



VALLEY CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

ENGAGE

2023-2024 Handbook

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." – Matthew 28:19-20

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ABOUT ENGAGE

WELCOME FROM DR. TONKINSON

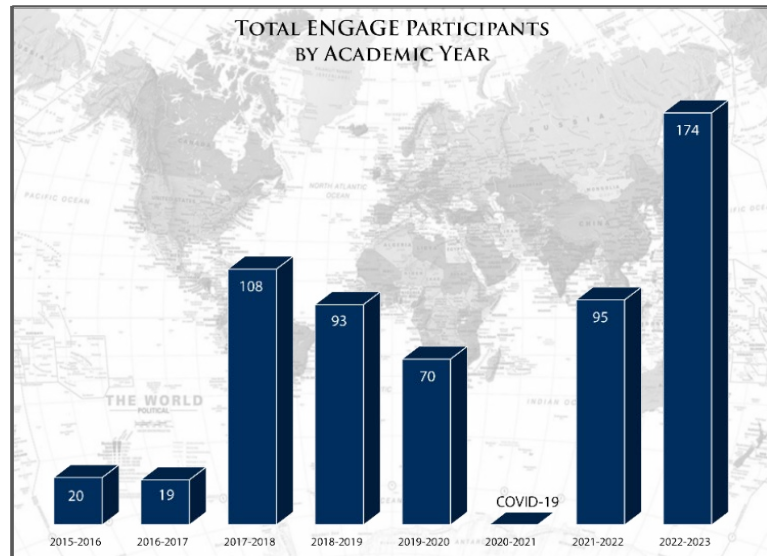


Hello and welcome to the Valley Christian Schools' ENGAGE program! We can see throughout Scripture that God calls us to both share the Gospel and serve others (Matt 28:18-20, Acts 1:8; 20:35, Ja 1:27). This is true whether you are 15 years old or 55 years old, whether you are a young believer or mature in your faith. Heaven will not be in need of people sharing the Good News of Christ. Our opportunities are now! At Valley Christian Schools, we believe that part of a Christian education should include stepping out in faith, trusting in God, and taking some risks. We desire for all our students to not only know about God, but to experience His fullness, which in-part, happens when we put our faith into action. We know God is moving here in Arizona, across the United States, and all over the world. We're thrilled to be a part of His plan and always look forward to joining Him on these exciting adventures!

Dr. Greg Tonkinson, ENGAGE Director

HISTORY OF ENGAGE

LOCATION	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
Brazil	24
Costa Rica	99
Cuba	11
Curacao	65
Dominican Republic	28
Honduras	15
Italy	12
Kenya	97
Poland	20
Puerto Rico	19
Mexico	47
Romania	88
Washington DC	54
TOTAL	579



The ENGAGE program at Valley Christian Schools began in the Spring of 2016 when an adventuresome Bible teacher joined with 20 willing staff and students and travelled to Draganesti-Olt, Romania. There, they partnered with Pastor Raul and Hope Church to bring the Gospel to orphans, widows, and the disenfranchised. Upon returning to the States, the small band of believers knew God was creating a desire in the people of VCS to make short-term missions part of the Valley experience.

Since 2016, VCS has sent over 550 staff and students to 15 locations around the world to share the Good News of Jesus Christ. People in America, Central America, South America, Europe, and Africa have been exposed to the Gospel because of God working through the VCS ENGAGE program. ENGAGE has seen over \$1 million dollars raised over the past eight years to support these efforts, and we are excited for what is to come!

PHILOSOPHY AND OBJECTIVES

13
countries
reached

579
participants

Over
\$1,080,90
0 raised!

While VCS has enjoyed several years of sending students around the world, we believe that was just the beginning!

Under the leadership of our current ENGAGE Director, Dr. Greg Tonkinson, VCS will participate in expanding the ENGAGE program to include all of Arizona, all of the United States, and new locations around the world.

Beginning in the 2023-2024 school year, and moving forward every year after, all VCS high school students will participate in a school-wide, Two-Week Spring Service Break. The vision is to create more opportunities for unforgettable experiences for VCS families. We believe

a two-week Spring Service Break can fulfill this vision and have a deep, lasting, and positive impact on our community both near and far. ENGAGE Arizona (EAZ) will occur during the first week of Spring Service Break. Students will be able to partner with local schools, non-profits, and churches to serve those in need. ENGAGE U.S. (EUS)

and ENGAGE Global (EGL) will continue to take students

on Spirit-filled adventures farther from home! Our hope is to

build lasting relationships with missions groups and churches all over the world that VCS students can partner with even after they graduate. What may be most exciting is that EAZ, EUS, and EGL perfectly aligns with our school mission – providing opportunities for our students to be culture changers for Christ – in very tangible ways. To think that over the course of two weeks we will have over 500 VCS students representing Christ in acts of service is exactly why we believe so strongly in the ENGAGE program.



READY TO ENGAGE?!

