

September 5, 2010

Hello!

This week was the last week before the kids at the orphanage start back at school. I did not come to Ghana with the intention of teaching, but because several of the kids have asked me if I will volunteer at their school, I have accepted an offer to teach there. It has been such a challenging but rewarding experience conducting lessons at the orphanage while the kids have been on holiday, and I decided that I would love to try teaching in what will hopefully be a slightly more structured environment.

During this week's lessons, the orphanage's live-in teacher and I helped the kids review what they learned before the break, in preparation for the start of classes. I know they have had a good time on holiday, but most seem eager to get back into the routine of going to class.

I have gotten into the habit of sitting with the kids everyday while they eat lunch (usually plain rice with a bit of sauce or banku, a traditional Ghanaian

dish that looks a bit like mashed potatoes but is actually made of fermented corn and Cassava and has a bitter taste). The kids have now started saying, "You are invited" when I sit with them, which essentially means that they welcome me to their table and invite me to try their food. I have had so many amazing experiences in Ghana, but somehow I am more content sitting with the kids while they eat every day than almost anything else I have experienced while here — I love knowing that I am invited to their table and that they genuinely enjoy me sitting with them.

This weekend, a group of volunteers and I traveled to Keta, a refreshingly untouristy fishing village about six hours southeast of Kwamso by road, where we stayed at the quiet Keta Beach Hotel. On our only full day in Keta, we saw a historic slave fort, which had been mostly destroyed by a storm. A local guide showed us around the fort, and while it was not as massive and

elaborate as the slave forts around Cape Coast, it was nevertheless very interesting. After exploring the fort, we each paid a few local fishermen a couple of Cedis to take us by boat around Keta Lagoon. We boarded three very shaky and leaky canoes (it was our responsibility to bail water out of the boats using small plastic containers), which took us to several small islands in the lagoon. We ended our day in Keta with a visit to what is reportedly the oldest lighthouse in Ghana. Our trip to Keta was possibly my favorite weekend in Ghana so far. It was nice to get away for a relaxing weekend, but I am looking forward to what I am sure will be a hectic first week of teaching.

All the Best,

Abby