

Saint Thomas More Catholic Chapel and Center at Yale

Alternative Spring Break 2019

Guatemala and France

Background

Thank you for your interest in the 2019 Saint Thomas More Alternative Spring Break (ASB) trips. The ASB program has been a cornerstone of the social justice and prayer mission at Saint Thomas More for many years. In contrast to other spring break trips, the ASB program was conceived as an opportunity for Catholic students at Yale to take part in a formative, faith-centered, and life-changing experience. By immersing themselves in an international setting, locally or abroad, participants in ASB have a chance to bear witness to the truly universal nature of the Catholic Church, while living in and serving a local community.

Location

- **TAIZÉ, FRANCE:** Founded in 1940 by Brother Roger as a hideaway for Jews during WWII, the Taizé community in France is now an ecumenical monastic order composed of over one-hundred Catholic and Protestant Brothers from around the world. Known as one of the most important sites of Christian pilgrimage, Taizé welcomes over 100,000 young adults to the community each year. Young Christians from around the world come to experience Bible study, justice talks, community work, and three times of daily prayer. Taizé prayer has become famous throughout the world for its contemplative nature. Grounded in chants, silence, and biblical readings, the prayer services provide an intimate experience of God's presence. At the Taizé community, prayer provides a rhythm for daily life and grounds the participant in God's love and call for justice. A week at Taizé means time for reflection, prayer, and a deeper commitment to justice. Come to experience God and be transformed by the encounter.
- **GUATEMALA:** Guatemala is a country with diverse landscapes and people. Over half of the population descends from the indigenous Mayan people. It is a primarily Roman Catholic country. Participants will be hosted by local Guatemalan organizations staffed by Maryknoll Missioners, which focus on encounter and relationship building with the Guatemalan people. In Guatemala City, participants will be working at Caminar de la Paz, where they will participate in a tutoring program, games with children and visit homes. They will also visit Xela, a community three hours from Guatemala City. In Xela, participants will work in a non-traditional school setting, where education is provided both for standard subjects as well as social justice advocacy. Participants will be oriented to the social, political and economic realities in Central America, while reflecting on how their faith is connected to service and justice. There will also be an opportunity to visit the Spanish colonial city of Antigua, Guatemala.

Logistics

Dates

FRANCE: We will depart New Haven on the evening of Friday, March 8, 2019 and will return on Monday, March 18, 2019 pending travel arrangements.

GUATEMALA: We will depart New Haven on the evening of Friday, March 8, 2019 and will return on Sunday, March 17, 2019 pending travel arrangements.

Cost

As the heart of Alternative Spring Break is social justice and not tourism. The group will be expected to fundraise a meaningful portion of the cost of travel. The cost of meals and lodging will be covered by Saint Thomas More. Each participant is required to cover the cost of their airfare that is not obtained through fundraising, as it is not refundable. Lack of funds should not be a reason for a student to not participate, and any student in need of financial assistance is encouraged to speak with Sr. Jenn or Carlene prior to applying.

Trip Coordinators

FRANCE: Students will be accompanied by Carlene Demiany.

GUATEMALA: Students will be accompanied by Sr. Jenn Schaaf.

Eligibility

Alternative Spring Break is open to current Yale undergraduate and graduate/professional students. Both for logistical reasons and to foster a meaningful small-group dynamic, the size of the groups is strictly capped and will be selected on the basis of competitive application. We expect applicants to have demonstrated a commitment to social justice and the Saint Thomas More community. Accepted participants are expected to make this trip a priority in their academic year, as the groups will be meeting begin meeting this semester and regularly meet in second semester to plan for the trip, fundraise, and prepare together.

