

A Bible and a Bear Trap

March 2023



Having fun at camp

Camp is coming! If you were to peek in and see one of our meeting times with the 150 children 8-12 years of age who will attend camp in May you might see me with my worn-out Bible in one hand and my bear trap in the other. This is something that I love about camp. We have an opportunity to share God's word in engaging and creative ways with our kids from many rough Tijuana neighborhoods. And God's word is a powerful thing! The bear trap provides a strong visual representation of the dangers of sin, drug use, and other traps which pervade the tough streets at home. The Bible is the star of the show and the bear trap is a hook.

The kids tune in. Getting them out of their neighborhoods and into a fun-filled weekend with great food, games, and activities opens many ministry opportunities. Sharing the gospel is what I treasure the most. We are busy with preparations right now and it is an exciting time!

There are many reasons the children look forward to camp. They have nothing else like this in their life. Many of the children we serve come from very difficult situations at home. Poverty is the norm. It is no wonder that the food is one of the children's favorite parts. Just having access to quality meals blows their minds. For many of the kids, having milk or meat is an out-of-reach privilege of the rich. Camp is our opportunity to pamper them with food. Both what we do and who we serve are things that get me excited about camp. But the underlying truth that has kept us pursuing camp in our ministry is that camp just works. We see God producing fruit. Many make decisions for Christ at camp, and this keeps us coming back.

Camp costs us about 50 dollars per camper. This covers the whole cost and includes the transportation, meals, shirt, activities, and stay. We ask the kids to cover 50 pesos of that cost. That amounts to about \$2.50. We think it a good thing for the kids to pitch in, though their contribution is largely symbolic. We don't want cost to be a barrier. That leaves us with about \$47.50 left to cover for each camper. Your donations help us take kids to camp. We are very grateful for your generous support in this ministry! Please pray for us as we continue to prepare.



Sharing the gospel at camp



Speaking of camp ministry, we just finished a great week providing a four-day retreat for the youth locked up in the CEMI youth jail. Forty-one inmates attended. Seventeen made decisions for Christ. Seven were baptized. One of the young inmates told a staff member that after his mother's death when he was a child he lived like a dog on the streets. The first people to show him kindness were from the drug cartel. They put a weapon in his hands, and by the time he was 13 he had made his first kill for the cartel. He was one of the young men baptized on the final day of the retreat. Baptism is an early step.

The challenges ahead abound, and we pray for this young man to remain faithful.

Another young man talked of how he was locked up for kidnapping a pastor. He told us that he made the mistake of taking the gag off the pastor's mouth, expecting to hear a cry for help. Instead, the pastor told him that God created him for something better, and that he would pray for the young man if he got out! The boy pleaded with us to help him find this pastor. The boys locked up in CEMI are serving time for serious crimes. And yet God's light shines here! Pray for Carlos and Robin as they minister weekly in the jail. Pray for the young who made decisions for Christ. We see God producing fruit from this ministry.

I am encouraged by the support we receive from you. Thank you for standing with us as we reach out to the city of Tijuana. We know we are not alone. Even as we are surrounded by overwhelming needs, we minister with the hopeful expectation of how God will continue to work in the lives of the families in the communities we serve. All glory to Him!

For all of us at Spectrum Ministries,

Paul Alvarado
Spectrum Ministries Director

1 Corinthians 1:27-28 " Instead, God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. And he chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful. 28 God chose things despised by the world, things counted as nothing at all, and used them to bring to nothing what the world considers important."



Kid's love our competitions