

Report on India Vacation Bible School, from December 2008

by Pastor Jyothi Benjamin -- Church of the Lutheran Confession in India -- CLCI

Dearly beloved, Greetings to you all in name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. God is good! We are thankful to report God blessed the VBS-08 with more than two thousand children. After a lot of planning, organizing, budgeting and of course, praying, the VBS-08 Harvest was a wonderful success! We are happy to inform you that we had quite a few number of Hindu and Muslim children who participated in this VBS-08. We are sure that seeds were planted in quite few of those Hindu and Muslim children. It was awesome to see that many CLCI members also stepped up and helped with the VBS-08.

Our annual VBS-08 was held from December 7th to 13nd, 2008. We had 200 to 250 new kids each day from different CLCI congregations and from other denominations also. For the final Saturday's activities, we had 561 children. In total, during the seven days, 2016 children attended the VBS-08. Keeping with its many years experience, the CLCI VBS continues to have the greatest evangelistic impact on many villages. Increase of the membership in our CLCI churches is a direct result of VBS. We heard from our Pastor Johnson, from Chandole CLCI congregation, that one of the 2nd grade boys is still asking his mom to read the John Gospel to him. In a few days she read all John Gospel for her boy. This Mom is not a Christian, but rather a Hindu, and now is very interested now about Bible stories. Our pastor informed us that she is now visiting our Chandole CLCI church on Sunday with her son. We are praying that soon or some day she will trust Christ as her Savior.

Programs: What a fine time we had! It was a busy week but well worth the effort. Our VBS motto for this year was "The fear of the Lord is the fountain of life. Proverbs 14.27" The participants in this year's VBS also learned to grow the fruit of their spirits - love, kindness, peace, joy and patience. This service provided an excellent environment for the children to provide music and singing during VBS programs. Kids sang along to the music of the CLCI Choir. Children were taught many number of traditional Sunday school songs "B.I.B.L.E.; Rise and Shine, This is the Day, Jesus Loves Me" and more.

Experiences of new children: I am happy to report that many of the participated kids were very responsive. There were several very surprised parents who commented on the good things there kids were doing at home. There were quite a few new Hindu and Muslim kids came together along with regular kids and enjoyed the week of activities. These following are some of their personal experiences they shared with our CLCI teachers.

From Lakshmi, Hindu Girl of age 12: "Going to CLCI VBS was truly an unforgettable experience. I really enjoyed the stories of Jesus. I loved getting to know new friends of my own age and learning about their lives. I absolutely loved the experience and hope to go to VBS again."

From Rajak, a Muslim boy, age 11: "Going to CLCI VBS was so much fun. In some ways, the mission house is like my home. It was new for me to see that children love talking to us and they're just as fascinated with us as with their close friends. Some things really are good. The lessons regarding Jesus were really good. I got a chance to learn more about Jesus during the VBS. We really love the new food we eat. I also had fun getting to know the other children."

We thank all the CLC-U.S. children so much for their help. It is greatly appreciated. Their prayers and contributions have been building up the CLCI children, so that in the future they will be prepared as God's witnesses to influence their families and communities here in this darkened India.

Conclusion: All glory, laud and honor to Him alone. In our next VBS - 2009, we have a goal of reaching many more children, as we are concentrating more on new villages, tribal Thandas (groups). This goal can only be reached if all of us hold our hand together and move forward. God is providing for our needs now and is building our CLCI VBS ministry team more strongly. God is faithful! God did more than what we imagined! We pray that His blessings may rest upon all the children that have been contacted through the humble and earnest endeavor of VBS-08. Please pray that the Lord will use this CLCI VBS ministry to bring many into His kingdom and to call some into full-time Christian service. Praying for you and May the Lord bless you all. Thank you very much –

Rev. Jyothi Benjamin

