

CONFERENCE PACKET

SU401



SLU 401 CONFERENCE PACKET

Student Leadership University 401 2026

You have an amazing opportunity to explore Greece this coming June. There is a lot that goes into preparing for this adventure, and we want to do our best to equip you with all the information you need. Please read this packet in its entirety and follow the steps as you walk through the preparation process.

Things You Need to Know:

1. Start preparing your mind and heart now:

- Dwell on Mark 12:30-31 and pray for a deep love for our Lord and the ability to express who He is.
- Start learning more and check out our recommended reading list.
- Finally, as we will literally be walking through Scripture during this trip, read the book of Acts to focus on the Journeys of Paul (specifically Acts 13-20) and the 13 New Testament Letters written by Paul.

2. We want to care for you well as you prepare for 401.

- A SLU team member will email you before the final payment deadline but at any time feel free to call (407.248.0300 ext. 20) or email us (kayla@slulead.com or nikki@slulead.com) if you need anything.
- An SLU team member will check in with you before any upcoming deadline. Also, helpful information will be sent three weeks before the trip, like an electronic copy of the syllabus, updated schedule, and departure day information.

3. Pack smart: Read the packing and travel tips we have provided. Those guidelines will set you up well for this awesome journey.

4. Your journey with SLU is not done yet! From our alumni exclusives to the opportunity to serve on our SLU summer staff, we would love for you to stay connected with SLU in 2027 and beyond! Ask us about this while you are on the trip.

SLU 401 2025 Greece Schedule

June 3, 2026 - SLU 401 GREECE BEGINS! Depart from USA on an overnight flight to Thessaloniki, Greece.

June 4, 2026 - INTO THE FOOTSTEPS OF PAUL: Arrive in Thessaloniki. Meet with our guide and transfer to the hotel. Dinner and overnight in Thessaloniki.

Thessaloniki Hotel (for 2 nights): Check in June 4 and out June 6

Grand Hotel Palace <https://www.grandhotelpalace.gr/en>

Address: Monastiriou 305, Thessaloniki, Greece, 54628

Phone: +30 2310 549 000

June 5, 2026 - THESSALONIKI/ PHILIPPI/KAVALA:

- Begin the day traveling to the riverbank to the site of **Lydia's baptism**, the first baptism on European soil.
- Next, stop in **Philippi**, where Paul preached his first evangelical sermon and sowed the seeds of Christianity. Among the ruins located on the rocky ledge above the town's main road is the prison into which Paul and Silas were thrown.
- Next, travel to the port of **Kavala**, where Paul landed with his disciples, Timothy and Silas. This port was also a destination for Luke the evangelist when he sailed from Troas.
- See a Byzantine castle, the Roman Aqueduct, and the ruins of an acropolis. Follow the Via Egnatia, a remnant of Rome's highway system, viewing Roman and Greek tombs.
- Return to Thessaloniki, where Paul planted a church that would later receive two New Testament epistles.
- Dinner and overnight in Thessaloniki. Late lunch in Kavala.

June 6, 2026 - THESSALONIKI/ METEORA/KALAMBAKA:

- In the morning visit one of the most beautiful basilicas in the city, St. Demetrius and spend time in the ancient city of **Thessaloniki**. Explore the ruins of the Roman Forum and see the Rotunda. View the triumphal Arch of Galerius and continue along the waterfront to the massive White Tower.
- Next, travel south to view the awe-inspiring rock formations of **Meteora** and Mt. Olympus. Take in the striking monasteries of Meteora that seem to hang in the air, crowning the summits of these pinnacles with their wooden galleries and corniced rooftops. Dangerously hanging over the stunning abysses, these primitive dwellings compose one of the most fascinating sites on earth. A special treat awaits with a visit to one of these timeless monasteries to see the exquisite specimens of Byzantine art on display.
- Dinner and overnight in Kalambaka. Lunch on own in **Meteora**.

