

Dear Youth Pastor/Parent/Participant: Greetings in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ!
Here are some responses to frequently asked questions about Poverty Simulation:

HOW DO WE DESCRIBE THE DETAILS OF MISSION WACO'S POVERTY SIMULATION WEEKEND FOR INFORMATION AND MOTIVATION?

"If You could embark on an incredible journey into the Heart of God would you choose to...

- travel out of YOUR cultural comfort zone?
- follow in the footsteps of courageous adults and youth numbering in the thousands?
- understand the plight of a large majority of fellow humans who do not have the same choices as you?
- test yourself about what you know and don't know about God's heart for the poor?
- feel for just a time what many others across the world feel every day of their lives?

If so, then the POVERTY SIMULATION WEEKEND IS FOR YOU!

WHAT DO WE BRING?

You will pack for a simple weekend retreat, including a sleeping bag if you like.

WHAT IS THE WEEKEND ABOUT?

God's heart for the poor, compassion and bringing about the Kingdom on Earth.

WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT?

To glimpse things about yourself that you did not know and would not necessarily choose to know.

WILL I BE MISERABLE?

You will need to pack a good attitude and have a desire to know your Lord and Redeemer in a deeper way. When you love someone you know what breaks their heart.

WHAT IF THE WEATHER IS RAINY... COLD... HOT....?

Hey, it's Texas – it might be all of the above in the same weekend! The environment is part of the simulation in that it is hard for those who are regularly exposed to it, but the simulation is a short time to experience it, and not even for the whole weekend.

WHAT WILL I EAT AND WHERE WILL I SLEEP?

You will always have a choice of necessities, such as food and shelter.

WHAT AGES CAN PARTICIPATE?

14 years old and up - You need to have completed the 8th grade.

IS POVERTY SIMULATION JUST FOR YOUTH OR COLLEGE STUDENTS?

Not at all! Poverty Simulation is for all ages of adults plus high school youth. Come with a teachable heart!

WHY DON'T YOU ALLOW JUNIOR HIGH STUDENTS?

The weekend requires thought processes and focused conversations which often bore someone younger than 14 years old. Attention spans need to be longer. But, great news, we have other things for junior high students to do. Work projects, play therapy with kids, King's Clubs and Street Camps – see the "Training & Mobilization" section of www.missionwaco.org for group information.

WHAT IF SOMEONE HAS A SPECIAL DIET OR NEEDS MEDICATION?

No problem! This person will need to bring items for the special diet and their medications.

CAN WE BRING A CAMERA? CAN WE BRING A CELL PHONE TO RECEIVE EMERGENCY CALLS FROM PARENTS?

Yes, one digital camera is allowed per group. Yes, the group leader may leave a cell phone in the Poverty Simulation office, and he/she will be allowed to check it periodically throughout the weekend.

HOW SAFE IS THIS WEEKEND?

You and your group will be safe here because you will never be alone or without adult supervision – (youth group members will always be with at least one of the group's adult chaperones). This is the program director's neighborhood and she has lived here for 30 years and knows ALL of her neighbors! Do you know all of your neighbors?

WHAT IF SOME OF THE GROUP CANNOT COME FOR THE ENTIRE WEEKEND?

Then they should come on another weekend when they can stay the entire time. The weekend starts at 8 p.m. sharp on Friday night and ends on Sunday at 2 p.m. Only 42 hours long! *So... you need to leave your town on time to get here on time.*

FOR YOUTH GROUPS, HOW MANY ADULTS SHOULD WE BRING?

Please bring one adult for every 5-7 youth – they will participate in Poverty Simulation along with the youth.

I'M AN ADULT WHO HAS BEEN RECRUITED TO ATTEND WITH OUR YOUTH GROUP. DO I PARTICIPATE IN THE WEEKEND?

We understand how rare it is for adults to choose to push their limits to understanding the plight of others. Many wouldn't choose this unless they are encouraged to do so for the learning of the youth! It is a different way of thinking and choosing to live – to follow the Christ who was homeless, to give up our own lives for the lives of others, and yet this is what our King taught us to do.

WHAT ARE THE DETAILS OF THE WEEKEND?

The weekend is designed in a structured experiential learning approach. The feedback we receive from people who have attended Poverty Simulation is that the impact of the weekend is greater when the participants do not know the details. However, it is very important that all participants know they are attending a Poverty Simulation that will be a challenging and hard weekend. You are welcome to share this FAQ sheet with anyone. Group leaders or parents may contact us with additional questions, but we ask that you not circumvent the learning process for your teens by giving them the details ahead of time (surprisingly, some parents think this helps the teen through the weekend, when in fact it is not helpful at all).

SOME OF OUR YOUTH GROUP PARENTS ARE HESITANT TO LET THEIR TEENS ATTEND – IS THERE ANYTHING WE CAN TELL THEM TO HELP THEM MAKE THE DECISION?

500+ people a year attend Poverty Simulation at Mission Waco and have done so for over 20 years. We have seen many, many lives changed as they understand more fully Christ's love and compassion for the poor and marginalized. Hopefully by the time parents have read through this Frequently Asked Questions sheet, they will have enough information to determine if Poverty Simulation is appropriate for their teen's maturity level at that time. If not, then perhaps suggest to the parent that they wait a year or so until they allow the teen to participate. Regardless, we encourage parents to also attend Poverty Simulation and experience it for themselves!