

GROUP LEADER'S GUIDE

HOW TO PLAN AND OPERATE A SUCCESSFUL PILGRIMAGE TOUR



Worldwide Tours & Pilgrimages

Web: www.GoCatholicTravel.com



Dear Pilgrim Group Leader,

Welcome to the World of Catholic Travel Centre!

To achieve a successful pilgrimage, we understand that you need to plan your pilgrimage well. To assist you, we are very pleased to honor your request for this complimentary copy of Catholic Travel Centre's **Group Leader's Guide - *How to Plan and Operate a Successful Pilgrimage Tour.***

The Guide is our gift to you, and we hope it serves as tangible proof of our commitment to anticipating and exceeding your expectations!

If this is our first encounter, we are eager to begin a relationship with you and to help make your group pilgrimage tour a reality. That is our ultimate goal – the successful planning and operation of your pilgrimage tour.

If you have already experienced a Catholic Travel Centre Pilgrimage, enjoy this Guide and please continue to tell others about us. You are our best supporters!

Whether you are a new friend or current friend – you can be assured that Catholic Travel Centre will continually strive to offer you the best possible pilgrimage experience.

You will find further assistance at our Web Site: www.GoCatholicTravel.com

Or by contacting us: Toll-free: (800) 553-5233, Email:

Groups@GoCatholicTravel.com

Sincerely,

J. Scott Scherer
President





A Reflection on Pilgrimage Travel

“In traveling, new roads, new skies open to expand the mind and heart. One experiences a new freedom and freshness: something is reborn in one... The world is the sacrament of God, the earth is the face of God. All things are yours... The rivers, plains, the mountains, canyons, the desert, the ocean were made for me, create a new song, new prayer, new psalms in me in the awe, the wonder of gratitude, and beauty.

It is I who am traveled in and what I discover is what is within me... All of this was made for me, all of it waiting to be seen, to be appreciated, to be delighted in as only I could delight in it. All of this sings its unique song in me. God speaks to me on the way. He journeys in me...he stretches, draws me to his dimensions, giving me new eyes, new ears, a new tongue... He goes before us; he goes with us in all of our journeying.”

– Rev. Edward J. Farrell,
The Father is Very Fond of Me



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Seven Reasons for You to Choose to Travel with Catholic Travel Centre

Big Enough and Small Enough

Catholic Travel Centre is big enough to be able to secure volume discounted pricing for your tour, and small enough to give you all the personal attention you need in leading your group.

Customized Itineraries

While our website (www.GoCatholicTravel.com) lists many itineraries, we offer you the opportunity to create a 100% customized itinerary that exactly suits the needs of your group. Few religious tour companies can offer you this capacity.

Sales and Financial Assistance

We offer you a variety of tools to help you promote your pilgrimage tour: full-color brochures and registration forms, bulletin inserts for your weekly church bulletin, bulletin announcements for advertising your pilgrimage tour in your weekly bulletin, and posters for the parish bulletin board. We also handle all the invoicing and collection of funds from the tour participants. This way you can focus on recruiting the group members. We do the rest.

Knowledge

Since our founding in 1991, we have been customizing religious group tours for over 1,000 Catholic organizations. We willingly share this knowledge with you in creating your customized itinerary.

Reputation & Experience

Over 80% of our clients/group leaders are repeat group leaders from previous years or are referred to us by our 'family' of repeat group leaders. Some group leaders have led over 15 different tours with us. Clients are loyal to Catholic Travel Centre because they have not found better options elsewhere, and they trust the service they receive is a good value for their investment. We feel that our experience is unrivaled in the religious travel market.

Reliability

Our moniker as 'The Most Trusted Name in Religious Group Travel' has been earned because we deliver what we promise. And more.

Sensitivity

We understand that a religious group tour is a unique recipe of travel, spiritual enrichment, cultural experiences, and social/community building activities. A successful pilgrimage tour requires just the right mix, and over the years, we feel we have created the perfect recipe to bring your people home fulfilled in body, mind, and soul!





Who is Catholic Travel Centre?

Our Mission:

To provide you and your pilgrims with a customized religious group travel experience that is professionally organized and, at the same time, highly responsive to the spiritual intentions of your journey, so that you and your pilgrims return home deeply enriched in body and soul.

A Testimonial:

“Catholic Travel Centre provides the BEST in religious group travel and custom-made pilgrimages...service is first rate... the most trusted name in religious group travel.” Rev. T.A.K, Massachusetts

Our Story:

Origins:

Catholic Travel Centre's beginning dates back many years, when the company's founder, Scott Scherer, decided to use his business skills to help fundraise for the Catholic Church.

Marketing expertise:

After graduating from Duke University in 1981, Scott was recruited to the Marketing Department of a Fortune 100 company. However, he soon realized his fit would be elsewhere - outside the field of corporate marketing.

Organizing pilgrimages:

Scott soon left the corporate world to work for a small, southern diocese. While living at a local retreat center and still fundraising for the Church, Scott began to organize pilgrimages. He quickly discovered his passion for pilgrimage – a passion shared by his mentor, the Reverend Msgr. John Wall, a diocesan priest, who tutored Scott on the spiritual dimension of pilgrimage.

Scott's passion:

For the next seven years, Scott's business grew as he fostered his passion for pilgrimage, leading groups with Fr. Wall throughout Europe and the Middle East. Throughout his journeys, Scott perceived a need within the religious group travel market -- a need for a pilgrimage company whose spiritual understanding matched its travel professionalism.

Learning from the best:

In 1991, Scott moved to Los Angeles to share his passion with Henry Avakian, a veteran in religious group travel. Thirty years his senior,





Henry taught Scott the essentials of managing a successful group tour company.

Founding of CTC:

Together they founded Catholic Travel Centre. In 1995, Henry passed away, leaving Catholic Travel Centre to Scott's leadership.

The CTC Vision:

In Scott's words, the vision of Catholic Travel Centre is a melding of the influence of his two beloved mentors, Msgr. John Wall and Mr. Henry Avakian. Because of the tutelage of these two men, Scott and his devoted team have been able to create a company known for its high-quality of service and its ability to meet both the spiritual needs and the travel needs of Catholic pilgrims nationwide.

The CTC Team:

Today, Catholic Travel Centre's team serves more than 500 Catholic organizations from coast-to-coast – all who trust Catholic Travel Centre to customize a top-quality, religious travel experience.

**The Most Trusted Name
In Religious Group Travel:**

Since its founding in 1991, Catholic Travel Centre has earned the reputation of being “the most trusted name in religious group travel.” The entire CTC team shares this commitment to excellence, and is dedicated to ensuring the best experience for their pilgrims.

CTC Headquarters:

We are located in the Greater Los Angeles metropolitan area at:
4444 Riverside Dr., Suite 301, Burbank, CA 91505 USA.
Toll-free: (800)553-5233 Web: www.GoCatholicTravel.com

Your Benefits:

- Through our painstaking attention to detail, you will have a smooth-flowing, seamless religious travel experience – with no surprises!
- Group Leaders can travel FREE, see [Information on Earning Your Free Trip & More!](#)
- Customized Itinerary: By customizing your itinerary, you get to see only the sites your group wants to see.
- A truly spiritual and trouble-free pilgrimage: We recognize that a pilgrimage is often an opportunity for conversion – an occasion for an intimate encounter with God. We bear this realization in mind as we plan your group's itinerary with sensitive, well -informed escorts, Christian Guides in the Holy Land, painstaking attention to detail, and much more...





- **Social Sensitivity:** Historically, a Christian pilgrimage has been an experience of community – a chance to bond with others, and just to have fun! We work to achieve a spiritual and social balance – providing a one-of-a-kind religious travel experience.
- **Promotional Partnership:** We will work closely with you in planning a customized itinerary, walking you through the tour marketing and promotional steps, creating attractive color brochures for promoting your trip, and offering you cutting-edge, back-office resources (including computerized invoicing and payment collection).
- **Many Satisfied Group Leaders:** See [Testimonials from Group Leaders](#)

What CTC Does for Group Leaders Like You

When you choose Catholic Travel Centre, you can be confident of receiving only the best: exceptional service, uniquely customized itineraries, spiritual sensitivity and promotional counseling – everything to make your trip an extraordinary success!

Customize Your Itinerary – One of our Strengths:

You will be working very closely with our team to custom-design a daily itinerary that exactly meets your needs. If you buy a 'cookie cutter' or 'package' tour somewhere else, you often are paying for parts of the tour you don't want or need. By customizing, you pay only for what you want and need. Furthermore, once we know your group's interests, we can even suggest "little known" sites for you to visit, making your trip truly "one-of-a-kind." And, we have the ability to plan your trip to anywhere in the world.

Print an Attractive Promotional Brochure & Registration:

We will print, at no charge, 200 copies of an attractive brochure that can assist you in promoting your tour. Your photo, your letter of invitation & your parish or organization logo can be incorporated into this professionally produced brochure. We also handle all registration & invoicing.

Provide all the Travel Arrangements for Your Group:

- Confirm all your airline flights
- Book your hotels, and arrange for portage at hotels
- Schedule bus transportation for all your sightseeing
- Arrange local guides to make the sights come alive (and we even pay the entrance fees)
- Book the Mass altars at local churches for your group's private liturgies

Full service – that's the Catholic Travel Centre way!



Provide Travel Accessories to Make Your Trip Easier:

Everyone in your group will receive a complete travel package:

- Travel Documents showing flight schedules & hotel contact info
- Luggage tags, flight bag, and name tag

All to make traveling with Catholic Travel Centre that much easier.

Arrange Meetings with Local Communities or Church Representatives:

Perhaps you wish to meet with the Latin Patriarch in Jerusalem. Or attend the Papal Audience in Rome. Or perhaps you want to meet with a representative of the Eastern Churches in Jerusalem. How about visiting the Community of San Egidio in Rome? Catholic Travel Centre can do it for you!

We Can Help You Promote Your Pilgrimage: See [TIPS for Promoting Your Pilgrimage](#)

Benefits of a Customized Tour

Your group is unique. Your interests are unique. You have your own set of expectations for a tour.