APPLYING FOR AN EUS/EGL OPPORTUNITY

We are thrilled you have decided to apply for one of our U.S. or Global ENGAGE trips! The opportunities you will have to go on a short-term mission trip will likely decrease as you get older. Job commitments, marriage and family responsibilities, and financial considerations tend to keep us grounded. Now is the time to engage the world whether that is across the country or across the planet! So, how exactly can you apply for one of our U.S. or Global trips?

1. ServiceReef setup

Parents/guardians will follow these steps to sign up for a [VCS ServiceReef](#) account. The account will allow parents to view their student's pertinent information, including application, fundraising, passport upload, and more!

You can also visit our school website, and, under Student Life, you will find with all kinds of useful information!

valleychristianaz.org/engage



2. The formation of ENGAGE Teams

Students will submit a "General Application" for all US and Global trips. Students will NOT submit individual applications for specific trips. Even if the specific trip shows "Closed" on ServiceReef, you can apply via the General Application during the designated time period. On the General Application, students have the opportunity to list their top-three trip preferences.

Once all the applications are submitted (usually by the third week of September), ENGAGE teams will begin to be formed. Lead chaperones will review applications and put together their teams. Students can choose up to three trips to apply for. Teams are usually decided based on several variables including number of applicants, grade level of applicants, application responses, repeat or first-time applicants. Most students do receive their first choice, but, for popular trips, chaperones cannot take all the students who put the trip first simply due to the trip's capacity. This means that the chance of a student getting their second choice may diminish as trips fill up from those with their first choice.

Seniority is taken into account, but it is far from the only factor considered. Though giving seniors the opportunity to ENGAGE before they graduate is a priority, being an upperclassman does not guarantee you a spot in your top-three choices.

Chaperones carefully review applications and take into account teacher recommendations. They look for spiritual maturity and consider academic and behavioral standing with the school. Being flexible to changing plans and being able to work well with others are crucial skills our chaperones consider.

Each applicant will receive an email shortly after all the applications are reviewed with an invitation to be a part of a specific ENGAGE team. The ENGAGE teams work hard at accommodating everyone's first choice, though it is not uncommon for many trips to exceed the number of spots available and therefore some students will be invited to their second or third choice. If no spots are available for a student's top three choices, an invitation will be offered to join a team that has availability.

3. Acceptance

Once a student receives an invitation to join an ENGAGE trip, the family has the opportunity to accept or deny this opportunity. Upon acceptance, the student is added to the trip's page on the VCS ServiceReef site. The student's dashboard on their account should be monitored closely for fundraising updates and tasks to be completed.

APPLYING FOR AN EAZ OPPORTUNITY



So many opportunities to serve others and minister to the less fortunate are available right here in the Phoenix-Metro area. We are excited to offer several ministry opportunities to every student who chooses to stay in-state during our Spring Service Break. Each year, students will have a number of local options to choose from as to where they would like to serve. There are no costs associated with EAZ opportunities. The applications can be found on the VCS ServiceReef site. Applications for EAZ opportunities open a few weeks after all of the EUS/EGL teams have been formed.

All students must participate in an EAZ, EUS or EGL opportunity.



ENGAGE COVENANT

ENGAGE trips thrive on teamwork! The most successful trips occur when all team members are unified in commitment to Christ and commitment to one another. VCS wants to ensure that every student has the most fulfilling time possible while on their ENGAGE trip and therefore has included an ENGAGE Covenant to be acknowledged and upheld by VCS students and families.

ENGAGE COVENANT COMMITMENT

As an ENGAGE participant with *character*, I will:

- Anticipate being taught by God
- Purposefully ensure a readiness to go on their ENGAGE trip
- Actively participate in serving others on the team and in the field
- Intentionally avoid murmuring, complaining, and gossiping
- Joyfully work to find solutions to unexpected challenges
- Be in good academic standing prior to the trip
- Understand that any behavior challenges with the school may result in a forfeit of the trip
- Understand that any behavior challenges during the trip may result in immediate removal from the trip at my family's expense

As an ENGAGE participant with a *team-mindset*, I will:

- Attend all of my ENGAGE team meetings
- Willingly submit to my chaperones and trust their leadership decisions
- Be on time for all features of my trip
- Demonstrate a healthy respect for other cultures
- Immediately practice biblical conflict resolution
- Understand that this trip is not a romantic vacation and therefore I will not display PDA or give indication that I am spending exclusive alone time with my significant other
- Understand that there will not be any opposite-sex fraternizing in our sleeping quarters

As an ENGAGE participant with *financial responsibility*, I will:

- Meet all of my financial obligations on or before the proposed due dates
- Understand that my family and I will accept responsibility for any outstanding balance in my account



IMPORTANT DATES

August

8/23 – ENGAGE Chapel, EUS and EGL applications open!

