

Tips

for First Time  
Group Leaders

**WE'VE GATHERED THE BEST**

# *Tips and Tricks*

**FOR MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR ACIS TOURS EXPERIENCE, FROM PICKING A TRIP AND RECRUITING STUDENTS, TO THE ACTION ON TOUR.**

**Featuring testimonials from both ACIS Group Leaders and our expert team of travel consultants, who have supported thousands of teachers overseas!**

## **ACIS PROGRAM CONSULTANTS**



**Beth**



**Jill**



**Tom**



**Tricia**



**Bridget**



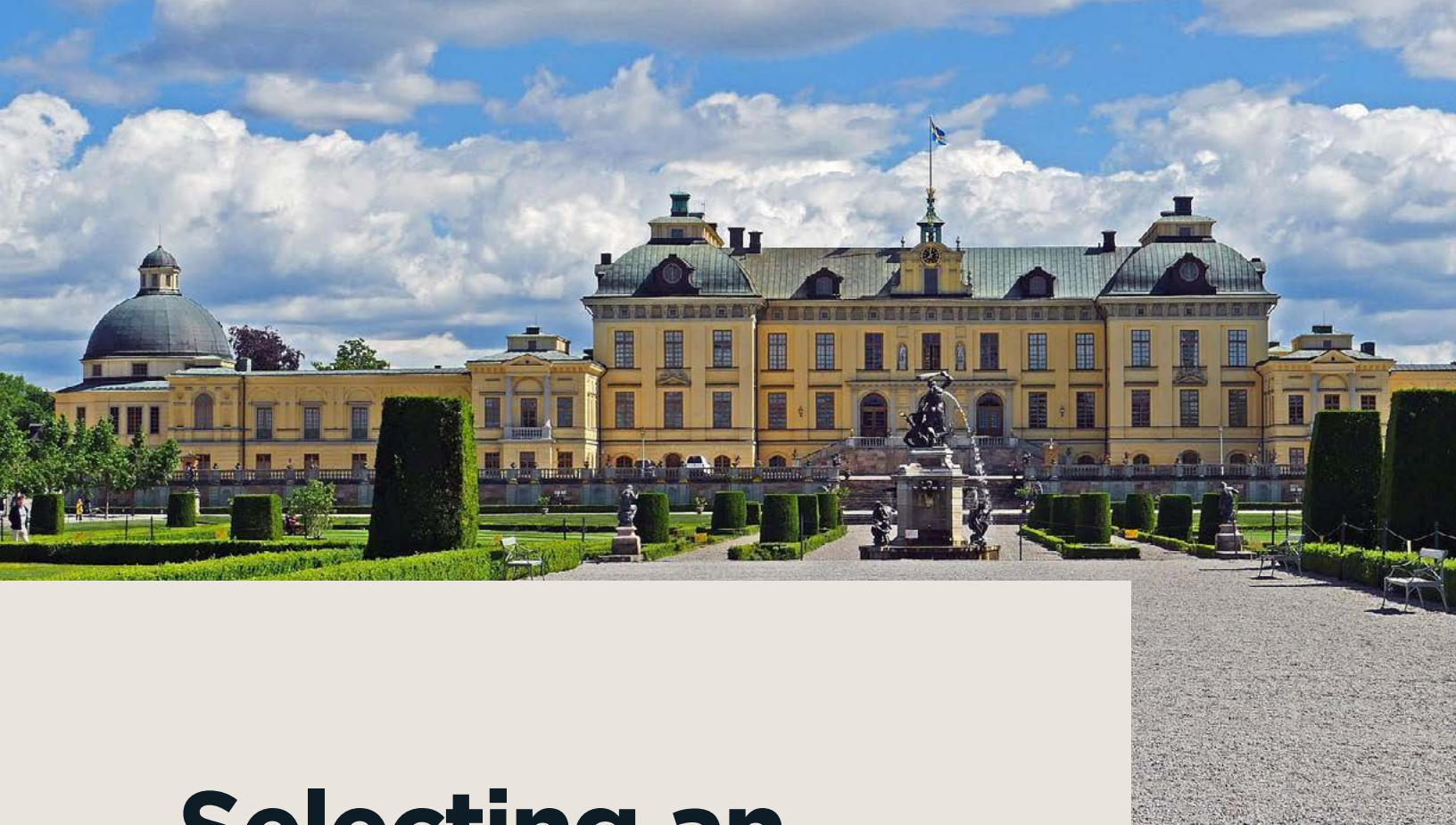
**Heidi**



**Victoria**

# Content

- 04 [Selecting an ACIS Itinerary](#)
- 07 [Recruiting Students for Your Trip](#)
- 10 [Sharing Peace of Mind](#)
- 12 [Preparing Your Students for the Trip](#)
- 16 [Getting There: Best Advice for Your Departure Day](#)
- 19 [Having the Best Time on Tour](#)
- 24 [Dos and Don'ts](#)
- 25 [We Get it Right](#)
- 27 [Security and Flexibility You Need](#)
- 29 [Rewards of ACIS Travel](#)



# Selecting an ACIS Itinerary

**The good news: We have over 200 pre-built educational travel itineraries around the world and can also build trips from scratch! The less good news: You'll need to make a decision on where you're going.**

**Not to worry. Your Program Consultant will be there from Day 1 to help you make the important decisions based on your classroom goals, budget and areas of interest.**

## **Questions to Ask Yourself**

- ▶ How busy would you like your days to be and how comfortable are you with free time?
- ▶ Would you prefer to travel to many places and gain a general sense for the country or region you are visiting, or would you rather stay in one to two cities and have the chance to dig in and more fully immerse yourself?
- ▶ Do you have a particular price point in mind? How did you reach that number?
- ▶ Do you have any specific educational goals for this trip? Are there any aspects of your curriculum you would like for the trip to support in particular?

***“Keep the kids in mind and focus on an itinerary that appeals to students – Remember it will be many of their first time overseas. We offer amazing Global Conferences so that you can check destinations off your bucket list.”***

**– ACIS Program Consultant Bridget**

***“If you don’t know where to begin, start with a Classic Tour! It’s a great middle ground in terms of free times and inclusions.”***

**– ACIS Program Consultant Beth**



## ***The Big Question***

**What do you hope your students will get out of an educational travel experience?**

# Top Trips for First Time Group Leaders

We asked our Program Consultants to name some of their favorite tours for first time Group Leaders.

