

## 2013 CIM Brazil Missions Trip Reflections

Before we left for Brazil on the trip, the main thing that worried me was my age, and how people might not take me seriously or respect me because of it. However, I can't change my age, so the only solution is to work around it by being mature and not letting it bother me. I feel that one of my main goals for this missions trip was to grow mentally as well as physically. I've also been a rather immature kid, and I felt that this trip would help me become more of a young adult than a child.

During the trip, I think all of our groups' organizational skills were put to the test, as well as our time management and patience. To be honest, the first week's camp members were not good listeners, especially during the sermons and testimonies. I feel that this really tested our patience because we really wanted the kids to actually pay attention to the speakers who spent a lot of time preparing for what they had to say. The kids also didn't sleep very well and kept waking us up. This problem gradually ceased over the course of the week, which was good. Also, Mrs. Pi's decision to let us sleep through an afternoon was greatly appreciated, as we were all almost falling asleep during sermons.

On the last day of the Youth Camp, after our skits, I heard group members talking about weird spiritual things happening, which actually really scared me. I never thought that evil spirits could actually make such a large impressions on people. This really forced me to put aside my more childlike nature and focus more on what's important in my life. I think a firsthand experience with something unearthly really unnerved me, but also was an important factor in my spiritual and mental growth.

Personally, the second week was much easier. The VBS camp was very fun, and I got to interact with a lot of kids. My only qualm is that I feel the kids were not quite old enough to actually understand what we were trying to share with them. The afternoon camp's kids were much better, and some of them attended our Youth Camp during the first week. I had a lot of fun there, but I felt that I could also speak to the kids about God, and they would be able to understand me. My small group's kids were sometimes a bit too talkative, but they also had really deep conversations and good questions for Josh, Joseph, and me. Also, Josh lost his voice halfway through the camp so I ended up having to teach some of his class.

Now that I'm back at home, I have multiple emotions about the trip and its aftermath. I'm really happy and grateful that I could go on this trip with my friends and share God's word to people. Sometimes the living conditions weren't that good, but they were all bearable and I had a great time there. I feel that sometimes I might get angry at my friends for worrying over trivial things. The trip really put things into perspective for me, and I'm worried that I won't be as caring to people that worry about simple things that don't even really matter. Other than that, I think the trip definitely helped me grow closer to God, and also made me a more mature person.

And now my apologizes for not following any kind of writing format and wandering around in my thoughts without sequence or order. Something that really struck me was the sub-par lifestyle of the

children attending our camps. Their lives were really terrible, but somehow they were happy with the things they had. That really put things into perspective for me, because in the United States people worry so much over trivial things, which is something I've gotten used to. I feel that now I'm not going to be quite so attached to random things in my life that don't really mean anything in the long-term.

Also, I'm glad that this year I was more involved with the planning of the camps, as well as actually participating during them. Last year, I was kind of just there to help out wherever I could. This year, I was an actual small group leader with Josh, and I taught the class for some of the time. I feel that this gave me more experience as a leader, as well as more sympathy for group leaders, because it is not easy. Because of this, I think I feel more encouraged to step up and assume roles of greater responsibility in my everyday life.