

The NIAS Experience Part 2

Patrick & Samantha's family with 2 boys (Kieran & Caleb)



1) Give Thanks

Thanks Pastor Michael and Ibu Sintha for opening the Home for us to visit. Thanks also to Derrick for the organization of the trip, lots of efforts. Appreciate Young Kwang for taking care of our stomachs. Most of all, give thanks to our Father in Heaven for giving us this opportunity to share His Love among His Children.

2) Eyes

Every child is unique, their eyes will tell you whether you are accepted or not. From their eye expression, they were eager in wanting to know us more, wanting to connect. And in their eyes, you find love.

3) Independent

We see the Home bring up the kids to be independent, as young as 4 years old. I remembered Sam and I were talking, if we ran the Home our way, we are doomed. We learned the importance of trusting in God and relying on His strength for this parenting journey.

4) Joy

- With less, the children are still happy.
- Despite their painful past/childhood, but because of Jesus Christ, our Lord, these children are now new persons, totally healed from the hurts. From their lives, we can see the fruit of the Holy Spirit, e.g. Love, Joy, Peace. We witnessed the Grace of God and the power of God

through their life as God can heal any wounds in the heart. Praise be to God.

5) Affirmation to JCC Children

a) We are keenly aware that it took a lot for our city dwelling children to adjust to Nias, and we are delighted to see that all our children didn't complain and they adjusted quite well. They played and connected with the children in the Home even on the first day. Soon, they were just like the children in the Home, enjoying the nature, and playing together.

b) We are very encouraged by our children's perseverance to want to do their best for the puppet show and working with one another as a team. From the preparation to the actual performance, they had practiced many times and kept improving themselves. In fact, they shone on the day of the performance. Bravo to them for their willingness and perseverance.

We learnt that every one of us can serve God in one way or another, big and small, young and old.

6) Love

Some personal sharing, I recall before the trip, I was asked by my kids, why we needed to go to Nias since the kids there are already believers and there is no need to evangelize? I remembered my answer to them was to share God's love with them and let them know there are people outside Nias who cared about them. Ps Michael shared with me that the children from the Home asked him, why these people from the city want to come and see them? "Love" was the answer given to the kids by Ps Michael. During the trip, we put away our differences and just spent time playing and doing activities together. We would say we built a bond with one another, in the Love of Christ, as the kids were crying on the farewell night. We felt loved by the kids, especially when

some kids gave us personal cards and messages. In my heart, this is mission accomplished.

7) Encourage one another

We understood what it meant to "deny yourself and carry your cross" from the life of Ps Michael and Ibu Sintha. We are encouraged and inspired by them through their testimony of how God led them all these years. We give thanks and praise God for all these. Although God called each one of us on different path, all we need is to trust and obey. I'm grateful to hear Ibu Sintha sharing our visitation to them also spurs them on. These words dawned on us that we should always be supportive and encourage those that are in the mission field, as it can be really lonely and tough. This trip definitely widens our perspective and teaches us to be more caring to people outside of our social circle. Through the conversation with Ps Michael and Ibu Sintha, we realized there are constant challenges in the Home, we just briefly mentioned a few here:

- 1) As the Home is still receiving children every now and then, there is still a need for sponsorship. And the Home is greatly affected by the global economic crisis. There were cases where sponsorship terminated when companies cut cost due to the economic downturn.
- 2) With the living condition at Nias, there is constant need to de-worm for the children and social workers every half yearly.
- 3) We are very impressed with the essential oil steam distillery and the goat pen, as well as the self-made fertilizer, etc. These are Ps Michael's effort in trying to be self-sustaining. Pig farming is one idea in the pipe line and it requires funding too.

The above challenges are just a glimpse of the whole picture. I like to bring awareness on how we can help and support this meaningful and impactful ministry for God's kingdom.

Reflections from Caleb (12 years old boy):

Day 1: when we arrived at Nias (TOMORROW HOPE) orphanage, I didn't expect much but I did not expect they used phones more properly than us, like not playing games on their phones. And they are more fit than us. Having a type of blood that mosquitoes there like, I was getting bitten all over by them. The toilets have ants in them and by the end of the trip ants and mosquitoes were my worst enemies ever!!!!!!!!!! I suffered from hives from the first day. But thank God I was totally well by day 2.

Day 2: the sleep was blissful and the food there was actually better than my expectation (thanks to Chef Young Kwang) and when we went to their church for our puppet show, I saw a lot of children and some of very young age. They are already doing God's work!

Day 3: we went for Christmas celebration at the Home, it was a long night but I saw that the children at the Home were so young and they worshiped God with all their hearts.

Day 4: it was the last day, a farewell night. I felt the children don't want us to leave, they prepared a special performance. We prayed for the children. I remember in the end, many children were crying. We distributed some gifts to them and comforted them. (I won't mention Day 5 because we went back early)

Reflection: I feel I am very lucky and fortunate because I live in a modern city where everything is conveniently available. The children in the Home don't have parents and live in poor living conditions. I learnt to be more appreciative of what I have and feel blessed that I have my parents with me.

And lastly, through this trip, I rediscover my love for origami again.