WINTERIM

Travel Offers Students Unique Learning Opportunities

2027 Winterim Trips

- Colombia: Java and Jesus
- Costa Rica: ¡Pura Vida!
- Dominican Republic: Serve, Rest, Grow
- Egypt and Jordan : Cradles of Civilization
- Galápagos: Island Adventure
- Iceland: Land of Fire and Snow
- London, France, & Spain: Bucket List Europe
- New Mexico: Serve and Explore
- Oman: An Arabian Adventure
- ¡Puerto Rico: es otra cosa!
- Sarasota: Alpha Win Triathlon
- Spain, Morocco, & the Rock in Between
- Switzerland and Italy: Swiss Peaks to Italian Streets



Colombia: Java and Jesus
Join Java & Jesus this Winterim for an unforgettable trip to Colombia, where faith, culture, and service come together. Students will explore Cartagena and Barranquilla, experience the coffee industry firsthand, enjoy beach and cultural days, and serve through a Vacation Bible School and partnership with a rural church plant. This Christ-centered experience blends adventure with meaningful service, inviting students into authentic relationships, spiritual growth, and global community.
Leaders: Crystal Strickland and Liz Vrooman
Number of students: 24
Approx cost: $3,200-3,400



Costa Rica: ¡Pura Vida!
Get ready for the adventure of a lifetime in Costa Rica! This Winterim trip blends adventure, faith, culture, and surf into one unforgettable experience. We'll start in the lush rainforest of La Fortuna, hiking canyons, ziplining by waterfalls, white-water rafting, dancing & cooking lessons, and practicing yoga. Then we head to the surf town of Nosara for a full immersion into the Pura Vida lifestyle—early morning yoga and devotions, daily surf lessons, sunset horseback rides, paddleboarding through mangroves, beach church, and meaningful service with local children. We'll even explore turtle conservation and set sail on a catamaran to spot dolphins, sea turtles, and migrating humpback whales. If you love adventure, the ocean, and making memories that matter, this trip is for you.
Leaders: Jonathan Quist and Sarah Quist
Number of students: 12
Approx cost: $4900-$5200

2027 Winterim Trip Timeline

February 26 - Trips Announced in Community Time
March 4 - Trip Parent Meeting at 7pm (The Garage)
March 11 - Trip Applications Due at 3pm
March 20 - Trip Selection Forms Due by 8am
March 30 - Enrollment Contracts Due



Dominican Republic: Serve, Rest, Grow
Do you want to make a difference, build new friendships, and serve internationally? Would you like to explore a new culture and practice your Spanish? Join us as we partner with Sociedad Lucas in the Dominican Republic to share Christ's love with the children in their community. We will SERVE in a Christian school, teaching Bible and English lessons, playing with children, participating in sports, serving meals, and working on light construction projects. We will REST so we can pay attention to the work God is doing in our midst. We will also explore the beautiful island, hike to waterfalls, spend a day at the beach, and tour the historic colonial district. We desire to GROW in our faith through daily worship, prayer, and time in scripture, drawing closer to God as we witness His love in action. Come joyfully SERVE with us in Jesus' name in the Dominican Republic!
Leader: Frank Padilla **Number of students:** 18 **Approx cost:** $3,000-3,200

Egypt and Jordan : Cradles of Civilization
This unforgettable adventure through Egypt and Jordan invites you to walk in the footsteps of pharaohs, prophets, traders, and travelers who shaped the ancient world. In Egypt, marvel at the timeless wonder of the Great Pyramids of Giza and the mysterious Sphinx. From bustling bazaars to golden deserts, Egypt is a place where the past and present exist side by side in vivid color. Cross into Jordan, a land of dramatic lands capes and deep spiritual significance. Ride on horseback into the rose-red city of Petra, hidden among towering cliffs and revealed through a winding canyon. Float effortlessly in the mineral-rich waters of the Dead Sea, explore the otherworldly desert of Wadi Rum, and experience warm Jordanian hospitality under starlit skies. This journey is more than sightseeing—it's an immersion into cultures that welcome you like family, flavors that linger long after the meal, and moments that stay with you forever. If you've ever dreamed of adventure, wonder, and connection, Egypt and Jordan are calling.
Leaders: Joe Brower and Seth Davies **Number of students:** 24 **Approx cost:** $4,900-5,200

Galápagos: Island Adventure
Come explore and marvel at the biodiversity of Ecuador and the Galápagos Islands! Located off the coast of Ecuador, this archipelago straddling the equator is home to a unique biodiversity found nowhere else on earth. Unique plants and animals abound. Our hiking and snorkeling expeditions will offer direct interaction with iguanas, penguins, flightless cormorants, various finches, blue-footed boobies, giant tortoises, sea-lions, and an abundance of extraordinary marine life. We will island hop through the Galápagos, where we will move from mangrove swamps to lava flows to sunny shorelines, encountering scores of exotic creatures along the way. At the Charles Darwin Research Station, we will visit the breeding center for the famous giant Galápagos tortoises. Our experienced guides will help us to understand and experience not only the unique flora and fauna, but also the cultural and historical aspects of Ecuador. This trip offers the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to snorkel with sea lions and sea turtles in the warm equatorial waters of the Pacific! We will also spend two days in mainland Ecuador with trips to famous historic destinations, including Mitad del Mundo, where you can straddle the equator, among other stops in and around Quito, Ecuador's beautiful capital city. Come and join us as we chart the Galápagos Islands and discover some of the biological wonders of God's creation! Prepare for the adventure of a lifetime!
Leaders: Paul Diekema and Kara Kits **Number of students:** 24 **Approx cost:** $5,850

