

Traveling with GEE

“What’s the furthest you’ve ever traveled?” a colleague of Ann Tuennerman asked her class one day. The answers ranged with locations as far as several states away, to one student who’d only ever ventured about 200 miles from their rural hometown.

Ann’s students shared similar experiences to that of her colleague’s classroom. For many of them, places like Egypt and Jordan were but places on a map or locations in news headlines - thousands of miles from home, and objectively out of their reach.

“If kids aren’t exposed to big things, they can’t dream about it,” Ann said. “I don’t want them to limit themselves. I want better for them.” Her adoration for her students fueled her desire to bring the world to them, and inspire a confidence that they too could see it one day. However, Ann and her husband fit the “opposites attract” trope when it came to travel. While she craved adventure, her husband was content with the comforts of home. Determined to find a way, Ann stumbled across GEE, a nonprofit that helps educators travel for discounted prices. To her delight, there were dozens of trip options to choose from, all running during school breaks.

She first signed up for a trip to Morocco. While she knew she was in for an adventure, she didn’t know she would meet lifelong friends. “I’ve met so many fantastic people I never would’ve met otherwise,” she said. “If anyone is on the fence about taking a GEE trip because they’re nervous about not knowing anyone, my advice is to just do it.” With about half of GEE’s travelers being women traveling alone, plus the shared background of working in education, it was easy for Ann to feel comfortable in the group from the get go.

Now a seasoned traveler, Ann is gearing up for her 7th GEE trip to India. “They’re not trips I would take by myself,” she said, speaking to the safety of having a dedicated guide that was an expert on the location. “The guides also really contribute to the experience - they’re always so knowledgeable and personable. I also don’t enjoy the planning aspect of the trip - as a teacher, I already spend all my time planning lessons and making decisions. Having GEE plan the trip took all the pressure off.”

During her Morocco trip and each one after, Ann would tactfully select items to bring back to her classroom to share with her students. “The kids love it because it brings these places to life,” she said, speaking to how her kids were actively engaged in lessons when she tied in her travels. Previous lesson plans that only involved reading passages about different places were forgettable and impersonal for her students’ young minds. However, once Ann incorporated tangible elements, her students were hooked. After a trip to Egypt, she had her students write their names in hieroglyphics, inspect money, and view slideshows of images she took herself. The once mystifying country had become real to them, and incited a desire to continue learning.

Now, Ann looks forward to traveling with GEE any chance she gets, expressing how she feels energized before a trip, and recharged afterward, ready to jump back into the classroom.

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Travel the world affordably, earn professional development credit, and bring diverse global perspectives into your classroom with GEE. Global Exploration for Educators Organization (GEE) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization founded in 2007 that runs travel programs designed and discounted for teachers.

With GEE0, educators earn professional development credit and optional graduate credit while seeing the world. The programs are 5 to 23 days in length. GEE0 also provides teachers with educational materials and the structure to help them bring their experiences into the classroom. The trips are open to all nationalities of pre-K-12 and university educators, administrators, retired educators, as well as educators' guests. The deposit is \$350 for each program and then the final payment is due 60 days before departure.

In 2023, GEE0 is offering programs in over 57 countries on 5 continents. Detailed information about each trip, including itineraries, costs, travel dates, and more can be found at <http://geeo.org>. The registration dates are flexible, but space is limited and many programs will be full well before the deadline. You can see a [list of programs here](#). If you prefer to browse via a search engine, you can [search the catalog here](#). GEE0 also partners with universities, national resource centers, professional associations, and other groups to offer private programs. To learn more, visit [GEE0's website](#), email travel@geeo.org, or reach out seven days a week, toll-free at 1-877-600-0105 between 9:00 AM and 9:00 PM ET.