At Catholic Travel Centre, we feel that your group's daily itinerary should reflect your uniqueness.

That is why we offer you a '100% customized tour.'

While we offer a variety of sample itineraries on our website www.GoCatholicTravel.com, we do encourage you to customize your itinerary.

Here are some examples of highly successful customized ideas used by other groups:

- A group from St. Charles Borromeo in California was celebrating its 50th Anniversary. They asked us to plan a tour to Italy that included the popular cities in Italy plus sites important in the life and story of St. Charles. In Milan, we arranged for a special Mass to be said at the Tomb of Charles Borromeo in the Cathedral in Milan. In Rome, they visited churches with special paintings depicting the life of St. Charles.
- A group from a farming community in the State of Washington wanted to go on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Since Israel is known for its farming technology, they wanted to meet with some farmers in the Holy Land. We were able to arrange several visits for them.





- The Archdiocese of Los Angeles was building its new Cathedral, and the architect was Rafael Moneo from Spain. Catholic Travel Centre organized a pilgrimage tour to Spain visiting sacred and tourist sites, including special visits to buildings by the new Cathedral's famous architect.

Catholic Travel Centre has customized hundreds of unique experiences for parishes, dioceses, church choirs, universities, and religious orders across the USA. Let us help you make your tour unique and memorable.

Private Group Masses on Your Journey

Many group leaders would like to arrange for private daily Masses for their group while touring overseas.

Whether you want Mass daily for your group while on pilgrimage, or whether you prefer to celebrate Mass only a few times during your tour, Catholic Travel Centre can help you.

Imagine your group, celebrating Mass at the Tomb of St. Peter in Vatican City. Or at the tomb of St. Francis in Assisi. Or at the Grotto in Lourdes. Or at the Basilica of the Apparitions in Fatima. Or even at the Grotto of the Nativity in Bethlehem!

When you travel with Catholic Travel Centre, you can do just that!

Several months before your group departs the USA, Catholic Travel Centre contacts you to discuss the Mass Schedule for your group.

We will recommend places where your group can celebrate Mass, and ask you for your preferences as well.

Prior to departing on your overseas tour, you will receive a list of confirmed Mass sites, in writing, so you will know exactly where and when your group is celebrating Mass. This is the Catholic Travel Centre way!

So whether you want to celebrate Mass daily on your overseas pilgrimage – or only on Sundays, as some group leaders prefer – Catholic Travel Centre will be able to assist you in confirming your group's preferred Mass schedule.





Choosing Your Itinerary: Where to go?

Catholic Travel Centre operates tours to many countries, encompassing virtually every major site of interest to Catholics anywhere in Europe, the Middle East, South Pacific, and beyond.

You will find a fully updated list of our itineraries at our website: www.GoCatholicTravel.com. Click on Itineraries by Country. Here you will find itineraries ranging from 7 to 16 days, visiting a variety of sites.

We have also added a list of Marian Pilgrimages, specifically themed to visit major Marian sanctuaries.

If you do not find an itinerary that suits you on our website, we will gladly customize a unique itinerary for you. Since our founding in 1991, Catholic Travel Centre has operated hundreds of highly successful tours. The most popular countries to visit are listed below.

COUNTRIES TO VISIT	Austria	France	Italy	Slovakia
	Belgium	Germany	Jordan	Spain
	Bosnia	Greece	Mexico	Switzerland
	Croatia	Holy Land	Poland	Turkey
	Czech Republic	Hungary	Portugal	Wales
	England	Ireland	Russia	
	Egypt	Israel	Scotland	...& more!

SHRINES & CITIES	Altotting	Fatima	Lourdes	San Giovanni
	Assisi	Florence	Madrid	Santiago
	Avila	Knock	Mariazell	Walsingham
	Barcelona	Lisbon	Munich	Zaragoza
	Chartres	Lisieux	Padua	
	Dublin	London	Paris	..& 100's more!
	Einsiedeln	Loreto	Rome	

If you don't see your country of interest listed here, call us. The above list represents only the most popular destinations among Catholics. As a worldwide tour operator, Catholic Travel Centre can organize your group's travel to countries other than those listed above.



Choosing Your Dates: When is the best time for your group to travel?

You've decided to lead a pilgrimage tour but you are not sure when to go. Here are some factors to consider when choosing your group's travel dates.

Price Factor

Two factors go into constructing the price of your tour: the price for the airfare, and the price for services on the ground, including the hotels.

In general, airfares fall into 3 seasons:

November 1 to February 28 is low season (except holidays)

March 1 to May 30 and September 1 to October 30 is middle season.

June 1 to August 30 is high season.

Hotels tend to fall into similar categories, but with some exceptions which we will be glad to discuss with you when we plan your tour. Just remember: the price of a 10-day tour to Italy in high season can be 50% higher than the price for the exact same trip in low season. Few groups tend to travel in July and August, mostly because airfares overseas are at their peak during this period. We find more groups traveling to southern Europe in the November to March period, mainly because the weather is okay and the price is better.

Weather Factor

Weather varies by destination. You might not go to England in February, but many groups travel to the Holy Land in February, since the climate is more Mediterranean. Many groups like to travel in early November to Europe and the Holy Land because, in general, the prices are lower and the odds are that the weather will still be pleasant during the early part of the month. In general, you can think that Paris is like Boston and Rome is like Miami, in terms of weather and temperature. Using that general index, it is possible to figure out the rest of the geography and associated temperatures.

Your People's Availability

Experience has taught us that certain times tend to be good for people to travel; others, not so good. Trips scheduled in September, October and November tend to sell well. Trips that depart soon after Easter also sell well. However, trips in early May often have a hard time with recruitment. Experience has taught us that many parishioners have commitments for first communions, confirmations, weddings, and graduations – commitments which prevent them from traveling. The second half of May sells better than the first half. Also, Lenten trips sell well. Of course, the group will return home before the beginning of Holy Week.





If most of your group is still employed and not of retirement age, then try to maximize the number of weekends in your itinerary so people can minimize the number of vacation days they have to use to go on your trip.

Days of the Week

Airfares are higher, \$30 per person, if your group flies on Friday, Saturday or Sunday. So if you can schedule your trip to depart on a Monday and return on a Thursday, you have already saved \$60 per person (2 x \$30) on the price of the tour. Also, most priests want to minimize the number of Sundays they are absent from the parish.

Timeline for Planning Your Successful Pilgrimage

The following is an excellent time-line that you will find useful in planning your pilgrimage promotion. It has been well-tested by our many satisfied group leaders.

“The whole experience - from the planning last Fall to now – was a good one for me. I'd be glad to work with you again.”

Sr. M.D., California

A Study Tour to Turkey in the Footsteps of St. Paul

14 to 11 Months Before Departure: Initial Planning Period:

- Plan your daily itinerary with your Catholic Travel Centre specialist. You might consult a core of interested persons in the parish to identify the most popular destinations to find out where people are interested in traveling.
- Catholic Travel Centre will produce your promotional brochure and registration form free of charge (at the earliest, 11-months prior to departure).
- Place advertisements in your parish and neighboring parish bulletins about the trip and about your information meetings.
- Host a General Information Meeting at the parish featuring a video on your destination.
- Distribute your color brochure and registration form.

10 to 3 Months Before Departure: Orientation Period:

- Encourage early registration for your trip. By 6-months prior to departure, your trip should be 75% subscribed; by 3 months prior, your trip should be SOLD OUT.
- Remember, final payment is due to us at 90 days before departure, so registrations should be mailed in to CTC at the absolute latest 3 months prior to departure.





- Hold monthly meetings with your group, showing slides or videos of places you will be visiting.
- Host cultural theme meetings:
- Food – Potluck dinner with typical foods of the country you are visiting.
- Music – An evening of listening to music of the host country.
- Literature – Group members read and discuss a classic novel set in your host country.
- Distribute articles on particular sites you will be visiting.
- Practice with local monetary currency, and role-play shopping in a foreign country.

3 Months up to Your Day of Departure: Final Preparations:

- Finalize rooming list with Catholic Travel Centre.
- Finalize Mass schedule with Catholic Travel Centre.
- Prepare daily prayer/song book for daily worship on your trip.
- Select leaders for various tasks (Head Counter, Music Leader, Luggage Leader, etc.).
- 2 Weeks Prior to Departure: Hold a FINAL GENERAL INFORMATION MEETING to distribute airline tickets, flight bags, luggage tags, and travel documents (which will include your final itinerary, Mass schedule, hotel contacts, rooming list, and insurance information).
- NOTE: If you are not able to plan a final group meeting, CTC will ship the appropriate documents individually to each passenger.

Day of Departure:

- Go to the airport with plenty of time for check-in. At most US airports, CTC will have a representative to assist you with the group check-in process at your local airport.
Have a great trip!

After You Return from Your Pilgrimage:

- Call us immediately to start planning your next pilgrimage!



How to Book Your Group With Catholic Travel Centre

“Seven Steps to Take You From Here to Booking Your Pilgrimage Tour”

Step 1: Decide on Your Itinerary

Do you want to go with one of our itineraries, or do you want to customize something different? Just email us the specs you want, or call us toll-free at (800) 553-5233 to discuss what you need in your itinerary.

Step 2: Decide on Class of Accommodations

Do you want to stay in superior first class hotels (5*), first class hotels (4*), superior tourist class (3*), or do you prefer to stay in 'religious housing' – like a convent. Please think through this and remember, we are here to help you decide. All the places we work with have private bathrooms, so it really comes down to the comfort level you want.

Step 3: Decide on Your Meal Plan

Most groups take breakfast and dinner daily. Do you want dinner included every night or do you want to give the group a few nights free to explore restaurants on their own?

Step 4: Decide on Group Size

How many people do you plan to bring? Most buses hold about 48 people. We can base your price on a minimum of 40, 30, or 20 paying passengers. Remember, a smaller group yields a higher 'per person' cost.

