

More Retreat Reflections from HuiLing

(105 participants – including 3 babies)

More than a week has passed since the recent church retreat and even as I receive pictures and videos as a reminder of the short time spent there, I still smile to myself while pressing the play button. There were, however, a few major highlights for me at Pulau Springs and I shall recount them for the benefit of those who didn't manage to go.

There were really so many things to thank God for whilst we were there. Firstly, thank God that the passage through customs were smooth and we had no one stopping us though the youths' bags were filled with instant noodles and chips to the brim – I kid you not! Clearly as Singaporeans, we've got our priorities straight, food first, clothes later. But a huge shout out to Elayne, Diana and Zhen - the youths who helped buy the goodies for a starving kamping!

Once that was out of the way, we arrived at this really impressive resort boasting of so much greenery, thanks to the rolling golf fields. It was lovely to be able to get away from the city landscape to just enjoy another side of God's creation. It was amusing to also note, of course, that as soon as we reached our destination, a few of our youths started to go around looking for Wi-Fi and saying to each other "eh, you know what is the password anot uh?" (Some things just don't change.)



The girl youths were also extremely blessed to have a mini "house" to ourselves and, because of that, were able to host several late nights' worth of games playing together. Thank you, Uncle Young Kwang and team, for helping to make that happen! We brought our games from Singapore, and boy were we glad that we did so. God added to us 3 new youths; namely, Darren, Malcolm and Soon Wei. I was really heartened to see the P.U.L.S.E. guys trying to make an effort to talk to the newcomers and to try to make them feel at home.



I am also very thankful for the opportunity to get to know our younger youths like Diya and Kieran better, as they spent time with bonding with the older youths. Honestly, even though I am involved in P.U.L.S.E., I find myself wishing, more often than

not, that I get to spend more quality time with the youths individually than perpetually running from meetings to meetings within church. This was a good time of getting to know them better, and to actually find out more about their lives.

On the subject of time, I was also grateful that I got to catch up with my fellow peers from AAT during one of the nights when I went over to their place. So many times we get caught up with our own ministries in church and with our own lives that we seldom have the luxury of time to just chit chat and really get updated on each other's lives.

But I think the part that I am most thankful for was when we went around encouraging each other, and attempting to mend broken relationships on the advice of Rev Phillip Huan. I remember crying so hard (not that I wasn't already in the sessions before), but there was this sense of warmth that filled the room. Hugs were given, kind words were shared and all around we could all feel that the Holy Spirit was present. For those who came up to encourage me, thank you – your words meant so much to me. To those whom I didn't manage to catch and thank, my apologies; and I will try to get around doing that before we see each other in heaven (hopefully).

I think all in all, what I am truly thankful for is the idea of community. God really has blessed me by giving me an extended family in JCC and one has come to realise that even as the years pass, and people age, our hearts for each other always remain the same.



There is so much love between each other – when we see the adults indulging in the youth and appreciating their energy and expertise brought into the games portion of the retreat, or when we see the aunts and uncles caring about the small babies that were running about at the retreat and helping to take over child care duty so that the parents could enjoy the retreat as well... these small things count.

JCC may not be the most eloquent of all the churches, nor the most gifted, but I daresay we might be one of the most loving. I am glad that during this retreat, I got to witness and experience that all over again. As we all get chased to sign up for our annual “JCC Reunion” (as I like to term it), I urge all of us to look forward to this yearly treat of getting together as a church, and not further miss out on opportunities like these!

In His Love,
Hui Ling

<https://youtu.be/Ye0LmdnnVCK>