

# Oregon: Adjusting to changes

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I went on my first mission trip when I was 8 years old. My parents introduced me to missions when they took me to Reynosa, Mexico, with our church. I was so heartbroken to see how the people we ministered to live, I could not help but want to do whatever it took to help them while we were there.

Since then, I have fallen in love with missions. Throughout middle school and high school, I went on numerous mission trips with my youth group, locally in Houston, to other cities in Texas and also to Florida, Missouri, New York, Louisiana and Arkansas. During all of those trips, I was under the protection and authority of adults, and I had to follow a really strict schedule and a lot of rules one normally would require of minors.

My latest mission trip, to Beaverton, Ore., was a different story. This was my first mission trip where I flew on a plane all by myself, did not have adult supervision 24/7 and was completely responsible for myself. I was really nervous about all of these things at the beginning of the trip. But God, as always, reminded me that even when I am “alone,” I am not alone. He put amazing people in my path at the airports and planes to help guide me, and they served as a reminder to me that God always will take care of me, no matter the situation.

As I got into the ministry portion of the trip, the rest of the team and I hosted Christmas parties for both kids and adults, baked a lot of cookies and gave them out to people, caroled through an apartment complex, offered two photoshoot sessions for families to take their Christmas family photo for free, and helped one of our supervisor’s neighbors decorate a house for Christmas.

But we hit a lot of bumps in the road, when things that had been planned in advance were cancelled at the last minute. For someone who works better with structure, I became extremely frustrated and irritated with how much our plans were changing all at once. I even started getting anxious a lot, to the point where part of me was ready to just give up.

But one morning, our supervisor started the day with a team meeting. She told us she felt the need to share what God had done so far, since she knew we were getting discouraged with all of the last-minute changes. She told us we had encouraged many families. In one family from Mexico, the husband moved a few steps closer to accepting Christ. Members of a Muslim family all are ready to accept Christ. A couple who have been living together for years and have three kids are engaged now. The family whose house we helped decorate for Christmas was encouraged at a point when they were having a really rough time with their church. She also talked about the kids and parents we had encouraged during the parties.

After hearing all of these things, I realized something. Satan tried to get in my way by making me frustrated and anxious about how crazy the week had been. But God stepped in and made these changes, because he knows better than we do. God wanted us to minister to other people in a different way. Now that I think about it, if our plans had not changed, we would not have been able to impact the specific families we did.

Overall, through this trip, God taught me he not only can change plans on mission trips, but also can do the same in my everyday life. I do not need to be anxious, worried or frustrated, because God knows better than me. I still will have a great impact on people for the advancement of God's kingdom, simply because he is in control. I am so thankful God allowed me to go on this trip. He taught me a lot about myself and about life, and I always want to be ready for whatever God has in store for me for the rest of college, as well as in the future.

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