Meteora Hotel (for 1 night): Check in June 6 and out June 7

Grand Meteora Hotel <https://www.grandmeteora.gr/en/>

Address: Kastraki, Kalampaka, 42200 Meteora – Greece

Phone: +302 432 077 707



June 7, 2026 - THERMOPYLAE/ATHENS:

- Journey through the amazing countryside, taking in the beauty of Greece. Stop at the mountain pass of **Thermopylae**, the location where the Greeks victoriously fought for their freedom during the Greco-Persian wars in 480 BC. See the statue of Leonidas, king of the Greek city-state Sparta.
- In the afternoon, continue to **Athens**, the birthplace of democracy. View the world-renowned Acropolis and wonder at the glory of the Parthenon, built 2400 years ago. Gather at **Mars Hill**, where Paul addressed the intellectual men of the most informed city of the time, pleading for the cause of Christianity. Dinner and overnight in Athens.

Athens Hotel (for 1 night): Check in June 7 and out 8

Divani Palace Acropolis <https://divaniacropolishotel.com/>

Address: 19-25 Parthenonos Street, 11742, Athens, Greece

Phone: +30 210 928 0100

June 8, 2026 - ATHENS/LAVRIO/MYKONOS:

- Begin the day with a drive to the Port of Lavrio and step aboard The [Celestyal Discovery](#) to start a 4-day Greek Islands cruise. All SLU cabins are outside cabins.
- Spend the afternoon exploring the Island of **Mykonos**, world-renowned for its lovely windmills, small cobblestone streets, and countryside.
- Return to the ship for dinner and overnight. Lunch included onboard.

Cruise Ship (for 4 nights): Check in June 8 and out June 12

Celestyal Discovery <https://celestyal.com/us/our-ships/celestyal-discovery>

June 9, 2026 - EPHESUS, TURKEY/PATMOS, GREECE:

- Step off the ship at Kusadasi and into nearby **Ephesus, Turkey**, Asia Minor's greatest archeological site. This Greek and Roman city has been remarkably preserved. Step along the broad marble where Paul walked. Gaze at the Temple of Artemis (Diana), the Temple of Hadrian, and The Celsus Library. Marvel at the massive theater where Paul was opposed for speaking boldly about Christ.
- In the afternoon, enjoy cruising aboard The Discovery to the **island of Patmos**, built on a mass of volcanic rock. The island marks the site where the apostle John was exiled. Visit the Monastery of St. John and the cave where he received the vision he recorded in the book of Revelation.
- Return to the ship for dinner and overnight. Lunch included onboard.

June 10, 2026 - RHODES:

- Spend a full day on the **island of Rhodes**, the largest of the Dodecanese islands, rich in history. Journey to Lindos, where it is believed the Apostle Paul had a short stay on his way to Jerusalem. Visit the Acropolis of Lindos, prominently displaying the Doric Temple of Athena, built in 300 BC with a stunning view of the sea below. See the Church of the Virgin Mary containing frescoes from the 15th century. Return to the capital to be immersed in the history of the occupation of the Knights of Saint John during the Crusades. Pass under the imposing Gate d'Amboise and walk along the Street of the





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Knights. The crests which identified their Order and living quarters are still visible today. View the awe-inspiring Palace of the Grand Master of the Knights of Rhodes, built in the Gothic style.

- Enjoy free time before returning to the ship for dinner and overnight. Lunch is included onboard.

June 11, 2026 - CRETE/SANTORINI:

- Arrive in **Crete**, the largest of the Greek Islands and the cradle of the Ancient Minoan Civilization. This island is where the Apostle Paul spent time as he was being transported to Rome as a prisoner and where Titus remained to help the churches. Take a leisure walk tour through Heraklion, the capital of Crete, and enjoy shopping and local culture.
- Board The Discovery for an afternoon cruise to the famous island of **Santorini**, formed by the half-submerged crescent of a volcanic caldera. Perched atop high cliffs, savor the island's breathtaking views from Oia.
- Dinner and overnight on the ship. Lunch included onboard.

June 12, 2026 - CORINTH:

- Early morning arrival in Athens to begin the day's excursion. Proceed to Corinth through the Bay of Salamis and the Saronic Gulf. This city was home to the apostle Paul for over a year and inspired two of his most familiar letters. Gaze at the temple of Apollo towering above the remains of the influential metropolis. See the ruins of the agora and the shop believed to be where Paul stayed with Aquila and Priscilla. Marvel at the bema where Paul stood before the proconsul, Gallio.
- In the afternoon, return to Athens and enjoy a free late afternoon to explore the historical neighborhood of Plaka at the foot of the Acropolis. Stroll along the narrow roads, peruse the quaint shops, and find refreshment at one of the many taverns.
- Dinner and overnight before airport departure in morning.