**Here's what they said:**



[Read why they recommend them on the blog!](#)

## Spotlight on City Stays

Our City Stay tours focus on the excitement of one city. We have itineraries built for Paris, Madrid, Rome, Berlin and London. Each itinerary lasts seven days, giving you five overnights, plus an abundance of cultural inclusions. City Stays are perfect for first time ACIS Leaders because of their simplicity and affordability.





# Recruiting Students for Your Trip

**You've got your itinerary and you're ready to recruit. What are the best ways to ensure you hit your participant goals?**

*“Start mentioning your trip in class on day one (I always do a presentation of what I did this summer, including any trips I've done, and also hang pictures of past trips in my room.) I also specifically create lessons that focus on something that we would learn about on the next tour, if I can tie it into my curriculum.”*

- ACIS Group Leader Beth M.



## **Promote, Promote, Promote!**

Start promoting early and share the trip often. First time group leaders should have an absolute minimum of 2 trip recruitment meetings.

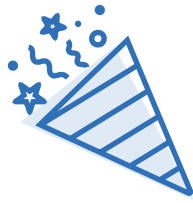
***“Get the word out and KEEP GETTING IT OUT. People are busy...all the time. Make sure to continue to promote and advertise well beyond the initial launch.”*** —ACIS Program Consultant Tom

***“A structured registration window is productive for making sure families commit when the interest for your tour is at its peak, and it leaves less room for distraction. Suggest to parents that registration might not be possible outside of your dedicated enrollment window. 2 weeks is a good period of time for this window.”*** —ACIS Program Consultant Tricia



***“Communicate a sense of urgency. Signing up now guarantees the best price, smaller monthly payments, and the sooner the group is finalized, the sooner bookings can begin!”***

- ACIS Program Consultant Beth



## Enthusiasm is Contagious

Let students see why YOU are genuinely excited about the trip.

