

August 2019

Celebration Magazine

A publication celebrating what Jesus is doing at Clear Creek



“And isn’t that the focus of today’s age? To connect with people on a face to face basis amidst the rising distractions of technology and social media.”

from Step Up

Party Like God

God loves to party.

It's true. Thumb through the pages of Scripture and you'll see a celebrating God. Luke 10:21 describes Jesus as joy-full. Paul describes God in 1 Timothy 1:11 as blessed, which means happy. So, Paul is calling God a "happy God." And the prophet Zephaniah says that our God sings and "rejoices over us" (Zephaniah 3:17). Rejoice means to "dance, skip, and spin with joy." Ours is a joy-filled, happy, dancing and singing God.

God enjoys life and he wants us to enjoy it as well. Consider this...

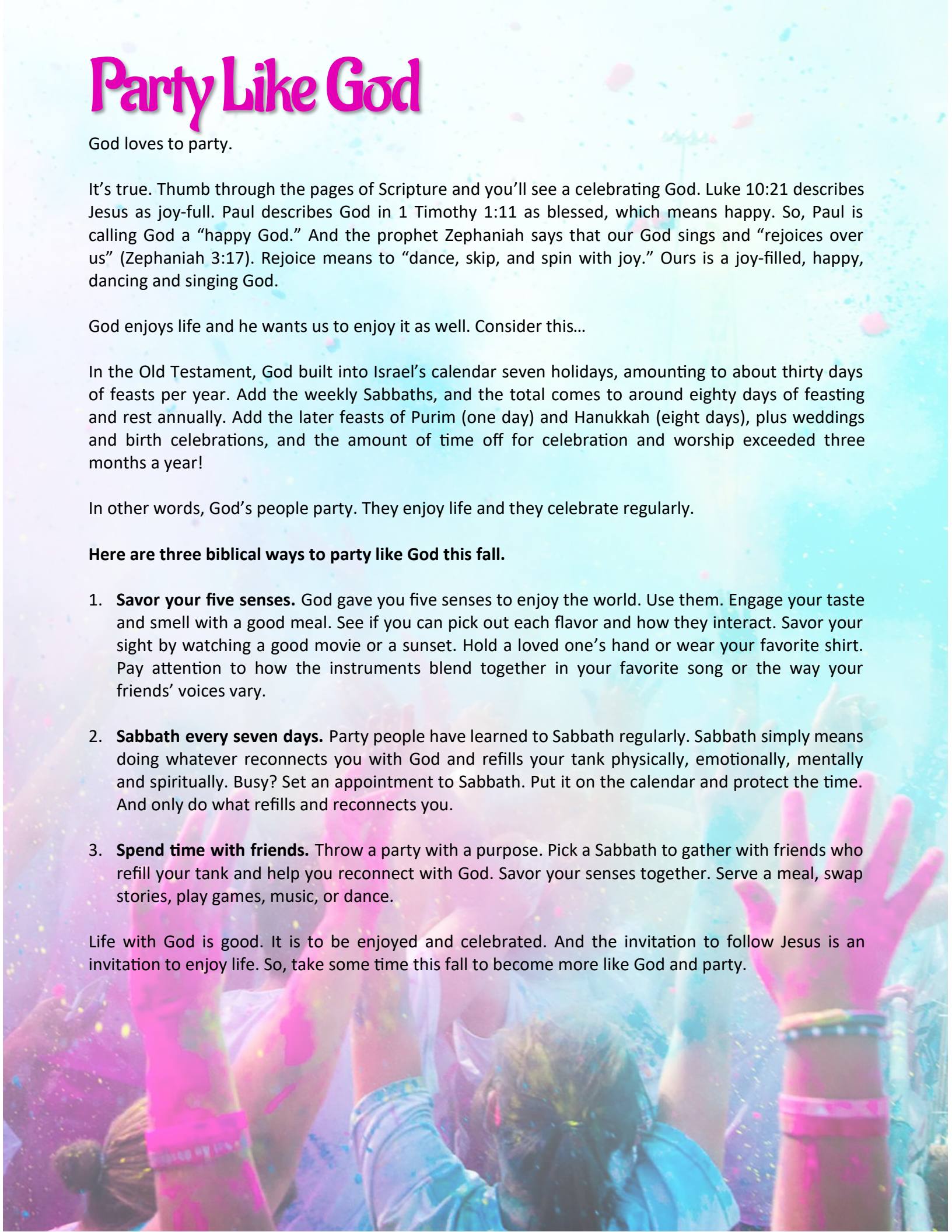
In the Old Testament, God built into Israel's calendar seven holidays, amounting to about thirty days of feasts per year. Add the weekly Sabbaths, and the total comes to around eighty days of feasting and rest annually. Add the later feasts of Purim (one day) and Hanukkah (eight days), plus weddings and birth celebrations, and the amount of time off for celebration and worship exceeded three months a year!

