

N O V E M B E R 2 0 1 0

DESERT BLOOMS

Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati

PROYECTO SANTO NIÑO * ANAPRA, MEXICO

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Top picture:
The clinic
prepared for
morning
reflection.

Picture in the
middle: Celia,
Teo, and
Sandra study
and share in
their small
group.

There was a spirit of excitement in the air as the moms walked into the clinic one Saturday early in November. This day was not about doing therapy with their child or keeping track of their other little ones running around. This day was about THEM. They dropped off their kids in the first room where Sisters Peggy and Carol and some other volunteers had agreed to be the childcare workers for the day. Then, they entered into the big room where we had prepared a workshop for them.

They found a circle of chairs with a bowl of water in the center, candles, and a statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe looking over it all. They found a table with different colored folders that they could choose from and decorate. They also smelled the aroma of freshly brewing coffee and muffins. It was a joy to see them interact and soak up this space that had been created just for them to relax, pray, reflect, and have fun – a space they do not often have.

The theme of the workshop was “Women of Scripture” with a sub-theme of “Agua de Vida” (Water of life) since we focused on the Bible story of the Samaritan woman who speaks with Jesus at the well. We began our day with centering prayer and a ritual in which each woman poured water into the same bowl to represent her uniqueness and gifts mixing with that of the other women. Then we poured more water into the bowl representing Jesus and how he, too, comes to be one with us as we are with each other. We were all very aware of and touched by God’s presence in the room.

The morning progressed with some hilarious ice-breaker games during which the bowl of water from prayer accidentally got knocked over. Of course all the women were doubled over in laughter for about five minutes. We learned basic history of the Bible and then got into a deeper discussion of women in the Bible and what it was like to be a woman in those times. We talked

about how women were unable to speak to men in public, how they did not have opportunities to realize their dreams, how they were the equivalent of a slave or even property. The moms at the workshop were incredibly knowledgeable about all of this, and were able to offer insightful reflections about how women all over the world still live those oppressive realities today. One woman in the circle even shared that as a child in Mexico, her family SOLD her to another family for a plot of land. In the last thirty years! We still have far to go in our world in asserting the rights of all people. We also talked about how, despite the restrictions of society at the time, Jesus spent time with and spoke to women, included them as equal disciples in the building of his Kingdom, and loved them very much. They reflected on how they, too, have felt that love from God and how they know that they, too, share an important role in the Church.

As we delved into the reading about the Samaritan woman at the well, women shared beautiful reflections about how they have received Christ’s living water in their own lives, and about how we ourselves can bring the news of the living water to others. They asserted that through our actions of service and words of encouragement to other people we can be instruments of God’s love. We closed with a prayer of intentions offered by each woman, many of them prayers of thanks for family, friends, life, and all of the good gifts that Jesus has given them.

There were also prayers for the health of their children and for peace in Juarez.

After a heartfelt sign of peace the doors to the “kids’ room” opened to release them back to their moms. All the volunteers came in too, and we shared a big meal of ham and potatoes that Sister Peggy had prepared. The “babysitters” recounted the blast they had with the kids. They had pushed back the therapy tables and covered the floor with our new tumbling mats (purchased recently with your donations- Thank you!). All of the kids were together on the mats in our version of “main-streaming”, interacting and enjoying each others’ company which is the best therapy of all.

It was a great day. A day for togetherness and community for kids and moms alike. A day for the women of Proyecto Santo Niño to PAUSE and receive the living water of Jesus and one another.

