

Blessings of school worship & devotions.

Dear Friends,

This article will serve as a short intermission, so I can come back in the next article to talk about how the graduation ceremony for the total of 24 students - 17 in Kindergarten II, and 7 in Junior High School - went. Please see the July article if you missed this exciting announcement.

The Akrapma school is in their third and last term of the 2016/2017 academic year. It will end in the last week of July, and re-open in September for the 2017/2018 academic year. Since the school's inception, it has grown from just kindergarten through 6th grade, to now include a junior high school, with the junior high school producing its first batch of Grade 9 graduates this year. First Lutheran Church, entirely built the two blocks of classrooms that accommodate the pupils from Kindergarten through 6th grade. The junior high school block of classrooms was built by the government, for Grades 7 to 9.

The Akrapma School is feeding our children, and giving them an education, designed by the Ghana Education Service. But I think one of the most significant events to impact the children is the Wednesday worship and devotions.

Every Wednesday, the whole school, including the teachers, gather in the place of worship. What is this place of worship? Right from the very beginning I instructed the builders to design a huge classroom that has folding doors that separate two classrooms. I prayed that the future would hold a population increase such that one classroom wasn't going to be adequate for such gatherings. It was very good planning; still, after all these years, the place becomes very congested when we gather for Devotion/School worship. The size of each classroom accommodates twenty-four children seated at their desks, but we squeeze a lot more children into each desk on Wednesday's.

With the current school population of 126 students in the K-6th grade & 30 students in the junior high, we have a total of 156 students, plus teachers, and me, in this room for Wednesday devotions. It is not difficult to see how that makes it very crowded, but what a great "problem" to have. It's such a blessing for this many people to hear the Word of God for 40 minutes each Wednesday at our Akrapma school!

The form and nature of the school worship/devotion is very simple. When the children gather, we begin with the singing of **Choruses**, with drumming and clapping of hands, in tune. Once in awhile when the excitement and enjoyment is high, we permit a few children to dance to the music. That is the nature of local Ghanaian worship settings in the churches, the use of drums, tambourines, etc., during worship, and the children are familiar with that. After this prelude, a **Prayer** is said and then reading of **Scripture**. Most often the Scripture is just one verse, the intention of it is so the children can memorize it. Then there is a brief address, followed by **Offertory** time. We use that to teach the children 'giving to the Lord', which they see in the churches they attend. They dance and move up to the bowl, putting their pennies into the bowl. After this, we say the closing prayer and they are dismissed back to their classrooms.

The students of the junior high school join those of the Basic School at school worship because they are on our same compound and administered by one head teacher. We are looking into the future where, as the population increases, it would be wonderful to be able to build a **Worship Auditorium** specifically for these events and others, where the children all will be able to gather at one place.

Pray for us as these children grow in their faith and knowledge.

Blessings, Pastor Ben