

Guiding The Way In Faith-Based Vacations

(NAPSA)—According to a recent study by Baylor University, more than 90 percent of Americans say they believe in God or a higher power, which to many means that most people in the U.S. have a desire for spirituality in the everyday. While these individuals celebrate personal beliefs in their own way, many are turning to faith-based travel as a new and unique opportunity for enlightenment.

Today, more than 600,000 Americans travel overseas each year for religious purposes and 50,000 churches play host to travel programs. From pilgrimages that trace the paths of important religious figures to tours of some of the world's most remarkable places of worship, faith-based vacations offer travelers a life-changing and awe-inspiring cultural experience.

One tour operator has emerged as the largest company to embrace the spirit of faith-based vacations, creating an entire division to develop and operate these religious trips. Globus, the world's leader in escorted travel, started its religious division in 2004 and since then has seen an unprecedented 650 percent increase in passengers taking faith-based vacations. The company now offers a vast selection of personal, in-depth visits to some of the most famous religious sites in the world.

However, even if planning an escorted vacation isn't always an option, here are some tips for any



traveler looking to gain the most history, enlightenment and inspiration from his or her faith-based vacation:

1. Do Your History Homework—Take a trip to a local bookstore or your church's library to read up about specific Bible passages and/or historical significances of the areas you're traveling to. Learning historic background about the locations you're planning to see will increase your knowledge about the holy sites and create a more memorable learning experience. If you really want to dig deep, be sure to research local religious customs and dress codes to ensure you not only show the proper respect, but also gain access to every public worship area.

2. Celebrate!—Religious holidays are rich in tradition and cultural enlightenment. Try planning your vacation to coincide with a special holiday unique to that area. What better way to learn the rituals and practices of a particular faith and culture than to cele-

brate where they originated?

3. Make a List—With so many spiritual sites to take in along the way, it's best to know what locations hold the most religious value. Make a list of the churches, synagogues or other places of worship in the region you are traveling to—that way, you're more likely to have enough time to take in the breathtaking views of some of the world's most historic religious centers.

4. Receive a Blessing—A religious blessing can be one of the most emotional and uplifting experiences an individual can receive. Since you'll be exploring holy lands and historic places of worship, attend an actual service and receive the ultimate blessing firsthand.

5. Spread the Word—Upon your return, set up time with your religious leader to share your experiences with others. Whether it's contributing to a blog on your church's Web site, speaking at an upcoming service or even just showing thoughtful pictures and small souvenirs to your fellow parishioners, sharing your extraordinary journeys to a religious area can help others to learn from your travels and strengthen your spiritual connection to each location.

To learn more about Globus' faith-based vacations or to book reservations, call, toll free, (866) 313-2855 or visit www.globusfaith.com.