Step 5: Decide on the Number of 'Free Trips' You Need

You probably want 'free' tickets for your group leader and maybe other guests. Free tickets are pro-rated among fully-paying members of your group. We quote you only on the number of free trips you really need. We normally calculate 1 'free' trip per 20 fully paying travelers. However, we would be glad to price your trip at 1-for-15 or 1-for-10. You can give the 'free' trips to other persons who help you promote your tour by getting more pilgrims – or 'sell' the 'free' trip(s) as fundraising for the parish. Ask us how.

Step 6: Decide When You Want to Go

Tours in the Autumn tend to sell best, followed by Spring tours. Summer is the most expensive time to travel; many groups prefer to travel in the off-season (Nov-March) when prices are lower.

Step 7: Please Contact Us

Once you have thought through the above items, we are ready to start planning! Please contact Inga or Scott at Catholic Travel Centre, by email, phone, fax or mail:

EMAIL: Groups@GoCatholicTravel.com



TOLL-FREE: (800) 553-5233 FAX: (818) 848-0712
MAIL: 4444 Riverside Drive, Suite 301, Burbank, CA 91505 USA

Step 8: What We'll Do Next

We will work up an itinerary and quotation based on your specifications. We will then submit a formal quotation proposal, including a contract for you to sign. Once you complete the contract and make an initial deposit, we will create and print your promotional brochure. Remember – we can take care of all the collection of funds and invoicing!

Seven Factors Affecting Your Pilgrimage's Price

1. Time of Year You Wish to Travel:

The season in which you travel can affect your cost. Airfare and hotel prices can vary up to \$500 for the exact same itinerary in August versus November. We will help you choose the best season for your group's travel.

2. Size of Your Group:

Costs for the buses are pro-rated among the group. Prices for 20 persons can be up to \$200 higher than the exact same itinerary priced for 40 persons. FYI, most motor coaches in Europe and the Middle East hold about 48 persons (44 persons in Mexico). Some double-decker motor coaches are available and take up to 72 persons.

3. Number of FREE Trips You Need:

We normally calculate 1 'free' trip per 20 fully-paying travelers. However, we would be glad to price your trip at 1-for-15 or 1-for-10. Your 'free' tickets can be granted to a group leader or other invited members of your group. Or, they can be a great fund-raising vehicle for your church or organization.

4. Hotels: Class & Location:

Accommodations can range from simple (religious hospices) up to deluxe (5 Star hotels). Most groups use 4 Star (classified as 'first class') hotels. Remember, location affects price; a 4 star hotel outside of the city center of Rome is more affordable than a comparable hotel near the Vatican.

5. Meal Plan:

Many groups will choose breakfast and dinner daily. Breakfast is usually buffet. A trip with only breakfast included will be less expensive and allow people to choose where they would like to eat. Some budget-minded groups will include dinner the first night in each city only, requiring group members to buy their own dinners other nights.





6. Number of Days in Your Itinerary:

This is a logical but oft-forgotten factor that affects your price. You can have a 10 or 15-day tour of Italy, and still see the same sights! For the record: 11-13 days is average for a European trip; 10-12 days is average for the Holy Land. A more leisurely, preferable pace is also more expensive.

7. Departure City:

Some airports are cheaper than others. For instance, if your group lives closer to San Antonio but can make it to Houston Airport, you can save up to \$200 per person on certain itineraries. You may choose to charter a bus to Houston and save the additional fare. Also, In the case of Houston and San Antonio, you would have a much wider selection of flight schedules departing from Houston, another factor to consider.

Information on Earning Your Free Trip & More!

How Many Free Trips Can I Get?

Normally, tours are priced to include 1 free trip per 20 fully-paying passengers. If you need more free trips, such as 1-for-15 or 1-for-10, just let us know and we'll calculate your quotation accordingly. You can give the 'free' trips to other persons who help you promote your tour by getting more pilgrims – or 'sell' the free trip(s) as fundraising for the parish. Ask us how.

Does Everyone Know I am Traveling for Free?

No. The terms of your arrangement with CTC are confidential.

What's the Minimum Number Needed to Make the Trip Possible?

Most groups require a minimum of 20 paying passengers for a customized, private tour, with your own bus & your own guide. Price varies according to group size, so the larger the group you have, the lower your per person price is.. If you can't get that many people yourself, consider teaming up with a neighboring parish, and travel together on a lower-priced trip.

What is my Primary Responsibility as a 'Group Leader'?

As a group leader, your responsibility is to gather the pilgrims who will go on your tour. By gathering the people and serving as their spiritual leader, you earn your free trip(s).

How do I Gather the People?

Catholic Travel Centre can help you by printing an attractive, color promotional brochure with a registration form. We also have extensive experience in helping parishes and groups successfully promote their trip. We can help you write bulletin announcements, plan meetings, etc. See Page 23, [TIPS for Promoting Your Pilgrimage](#).





How Much 'Lead Time' do I Need in Planning a Trip?

We recommend 11 months minimum lead-time from the time you announce your trip until the date of departure. Pilgrims will need that much time to plan their calendars and their budgets. That means you need to start planning with us about 1 year before your proposed departure date, so that we can have your brochure ready for you 11 months before your departure. (See ['Timeline for Planning Your Successful Pilgrimage'](#) in this Guide).

What is the Average Length of a Trip?

Average trip length is 10-13 days to Europe or the Holy Land, though trips can range anywhere from 6 days (usually to Mexico) to 3 weeks for multi-country European itineraries.

Frequently Asked Questions on Leading a Pilgrimage

How Does the Registration Process Work?

If CTC is printing a brochure and registration form for your group, then we will process all the registrations. Each registrant must submit a registration form (or photocopy), signed, with the deposit payment enclosed.

All registrations must be sent by mail. Phone or e-mail reservations are not allowed. Also, we cannot simply 'hold' a space open for pilgrims who are anticipating to register. To avoid the occasion for any errors, we require a valid registration form for each participant, accompanied by the initial deposit. The name on the registration form must match your travel document (passport). We have assigned a Tour Number for your file – for record keeping purposes. All of our accounting records operate according to the Tour Number. The number appears on the registration form. Example: 06-045-1022.

Do the 'Free Trips' Need to Fill Out a Registration Form?

We require a completed registration form from any person traveling as one of your earned 'free' trips. Airport taxes and tips are included for the free trips. Optional travel protection insurance is not included for the 'free' trips and must be purchased separately. Please contact our accounting department with any questions on the insurance program.

How Does Invoicing Work?

If CTC is printing your brochure, we will also handle all invoicing. Invoices are processed within two weeks of receipt of a passenger's registration form. Invoices are mailed to registrants, along with a 'Dear Traveler' Letter, General Information Sheet, and the optional travel protection plan brochure. The process has proven to work seamlessly with the thousands of people traveling with us each year. This service, which we provide, saves you from having to collect any monies for your trip.





Only one invoice is sent; passengers are responsible for making final payment per the date stated on the invoice. A reminder statement is sent out 90 days prior to departure. For questions regarding invoices, please contact our office. The final payment deadline is shown on your registration form, normally 75 days prior to departure (per the terms in your brochure). A penalty fee of \$50 may apply to each late payment.

What is Catholic Travel Centre's Travel Insurance Program?

The Travel Protection Program is an optional item, but about 90% of our registrants accept the coverage. (Please note, the coverage will be invoiced to each person, and if they do not want to accept the optional coverage, they only need to decline the coverage and adjust their balance due accordingly.)

The program offers Trip Cancellation, Trip Interruption, Emergency Medical, and Excess Baggage Protection. Please refer to the protection plan brochure for the terms and conditions of the policy. *Please note that this program coverage cannot be purchased after an individual has submitted full payment for their tour.*

How do Cancellations Work?

Cancellation terms apply according to the terms on the brochure. All cancellation penalties apply per the brochure.

All cancellations must be sent to our office in writing, via certified mail or fax. Verbal cancellations cannot be accepted. Since cancellation penalties levied by the airlines and other suppliers are quite strict, we strongly encourage that all your participants purchase the Passenger Travel Protection Program.

If a partial refund is due to a registrant after they cancel, we will promptly process the refund, usually within three weeks of receipt of their cancellation letter. If the passenger had purchased the optional insurance, then in addition to notifying our office, they must also notify the insurance company.

How about Airlines, Seating Requests, and Special Meal Requests?

CTC has made an airline reservation for your group. Since this reservation is made far in advance, the schedule is subject to change. Therefore, we prefer not to release flight information to the passengers prior to the time of ticketing. We can tell you, as the group leader, but we ask that you do not disseminate this information as schedules do change and could cause confusion.

For seating, the airlines will normally assign a block of seats to your group, and the passengers can shift seats within the group after check-in. We have given the rooming list to the airlines and asked that they place roommates together within the block of seats, but we cannot guarantee this. We regret that we cannot accommodate specific seat requests on the airplane, nor are we





able to process frequent flyer numbers (these can be given to the airlines on check-in).

For special meal requests on the airplane, please call the airlines directly about one week prior to departure. The menus at the hotels and restaurants are table d'hôte, meaning that one menu is served for the entire group. Any special dietary needs must be addressed 'on-the-spot' at each hotel or restaurant, and your local guide will be available to assist.

How Does the Pilgrimage Actually Operate on the Ground Overseas?

Your group will have its own local tour escort/guide. You will also have a private motor coach available according to the sightseeing in your itinerary. The guide will be responsible for all entrance fees for all the sites on your itinerary, so you need not be concerned with carrying any monies for this purpose.

Can CTC Schedule Daily Mass for our Group?

CTC will request Mass arrangements to be made for your group, and normally this includes a private reservation at a particular church or altar each day, if you so desire. Our Operations Department will discuss Mass schedules with you and/or the Spiritual Director. We normally recommend that you bring along an alb, stole, and Sacramentary – just in case they are not available. In some countries, such as Turkey, you will need to bring along the elements as well.

How Does the Group Size Affect the Price of our Tour?

Your group quotation is based on a minimum number of fully paying passengers. A fully paying passenger is a passenger who purchases the entire tour package (the airline and the land portion).

If your group fails to reach the minimum number of fully paying passengers contracted in your quotation, then your price will increase. Why? Because portions of the trip are pro-rated according to the number of passengers, and fewer passengers means a higher per person pro-rate (such as the cost of the motor coach, guide, etc).

