



# JAMAICA LVC REFLECTION GUIDE

Coach. Serve. Learn. Think. Reflect.



## **EDUCATION & EVENING REFLECTIONS**

Every evening volunteers will get together to recap the lessons learned from the day's activities. The reflection guide serves to prepare you culturally and intellectually prior to your trip. This helps us have thoughtful reflections throughout your experience. These readings ensure structure to our reflections, while adding historical information and relevant context. This ensures we put you in a position to have an enriching learning experience.



## Jamaica LVC Educational Packet and Reflection Guide

### *Arrival - What does it mean to live a good life?*

**Aristotle** reasons that the good is that at which all things aim; and all human beings aim primarily at happiness. Aristotle describes happiness as action of the soul in accordance with virtue. Whereas the function of a flute is to play music, its ultimate good is to play music in an excellent manner (Nicomachean Ethics). Therefore it reasons that humans are rational animals, whose function is to be found when their rational soul acts in an excellent manner, and consequently, the ultimate human good/happiness is the action of our soul in accordance with virtue.

**Socrates** believes that the good life for a human being is a life of ethical virtue, and knowledge of what the ethical virtues are is a matter of reason, not experience. The good life is a life that questions and thinks about things; it is a life of contemplation, self-examination, and open-minded wondering. The good life is thus an inner life—the life of an inquiring and ever expanding mind.

In the **Bible** the good life is bound up tightly with community and fellowship. “Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality” (Romans Chapter 12, verses 9-21).

In the **Qur’an** the good life is heavily linked to faith and good deeds, together they are the link to rewards in the life to come, God says, “but those who disbelieved – their deeds are like a mirage in the desert which a thirsty person thinks is water until, when he comes to it, he finds it is nothing but Allah standing before him. And He will pay him in full due – God is swift in reckoning” (Surat an-Nur chapter 24, verse 39).

One famous **Buddhist** text, Sutta, is that of the Advice to the Kalamans, in which the Buddha tells the Kalama people: “Be not led by the authority of religious texts, nor by mere logic or inference, nor by considering appearances, nor by the delight in speculative opinions, nor by seeming possibilities, nor by the idea; “this is our teacher’. But, O Kalamas, when you know for yourselves that certain things are unwholesome, and wrong, and bad, then give them up ... And when you know for yourselves that certain things are wholesome and good, then accept them and follow them.”

**Discussion: What does the good life mean to you and the way you live?**

**Continued...**



### Pre-Colonial History and Spanish Rule

An Amerindian group, the **Arawaks** (also known as the **Tainos**), settled the island around AD 700 to 800. After developing seafaring skills, they gradually moved north through the Caribbean island chain. Once settled, they made their homes in conical thatched shelters. Their communal villages were made up of several family clans, which were headed by a chief. The women gathered food, while the men tilled the fields, hunted and fished. Jamaica's fertile soils yielded yams, maize, beans, spices and cassava, which the Arawaks leached of poison and baked into cakes and fermented into beer. The Arawaks called the island '**Xaymaca**,' meaning '**land of wood and water**.' They worshipped a variety of gods believed to control rain, sun, wind and hurricanes, and who were represented by zemes, idols of humans or animals. They honed skills as potters, carvers, weavers and boat builders. (Columbus was impressed with the scale of their massive canoes hewn from silk cotton trees.) They were particularly adept at spinning and weaving cotton into clothing and hammocks.

Jamaica's first tourist was none other than **Christopher Columbus**, who landed on the island in 1494 on the second of his four voyages to the New World. Anchoring offshore in modern-day St Ann's Bay, Columbus sailed down the coast to Discovery Bay, where he had his men fire crossbows at a group of Arawaks that failed to welcome him. He also set a fierce dog – the first the Arawaks had ever seen – on them, establishing the vicious tone of future colonial occupation. Columbus **claimed the island for Spain**.

In attempts to find passage to Asia, Columbus stopped by Jamaica a few more times until his ships rotted and sank off the coast of the island. The hapless explorers spent almost a year marooned and suffered desperately from disease and malnutrition in Jamaica before they were rescued. Jamaica became Columbus' personal property. When he died in 1506, it passed to his son Diego, whose descendants carry the honorary title of Marquis of Jamaica to this day. Diego appointed as governor one of his father's lieutenants, Don Juan de Esquivel.

