

Dear family at Cannon Beach,

Thanking the Lord for another good night of sleep, maybe partly due to being tired out playing soccer with the local kids. I normally play soccer with our Mangyan students. But they are in their villages for the summer. About 10 days ago I went to our soccer field (just a few meters from our house and classroom) with our staff Sacio and Beno, and I saw a bunch of kids in the distance playing around throwing sticks. I raised up my soccer ball over my head in their direction and they came running towards me. Every afternoon since I've been teaching them how to play soccer. Then I thought I might as well have a Daily Vacation Bible School with them. The first day (Monday) around 10 of the kids showed up and every day since there have been around 10 – not necessarily the same kids – some oversleep during their afternoon siesta and yesterday there was a death in the family of a couple of the soccer kids who normally attend. They seem attentive for the most part to my sharing with them about Jesus and God and the Bible. Only one of them I think goes to church. Raquel helps with teaching them songs. I often sing off key. The kids are even worse than me. It's been challenging for Raquel getting them (and me) to sing in tune. I think these kids are related to the Titruds when it comes to music. :)

I've been going over a booklet I had sent to me from The Bible League (office in Manila). With cool pictures for kids, it talks about heaven being a beautiful place where there is no crying, then it mentions Jesus' amazing love for children, and about Jesus being the way, the truth and the life, and that no one can come to the Father except through Jesus - Juan 14:6. I had them memorize this the second day and every day we've repeated it. Then we talked about KASALANAN/sin and that all of us including Adam and Eve fault here, and that we need a way to get back to God since due to sin we can't go to God. Yesterday we talked about what Jesus did for us and then they all recited with me the sinners prayer. The other day they also memorized 1 Juan 1:7b – Ang dugo ni Hesu-Kristo, ang Kanyang Anak, ang naglinis nga ating mga kasalana." Today is the last day of DVBS. Pray that it will go well. Pray also that whatever seed we are planting will grow into maturity. I've already seen the fruit of our DVBS, since at the beginning the kids often were mean to each other, especially the bigger ones kind of pushing around the little ones on the soccer field and hitting the back of their heads when they goofed up kicking the ball. But now I don't see that. I even see them passing the ball to the little ones. It's been great seeing the huge difference in their behavior and even in their soccer skills. They never played soccer before and at first everyone just ran to the ball – just a chaos of kids around the ball and just kicking it and one another. They now know how to "kalat"/spread around and pass to one another and even have disciplined themselves to not go off sides (making sure at least one defender is between them and the goal) – that is, no cherry picking.

In a recent Revised Common Lectionary passage that I've been going over with the local pastors here, it read about Peter seeing his opportunity (after healing a crippled beggar and seeing tons of people rushing out in amazement to Solomon's Colonnade, where the man was holding tightly to Peter and John), and so Peter addressed the crowd sharing with them that it was not he and John that healed the person, but God through Jesus and that they needed to repent and accept Jesus as their Messiah. I thought of myself, sensing the opportunity to reach out to these little ones through soccer. Not that I always take advantage of opportunities, but I'm sure glad I did so this time. Again pray for these little ones. And pray for me that I'd have the energy to keep up with them. The older I get the more difficult it gets, energy wise.

Yours in His service for His little ones,
Kermit