The only other items that could affect the final cost of your tour (besides a smaller group size) are a drop in the exchange rate for the U.S. Dollar or fuel surcharges applied by the airlines. CTC reserves the right to collect such charges prior to departure.

For more information on pricing, see ['Seven Factors Affecting Your Price'](#).

Are the Tips Included?

We do not want your people to be distracted with tipping while on tour, and for this reason we pre-collect all gratuities prior to your group's departure, and we distribute the tips for you. We do ask, however, for the churches where your group celebrates private Masses, that your people bring a 'pilgrim offering' of minimum \$1 per person for the offertory collection.





What do We do About Changing Money Overseas?

Your group members will need to convert their money into local currency (except if you are traveling to Israel, where US currency is often accepted). For safety, we recommend carrying traveler's checks. These checks can be used to secure local currency in the foreign country. Please note that there is a fee for cashing traveler's checks.

In most countries, ATM machines are widely available. You also may use credit cards such as VISA, MASTERCARD, American Express & Diners Club.

Can People Deviate from the Group's Schedule?

A deviation refers to a person who wants to tour with your group, but wants to make some alteration in their travel plans (such as returning a week later than the group returns or going overseas early and meeting up with the group).

Such persons are welcome to make their own airline arrangements and to purchase the 'land only' portion of the itinerary. Persons deviating are responsible for their own transfers from/to the airports. Ask our office for the 'land only' price for your tour. Certain exceptions can be made for the group leader who wishes to deviate.

What is the 'Land Only' Price?

Some members of your group may prefer to make their own airline arrangements. For these passengers, we make available what is called a LAND ONLY price. They make their own airline arrangements and are responsible for meeting the group at the first hotel for the group's first night stay. They are responsible for their own transportation to and from the airport.

Where do We Get Passports?

Applications and instructions are available from most major post offices or on the web. Non-USA citizens are responsible for securing any visas they require at the consulate of their nationality. See [Passport Information](#).

When Individuals register for your Pilgrimage and mail in their initial deposit to Catholic Travel Centre, we will mail each person instructions on how to obtain a passport. Apply for passports early!



TIPS for Promoting Your Pilgrimage

Start to Invite Pilgrims Immediately... and keep inviting them!

To make your pilgrimage tour a success, you must continuously invite people to join you! And make a habit of inviting more people than you would take along – you will undoubtedly have some attrition. Start inviting people right away. Our general rule of thumb is that unless you have a lot of experience in promoting pilgrimage tours: For every five persons who say they plan to come on your pilgrimage tour, one-to-two persons will actually register.

Keep a Mailing List of Everyone Who Says They're Interested:

Once you receive your Brochures & Registration Forms (which we will print for you – see immediately below), mail a copy to everyone on your mailing list with a personal note, inviting each person to register early. Encourage everyone to register immediately.

Your Brochure and Registration Form:

Catholic Travel Centre will print an attractive brochure, with a registration form. These should be given to those persons who express serious interest in registering. We normally print 200 of these brochures; more can be printed if needed. We will handle all collection of funds and issuance of invoices to the passengers, so you as group leader do not have to be at all involved with the collection of funds.

To begin work on the brochure, we need the following items from you:

- Your photo (a head-shot, preferably black and white)
- An Invitation Letter (we can provide you samples)
- Your parish/organization's logo (if you want that to be included).

We will send you a final brochure proof before printing. Your brochure will be delivered in about three weeks, shipped directly from our printer.

(Note: Payments are normally made payable to Catholic Travel Centre and mailed to our office. If you prefer to have the registrations payable to CTC and mailed first to you – and you in turn forward these items to our office – this procedure can be arranged, but we must be advised prior to the printing of your registration form. Please notify us right away.)

Promotional Flyer:

You want to start promoting your trip NOW! To not lose time while your brochure is in production, we will create a promotional flyer for your trip. The flyer can be produced within 24 hours and sent via overnight delivery to you or sent immediately as a PDF file. The flyer will show the dates of your tour, sightseeing highlights, pricing, and contact information. This allows you to 'hit the ground running' so you can start promoting your tour immediately.





How You Can Use Your Promotional Flyers:

- Insert them in the parish bulletin
- Post the flyers on the parish bulletin board
- Place them in the back of the church
- Distribute them at church meetings
- Carry them with you to hand out at all church functions

Promotional Poster for Parish Bulletin Boards:

When we mail the promotional flyers to you, we can include a poster for your parish bulletin board – and also for neighboring parishes. This poster will contain the same information as the flyer, showing your name or telephone number to contact for more information about your pilgrimage.

Host an Information Meeting at Your Parish:

- Plan an Information Meeting at your parish
- Distribute the Brochures and Registration forms
- Encourage all attendees to register at the meeting (mention that the number of single rooms at hotels are limited - available on a first-come basis.)

At this meeting, you can show a video on your destination (CTC can loan you a video for this meeting). The meeting will help to ignite interest in your trip. Four weeks prior to the meeting, place a meeting announcement in your parish bulletin and those of neighboring parishes.

Parish Bulletin Announcements:

Place a continuously running announcement about your pilgrimage in your parish bulletin. Below you will find a sample bulletin announcement. Send the announcement to neighboring parishes as well, and ask them to run it:

Sample Bulletin Announcement

A Journey to the Shrines of France, April 10 to 24, 2006, led by Rev. John Smith and Sister Ann Marie of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish. \$1895 from Boston, all-inclusive. Please join us for the experience of a lifetime! For your free brochure, please call Fr. John Smith at (617) 586-9874. Space is limited.

Promote Your Trip in Your Local Area:

To promote your trip outside your immediate parish, here are some tips:

- Community & Diocesan Newspapers: Place an announcement in the community notes section of your local newspaper. These announcements are often free. Or place an advertisement in your diocesan newspaper. CTC might be able to share the costs with you, so please inquire.
- Announcements at Parish Meetings & Masses: Announce the trip regularly at Masses, and at church group meetings. Remember, people will respond to an invitation to go on pilgrimage, and inviting people is an important part of your role as the leader of the





group. Once invited, people can then discern if they are called to participate. But you have to invite them first!

Using Your Website to Promote Your Trip:

Place a button on your website with a click-thru to an information page about your pilgrimage. Catholic Travel Centre will provide you with a PDF version of your brochure and registration.

Monitoring How Your Group is Selling:

Even though final payment is due to Catholic Travel Centre 75 days before departure, we need to make an evaluation on the viability of the trip before that 75-day mark – meaning we have to know by 120 days prior to departure IF in fact your group will have enough people to travel.

Within 3-months of receiving from us the color brochure and registration, you should have collected deposits from at least 50% of your group. 4-months prior to departure, your trip should be almost sold out!

While we would like to give you more time to promote, bear in mind that we have in many cases made significant deposits to the airlines and/or hotels on your behalf. Furthermore, if we have reserved a guide for your group – and your group is not going to materialize– then we would like to provide sufficient time for the guide to find additional work since guiding is their welfare.

Once we start receiving and processing registrations for your trip, we can generate a computer printout of all the registrants and email the list to you upon your request.

Final General Information Meeting Before Departure

Suggested Topics to Cover

Passports

- Make 3 photocopies of your passport (signature pages). One copy in your suitcase, one copy with your group leader, one copy with family back home.
- Make certain your passport is valid at least six months beyond your intended date of return.
- Carry your passport securely with you or a copy with you at all times; if, once you arrive overseas, you do not wish to carry your passport with you, keep it in the safe deposit at the hotel or in a safe in your room.
- If members of your group are not US citizens, they are responsible for securing their own visas to gain access into a country they are visiting.
- If you have the ability to scan your passport, save the image in a file that can be placed in your personal email account (i.e. Gmail or AOL). In the event that you are without documents in a foreign country, and the local authorities have internet access, you can pull up your passport information.





Time

Most of mainland Europe is 6 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time – EST (England is 5 hours ahead). The Holy Land is 7 hours ahead of EST.

Weather

For average temperatures, please check the Internet at www.weather.com.

Medicines

Carry your prescription medications in your carry-on bag -- do not place medicine in your checked luggage. Also, carry a photocopy of your prescriptions in case you happen to lose your medicine. It's a good idea to carry a copy of your eyeglass prescriptions also.

Money Issues

- You will have to use local currency. In most countries you can get local currency from ATMs. Make sure you have your PIN number, and before departure notify your bank that you will be making withdrawals from overseas so they don't freeze your account when they suddenly see withdrawal requests coming from overseas.
- Travelers' checks can be converted to local currency at hotel front desks, banks, and special exchange centers. A commission will be charged for this service.

Credit Cards

- Visa, MasterCard, Diners and American Express are widely accepted (Discover not as much).
- Carry copies of your credit card numbers and also the emergency phone numbers for your credit cards (in case the cards are stolen or lost).

How to Carry Your Money

Carry your money in a money wallet, which can be purchased at any luggage store. This is the most secure way. Do not carry cash in your pockets.

Electric Appliances

- Remember you will need both an adapter (for the socket) and a converter (to convert the electric current). Both items must be purchased before you leave the United States. You can find these at a luggage store. (See <http://www.magellans.com/>)
- Make sure that your converter is strong enough to support the current of your appliance
- (for example, a curling iron requires a heavy duty converter).

Luggage

- You are permitted to bring one piece of checked-in luggage, and one piece of carry-on luggage. No exceptions.
- Storage space underneath the bus is limited, and if your group ends up bringing too much luggage, you will have a big problem.





- You are responsible for carrying your carry-on while on tour. Be careful that your carry-on luggage is within the standard size and weight of your airline. Call the airline if you have questions. There is limited space on the bus for your carry-on luggage.
- Make sure you have your luggage tags on the outside of your luggage and that you also have your name and telephone number inside your luggage, in case your luggage tag falls off.
- Use the colored CTC luggage tags on your checked luggage and your carry-on. It is a good idea to have your own luggage tag on each bag also (in addition to the CTC colored luggage tag).

