

An Experience of Reconciliation Lived at Summer Camp
Catholic School of Evangelization
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Every camp gives us so many reasons to rejoice, and the 2018 summer camp season was no exception! Every camp, we get to see the Lord transforming the lives of hundreds of young people. This summer, though, we had a few more reasons to celebrate than usual!

First, we celebrated our 25th summer of camps. Twenty-five years of high-quality camp programming. Twenty-five years of young people bearing witness to others of the love, mercy, and freedom they have found in Jesus. Twenty-five years of transformations in the lives of so many young people.

Also, our 276 summer camp participants represented a whopping 26% increase in campership from our 2017 summer season! This reminds us of the importance of our work. Although society is changing at an alarming pace, Catholic camp ministry remains – and may be now more than ever – an invaluable experience for each young person.

A portion of that increase was twenty-seven campers from Sagkeeng First Nation. Last year, the Lord led us to Fr. Augustine Ezediniru, Pastor serving the Parish of St. Alexander. Fr. Augustine dreamt of offering the young people in his community a Catholic summer experience. We committed to doing everything we could to bring his dream to reality.



According to Fr. Augustine: “It was a really awesome experience for them. When they came back home, they were so full of energy and excitement. They really enjoyed the program,” he continued. “They talked about all the friendships they created and all the games

they played with people from other communities. They made so many friends!”

He shared that since returning from camps, many young people in his community have started to pray at home: “What you taught them was so very good. This was a renewal of their baptism, an enlightenment in their faith.”

Camp is a warm, welcoming and inclusive place for every child, which means our groups become a mosaic of young people coming from diverse cultural and social backgrounds. Fr. Augustine shared with us that the campers from his community “were able to make friends without any prejudice. They belonged.” For him, this was “a sign of growth. We may not yet fully understand what the word ‘reconciliation’ means, but at camp, these young people experienced it. They created relationships and they built a bridge.”

According to Fr. Augustine, they “want to come back to winter camps! They want to re-experience what they were given during their summer camp: the friendship and prayer and the coming together. That experience meant a lot for them.”

He also wanted to be sure to “express gratitude to those who donated to make this possible.” Having heard of the financial need, one of our supporters contacted a number of her friends and raised enough money to pay for this group’s transportation to camp. She even had enough left over to pay for a couple kids’ registrations. We really do have the best supporters!





As with every camp, we concluded this week with Mass, which Fr. Augustine celebrated. He felt edified and inspired by his experience: “I saw my parishioners coming to read, holding hands with other kids, singing the camp theme song. I was so very delighted.” He was pleased to see that these kids “returned home feeling spiritually fed and physically taken care of,” a quality, which according to Fr. Augustine, “really makes this camp different. They were able to nourish both body and soul.”