

Easter 2024

Events, Testimonies, Updates

# Youth Newsletter

## CAMP SURVIVE

A week of adventure, friendship, & transformation for youth going into 7-9th grade | Big Sandy Camp, McGregor

Pre-registration now open on parish website (follow QR code)



Prayer Team & JC Applications due March 29

## TOTUS TUUS

Totus Tuus will be June 16-21 this year

Grades 1-6 during the day

7-12 in the evening

Registration Info to follow



## STEUBENVILLE CONFERENCE

Join us for a Steubenville Youth Conference at Franciscan University of Steubenville this July 11-15. Limited spots open. Learn more & register on our webpage.



# CAMBODIA

*Lucia Carlson*

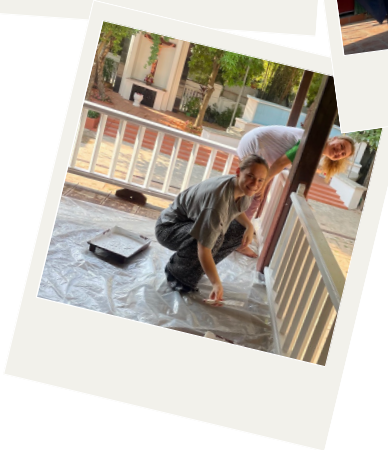
Hi! My name is Lucia Carlson, and I am a senior in high school. I am a part of Holy Spirit Parish and am an alumni of Marquette Catholic School. I have been on many of the Camp Survive, Camp Covecrest, and Steubenville conference trips over the years and every one of these trips have contributed to my relationship with God and the desire to spread the Catholic faith to others. Having things that fostered my faith early on, and being open to God's will, allowed the seed of mission work and evangelization to be planted on my heart.

I had been praying about wanting to do mission work for years, and about wanting to spread Jesus' love and truth to people. I have felt God telling me that this is something He wanted me to do. Unexpectedly, I was presented with an opportunity to travel to Cambodia to do mission work. I felt no hesitation in saying "yes" but didn't know how everything would work out. It took a lot of trust in God that He would put pieces of my life into place so that I could go on this mission trip. I kept trusting that He would either make this happen or take it away if it wasn't meant to be. I kept saying "yes" to the next steps in the planning process, and the next thing I knew I was in Cambodia, with people I had never met, ready to do whatever the Davidson family, who had established a mission there, needed us to do.

Only 0.5% of Cambodians are Catholic. It is a mostly Buddhist country and many of its population have never even heard about Jesus. This, along with language barriers can make it difficult to share the faith in the ways we may want to such as preaching. The Davidson's are doing amazing things in Cambodia. The missionary that they have established is so beautiful and truly shows what it's like to love how Jesus loves. A big part of the Davison's missionary approach is to meet people where they are at, love them as Jesus loves, and be an example of Christ in everything that you do.

A couple of the projects the girls and I helped with while there was painting church railings for the only Catholic Church in Siem Reap and painting walls at a Pastoral Home for kids and teens. An interesting while attending Mass in Cambodia is that you sit on the floor during mass! The men mixed and poured cement at a school and cleared a lot of debris out of a woman's yard. These projects made me realize the lack of resources for many Cambodians. They don't have access to the same tools and technologies that we do which assist us and make our lives easier. They live very different lives from us and many of us wouldn't even be able to imagine living how they do. It was a big culture shock for me seeing the way that Cambodians live. There is a great amount of poverty and suffering but also great amounts of joy and happiness among the people. Something that I will never forget seeing were beggars with missing limbs due to landmines left over from the genocide during the Khmer Regime. Nearly 25% of Cambodians population was killed during the genocide. Seeing the ongoing affects of this firsthand put into perspective the great suffering this country has faced and what is still a reality for many people. We visited one of the oldest Catholic Churches in Cambodia where evidence of machine gun fire could still be seen on outside of the church.

There are many displaced children in Cambodia who have broken homes or whose families are too poor to care for them. We were able to visit an orphanage where the little kids around the ages 2-5 showed us their progress in learning English.



The orphanage was run by the Missionaries of Charity. We visited the Pastoral Home which is run by a couple who takes care of around 60 displaced kids and teens. We also went to a church at one of the floating villages. Yes, there were whole villages floating on the river! Here we had Mass and some people on the team did medical outreach with sick men, women, and children. Without the medical help the team gave, these people's illnesses would have been left untreated. Sadly, there is a lack of knowledge and resources among Cambodian doctors, so many people don't get proper treatment or no treatment at all. This is just another amazing gift the Davidson's have brought to Cambodia. I had an amazing time at the floating village playing with the children. I had a giant tickle fight with a bunch of the kids, and they helped me count to 5 in Khmer! It was so beautiful seeing the joy on the children's faces. What a gift it was being able to have fun with them. The kids in Cambodia are so starved for love. They will run up to you, hug you, and try in every way to engage with you. It's joyous and heartbreaking at the same time, because all they desire is love. Cambodians are some of the most friendly, happy and loving people I've met despite the suffering all around them.

