



NEW ORLEANS: THE GATEWAY VOYAGE

The first time you arrive at New Orleans you will quickly realize there is no place else in the United States like the Big Easy. Every aspect of the city of New Orleans has a unique flavor. Her vivid architecture is bold; her distinctive food is full of gusto; her rich music captivates

the senses; and her history is complex and fascinating. While in New Orleans you will dive deep into Cajun culture by exploring a world quite different than the one that is familiar to you.

What most people do not realize is that New Orleans is a gateway to history. Spanish, French, English and Americans have all held her during some period of time. In order to control the Mississippi, one had to control New Orleans. Slavery, war, and most recently Hurricane Katrina, have been gateways that have significantly changed the course of history for New Orleans and the United States.

DAY 1: HARSH REALITIES

The team will arrive at the historic neighborhood of Algiers Point. Nestled in the bend of the Mississippi, the quiet streets of Algiers are filled with turn of the century homes. Though directly across the river from the French Quarter, Algiers has become known as Mayberry on the Mississippi because of its peaceful demeanor. Algiers is one of the best-kept secrets in New Orleans.

Our first encounter, Harsh Realities, will focus on the most current gateway New Orleans has walked through, the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Before we become a part of the healing process, through our service, we must put on a mindset of compassion and empathy. The storms of life strike without prejudice. To simply feel sorry for others who are in a storm never helps. How do we empathize with the hurting and become an agent of change?

DAY 2: THE BIG EASY

Your mission project will be a time to serve others through your gifts, time and hard work. The team leader and voyage director will pick the type of project months in advance in order to properly prepare your team.

After a hearty evening meal, the team will take some time to explore the historic neighborhoods of Algiers. In small groups, they will launch out. The team that brings back the most interesting fact or story will win a prize. You may visit the world famous Mardi Gras World, play the New Orleans sport of Cabbage Ball, or stop at the famous Tout de Suite coffee shop. Before heading home we will stop at Daigle's Grocery for an encounter we call The Big Easy. This exercise challenges us about the present state of our faith.



DAY 3: FRENCH QUARTER STORIES

After a day full of mission, we will take the ferry over to the French Quarter for a fun evening. On the ferry on the way over you may hear the story of *Bienville's Bluff*, which set the history of New Orleans in motion. After a bit of exploration at St. Louis Cathedral and Park the team will get some free time at the world famous Café Du Monde.

DAY 4: SLAVERY

We will have a shorter mission today, focused on a relational project. Afterwards, we will join one of our favorite houses of worship in New Orleans, Mount Olivet Episcopal Church. Mt. Olivet Episcopal Church is in the oldest church building in continuous use west of the Mississippi. Built in 1854, the building has been in constant use for more than one hundred fifty years! Not only will we enjoy a great time in worship but we will enjoy an after-service feast hosted by our family at Mt. Olivet.

When slavery was common practice in America, Algiers was home to human warehouses. It was to these warehouses that large numbers of African slaves were delivered; if they survived the 6- weeks journey on coffin ships. We will tell the story of these slaves, as a reminder of a history not far removed. The Slavery encounter will be adapted as an exercise of contemplation for the team. A gateway of freedom waits.



DAY 5: GRAVE THOUGHTS

After a daytime mission project we will take the team to Preservation Hall for a fun night of traditional New Orleans jazz. If this option is not available or the team leader wants to go in a different direction we can present a number of options.

Grave Thoughts is one of our most powerful encounters in New Orleans. You slowly drive down the silent streets to an unknown destination. Everyone in the van wonders what lies ahead. As we pull up to the gates they will sit silently unnerved. The sign on the outside humorously reads ONE WAY but no one will be laughing. Over the next few minutes the team will wander one of New Orleans many Cities of the Dead. This encounter has to be explained by a director (we can't give away all of our secrets!) This is a gateway you will never forget.

DAY 6: EXPLORATION

After a casual breakfast and an 8:00 AM sleep in we will head out for one of our famous Extreme Swamp Tours. We don't look at gators or other swamp creatures—we catch them!

The group will have a few hours to explore the French Quarter, go shopping, find history or just hang out. If possible, you may be able to take the group on the New Orleans Steamboat Cruise. Our last gathering will allow each team member to share a moment of wonder, a relic or story they have gathered on his or her Gateway Voyage to New Orleans. We will end in a closing prayer or maybe a time of Eucharist.

DAY 7: SOUTHERN GOODBYES

At your convenience, you will pack up and say goodbye to a fantastic week of exploration, service and encounter. The voyage is now in fact just beginning.