Iceland: Land of Fire and Ice
Take on Iceland's untamed terrain in an adventure fueled by fire and ice. Hike lava fields and climb volcanic craters, descend into enormous lava caves, and feel the power of crashing waterfalls like Dettifoss and Gullfoss. Walk Reykjavík's lively streets before heading out on the legendary Golden Circle, where erupting geysers, powerful waterfalls, and dramatic rift landscapes steal the show, all under the stunning aurora borealis. Round out the journey with several geothermal baths and whale watching in towering fjords on a dynamic exploration of one of the world's most extreme destinations.
Leaders: John Christians and Neil Karsten **Number of students:** 24 **Approx cost:** $4,700-4,800

London, France, & Spain: Bucket List Europe
Experience the arts and iconic sights in five of Europe's most beautiful and culturally rich cities: London, Paris, Avignon, Barcelona, and Madrid. We begin our tour in London where we will see famous landmarks such as Big Ben, Buckingham Palace, Westminster Abbey, the Tower of London, and the Globe Theatre. We will then travel to Paris via the Chunnel where we will experience the charm of the city while visiting iconic sites including the Eiffel Tower, Louvre Museum, Notre-Dame Cathedral, and Montmartre. From there, we journey south to Avignon, where we will explore the historic old town and visit important cultural and historical sites such as the medieval city walls and the Pont d'Avignon. We then continue on to Barcelona, where we will immerse ourselves in the art, architecture, and vibrant culture of the city, visiting landmarks such as La Sagrada Família, Park Güell, Las Ramblas, and the Gothic Quarter. Our journey concludes in Madrid, where we will explore the heart of Spain by visiting the Prado Museum, Royal Palace, Plaza Mayor, and Retiro Park. And throughout our travels, we will experience some of Europe's most amazing food at local cafés, bistros, and markets. This trip truly is a European bucket list!
Leaders: Lisa Rozema and Amy Worden **Number of students:** 24 **Approx cost:** $4,700-4,800

New Mexico: Serve and Explore
Enjoy serving in Native American schools, immersing yourself in the sights, sounds, tastes, and culture of the Southwest, and being transformed by the experience! You will discover a completely different part of America as you hike through Red Rock Park, visit Native American History and Cultural centers, stand in four states at once at Four Corners Monument, and witness the breathtaking beauty of the Southwest. Join us as we serve and explore!
Leaders: Missy Meekhof and Julie Watson **Number of students:** 13 **Approx cost:** $2,000

Oman: An Arabian Adventure
Committed to peaceful coexistence, Oman is a country that is an oasis in the Arab world, offering a way to explore intercultural and interfaith relations. Experience Oman's natural beauty: enjoy a day at the beach, visit a turtle preserve, snorkeling/paddle boarding, hike along a river to a cave with a waterfall inside, ride a camel and surf the dunes during a night at a desert oasis, take a sunset cruise on a dhow (traditional sailboat). Explore Muslim religion and culture: visit the Muscat Grand Mosque, wander a spice market, visit a date farm, learn to cook a traditional Middle Eastern meal, find out how Muslims live their faith in everyday life. Learn to love your neighbor: discover how shared values can bridge cultural and religious divides, experience Omani hospitality, and learn from the 100+ year legacy of Christian medical professionals serving through the Al Amana Centre in Oman.
Leaders: Joelle Williams and Mark VanderWerf **Number of students:** 18 **Approx cost:** $4,100-4,300

¡Puerto Rico: es otra cosa!
If you want to be immersed in a land of enchantment, look no further than Puerto Rico! Dance to the rhythm of bomba music, swim in a bioluminescent bay, hike the Yunque rainforest and slide down a natural waterslide, all while soaking in the beautiful Caribbean sun! Get to know the locals by going on a guided bike tour and volunteering in a community project. And if all that doesn't sound enchanting enough, don't forget about the food, including a visit to an iconic ice cream shop with creative traditional flavors and a stop at the Plazita market to try fresh fruit. Come see for yourself why Bad Bunny always says that PR is truly something else!
Leaders: Melissa Allen and Raquel Bartaway **Number of students:** 20 **Approx cost:** $3,500-4,000