How to Pack & What to Pack

- Pack comfortable, already broken-in walking shoes. NO HEELS, girls/ladies.
- Also, dress in layers. Informal clothing is best. Jeans are widely worn.
- Bring a fold-up umbrella and rain jacket in case of inclement weather. It is always better to be prepared.
- Bring sunglasses, sunscreen, and a hat (that you can fold in your suitcase) for sun protection.
- Most overseas hotels do not provide washcloths, so if you use one, you will have to bring your own.
- Note: Shorts and sleeveless tops are NOT permitted in most churches overseas. .
- To avoid wrinkling when you pack, you may wish to roll your clothes up in a roll. It takes up less space and diminishes wrinkling.
- Don't over-pack!

Cameras

- Bring enough film for the journey, and load your camera with a fresh battery. Lithium camera batteries are three times as expensive overseas.
- Make sure that for your digital cameras you bring your charger and enough memory cards for your journey, too.
- Be mindful that some churches and museums do not allow photos at all; some allow photos only without a flash. Obey the signs.

Telephones

- Telephone calls placed from and billed to hotel rooms carry heavy surcharges.
- If you belong to MCI, SPRINT, or AT&T and have a calling card, you may be able to use this card to call back to the USA. Check with your calling card provider regarding the numbers to dial from out of the country.
- Some cell phones will work overseas, but the charges are very high. Check with your mobile phone supplier for international rate plans for voice, data and texting charges.

Meals & Beverages

- Breakfast is included daily; other meals are per the itinerary during the touring portion of your day.





- Drinks are not included with these meals. You can purchase mineral water, wine, soft drinks or juice from the waiter for an additional cost, so have money ready when you come to these meals.
- We always suggest you drink mineral water only, when abroad. It comes in two varieties, carbonated (sometimes referred to as “with gas”), or uncarbonated (“without gas”).

Offertory Collection at Your Masses

During each of the scheduled daily private Masses, each person in your group will be expected to make a pilgrim’s offering in support of the local church. Usually the equivalent of \$1 per person is the average contribution; you are welcome to give more if so moved.

Language

- English is understood and spoken widely in most tourist areas. Avoid the use of slang and contractions, and speak slowly and succinctly – you’ll have a better chance of being understood.
- Learn how to say ‘hello,’ ‘please,’ and ‘thank you’ in the language of the countries you are visiting.

Toilets Overseas

Public toilets are widely available, and you are expected to leave a small ‘tip’ for the person who cleans the bathrooms. A few coins are sufficient.

Taxis

- In some cities, taxis are available only at taxi stands marked by the TAXI sign, so don’t be surprised if you are trying to hail down a taxi and they don’t stop.
- If you are departing from your hotel and want a taxi, most hotels can call the taxi for you. Remember to tip the front desk personnel for the favor.

Professional English-Speaking Tour Escort

Most groups will have a multi-lingual tour escort who will accompany the group. These tour escorts have your entire itinerary and know where you are supposed to be and when. This person operates as the tour escort and is responsible for the group’s movement, cooperating closely with your group’s leaders. This person’s tip has already been pre-collected. You are welcome to tip more if you so desire.

Entrance Fees to Sites Visited

All entrance fees are included to all mentioned sights on the itinerary.

Tips & Gratuities

- Catholic Travel Centre has pre-collected your tips for the driver, guide, and hotels. If you





want to leave something extra for the maid or hotel front desk staff, that is up to your discretion.

- If you are extra satisfied with the services of the tour escort and motor coach driver, you
- may take up a collection at the end of the tour, but this is not obligatory as your tips have already been pre-collected.

Posting of Daily Schedule

Group leaders are given copies of special posters for posting the day's activities in the lobby of your hotel. At the end of each day, the tour escort will help you in planning the next day's schedule, and the tour escort will post this schedule. A sample schedule would look something like this:

- 7:30 AM Wake-up call.
- 8:00 AM Breakfast available.
- 9:00 AM Motor coach departs for tour of Ancient Rome.
- 1:00 PM Return to hotel for afternoon at leisure.
- 7:00 PM Dinner served in dining room of hotel.

Wake-up Calls

Your group should have a wake-up call daily, to make sure everyone wakes up. The tour escort will confer with you, the group coordinator, to decide on the wake-up time each day.

Being on Time Each Day

- As group coordinator, you have to make sure that your group is on the coach and ready to leave on time each day. Your group has an itinerary to keep, and you need to be especially mindful if you have Mass scheduled daily. (If you are late for your allotted Mass time, the priest at the church may give your space to another group.)
- You must enforce this rule for timeliness early on in the trip, and let it be known that late-comers may be left behind. You have to run a tight ship!

Menus for Meals at Hotels &/or Restaurants

- All menus are pre-planned, and are table d'hote (plate of the day) menus.
- If someone in the group has an allergy and cannot eat the menu of the day, advise the tour escort and they will try to work something out on the spot with the dining room staff.
- Beverages are not included with lunch and dinner. You can purchase mineral water, soft drinks, wine and beer from the wait staff for an additional cost.

If Someone is Going to be Absent from the Group for the Day

The tour escort must be advised. They cannot only tell you or another group member. Anyone leaving the group or absenting themselves from the group's activities must tell the tour escort directly. You must adhere to this rule.





Prayer Partners

Some groups like to have secret prayer partners. You put everyone's name into a hat, and each member of the group picks the name of another group member they will pray for throughout the trip, silently and secretly. At your final Mass or final dinner, you can reveal the prayer partners, and even have a small gift to give to the person for whom you were praying. This is a nice touch and adds an intimacy to the group's experience.

Readers for Mass

It will help if you pre-arrange the readers for each privately celebrated group Mass. You can ask people if they have a special Mass for which they would like to read. Make sure you consult with your Spiritual Director beforehand.

Readings for Mass & Sacramentary

- Most of the churches where your group is celebrating Mass will have copies of the daily readings and the Sacramentary in English. But there is always the possibility that this will not be the case, so as a back-up we recommend you bring a small travel set with you.
- The water, wine, chalice and hosts will always be available.
- We recommend that the priest always carry a back-up alb and stole on the bus, just in case one is not available at the churches.

Medical Insurance

Each traveler should check with their medical insurance provider to determine coverage and how to arrange payment for services received overseas, also what documentation is needed to file a claim once they return home.

Insurance: Important Info on Optional Travel Insurance

- If your group members purchased the optional travel protection program from Catholic Travel Centre, tell them to carry with them at all times the Emergency Contact number listed in the insurance brochure.
- In the event of an emergency, the individual should call that number collect, at any time of day or night.
- If alternate travel plans need to be made to get a person home in the event of an emergency, then the insurance company will arrange the alternate plans directly with the individual (they do not involve Catholic Travel Centre in these plans at all).

Buddy System

It is best if each person has a buddy on the tour, someone watching out for them. Be mindful of any loners who tend to 'stray from the herd.' While you will honor their need for 'space,' remind them this is a group pilgrimage experience and encourage them to buddy up with another group member who will keep their eye out for them.





Lost Luggage

In the event that the airline loses your luggage, make sure to file a claim before leaving the airport. You will need the claim number to track the status of your luggage.

Pickpockets & Police Report

If a member of your group is pick-pocketed or has an item stolen, they need to obtain a local police report to file a claim with their insurance company back home.

TIPS for Sharing Group Responsibilities While On Tour

For some groups the Spiritual Direction and Group Coordination will be done by the same person; in others, the roles will be divided between two persons.

A group pilgrimage can work best if the Spiritual Director / Group Coordinator can delegate some responsibilities to other members in the group. Many hands lighten the load. Below is a list of roles which other group leaders have found to be helpful. We begin with the two major roles – Spiritual Director and Group Coordinator.

Spiritual Director

The spiritual director's role is primarily to celebrate Mass, lead the prayer and reflection time, and be available for private counsel and reconciliation. Most priests will also want to take an active role in the group coordination, and in some cases, the priest actually serves as the group's coordinator. If this is not the case in your group, then this means that the role of spiritual director and group coordinator are divided into two separate roles.

Group Coordinator

The Group Coordinator works directly with the Tour Escort in the daily coordination of the group's activities (unless your Spiritual Director wants to fill this role). If it comes time to make a decision about an activity, the Tour Escort will not poll the group. She/He will ask the Group Coordinator as the spokesperson for a decision and will go by that decision. If your group has a spiritual director, the Group Coordinator should always consult with your spiritual director to get his opinion.

Counter

This person counts the number of persons present and gives the 'go ahead' to the Group Coordinator & Tour Escort that all are present and accounted for, meaning that the group can depart. The counter should count heads on the bus each time the group boards the bus, and each time the group gathers to move from one place to another place.





Caboose

This person should be the last person in the group as the group is walking around the city or leaving a restaurant. When the tour escort sees the 'Caboose' then s/he knows no one else from the group is lagging behind.

Sweeper

When leaving the airplane, restaurant, or any venue where the group was seated, the Sweeper checks behind to make sure no cameras, purses, etc. were left behind.

Games Person

There may be times when your group will be gathered in a place and will have to wait in a line. It is good if you have a person in charge of quick games that can be played to entertain the group during such waiting periods.

Motor Coach Seat Monitor

You will want to rotate daily who sits where on the bus. We suggest that you come up with your own system, and have the Seat Monitor be responsible for implementing your system. That way, you don't have the same people consistently taking the front seats with the best views. Better to rotate.

Banner or Flag Bearer

You'll give your group a certain character if you have some kind of distinctive banner or flag that will be carried by one person in the group. This banner or flag should be in a bright color and should stick up (when carried) to a top-height of about 10 feet from the ground (about 4-5 feet above everyone's head) so that it is easily visible in a crowd. When the group is walking, it will be an easy reference point for the group members. When the group is given some free time and told to meet back at a certain point at a certain time, the Banner Bearer should be the first person at the meeting point (even prior to the designated meeting time) so that their presence serves as a 'human marker' where the group is to meet. Only some groups decide to have a banner or flag; many do not.

Street Crosser

When walking around the city, your group will be crossing streets. The Street Crosser should plant themselves safely near the crossing to make sure the people do not stray while walking across the street. Sometimes street crossings just take a little extra attention.