September

9/22 – EUS and EGL applications close

9/28 – EUS and EGL acceptance emails sent out

October

10/10 – send out first team email

10/16 – EAZ applications open

10/20 – non-refundable \$100 deposit due

10/31 – EAZ applications close

November

11/1 – mandatory EUS and EGL parent meeting @ 6pm, VCHS – Bradley Gym

11/14 – first student team meeting during Spiritual Emphasis Conference

December

12/8 – 50% of funds due for EUS and EGL

January

1/11 – AAH team meeting

1/25 – AAH team meeting

February

2/9 – 100% of funds due for EUS and EGL

2/15 – AAH team meeting

2/26 – AAH team meeting

March

3/1 – 3/17 – ENGAGE TRIPS!!! (dates vary dependent on trip)

3/21 – AAH team celebration



LEADERSHIP ROLES

ENGAGE STAFF TEAM

Dr. Greg Tonkinson, Director

GTonkinson@valleychristianaz.org



Taylor Adams Mehner, Assistant

TAdams@valleychristianaz.org



The ENGAGE Staff Team is expected to communicate all policies and travel arrangements to the chaperones. The Staff Team acts as support for the chaperones in all areas, including logistics and planning, communication, and especially with regards to making difficult decisions regarding students. The ENGAGE Director, Dr. Tonkinson, has final authority with support from the Head of School over all matters pertaining to ENGAGE. The ENGAGE Assistant is to be the first point of contact and will escalate issues to the Director as necessary.

Responsibilities

- Secure EAZ/EUS/EGL opportunities
- Create policy and directives for all opportunities
- Oversee all fundraising initiatives
- Oversee all transportation (air and ground)

Communications

- With lead chaperones
- With VCS families pre-application
- With team members/families upon discipline escalation
- With VCS families during trip
- With travel agency and insurance

CHAPERONES



Chaperones consist of faculty and staff members as well as external volunteers that must complete all requirements per the VCS website ([Level Three Volunteer](#)).

Chaperones are expected to “over” communicate with their team. Chaperones should regularly communicate all trip details with parents and students. Parents are considered part of the team and zoom calls are encouraged.

Chaperones will monitor fundraising for their team. This may include having difficult conversations with students who are not meeting the fundraising deadlines. Chaperones are the first line of communication regarding team funds.

Responsibilities

- Develop team spiritually, emotionally, and mentally
- Manage all aspects of trip on the ground
- Develop a daily agenda for the trip
- Act as primary contact with ministry partner

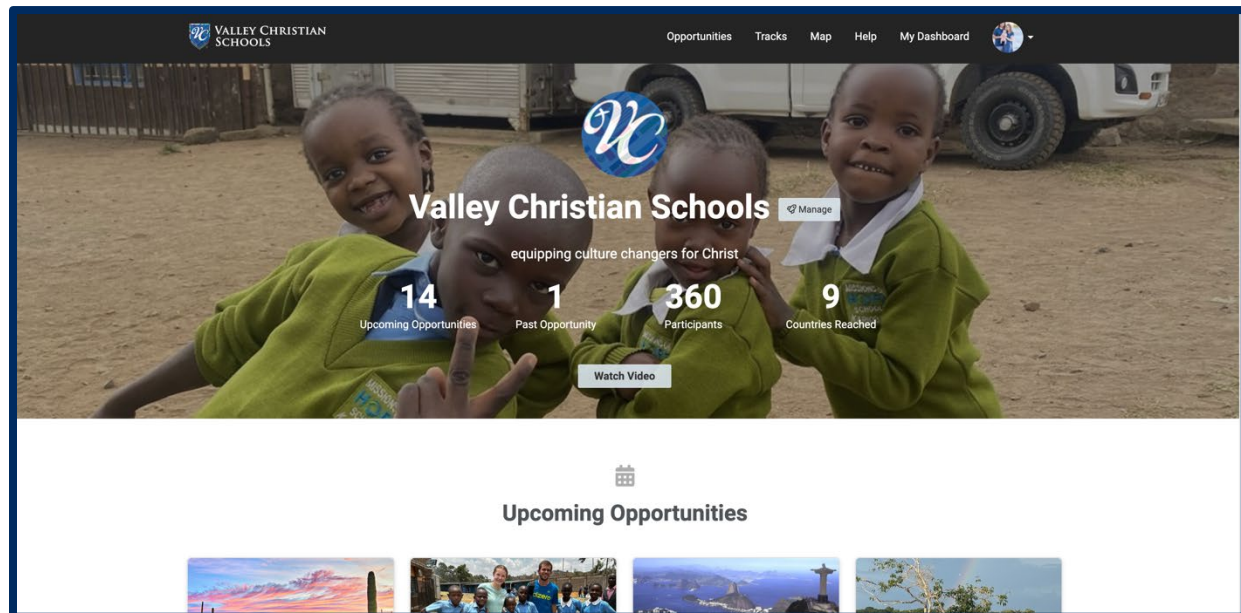
Communications

- With ENGAGE Staff Team
- With other chaperones on the trip
- With team members
- With VCS families post-acceptance and pre-trip
- With ministry partner



BEFORE YOU GO

NAVIGATING SERVICEREEF



vcs.servicereef.com

We are thrilled to partner with ServiceReef in providing VCS families a smooth, informative, and easy to use short-term missions platform. Getting used to a new platform can be challenging. Thankfully, ServiceReef has built a user-friendly platform without sacrificing necessary components, making this a win for VCS! We are here to assist in any way we can as you journey with ENGAGE. The following section will assist you in navigating your account with ServiceReef.



