

June 12, 2024

Dear Jeanelle,

Greetings from Costa Rica! We are happy to inform you that you have been accepted to Portantorchas Bible school for the Spring 2025 semester. Congratulations! We hope that your time spent here will inspire you to a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ.

We strive to create a safe, welcoming community at Portantorchas where students can grow in their love of Jesus and knowledge of the Bible, experience closeness in their journey with God, and "put off the old and put on the new" (Colossians 3). God works in so many lives here, and we pray He will do the same in your life as well.

Our Spring program will begin on **Monday, January 20th, 2025**. You can arrive on campus between the morning of Saturday, January 18th and the night of Sunday, January 19th. At the end of the semester, you must leave campus on **Saturday, May 10th, 2025**.

Many students take the opportunity to travel together after the semester ends. If you plan on being in the country **before** the opening dates or **after** the closing dates, you will be responsible for your own off-campus lodging and transportation to/from campus. Please have a plan for where to stay if you choose to come early or stay late. We cannot accommodate you on campus.

The cost for the Spring 2025 semester (16 weeks) is \$5800 USD. Depending on the number of students applying, we may ask you to pay a deposit to reserve your space.

Please read over the accompanying information and any emails that we will send. There is a lot of information to prepare well for your travels and time here. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

May God continue to bless you and direct you as you make plans to come to Costa Rica! We will continue to pray for you and for what you need to get done.

Yours in Christ,



Tom Marcus, Bible School Director

Arrival and Departure Information

The international airport code for the Juan Santamaria International Airport is **SJO**. We provide a complimentary airport pick-up on the weekend of your arrival (Sat-Sun), as well as on the Saturday of your departure. Please send your flight information to contact@portantorchas.org so that we can pick you up when you arrive. If you choose to arrive or depart on dates other than the ones listed, you will be responsible for your own transportation (costs about \$50.00 from the airport) AND your own housing for those dates. If you have any questions about flight arrivals or departures, please ask.

Visa, Passport, and Health Insurance

You will get a 180-day tourist visa when you enter Costa Rica and pass through Immigration. You do not need to apply for a visa.

You must have a passport and a return (exit) ticket before you get on the airplane.

Please be sure that you have at least 6 months of validity on your passport when you enter Costa Rica. If your passport will expire before this, we recommend that you renew it.

ALL students must have a travel health insurance policy that will cover them for their time at Portantorchas. You must also be able to cover your medical expenses with cash or credit card.

General Schedule

7:45 a.m.	Breakfast
8:15 – 9:00 a.m.	Daily Duties
9:00 - 12:00p.m.	Morning Classes (Wednesday morning is for Work Day on campus)
12:30 p.m.	Lunch
1:30-5:30 p.m.	Afternoon schedule varies (weekly ministry, mission trip planning, free time, classes, etc.)
5:30 p.m.	Dinner
7-8:30 p.m.	Evening schedule varies (eg. M&W classes, Tues. Worship Night, Thurs. Family Night, Friday usually free)
10:00 p.m.	Quiet Hours
12:00 a.m.	Curfew

Classes

During the first month, students will receive 45 hours of Spanish language classes. We are first and foremost a Bible school, not a language school, so these classes are given as a base and to give some familiarity with the language.

All of our Bible classes are taught in English. You will receive about 12 courses per semester with roughly 12 hours of class time each. The majority are taught in week-long blocks. Most courses are taught by our own staff, but 2-4 courses per semester are taught by a visiting Bible teacher or lecturer from another Torchbearers center. Topics include: books of the Bible, Christian Life, and Theology. All have a practical focus and seek to help students understand and experience the indwelling life of Christ in the believer.

Bible and Class Supplies

Bring a Bible that you like; you will be using it a lot! A Study Bible with notes, cross-references, and a concordance is a good option. Most students and teachers use an NIV or ESV translation. There are a few study Bibles here to share if you cannot bring one.

Phones are NOT allowed in the classroom (kiosko) during class time, so you must have a physical Bible that you can use. Online (on your phone) resources and reference tools can be used outside class time. Laptops can be used in the classroom.

One of the books that you will use every week is Rick Warren's Bible Study Methods. We will provide you with a paperback copy or a digital copy for no cost. Please do not write or highlight in it. You can buy one (new or used) if you want to write in your copy, or buy the Kindle version.

Bring any school supplies (journal, pens, pencils) that you need for taking notes. We provide one spiral-bound notebook.

What to Bring

The "Getting Ready" packet that you will receive in a few months has a longer Packing List.

A brief list is:

- Credit/debit card or cash for personal shopping
- Bible and school supplies
- Regular clothes for daily use.
- Warm clothes eg. sweater, jacket, hat. We DO have cool weather.
- Waterproof clothes/shoes/umbrella. It can rain all year round, but the Fall is "rainy season".
- Work clothes for service days. Bring old clothes as they may get stained/ruined.
- Dress-up clothes. Church is informal, but you can come as you like. We have one formal event on campus, the closing ceremony, that students enjoy dressing up for.
- Towels, toiletries, and a laundry hamper.
- Power adapter – for Europeans students only. We have the same system as North America.
- An instrument - optional- We have a piano, 2 guitars, and a violin that you can use here.
- A blanket – optional – to make your bed more cozy and to use when you feel cold.
- A backpack for travel weekends or shopping.

Important Dates

2024 Fall

August 17th & 18th

August 19th

December 6st

December 7th

Student Arrival*

Classes Start

Last day of classes**

Student Departure

2025 Spring

January 18th & 19th

January 20th

May 9th

May 10th

Student Arrival*

Classes Start

Last day of classes**

Student Departure

*We ask returning (second semester) students to arrive 3 days earlier, on the Wednesday before classes start.

**Please do not book a departing flight on the last day. You must be on campus on this day. If you have questions, please ask.

Payment Information

All prices listed are in US dollars (USD).

There is a USD \$30 application fee which is paid online through PayPal.

The total cost of each semester includes:

- Room and Board (sheets, blankets and pillow provided)
- Bible Classes
- Access to Washer/Dryers
- Shared Internet Access
- Spanish Language Classes (45 hours) during the first month of the semester
Please contact us if you are fluent in Spanish and will not need Spanish classes.
- School-sponsored weekend or day trips to a volcano, beach, etc. (3-4 per semester).
- Trip to Bocas del Toro, Panama as a mid-semester trip
- Weekly Ministry/Outreach opportunity
(eg. seniors' center, men's rehab, orphanage, on-campus soccer ministry or student worship team)
- Week-long Mission Trip
The basic costs of the Mission Trip are covered by your tuition payment. However, raising additional funds may be part of the student preparation for the mission trip if the group chooses to purchase additional materials or supplies in order to meet a need in the community where the trip takes place.

- We recommend that students budget USD \$150-200 per month for spending money.
- Semester balances are due upon your arrival in Costa Rica.
- We will send payment information closer to the start of the semester.