to be provided for you but if you want to bring your own personal tools, you are welcome to do so. A hammer, wire cutters, hand saw, tape measure and utility knife are helpful options.

Do not bring: alcohol, illegal drugs, tobacco products, fireworks, firearms, large knives, electronic games, blow dryers, curling irons, power tools or valuables.

You may be required to carry your personal bags/cargo when crossing the border.

Please only pack what you can carry.

YOU CANNOT COMPLETE THIS FORM UNTIL YOU ARE WITHIN 30 DAYS OF YOUR ARRIVAL

Instructions for the FMME

(Forma Migratoria Multiple Electronica)

What you will need:

- Internet access
- Passport
- Printer

People entering Mexico by bus are required to present a completed FMME upon arrival at the border. Anyone not traveling by bus will likely be asked to present this form as well. We recommend everyone complete it ahead of your trip.

These instructions will help you fill in the form before your trip and save time at the border.

We have included some information and tips to help you fill in the boxes.

If you have any questions, please contact your group leader.

If your passport expires within 6 months of your arrival, you cannot fill this out online. You will have to fill it out in person at the border.

1

Before your trip visit:
www.inm.gob.mx/fmme

2

First, change the form to English by clicking **EN**.
Then choose **By Land**.

3

Scroll down and check the agreement box. Have your passport ready for the next section.

Entry Information:
Point of entry: El Chaparral (for charter buses only)
Point of entry: Mesa de Otay

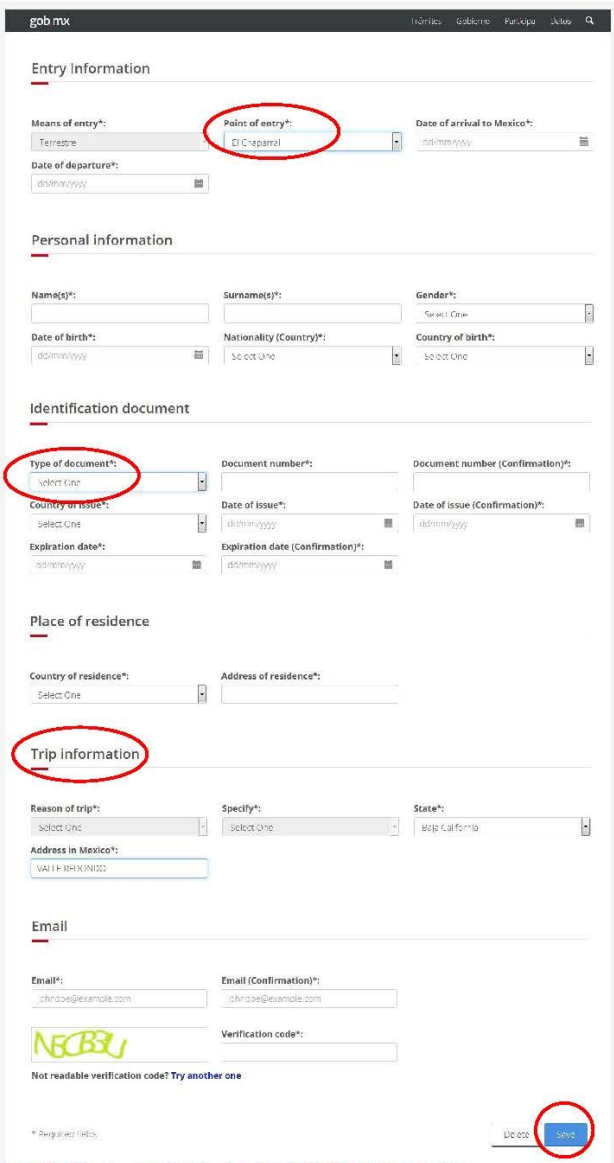
***For Puerto Penasco Only*:**
Point of entry: Sonyota

Identification document:
Type of document: You must use a passport or passport card

Trip Information:
Reason of Trip: Tourism
Specify: Recreational Activities
State: Baja California
Address in Mexico: Valle Redondo

***For Puerto Penasco Only*:**
State: Sonora
Address in Mexico: Puerto Penasco

Click Save
And **PRINT** document.



YOU MUST BRING YOUR PRINTED FORM AND PASSPORT TO PRESENT TO BORDER OFFICIALS.

2024/2025

CAMP RULES

QUIET HOURS ARE FROM 10pm to 6am. Be respectful. Please have campfires and pre-bed bathroom trips completed by 9:45 to be back in your camp area and quiet by 10pm. No generators are to be used during quiet hours.

NO DRUGS OR ALCOHOL
NO PETS
NO DRONES
DO NOT EXCEED 4MPH IN CAMP
NO BONFIRES
NO FIREWORKS
NO RIDING IN THE BACK OF TRUCKS OR ANYWHERE OUTSIDE OF A MOVING VEHICLE
DO NOT PLAY WITH OR TOUCH ANY ANIMALS
VISITORS IN CAMP: All visitors in camp must be approved by your Amor Trip Coordinator or Amor Field Rep. All visitors must fill out a participation form prior to entering Amor's camp. As the Trip Coordinator, you assume responsibility for any visitors.

For your safety, please notify an Amor rep where you are at all times. All groups must be in camp by sundown. The camp gate is locked at 10pm. If for some reason you are not returning until after 10pm, you must inform an Amor rep.

Stay in the Amor camp as demarcated by the fence. The surrounding area is the private property of others and we are not permitted to enter.

Notify an Amor rep immediately if you see something/someone out of the ordinary.

Showers: Swimsuits are required. 2.5 gallons of water per person per day. Do not use this water to brush your teeth. Please cover up when walking to and from the showers.
Baños: In camp, please use the toilet paper provided. Lock doors during use.
Trash: Please bag and tie all trash and put in the designated area. Burn paper products only.

WORKSITE RULES

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY, contact an Amor rep immediately. (i.e. theft, injury, accident)

NO POWER TOOLS! The only exception to this rule is a battery-powered drill for the door.

Be off the worksites by 5:30pm during daylight savings time (after early March) and by 4pm after daylight savings time (after early November).

DO NOT PLAY WITH ANIMALS! If someone is bitten, apply necessary first aid and contact an Amor rep immediately. If it is safe, keep track of where the animal goes.

Follow all posted speed limits and do not exceed 15 mph in the communities you are building.

Each person should drink around 2 gallons each day. If you have a dehydrated group member, have them drink small amounts of water slowly, put them in the shade and contact an Amor rep. The first signs of dehydration are normally headaches and nausea.

Be aware of yourself and those around you while working with tools and lumber. Take your time and work smart.

Wear gloves when handling cement. Protect your skin from chemical burns.

You must wear long pants on the worksite. If you are not, you will be asked to return to camp to put long pants on.

LOCK YOUR VEHICLES AT ALL TIMES. Park as close to your worksite as possible. Do not leave bags or valuables lying in plain view.

Utilize the buddy system on the worksite. Notify your group leader if you want to leave the site to go to the store.

VISITORS: All visitors must be approved by your Amor Trip Coordinator or Amor Field Rep. Prior to coming onto the build site, all visitors must fill out a participation form. Do not invite community members to join on the worksite.

AMOR'S EMERGENCY LINE: 001-619-662-1200 X 2