From their arrival the Spaniards had exacted tribute from the Arawaks, whom they enslaved and killed off through hard labor, ill-treatment, European diseases. To replenish the labor pool, the Spaniards began importing slaves from West Africa to Jamaica, the first arriving in 1517.

In 1534 the Spanish uprooted and created a new settlement on the south coast, Villa de la Vega (Spanish Town). However, the Spaniards never developed their Jamaican colony and it languished as a post for provisioning ships en route between Spain and Central America. By 1655 the English invaded in efforts to destroy Spain's trade monopoly. On May 10<sup>th</sup>, the English landed 8,000 troops near Spanish Town. As the Spanish retreated, they freed their slaves encouraging them to harass the English, who promptly destroyed the Spanish capital. These **cimarrones** (wild runaways) took to the hills, where they mastered the tactics of guerrilla warfare and fiercely defended their freedom.

### The Slave Trade

Jamaica's English planters grew immensely wealthy from sugar, cocoa and coffee, and English merchants brought in slaves to help in the efforts. Wrenched from the Ashanti, Cormorante, Mandingo and Yoruba tribes of West Africa, they were bought from African slave traders and shipped across the Atlantic to



Kingston, where they were auctioned off. Estimates as to the number transported from Africa run as high as 20 million slaves, but more began the trip cross the Atlantic and never made it due to disease and hunger that festered in the cramped spaces.

Those slaves who were still alive at the end of the voyage were fattened up as the boat reached port, and oiled to make them appear healthy before being auctioned. Their prices varied between £25 and £75 for unskilled slaves. Slaves who had been trained as carpenters or blacksmiths fetched a premium – often £300 or more. The most wretched had a worth of no more than a shilling. Kingston was a main port of delivery and re-exportation of slaves to the Caribbean and Americas. The slave ships then returned to England carrying cargoes of sugar, molasses and rum.

### **Maroon Resistance**

By the end of the 17th century, Jamaica was also under siege from within. The first major slave rebellion occurred in 1690 in Clarendon parish, where many slaves escaped and joined the descendants of slaves who had been freed by the Spanish in 1655 and had eventually coalesced into two powerful bands (called **Maroons**, from the Spanish word cimarrón): one in the remote Blue Mountains and one in the almost impenetrable Cockpit Country of southern Trelawny, from where they raided plantations and attracted runaway slaves. The eastern community became known as the Windward Maroons; those further west were called Leeward Maroons.

In 1729 the English launched the First Maroon War offensive to eradicate the Maroons. The thickly jungled mountains, however, were ill-suited to English-style open warfare and the Maroons had perfected ambush-style guerrilla fighting. Nonetheless, after a decade of costly campaigning, the English gained the upper hand.

A legendary Maroon called "Three-Finger" Jack Mansong, was known as an 18th century "Robin Hood" character said to be associated with the region. Three-Finger Jack began his life as a slave on a nearby plantation, but in his adult life was labeled a rabble-rouser and was sentenced to death for inciting other slaves to rebellion. Jack cheated death and took to the hills, terrorizing the British authorities and landowners.

On March 1, 1739, Colonel Guthrie and Cudjoe, the leader of the Maroons of Cockpit Country, signed a peace treaty granting the Maroons autonomy and 1500 acres of land. In return, the Maroons agreed to chase down runaway slaves and return them to the plantations and to assist the English in quelling rebellions.

The Maroons of the Blue Mountains, under a leader named Quao, signed a similar treaty one year later.

**Discussion: As we ascend the mountains to Cane River, what are our thoughts of escaping to the mountains... is it really an escape, or is the jungle another form of entrapment?**



## Day 2: Farming and Globalization

During the course of the 18th century, Jamaica became the largest sugar producer in the world. The island was jointly ruled by a governor (appointed by the English monarch) and an elected assembly of planters. Jamaica was divided into the same 13 parishes that exist today. The Crown's interests at the parish level were looked after by the Crown's local representative.

The planters built sturdy 'great houses' in Georgian fashion high above their cane fields. Many planters were absentee landlords who lived most of the year in England, where they formed a powerful **political lobby**. In Jamaica the planters lived a life of indolence, with retinues of black servants. Many overindulged in drink and sexual relations with slave mistresses, frequently siring mulatto children known as 'free coloreds,' who were accorded special rights.

