

THE 2019 PHILIPPINE SUMMER CAMP

Our camp meeting was held at the headquarters in Bagong Sikat, Nueva Ecija from April 18-22, 2019, with a total of 388 brothers and sisters taking part this year.

The theme of this year's summer camp is GOD'S SALVATION PLAN inspired by Psalms 18:46 which says, "The Lord liveth; and blessed be my rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted."



388 brothers & sisters registered for this year's summer camp, not counting children of ages 4 and below

In line with this theme, the following topics were discussed during the Bible studies: HAMARTIOLOGY or the study of sin; SOTERIOLOGY, which is the study of the doctrine of salvation; and ESCHATOLOGY, referring to the study of the final events of history or the ultimate destiny of humanity.

We also talked about the Biblical review of heaven and hell as literal places and final destinations of men, and of course we looked back on the sufferings of Jesus by revisiting His final week on earth.

Altar calls were held right after each Bible Study to give the congregation chance to pray to the Lord and to seek deeper graces.

Day 1 - Bible Studies Nos. 1-4 and Evangelistic Service

To address the needs of different audience during the Bible studies, we were divided into 5 groups, namely: Adult and Young People, Junior Young People, Elementary (ages 7-10), Kinder (ages 5-6) and Nursery (ages 4 & below).

For DAY 1 the teachers brought to us the following topics: 1) Who Needs a Savior?; 2) The Passion Week; 3) The Doctrine of Salvation; and 4) Hell is for Real.

Our first teacher reminded us that all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. He then stressed that the result of our sins is death, and so the indispensable need for a savior. He also gave us a closer look on HAMARTIOLOGY, saying that sin may be committed either way – transgressing the law OR missing the mark.

The sufferings and the death of Christ were also timely discussed to commemorate His unconditional love for us this Lenten season.

Then the next teacher brought to us the means of how a sinner can be saved, and that is by coming to Christ with a contrite heart, and by accepting Him as our Lord and Savior. The topic about hell was discussed right after to refresh our memories that souls of unbelievers will be tormented day and night in the lake of fire. And that Christ simply won't give his life for nothing – he died to save us from the eternal punishment.



The elementary group (7-10) learning a song during a Bible Study



We took our dinner at 6:00 o'clock, then the congregation marched up for the Evangelistic Service, through which we felt blessed upon hearing the encouraging testimonies of our brothers and sisters. Most of them happily shared how their lives were completely changed by knowing Christ. Then Rev. Isidro "Sid" Fiegalan showed us that his age (77) couldn't stop him from serving God. He gave an inspiring message that our faith should not waver amidst trials.

Day 2 - Bible Studies Nos. 5 and 6, Seven Last Words and Night of Worship

The following day we had our Bible Studies Nos. 5 (Heaven is for Real) and 6 (End Times Updates). The teacher walked us through the fact that God has prepared a special place – a paradise for his children. However the choice remains with us, of course if we will continue with our sinful ways, then we are bound for hell. But if we will decide to take up our cross and follow Christ, if we will give up our worldly pleasures, and if we will continue to struggle for a holy life, then our souls can find rest in that paradise.

At 10:00 a.m. we started discussing the End Times Updates. Our teacher made it clearer that the prophecies in the Bible are now being fulfilled little by little, like the massive earthquakes, people gets more proud, their love for others turn colder, human knowledge reaches its peak and the gravity and proliferation of violence.

At 2:00 p.m. the Church gathered up again to hear the message about the Seven Last Words of our Lord. Each Pastor gave a short sermon for each of the 7 words. One of our Pastors said that no father can ever bear to witness the suffering of his child, and perhaps God Himself simply decided to close His eyes than to witness the suffering of Jesus. Because of God's love for us, despite our sins, He gave his only begotten Son. And because of Christ's love for us, again despite our sins, He willingly accepted the punishment intended for us.

