

Narration for Costa Maja Slides

Slide 1: Skip

Slide 2: Skip

Slide 3: We are a “WELS affiliated ministry” – we are all WELS members and do our work in coordination with WELS World Missions, and receive guidance from them– and we are grateful!

Slide 4: Costa Maya mission is on the YUCATAN PENNINSULA – do you want to guess which country has the Yucatan Penninsula within it’s borders? (Click to next slide to eliminate one country).

Slide 5: (Click to next slide to eliminate one country).

Slide 6: (Click to next slide to eliminate one country).

Slide 7: (Click to next slide).

Slide 8: Here we are on the Yucatan Peninsula. It has Mangrove forests and swamps; jungles. Travel is difficult. It was mostly unconquered by Spanish conquistadores in the 1600s; **The city of Mahahual** is located in a pivotal spot in the Yucatan. Our biggest congregation, Cruz de Cristo (Cross of Christ) is located here.

Slide 9: We are mostly a volunteer mission group. The only 2 full time workers are a pastor and teacher (education director). The Community Activities Coordinator is a volunteer who receives a stipend. Many of the volunteers live in northeastern Wisconsin, near Green Bay!

Slide 10: This little fishing village of Mahahual is located on the only major thoroughfare from Cancun, Mexico to the small central American country of Belize. It reminds us of Israel, located where the gospel could be experienced by travelers from various countries and carried to the rest of the world.

Slide 11: During the “high season” several cruise ships may stop at port Costa Maya in one day! It’s not uncommon that WELS members visit our congregation, Cruz de Cristo, when they leave the cruise ship to browse in Costa Maya! Residents come to Mahahual from the surrounding area to work in the stores and shops and restaurants. When they come to Mahahual, we reach out to them with the Gospel!

Slide 12: People from all over Central and South America and Europe visit the resorts in this area for the climate, diving and fishing, as well as the beaches.

Slide 13: This is the “landmark” lighthouse in the port of Costa Maya. We use the image of this lighthouse as part of our logo, reminding us that it is our Lord Jesus who is “the Light of the World”. We are there to let the light of His Gospel shine!

Slide 14: While there are some wealthy residents in the area, both Mexican and foreigners, most of the residents are of modest means. Many who come here to work from other Central and South American countries are very poor, living in makeshift shelters, in their vehicles if they have one, or just out on the beach.

Slide 15: Here is Angela, who attends Cruz de Cristo, at her restaurant in Mahahual named “Saulo” Angela shares, “Since the name isn’t common in Spanish, it sparks conversation with customers and has enabled me to share the story of Saul/Paul with my customers.” She tells them God chose Saul in spite of his many sins, forgave and loved him, gave him faith, a new name, and a new way of life. God does love them even when they feel like the ‘worst of sinners,’ like Saul.

Slide 16: What do people here believe? The Maya culture existed hundreds of years before Christopher Columbus discovered America. The conquistadors and the Spanish priests had a much easier time than expected when converting the Mayans of the Yucatan because of the similarities between Jesus and their god, Quetzalcoatl, a feathered serpent god. Jesus and Quetzalcoatl both helped create mankind. They each were intermediaries between earth and heaven. Celebrating the “Day of the Dead” is one of the most widely celebrated dates in the Catholic church.

Slide 17: **Most people in Mexico are Roman Catholic.** In the Catholic Church the Virgin Mary is worshiped and prayed to. They say she is more important to follow than Jesus. This confuses people and they know little of Jesus. **Here is the serpent-god Quetzalcoatl** at his finest. He is a “serpent god with wings”. A clear presentation of the person of Jesus Christ and what he has done as our Savior is almost impossible to find. (While there are several Christian denomination working on the Yucatan Peninsula along with the JW’s and Mormons, none will give the sweet comfort that Jesus has done it all, he has done it alone, he has done it for you!)

Slide 18: God willing, we will bring the sweet, comforting message of the pure Gospel across the peninsula, starting at Mahahual, one soul at a time.

Slide 19: Our vision, God willing, is to share the Gospel of our Lord Jesus with the entire Yucatan Peninsula. We have begun that work of grace in the small town of Mahahual, with a population of about 2,000. It is to become a much larger tourist center with an airport and a large dock for cruise ships.

Slide 20: Cruz de Cristo is the only Lutheran church in the Yucatan. **The “red porch”** - not the building itself - has been our worship area up to this time. We hold worship services and Friday soup suppers here, along with VBS and other activities. But thanks be to God – it has become too small!

Slide 21: Here is what our “sidewalk church” looks like inside. Pastor Valleskey leads worship. Many other church events are held here as well!

Slide 22: Pastor Valleskey’s gift for the guitar not only serves worship here, but he can take it “on the road” to groups gathered in small villages and even on beaches.