TROUBLESHOOTING SERVICEREEF

The first step to answering ServiceReef questions is to check out their support page:

<https://servicereef.freshdesk.com/support/home>

The most common problems are:

1. *I'm confused about how to create an account*

First, make sure parents/guardians are going to vcs.servicereef.com instead of just servicereef.com. Then, in the top right corner, select "Sign In" and then "Sign Up." Enter the required information and select "Register."

Follow these instructions to set up a family account and add your students:

<https://servicereef.freshdesk.com/support/solutions/articles/151000012719-setting-up-family-accounts>

2. *A student registered for an account before the parent/guardian*

First, the parent/guardian is required to have an account. Follow the posted steps above to get a parent/guardian VCS ServiceReef account.

Next, follow these instructions to add your student:

<https://servicereef.freshdesk.com/support/solutions/articles/151000058217-how-to-link-a-family-member-who-already-has-a-servicereef-account>

Lastly, email Taylor Adams Mehner at TAdams@valleychristianaz.org and request a merge of the student's accounts.

3. *The parent has the application completed under their name instead of their student's*

Follow these instructions to change the applicant.

<https://servicereef.freshdesk.com/support/solutions/articles/151000012720-registering-family-after-i-ve-applied>



4. Viewing and editing a student's personal fundraising page

Login to vcs.servicereef.com and go to "My Dashboard" for your student. Select "See my Fundraising Page." There you will be able to "Edit Personalized Content." Do not delete what is below the line, included to direct viewers to the giving page.

The screenshot shows the "My Dashboard" for Aaron Mehner. The dashboard includes a sidebar with navigation links: Dashboard, My Family, Opportunities, Tracks, Finance, and Update Profile. The main content area displays the "Kenya" fundraising campaign for the period of Mar 1, 2024 - Mar 11, 2024. The contact person is Greg Tonkinson, with the email G.Tonkinson@valleychristiansaz.org. The fundraising progress is shown as \$0.00 of \$0.00, with a 100% funding goal. A red box highlights the "See My Fundraising Page" link. Below the progress bar, there is a "Your Tasks" section with a 2/7 completion rate. The tasks listed are: Check passport expiration date (Due: November 1, 2023), Policy Agreement (Due: November 10, 2023), Upload Passport Information (Due: December 8, 2023), Notarized Parental Consent (Due: January 19, 2024), and 100% Funds Raised (Due: February 9, 2024). Each task has a corresponding "Check passport expiration date", "Policy Agreement", "Upload Passport Information", "Notarized Parental Consent", and "100% Funds Raised" link. The dashboard also includes sections for "My Family" (Taylor Mehner, Aaron Mehner) and "Share Your Mission" (Missional.Life).

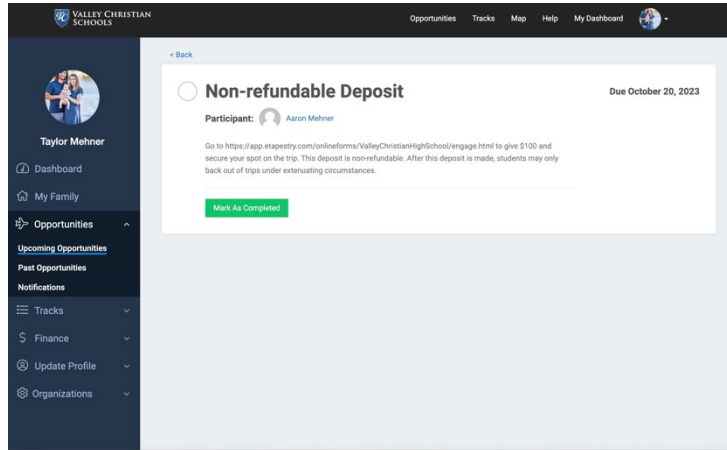
5. View donor information

Login to vcs.servicereef.com and go to "My Dashboard" for your student. Select "See All Donors." There you will be able to view donor names and emails. Students are encouraged to send thank you messages to their donors.

This screenshot is identical to the one above, showing the "My Dashboard" for Aaron Mehner. The "See All Donors" link is highlighted with a red box in the "Your Tasks" section, indicating the next step in the process.

