

Bethany Visit February 2024

John and Joanna

Nothing prepares you for your visit to Bethany as a volunteer. Look at the website, watch the videos and you will begin to get an idea. The journey to get there is not for the faint-hearted. Three flights, plus two hours in a land-cruiser and lots of time hanging around in airports. Flights delayed or cancelled, but the moment the land-cruiser pulls into Bethany village you are surrounded by excited, happy, and smiling children, who are grabbing your hands, carrying your bags, welcoming you.

As a former maths teacher, John was soon rediscovering the joys of teaching, working alongside Mr Alfred with Standard 3, 6 and 7. I was with the younger end of the school, telling stories and looking down at a sea of upturned faces. I also took smaller groups for reading practice, which was very rewarding. We both became involved in the worship with prayers, and I preached on the second Sunday. Lying in bed in the morning, we woke to the sounds of the children singing in the day by torchlight. The staff were fantastic and welcoming and very open to us being there. In some ways we seemed to have been there for months, but the time went all too quickly, and we said goodbye, Kwaheri, but we hope it is Au revoir as we want to return. I wrote this little verse to express our feelings (to be sung to the tune of What a friend we have in Jesus)

“We’re so sad our time here’s over.
It’s goodbye from you and me.
Bethany’s in our hearts forever
Now its time for us to leave.

No more songs at dawn by torchlight.
No more working in the school.
We will miss the staff and children.
We will leave hearts so full.”