Slide 23: Skip

Slide 24: Reaching out to children has been a focus at Cruz de Cristo. As parents hear the Gospel and begin to trust our ministry, (remember most are nominally Roman Catholic), parents bring their children for baptism and Bible school.

Slide 25: As trust builds, the community recognizes we are a legitimate church. Here is the first wedding at Cruz de Cristo. Luis and Luisa now also help teach Sunday School!

Slide 26: Just like at your church, the pastor teaches confirmation class.

Slide 27: Who has attended Vacation Bible School? Just like in the US, reaching out through VBS brings contact with new children and their parents. What a blessing our new ministry center will be! Often, volunteers from Martin Luther College and/or other US WELS schools pay their own way to come down and help!

Slide 28: How do all the children get to church and Sunday School and VBS? We have a van to pick them up in their neighborhood!

Slide 29: Every Sunday a van goes through the town to gather children for Sunday School and Church. Look at those happy faces!

Slide 30: Why do children want to learn to speak English? Then they can work in stores, shops and restaurants where the tourists go! They have a better chance getting a job! Teaching children how to read also enables them to read---God's Word! Mr. Chris Dean conducts these classes. He also teaches Bible stories and Sunday School. How would you feel if someone told you that you had to learn Spanish to get a job???

Slide 31: Our mission reaches out with God's Word, Many children receive little or no formal education. Teaching the basic subjects brings us into contact with new children and families as well!

Slide 32: Miss Megan Mortensen serves the congregation and helps the congregation get involved with the community

Slide 33: Organizing helpful activities is part of Meghan's work.

Slide 34: Meghan also runs the Soup Kitchen. While people are not starving, our Friday evening soup kitchen serves welcome nutritious meals and attracts many. Our mission workers make the most of the opportunity to get to mingle with our guests!

Slide 35: Our mission gives out hundreds of meals each week as there is little work because of Covid.

Slide 36: Volunteers build cages and we give away 5 chicks per family for eggs in the future.

Slide 37: Our grateful response to the Good News of forgiveness and eternal life through Jesus alone and by Jesus alone is - now to want to share it! So Cruz de Cristo reaches out to the surrounding villages and to the scattered huts along the beach.

Slide 38: Skip

Slide 39: The Yucatan Peninsula is an area of 5 million people.....some know a little bit about Jesus.....some don't know him at all. We want to bring the simple, sweet Good News!

Slide 40: The town of Xcalak is an hour south of Mahahual where our church is – sharing food and devotions has given us many grateful contacts.

Slide 41: **We want to tell people about Jesus where ever and when ever we can! There are many different ways: (Pickup truck)** This truck is used to pick up children for church, soup suppers, and other activities. Children would run out of their huts and pile in. Since there are no seatbelt laws in the Yucatan, many crowded in.!

(lower right) A woman lives in a thatched hut near the ocean. She and a group of believers meet for Bible study. The missionary left a Proclaimer in her care for group listening. She said that evening she thought she would listen in her hut a few minutes before she went to sleep; she said, “after the first night, I could not stop listening.”

Slide 42: By God’s grace, the Gospel is producing its fruit and the mission is growing! Members of Cruz de Cristo stand **with machetes** after working to clear out new church site purchased in the fall of 2018.

Slide 43: Our worship and ministry center is being built as we speak! God willing, our new facility, including an apartment and classrooms, will be up and running in 2021.

Slide 44: Our new church and classroom/fellowship building is on the way up! God willing, the outer structure will be completed by the end of 2020.

Slide 45: Here is a pew built by members using some of the colorful native wood!

Slide 46: **OUR MISSION IS NOT TO BUILD A CHURCH, BUT TO REACH MORE PEOPLE:**

To read if you have time: **(Pedro – upper right)** Pedro cannot read. His hut is down a narrow road in the mangroves. When it rains hard, crocodiles swim across his road. After a Bible study one Thursday, the pastor loaned him a Bible Stick (MP3 Proclaimer). On Sunday he handed it back to the pastor, greatly irritated that it quit after only 3 hours. Pastor inserted a new battery, and a happy Pedro took the device back home.

Waiter in green – He asked some volunteers if he could get a Bible because he wanted to learn to read English better and he wanted to do it with God’s Word. When the volunteers returned the next day with a Bible, he received it with a smile and misty eyes.

One dad and 4-year-old son (NO PICTURE) attended church every Sunday. They were living in the father’s car while he worked in Mahahual during the tourist season. After four months he left with his son to find work elsewhere. He has not returned, but the people of Cruz de Cristo know the man and his son heard the Good News, and the seed of Life was planted.

Slide 47: By God’s grace, CMM is keeping the Gospel Light shining. Thank you for your interest! Thank you for your prayers! Thank you for helping!

Slide 48: Skip

Slide 49: No narration

Slide 50: Blank