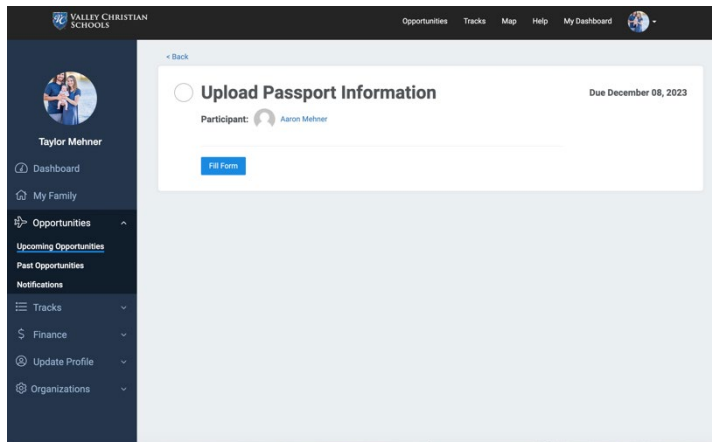
6. Completing tasks

Checkbox – This must be manually completed by the user. Payments do not automatically check the box. After the non-refundable deposit, parents/students must manually check the box. The same thing is true for 50% and 100% fundraising milestones.



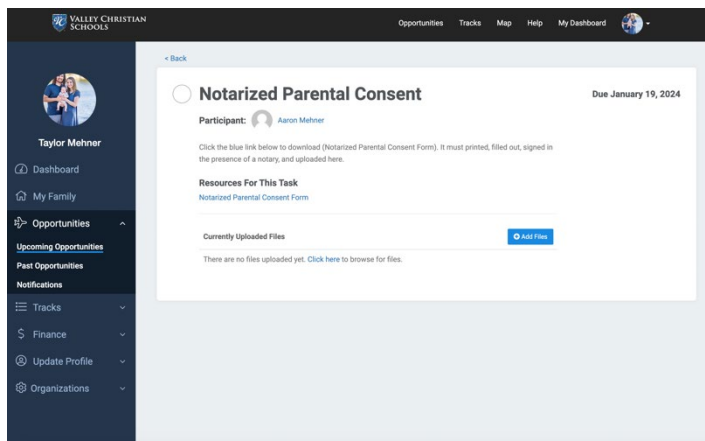
The screenshot shows the 'Non-refundable Deposit' task page. The left sidebar contains a user profile for Taylor Mehner and a navigation menu with options: Dashboard, My Family, Opportunities (expanded), Upcoming Opportunities, Past Opportunities, Notifications, Tracks, Finance, Update Profile, and Organizations. The main content area has a 'Back' link, a task title 'Non-refundable Deposit' with a due date of 'Due October 20, 2023', and a participant 'Aaron Mehner'. Below this is a text box with instructions: 'Go to <https://app.staples.com/online/forms/ValleyChristianHighSchool/engage.html> to give \$100 and secure your spot on the trip. This deposit is non-refundable. After this deposit is made, students may only back out of trips under extenuating circumstances.' At the bottom of the task area is a green button labeled 'Mark As Completed'.

Form – Once the form is completed, the task will automatically be marked as done.



The screenshot shows the 'Upload Passport Information' task page. The left sidebar is identical to the previous screenshot. The main content area has a 'Back' link, a task title 'Upload Passport Information' with a due date of 'Due December 08, 2023', and a participant 'Aaron Mehner'. Below this is a blue button labeled 'Fill Form'.

File Upload – Once the file is uploaded, the task will automatically be marked as done.



The screenshot shows the 'Notarized Parental Consent' task page. The left sidebar is identical to the previous screenshots. The main content area has a 'Back' link, a task title 'Notarized Parental Consent' with a due date of 'Due January 15, 2024', and a participant 'Aaron Mehner'. Below this is a text box with instructions: 'Click the blue link below to download (Notarized Parental Consent Form). It must be printed, filled out, signed in the presence of a notary, and uploaded here.' Underneath is a section titled 'Resources For This Task' with a link 'Notarized Parental Consent Form'. At the bottom is a section titled 'Currently Uploaded Files' with a blue button labeled 'Add Files' and a note: 'There are no files uploaded yet. Click here to browse for files.'

7. *Making payments*

Go to valleychristianaz.org/engage and select "Make a Payment." If you wish to designate your payment to a specific student, be sure to list their name as the recommended student. The contribution will be applied to their account.

ENGAGE

At Valley Christian, we desire our students to engage within their community, their state, their country, and their world. As our world continues to shrink with global technology and communication advances, Christians must learn how to navigate and interact with people of differing backgrounds, cultures, and experiences.

ENGAGE gives students a transformative educational experience on a local, national, and global scale.

PURPOSE

The ENGAGE program is designed to do exactly what it says: engage within our community, our state, our country, and the world. Each of these trips are completely optional for students. All local trips will allow opportunities for parents to accompany students and be a part of the trips as well. For national and international trips, Valley Christian faculty, staff, or appointed chaperones will accompany students.

OUR TRIPS

ENGAGE APPLICATION

MAKE A PAYMENT

SUPPORT



8. *My donation isn't showing up on my student's page*

After a donation is received by VCS, the donor is emailed a digital receipt. The payment will not automatically be reflected in the student's account. The payment must first be processed by VCS and exported to ServiceReef. ServiceReef accounts are updated on Friday mornings each week and reflect payments through the previous Tuesday. For example, payments made on Wednesdays will not be updated in student accounts for 9 days, until the next Friday.