***“Give them FOMO! Make sure your families know you’re only holding a certain number of spots on the trip, once they are gone, they are GONE. Don’t miss out!”***

– ACIS Program Consultant Heidi



## Take full advantage of the ACIS Recruitment Tool

Our recruitment tool provides you with an easy way for participants to RSVP to recruitment meetings, helping you keep track of interested trip participants and sending automated reminders to ensure meeting attendance.

Access an array of recruitment materials, including email templates, online at the [ACIS Group Leader Academy](#).

**acis** My Account MY TRIPS MY REWARDS MY PROFILE MY CHECKLIST MY ACADEMY

**Bell'Italia** SHARE THIS FORM WITH OTHERS: <https://webapp.acis.com/trip/vr> COPY

The experience of a lifetime is waiting for you! Learn all the details about what we'll be seeing, and what traveling with ACIS is like, at our upcoming trip information session. Fill out the form below to let us know that you'll be coming to the meeting. And share this page with others you'd like to travel with too!

**Meeting Details**

Group Leader: Happy Travels — [happytravels@acis.com](mailto:happytravels@acis.com)

Meeting Date: 12/11/24

Meeting Time: 12:00 PM - 12:00 PM UST/Central

Meeting Location: Library Media Room 203

**RSVP Here!**

FIRST NAME:	LAST NAME:
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
EMAIL:	PARENT/OTHER EMAIL:
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
PHONE:	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
COMMENTS/QUESTIONS ABOUT TRIP	
<input type="text"/>	

***“Your students will reflect your energy. If you radiate excitement for this opportunity, they’ll feel that and won’t want to miss out!”***

– ACIS Program Consultant Tricia



# Sharing Peace of Mind

**We know it's a big ask for parents to send their children overseas, especially for first time group leaders. Here are a few things to share with them as you promote the trip.**

***“If you have concerns that something may go amiss, I can wholeheartedly assure you that whatever situation arises, you will be quickly and competently cared for.”***

**- ACIS Group Leader Catherine G.**

## You Get 24/7 Support On Tour

Not only does ACIS operate from offices in Boston and Europe, we have a 24/7 Duty Officer network trained to respond to emergencies and resolve problems on tour day or night.

## You Are Guaranteed Insurance Upon Enrollment

It includes 24 hour medical assistance, consultation, monitoring, travel delay protection, and emergency evacuation when necessary.

## You Can Cancel For Any Reason

With the Ultimate Plus Protection Plan, you can cancel for any reason whatsoever all the way up to four days prior to departure and receive a full refund.

***“I had peace of mind the entire trip, even with an emergency one of our chaperones had. I will travel again with my students, with ACIS!”***

- ACIS Group Leader Sephora E.



***“This company plans out everything and asks for input before, during, and after the trip. Everything is tailored to the group’s needs as much as possible. It’s so worth the money for peace of mind!”***

- ACIS Group Leader Lauren B.



