

## **Erica Cho's Reflections**

*What have you felt has been the main thing or main things that God has revealed to you during your time in Korea?*

God really convicted me of how important prayer is and the power of prayer. I came to realize how useless and hopeless my service was without prayer. And the biggest way of loving the kids, dorm mothers, and the director was through prayer. And throughout the 2 months as my prayers became more sincere and as I cried out for them, God revealed His power and works through the prayers. And through realizing this, I began to know and see that even though I'm here serving at this home, it was ultimately only God who will work and who can change their hearts. I learned to surrender myself and to fully trust Him.

Also, God taught me more of having faith in Him. Throughout the 2 months, He was consistently testing me of my faith. Either from being sick all the time to kids rejections and hurtful words/actions. I was trying to rely on myself to solve the problems and I would feel hopeless; God would ask me if I trusted Him. Through His words, God revealed so much. He comforted me all the time through intimacy with Him; teaching me that without Him I cannot do anything. And that the only way I can overcome this weakness and struggles were with Him. I had to truly lean on Him for guidance. Once again, I learned to surrender myself and to fully trust Him.

*Please share or list some of the joys of your time here.*

- The joy of drawing closer to God! Coming to Korea, away from all my brothers and sisters in America to keep me accountable, I was worried and a bit frightened. But the first week I got to Korea God already knew my worries and comforted me with His love. He reassured me that He would hold my hands all the way through all my struggles and worries together with me. And to know the fact that God is always there no matter what, my passion for the Lord and my love for Him increased!
- Meeting Tina (my partner) It was such a blessing to have a partner to share every moment in the home and out and to encourage each other. Each QT time, as sister we grew closer and stronger.
- The joy of spending every moment with the kids from their ups and downs. Whether I am playing games with them or just sitting down watching TV together; every moment was a true blessing to pray for them and spend quality time with them!
- Displaying God's love to them. Giving them hugs and kisses every time I saw them. Even though they seem to hate it from the outside, they loved the warm embrace. This is what most of the kids lack and long for, and to share this love showed them that I really cared for them and was easier for them to open up.

- Buying the kids ice cream. Either from losing from a game with them to just randomly taking them out for ice cream; all the kids LOVED ice cream! Just brought joy to see them smile so big and getting excited to eat ice cream!

*Please share or list some of the difficulties of your time here.*

Firstly, it was hard getting to know all the dorm mothers and the directors at the home. Because most of them in the beginning were very cold and not very welcoming. I got hurt a lot when I first got in the home because their responses were so cold or they didn't respond at all. So, it was hard to open up to them. But I knew if I continued to feel this way, satan would take advantage of it and close my heart for them more and more. I knew they wouldn't open up first, so I had to take the actions and asked through many prayers for more love for them and for their hearts to open. As my prayers for them became consistent; I got to see the power of God moving through the prayers. The directors were smiling a lot more towards me and the kids, and the dorm mothers started cheerfully greeting me.

Secondly, constantly loving the kids. It was hard sometimes to love the kids all the times. I would get frustrated in class if they were really bad and not listening, or sometimes would be complaining about certain kids. I had to step out of the classroom for a minute or go to my room to pray for myself and to ask God for peace and joy in my heart and a deeper sense of love for them.

*How do you feel Jerusalem Ministry could better prepare or equip future summer volunteers?*

I guess a better understanding of the orphanages you are about to serve in. Just the basics, of how the orphanage runs, the kids time schedules, and a little about the staffs and dorm mothers. This would really prepare the volunteers of what to expect when they arrive to the orphanage. It was hard for my partner and I to fit in all the classes and play time for the kids, not knowing their schedules. It took a good two weeks to actually figure out their schedules.

Please share any extra comments, advice, or reflections you have for the ministry

I honestly thought that 2 months in the beginning was a long time, but actually being able to experience it was really short. I would have loved it if I could have spent more time at the home. And it would give the volunteers more time to get to know more of kids; especially having 85 kids at Sangrok. But other than that, I had a great time and learned a lot through this!! Thank you Jerusalem Ministry for this opportunity and Thank you God for opening the door for this experience.