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About three weeks ago I was fortunate enough to travel with 37 others down south to Bayou La Batre, Alabama. This is the second mission trip I have gone on. We're always told not to compare mission trips and to "participate not anticipate," but in the weeks leading up to the trip I couldn't help but wonder how this trip could ever top last years. During the week I learned to let this worry go and just give everything up to God. As soon as I did this I realized how silly it was to have ever had this worry in the first place. This trip of course turned out to be unique and much different than last years trip, but it was still one of the most unforgettable experiences of my life.

During the week I experienced God in countless ways. The first two workdays my group went to a man named Charles' house. We helped to clean up his yard by clearing out trash, branches, weeds, etc. He was so grateful to us and showed his gratitude by reading us poetry, singing to me, and even cooking his famous shrimp for us. It was impossible to not feel God's love coming from Charles.

The last two workdays we helped at kids club. We sang songs, played games, read books, gave piggyback rides, did countless cartwheels and talked about God. It was easy to tell how excited the kids were to have us there and how much they craved the attention and hugs we gave them. It felt really good to know we made an impact on them, even if it was in just a small way, like by making them smile or laugh. My favorite part was when some of the girls wanted to "play cheerleading" so they made some of the older boys kneel on the ground and be the bottom of the pyramid while I helped them stand on top. They never seemed to get tired of that! During our time there I constantly saw God through the kids.

Another way I felt God's love was through the 37 other St. Lawrence mission trippers. Our large number did not stop us from becoming a family that week. We formed unbreakable bonds with each other and at the same time helped one another grow in faith. Whether it was our church group time every night, our spontaneous faith discussions, or our awesome hug circles the love we showed for one another is indescribable.

I learned so many things on the mission trip this year. I developed my faith, I learned about myself, and I formed strong bonds with those around me. Now I understand why it's so important not to compare trips. It's because you really can't. Every experience, relationship, and feeling you get out of the trip is up to God. And once you give all control to Him you realize there is nothing to worry about. I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to experience this trip. It was definitely life changing and something I will never forget.