# Preparing Your Students for the Trip

**We asked Group Leaders: With hindsight, what's something you'd wished you'd done before your first trip?**

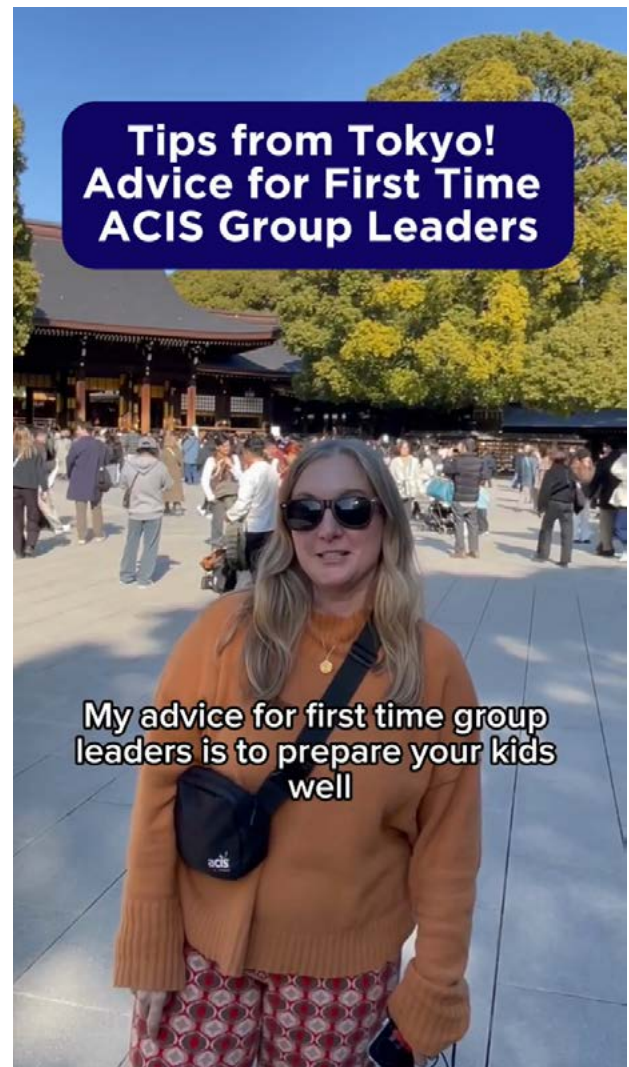
## Here are some of our favorite responses!

*“Language practice!  
Give them phrases for  
directions (turn left, etc)  
and pair them up and have  
them walk around the  
classroom/school giving  
directions to each other.”*

- ACIS Group Leader Ryan V.

*“We had regular meetings  
(about every 6 weeks)  
away from school. Each  
meeting was a different  
theme - packing, culture,  
food, walking, suitcase trial  
run - and just a fun time.”*

- ACIS Group Leader Anna R.K.





***“Spread out topics over a few meetings; it clarifies information, gets them excited, and makes sure that they are meeting all deadlines.”***

- ACIS Group Leader Beth M.

## **From ACIS Program Consultants**

***“Start meeting early and often! This helps the group get to know each other and gives you more time to review group rules, travel plans, cultural expectations, and get excited about different parts of the trip!”*** —ACIS

Program Consultant Beth

***“Making the most of the tour means waking up early, eating a good breakfast and preparing to be on the go for the rest of your day! You do not have time to go back to the hotel to “freshen up” or charge your battery so make sure they know this. Walking is KEY. Most of the European trips will have you walking at least 15K steps a day. Be prepared and start walking before you go.”*** —ACIS Program Consultant Heidi



***“Set up a travel club or group meetings to keep them excited and prepare them for what’s to come. And at the end of each session, WALK together so that they get used to the amount of walking they’ll find on tour.”***

**- ACIS Program Consultant Tom**



## **Keep Calm and Carry On**

Encourage students to only pack a carry-on suitcase for the tour. It’s going to make travel so much easier, from the initial departure day to switching hotels.

***“Have a packing party where people have to pack their bags and bring them to school to walk around with them all day. It not only adds a great visual promotion around school of the students that are traveling with you, but it will also teach them they don’t love lugging huge cases up and down stairs all day – great nudge for carry-on only!”*** —ACIS Tour Consultant Tricia



**GETTING THERE:**

# **Best Advice for Your Departure Day**

**Departure day is full of energy and excitement, but it can also be stressful.**

***“3 hours early, always.  
Even when you think you  
don’t need 3 hours.”***

**– ACIS Program Consultant Beth**

## Some Great Advice for First Time Group Leaders



## Arrive Early

Everyone should be at the airport 3 hours ahead of takeoff. No exceptions.

## Stay Positive

You serve as the emotional barometer for the group. If you're stressed, frustrated, or upset, it passes through the group. Try to maintain a calm demeanor and know that ACIS will do everything possible to help you out.