Application Timeline

<i>Sunday, October 28th</i>	Applications open
<i>Wednesday, November 21st</i>	Applications due by 11:59 PM (EST) by email to carlene.demiany@yale.edu or jennifer.schaaf@yale.edu
<i>Thursday, November 29th</i>	Applicants notified of decision
<i>TBA</i>	First meeting of 2018-2019 Alternative Spring Break group

ASB Application

I would like to be considered for (check one or both choices or indicate preferences with 1 or 2):

France

Guatemala

Identifying Information

Full Legal Name (as it appears on passport or photo id):

First: _____ Middle: _____ Last: _____

Yale Email: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Sex: Female Male

Birthdate (MM/DD/YY) _____

Select one:

Yale College undergraduate

Residential College: _____

Year of Graduation: _____

Major(s): _____

Yale graduate or professional student

School: _____

Department/Program: _____

Year: _____

Citizenship (list all that apply): _____

Do you have a passport?

Yes. Country: _____ Passport Number: _____ Expires on: _____

No, but I have applied for a U.S. Passport. Date of passport application: _____

If you are not a U.S. Citizen, do you need a Visa to enter France or Guatemala? _____

NOTE: All applicants must provide a photocopy of your passport or proof of your passport application with this application.

Application

Please type a thoughtful and honest response to the following questions.

1. What experiences or motivations contribute to your desire to apply for this trip? If you have previously attended an ASB trip with STM, what specific insights, skills, and experiences can you contribute?
2. Describe a situation when your personal views were challenged by the people or a situation you encountered, how you reacted, and what, if anything, you would do differently.
3. Briefly describe your involvement in the Saint Thomas More community, or, if you are a new student, in your prior Church community. What role does this community play in your life?
4. How do you think your personal characteristics will enhance the Alternative Spring Break trip?
5. Skills and Experience:
 - a. Although prior travel experience is neither necessary nor expected of all applicants, if you have meaningful international travel or living experience, please list dates and describe briefly here.
 - b. Are you proficient in Spanish or French? If you have taken, are currently taking, or will be enrolled in a Spanish or French language class at Yale, please list dates and levels here.
 - c. Do you have any relevant community service, volunteer, retreat, or teaching experience? If so, please describe briefly here.
 - d. If you have any relevant additional skills, medical training, certifications, or talents, please describe here.

6. Please list two faculty members or administrators of Yale University that we may use as character references:

Name: _____ Department/Title: _____

Yale Email: _____

Name: _____ Department/Title: _____

Yale Email: _____

7. Please indicate any health issues that might effect your ability to participate fully in the experience.

I would rather discuss my answer to this question in person or on the phone.

8. Please list any allergies and whether or not you carry an epi-pen.

9. In his letter to young people on January 13, 2017, Pope Francis wrote:

I am reminded of the words which God spoke to Abraham: “Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you.” (*Gen 12.1*). These words are now also addressed to you. They are words of a Father who invites you to “go”, to set out towards a future which is unknown but one which will surely lead to fulfilment, a future towards which He Himself accompanies you. I invite you to hear God's voice resounding in your heart through the breath of the Holy Spirit.

When God said to Abram, “Go!”, what did he want to say? He certainly did not say to distance himself from his family or withdraw from the world. Abram received a compelling invitation, a challenge, to leave everything and go to a new land. What is this “new land” for us today, if not a more just and friendly society which you, young people, deeply desire and wish to build to the very ends of the earth?

But unfortunately, today, “Go!” also has a different meaning, namely, that of abuse of power, injustice and war. Many among you are subjected to the real threat of violence and forced to flee their native land. Their cry goes up to God, like that of Israel, when the people were enslaved and oppressed by Pharaoh (cf. *Ex 2:23*).

What does the request of Pope Francis to “Go” mean to you personally and in the context of participating in an ASB trip?

Application Submission

Save a completed copy of this application with your answers included, and attach the completed document to an email sent to carlene.demiany@yale.edu or jennifer.schaaf@yale.edu no later than 11:59 PM (EST) on Wednesday, November 21st, 2018. Additionally, all applicants must attach a PDF or JPEG photocopy of the identification page of your passport; the photocopy should clearly display your name, photograph, passport number, country of citizenship, and passport expiration date. If you are a U.S. Citizen and have applied for but not received a U.S. Passport, you must submit proof that your passport application has been submitted and received by the U.S. Department of State.

Signature: _____ Date: _____