

Philippians ones were great too!) as we delved deep into the word of God and were all challenged in the best way possible to hear and listen when God whispers to us, as well as how we can use what we've learnt when going back into UK culture.

Colombia highlight - I really enjoyed getting involved more in worship through singing and playing guitar, specifically in the Monteria camp. We taught the kids 'My Lighthouse', 'I Thank God' and 'More than Conquerors' among other English worship songs and it was so amazing to be able to see the kids become more familiar with the songs and to enjoy worshipping our father in any and all languages.

How God has worked in my life - My life has been drastically changed by being a part of Step; before I only lived for Jesus on a Sunday morning and now I am on fire for God! It's been amazing to be surrounded by such strong Christian's uplifting me in my faith and being inspirations for how I want to live my life back home. Before this experience, I was too scared to get baptised and I made up excuses when people asked but barely a week into Ecuador I knew I wanted to get baptised and live for Jesus like I never had before.

Ben:

Wow! Where do I even start? From building a church roof with a broken wrist in Ecuador to leading worship in the youth camps of Colombia, there has been so many incredible experiences. However, I've chosen to end this experience as it started...with God slap bang in the centre of it all. Over these 4 months I have been blessed to further my education of the Bible and gain a greater grasp on understanding why and how God works. As I look back I reflect on times where God was with me in my weakness, through my various health issues: from broken bones to migraines and tropical illnesses, I can truly say that God has taught me to lean on him always. This was particularly highlighted to me when I went back to the Ecuadorean hospital (the second time of three in this trip I'd visit a hospital) to find out that God had mended my wrist and I was able to join back in with the construction. God is good all the time, all the time God is good. I've had so many highlights this trip, from going to paintball with the Ecuadorean men, finding a new joy in leading worship across both countries and seeing God's love being spread worldwide. However, my highlight across this whole trip was the times we spent with Lily and Abby which included many greenfrost trips, dinners, Tsachilla tribe visits, going to the farm where I had a bull named after me, and of course the many medical appointments (yes I got to witness Abigail Murphy's first live reaction to a cast being put on). My leaving message of this whole experience comes from Romans 5:3-5 "Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us."

Anoushka:

I feel incredibly blessed that God invited me into his mission field in Latin America, my heart has been transformed over this special time. I cannot begin to describe the impact the beautiful people of Ecuador and Colombia have had on me. I went out to South America believing I could help people, but they helped me. They've showed me determination, passion for Jesus and spiritual strength. From living in the community of Union Civica in Ecuador and seeing God so powerfully place his hand of protection over the church to forming relationships with the mothers and women of El Cerrito and seeing them spiritually grow. God is moving so powerfully all the time. I will always hold this time as a special one where God has taught me how much I need to rely on him. Living with 7 other Christians my age has brought me so much encouragement and fellowship and learning how to devote our time to the Lord and pray to him in every situation as a team has been incredible. The joy of the Lord is our strength! I've also seen that God isn't confined to borders, countries or languages. As our Ecuadoran mum would say we really are united wherever we are from as hermanos en Cristo. (brothers and sisters in Christ)

Maddie:

There's not enough words to describe the past 4 months - believe me I've tried! I have felt so utterly blessed by God for having this experience and being able to create memories I know will last a lifetime. Through the highs and lows He has been the anchor holding me steady. And I am forever grateful to God for that. Whilst I hope I have shown something of God's love to the people I have met out in Latin America, I know for definite that I have been shown that very same love by those I have met. To have a God that unites across entire oceans is so breathtakingly incredible.

Issy:

This trip has taught me what true active and living faith looks like. In James he talks about living faith, teaching us that 'Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead' (2v17). God taught me on this trip that I before was living a dead faith, I had a Sunday faith, a youth camp faith but not a constant 24/7 living faith. Through all the amazing people we were blessed to meet I saw what unwavering devotion to the Lord really looked like, what it meant to really serve in the hardest of times, to give your all to people who needed it. I met Jesus many times, every new person I was meeting taught me more about what it looks like to walk along the path of our Saviour. I was taught what it looked like to give up all dignity, all sense of pride for Jesus, where nothing else mattered, for we have an audience of one. I have been blessed with such a strong and real understanding of what Christian fellowship looks like, relationships where 'iron sharpens iron', where prayer and seeking glory for God are at the centre and I am a changed person for it. If I could I would relive every moment, not just the times of hysterical laughter or just amazing

joy, but all the tears and frustration too because in the end it is in all these moments that I learnt what has become something I lean on so heavily, that our God is good in all things, he is the same God yesterday, today and forever. I am and always will be first and foremost a child of God.

- Many thanks for following along - Your 2025 Step Team x



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