## Reach Out

If your group's flight is delayed or cancelled, know ACIS has your back! We have a Duty Officer standing by 24/7 to assist you.



***The reason I keep traveling with ACIS is their impeccable customer service. One time, traveling back from Barcelona in January, half of the country's airports shut down due to a snowstorm. When I landed in New York City, all the flights heading south had been cancelled. Standing in an airport that was quickly filling with stranded passengers, I thought, "Maybe I should call ACIS." In seven minutes, they had re-booked my flight, booked me into a hotel and had directions to the airport shuttle location."***

—ACIS Group Leader Christie M.





***“Bring a positive attitude to the airport. This is generally the worst part of travel (we know!), but you have to do it to start this amazing adventure. If you’re delayed or needing assistance, approach those gate agents with a smile—it will get you further. Positive attitude and patience always.”***

**- ACIS Program Consultant Jill**

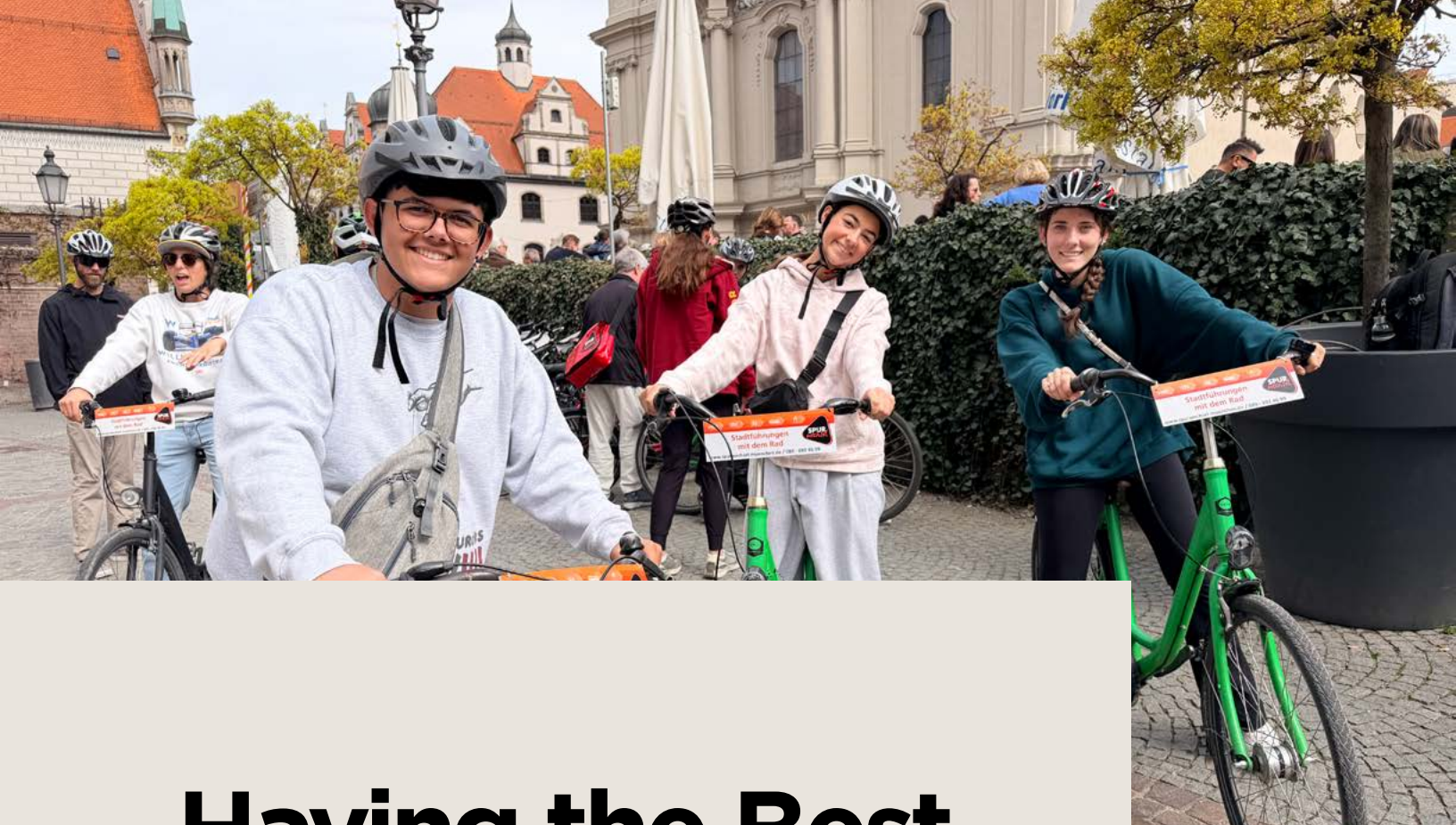
***“Make sure that you set up a group chat, such as “WhatsApp”, prior to the travel date in order to communicate quickly in case issues arise on the transportation side, give families an overview of the expectations for flights in general and for the specific airline, such as carry-on dimensions.”*** —ACIS Group Leader Beth M.

