



KRISTI TENCLAY - Missionary in Cameroon

February 2018

Each year RFIS takes our high school students off-campus and out of town for a few days of 'retreat'. (This year that was Feb 6-9). It is a really special time of relationship building, spiritual growth, and a whole lot of fun. Instead of a regular newsletter, I thought I would write a sort of "Retreat Edition."

This year another teacher and I were the 'advance team' assigned to drive down the day before everyone else, get a few things set up, and make sure the venue was ready for us. Interestingly, most of the employees spoke only French, so despite the fact that we got everything done that needed to get done, the communication was a bit of an adventure. The bonus? We got to hang out in the pool for an extra evening, and look at this view!



As you can imagine one main focus of this retreat is spiritual growth. Each morning there is a 'quiet time' set apart for us all to spread out and spend some time alone with God. Time is also spent together in worship, listening to our speaker, and debriefing each session with our small groups. It is a tradition that

students who are not normally a part of our school worship team are invited to lead worship sessions through the retreat. Our speaker this year was from Michigan (but actually lived in Kansas at some point years ago too!). He connected with the kids (and staff) really well as he shared on the theme "The 'Greater Than' Kingdom." As we walked through the gospel of Matthew, we explored the reality that knowing the Sunday school answers isn't enough. . . that Kingdom living is about being a part of a bigger story that God has chosen to include us in. He presented Jesus' words in Matthew 16:24-28 that call us to 'deny [ourselves], take up [our] cross, and



(My Small group girls)

follow' as a part of a shift we must make each day from 'it's all about me and I am all I need' to 'Yes, God, I will obey.' Denying self isn't about asceticism or self-punishment, but about a fundamental re-orientation towards Christ, and obedience isn't about a bunch of rules, it is about surrender.

"God's kingdom advancing mission of relationships, redemption, and reconciliation is greater than immediate circumstances."

PRAISES and PRAYER REQUESTS

- Praise God for a great High School Retreat week, but pray with us that students will continue to grow as we return to 'normal' life.
- Please pray for more teachers! We have many needs for the coming years!
- Pray for persistence and energy in the dust and heat of dry season.
- Pray for me as I weigh out possibilities for this summer and how they fit with all the school things I will need to get done for next year, for example, if I should travel back for Triennial.

We always include a variety of 'classes' at retreat. Generally, these are only about an hour long, and they focus on something more 'fun' than what we might do in a normal school context. The big hit this year was 'survival.' Students were given instruction sheets on fishing and cleaning fish, starting a fire, and making a shelter and they had one hour to work together to make a shelter, boil water over a fire for 3 minutes, and catch, clean, cook, and eat 5 fish. (we were right next to a fish farm, so the fishing thing





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wasn't as hard as it sounds. . . though neither group managed to get their fish cooked in the time limit.) Some other 'classes' this year included fitness, origami, string art cards (I led this one), first aid, swimming, and hair braiding.

This year's retreat site had a pool, so I spent a large percentage of the students' "free time" standing guard. The pool's filter system didn't do such a great job keeping up with us all, but when the water was so cloudy we had to confine them to the shallow end during a couple of the night swims, the kids had a great attitude. Two of us even agreed to come up an hour early to open the pool for a morning swim from 6-7am the last few days!



(They may have liked the IDEA of a morning swim, but . . .)

"Your life is WAY bigger (greater) than you can comprehend and bigger than you . . . we are a part of a MUCH BIGGER STORY."



Another hit each year is the class competition. Each grade level competes in a variety of tasks that change every year. This year they had a canoe relay race, math challenge, and a variety of other relays and team challenges. This year the 11th grade won in a HUGE upset of a single point over the 12th

grade class who had won the previous two years!



"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me"
Matthew 16:24

Blessings to you all!
Kristi



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