There is also a culture of lust in Cambodia, so being able to bring love to anyone was a gift to me. A beautiful tradition that the Davidson family started is that every month they give out roses to prostitutes with a loving message attached to it. I am blessed to have been able to be a part of this. Prostitution is embedded in Cambodia's culture. Learning this and seeing how many women are involved in it broke my heart. We had 300 roses with notes on them when we went out into a small section of the streets in Siem Reap, and we had given them all away. We only touched on a small part of the city and could've given out even more. I had mixed feelings during this because I was angry that so many young women were being defiled and used, but I also felt some joy seeing the women's faces light up when receiving a rose knowing nothing was asked of them in return other than to know they are loved.

I was able to do many other things and had extraordinary experiences that I will carry with me throughout my life. I was so blessed and hope to continue to bring Christ's love to more people. I especially encourage anyone who has a heart open to mission work to allow the Holy Spirit to guide their path, and trust that if you are open and put the work in, God will direct your steps. Live for the Lord, receive the sacraments often, and be an example of Christ in the world, for even at home you are on mission.

I was so lucky to have met the missionaries from Brainerd whom I journeyed with. Their kindness in allowing me to go with them is a treasure I can never repay. The Davidsons and the other missionaries living in Cambodia were such a beautiful example of people living out their vocation. I will carry their memories with me always! I hope to continue mission work throughout my life and ask for you to pray for all missionaries in the world. If you'd like to donate to the Davidson's missionary work or are interested in seeing what work they are doing, visit their website at: [freelygiveninc.org](http://freelygiveninc.org)

"Commit to the lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans" Proverbs 16:3.

Jesus, I Trust in You!

-Lucia



# Middle School Testimonies

## Resting in Jesus' Love

I grew up learning about Jesus, I've always known about him, but only since about sixth grade that I actually come to KNOW him. We go to mass to every day and have adoration every other day, it's a blessing, and I truly appreciate it. I get to see how Jesus works in many different ways, one way is at bible study I received the gift of resting in the spirit, and ever since, I pray over people so they can be really open to receiving Jesus in their hearts. I love being able to go sit in the chapel whenever I want, I just always know Jesus is with me, and it's truly wonderful, I wish all kids could experience the mercy of Jesus, and the ability to grow up in a school like that. And most of the kids you would have known since PRE-K and so it's more of a brother-sister bond than a friend bond, and you get to know people on a whole different level when you know them through Jesus.

*-Ella*



## Jesus' Call in Adoration

My name is Rylee Mineheine and this is how I came to know Jesus. When I was in 6th grade I transferred schools, from a public school, to a private school called Marquette! This is my last year there, since it only goes from preschool to 8th grade! The summer of 6th grade is when I really came to know Jesus, I had this amazing opportunity to go to a camp called camp survive! During adoration, I felt like I had calling to become catholic! At the time I was Lutheran, I was baptized in the Lutheran church. So I worked with a couple people to basically train me in the catholic religion. Then school starts 7th grade year, I had religious classes and I really got to know about the faith and what it means to become catholic and live in the catholic faith. In the winter of 7th grade I took my first communion! And now I have been catholic go over a year! And I'm loving it! And today in adoration I had a calling to become a religious sister! So I am studying the ways of becoming one! Because this is my last year at Marquette, I won't get to talk about my faith as much as I do. I'm very sad this is my last year! But, I can preach the working of Jesus in my life to other people in the public school.

*-Rylee Jo*



# High School Testimonies



## Walking With Jesus in the Everyday

When I thought about the question “what way has Jesus worked in my life recently?” I felt as if I had hit a road block. I know He has, but I couldn’t pinpoint what. I looked back over the past couple of months trying to find a moment that Jesus worked. I felt at a loss. I thought about where I was at the beginning of this year and where I am now. I could clearly see that I’ve changed even just within that small amount of time. Looking back further I saw that I had come even farther from where I had been. At times falling but still getting back up. But I still couldn’t find that life shattering moment that I wanted. I felt like I was supposed to find that “ah ha” moment where everything changed and everything became clear. But the closer I tried looking the more blurry things got. Only when I decided to step back did I see the full picture. There was no one moment that changed everything. He had actually been working in a bunch of small moments, at times things that felt insignificant but Jesus still worked. He had been working in the background, catching me when I fell and encouraging me. Building me up over time, even in those times I felt alone. He worked quietly and carefully; bringing me to the right places, talking to the right people, and hearing what He needed me to. He didn’t work through some flashy moment. Jesus works in ways we often don’t expect whether that be big or small. But those are the moments that really make the difference.