FUNDRAISING

Each team member will have a specific amount to raise to ensure the trip, as a whole, is fully funded. Families should know that while each student raises their expected amount, funds are raised for the team - not individuals. Because funds are being raised for the team, any overages will be used for the opportunity as a whole. Parent/guardian's financial contributions to their student are considered payments and are thereby not tax-deductible. Donations made by individuals who are not the student's parent/guardian are tax-deductible gifts and therefore *cannot be refunded*. Furthermore, most funds are spent prior to the trip taking place, which does not allow for refunds or credits.

The primary way students raise funds for an ENGAGE trip is through electronic support letters, using the student's Personal Fundraising Page on their VCS ServiceReef account.

These support letters can be personalized and sent to family, friends, and churches by the student. Team leaders will provide students with detailed instructions.

Fundraising efforts:

- Individuals may sell items (e.g. – homemade salsa, wrist bands, etc.) without permission
- Team fundraising (e.g. – selling items as a group) needs permission from ENGAGE Director & VCS Development
 - Fill out a request form at www.valleychristianaz.org/fundraising

The VCVC page on Facebook, or any other VCS-administered social media page, is not to be used for fundraising. Fundraising posts will be taken down by administration.

Students will be able to track their fundraising progress on ServiceReef. Donations and payments will be accepted and cataloged on the same day by VCS. Each Friday morning, ServiceReef will send out a weekly email that includes updated giving through the previous Tuesday night.

REFUNDS

Refunds are extremely rare and limited in nature. Absolutely no refunds are given for the following scenarios:

- Failure of student to be in good academic or social standing with VCS
- Change of plans, unexpected or otherwise

Donations of any kind are non-refundable. Donations are defined as any contribution to a student from an individual who is not the student's parent/guardian. Payments made by the student or their guardian(s) are the only fund that have the possibility, though not the guarantee, of being refunded.

Students may not bank funds for future trips nor reallocate funds for siblings, friends, etc.

CULTURE

Understanding that ENGAGE participants are going to serve in various cultures and not trying to change cultures is paramount to a trip's success. Each team will work together to diligently prepare for an understanding of the culture they're going to engage with. Here are a few points of discussion ENGAGE teams will have in their pre-trip meetings.

ELEMENTS OF CULTURE		
Expressions	Religion	Values
Time	Child raising	Leadership
Literature	Holidays	Fairness
Gestures	Modesty	Foods
Friendships	Music	Work ethic
Eating habits	Personal space	Clothing
Beauty	Health	Etiquette
World views	Individualism	Language
Opposite sex	Rituals	

PREPARING FOR CULTURE SHOCK

It's natural to have a degree of culture shock, especially if this is your first time leaving your state. The following are great resources to further engage with other cultures (courtesy of Valor Christian High School):

- Global Oneness Project, <https://www.globalonenessproject.org/>
- National Geographic Education, <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/education/>
- Google Earth
- Poverty Encounter (virtual tours of Guatemala, Haiti, Nepal & Romania), <https://povertyencounter.org/>
- Pathways out of Poverty (virtual exhibit), <https://www.hopeinternational.org/take-action/pathways>
- Access country and culture guides for the country you will serve in at <https://www.commisceoglobal.com/resources/country-guides/> or <http://guide.culturecrossing.net/>
- What the World Eats (TIME) - <https://time.com/8515/what-the-world-eats-hungry-planet/>
- Around the World in 80 Diets - <https://menzelphoto.photoshelter.com/gallery/What-I-Eat-Around-the-World-in-80-Diets/G0000.us7tw6HCdw/C0000zsQX1niZ0zw>
- Everything you own in a photo - <https://menzelphoto.photoshelter.com/gallery-collection/C0000d0DI3dBy4mQ>
- Where children around the world sleep - <https://www.jamesmollison.com/where-children-sleep>
- Classrooms from around the world - <http://todayspictures.slate.com/20101014/> or <https://slate.com/culture/2012/11/julian-germain-photographs-of-classroom-portraits-around-the-world.html>
- Google "The Places We Live, Jonas Bendiksen" for images of dwellings across the world, including many slums



TRIP PREPARATIONS



PACKING LIST

Are you ready to travel?! We want you focus on ministry and all the Lord has for you on your trip. You can this best by being prepared before you travel! This means, have a packing list! Spend the week(s) prior to travelling thinking through what you will need for a successful trip. All of our ENGAGE trips will send out a unique packing list, but here are some common items to consider for your packing list.

