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FAQ sheet
(rev 26-Mar-20)

WHERE DO I BEGIN IN PLANNING A MISSION TRIP?

What is Franciscan Ministries' Tau House?

We offer Cincinnati-based week-long service experiences for high schools, youth ministries, campus ministries, scout troops, adult groups, and families. We also can offer shorter trips, service days, and hosting of your retreat program. Opportunities are available year-round.

How much does it cost?

All groups are booked on a first-come, first-serve basis. The week is not booked until deposits are received. All payments are non-refundable. In order to secure the Tau House **for your group only**, you must guarantee a minimum of **28 people**. Otherwise, the Tau House opens to additional smaller groups.

Price per week	Price per night*
\$275/week	\$55/night

**For groups who prefer to do a 6-night program, add this additional cost per person to the rates. This option is very limited and must be approved in advance. This option may not be available during June, July, and August.*

Who can chaperone?

Adult chaperones must be at least 21 years of age and be in compliance with their (arch)diocesan child protection policies. Non-Catholic groups should contact the Director for this requirement. Trip coordinator and chaperones must sign off on an Adult Pledge of Support confirming this for their adult leaders. Adult/College groups and youth groups will not be combined. For High School aged groups the adult-student ratio is 1:6. The JrHi ratio is 1:5.

How many people can we bring?

The Tau House comfortably sleeps 30-35 participants. **You must guarantee a group size of 28 people in order to secure the House for your group only (or you may pay the fee for 28 people and bring a smaller group).** Groups of <28 people must be willing to share the week with another smaller group.

What if someone cancels?

We **cannot issue refunds**. However, if a participant needs to cancel, another participant can be sent in his/her place. Please contact the Director for details.

Who can attend?

Typically, we host youth groups who are at least in the 7th grade and minimally age 12. Some exceptions can be made with prior Director approval. JrHi groups must have a student-chaperone ratio of 1 chaperones for every 5 students. High School groups must have a student-chaperone ratio of 1 adult chaperone for every 6 students.

Do I have to be Catholic to make the mission trip?

No – we happily host all denominations and non-religious groups alike.

How do we travel during the week?

Groups are responsible for providing their own transportation. Once you arrive at the Tau House, work sites are typically <20 miles from the Tau House. Gas tanks typically only need to be filled once during the week.

How do we travel to the Tau House?

By car: The Tau House is located in the City of St Bernard, inside the Cincinnati city limits. It is 1 mile from I-75. Groups are responsible for providing their own transportation. Once you arrive at the Tau House, work sites are typically <20 miles from the Tau House. Gas tanks typically only need to be filled once during the week.

By airplane: We are approximately 20mi/30min from the Cincinnati-Northern Kentucky Airport (CVG) and 60mi/60min from the Dayton Airport (DAY). When you arrive at the airport, group leaders are responsible for renting vehicles to transport their group during the week.

COMMUNITY LIVING

Where will we live?

Tau House, formerly the Convent at St Clement Church - 4523 Park Place, St Bernard, OH 45217

What are the sleeping accommodations?

Participants have separate floors for men and women at the Tau House. Each bedroom has 2-6 beds, fans, and a sink. Community bathrooms are located on each sleeping floor with 2 toilets and 2 showers in each bathroom. Depending on the number of participants, chaperones may be assigned to their own bedroom. Separate rooms for adults and teens. All beds are twin size – we provide linens. To allow ample rest to be able to work the next day, we suggest that lights are out by 11pm each evening.

What is there to do at Tau House?

The Tau House has an array of simple games and activities available at the house and in the neighborhood:

- Table tennis, air hockey, ping pong, foosball - in the basement
- board games, card games, jig-saw puzzles - in the community dining room
- St Bernard City Pool is available in the summer – free of charge
- St Bernard City Park is 1 block north and offers a playground, ball fields, and basketball court
- a limited supply of frisbees, whiffle ball, and kick balls are provided - some groups choose to bring their own

Are linens provided?

Each participant is provided fitted and flat sheets, a pillow with pillow case, and one quilt. We provide wash cloths, bath mats, bath towels, hand towels, and kitchen linens. To keep our costs low, prior to departure, each participant will be asked to: launder their bath towels; re-make his/her own bed with fresh linens; assist in preparing/cleaning the House for the next group. Our Staff launders all sheets.