June 13, 2026 - ATHENS/USA: Transfer to Athens airport for your return flight to the USA with your heart full of memories from spectacular views and unforgettable experiences.

NOTE: Schedule is subject to change due to various factors and the SLU's discretion.

Travel/ Flight Questions

Is it possible to book my own flight?

Yes, but it is your responsibility to meet up with the group on June 4, 2026. If you have flight delays or are unable to meet the group at the scheduled time, travel arrangements and costs associated with meeting up with the group will be your responsibility. You will be sent a contact number one month before the trip in case you need to reach someone while traveling.

Do you have any flying tips for SLU 401?

- If your flight is delayed, or if you have an emergency on the travel date, you can contact our SLU 401 launch team at your designated airport or our Orlando office at (888) 260-2900. You will be emailed your airport contact person's information one month before the trip.
- For sleeping on the flight, try Dramamine, Advil or Tylenol PM, or Benadryl with your doctor's permission.
- Make sure you eat the meal provided by the airlines before you land.

What about possible travel security issues?

Remember that SLU doesn't send your child on these trips; we *take* your child. We would never risk your child's safety or our own. We actively watch for updates from the government on security issues or concerns. We are prepared to adjust the schedule as needed. Also, all travelers should consider registering at <https://step.state.gov/step/> through the US Department of State as it allows them to better assist you should an emergency arise either at home or abroad.

Dress Code, Packing Tips, and Money

What type/amount of luggage should I bring?

Bring ONE piece of checked luggage. Although the airline allows two, we don't have room on the bus for more than one per person. Also in hindsight, many participants wished they had packed a size up on their suitcase, so they had more room for souvenirs. In addition to your large suitcase, you can bring one carry-on / backpack as you will need this for traveling on the bus each day. Pack any medications, toiletries, and a change of clothes in your carry-on in case your luggage arrives later than you do. Go to www.tsa.gov for up-to-date information as this ruling is subject to change.

Why is there a dress code at SLU?

SLU strives to set students up in such a way that they will have the confidence and wisdom to walk into any room whether now or in their future and be prepared for whatever is before them. We believe that how you present yourself is a vital part of that. The dress code is not meant to put a negative light on the students' experience, but to help train each one of them on the importance of dressing modestly and appropriately for whatever situation they are about to walk into.

What is the dress code for 401?

- Usual SLU rules apply and this is your 4th year so you know by now how to yourself up for success.
- **Dress modestly** – you will be required to wear pants on the day we visit the Meteora Monastery, but outside of that shirts and shorts set you up well for this trip. We will be walking around outside in the sun most of the trip as we dive into Scripture and history so it is simple – wear something that you can do a lot of walking in.
- T-shirts that do not have slogans are great (you never know how your logo or slogan will be interpreted internationally, so it is best for it to have no writing on it at all). **Shirts need sleeves** and to fully cover the front and back of your body.
- Shorts and dresses need to be of modest length.
- **No flip flops or sandals without a back strap** are permitted during SLU 401. There will be LOTS of walking every day in a variety of conditions (climbing over rocks, dusty roads, etc.), so think about the shoes you bring. We recommend a good pair of tennis shoes or hiking sandals with a back strap (like Teva's or Chaco's...but if you get those make sure you break them in before the trip).
- There will be a pool on the cruise ship that you can enjoy as our schedule allows. Ladies, please pack a modest one-piece bathing suit.
- Pack light! Think in terms of two tops for one bottom. Only take items you truly need. Too much stuff can be a burden on your trip. Pick out what you think you need and cut it in half.
- One night on the cruise we will have an opportunity to dress up for the captain's dinner. Think cruise ship fancy casual. So sun dresses or casual pants and a nice short-sleeved shirt. It is optional to dress it – just a fun option.
- **Those who do not adhere to the dress code will miss out at certain sites as these are the site's rules, not SLU's.**

General Packing Tips:

