



On the journey...

He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. Mark 16:15-16

We have returned to the US from our time in Ecuador where we learned the language, experienced the culture, and built relationships. We lived in a small city called Macas, which is along the edge of the Shuar territory, our target-people group. The city of Macas provided us with the opportunity to experience the larger Ecuadorian culture, but we also learned about and experienced the Shuar culture. We learned how the Ecuadorians have a slower pace of life and value relationships more than business. As you might imagine, we had adjustments to make when we returned to our “busy culture” in the states.



When it came to learning the language, we used the “immersion method.” We had tutors who would work with us part of the day a couple days a week, and then we’d practice our language skills by taking different “language routes” in the city. If we had a list of items to buy, we wouldn’t purchase all of them in one location. We would buy one thing at one store, a couple at the next, and one at another until the list was complete. Because of this, we spent time at multiple locations practicing our language skills and building relationships. Some of the storeowners we got to know even invited us to dinner, which provided some longer and more intense opportunities to practice our language. Our children spent time with the tutors, but they didn’t go on the language routes. Instead of going with us on the language routes, we put our children in an Ecuadorian Christian school part-time where some of the students spoke some English. This



gave the kids an opportunity to practice their Spanish with bilingual students who helped them learn faster.

We also appreciated the new relationships we built. The church we attended in Macas provided us with the opportunity to meet and get to know a lot of different families. Some of our strongest relationships were made with them. We also got to know a really sweet Christian family that owned a store, but they were not associated with the church. Other relationships included some Shuar from a church in Shimpis who did outreach to other Shuar communities and a non-Christian couple who were newly pregnant. It was also our pleasure to get to know missionaries from many other organizations in Ecuador: Reach Beyond, Global Outreach, Reaching and Teaching, and others. These missionaries gave us the opportunity to speak English outside our home and still keep a little of our own culture while we made adjustments.

Highlights for the family:

Russell: I enjoyed experiencing a missionary group that came in and started an in-depth Bible study program for Shuar pastors. It was a good experience to see how teaching could be implemented.

Sarah: I really enjoyed getting to know a young pregnant Shuar couple named Nantar and Holgar. They frequently visited us in order to hear the heartbeat of their baby. It was a giddy delight for them when they heard the baby's heart beat the first time. They live farther in the jungle where women give birth unattended, on palm leaves, and outside their home.

Joe: I really like visiting the villages and the jungle. I look forward to being in the jungle again. When I came back to the US, it was easier to speak and way "funner." I like being with my friends here, and I don't get laughed at for being the silly gringo at school. I can also play organized sports here.

Emma: I liked the foods, positive cultural aspects, learning a new language, and learning about the way Ecuadorians go about their everyday life. I enjoyed progressing in my fluency of Spanish. I also loved getting to see my mom's friend give birth to her baby; I was her photographer. The things I liked about returning to the US are being able to fully connect with people because I can speak English, making new friends, the climate, opportunities to go places, and moving to a new town and school. I love sports, Future Farmers of America (FFA), and my agricultural class.

Ruth: In Ecuador I liked my friends and getting to go to an Ecuadorian birthday party. I always looked forward to visiting the jungle and climbing trees. In the US I like seeing old friends, making new friends, and going to a school where I can actually speak to people.

With much Love,
The Badgley's (Russell, Sarah, Emma, Ruth)