In other words, God's people party. They enjoy life and they celebrate regularly.

Here are three biblical ways to party like God this fall.

1. **Savor your five senses.** God gave you five senses to enjoy the world. Use them. Engage your taste and smell with a good meal. See if you can pick out each flavor and how they interact. Savor your sight by watching a good movie or a sunset. Hold a loved one's hand or wear your favorite shirt. Pay attention to how the instruments blend together in your favorite song or the way your friends' voices vary.
2. **Sabbath every seven days.** Party people have learned to Sabbath regularly. Sabbath simply means doing whatever reconnects you with God and refills your tank physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually. Busy? Set an appointment to Sabbath. Put it on the calendar and protect the time. And only do what refills and reconnects you.
3. **Spend time with friends.** Throw a party with a purpose. Pick a Sabbath to gather with friends who refill your tank and help you reconnect with God. Savor your senses together. Serve a meal, swap stories, play games, music, or dance.

Life with God is good. It is to be enjoyed and celebrated. And the invitation to follow Jesus is an invitation to enjoy life. So, take some time this fall to become more like God and party.



Send Out the Signal!

Not since the 1930's has there been a generation who, in some form or fashion, wasn't familiar with the adventures of billionaire bachelor Bruce Wayne and his quest to clean up Gotham City under the guise of the caped crusader. Few superheroes have gone through more reboots and evolutions than Batman, but through it all, one piece of the story has stood the test of time: the Bat Signal.

No matter what version of Batman is the "real" one in your mind, you will never see a version where Commissioner Gordon doesn't have access to the giant spotlight that served as his direct connection to the city's greatest crime fighter. When there was a need, simply flip the switch and rest assured that help was on the way. And isn't there something comforting about that? Knowing that you have someone who will reliably show up, time after time, whenever they are needed is something that resonates with everyone. At Clear Creek, we do our best to make this a reality for everyone we serve. We may not use capes or have insanely high-powered spot lights on top of our houses, but we do have a tool that is just as effective: our small groups.

Our groups have begun to master the art of reliably showing up, time after time, whenever someone in their group needs them. Most often, we see this during life's big moments be they happy or sad. Typically when someone in one of our young family small groups gets ready to welcome a new addition to the family, a baby shower and a schedule to take them meals after the birth is already planned before most people even know they are pregnant. We know stories from groups who, after the death of an elderly family member, have spent hours helping to clean out personal affects all while being a comforting presence for the group member



who experienced the loss. There are stories of long days and nights in the hospital waiting room and joyous anniversary celebrations. When big things happen, our small groups show up. And though it is such a blessing to have people show up for you when it is expected, sometimes the most meaningful times are when they show up to help with life's more subtle needs.

One of our small group leaders took someone in their group out to lunch to help them with their resume after they lost their job. We have had group members bring dinner to the family of a teacher during the first week of school just to make life a little less crazy. Groups will set calendar reminders so that they can begin praying for someone in their group the moment they walk into a job interview. We have seen them meal prep for those who have dietary restrictions, open their homes to one another when major house repairs have them displaced, and drop everything they are doing to help someone in their group get ready to put their house on the market. On top of that, there are countless stories of phone calls, text messages, notes, and e-mails that seem to always come "just at the right time." They reliably show up, time after time, whenever they are needed.

The Bat Signal is a fun piece of a fantasy story that many of us have grown to know and love, but what is most incredible is what it has come to represent. There is such comfort in knowing that with the metaphorical "flip of a switch," there is a group of real life superheroes ready to help you face whatever comes next.

Ready to Lead

Humans long to be a part of something, we crave a community and we want to be poured into. A youth group is one of the best places for teenagers to experience community, and this is obviously why ministers and parents pour into them so much. CCYM is no exception to this. With United being our summer theme, we've been able to practice community as a group and learn more about how to be a stronger community within the church. So many of these kids are growing up to be leaders and continue to find opportunities where they can lead in their own communities.

Sophie Hadfield is a great example of someone who is ready to lead and form community. On multiple occasions she's been asked to step up and lead a song or activity on the spot, and she does it with little hesitation. She has risen up to the task of leading for the middle schoolers and the youth group as a whole. This has been obvious throughout the events of this summer. Her energy is high and her spirit is ready to create opportunities for this group to see and experience Jesus. It is clear that Sophie uses her talents in a way that God can work through them so others can experience His joy and love. It is so special to see God's spirit working through someone, and when interacting with Sophie you can see Him. That is what we strive to be, people who show others Jesus. She pours into others so well and is so excited to be around people. It is encouraging to watch her allow Christ to work in her life and set an example for the community she is a part of!