Nametag Checker

Each person will have a nametag, and it is critical that each morning the Nametag Checker ensures that everyone on the bus has his or her nametag. Wearing nametags enables the Tour Escort to identify group members more easily.





Luggage Checker

Upon arrival in your overseas airport, it is possible that some luggage may be lost or delayed among the group. A pre-designated person (the luggage checker) will be responsible for completing lost luggage forms, and for following up on the lost luggage once the group gets to the hotel.

On return from Europe back to the USA, this person will be responsible for working with the Tour Escort to make sure all luggage is on the bus before leaving from the hotel to the airport. This person is also responsible for making sure that everyone has luggage tags on their luggage, as well as name and address information on the inside of their luggage.

Bathroom Checker

When the group arrives at a restaurant, church, etc., it will be important for this person to learn where the bathrooms are, and how to direct people to the bathrooms (and to make sure everyone is out of the bathroom before you leave a place).

First Aid

This person is the bearer of Band-aids, Pepto Bismol (or equivalent) for upset stomachs or diarrhea, Aspirin, ace bandage, a small sewing kit, etc.

TIPS for Worship & Celebrating Private MASS Overseas

Helpful hints as you prepare to celebrate Mass overseas.

First, we would like to introduce you to the notion of 'Prayer Partners' on your pilgrimage:

PRAYER PARTNERS

A good way to create group camaraderie is to have daily prayer partners within the group. There are a couple ways to do this:

- 1) At the beginning of the trip, put all the names in a hat; each group member draws a name. Whosever name you draw, you pray for that person, secretly, for the entire trip. At your final dinner on the last day of the tour, you reveal the name of your prayer partner, say a few words about your experience of praying for them, and present them with a small gift as a remembrance token.
- 2) A variation on having one prayer partner is to have a different prayer partner each day. So every day, at breakfast, you pass the hat around, and each person selects a name of a person they are praying for that day.





WORSHIP GUIDE

Create a Worship Guide, including the readings for each day you are celebrating Mass. In the back of the Guide, include a Song Book with songs for Mass. Your liturgies will be much more lively this way.

We suggest that you enlist the assistance of some group members in assembling the Worship Guide for your pilgrimage. This will insure early involvement and anticipation of the travel experience.

READERS

Invite group members to read various parts of the Mass. You can either assign these roles before you leave the USA or you can assign them daily while you are overseas.

SET-UPS FOR MASS

Most locations will have all the Mass books in English. As a backup, we recommend you bring a pocket-sized copy, just in case some church does not have the books you will need. Hosts and wine are provided by the local churches.

PILGRIM'S DONATION

Even though Catholic Travel Centre has already made a stipend donation to the church in booking your group's Mass, your people will be expected to make a donation in the collection plate at the offertory. You may want to invite a group member to be in charge of the collection basket during Mass. A small donation of \$1 or its equivalent, per person, is usual. Those willing to give more are welcome to do so.

VESTMENTS

The local churches will have vestments for you. You are welcome to bring your alb and stole if you are interested in doing so.

TIME FOR MASS

Most churches allot for 45 minutes for Mass. Some extremely popular sites will only allow, on rare occasions, 30 minutes during the peak season. You can work with your local tour manager to try to get extra time if you will need it. Please be on time for your scheduled Mass. If you are late, the sacristan might give your "slot" to another group that shows up "on the spot".





GAME SUGGESTIONS

To be played during the Bus Rides!

On any pilgrimage there are times when there will be long bus rides from place to place. In addition to beginning the ride with a prayer, and praying the rosary at a later time, it is always enjoyable to intersperse the quiet time with a game.

Games can create a real camaraderie for the group. Long after a tour is over, some of the people will remind you again and again who won a particular game, or of the fun involved. Below are a few that you might find appealing.

Birthdays

Pass out a small post-it note to each person and ask them to write their name and birthday on the slip. Ahead of time, determine what date will be the focal point. It may be the actual date of the tour, or it can be a milestone anniversary, etc. Of course, the birthday closest to the focal point is the winner.

Always be prepared to have two winners for each game – the more, the merrier, for everyone likes to win and be recognized.

The real advantage of this game is that you can save all the slips of paper, so later on you may send the group members cards on their birthdays.

Mileage

This is probably the most common game, and the easiest, and it can be repeated several times on a tour.

At the beginning of the ride, after handing out slips of paper, announce the beginning mileage (noted when the engine is turned on) and ask them to write it down. Then ask them to guess what the mileage will be when the engine is turned off at the end of the ride. Ask them to put down the mileage figure – NOT how many miles/kilometers the bus has traveled.

After gathering the slips of paper, arrange them in numerical order. Along the way you can create a fun atmosphere by occasionally announcing those that are “out of the running” because you have already passed their estimated mileage to the destination. You will find that the group enjoys this even though you may use the same game several times in a few days.





Pebbles

Before the tour, take a picture of a hand that is full of pebbles. Enlarge it sufficiently so that it is probably about a 5" x 7" size. Pass it around the bus and ask each person to guess the number of pebbles in the picture. Tell them that you kept all the pebbles in a bag, and if they don't trust you with the right number, they are free to count them. You will be amazed at the banter that goes back and forth about how they guessed the number.

Population

Prior to the tour, look up in an Almanac or in the Kenedy Catholic Directory the population of a city (such as the See of a Diocese – Los Angeles or Orange or Phoenix). Or, you may wish to determine the Catholic population of a Diocese. This can be found in the Kenedy Catholic Directory.

Ask each person to write down their estimate. Again, you will find that this game creates a fun atmosphere. A variation would be to guess the population of a city or a diocese 50 years previous.

Is This I?

The sheet for this game needs to be developed prior to the tour with a copy for each person. You may list 20 or 30 different items and ask them to answer a YES to all the items that pertain to them. Some items that everyone could respond to could be: likes tapioca pudding; sings in a choir; likes to garden; played football.

After everyone has responded, read each of the items and ask for a show of hands for those answering YES. It will be a fun few minutes. Of course, the winner is the one with the most "Yeses".

Prizes

Be prepared to have at least 10. Wrap them and bring them with you on the tour. The cost is not important. What is important is that the winners are recognized, get to unwrap their prizes, and perhaps 5 years later will tell you they still have their prizes. Of course, if you are running short of prizes, there are many souvenir shops where you can purchase more. Remember that they don't have to be expensive. What is important is that people win!





PRAYER WHEN BEGINNING A JOURNEY

Let us remind ourselves of why we resolve to go on holy pilgrimage. The places we will visit are monuments to the devotion of the people of God. Let us try to bring something to the faithful who live there: our example of faith, hope and love. Then both they and we will be enriched by the help we give each other

***All Powerful God,** you always show mercy toward those who love you and you are never far away from those who seek you. Remain with us on this holy pilgrimage and guide our way in accord with your will. As our companion on this journey, bring us to our destination in safety. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen*



PRAYER ON RETURN TO THE PLACE OF DEPARTURE

***OUR PILGRIMAGE** has been a privileged period of grace given us by God. We who have come to trust this holy place are moved with a new resolve to be renewed in heart.*

The sanctuaries that we have visited are a sign of that house not built with hands, namely, the Body of Christ, in which we are the living stones built upon Christ, the cornerstone. As we return home, let us live up to the vocation God has given us; to be a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people God claims for his own, so that we may everywhere proclaim the goodness of him who called us from darkness into his marvelous light.

***MAY GOD**, the Lord of heaven and earth, who so graciously accompanied us on this pilgrimage, continue to keep us under his protection.*

Amen.

***MAY GOD**, who gathered all his scattered children in Christ Jesus, grant that we will be of one heart and one mind in Christ.*

Amen.

***MAY GOD**, whose goodness inspires in us all that we desire and achieve, strengthen our devotion by his blessing.*

Amen.



Passport Information

Very important. Please read.

YOU WILL NEED TO OBTAIN A PASSPORT...

For tours outside the USA, all tour members should have a valid passport. Make sure your passport is valid 6 months beyond your tour return date. If you do not have a passport, you can apply at your main post office.

If your itinerary requires a visa for USA citizens, Catholic Travel Centre will assist you in securing this visa, and will notify you if further information and/or payment is required. If you are not a U.S. citizen, you will need to check with the appropriate embassies to obtain your visas if required. We encourage you to apply for your passport EARLY!

HOW TO OBTAIN A PASSPORT...

United States citizens who do not have a valid passport must apply for it. Passport applications are available from the Official U.S. Passport Website:

http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html

Or you can check with your local post office, since many post offices have the necessary passport application forms on hand.

In either case, you will need to pay the appropriate fees to obtain a passport. To apply for a passport, all applicants must have a certified birth certificate; if not available, the Passport Office will advise you which documents may serve as a substitute

All documents submitted as evidence of United States Citizenship by birth shall include the given name and surname, the place and date of birth of the applicant and bear the seal of the office, if this is customary, and signature of the person before whom such documents were executed or by whom they were issued.

The Passport Office will return evidence, except affidavits and altered or mutilated documents, to the applicant unless the case may require further investigation. A person who claims United States Citizenship by naturalization shall submit his/her certificate of naturalization with the application.

IF YOU ARE NOT A USA CITIZEN...

Non-USA citizens should apply for passport information at the consulate of their nationality. If you hold a foreign passport and require a visa for entry into a country you are visiting on your tour, it is your responsibility to obtain the appropriate visas.





Packing List

You won't need everything on this list, nor does this list include everything – but it can help you think about what you want to take.