- Tips from SLU Staffers on what they pack:
 - **Guys:** I generally just get away with packing a mix of shorts and hiking pants for the trip. It is hot, so I make sure everything is breathable. I pack one pair of hiking sandals or tennis shoes. The site that requires everyone to wear pants was in the middle of the day so I packed hiking pants that zip from shorts to pants for that day. One year, I made the mistake of just packing shorts, and I missed out on some great opportunities because of it. Finally, a good hiking hat that covers the back of the neck is a must.
 - **Ladies:** I made it through the trip with packing all calf-length capris and shorts, modest short-sleeved tops, one very cool hiking hat ☺, and one good pair of Chaco's. Then, I also pack one ankle-length skirt (or pants are good too) for the site that did not allow shorts. Plus while the cruise does not require you to dress up, I had one summer sundress in case I wanted to have something for dinner just for fun.

- You may want to pack one or two extra outfits for dinner on days we have time to freshen up and be aware that some of the dining rooms on the cruise ship won't allow you in shorts.
- Roll your clothes rather than folding them. Many travel experts agree that rolling is superior to folding. Tightly rolled clothes take up less space and are less likely to wrinkle.
- Put a dryer sheet or two in your suitcase. Not only are they very light, they will also keep your clothes smelling fresh.
- It will be hot, hot, and did we say, hot? Hats are a good idea; sunglasses and sunscreen are essential!
- As always, if you are in doubt, don't bring it! You don't want to miss an important occasion or site because of your dress.
- Essentials that **you must pack for the trip:** **sunscreen, a good hat** (have you noticed we mentioned this a couple times), **sunglasses, your Bible** and **pen** – you will be taking lots of notes!
- Small snacks that fit in your bags are great: peanut butter crackers, almonds, and energy bars are really helpful between meals.
- A good book or games for the bus; we have a couple days we are driving quite a bit.
- The rolls of travel toilet paper can be a lifesaver or just a roll from your house half full (not too big to carry with you). Bathrooms don't always have toilet paper, so always make sure you have toilet paper and hand sanitizer in your bag.
- Pack your sense of adventure! Trying new food, having new experiences, and meeting new friends in Greece is half the fun!

What about changing money, and how much money do we need to bring?

- Money for water is essential – bring at least 120 Euros for drinks, souvenirs, and emergencies. Bottles of water can be purchased on the buses each day for \$1 or 50 cents Euro and our staff usually go through 6-8 bottles a day.
- While credit cards are accepted in most places, some of our shopping will take place at special local venues and booths where you may feel more comfortable using cash instead of credit cards. Also special spending accounts like **Till** are great as they don't charge you foreign transaction fees.
- The currency is the Euro. Money can be changed at your US departure airport (if you have time) at the currency exchange or sometimes at your local bank in the US. It is important to bring some of your money in small bills. You will not get a good deal if people see larger currency.
- You will need Euro coins to use some public bathrooms.

Would you use a debit card overseas?

Typically, our staff does not do this since sometimes banks put a hold on the money in your bank account for a couple of days. Even though some debit cards can be used as a credit card, our staff choose to use "credit card only" cards and only used those for some serious souvenir shopping. Before your departure, be sure to alert your credit card company that you will be using your card overseas. For others, you may choose to bring your debit card to get cash out of the ATM on the trip. Our staff gets cash prior to departure.

Outside of my registration fee, what other expenses should I plan for on this trip?

- **Flight:** If you select one of the designated flight paths provided by SLU (includes specific domestic departure cities), your roundtrip international airfare is included in your registration. However, it is your responsibility to arrange transportation to and from this domestic departure city.
- SLU participants will need to contribute a **tip** for our drivers, hotels, restaurants, and guides. All participants should bring an additional **\$80 in cash** for this. Please bring this in US currency and have this ready to be collected upon arrival the first night at the SLU meeting.
- Some **bathroom facilities charge for use**, so you will need some **1 Euros** or change for this as the need arises.
- If you choose to have lunch not on the cruise ship but rather eat while on excursion, then you will be responsible for the cost of your lunch. We encourage attendees to **plan for 2 to 4 lunches** at their expense.

General Questions

Do I need to bring a medical release form?

- **Groups:** Group leaders must bring a medical release form for any minors attending without a parent/ guardian and always keep them with you during the program. Medical Release forms must empower your group leader (not SLU) to authorize medical treatment for the students you are bringing to the program.
- **Singles:** Any student attending without a chaperone must complete the SLU Medical Release Form during the online registration process.