Just few hours after sunset we met together at the front lawn of the Church building for the first ever Night of Worship: Music Under the Stars. The whole place was filled with rejoicing as we spend the night lifting our voices to God and listening to the special numbers prepared by our brothers and sisters from different Churches. This also gave us wonderful chance to get closer with each other by sharing tables and snacks.



AFC-Philippines holding its first ever Night of Worship

Day 3 - Water Baptism, General Assembly, Ordinances, and Bible Quiz



Photo taken after the water baptism

At 8:00 a.m. we assembled for the water baptism, and we were filled with joy as we witness 18 souls publicly declaring their faith in Christ. The whole Church prayed for them and welcomed them in this new life in Christ.

At 10:00 a.m. the annual General Assembly was conducted. Our pastors reported the status of the respective Churches. Then our treasurer, Rev. Joseph Ruiz presented the financial reports.

After taking our lunch, we got back at 2:00 p.m. for the holding of the Ordinances of Holy Communion and Foot Washing.

Rev. Reynald Gapuz carefully reminded us that we must examine ourselves first before partaking with the Body of Christ. Then Rev. Emily Lucero told us the significance of the second ordinance, that the Lord himself performed the humblest duty by washing his disciples' feet to leave us an example to do the same to our brothers and sisters. During the ordinances we felt blessed while witnessing the pouring out of God's blessings of sanctification and baptism of the Holy Spirit.

To further build camaraderie and of course to encourage everyone to always read their Bibles, the 2019 Summer Camp Committee decided to bring back the Bible Quiz. Each Church volunteered 2 representatives to compete with this much awaited event. The contest consists of 3 rounds, and 10 questions were asked for each round. The questions are tough, and the brushing away of choices made the quiz more challenging. In the end the Baguio Church got the 3rd place, the Balloc Church bagged the 2nd place and the Tabulac Church took home the top spot.

Day 4 - Easter Service, Sunday School and Closing Program

At 5:00 a.m. we celebrated the Lord's resurrection in our Easter Service. Rev. Zenaida Ruiz gave a message using Psalms 18:46, the very text of the 2019 Summer Camp. She persistently encouraged the Church to finish the race victoriously. *Along the way we will definitely encounter trials, but God will not allow us to be tested beyond our limits*, she added.

She also stressed the importance of consecration, *if we will consecrate our whole being, God will give us a different perspective and we will not easily succumb to the demands of this world*, she added.

She then gave us the example of David when he was being hunted down by Saul. That time David got a clear chance to kill his persecutor, and David's men were forcefully suggesting to him that he should immediately take Saul's life. But David was given by God a different perspective, he spared Saul's life, respected God's anointed king and simply decided to cut off the skirt of his robe as proof of his good intention.

This happened again during the revolt of Absalom. David's men wanted Absalom to pay with his life, but David got a different perspective. He forgave his son wholeheartedly, forgot the sins he committed, and even grieved for the death of the very person who ousted him from his throne.

We are like clay in potter's hands, we should completely trust the hands of God while He's shaping us to become pots that are pleasing to Him and useful to His own purpose, she explained.

The Sunday School followed right away, and we talked about the Risen Christ. Our teacher shared with us that the Risen Christ strengthens the faith of the believers. It even turned James, Jesus' brother, from a total unbeliever into one of the pillars of the early Church. The Risen Christ is also God's proof – a guarantee that Christ's statement is true. *When Jesus said that he will build the temple in 3 days, the people doubted Him, but the Risen Christ proved them all wrong*, the teacher added.



Our kids awardees for the 2019 summer camp

We then ended this year's summer camp with a short closing program, starting with the announcement of kids awardees for **future musician, little pastor, best in prayer, most creative and most outstanding**. This was followed by the closing remarks of our camp director, Rev. Richard Cruz. He also thanked everyone for their prayers and cooperation in making this special event possible all for God's glory. Finally we exchanged our goodbyes both with sadness and joy, sadness because we already need to part ways though momentarily, and joy for all the blessings we've received and the presence of God in our hearts.



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