The economic and political life of the times was an exclusively **male arena**. The planters' wives spent much of their time playing cards, arranging balls and other events, and otherwise socializing, while the day-to-day care of their children was undertaken by wet nurses, who were often female slaves. New slaves kept arriving, most of them put to work on sugar plantations in appalling conditions. Bloody slave insurrections occurred with frightening frequency. The last and largest of the slave revolts in Jamaica was the 1831 Christmas Rebellion, inspired by 'Daddy' Sam Sharpe, an educated slave and lay preacher who incited passive resistance. The rebellion turned violent, however, as up to 20,000 slaves razed plantations and murdered planters. When the slaves were tricked into laying down arms with a false promise of emancipation – and then 400 were hanged and hundreds more whipped – there was a wave of revulsion in England, causing the Jamaican assembly finally to **abolish slavery in 1834**.

The resulting transition from a slave economy to one based on **wage labor** caused economic chaos, with most slaves rejecting the starvation wages offered on the estates and choosing to fend for themselves.

**Discussion: After visiting St. Anne's a largely farming community, are there any thoughts regarding the difficulties of farming on a small island in such a globalized world? Politics plays a large role in trade, and yet farming can be such a local burden, how does the relation of local and national initiatives complicate economics? Any thoughts on the challenges facing female farmers in a historically male dominated arena? How has this experience molded your ideas of a good life?**

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### **Day 3: Entrepreneurs**

In 1866 a Yankee skipper, George Busch, arrived in Jamaica and loaded several hundred stems of **bananas**, which he transported to Boston and sold at a handsome profit. He quickly returned to Port Antonio, where he encouraged production and soon had himself a thriving export business. Captain Lorenzo Dow Baker followed suit in the west, with his base at Montego Bay. Within a decade the banana trade was booming. Production peaked in 1927, when 21 million stems were exported.

To help pay the passage south to Jamaica, banana traders promoted the island's virtues and took on passengers. Thus, the banana-export trade gave rise to the tourism industry.

The **Devon House Mansion** is the architectural dream of Jamaica's first black millionaire George Stibel. Stibel was among three wealthy Jamaicans who constructed elaborate homes during the late 19th century at the corner of Trafalgar Road and Hope Road, which fittingly became known as the Millionaires Corner.

Born to a Jamaican housekeeper, and a German Jew in the 1820s, George was subject to a range of criticisms and harsh treatment from his peers as a result of his mixed parentage. School was therefore not as fulfilling an experience as it should have been, and he quit the classroom at age fourteen to become a carpenter's apprentice. George quickly developed a flair for **carpentry**, and by age 19 he played an integral role in the reconstruction of the famous Ferry Inn, between Kingston and Spanish Town.

In the 1840s George's father gave him startup capital to purchase a ship, which he began using to **transport cargo**. Shortly after he purchased two additional ships to develop his new business venture in the West Indies including Cuba where a revolution was in high gear. He realized that the island would be ideal to undertake a lucrative gun-trading ring. While he did manage to make respectable profits from trading guns, he also fell in trouble with the law for his activities.

In 1851 George's life took a turn for the better when he married long time sweetheart Magdalene Baker, daughter of a Moravian Missionary. Five years and a few children later, his ships were caught in a terrible storm, which destroyed the vessels. Stibel was aboard one of the ships which sank off the coast of Venezuela. He managed to survive the wreckage and luckily he had the foresight to secure all his money which was stored in a leather belt. Stibel's tenacity soon began to show results, because shortly after arriving in Venezuela he became a peddler, and with his savings he purchased a mule to assist in transporting his goods. His misfortune at sea quickly dulled when he began trading gold in Venezuela. He invested in a gold mine with his friends, and fifteen years later in 1873 the business was showing huge profits. George Stibel had undoubtedly made an impressive stake in the gold mining business and the accolade awarded to him as Jamaica's first black millionaire seemed very deserving and appropriate. His achievements were shattered however with the death of his son, and he returned home to Jamaica. Stibel's love for his country and sense of civic duty kicked in almost immediately after his return to Jamaica. It is reported that he purchased 99 properties (it was illegal to own 100 properties during the period) including two sugar estates, a wharf at Church Street, Great Salt Pond and a Cattle Pen in St. Ann.



In 1881 he commissioned the services of contractor Charles P. Lazarus to build the magnificent Devon House Mansion. In addition to investing in property in Jamaica, Stiebel was a philanthropist, assisting the poor and disadvantaged, as well as exhibiting continuous interest in the socio-economic state of the country. Stiebel's most noted civic duty came when he was named a Justice of the Peace (JP) and later Custos of St. Andrew. It was during his tenure as Custos that the Great Exhibition of 1891 was staged in Kingston. The Exhibition, which sought to introduce tourism to the island, required extensive financing which the government was unable to undertake. Stiebel was among a small group of entrepreneurs who loaned the Government funds to stage the exhibition. In recognition of his services in the interest of the island, Her Majesty the Queen bestowed on Stiebel the honor of Companion of the Most Distinguished Order (C.M.G.).

