

Memoir of a Summer Bible *Adventure Camp Volunteer*

“Are you going to live to regret this?” I asked myself, as I climbed out of bed on a humid Monday morning at 7:00 am. It was hard to goad myself to quickly dress and eat, for today was July 21, and the start of the Summer Bible *Adventure Camp for kids, the first summer camp held at the parish since Covid.*

Due to my lethargy, I only arrived at the church fifteen minutes before our scheduled starting time. D’Zarea Preuss, our wonderful secretary, opened the doors of the church. “Kids have been arriving here since 8:00 am!” She said in frazzled excitement. “If they keep coming this will be a great success!”

I went in my marching orders, then marched over to the Community Center. I opened windows and set up fans, straightened furniture and tried to organize the kitchen. The building has no air conditioning, which can be tough on a hot, humid day. Mr. Keith Gamble, our music teacher, came by with a huge, full sized professional drum set, and took it upstairs for the band class he was to teach.

Besides the drums, the kids could sign up for praise dancing with dance instructor Steve Dearing. Sister Rosemarie Abate would did bible and meditation classes, and Kourney Jackson arts and crafts, as well as be our fearless leader. Thirty two children ending up registering for the camp, which lasted half a day, from 9 am to 12 noon. Breakfast and snacks were included.

Arts and crafts specialized in messy projects that the children couldn’t normally do at home, like using messy acrylic paints, or projects with a message, such as bead & pipe cleaner friendship bracelets, that you had to give to a friend, or made part of a rosary. There were also a couple of ‘Maker’ projects, which taught how to make a fruit salad and (my favorite, since I suggested it) pickles. The day prior to the pickle making, I helped take the kids on a tour of our community garden, where we picked dill and cranberry soup beans. (The beans were encased in bright pink and yellow pods, and had grown from seeds raided from a dried soup mix.)

Fr. Charles was also at the Bible Camp every day, with his helpful support. Just by being there he helped keep things calm. One day, he settled a group of kids by asking what their favorite Bible stories were. David and Goliath was most popular, and he asked the tallest and the smallest of the kids to stand side by side, to give them a true idea of how David felt when faced with Goliath. I was waiting for the sling-shot to come out, but I was disappointed!

The highlight of the camp was a field trip by bus to the Nature Center on Belle Isle. At the Nature Center, we saw outside a small deer (with antlers!), chipmunks, birds, and a long animal with greyish fur built like a thin otter. Mudpuppies, turtles, snakes, frogs, and toads and even a bee hive were in terrariums inside. We walked on a boardwalk across a meadow and a marsh, and saw trees where ospreys had nested in previous years. The younger children were very content to play in the giant sand lot behind the Nature Center.

The grand finale to the Bible Adventure Camp was a Family Night Performance on the evening of Friday, August 1. Parents and relatives were invited, and the children danced, sang, and played drums, and had a wonderful time. Afterwards, everyone was invited to the Community Center for hot dogs, chips, and some of Steve Dearing special baked beans, made with pineapples and green peppers. It was incredible to see the Community Center packed with people, as I helped hand out hot dogs and beans with another volunteer.

The camp was an inspiring experience, not just to the young campers, but to everyone who came into contact with it. It was filled with hope and goodness, and offered an alternative to the gloomy news of the world.

Cy Chauvin