High School Servant

I had the honor and privilege to travel with twenty-two of our high school kids to Salida, Colorado to participate in Wilderness Expeditions Trek on Mt. Arkansas. Throughout the week, I got to watch God pour into, and out of, these students in so many different ways that if I tried to tell all of them I would need a whole lot more time.

One of Clear Creek Youth Ministry's (CCYM) main motives is to be lights to the world and to exemplify Jesus in everything we do. As a group, we strive to be consistent in how we act, trying to make Jesus the focal point of our words, actions, and in turn, our lives. One person that truly exemplified everything that CCYM is all about over the week in Colorado was Luke Tucker.

There are different ways to reveal Jesus to others and bring people closer to God. I saw this in Luke through his acts of service to everyone around him as he put himself second to the group, and also by showing Jesus' unconditional love to everyone. Throughout the entire trip, Luke looked for every opportunity to serve, help and love others. Whether it was giving up a seat, washing dishes, carrying extra weight for someone who was struggling, or just being a verbal encourager to others, Luke was consistently there for the group. Luke poured his love into the group with constant words of support and affirmation, no matter how good or bad he was feeling.

I truly believe that through Luke, others around him saw Jesus more clearly and God was fully glorified through his actions.

Step up.

Own it. Unite. For some of the best and brightest of CCYM, that has been the focus of the summer: creating unity. When it comes down to the importance of community, one of the most common and most effective ways of cultivating future Christian leaders is through a community that undoubtedly only synthesizes during summers in the youth group, with so much continuous time spent together. I have had the distinct pleasure of being a part of this growth experience for a few kids as a youth intern, an experience that has been filled with Jesus.

Enter Houston Hicks. At first glance, you might catch him hustling up and down the basketball court in the gym with fellow CCYMers, throwing a football with friends as an up and coming stud quarterback, or even just goofing off with the dynamic group of middle school guys. But make no mistake, he is one of the youngest in the bunch. As a rising seventh grader, his time in CCYM has merely just begun, yet he is extremely keen on connecting with peers not only within his own grade, but of all ages within the middle school. And isn't that the focus of today's age? To connect with people on a face to face basis amidst the rising distractions of technology and social media.

It is clear that Hicks has a heart for the people around him. It is a God-given gift to be able to connect with kids of different ages, especially at a young age. As Hicks continues to mature, the seeds that have been planted in him by parents, mentors, and ministers alike will continue to sprout and his impact will continue to be felt by those around him. This, my friends, is discipleship.



restoring with confidence

Catrina Cabe is the new Restoration Developer with Clear Creek Church of Christ. It is her job to go out into the community and lead people to Jesus and make them into disciples. One of the ways she accomplishes this is by going into the jail every Monday to teach a class called Twelve Steps to Freedom. She uses the twelve steps of Alcoholics Anonymous along with biblical principles to lead women into Christ centered recovery. The twelfth step states, "Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps..." We try to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs. This final step screams discipleship. When we guide people through recovery with Jesus, servants are readily made.

Each week, Jackie Olson is faithful to volunteer in this endeavor. Even though she is not an alcoholic or an addict and has never been incarcerated, she is able to use her own experience with brokenness to relate to the inmates in our classroom. Watching her minister to these ladies with her knowledge and wisdom makes us want to be better people. Today we honor her as a true disciple of Jesus Christ.

Last Monday, Jackie recalled what it was like to enter into prison ministry while talking to the girls in class. She told them that she was scared to death to come into jail and teach. But she knew that God was calling her there so she was obedient to submit to His will. Before she knew it, she was teaching with confidence and so happy that she had answered God's call. We are grateful to Jackie Olson. All of us are!

