

Brazil Missions 2013 Reflection Lisa Yao

Synopsis:

I took part in a 3 week trip to Brazil to outreach to kids who were children of Chinese immigrants that came to Brazil to open shops and make a better living. During the first week, I was part of a team that held a 5-day overnight camp at a rural retreat facility near Sao Paulo. I helped to lead small groups, skits, songs, games, workshops, and gave a short message. During the second week, we held a VBS for kids ages 4-12 in the morning and an English camp for teens in the afternoon. After these camps, our team toured Rio de Janeiro, Iguazu Falls, Sao Paulo, and the Amazon.

First, I am going to focus on the things I am thankful for on this trip.

- The generosity of those who hosted us in Brazil. Including:
 - The hotel keeper at Banri for giving each of us 300 R\$, being extremely hospitable during our stay, treating us to Brazilian candies, and making sure we were totally comfortable.
- Parents on this trip who were constantly watching out for our every need. During the second week - asking how we are, praying for us, getting breakfast ready, helping us find supplies and needs
- Chinese-speaking adults team members for helping us lead small groups during both weeks, translate, and communicate with the youth.
- Youth team for supporting each other collaborating and effective work with a shared vision
- Happy Teens/Kids for being extremely generous with facilities, materials and preparation. They were always ready to meet any needs that we had.
- Su Yuan who helped us translate, supported us, and is going to be a point of contact for the youth going forward
- John (son of pastor Chuang) for being a great host, taking us out into the city, and giving us a better sense of what Sao Paulo is like from a local perspective.
- Melissa for the Sao Paulo tour
- General welcoming and friendly attitude of the people at all the churches we visited, the medical clinic, etc. They didn't treat us as imposing strangers at all but rather went out of their way to make us feel part of their community.
- God's grace in keeping us healthy (no serious illnesses) and safe on this trip. No one really got food poisoning during the two camps and we got nothing stolen. Both of these things are usually high risk in Brazil.
- God's grace in reaching out to the youth so that **many** came to know Him, and others got to know Him better.

Personal reflections

- I was challenged to give my testimony during the second week. I do not often give my testimony and it was a good exercise to get out of my comfort zone and practice telling about my faith to many people. This process helped me reflect about the challenges and foundations of my own faith which I think was valuable.
- Through listening to others' testimonies, I really got a stronger sense of how God loves people and works to change their lives.

- My view of worship changed. During the second week, at Wan Guo church, I got a sense of what it means to really worship God rather than go through the motions of singing and listening to sermons. It is a waste of time to go through the motions - I want to focus more on worshipping from the heart **all** the time.
- Going into this trip, I was skeptical that I would be able to really understand and build relationships with the youth. During the trip, I was proved wrong because not only did I get to know the youth, I understood that though we may differ in personal and geographic background and even education, there are many human qualities that makes it possible for people from anywhere to relate.
- Teamwork was essential on this trip. Going in the trip, the only adults I had known were Esther and Stanley (and not TOO well), and I hadn't even known the entire youth team. We really came to rely on each others' skill sets and general support during the trip. The Chinese team were instrumental in communicating important ideas and values to the youth campers. I had trouble communicating complex messages and even praying in the group and Kasindy and Eunice helped a lot. They were always so willing to step in. The youth were great at understanding each other and working together since we are more alike in age and culture. We played to the strengths of our team. I've always heard from business articles and talks that "diverse teams are more effective" and I think this group exemplified this statement.
- From debrief meeting: I thought that it was really important for us to bring members of the team with different tangible talents and skills. I thought the workshops we held in the overnight youth camp (crafts, dance, health, beauty, instruments) were a great opportunity to lift the morale and build relationships with the kids. When the morale is high and relationships are strong, people are much more receptive to what we have to share (and trust us more).
- It was eye opening to understand some of the life situations of the kids that we worked with. Although they are not financially well-off, I actually don't think they need a better quality of life. I think what they are missing is hope and love and values, and that is what we tried to deliver during the camps. Every country has a different standard of living and you can never be fully satisfied with material goods, but it really changes your life to have an underlying sense of hope and love, which comes from Christ and His community.
- The "questions" game, where in a circle one person throws and object to another group member and asks them a question which they have to answer honestly, was a turning point in our English camp small group. It was that game that got people to open up and share about their lives. It is important to note that the leaders set the standard by telling honest and substantial stories to the group FIRST before expecting the campers to answer in that way.
- *I also kept a journal that includes more extensive synopses and reflections of each day.