What will we eat?

- Breakfast is self-serve and consists of fresh fruit, toast, oatmeal, and dry cereal. Beverages include hot tea, coffee, hot chocolate, milk, orange juice, and apple juice.
- Lunch is self-pack and typically consists of a turkey, ham, or PBJ sandwich; a piece of seasonal fruit (ie: banana, apple, orange); carrot/celery sticks; a salty snack; cookies. We provide coolers, lunch bags, and ice packs for use. **Please bring a water bottle.**
- Supper is community cooking – 3-5 people at a time take turns cooking the main meal. Menu choices are sent to the group leader and s/he chooses the evening meal weeks in advance. Popular choices include: Lasagna, Spaghetti, BBQ Chicken, Fajitas, and Tacos. Vegetarian options are available upon request.
- Some snack items are available for after work - groups are encouraged to bring their favorites to share.
- The evening of the speaker, we offer make-your-own ice cream sundaes.

WHAT KIND OF WORK WILL WE BE DOING?

Will I work at the same site every day?

One of the things that makes our program unique is that you will be scheduled to work some place different every day. This allows participants an opportunity to discern where their gifts may lie and how they can utilize their gifts back home by experiencing a variety of work-sites. We highly recommend participants serve at a combination of indirect and direct service sites. If a group desires the same site all week, we will try to accommodate with enough notice; however, we cannot guarantee this option.

How will we know where to go?

We will provide each driver with directions to the worksites each day. You are encouraged to bring a GPS as a back-up.

Direct Service Worksites:

These include day care centers, schools for the mentally and physically differently-abled, soup kitchens, food pantries, homeless shelters, nursing homes, and transitional housing. At these sites you will typically have the opportunity to work and visit with those you serve.

Indirect Service Worksites:

These may include warehouses or housing rehab such as painting, yard work, house cleaning, moving, and minor home repairs. The work done at these sites indirectly serves those in need. Sometimes the client is present and working side-by-side with our volunteers.

What hours will we work?

Most worksites require groups arrive by 9am and stay until 3:30pm. A lunch break is scheduled by the worksite. Some worksites' hours are slightly different (ie: 10am-4pm or 9am-2:30pm).

Will I choose where I work every day?

The group leader sends the Director the number of people coming, the number of vehicles coming, and how many individuals can be in each vehicle. The Director then schedules the appropriate number of participants to each site.

- For example, let's say a group of 20 people is divided into 4 vehicles of 5 people each. The Director will have various sites lined up based on the transportation needs of the group. Once in Cincinnati, the adult drivers sign up first where s/he will serve and then the participants are assigned where they will go each work each day. Some groups have the group leader assign participants to sites, others allow the participants to select and sign themselves up. It is okay for drivers to take different students each day, but groups sharing the Tau House with another group will take only students from their home group in their car each day.

WHAT DO WE DO AFTER WORK?

Will there be 'down' time?

Free time is scheduled from the time you return from work until supper at 6pm. Some participants use this time to shower, nap, read, pray, play games, or swim. Participants scheduled to cook the evening meal need to allow ample time for supper to be served by 6pm.

Will there be time to site-see in Cincinnati?

If a group chooses to sight see, you are welcome to explore on your own, or we can provide directions and options for some attractions. These include:

- **St. Mary's Basilica** in Covington, Kentucky - www.covcathedral.com
- **St. Peter in Chains Cathedral** in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, Ohio - www.stpeterinchainscathedral.org
- **Ault Park** provides a beautiful view of the Ohio River. Weather permitting, groups can pack a picnic lunch and eat there one evening – see Director for details - www.cincyparks.com/parks-events/central-region/ault-park/index.shtml
- **Krohn Conservatory** has free admission and only open until 5pm. Groups would go there right after work and eat supper later either at Tau Community House or the Picnic in the Park - www.cincinnatiiparks.com/krohn-conservatory
- **The Cincinnati Art Museum** is free of charge and a \$4 fee for parking. Only open until 5pm (except Wednesdays open until 8pm) - www.cincinnatiartmuseum.org
- **Carew Tower** offers a \$2 elevator ride which provides a view of the City. Only open until 5pm, so groups who choose to do this should plan on a late supper - www.cincinnatiusa.com/attractions/detail.asp?AttractionID=83
- **Cincinnati Reds Baseball** - some groups choose to take a free night and attend a professional baseball game when the Reds are in town. Check their website for current schedule and ticket prices. Group sales are also available - cincinnati.reds.mlb.com/ticketing/index.jsp?c_id=cin
- **Cincinnati Zoo** - some groups choose to go to the Cincinnati Zoo the day of departure. Group tickets are available - www.cincinnati-zoo.org
- **Skating on the Square** - downtown Cincinnati on Fountain Square offers ice skating for a nominal skate rental and admission fee. This is typically offered nightly from Thanksgiving - January 31st - www.myfountainsquare.com
- **Music on the Square** - downtown Cincinnati on Fountain Square offers a live band most nights of the week during the summer. Free admission - cincinnatiusa.com/Attractions/detail.asp?AttractionID=559
- **Graeter's Ice Cream** known nationally and shipped on dry ice to Oprah - www.graeters.com
- For groups who choose to add a day to their trip for site-seeing, we recommend this website for more information on activities available in Greater Cincinnati - www.cincinnatiusa.com/Attractions/index.asp?AttCatID=40&season=holidays

WHAT PROGRAMMING DOES FRANCISCAN MINISTRIES' TAU HOUSE OFFER?

Speakers:

We provide the opportunity to spend the evening hearing from a speaker on one of two topics: experiencing homelessness and refugees/immigration. The speaker comes to the Tau House in conjunction with either the Greater Cincinnati Homeless Coalition or Heartfelt Tidbits. Group leaders can indicate their preference of topic, and we will do our best to accommodate based on speaker availability. Free of charge.

Supper with the Sisters:

The participants are invited to St Clare Convent for a Supper with the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor. Participants will have an opportunity to be in conversation with the Sisters about their experiences serving and to ask the Sisters questions about their own vocation and experiences. Free of charge.

Digital Scavenger Hunt:

Groups may choose to participate in a digital scavenger hunt for a fun, team-building opportunity. Scavenger Hunts can be held at a local park (during nice weather), on St Clare's grounds, or at the Tau Community House. Free of charge.

Ice Breakers:

Our staff is happy to lead ice-breakers for groups upon request. Free of charge.

Other options may be available depending on the time of year you are coming to Tau House.

IS THERE OPPORTUNITY FOR REFLECTION AND PRAYER?

Mass:

Groups may choose to attend Mass during the week. Please notify the Director so your week can be scheduled accordingly. Mass times for neighboring churches are:

- St. Clement's Catholic Church - both 7am and 8am. Located around the block from the Tau House - many groups choose to attend before going to work at least once during the week - www.stclementcincinnati.org/Parish.aspx
- St. Peter in Chains Cathedral, downtown Cincinnati - weeknights at 5:15pm. Some groups choose to attend after work, but before supper - www.stpeterinchainscathedral.org
- Bellarmine Chapel at Xavier University - weeknights at 5pm (*during the school year only*) - www.bellarminechapel.org
- Our Lady of the Holy Spirit Center, 5440 Moeller Avenue, Norwood, OH - weeknights 7:15pm - www.olhsc.org
- Holy Cross Immaculata Church, 30 Guido Street, Cincinnati, OH - Monday evenings at 7:30pm - hciparish.org

Morning Launch:

Our Staff is happy to offer a morning reflection activity at 8am. Some groups choose not to do a morning reflection and instead attend Mass at St Clement Catholic Church. Groups are also welcome to do their own morning reflection(s) – please contact the Director to make arrangements.

Evening Reflection:

Groups are encouraged to lead evening reflections during the week. Our Staff provides some resources onsite for this; however, groups are highly encouraged to plan some prayer options before arriving and to bring any resources with them for the week. Opportunities for Mass or evening reflection at St Clare Convent Chapel or St Clement Catholic Church may be available upon request. Contact the Director to make arrangements.

Sacrament of Reconciliation:

Reconciliation may be offered, if clergy is available, next door at St Clement upon request. Contact the Director to schedule.

Time for the Blessed Sacrament:

Time before the Blessed Sacrament is available, if clergy is available, upon request. Contact the Director to schedule.