

This morning students at Immanuel Christian School were reminded of how privileged they are. Sheila Dykstra, a Christian Reformed World Missions teacher from Nigeria, shared details about her work as she led Chapel this morning. After opening with the song, Cast Your Burdens on Jesus, students learned about the physical burdens children in Nigeria face as well as the emotional and social burdens they need to deal with.

To appreciate some of the challenges of Nigerian life, Immanuel students had an opportunity to carry water 'Nigerian style', putting makeshift padding on their head to carry a 20 liter jug of water. Nigeria children often walk great distances carrying water. Tasks like this are regularly done before these students head to school for the day.

Ms. Dykstra instructs teachers in Nigeria who often don't deliver nearly the same quality of instruction that students receive at Immanuel. Many Nigerian teachers simply have students spend all day copying notes off a chalkboard. This is true of kindergarten students as well as grade 8 students. Students are expected to learn from that and are then tested on their learning at the end of the week. Ms. Dykstra not only teaches Nigerian teachers how to improve their pedagogy but she also teaches them that "This World Belongs to God". This highlights not only the importance of reading and writing but to also recognizing that God created this world and that he takes care of it.

Our students at Immanuel are indeed privileged. They don't need to carry water on their head. More importantly, we have teachers who have developed their pedagogical skills to engage students in their learning, and contribute to their learning by making connections with their experiences and learning. The main lesson learned this morning was realizing that all of our students are privileged. Despite that, Immanuel students, like students in Nigeria, need to rely on Christ to help them bear their burdens. This is both important and comforting to know.

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