Over the next ten years George Stiebel lived happily at Devon House. The Stiebels also did an impressive job of holding lavish parties for friends and family. It was no surprise then, that they employed a large staff which reportedly included four gardeners, two house maids, a butler, cook, laundress, grooms and coachman. Servants Quarters were located in the space now used as the property's commercial complex.

**Discussion: Ideas on shipping, and government regulations. Have you met any other entrepreneurs on the trip? Share some stories of local start-up, etc. Are riches, ideas, or willpower most effective for achieving that good life?**

#### **Day 4: Environmental Concerns**

One of Jamaica's many environmental concerns is waste management.

The Jamaica Environmental Trust states that generation of solid waste in Latin America and the Caribbean has doubled over the past 30 years. In Jamaica, there has been a 50% increase in per capita generation of solid waste in the last 5 years alone. Composition of wastes has changed to become more non-biodegradable and hazardous. 1.2 million tons of waste is generated across the island annually. Approx. 828,000 tons are disposed of at legal sites, none of which are properly managed landfills. Almost 300,000 tons of waste is illegally dumped. Riverton receives 60% of the waste produced in Jamaica. Riverton is 119 hectares, and is adjacent to mangroves and the Duhaney River.

A 2006 study shows that 69% of the waste produced in Jamaica is organic, that is, compostable. Domestic waste is about 70% of the waste produced in Jamaica, commercial/industrial about 30%. Public health risks from unmanaged dumps like Riverton are: water pollution into the Duhaney River, used for drinking and bathing by people living nearby, pollution of Hunts Bay (scientists call Hunts Bay 'The Dead Zone'), heavy metal contamination from cadmium, manganese, lead and pesticides

A wide range of air pollutants result when the dump burns – particulates, carbon monoxide, aldehydes (eg formaldehyde), acrolein, benzo (a) pyrene, hydrogen bromide, hydrogen chloride, hydrogen cyanide, hydrogen fluoride, nitrogen oxides, phenol, sulfur dioxides, dioxins and furans.



Health impacts of the air pollution from dump fires: increased risk of death among elderly and those with preexisting respiratory and cardiac illnesses, infant mortality, low birth weight of babies, onset of childhood asthma, coughs, wheezing, chest tightness, shortness of breath, burning in eyes, nose and throat, dizziness, weakness, confusion, nausea, disorientation, exposure to known carcinogens. The seriousness of these depends on how close people were to the fire.

**Discussion Point: How does this experience effect your philosophy of a good life? What are some challenges we take for granted in living our lives?**

### **Day 5: Modern History, Violence and Economic Hardships**

To understand it's modern history, let's briefly recap the history of slavery in Jamaica. The British turned Jamaica into one of the most profitable and productive slave based economies in history. Jamaican's climate made it an ideal place for growing sugar cane. The entire economy was based on slave labor. The British treatment of slaves made the new American nation to the north's relationship and treatment of slaves come across as cordial and friendly. By the end of slavery the ratio was approximately 20 blacks to 1 white on the island.

Jamaica gained it's full independence from the United Kingdom in 1962. The country got off to a solid start, experiencing 10 years of solid economic growth, however not all were enjoying prosperity and a global slowdown led to challenges in the 1970's that reinforced a two party system, not all that different from what we have in the USA. The PNP (People's National Party) were based upon a philosophy that would be compared to the Democratic Party in the USA, while the JLP (Jamaica Labor Party) is more similar to the Republican Party.

The battles, bickering and bad blood between the PNP and JLP is not all that much different from what we experience in the USA between the Democratic and Republican Parties. In the late 70's things became very heated and there are a lot of "rumored" external influences (to many to go into here) involving a clash of American (Capitalist) and other communist influences (Cuba/Russia). Michael Manley had begun to adopt "socialist" stances and began openly criticizing American foreign policies and meeting with U.S. enemy, Fidel Castro, in the 1970s. Given the Cold War the US was having with Russia, the CIA did not want Jamaica to be friendly with communists. It is widely thought that many of the violence and gang problems that have plagued Jamaica were fueled by outside influences. How did all these weapons get to Jamaica? How did gang leaders become politically influential?

