

My Trip to Kenya

Blog of Matushka Marina Holland

Part 8

Monday, January 28, 2019

Glory to God, I slept very well last night. I woke at 6:30 and felt very refreshed! We had breakfast with FM and Papathiya and little Panteleimon, then went to the school. Blessings and Christine were already there, having arrived at 7:00.

There is talk of FM and FS going to Kisumu for the funeral of Bishop Athanasios who passed away recently. Kisumu is 500km away, at least 7 hours of bumpy road driving. They will leave midday Tuesday, spend the night, attend the funeral Wednesday and head back Thursday. They invited me to go along, but that would mean missing three days with the children. But how often does one get to attend the funeral of a bishop, and one considered by many to be saintly? I haven't decided for sure, but am leaning toward staying here with the kids, since that was my purpose in coming here.

A new schedule has been made for me. I now have 3-4 classes a day. I am learning to wing it, for I am not always informed of what we will be doing! My first class today was with the level 4 students, with teacher James. I read their assigned story aloud to them in English, and reviewed or quizzed them very often for comprehension. They often did not answer the questions. I did not know if this was because of their level of English comprehension, or shyness. So I repeated things many times, in many different ways, and gradually got more participation from them. In the end I felt confident they understood the lesson, but it did take a while. I learned from Moses, the nephew of FM who stayed with us this weekend, that my English is hard for them to understand! So I am trying to speak very slowly with the children. The adults seem to manage, but I think they are using context with me as much as I do with them!

From that class I went to the "baby" class, with Teacher Milka. These children are 3 years old, and do



not know English. I read the story *The Mitten* to them, about a boy who loses his white mitten in the snow. Various animals squeeze into the mitten to stay warm, until the mouse's whiskers tickle the bear's nose. The bear sneezes, and all the animals go flying out of the mitten. The mitten flies through the air and lands in the boy's hand. There were so many concepts we got to talk about! I knew they wouldn't know what snow was and I had a plan how to explain it to them. But they didn't know what a *mitten* was. As much as they bundle up, I was sure mittens were familiar to them. I explained it was like a sock for the hand,

to keep the hand warm when it is very cold outside. Ah! Then the teacher pulled a glove out of someone's backpack, and we talked about the difference between a mitten and a glove. They were not familiar with several of the animals, either, but that was easily enough gotten around. The teacher did an excellent job, capitalizing on the opportunity to incorporate counting and repetition with the children.



I really enjoyed watching the kids play organized field games during their gym time. Many of their games look similar to games I am familiar with from America, but some are new. I was impressed with teacher Milkah, for she had perhaps 25 three-to-four year olds by herself. Teacher Monica was very warm and energetic with the kids, laughing with them and bouncing around.



When I got home I met Papapthiya carrying a heavy bag of vegetables, and took it from her. "See," I said. "American women can carry loads, too!" She laughed and said, "This is how *African* women carry loads: you must also have something on your head, and a child in your arms!" She had me beat! Later she had another travelling salesman here.

Papathiya had never had the occasion to learn to cook fish, so they bought some tilapia and asked me to show her how. She has taught me so many different things about cooking, so now it was my turn to

return the favor. I made an egg wash to dip the fish in, and then coated the fish with a mixture of flour and one of their seasoning mixes. Thankfully it was quite tasty!

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