
ARIEL & CARLYE GOMES

September 2018 Update



2 weeks in...

Though we've only been in Senegal for two weeks, it feels like we have been here for so much longer. The past two weeks have been challenging; full of new ideas, experiences, fears, exciting happenings, friends, joys, tears, and laughter. It wouldn't be an honest update if I didn't express how much we miss our dogs, but we have also experienced how God is the mender of broken hearts, so we are trusting that this is all for not only our good, but for Jax and Phoebe's good as well.

First Full Week of School

Impressions: Ariel

The first full week of teaching has gone far better than I anticipated. I walked into my first class on Monday morning with absolutely no idea what to do - do I ask their names? Should we just dive right into the lesson? Do they have books? Do they speak English? So we just dove right into "French conjugation and grammar" - a subject I am definitely not an expert in. After an hour of misspelling French words on the board, and saying "I'm not sure, I'll get back to you on that tomorrow" to just about every question the students asked, I thought to myself "this is gonna be a long year." But as the kids started to pack their bags and walk out of the classroom, a number of them took the time to say "thanks, that was fun!" As the week went by, I began to feel more confident about teaching. Each class felt easier than the last, and as the week drew to a close, I feel that it was a success. I incorporated more activities in each class, and the kids are having a blast.



A peek inside Carlye's 4th & 5th grade classroom

First Full Week of School Impressions: Carlye

Donald Miller says that "all God really wants from us [is] to live inside a body he made and enjoy the story and bond with us through the experience." As a literature teacher, I've been thinking a lot about what makes a story good, and recently challenged my 8th graders to consider what might make not only a literary story good, but also what might make a life's story good. Since a character is what he or she does, rather than his or her dogmas, I've found myself scrapping the idea of being a teacher who demands perfection and replacing it with the embrace of whimsy. I think the most frequent sentence in my lectures is, after pausing to hear what a student says, "Yeah! What IF... (our lives were movies/horses could talk...)" and allowing myself to thrive in the imperfection. It's not as romantic as it sounds. Most of the time, my classes are the loudest in the building. We'll work on that, and hopefully someday I'll stop taking aspirin every day after school. Until then, we'll dream and laugh and wonder and hypothesize. Life moves too fast to focus on enforcing perfection.

Prayer Requests

One of the things we have been baffled by over and over again is how very aware of your prayers we are. We will often be going about our days and randomly come to the realization that someone back home is praying for us. It's hard to describe how amazing that feels. Know that your prayers are being heard, that God is near to us, and that we are keeping you in our prayers as well!

- Pray for us as we continue to teach; as the fun of a new school year begins to fade and we begin to enter the "nitty gritty" of the work we're called to.
- Pray that we have the wisdom to discern when we're supposed to embrace distractions in our classrooms and when it's time to be firm and get things done.
- Pray that we would be able to love our students extravagantly and well. Pray that we know what that means :)
- Pray for our health - it's rainy season, which means mosquitoes are bountiful, and they seem to generally like Carlye more than Ariel. Pray against malaria and other mosquito-carried diseases that we are at higher risk than usual for.
- Pray for comfort for Carlye as she is really missing being the youth pastor at First, and life in Sioux Falls!
- Please continue to pray for comfort for us as we really miss our doggies!

“According to God, we are here to love. Not much else really matters.”

-Francis Chan