The names Seaga (JLP) and Manley (PNP) dominted the late 70's and 80's. These two politicians where the subject of the famous "One Love" peace concert where Bob Marley brought the two opponents together in a show of unity.

The Patterson-led PNP romped in the 1993 and 1997 elections. In spring 1999, the country erupted in nationwide riots after the government announced a 30% increase in the tax on gasoline. Kingston and



Montego Bay, where sugarcane fields were set ablaze, were particularly badly hit. After three days of arson and looting, the government thought better of it and rescinded the tax.

In the lead-up to the 2002 elections, violence in West Kingston soared to new heights as criminal groups battled to control electoral turf and profit from the largesse that victory at the polls in Kingston. Rival political gangs turned the area into a war zone, forcing residents to flee and schools, businesses and even Kingston Public Hospital to close.

In 2004, Hurricane Ivan bounced off Jamaica en route to the Cayman Islands, causing widespread damage, and Edward Seaga – still representing the JLP as opposition leader – retired after over three decades of life in politics. Two years later, Prime Minister Patterson resigned in 2006, giving way to Portia Simpson-Miller. Jamaica's first female prime minister, 'Mama P' was initially popular with the masses, but 18 years of PNP rule bred gradual voter disillusionment with the party. In the 2007 elections, Bruce Golding of the JLP carried the day.

The Jamaica Golding inherited faced several battles, and most Jamaicans will tell you the greatest is crime (the 2007 murder rate was 17% higher than the previous year's). Illiteracy is also a grave concern (according to UNESCO, over 90% of 15 to 24 year olds couldn't both read and write in 2004) as are threats to the environment through deforestation and overdevelopment. In the meantime, the Jamaican people face the future with resolve and a measure of good humor – they've endured so much worse in the past.

More recently Portia Simpson-Miller was re-elected in 2011. She is from the area of West Kingston where Dupont Primary school is. Jamaica continues to face incredible challenges.

**Discussion points: After seeing children living in villages, trash dumps, and the inner city, what are your thoughts regarding social development? Regarding changing their futures and providing opportunities?**

### **Day 6- Lime Kay: The English and the Pirates**

In 1654, Oliver Cromwell, set out to destroy the Spanish trade monopoly and amass English holdings in the Caribbean. After defeat in a larger campaign, Cromwell sent Admiral William Penn and General Robert Venables to weakly defended Jamaica. On May 10, 1655, this expeditionary force of 38 ships landed 8000 troops near Spanish Town. The Spaniards retreated north over the mountains, from where they set sail to Cuba.

In a rare act of benevolence, the departing Spanish freed their slaves – encouraging them to harass the English, who promptly destroyed the Spanish capital. These **cimarrones** (wild runaways) took to the hills, where they mastered the tactics of guerrilla warfare and fiercely defended their freedom. By 1662, there were 4000 colonists on the island, including exiled felons as well as impoverished Scots and Welshmen, who arrived as indentured laborers. Settlement hastened as profits began to accrue from cocoa, coffee and sugarcane production.



Throughout the 17th century, Britain was constantly at war with France, Spain or Holland. The **English sponsored privateers** to capture enemy vessels, raid their settlements and contribute their plunder to the Crown's coffers. These privateers, or buccaneers, evolved as a motley band of seafaring miscreants, political refugees and escaped criminals who decided their ill-gotten gains were better off in their own pockets. They formed the Confederacy of the Brethren of the Coast, committed to a life of piracy. Gradually they replaced their motley vessels with captured ships and grew into a powerful and ruthless force, feared throughout.

Initially, the newly appointed governor of Jamaica, Sir Thomas Modyford, joined with the Spanish in attempts to suppress the buccaneers. But the outbreak of the Second Dutch War against Holland and Spain in March 1664 forced England to rethink its policy. Modyford contrived for the Brethren to defend Jamaica. Port Royal and Kingston Harbor became their base. Their numbers swelled astronomically, and within a decade **Port Royal was Jamaica's largest city – a den of iniquity and prosperity.** With England at **peace** with Spain, buccaneers were now regarded merely as **pirates**. Mother Nature lent a hand in their suppression when a massive earthquake struck Port Royal on June 7, 1692, toppling much of the city into the sea. More than 2000 people – one-third of the Port Royal population – perished.

**Discussion points: Politics, loyalty, and profit... the good life, does it lie in being rich, being in power, or being feared?**