Paperwork and Documentation

- Passport
- Drivers License
- Insurance cards / information
- Travel Itinerary
- Reservation and Confirmation numbers for air travel
- Airline tickets
- Address book
- Copies of prescriptions and generic names

Money

- Cash
- Travelers checks
- Credit cards
- ATM cards
- Long distance card

Toiletries

- Soap
- Facial cleanser
- Lotion
- Shampoo
- Conditioner
- Deodorant
- Razor
- Shaving cream
- Comb / brush
- Nail clippers
- Nail file
- Q-Tips
- Toothpaste

- Toothbrush
- Dental floss
- Sunscreen
- Towel / washcloth
- Lip balm
- Insect repellent

Electrical

- Travel alarm clock
- Power converters and adaptors
- Flashlight
- Hair dryer
- Curling iron
- Travel iron
- Camera
- Film
- Digital Camera Memory Card
- Charging Cords for all Electronic Devices

Clothing

- Try to coordinate around a central color so you can mix and match items, and consider taking items you can use to layer outfits instead of taking heavy limited-use items
- Undergarments
 - Socks
 - Hose
 - Pants/ Jeans
 - Skirts
 - Belts
 - Shirts / Blouses
 - Sweaters / sweatshirts
 - Scarves
 - Handkerchief

Nightgear

- Pajamas
- Robe
- Slippers
- Sleeping mask

Shoes

- Walking shoes
- Arch supports
- Sport shoes

Swimming

- Swimsuit
- Swim wrap
- Swim cap
- Goggles
- Swim shoes

Raingear

- Raincoat / poncho
- Umbrella

Miscellaneous

- Medications
- First aid kit
- Sunglasses
- Glasses (bring an extra pair as well if possible)
- Eye Glass Prescription
- Contact lenses with case and cleaning kit (bring extra lenses if possible)
- Transit entertainment (reading material, etc)
- Wristwatch
- Batteries



Traveler's Checklist

You won't need everything on this list, nor does this list include everything – but it can help you think about what you want to take.

PRE-DEPARTURE

- Passport
- Visa
- Health Documentation
- Transportation Tickets
- Frequent Flyer Card
- Emergency Information
- Insurance
- Hotel Reservations
- Traveler's Checks
- Currency
- Credit Card
- Guide Books and Maps
- Trip Cancellation/Medical Insurance
- Personal Identification
- Copies of Airline Tickets/Passport etc.

TRAVEL GEAR

- Main Travel Bag (Travel Pack/Duffel Bag/Luggage)
- Packing Accessories (for clothes, small stuff & toiletries)
- Security (Passport Carrier/Locks/Luggage Tags)
- Document Organizer
- Everyday Bag

EVERYDAY BASICS

- Travel Clothing
- Raincoat/Umbrella
- Travel Footwear
- Visor or Brimmed Hat
- Camera, Lenses, Film
- Video Camera, Tapes
- Binoculars
- CD/Cassette Player
- Electric/Phone Converters
- Currency Converter
- Travel Alarm
- Language Book
- Reading Materials
- Address Book

- Travel Journal
- Pen / Pencil
- Scarf / Bandana
- Games / Playing Cards
- Snacks
- Water Bottle
- Hand Sanitizer / Towelettes
- Travel Neck Pillow
- Eye Shade / Ear Plugs
- Tissues / Toilet Paper
- Keys

MAINTENANCE ITEMS

- Extra Batteries
- Sewing/Repair Kit
- Travel Iron or Steamer
- Sink Stopper for Hotel Sink
- Zip-close Plastic Bags

TRAVEL HEALTH

Please consult your local health center or personal physician for help in planning your trip's medication needs.

- Travel Health Booklet
- Pain Reliever / Aspirin
- Cold Medicines
- Contact Lens Items
- Diarrhea Medicine
- Laxative
- Insect Protection
- Sun Protection
- Sunburn Relief
- Antibiotic Cream
- Motion Sickness Meds
- Personal Hygiene Items
- Personal Prescriptions
- Vitamins
- Moleskin
- Mouthwash

TOILETRIES

- Comb / Brush
- Toothbrush / Toothpaste
- Dental Floss
- Deodorant
- Soap – Personal & Laundry
- Skin Care Lotion / Creams
- Make-up
- Mirror
- Manicure Articles
- Hair Care
- Sunscreen / Lipbalm
- Razors / Shaving Cream
- Hairdryer
- Towel / Washcloth
- Travel Bottles
- (for shampoo & laundry soap, etc.)

HOME CHECKLIST

- Stop deliveries
- Have Post Office hold mail
- Arrange care for pets, lawn and plants
- Set-up a timed lighting system
- Notify local police of absence
- Leave house key and trip itinerary with a neighbor
- Empty refrigerator
- Eliminate possible fire hazards (unplug appliances, etc.)
- Adjust thermostat
- Turn off water heater
- Store valuables in safe place
- Lock all doors and windows
- Reconfirm with airlines





Healthy Traveling Tips

The following information is provided to help ensure that you remain as healthy as possible during your trip so that your pilgrimage can be enjoyed and appreciated to its fullest.

Pre-Trip

The secret to a healthy trip is to begin it well-rested. Excessive stress (such as waiting to the last minute to pack) lowers your body's resistance to any little "bug" that may come your way.

"Early to bed" every night the week prior to departure! You will lose 9 hours as you travel to Europe; store up some of those hours ahead of time.

Pack your suitcase a week ahead of time; this gives you a chance to leisurely remember those things you may have forgotten.

Pack light; use the motto, "when in doubt, leave it out." You'd be surprised at what you can get by without. This also means less physical stress in lugging the extra pounds around.

Be prepared for weather changes; instead of "bulky", think "layers."

Do errands ahead of time; put mail and newspapers on hold, arrange for care of animals and plants, pay your bills early, etc.

Pack a picnic-care basket to enjoy on the plane: special treats such as fresh fruit (grapes are especially refreshing), fresh vegetables, your favorite juice, etc.

Arrive at the airport even earlier than the 2 hours recommended; avoid the stress of unplanned traffic delays.

Have valuables (passport, money, credit card) safely out of sight in a money belt under your clothes to avoid the unpleasantness of misplacing or losing them through theft. Leave your precious jewelry at home.

On the plane, set your watch ahead to the local time of your destination, to help your mind adjust to its European schedule.

Dehydration

One of the most important factors in maintaining a feeling of well-being during your travel is the prevention of dehydration, especially while in the air. Dehydration causes fatigue, jet lag, dry and reddened eyes, dry mucous membranes (which leads to increased susceptibility to colds and flu), headache, nausea, lightheadedness, sleep disturbances, dry skin, chapped lips, fluid retention





(kidneys' effort to conserve water), depression and constipation. In other words, dehydration can make you truly miserable. In the beginning, its effects are barely noticeable, but then suddenly it is upon you, and it can take several days to recover.

Why does dehydration occur? Optimal humidity is between 50-55%; in the Sahara Desert it's 20-25%. At 30,000 ft, it's 1-10%. You are in that dry plane from the West Coast to Europe for 11 hours. During that time, moisture is literally being sucked out of your body! To avoid dehydration and minimize its effects:

Drink plenty of water! 8-16 oz every hour (2.5 to 5 qts. total). Note that airline glasses hold only 4 oz., so bring your own bottled water on board and refill it at the plane's galley by asking for assistance or filling it yourself. Do not use water from the lavatories. When being served refreshments, ask for 2 glasses of water or juice instead of 1.

Avoid alcohol and caffeinated beverages (coffee and cola) because they have a diuretic effect (excessive excretion of urine), which compounds the effects of dehydration.

Splash water on your face frequently during your flight to re-hydrate and refresh your face.

Use moisturizers on your face and lips, and Vaseline in your nostrils.

Remove contact lenses during your flight; dry eyes combined with contacts can cause corneal abrasions.

Alcohol

Resist the temptation of free drinks on the flight. Postpone the enjoyment of wine with your meals until you've landed on European soil.

Alcohol is a diuretic and therefore will increase dehydration in your body. At high altitudes alcohol is 2 to 3 times more potent than at sea level (1 drink will have the same effect as 2 or 3).

- When taken with meals, alcohol delays the digestive process and leads to increased abdominal discomfort.
- Alcohol (and caffeine also) is a gastric irritant.
- Alcohol mixed with prescription medications can increase, decrease or change the medication's effects in your body. Check for alcohol warning labels on your prescription bottles.
- Alcohol causes sleep disturbances. While it can initially relax you and help you fall asleep, it has a rebound effect which awakens you later and keeps you from sleeping normally.





Other Health Concerns

Inactivity inside the aircraft predisposes the body to pooling of blood, which can lead to blood clots (which can cause a stroke). One Aspirin (a blood thinner) taken on each day of air travel is a preventative; do not take if you are sensitive to Aspirin (stomach upset or a tendency to bruising or bleeding), or if you are on other blood thinning medications. Check with your doctor to see if this is a good idea for you. Other preventive measures include support stockings, walking around the plane (always re buckle seat belts when you return to your seat to prevent injury in case of air turbulence), and resisting crossing one's legs.

Ears tend to "pop" (Eustachian tubes close) when air pressure changes as the plane ascends and descends; this can be uncomfortable and painful, and can affect hearing for several days. Avoid or diminish these effects by chewing gum and using a nasal decongestant before ascent and descent, yawning, or pinching your nostrils together as you blow through your nose.

Plane Comfort

Unless you're in your own private jet, the experience of flying is one to be endured for the sake of arriving at your destination. Airplane seats are notoriously uncomfortable; after being confined to them for several hours, they take on the feel of a medieval torture chamber. Air Is DRY. Space is cramped. Lavatories are SMALL and UNPLEASANT. The food leaves much to be desired. Here are some ideas to make your trip more enjoyable: wear comfortable, loose clothing (no tight waist bands or pantyhose). Be prepared for both hot and cold temperatures on the plane. Wear roomy shoes; your feet are sure to swell. Remove your shoes in-flight and wear sox. Since your hands also can swell, avoid rings.

Bring along an inflatable neck pillow to support your head as you nod off to sleep.

Aid circulation and reduce stress by frequently tensing and relaxing every muscle in your body that you can think of (more than 600 of them). This can be done while in your seat.

Stretch your legs (and other body parts) frequently in the aisle, even if this means climbing over your seat-mates. This aids circulation.

Elevate your feet on your under-the-seat, carry-on bag; this reduces back strain.

Relieve a painful or numb tail bone by sitting on a rolled up blanket or pillow in such a way as to avoid putting pressure on that part of your anatomy.