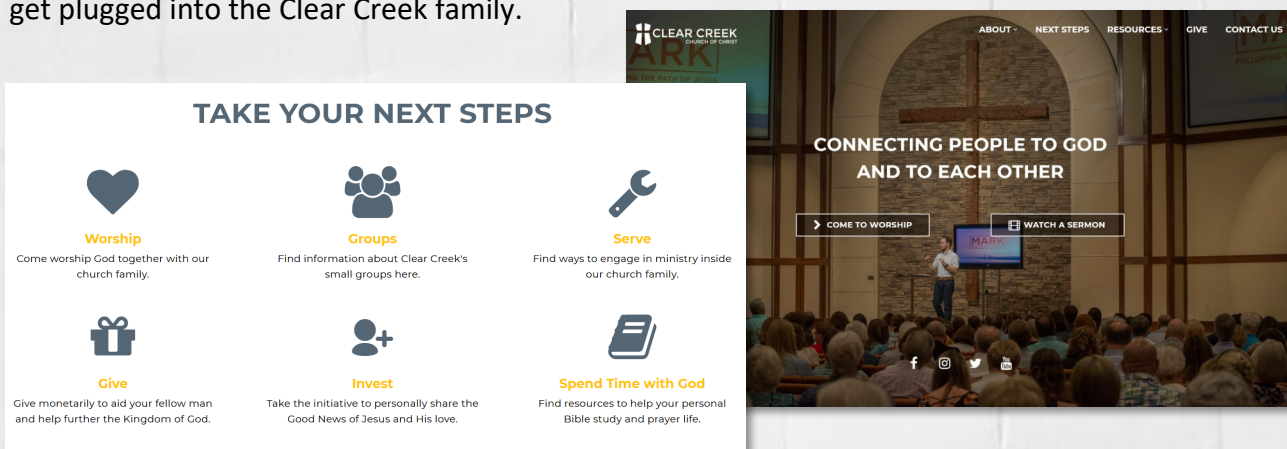


Can a website change your life?

In the coming days, Clear Creek will be rolling out a new version of our website designed to make it even easier for people to take their next step of discipleship. With so many different things going on at Clear Creek, we want to make sure our church family clearly understands our vision and has simple ways to join us in “Connecting People to God and to Each Other.” The focus is on providing clear, immediate ways to do things like:

- Worship at Clear Creek or online
- Join a small group
- Use one’s gifts to serve our church family
- Give financially
- Invest in discipling relationships in our community
- Be baptized, spend time with God and more.

First time guests will also find it easier to learn about our church, come visit us and quickly get plugged into the Clear Creek family.



Important resources like recent sermons, upcoming events, registration forms and daily news will still be available and hopefully more convenient than ever. The website will continue be found at www.clearcreekcoc.org

Man. Myth. Legend.

Bobby Golden: a widely loved and admired asset to Clear Creek Church of Christ.

This summer, he went along for the ride on our 4th teen mission trip to Haiti. During this week, the teenagers work together to host a summer camp for 200+ Haitian children. This is an opportunity for our students to step up and use their gifts to actively serve the Kingdom. Bobby G blew us away this week with his hard work ethic and desire to be involved with the group. From late nights playing games with the teens, to long hours in the hot sun rallying large groups of Haitian children... Bobby G was there for it all and did not hold back any part of himself for the sake of the mission. He was intentional about his interactions with the teenagers and positive about our many logistical setbacks. Our teens also loved the chance to spend time with him. Christ was evident in Bobby G's interactions with the Haitian children, but also with the teens on the trip.

Growing up at this church as a little girl, I always looked up to Bobby G. Everyone does. But working closely in ministry with him this summer and in Haiti, I've been able to glimpse the wisdom and perspective that he has been awarded from his many years of faithful service to our God. His character mirrors Jesus in every way. He is committed to this youth group. He loves fully and embraced each new experience on our trip with excitement and flexibility. Bobby G's quiet service to this youth group was seen on this trip to Haiti. It was a privilege to witness.



God Showed His Light

This June we took our fifth graders on a mission trip to Atlanta. We took them to a refugee day camp to play with kids who are less fortunate than we are. While we were there one of our students really stuck out. Gabriel Hodges was extremely involved in including everyone, not only did he include the kids at the camp he also made sure our entire group was involved. While some of the kids might have been focused more on the fun of the trip, Gabriel was focused on seeing Jesus through the trip. He displayed a great Christ-like attitude when everyone was tired from the long day. He was a great example of how Christ would encourage others.

On the second day of the trip we took the kids to Stone Mountain to climb the mountain and enjoy time as a group. Although the mountain was not very hard to climb for some, for others it was a bit of a challenge. One who stood out in this trying time was Chapman Mathis. She brought an attitude that many parents would be proud to hear their child was displaying on the trip. She encouraged everyone to keep going, and to finish strong. She was kind to others at all times even when others might not have been the kindest towards our group. Chapman was a strong presence in our group bringing nothing but positivity.

God showed his light through these two kids on this trip. These kids showed a great understanding of how God wants us to act. Both of these kids showed their love for God, and in their journals about the trip talked about how they were seeing him on the trip. God had a big impact on these kids which will continue to grow over time.