***“Have each chaperone dedicated to a task at the airport, and assigned to 6 students in advance. One makes sure the entire group is present before checking in and moving through security, another makes sure to clearly state timings for wait time at gate and any rules to set for student conduct or free time before boarding, etc.”*** —ACIS Program Consultant Tricia

## **ACIS to the Rescue**

**Read real stories from the ACIS Duty Officer team and see how we resolved a range of “travel hiccups.”**





# Having the Best Time on Tour

**You are going to have an amazing time abroad – that much we know! To make the logistical side as smooth as possible, here are some tips that will help you enjoy your time to the fullest.**

## Be on Time

We include a lot in our itineraries to provide the most value for travelers. Small delays can add up and lead to missed activities. Reinforce to students (and chaperones!) the importance of being on time.



## Stay Flexible

Things will go wrong in travel: It's part of the adventure! We'll be there to help with the big issues, but having a flexible mindset is going to make the experience much easier all around.

***“Keep to the schedule!  
It will help everything  
stay in place!”***

- ACIS Program Consultant Victoria

***“Prepare yourself mentally that things will go amiss – a flight delay, sick student, etc. Even though you can’t possibly prepare for every scenario, embracing that something, whatever it is, will happen sets you up for success. Your attitude in these situations goes a long way for setting the tone for your group.”***

- ACIS Program Consultant Beth



## Live in the Moment

Trust that ACIS is there to take care of you and truly enjoy your time abroad with students.

***“Try and encourage the students to ‘unplug’ and put their phone on airplane mode during the day so they can be in the moment and engaged in what they are seeing rather than being so worried about documenting it all for social media!”***

- ACIS Program Consultant Jill



***“No news is good news! Don’t set the precedent with parents that they’ll hear from their child every day, and encourage your students NOT to be in constant touch with family back home while on tour. Detachment is how they GROW!”***

- ACIS Program Consultant Tricia



## Provide Time to Reflect

As busy as the tour is, we recommend finding time throughout the day to reflect. Whether that's through journaling, a small group discussion in the lobby before bed or dedicated moments on the bus, making space for students to take everything in will make the trip more impactful.

## Sketching Your Tour

We highly recommend keeping a sketchbook throughout the tour, no matter your level of artistic ability!



Celebrated *The New Yorker* illustrator Gayle Kabaker offers more [inspiration for keeping a sketchbook on the blog.](#)

*“The key is to not try to actually draw what you’re seeing, but to draw the impression of what you’re seeing... And then you start to see in your sketchbook the progression of your trip. When you look back later, you’re gonna feel so happy.”*

- Artist Gayle Kabaker

## Working with Your Tour Manager

Your Tour Manager is there to make operations run smoothly and share their extensive knowledge about the places you'll be visiting. It might take a minute to adjust to handing over the reins and that's okay!



