

## Day 6 Reflection

# Lizzie McCallum



The most meaningful part of Thursday was almost certainly the mini church service that Port Loyola Baptist Church held to thank our team. At the beginning, the youth were asked to show the Port Loyola congregation part of what they had been doing in VBS that week, and so we did an energizer onstage for them.

It was a little uncomfortable doing an energizer in front of a bunch of adults because, honestly, it's very easy to make a fool of yourself in front of a bunch of kids – but it's much more difficult to do so in front of adults.

I was slightly nervous to do that at first, but I looked out at the congregation in the middle of it and they were all so excited. It was just a feel-good moment to see everyone so happy about something of which I was a part. It turned out that that wasn't even the most meaningful part of the evening.

Toward the end of the service, the pastor and members of Port Loyola were thanking us and gave us some small gifts. They asked Mr. Hogue and Mr. Riley to go to the front and presented them with a plaque and gave each of us bracelets and water bottles that read "PLBC" and "SVPC" and "Send Me" – from Isaiah 6:8, our guiding verse for this mission – somewhere on both of them.

At this point, I was pretty much in tears. It was a moving thing to feel, because we came here to serve them, and it honestly felt like they served us more than we did them. I'm aware of the work that our team has put in, but I feel as if Port Loyola's gratitude has brought them to give us so many more gifts – spiritual and literal – than I could ever repay.

I know it's a cliché to say that we got more out of the trip than we put in, but I didn't realize how true that statement was until I felt all of Port Loyola's gratitude this evening.

At the end of the service, it settled in all of our minds that this was the goodbye to Port Loyola, for at least 3 years. It's weird to think about how one can grow so close to a whole congregation – the clergy, the youth, the families and small children – in just a week.

The most difficult part came as I was walking out of the church, one of my favorite 4-year-olds from VBS ran up to me and hugged my leg. I realized at that moment how much I'm going to miss this congregation and you better believe I was walking out of that church with tears on my face.