- *Anonymous*

# “Welcome Home!”

*Kelsey Kramer*

Camp Covecrest will always have such a special place in my heart as a location of God’s beauty and blessings. It is where I was in a community of young Catholic people striving for God’s love. It really opened up my eyes to what the Lord can do. I connected with people in my faith life and grew to know God’s love for me. I learned how to pray, just by talking to Jesus like He is your best friend and not being scared to surrender and sacrifice things in my life to Him. As soon as I got to Camp Covecrest for the first time in 2021, we were unloading the bus and everyone was dancing around and welcoming us by saying “welcome home”!! I was a little skeptical about that and kinda shrugged it off. But as the week went on I really felt the love for Jesus that everyone at camp shared. I went to confession in the morning, overlooking the pond and it was so peaceful. There were so many fun activities to do, but what I found to be one of my favorite parts was something I didn’t expect. Adoration was one of my favorite parts of being at Covecrest. I encountered Jesus in such a beautiful way and was filled with the gifts of the Holy Spirit in this time of prayer, as it was so peaceful and you could feel God’s love in the room. I would just kneel there, and weep before the presence of Jesus Christ. I never liked sharing my faith life with people, but the night after our first adoration session, our church group had a “snack chat” and I was moved to share my experience of adoration in front of everyone.



I also was moved by what other people would tell us about their experiences. One night after we prayed by the pond, a friend and I stayed back and sat on the dock together while looking at the stars. We ended up sharing about our adoration experiences and she opened up to me about a lot of stuff she doesn’t tell many people. I just remember the love and peace we shared there, sitting on the dock together, feeling how much love and care God has shown us. This is a feeling I will never forget. As the week came to an end, I felt sad to go home because of the amazing place Camp Covecrest is. The last night at Camp our church gathered around the camp fire and shared our experiences of covecrest and sang songs to worship the Lord. This was when I realized why they welcomed us by saying “welcome home” because it truly felt like home. I could go on and on about camp Covecrest and how it has changed my faith life. I got the opportunity to go back this last summer. Again, it was such a blessing to have the chance to be in a place of so much joy and love for God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. This time around, I was one of the few people who had been there previously. I wanted all the people who were going for the first time to encounter God’s love in their own way like I did 2 years before. I was excited to see how God could work through me and others on the trip. I just prayed every day for the younger people in my parish on the trip, my life and opportunities, the people surrounding me, my church, and in thanksgiving for everything God has given me. I had the chance to be a leader to show people how to not be afraid to open up to the Lord. It was amazing to see other people experience the love that comes out of opening up to the Lord. My faith life kept growing and getting more fruitful by just watching other experience the Lord’s love and cannot be more thankful to God for that gift.





# “Glory to Glory”

*Naomi Ringhand*

*And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.*

*2 Cor 3:18*

Recently, I had the opportunity to spend a long weekend on retreat with some completely beautiful religious sisters in southern MN. This visit was particularly providential as it was on retreat with the same sisters two years ago that I made the decision to seriously pursue the opportunity to stay here in Virginia after my time with Teach for Christ ended. Throughout the weekend I found myself continually contrasting what I find in my heart now to what was present in it then. I was brought to tears several times by what I saw. The desires, the hopes, the peace, joy, love, & dreams I have for my life now are so much deeper, are so much more than anything I could have imagined then. This realization filled me with such gratitude for all of you, for the youth I am privileged to spend so much time with, & for Jesus' great love for me. Your love has transformed me. The ways I have been invited and challenged to love have transformed me. Jesus' beautiful love has transformed me. As we ran forward into this new season in the life of our mission field & diocese I am beyond excited for the MORE that Jesus has for us & so grateful to do so alongside all of you.



# In Their Words

Jesus told me that if you think I am far, I am very close - 5th grade girl

My prayer life has grown by getting uncomfortable and going deep- 7th grade girl

I have experienced Jesus love in an overwhelming peace - 8th grade boy

Jesus has given me the gift of deeply knowing Him. I have good conversations with Him - 7th grade girl

In adoration I know Jesus loves me -5th grade boy

Jesus took off my stress -6th grade boy

He has spoken to me, and it opened my eyes to how He is my Father and when I ask anything of Him he will respond -8th grade girl

I have started praying everywhere I go -5th grade boy



I have the knowledge now that I am a temple of the Holy Spirit - 8th grade girl

Jesus told me to be strong - 5th grade boy

In the past I watched instead of experiencing in prayer -5th grade girl

This year I don't feel like I have to pray, I want to -7th grade girl

God has revealed to me truths about myself - 8th grade girl

I want to praise God for my struggles because they help me realize I need God and I can't do it on my own -7th grade girl

I love being able to pray with people. I am now able to receive the Lord's words. I know when he is speaking to me -8th grade girl

I love learning how to pray -6th grade girl

Jesus has made me calmer -6th grade boy

Jesus has given me joy & happiness -8th grade boy