***“Communication is key! This is your trip, but they have so much knowledge to share. Be receptive to that.”***

**- ACIS Program Consultant Tom**

***“Always sit down with your Tour Manager when you get settled the first night. Clarity on expectations for both you and your Tour Manager is important. It will alleviate problems before they happen and allow you to enjoy your tour with confidence!”***

**- ACIS Group Leader Beth M.**



***“Leave space for your Tour Manager’s spontaneity to shine! Coming with ideas for free time is great and helpful, but make sure to not pack the schedule so tight that there won’t be an opportunity for Tour Manager suggestions as well.”*** —ACIS Program Consultant Beth

***“Work with your Tour Manager to get the group in some form of group chat where you can share important meeting details, location pins and photos. It can also serve as a great place to add historical context for things you see!”***

**—ACIS Program Consultant Bridget**

***“Communication with the ACIS team and the Tour Manager is so important: We can’t read minds! If you are unhappy with something, let us know because we can probably fix it!”***—ACIS Program Consultant Tricia

# Dos

# Don'ts

▶ **Encourage (or mandate) that kids pack in a carry on. It might seem daunting, but for a 9-10 day tour, it's not hard to do.**

▶ **Choose a trip and itinerary you are passionate about!**

▶ **Participate in the activities! Join the painting lesson, eat the ice cream, enjoy all the fun stuff on tour alongside your students.**

▶ **Have a sense of humor and be flexible!**

▶ **Address each student on the airplane just before you arrive to double check they aren't leaving their passports in the seatback pocket!**

▶ **Practice walking long distances around your neighborhood**

▶ **Collect the kids' passports. They should be able to be responsible for that themselves. If you have a color photocopy, they'll be fine.**

▶ **Choose a trip without considering that students will have different priorities for a tour itinerary than you as a Group Leader do.**

▶ **Encourage the kids to bring a giant suitcase or a ton of extra things—less is more when packing.**

▶ **Plan every spare moment of the trip!**

▶ **Let your students tuck their phones or passports into their back pockets at any point. Never.**

▶ **Pack new shoes**



SATISFACTION GUARANTEED

# We get it right



## **Our founding belief is travel changes lives.**

And our company culture is built on care. Add this together and you've got a group of people dedicated to ensuring you love travel as much as we do. This means providing safe, life-changing experiences you can count on, and if something does go wrong, fixing it fast. Good is merely a four-letter word at ACIS. Exceptional is the aim.

### **Service Guarantee**

We back up our quality with a guarantee. If for any reason you don't rate your tour good or excellent, we'll provide you 500 World Traveler Reward points and give you a \$1,000 travel scholarship. No questions asked, no strings attached.

### **Red Cards = Immediate Response**

If something falls short of expectations we want to know about it and fix it on the spot. Show your tour manager your ACIS Red Card to activate our 24/7 worldwide network so all complaints can be resolved immediately.

## Planning Partnership

Planning a trip with an ACIS Program Consultant is like getting advice from a very well-traveled friend. They know the best time to visit Costa Rica for turtle hatching, the coolest neighborhoods for exploration in Tokyo, and the number of nights you'll need to get a real feel of Berlin. They help you select, or design, the right tour for your group and are on hand to manage every detail from your first phone call all the way to your return. They may even drop in on your group while you're overseas, just to be sure your tour is meeting (or exceeding!) your expectations.

## Planning Program

Schools with 2+ annual tours are eligible for our Partnership Program which includes a special rewards structure. Ask us for more information if you think your school might be a good fit!



“

ACIS made my job so much easier and your mastery of logistics enabled our leadership team to stay focused on the engagement of our students.”

- Group Leader Scott H.



PEACE OF MIND

# The Security and Flexibility You Need



## **There is nothing more important than the welfare of our travelers.**

Just as we work tirelessly to provide once-in-a-lifetime experiences to group leaders and students, we are equally committed to ensuring that all of our groups return home safely. Our safety and support infrastructure has been a cornerstone of our business for more than 40 years.

### **Safety Monitoring**

ACIS constantly monitors global conditions and trains our staff on emergency response protocol, which immediately activates should an incident arise that could potentially affect our travelers

### **Peace of Mind Plan**

At any point up to 45 days prior to departure, ACIS Group Leaders may move their tour if they are uncomfortable traveling to their destination at that time.