Keep your tummy happy; eat lightly (use your own "picnic" basket). Avoid 'gassy' and spicy foods; skip carbonated drinks (those tiny bubbles expand to about 3 times their original size). Skip salty snacks (peanuts and pretzels) and drinks (tomato juice) which contribute to increased fluid retention.





Try to SLEEP. Advance your watch to the local time of your destination when you board the plane and realize that a new day is about to dawn. Forget the movie; the screen is small, people keep blocking your view, and the sound is muffled by the plane's engines. Eye shades and ear plugs can help.

Arrival

Upon arrival in Europe, your body will need to continue adjusting to the new time zone.

Continue drinking plenty of water in order to recover from the effects of dehydration.

STRETCH, WALK, and EXERCISE every chance you get during your travel days (e.g. in the airport before departure). This aids circulation and the transport of oxygen throughout the cells of your body. You get extra points if you can manage a short walk in the fresh air once you get to your hotel.

SEEK THE SUN: exposure to daylight helps to reset your body clock to European time.

On your first night in Europe, a warm bath will open your pores and re-hydrate your skin.

SLEEP! If you get up at 6 am the day of departure and go to bed at 10 pm in Europe the next night, you will have been up a total of 31 hours! Sleep restores energy. You might think that this will be no problem because you'll be so exhausted you'll fall right off to sleep, but that is not what happens. Because of the time changes, your body will think that night is day and vice versa. You may fall to sleep, only to find yourself wide awake at 2 am (11 am, PST). To avoid being a zombie due to lack of sleep, you may want to ask your doctor if it would be advisable for you to take a sleeping prescription during the first couple nights of your trip.

Jet lag

Jet lag refers to your body's lack of adjustment to the different time zones (the West Coast is 9 zones behind Europe while New York is only 6 time zones behind). Its symptoms include all those maladies mentioned under "dehydration." By paying attention to the preceding advice, you will greatly lessen its debilitating effects. Beware, the effects of jet lag can also plague you on your way home. Melatonin is sometimes considered a preventive measure, but its use is controversial. Be sure to check with your doctor before taking medications for jet lag.

Medications

Have sufficient medications and supplies (syringes, alcohol wipes, etc.) to last your trip.

Carry your medications with you on the plane; never pack them into the suitcase you will be checking, just in case your luggage becomes lost.





If traveling from the west coast you lose 9 hours during your first full day of travel (this day will consist of only 15 hours); on the day you return home, you gain 9 hours (giving you a total of 33 hours). This makes it difficult to know when to take those medications scheduled for more than twice a day (this includes Insulin). Ask your doctor or pharmacist for assistance.

If you take medications more than twice a day, you may want to bring them along in a "weekly medication organizer" to help simplify things. (If you do this, also bring along the original containers of all your prescription medications.)

Never mix all your medications in one container, or put any of them into containers labeled differently from what they actually are. In addition to your daily medications, bring along those "just-in-case" medications (for flu, colds, sore throat, diarrhea, constipation, stomach upset, headache, etc.). The over-the-counter remedies that you rely upon at home may not be available in Europe.

If you use Nitroglycerin tablets for angina, be sure to have a fresh, unopened bottle.

Asthmatics, remember your Inhalers!

NEVER start any new medication while on a trip (to avoid any unexpected side effects or adverse reactions with other medications you take). Ask your doctor if you can postpone starting anything new until your return home.

Bring along a list of your medications (including strength and dosing schedule). This facilitates caring for you in the event you need to be medically treated while in Europe.

Before You Head to the Airport

Here are some tips on dealing with the heightened security screening and more stringent policies that have been instituted:

Packing: Pack carry-on luggage with bags containing toiletries, etc., on top of other items. Security may spot something during the X-ray check, and digging to the bottom for little bags is time consuming. Pack "prohibited" items in checked baggage, or leave them at home. Because it's hard to break the habit of carrying grooming scissors and manicure kits in carry-ons, leave a note for yourself in your carry-on, "No sharp stuff."

Small nail clippers are allowed; tweezers may be confiscated. Prohibited items include sharp scissors with metal tips, corkscrews, knives of any size, Mace, pepper spray, razor blades not in a cartridge, straight razors and toy weapons.





Security Measures as stipulated by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) are available at: www.tsa.gov. Please consult this site for the most up to date guidelines and regulation.

The TSA recommends removing undeveloped film from checked bags, as it may be damaged during screening.

Leave all gifts unwrapped; security personnel will open wrapped gifts.

The TSA has strict guidelines regarding liquids in carryon luggage, so please consult their website for more information

You are allowed only one carry-on plus one personal item. In many airports, that rule is so strictly enforced that you need to stuff your sandwich or paper-back inside your briefcase before you are allowed through the security checkpoint.

Clothing: Wear shoes that slip off easily. Consider clothing that does not require a belt. Shoes with metal tips or shanks or metal eyelets will likely set off metal detectors.

Before you go: Call your air carrier to confirm your flight's departure time and that you are confirmed as a passenger. Ask for the recommended preflight arrival time.

Travelers debate whether it's better to carry on bags, assuming that they're small enough, or check them. The less you carry with you, the less you'll need to be checked by security. The process, however, has smoothed, and even those who prefer to carry on, vs. waiting for bags at their destination, usually find security quick and efficient.

ID, ticket: Have your government-issued photo ID (driver's license, etc.) and ticket handy as you approach check in, security and the boarding gate. A neck wallet with a see-through window for your ID helps to avoid fumbling and reduces chances of losing items as you pull them in and out of pockets and purses.

At the checkpoint: Before entering the security check-point, remove all metal - including cell phones, belts, shoes with eyelets, shoes with steel shanks, watches and other jewelry - from pockets and clothes. If you don't "beep", you're less likely to be checked with a wand. Be sure to retrieve your belongings after you've gone through the checkpoint.

Medical Issues: Inform the screener of any special equipment or device you may be using and where this equipment is located on your body. The TSA advises that you may request a private screening. If you need assistance going through the gate, check with your airline on how to get help or how to get authorization for a companion to help you.

Notify the screener if X-ray inspection will harm any equipment - such as Braille note takers - you may be using. Ask that your device be visually and physically inspected instead.





If you have diabetes: Notify the screener that you're carrying your supplies with you. Make sure that insulin (vials or outer box of individual doses), jet injectors, pens, infusers and preloaded syringes have been professionally and properly labeled. You must have insulin with you in order to carry empty syringes through the checkpoint.

If you have a pacemaker: Carry a Pacemaker Identification Card, issued by your doctor or hospital, when going through airport security. Advise the screener that you have an implanted pacemaker, and ask for a pat-down inspection, rather than having to walk through the metal detector or being checked with a wand.

At the gate: Passengers again are subject to random checks of luggage and their persons.

"Healthy Traveling Tips" and "Before You Head to the Airport"

Courtesy of Knight Ridder Newspapers





Testimonials from Catholic Travel Centre Group Leaders

“So many of the group commented most favorably on the service of Catholic Travel Centre, and I have never had a company that was as outstanding as you all were. You kept me informed weekly and were most gracious in our months of preparation. On a scale of 10- (10 being high...) I give you a 12! Would I use Catholic Travel Centre again? You bet!”

Fr. L.C. - Colorado
A Journey to Italy

“This is the best planned trip I have ever been on. You guys did great. I will definitely use Catholic Travel Centre again!”

Fr. V.G. - California
A Spiritual Journey to France & Italy

“In general let me say a heartfelt thank you for an incredible pilgrimage. It was truly made perfect by the level of detail you all gave to us. One of the patrons went so far as to say I cannot believe we paid so little for all we received. It was GREAT!”

Fr. D. O – North Carolina
A Lenten Journey to Rome

“Overall, another winning tour from Catholic Travel Centre – thank you!”

Msgr. D.M. - California
A Journey to Rome & Canterbury

“Thank you!! We had a great pilgrimage in January. You really do a first-class job on your tours, and I appreciate that as a group leader. The accommodations were especially nice. The trip to Jericho to meet the local Christians in the Holy Land was the highlight for most of our pilgrims.”

Mr. B. L. – Archdiocese of Denver
Pilgrimage to the Holy Land

“You and your staff are the most competent, courteous, and proficient of any professionals I have dealt with. Your experience shows. Thank you for all you did.”

Fr. J.V. - Georgia
An Ignatian Journey to Spain, Plus Lourdes

“Thank you everyone for such a great trip. It was the first trip I planned through Catholic Travel, but it will not be the last.”

Ms. K. H. - Pennsylvania
A Journey to London





Helpful Web Links for the Traveler

Disclaimer: CTC does not represent or endorse the accuracy or reliability of any of the information, products, or content of listed websites below.

Passports, Visas & US Customs

Where to get a passport application

<http://iafdb.travel.state.gov/>

Visa Processing Agencies

<http://www.travisa.com/travelvisa.htm>

<http://ambassadorpassportandvisa.com>

US Customs Information

<http://www.cbp.gov/>

Time Zones Worldwide

<http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/>

World Clock Time Zone Converter

<http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/converter.html>

Foreign Money: What Does it Look Like?

http://www.x-rates.com/photo_list.html

Currency Calculator to Convert US Dollars

<http://www.x-rates.com/calculator.html>

Currency Exchange Rates

<http://www.x-rates.com/d/USD/table.html>

Getting Foreign Currency Before You Leave USA

http://www.travelex.com/us/personal/FC_default.asp?content=fc

Weather Forecasts for Foreign Cities

<http://www.weather.com/common/welcomepage/world.html?from=globalnav&ref=/>

Metric Conversion Calculator

<http://www.metric-conversions.org/>





Books Pertaining to Destinations (Non-Religious Books)

<http://www.longitudebooks.com/>

Travel Accessories (Money Wallets, Converters, Etc)

<http://www.magellans.com/>

Avoiding Jet Lag

<http://www.nojetlag.com>

Tips for Packing

<http://www.smartpacking.com>

Maps of Various Countries

<http://www.worldatlas.com/>

Maps and Information on Sacred Sites

<http://www.sacredsites.com>

Foreign Phrases

<http://www.gorin.com/phrase/>

