

Jennifer in North Macedonia

July 10, 2024



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Acting out the storm on Jonah's voyage to Tarshish – click to watch!



“Anything is a blessing which makes us pray.”

~ Charles Spurgeon

Can God hear our prayer if we are underwater? This is one of the questions I asked the children at our third annual children's camp as we delved into the life and story of Jonah. From June 19 to 22, twenty-seven children and fifteen adult volunteers attended the camp in Gevgelija, North Macedonia. This year was special because six of the volunteers were part of a Volunteers in Mission (VIM) team from the US. I am very thankful to the Raleigh Court UMC for sending us a team and for their tremendous contribution to the camp.

The theme for the camp was „Бог ги слуша оние кои Го повикуваат“ (“God hears those who cry out to Him”). We studied how God responded to the prayers of the sailors who took Jonah aboard on their ship, to Jonah's prayer as he was sinking in the sea, and to the prayers of the Assyrians living in Nineveh. Our camp verse came from Romans 10:13, “for, ‘Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’”

We started every morning outside with some calisthenics and a brief devotional before breakfast. After breakfast, we had our large group sessions where we sang songs, had our main lesson, practiced our Bible verse, and prayed together. Then we divided into our small groups where we further explored the Bible lesson for the day. We also had time for swimming, making crafts, and playing games. On the final evening, we had a campfire and continued our tradition of roasting marshmallows.



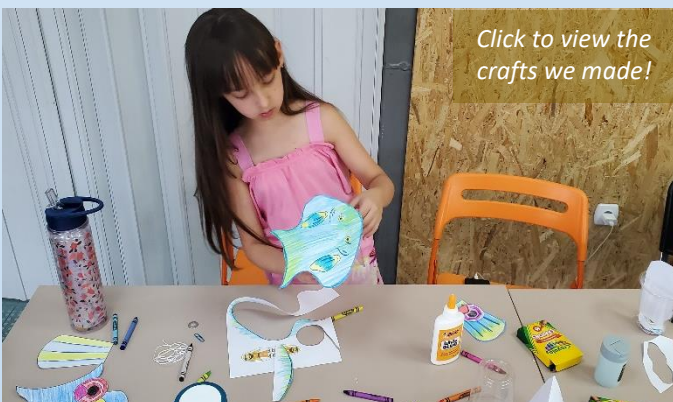
Swim time!



Click the photo above to watch the children enjoying one of our ocean-themed camp games!

On the first night, I asked the children if they knew what a prophet was and if they thought it would be a good job to have. We talked about the task God gave Jonah and how Jonah fled because he did not want to do it. The next morning, we discussed how the sailors who agreed to take Jonah to Tarshish got caught in a terrible storm and thought they were going to die. In our small groups, we acted out the storm and how nothing the sailors did worked to calm it until they finally called out to Jonah's God and threw Jonah overboard.

On the second day, we imagined what Jonah might have prayed as he was sinking in the water and decided that prayers can be as short as one word: "Help!!" We saw that God answered Jonah's underwater prayer and sent a fish to save him. In our small groups, we listed common places and situations in which we pray and then tried to come up with a place or situation in which God could not hear our prayer.



Click to view the crafts we made!

On the last day, we explored different ways people in the ancient world expressed sorrow and repentance. The children got to experience tearing clothes, wearing an itchy cloth (like sackcloth), fasting, and pouring ashes on their heads. We learned that when the Ninevites repented and cried out to God to save them from their own wickedness, God spared their city.

I prayed many prayers for "Help!" in the months and days leading up to the camp and God answered me by sending His best. I am extremely thankful for all the volunteers who came to invest in these children and make the camp a great success. So, if you are organizing a camp like me, being buffeted by a storm you did not cause like the sailors, drowning in a situation you did cause like Jonah, or have slipped into sin like the Ninevites, cry out to God. He will hear you. And He will save.

In Him,

Jennifer Moore

Marvelous Meals

Having a team of volunteers from the US meant that we could cook our own meals this year rather than ordering pre-packaged meals like we had done the previous two years. The meals were delicious, and we were able to save some money. But even more than that, the mealtimes took on an intimate, family-like atmosphere as the children got to practice asking politely for food to be passed to them.

Thank you, VIM team!