### **Cancellation Protection**

By popular demand, ACIS now offers two upgraded protection plans that allow participants to cancel for any reason and receive a full refund either in cash or in a combination of cash and travel voucher.

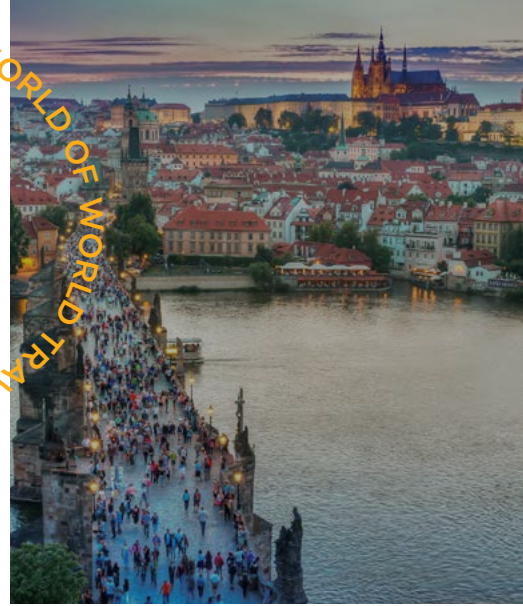
## **Policies To Meet Current Needs**

ACIS has always prided ourselves on evolving and innovating to meet teachers' and students' everchanging needs. These past few years, needs changed more than ever. Flexibility, while always important, is now essential—and we have adjusted and improved our policies to help.

When traveling as a small group became more important, we made it easier to do just that. Groups may now enjoy a private tour with 20-25 participants on a tour to Europe or just 15 participants on a tour to Latin America or Asia. Program Consultants and Tour Managers now attend more recruitment and pre-departure meetings to support your travel goals. And, if you have more ideas, let us know!

# The Rewards of ACIS Travel

WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF WORLD TRAVELER REWARDS.



Beyond being life-changing for your students, travel should be rewarding for you as a Group Leader.

## Earn Points. Earn Rewards.

For every trip you take with ACIS, you'll receive points for every registered participant. You can then redeem those points for tour upgrades, cash bonuses, scholarships, and ACIS Global Conferences. First time ACIS Group Leaders are also invited on Training Weekends when they register just 5 participants.

### WTR Levels

#### Bronze

Leading your 1st-2nd trip  
10 points per participant

#### Silver

Leading your 3rd-5th trip  
20 points per participant

#### Gold

Leading your 6th-10th trip  
30 points per participant

#### Platinum

Leading your 11th-20th trip  
35 points per participant

#### President's Club

Leading your 21st+ trip  
40 points per participant

### ACIS Global Conferences

Global Conferences are free trips exclusively for group leaders and companions. Hosted in destinations around the world, from Ecuador to Egypt, Paris to Peru, these all-inclusive adventures provide an opportunity to meet educators from around the U.S. and enjoy the best of ACIS travel experiences. All Global Conferences include airfare, accommodations, select gourmet meals, exclusive excursions and more.



### Training Weekends

Every first time Group Leader who registers 5 participants is invited to our free Training Weekends in Barcelona and destinations in Latin America. You'll learn from ACIS staff how the tour process works, meet fellow traveling educators, and experience an exciting destination.

# Let's Go!

Our goal is to make leading an educational tour your favorite and most rewarding part of your job. When we say travel changes lives, we don't just mean your students'.

- 1 Start Dreaming**  
Where do you want to go? What do you want to feel? How do you want your students to grow? Let your imagination run wild.
- 2 Start Planning**  
It's time to get in touch. Call 800-888-ACIS or email [info@acis.com](mailto:info@acis.com) and connect with an expert Program Consultant. They know all the questions to ask to help you build your dream experience.
- 3 Enjoy the Ride!**  
You're now in the capable hands of an ACIS Program Consultant. Trust them to guide you through this process.

800-888-ACIS • [info@acis.com](mailto:info@acis.com)  
[www.acis.com](http://www.acis.com)