Is there an emergency contact?

You may contact SLU at 407-248-0300, ext. 20, and a staff member will get the message to us as quickly as possible. We are constantly on the move at 401, and it is difficult to know whether we will have phone service at any given time. You may also leave a message at any of the hotels as shown on the itinerary, and they will contact us in our room or leave a message.

How do you deal with discipline issues?

We are a premier leadership training organization, and we do not babysit. We operate on an honor system. Roommates are to hold each other accountable. Our standard rule is that a breach of conduct results in an immediate phone call to the parent and the student being sent home on the next available flight **at the expense of the parent**. Remember as you are traveling that you represent someone – your group, your family, your country, our Savior. Don't play into the typical tourist stereotype. Make sure you use wisdom in how you carry yourself and set an example.

Are dietary restrictions or food allergies able to be met on 401?

- If you have special dietary restrictions or food allergies, they must be submitted to SLU at the time of registration. Please note, that many meals are served buffet style while traveling internationally. If you have severe allergies

where you cannot eat off a buffet, please contact SLU staff before registering so that we can discuss what options may be available for you.

- If something comes up after registration, you can update your registration information up to February 27, 2026 deadline by [clicking here](#). Please be sure to offer specifics on what you cannot eat and what can be substituted.
- We will make every effort to accommodate, but there may be certain times when this is not possible. We strongly recommend that you bring prepared foods or snacks with you that are compliant with your dietary needs since not all dietary restrictions can be accommodated while traveling internationally.

What if I have special medical needs?

SLU is not equipped to provide medical assistance such as injections, etc. Please send a detailed explanation by email to nikki@slulead.com of your medical condition and needs so that we can assess whether we can assist you. **It is the responsibility of the individuals to contact SLU prior to registration concerning any specific medical issues.** Always pack a backup of medications in case one is lost and bring the names of your prescriptions, and the doctor's contact information.

Do I need shots or vaccinations?

Typically, you do not need specific vaccinations. However, a Tetanus shot within the last five years is highly recommended.

Do I need to bring any medications?

If you are taking prescription or over-the-counter medications, be sure to pack enough to last your entire trip, as well as a little extra in the event of unexpected delays. Carry each medication in its original container with the label and pack it in your carry-on bag. Traveler's diarrhea and/or upset stomach are the most common conditions for travels. It is recommended to bring Imodium AD and/or chewable Pepto Bismol tablets.

What should I be doing right now to prepare for the trip?

We will send you a "pre-trip" briefing one month before departure, but here is a sneak peek of some things you can be doing in advance to prepare for this great adventure:

- Be prepared! Spiritually, focus on the Great Commandment and pray for a deep love for our Lord and the ability to express who He is.
- Check out our [recommended reading list](#).
- As we will literally be walking through Scripture during the trip, read the book of Acts to focus on the Journeys of Paul (specifically Acts 13-20), the 12 books of History in the Old Testament (Joshua – Esther) and the 4 Gospels in the New Testament (Matthew – John).

What can I expect from SLU prior to the trip?

Approximately two weeks before the trip, you will get the following information via email from us:

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- Electronic copy of the SLU 401 Syllabus (you will receive the printed copy once you arrive at SLU 401), updated schedule and travel tips.
- Bus assignment and who will be your SLU staff member onsite for the trip.

You will receive in the mail from our tour partners Signature Tours:

- E Ticket Copy, Schedule, and Hotels
- Name Tag, Luggage Tag, Convertor, and some travel goodies.

SLU 401 Packing Suggestions Check List

Since this conference packet is full of suggestions on what you need at SLU 401, here is a summary list, so you have everything in one place. Make sure you read the entire conference packet, so you don't miss any details.

