

SOUTH INDIA NEWSLETTER – WEEK 3

Greetings one and all, it is so wonderful to be writing to you once again! This week has been drastically different from the last and it has felt like I've not really had chance to sit down and properly process what has actually happened, so it is nice to be able to finally sit and put pen to paper (or fingers to keys!). Last Thursday I took the train from Chennai to Bangalore to attend another Youth Skills Enhancement Training Camp, and this time I was asked to lead a session on the value of using drama in church. Although this wasn't my first train journey, I still found the experience both absolutely terrifying and awfully exciting all at the same time, thankfully people have been very kind and helped me ("the confused tourist") get off at the right stops. I arrived in Bangalore in the late evening so only had time for a quick bite to eat before it was time for bed. The next day I sat in on some of the other sessions, which this time were being led by a woman named Jensie who taught the young people about workplace etiquette. In the evening I led my session on drama, which didn't go exactly to plan! You see I had heard the young people singing in the day, so I decided to go "off script" and teach them some basic singing skills instead. The young people seemed to enjoy this, and it was nice to be able to put some of what I had been taught into practice. Afterwards we all went out for ice-cream (which was very much needed after a drama workshop in the Indian heat!) and I got to see a bit more of Bangalore. It was nice to chat with some of the young people to and get to know them a bit better, however I did find it difficult seeing the great number of poor people begging on the streets.

Fortunately the youth leader was with us and was able to offer some help to the young children we encountered on the streets. The next day the young people had their final morning session before being given their certificates and heading home. My train was booked for the following morning meaning I had one more evening left in Bangalore, I managed to get in contact with my friend Ruben, who I met when I travelled to India last year and I spent the evening with him, exploring Bangalore and meeting his family. In the photo on the right you'll see me and Ruben tucking into some delicious Pani Puri at the street vendors near his home, and I have to admit the Pani Puri in Bangalore is a lot better than in Chennai (sorry Chennai!).



After another long train journey back to Chennai, I returned to the Synod Centre and helped the communication team here finish setting up for an Art Camp that would be starting the following day. The Art Camp was organized to bring together painters and sculptors from across each diocese to give them the space to create Christian art pieces, mainly focused on social justice themes. I wish I could show you all the pieces of art that were created, it was a true blessing to see how God had blessed these people with an extraordinary gift of creativity and how engaged they were with social justice issues, such as casteism and sexism. As part of the camp, we also got to hear several talks from those in the arts field, one that particularly stood out to me was a talk given on the links between literature and art from an English professor from Bangalore. Now although my creative

medium is definitely in drama, I was encouraged by the other artists to have a go at painting, so in the photo on the left you'll be able to see me having a try (probably the first time I've painted since secondary school!). Now, despite feeling extremely exhausted having just finished the Art Camp I am feeling very blessed to have been a part of a creative community here that is so passionate about social change, I hope I can bring some of that creativity and passion back with me to the U.K. Blessings to you all!

Prayer Points: To be more confident in asking questions, embracing new experiences and having a go at doing things outside my comfort zone.