1. Documents

- Passport – Color Copy needs to be given to Lead Chaperone
- 2nd form of identification (Driver's license, School ID): THIS IS MANDATORY!
- Wallet or money holder
- Spending Money (recommended \$100-\$200 for spending on additional food, gifts, airport, etc.) For most international trips, you'll need \$20's, \$50's, \$100's, must be newer than 2006, no tears)
- Immunization documents

2. Baggage

- All ENAGE trips need to pack all student belongings into one checked bag
- Students should also bring one carry on
 - This should include some clothing in case of delayed luggage
- Chaperones will let you know which airline you'll be on so you can check size requirements

3. Travel

- a. Neck Pillow
- b. Sleep Mask
- c. Comfortable clothing (fuzzy socks, sweats, leggings, hoodie)
- d. Phone
- e. Headphones/Ear Buds
- f. Book(s)
- g. Universal Adapter
- h. Charger

4. Clothes

- a. Underwear!
- b. Pants (Jeans)/Capris
- c. T-shirts
- d. Sweats, warm ups, basketball shorts
- e. Close Toed Shoes for ministry/Slides or flip flops for lodging
- f. Church Clothing
- g. Socks
- h. Belt
- i. Sunglasses
- j. Hat of some sort

** Keep in mind, no questionable language/graphics on clothing

5. Lodging/Toiletries

- a. Small Fan!
- b. Soap
- c. Wash Cloth
- d. Shampoo/Conditioner
- e. Hair products (comb, styling, bands)
- f. Deodorant
- g. Razor (If needed, must be in checked in luggage)
- h. Q-tips
- i. Female Products
- j. Hand Sanitizer

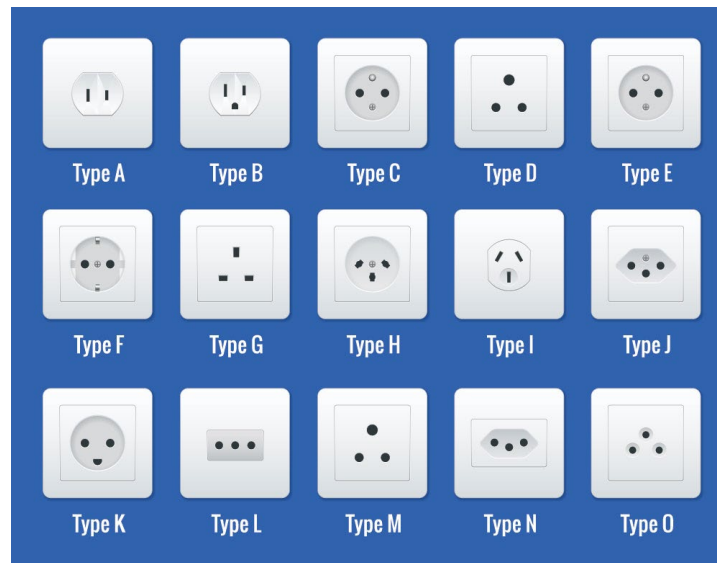
6. Snacks

- a. Candy
- b. Dried Fruit
- c. Trail mix
- d. Protein/Power/Cliff Bars
- e. Jerky
- f. Comfort food

7. Miscellaneous

- a. Journal
- b. Bible
- c. Pens/Pencils
- d. Trash Bag for dirty clothes
- e. Bug Repellent
- f. Sunscreen
- g. Chap Stick

OUTLETS



Type A - Canada, United States, Japan, and Mexico

Type B - Canada, United States, and Mexico

Type C - widely used throughout Asia, Europe, and South America

Type D - India

Type E - Belgium, Czechia, France, Poland, and Slovakia

Type F - Commonly used in Europe and Russia

Type G - Widely used in the Arabian Peninsula and United Kingdom, as well as in Ireland, Malaysia, Malta, and Singapore

Type H - Israel, the Gaza Strip, and the West Bank

Type I - Australia, Argentina, China, and New Zealand

Type J - Only used in Liechtenstein and Switzerland

Type K - Only used in Denmark and Greenland

Type L - Only used in Chile and Italy

Type M - Only used in South Africa

Type N - The International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC)'s choice for the standard universal plug. Mainly used in Brazil and South Africa.

Type O - Only used in Thailand

PASSPORT



All ENGAGE Global (EGL) trips require students travel with a passport. Passports must be current and cannot have an expiration date within 6 months of travel. Passports must match name on airline ticket. Most passports will take *at least* 8-11 weeks to obtain, so do not wait!

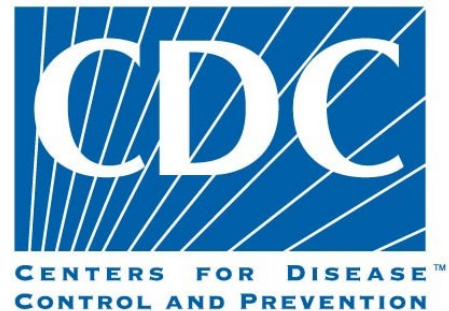
<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports/how-apply.html>

VACCINATIONS

Many countries will have suggestions or requirements for vaccinations. Lead chaperones will provide the team with any information regarding required vaccinations.

VCS will never advise families regarding non-required vaccinations. That decision is between a family and their doctor.