THE ESSENTIALS:

- Your sense of adventure and flexible attitude
- Suitcase (bring a larger one if you plan on getting a lot of souvenirs)
- Small bag to carry things on the bus with you that can also be comfortable to wear while out in the hot sun to hold water and snacks.
- Passport and Xerox copy of your passport
- Casual clothes that follow dress guidelines – keep it comfortable and simple
- Modest one-piece bathing suit for ladies
- Good shoes you can walk/ hike in (make sure you break these shoes in before the trip). Also, you want to make sure your shoes have a good grip on the bottom for walking.
- Bible (We suggest a Bible with room for notes and not a small travel bible. You will want to mark in your Bible the day we are at certain places in Scripture. It is really cool to look back on this.)
- Pen/ highlighters
- Sunscreen and toiletries
- \$80 tip money in US currency to give to SLU staff upon arrival for drivers and guides
- Bathing suit- there is a pool on the cruise ship
- Sunglasses and good sun/ hiking hat that covers your neck
- Rain Jacket – We will tour rain or shine so be prepared
- Power Adapter – this will be sent to you in your preconference packet from our partners
- Euros – US Dollars are not widely accepted in Greece
- All Medicines (including copies of prescriptions), plus it is also a good idea to pack a small medical kit with items like band-aids, sleep aids for the plane, and medicine for headaches or nausea (Imodium).

SUGGESTIONS TO SET YOU UP FOR SUCCESS:

- Phone/ camera to take pictures
- Extra charger/ battery pack for phone to use during the day
- Travel alarm clock/ watch
- Journal
- Spending Money
- Lots of snacks
- Rolls of travel toilet paper/ tissues/ hand sanitizer
- Good book or games for the bus rides
- Optional: ear buds to use with the guides instead of having to use the headphones provided (needs to be the old plug-ins - not new iPhone plugs)
- Plastic bags for wet or dirty clothes

EXTRAS:

What some past participants really liked having with them, but we admit it is not for everyone.

- Water bottle carrier
- Neck pillow for plane
- Cooling neck towels (especially for hotter days)

WHAT TO KNOW:

- Have a good attitude!** Don't let the little things bother you. Remember what you learned at SLU 101 "Blessed are the flexible because they won't be bent out of shape."
- Airline seats** are assigned at check-in for group tickets.
- TSA pre-check** numbers and **frequent flyer** numbers can only be added at check-in.
- Get to know your guides.** They will be your best friend during the tour.

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- Dress modestly**, covering legs and shoulders on days when visiting religious sites. Your guide will tell you when this is needed.
- Don't be late!** The bus or cruise ship will leave without you.
- Stay with the group!** Never wander off by yourself.
- Always wear your **name badge**. Your name badge is your ticket to get into the sites & restaurants.
- Put the **luggage tags** on your luggage. These are color-coded with your name badge and your bus.
- Make sure **your name** is on your suitcase.
- Credit cards** (Visa & MC) are widely accepted, so let your credit card company know you will be in Greece and Turkey.
- ATMs** are readily available to withdraw Euros.
- Many of the tourist **restrooms** charge €1 to use.
- Only do your **shopping** at approved locations.
- Drink lots of water!** Bottled water is available on the bus for purchase.
- Dress in layers.** There will be warm days and cool nights.
- Hair dryers** are provided in your hotel room.
- Pack some **clothes** and all **medications** in your carry-on backpack in case of lost or delayed luggage.

ON THE CRUISE:

- Drinks are **included** during all meals on the cruise.
- Group **shore excursions** to Ephesus, Patmos, and Santorini are included with your cruise.
- Wi-Fi** is available for purchase on the cruise.
- There is an **ATM** on the ship to withdraw Euros.
- Always wear your **name badges** when departing the ship and on shore excursions.
- Utilize the **laundry service** on the cruise ship and pack fewer clothes.

WEATHER IN GREECE

- [Click here](#) for the weather forecast for Thessaloniki, Greece
- [Click here](#) for the weather forecast for Ephesus, Turkey
- [Click here](#) for the weather forecast for Athens, Greece

BE SMART WITH YOUR SMARTPHONE:

- Phone camera** - Make sure you have enough storage on your phone for all your photos.
- Have your favorite **Bible App** on your phone.
- Use **WhatsApp** - It's the best free app to use for international texting and talking.
- Wi-Fi** is available at the hotel. Bring a portable battery to keep your phone charged.
- Keep your phone in **Airplane Mode** unless you purchase an international plan through your carrier.
- Keep photos** of your passport, travel insurance, and other travel documents on your phone.
- Remember the **time difference** when calling or texting home. Greece is several hours ahead of USA time.