

THE WOODS

P R A Y E R R E Q U E S T S

Please pray for the staff who have taken classes this summer to know how to use the things they've learned in their ministry.

Pray for our children (and us) to live out our identity as followers of Jesus and not get distracted by all that glitters around us.

JULY 6, 2022

TO GIVE A GIFT: GIVE.CRU.ORG/0495875

SUMMER OF CLASSES

One of Ben's main responsibilities now is organizing the theological classes our staff are required to take as part of their development and training as missionaries. They take place throughout the year and mostly online, but over the summer there is a large group of staff who gather at one location here in Orlando, FL (although online classes are an option as well). Ben organized the registration of these classes as well as lining up professors, teacher's aids, coaches and all of the logistics. Meeting the professors in person and hearing them teach was great for Ben after interacting so much over email in the past couple of months. (One of the professors is a girl I met on my first summer project in Traverse City, MI, as a student!) Ben even stayed on campus where the classes were held at Rollins College for a few weeks while he was coaching a class himself on Bible Study Methods. He has coached this class a few times now and always enjoys the opportunity to build into those specifically going overseas. The picture above is the group he coached this last month. They will be reporting to countries in Western Europe, the Middle East and East Asia. It was a blessing once again to see staff much more confident in handling the Word of God after taking this class.



PERSONAL UPDATE

It was hard having Ben gone for a few weeks while he was staying at Rollins College. I tried to keep the kids busy with their friends, but while still trying to work myself, it was a difficult balance. We were both exhausted after it all (and a few of us got COVID)! The kids school year ended well. Jonathan and Elliana will be moving on to Middle School and had a carnival to celebrate (*see Jonathan with a friend*). Noah's class ended the year with a wax museum tour where he played Alexander Graham Bell. And, as if we didn't have enough pets in our home, when Elliana learned that a neighbor was giving away their bearded dragon, she had to have him. So we have now welcomed Leo to the family!



Last week, one of the kids remarked that 'it's hard being from another country' because it's that much harder to go back and be there. A few days later, another one remembered how a teacher had been angry with them for getting questions wrong about American



geography that were so obviously easy. It was a good reminder that our kids still feel like outsiders here; and are giving a lot of energy to blend in and not 'get things wrong'. As I watch them struggle to find *home* and figure out their identity, I can't help but think of Paul's words reminding us that, as followers of Jesus, this world is not our home. Our citizenship is in heaven and we eagerly await our Savior to come from there - not from a belonging to something here on this earth or from creating a place that makes me feel safe. Knowing that doesn't keep us from feeling the pains of living as foreigners, but it does give us hope. May we all find strength and hope in our identity in Christ, *Ben & Mandi*