

## Day 7

**Alicia:** Today, we visited (or that was the goal, at least) the Mayan Ruins called Iximche (Ishim-che). We woke up early to have breakfast at 6:30 so that we could leave by 7:15. We first picked up our field director, Abby, then proceeded on the 3+ hour ride. We stopped in Antigua to pick up an intern, then decided to stay for a few minutes to shop around for gifts and souvenirs, always an interesting experience bartering especially because it's not in US dollars. I probably got ripped off a few times because I feel bad whenever I barter :P After shopping, we drove another hour to eat at a beautiful restaurant on the side of a mountain. Finally, we made it to Iximche in time for a tour. The tour guide was a native K'iche' speaker but was also fluent in Spanish, and luckily, was very good at English. We learned a lot about old rituals or customs and their strategic architecture. We only had about an hour there before we had to ride home for another 3+ hours. After a dinner of homemade pizza and ice cream(!!!) and the delivery of freshly washed clothes(!!!!!!!!!!!!!!), we are now having a team planning meeting for this week's work and devotions. I'm excited to meet new kids, though I already miss all the beautiful kids I had the pleasure of being with last week. Here are a few things I have learned in the past week: 1) Guatemalans rarely say "Hola!" You are obviously a foreigner if you do so. 2) It is most common to drink water out of bags. 3) Guatemalans are soo friendly. They are not afraid to talk to me even with a language barrier. 4) I'm not as terrible at Spanish as I thought. I've been doing English class at VBS this past week with Brandon and will be doing VBS again this week with Jake. I've had very interesting conversations with some of the kids including split ends in my hair, tickles, and dancing. And last but certainly not least, 5) It is definitely possible to find happiness in simplicity. As cliché as that sounds, it is very true and I think it is found in the relationships. The kids have been taught that family and friends play an important part in their lives. When the little kids cry, the older siblings help out. It is such a beautiful thing to watch and I can't wait to see it even more. Thank you all for contributing and supporting us in this awesome opportunity!

**Anna:** Today was designed to be a rest day, and while it was a breath of fresh (though less oxygen-saturated, as we were high up in the mountains again) air from the work we've been doing, it wasn't exactly relaxing. As Alicia said, we spent a lot of time in the bus. Between traffic, shopping, bathroom breaks, and lunch, it took us over five hours to get to the Mayan ruins. I love my fellow youth, but five hours is a looong time. (That being said, when we stopped at a gas station for the restroom (and maybe gas?), a few of us saw the owner had ostriches behind a fence. Those of us at the fence with cameras took selfies with the ostriches, and took pictures of those of us who didn't have cameras. It was definitely worth it.) Today actually felt really long – I'm ridiculously tired. It's not the same as the tiredness I felt after working, though. I think it has to do with the fact that a lot of us are dealing with a lot of hard things back in the States. And while it would be nice if we could leave them behind along with most of our clothes and electronics, the human mind doesn't work that way. There were a lot of deep conversations today (and some on earlier days, too) with lots of people. Of course, there was also climbing some ruins, taking pictures of the smoking volcano, lots of singing, and, obviously with this group, a ton of laughter. Despite feeling tired, I really do feel charged and ready for the week. All in all, it seems like we achieved what the Sabbath was intended for – taking a break from our routine work to rest with God and encounter Him, through the world, each other, and ourselves. And one final note – Happy Father's Day to all dads who read this, but especially my own. Love you. :P