Sarasota: Alpha Win Triathlon
Which athletes are the fittest: swimmers, cyclists or runners? That question was the inspiration for the first Ironman race in Hawaii. If you've ever wanted to try a tri, come to Florida and test your fitness in a sprint distance, olympic distance, or even half ironman distance triathlon. Teacher, coach and Ironman, Mr. Stapert, will guide you as you prepare for the Alpha Win Triathlon in Sarasota, Florida. You will learn the skills needed in open water swimming, time trial cycling, distance running, and, most importantly, eating to be a successful triathlete.
Leader: Tim Stapert **Number of students:** 12 **Approx cost:** $1,400-1,500

Spain, Morocco, & the Rock in Between:
Get ready for a unique and unforgettable adventure as we journey from Spain to Morocco! You'll explore the historic streets of Madrid, marvel at the stunning Alhambra in Granada, and discover the wild monkeys on the Rock of Gibraltar. Hop on a ferry to Morocco where you'll lose yourself in the colorful souks and maze-like medinas of Tangier, Fes, and Casablanca. From ancient castles and gorgeous cathedrals to vibrant markets and mischievous monkeys, this trip will give you a front-row seat to history, culture, and adventure in two incredible destinations.
Leaders: Larry Borst and Nate Zietse
Number of students: 24
Approx cost: $4,800



Switzerland and Italy: Swiss Peaks to Italian Streets
Adventure, food, and culture await on this amazing trip to Switzerland and Italy! Take in the stunning views of the Swiss Alps, ride to Jungfraujoch—the "Top of Europe," and cruise across Lake Lucerne. Make your own Swiss chocolate, tackle the thrilling Mt. Pilatus excursion, and explore charming alpine towns. Then head to Italy to create your own pizza and pasta in hands-on cooking classes, and discover the art, fashion, and culture of Florence and Milan. End the trip in Rome, tossing coins in the Trevi Fountain, exploring ancient streets, and visiting Vatican City. Along the way, you'll build friendships, share unforgettable experiences, and make memories that will last a lifetime!
Leaders: Jenn Benson and Dani Bosch
Number of students: 24
Approx cost: $5,250-$5,450



Winterim Trips FAQs

1. How is travel a relevant educational opportunity?
Winterim travel aligns with GRCS's mission of preparing students to be effective servants of Christ in contemporary society, providing unique opportunities to learn and serve in the global community alongside GRCHS staff. Winterim travel opens students' eyes to God's amazing world and reveals glimpses of how God might call students to serve Him in the future.

2. How are trip destinations decided?
Staff submit trip proposals to the Winterim Committee for approval. The committee is committed to providing trips that vary in both cost and purpose.

3. Can I afford to travel?
GRCS is committed to providing travel opportunities for all families who want this learning experience. There is financial aid for families who qualify. Additionally, thanks to generous donors, there is an endowment which grants scholarships for students who qualify and apply.

4. How do I request financial aid?
Submit the Winterim trip application and check the box requesting consideration for financial aid for Winterim trip. If you have applied for GRCS variable tuition for the current year, no further action is necessary. If you have not applied for GRCS variable tuition, you will be asked for a copy of your most recent tax return to determine a potential trip award. Families that do not receive a variable tuition rate are still eligible to apply for a Winterim trip award. Families will be notified of Winterim trip award amounts (via email), prior to the trip selection process. Be sure to discuss as a family which trips are a good fit, both by trip destination and cost, and select your trip accordingly.

5. Is fundraising available?
There are some limited opportunities for students to raise money through the New2You share program and other programs. Read morning announcements and emails from trip leaders and the Winterim Coordinator for more information. Students are encouraged to fundraise on their own, and the earlier students begin to fundraise the better.

6. Who can travel?
Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors can apply for travel. Counselors, school administrators, and the Central Office then review the list of applicants before students are approved and allowed to choose a Winterim trip. Students must be in good academic and behavioral standing, and families must be in good financial standing with GRCS to be eligible. About 25% of our students travel each year. Winterim provides many other unique opportunities for students who don't travel.

7. Can winter sport athletes travel?
Each winter sport coach has established a Winterim travel policy. Coaches may change this policy each year, and the policy may vary by grade level. Contact the Athletic Director at jheerema@grcs.org with questions about a specific sport.

8. What if I don't hold a U.S. Passport?
Students and their families are solely responsible for obtaining any necessary travel documents including passports and visas. It is HIGHLY recommended that students requiring a visa application to travel purchase premium travel insurance.

9. How do I apply?
Students will complete a general online trip application. Each application will be reviewed to determine travel eligibility.

10. How are trip rosters selected?
Trip rosters will be selected using a seniority-based lottery system. Interested travelers complete an Application to Travel that is reviewed by counselors and administrators to ensure all students applying to trips are in academic, behavioral, and financial good standing. Once approved, students complete a Trip Selection Form listing their order of preference for trips. First-time travelers will be given priority, but then a lottery will take place for current juniors who applied to travel. As each name is drawn, they will be placed in their most preferred trip as space allowed. This process will repeat for sophomores, and for freshmen. Before rosters are finalized, counselors and administrators will again review lists to ensure group dynamics will create a positive experience for all involved.

God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts.
Use them well to serve one another.
1 Peter 4:10