



GPA's Blue Nation in North Carolina

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As we drove to our workshop, teams were getting ready to see everyone and share their experiences about meeting God and spirit world and wrapping up their conditions to get ready for the workshop. No one knew what the workshop site would look like, but as we drove the country side, being surrounded by nature we came to see a beautiful dream house made of wood beside a pond and open grasslands. It was an amazing surprise for all!

The workshop theme is: Commitment—to action. We talked a lot about the meaning of commitment before and now we are learning to put it into action. The next two days we were privileged with guidance an activities that allowed us to really work together as a team, bond together as a family, and experience a tiny bit of what it's like being a leader. The first guidance we had was given by our elder brother Patrick Oppa. He talked about original value and how we get out value from two things. Our original value is determined by the relationship between its purpose of existence and the desire that a human being has for it. We then went out pumpkin picking all together at a local pumpkin patch to pick pumpkins and then carve them to compete against each other with the designs.

People got really creative with their ideas with scary, funny, exotic faces and designs. To continue on our days activities we then did two activities with our teams. First we did toilet paper mummy wedding dress and fashion show. The dresses were very unique and unusual that no one has seen before. Next we ended with a three legged race and bobbing for apples before we gathered to get a guidance about experiencing God and Spirit World. We ended the evening sharing our concepts about God and experiencing God. Everyone has a different and unique concept about God because God is invisible and is reflected everywhere in many different ways.

On Saturday we had three guidances. The first talk was given by Tolik Oppa about “Why we need God”. Needing God is like drinking water, however many times we wait to drink water until we are dehydrated. Likewise, we mostly only go to God in times of difficulty and when we need him the most. We easily forget how we have to be thirsty for God all the time. Our next talk was given to us by Aunt Christine about our “Foundation of Faith and being a Heavenly Victor”. A life if faith is a building of habits and discipline within yourself. But it's all given to us by God. ‘God punishes those whom He loves best.’ Then in the afternoon we had an activity that gave each of us the opportunity to experience what it's like being a leader. We did it by having our team members blind folded in a line and the leader not able to speak or use their mouth to communicate in any way. The only way we can communicate is by clapping,

using sticks, rocks, or some other unique way of have noises to signal different movements to help the team go about the obstacle course faster. Every five minutes we would switch leadership roles so that we can all experience leading without a voice which was very challenging and frustrating. Many times the leader would signal different claps or sounds causing frustration, miscommunications, all resulting in errors. This activity resembles a lot of what it's like being a captain or leader for anything in life because at times you want to help others and you say things, but people might not understand it at the time. It also shows how patient you are as a person. The activity really brought out different leadership characteristics in each of us.

The last guidance for the day was given by Myo Yeon unni about "Cain's Responsibility". As fundraisers and people in general we are both in the Cain and Abel position. It just changes depending on our environment. Cain and Abel are brothers supposed to unite together as one in order to fulfill their responsibilities and connect to God. It takes a lot of love and sacrifice for one another to achieve this amongst ourselves, but it's the only way we can reconnect with God.

Then for the rest of the evening we reflected about making our commitment for the GPA year and then declared it In front of the entire group to really keep each other accountable and committed to what we said. It is so easy to say things, but putting it into action is always hard. Saying to people what we want to do makes it more real and puts pressure to actually work on it since it's a promise and commitment we make before God and everyone else. We then ended the night and concluded the workshop with a nice bonfire with marshmallows. It was a great way to end together as a family after hearing about commitment and making the first step to act upon it by declaring our goals in front of each other.