

March 1, 2021 IT'S ALL PART OF THE JOB... Oh, the things I do for my middle schoolers! This year I have taken on a new role. I don't really know what the official title is, maybe "Advisory Planner," though that doesn't really encompass all of what I do. We don't have a middle school counselor this year, so my coworker and I took on one aspect of that role, focusing on helping students who are struggling academically as well as planning our advisory meetings. It has been a fun and challenging role to play! It is so hard to help students who are in a different country and struggling and won't respond to emails or messages! Advisory is something we started doing in middle school a few years ago, and it's somewhat like a homeroom class. The students are split into grade and gender groups and have a teacher as their leader. The purpose is for building relationships, having a teacher who can check in on students and mentor them, and also for helping students grow as people. We have used a set curriculum in the past, but that curriculum isn't conducive to online learning. So, my coworker and I have been designing the curriculum this year. Advisory has provided a place for students to build connections in a time where they are often still very isolated. It gives them a chance to grow spiritually, have fun, and get to know a group of their peers. We also have a friendly "Battle of the Squads" competition going on. After earning a certain amount of points, squads are able to "sandbag a teacher" - or make them do something ridiculous. In the Philippines, children under the age of 15 still are not allowed out of their houses or out in public places except to exercise. How this breaks my heart! Many of these kids have barely left their houses in the past year. They long for connection with others. One of the high school girls I am disciplining asks almost every week for us to pray that we will have face-to-face school next year. She struggles with depression already, and being in quarantine for so long has made it worse. And there are so many others like these two students. God created us for community. In the very beginning, the first thing God said wasn't good was that man was alone (Genesis 2:18). We need others. And so, we at Faith Academy are praying earnestly that we will be able to have in-person school next year. We are praying that the government will lighten restrictions and that vaccines will soon be available here (they are just starting to be available). Would you pray with us? Would you pray for my students who are stuck at home and are struggling to find motivation? Would you pray for those who are depressed? Would you pray that God would provide meaningful relationships for them while we wait for face-to-face school? Would you pray that God would use this time to draw them closer to Himself? Thank you for your partnership with my ministry through your prayers. I know God hears them and uses them. I know someday we'll look back on this time and see all the amazing things God was doing in it. May God bless you richly. And maybe see how fun it is to eat cake with your hands behind your back! ;) Send me a video if you do.

Amanda Praises • I have been able to find a good routine, now that I have been back in the Philippines for a few months and have had the first six-week block of school for the semester! • More Faith Academy staff are returning! Quite a few arrived in the last week or so. • We had the last week off of school as a break. It was a great time of rest, refreshment, and reconnecting for me. Prayer Requests • Pray that God would be close to those who are really struggling with the lockdowns and protocols due to Covid. • Pray that God would provide the staff we need at Faith Academy for next year, and that they would be able to easily get into the country. • Pray for continued wisdom and strength as I teach online and disciple four high-school girls.