<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel>



RE-ENTRY TO VCS

Reentry into a regular, daily routine will depend on which ENGAGE trip you take. Many of our trips are not physically taxing regarding travel. Students should be able to bounce-back fairly quickly. Emotionally, reentry from any of our ENGAGE trips can be challenging. So much happens during the course of a short-term mission trip emotionally from deep worship and spiritual growth, to team-bonding, to immersion into different cultures, to travel challenges. Students will need an outlet to process all they experienced so it is vital for families to talk to their students about the trip for at least two weeks upon return. Plan for an evening of show and tell where you place an emphasis on allowing your student to share!

All of our teams will have significant opportunities to debrief both collectively and in smaller groups. Students will also fill out a debrief survey indicating if there is interest in continuing with the team and team leaders for prayer, bible study, and discussion about the trip.



WHILE YOU'RE AWAY

PHONE POLICY



Most trips require students to be off their phones for the duration of the trip. Occasions may occur for picture taking where phones may be necessary. Most locations have poor cell-service and limited Wi-Fi.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

ENGAGE encourages students to freely post about their trip both pre-trip and post-trip! We want people to know all about students' experiences prior to taking off and we certainly want people to know all about students' experiences upon returning home. To ensure students stay focused on the heart of the mission, students are not permitted to post on their social media accounts during the trip.



COMMUNICATION

Teams will communicate with families primarily through the daily trip blog on the VCS ServiceReef page. Students do not need to communicate with families during the trip. If a situation arises whereby a family needs to be informed, chaperones will contact the ENGAGE Staff Team, who will then communicate with families. ENGAGE also asks families not to communicate with their student for the duration of the trip. This aides in allowing students to become fully immersed in their trip.

Chaperones must:

- determine specific details regarding where to meet at airport.
- communicate any changes to the itinerary immediately to ENGAGE Staff Team
- always carry the Crisis Team card on your person
- maintain a daily blog on the VCS ServiceReef page
- create and utilize a group chat between chaperones

Chaperones do not communicate with parents while on the trip. A correct and efficient communication flow is:



SAFETY PROTOCOL

- Chaperones and students alike must be vigilant with regards to safety and security protocols.
- The team folder (containing passport copies and other necessary documents) and first aid kit must be kept with a chaperone at all times.
- Passports may be collected by chaperones at their discretion. It is encouraged to keep all passports on your person or locked in a safe place at all times.
- One chaperone is responsible for tracking/logging incidents and all medications given to students.
- A chaperone must stay with a student in the event of an illness or injury, hospital stay, etc. Same gender is required, where possible.
- Chaperones will assign security roles (daily check-ins with students, specific, lights out, counting heads, first aid, binder, passports) to specific chaperones.
- The team must have a working phone on them at all times. When traveling internationally, at least one chaperone phone will have an international plan, to be reimbursed by VCS.
- Chaperones are to ensure students stay in pre-assigned groups of three-four when in airports, markets, etc.
- Chaperones are to remind students of safety measures for the duration of the trip - seat belts, locked doors, appropriate behavior, etc.

GROWING SPIRITUALLY

We fully expect God to grow you on your ENGAGE trip! While you will enjoy experiencing various cultures and have some relaxing moments, ENGAGE trips are purposefully designed to maximize ministry opportunities. When our students are serving others, it's hard not to grow closer to the Lord. As well, each ENGAGE trip will participate in local worship and have daily devotions/debriefs. Moreover, as students prepare for their trips, they will be walking by faith as they trust God for financial and health coverage.

SHARING TESTIMONY

What an exciting moment when the Lord allows His children to participate in the Great Commission. While some might believe sharing one's testimony is only for religious professionals, we believe every Christian has a story to tell! Many, if not most, of our ENGAGE participants will have an opportunity to share their testimony, so it's important to prepare.

Some simple steps as you consider sharing your story:

- Write out your salvation story from beginning end.
- Become very familiar with your story. You don't have to memorize every word you wrote out, but you need to know your story as well as you know the lyrics to your favorite song.
- Avoid religious language that a non-believer would not know. Phrases like "washed in the blood," "penal substitution," and, "omnipotent God," can be replaced with "Jesus' death on the cross," "Jesus paid for my sins," and "God is an all-powerful God."
- Don't leave anything out, but don't be too lengthy! You don't need to start your story at your birth and cover every day since!
- Think of one or two highlights in your story that others might be able to sympathize, or empathize with.
- Practice! Share your story with your friends, family, and trip leaders before you go on your trip!

SHARING THE GOSPEL

While there are many Bible verses that could be included in sharing the Gospel, we recommend using the Roman Road. Easy to memorize!

We have all sinned.

- Romans 3:23 – "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

There is a payment for our sin against a holy God.

- Romans 6:23a – "The wages of sin is death..."

God loved us so much He gave up His Son for our sinful ways.

- Romans 5:8 – "But God demonstrated His love for us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Our response is to confess (repent) and believe in the forgiveness of our sins

- Romans 10:9-10 – "That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation."