

# CHS students to journey to Israel in 2018

It will be the “field trip of all field trips,” as some CHS students along with interested parents and faculty members will be making a pilgrimage to Israel during the 2018 Easter vacation.

Titled the “Apologetics Study Bible Tour to the Holy Land,” the 11-day trip will take place from March 21 to 31, 2018. Students who go will miss two days of school but will be home in time to celebrate Easter morning with their families.

School administrator Pat McCarty and Vice Principal Orlando Duarte are planning to lead next year’s sophomores, juniors and seniors—along with interested parents and faculty members—on the trip that will end up halfway around the world.

Among the places that will be visited during the eight days on the ground are Caesarea, the Sea of Galilee (including a boat ride), the Dead Sea, Masada, Bethlehem and Jerusalem. Some favorite activities will include a hike up to Cave 1 in Qumran to see the cave where the Dead Sea Scrolls were first discovered in 1947, a walk through 2,700-year-old Hezekiah’s Tunnel in Jerusalem, a boat ride on the Sea of Galilee, a personalized tour behind the Western “Wailing” Wall and a chance to walk on the ancient walls of Jerusalem.

The trip is being organized by Eric Johnson, who graduated from Christian High in 1980 and later taught here from 1993 through 2010. The former Bible department head organized three previous CHS trips to the Holy Land in 2009, 2011 and 2012. Johnson has led a total of six trips to Israel since 2009, bringing along more than 200 people as well as a dozen pastors. In addition, CJHS/CHS teachers Randy Goen, Cindy Albert and Jacob Smith (who went on the trip as a student) traveled with CHS in previous trips.

Serving as a full-time Christian missionary in Utah since departing CHS in 2010, Johnson says taking annual trips to Israel is always a highlight of his year. He especially loves bringing high school students and their parents.

“Teenagers are typically very curious about their faith and want to make sure that they haven’t been buffaloed in a spiritual sense,” Johnson said. “They are often honest and want to know if the Bible is real. To take them to Israel and have them spend eight days on the ground is amazing because they get to see, first-hand, how the people and places talked about in the Bible are truly historical. While faith is certainly needed for accepting the biblical events—including the resurrection of Jesus—they end up discovering that their faith is a leap into the light and not into the darkness.”

Johnson is presenting the trip to students and parents this week in the high school Bible classes as well as leading informational meetings after school. These are scheduled for Tuesday (6 p.m.) and Wednesday (3:15 and 6 p.m.); those who are interested will only need to attend one of the one-

hour meetings to learn more and possibly sign up.

At each meeting one copy of the *Apologetics Study Bible for Students*—published by Southern Baptist publisher Holman—will be given away. Johnson was one of the editors of the Bible, writing several articles as well as the “Twisted Scripture” entries found throughout its pages.

Students from another school, Capistrano Valley Christian School located in San Juan Capistrano, will join CHS on the trip. This school participated in a trip with CHS students in 2011.

The trip will cost \$4595, although those who sign up by April 14 will receive \$100 off, making the total \$4495. This includes a chartered bus ride to and from LAX from CHS, the round-trip international flight, 3- and 4-star hotels, breakfast and dinner buffets, all admission fees, a dedicated guide and bus with the driver, and a St. Peter’s fish lunch. All taxes and tips, which are not often included in the initial price of many advertised trips, are covered as well, which is close to \$800 in fees.

Biblical archaeologist Joel Kramer is scheduled to guide the trip for three of the days, taking students to Old Testament places such as Jacob’s Well, Shechem, Samaria, Bethel, Ai and Jericho. In addition, a Jewish history teacher from Israel will address the students one night after dinner at the Sea of Galilee hotel.

Students will also have a chance to practice archaeology by participating in the Temple Mount Sifting Project, which involves sorting through dirt that was illegally dumped in a Jerusalem valley. Objects that are found regularly include pottery, glass, mosaic tiles and, occasionally, coins and bullae, all of which contribute to the understanding of the Jerusalem temple.

Johnson says that the price for what the participant will receive is well worth the cost.

“The only things not covered are snacks, water bottles and souvenirs,” Johnson said. “My goal is to not ‘nickel-and-dime’ those who come on the trip. To get the instruction that will be offered and allow students to draw closer to God is well worth this investment, which is how I think this money ought to be considered.”

Johnson plans to return to CHS next February to spend several evenings teaching on topics such as the Dead Sea Scrolls and archaeology.

The trip is limited to 52 total sign-ups, with priority being given this week to the Classes of 2018 and 2019 as well as their parents who are interested. Those who attend the organizational meetings will be told that, if they want to come, their \$500 deposits should be submitted as soon as possible. If there is enough space by next week, students from the Class of 2020 who signed a priority sheet offered at the meetings will also be invited to join the trip.