

Testimonies from 2015 Book of Mormon Internship

By Jenna Luedeman

Getting into the Internship

Jenna Luedeman

Ever since I was young, I had heard about the internship. I knew several people who had been a part of it, and I think deep inside I had plans of becoming a part of it myself. The first year I was eligible, I had plans and then the next summer was the same story. By the beginning of this year, the internship was out of my mind and I had several different issues on my mind.

I was talking to a friend about some of the issues on my mind. His response to me was I should apply to the internship. This conversation took place about a week before the application was due and I was not even sure if I really wanted to do this. I went ahead and applied and during the week, I asked several people if they were willing to write a letter of recommendation and have it sent in within a week. I submitted my application, but I still found myself wrestling with this internship. I had several concerns about the internship.

I got a call informing me I'd been offered an interview and I went ahead and did it. I didn't have any idea of what the interview would be like and what to expect. When I went in, I recognized several people. After the interview, I decided it was not for me. I felt like my interview went far from good. By not being a part of this internship, I wouldn't have had to face my concerns and I could just move on with my life. However, God had a different plan. I got a call the following afternoon from Sugar. She told me she felt badly that I didn't want to be a part of the internship and offered me another chance. She said she felt like I was supposed to be here and the internship would be very different from the interview. Lynn stated something I said during the interview that rang with him and told him I was supposed to be here. I consented and told them I'd be a part of the internship.

Between that phone call and the first day of the internship, I was really wrestling with my decision. I didn't know what to do or how to handle the issues I was facing. God had the answers and they were about to unfold once my semester ended. It started out with a change of heart. After my semester ended, I didn't know how to use my time and I felt a need to go on an adventure with Christ. I think deep down inside, I was hoping this adventure would take place before the internship, but instead, I had to wait until it began.

The first day we got together was at the Baumgarts on June 8th. I remember going to their place and talking with the new interns. It was mostly a get to know each other event with our first official day on Monday. I went home that evening with a burden. During my interview, I told the board, "If I apply myself to something, I'd do it 100% and give it my all." When I went home, I realized I was still holding reservations and there was no way I could give 100% toward the internship. I prayed about this and told God that either we were going to have to work through my reservations or he would have to take them away. There was no way I was going to walk into the foundation on Monday and not give my all.

God has an amazing way of answering prayers. I woke up that Monday morning feeling completely free. I had no reservations and all of my concerns were handled. I remember going in feeling like I was ready for the internship and I'm so thankful I did this.

The Seeping Stopped

Jenna Luedeman

Before the internship began, I went ahead and had a minor surgery. I had been having trouble with a couple of ingrown toenails and I wanted them taken care of. With advancement in technology and medical practices, a minor procedure could be done and removal of the ingrown portion of the toenail could be removed. So, middle of May, I went into the podiatrist and had it taken care of on my big toe on the left. What I didn't calculate was how long it would seep before I would be done with the band aids. The doctor said 6 to 8 weeks and the trip would be taking place a little before that time. My concern was the toe would be seeping on the trip and if it was seeping, then it would be an open wound. The water down there isn't drinkable for Americans and I didn't know if it would be bad to use on an open wound. The last thing I wanted was to have an infection because there were parasites or other microorganisms in the water. God was good and even though it was still seeping until we left, it stopped before I took my first shower in the hotel. To me, this was a blessing.

Earplugs for Eva

Jenna Luedeman

On June 22, the day before we left for our trip to Belize, we worked on our prayer list. During this time, we see which prayers have been answered and add names to the prayer list if we can think of any. Since it was the day before we left, a lot of our prayer list focused on our trip and concerns people had about leaving the country. One person in our group mentioned her concern for the flights. She suffers from airplane ear and finds flights to be very painful. She asked that we pray for her ears for our flights.

Throughout the day, people came up to her with ideas to help her ears adjust to the pressure. Things like chew gum, plug your nose and blow and yawning were some of the remedies people recommended. Unfortunately, for her, she'd tried these things and it didn't work. After our classes ended, I needed to go home and pack for the trip, but for some reason, I thought I'd research some remedies for airplane ear just to see if there was something else we hadn't mentioned to her.

One of the remedies I found for airplane ear that wasn't mentioned throughout the day was filtered earplugs. They look like tree tops and consist of filters within them. In other words, one end is small with about two rings each one slightly bigger than the first. The way they work is they reduce the amount of pressure the eardrum feels (such as in flight). I thought this was neat, but I didn't have plans to go to the store to purchase some. So, instead, I grabbed my waterproof earplugs, which looked like the filtered earplugs, but I wasn't sure if they really were.

The following day, at the airport, I was talking with my friend about the filtered earplugs. I asked her if she'd tried them before and she told me she hadn't. I gave her the option to use them if she wanted to and eventually I coaxed her into trying them. As I pulled the pair of earplugs from my backpack, I took a look at them and realized they were indeed filtered

earplugs! They were clear and I could see the filters in them. She ended up using them for all of the flights and didn't have any pain. God was so good in answering prayers!

Little Paint, Lots of Walls

Jenna Luedeman

The first whole day we were in Belize, we spent doing a service project for one of the schools. The task was to paint a wall that was two to three concrete bricks high. We were given one side to do and about 20 quart size paint jars. The jars contained different colored paint, so we decided to paint the wall in abstract colors with the stipulation no two bricks were the same color.

As we neared the end of the first wall, we got asked to do another one. This one was also long. We looked into our paint jars and didn't really have a lot left, but we decided we'd go until we ran out of paint. Before we started, we said a prayer asking for enough paint to finish the wall because we really didn't want to leave it partially done. Since there wasn't a lot of paint left, instead of having us all painting some of us worked on other projects for the school. The rest of us, started painting each brick alternating colors. Eventually, we neared the end and completed that wall. We never did run out of paint and, not only that, we were able to make sure there were no two bricks with the same color touching. That was truly an answer to our prayers!

Flying Standby

Jenna Luedeman

While in Belize, we stayed in a hotel. The way it worked out was the girls were in rooms five and seven while room six was vacant. A couple of days before we left, a couple (father and daughter) moved in for a few days. They were down on a mission trip to give a gift to some people they knew in Belize.

The night before we left, I had the opportunity to talk to the daughter staying in room six. She had just graduated high school and had made plans for college. Audrey and I had the opportunity to share some college tips and we talked about other things. During our conversation, we learned they had made plans to fly home the next day on the same airline at the same time as us. Unlike us, however, they were flying standby, and they were hoping to get on a flight back to the States sometime that day.

The following morning, before we left, we gathered into a circle and said a prayer. We prayed for the couple in room six to get a flight as well as have a safe journey home for all of us. Later, we saw them at the airport already to fly home. I had the opportunity to talk to them as we waited for our flight and learned there were two flights back to the States scheduled. Even though there was another flight (if they didn't make it on the first flight), I was really hoping they'd make it on the first flight just so they wouldn't have to spend their entire day in an airport.

As the time came near to board, an airline agent began making boarding announcements. One of the announcements mentioned how the flight was going to be a full flight and they highly recommended people to check in their carryon bags. I felt my heart sink at that announcement; because I got the feeling they wouldn't make the flight with us. A little bit later, I heard their name called and they went up to the gate and then sat back down. I looked over at the daughter to see if she'd gotten the "OK" to fly on this flight and she gave me a thumbs up. I was so

thankful she and her father were able to fly home on that flight. It was definitely and answer to prayer!

Coming Home

Jenna Luedeman

As our trip neared the end, it was time to come home. We had a scheduled flight from Belize departing about 11:00 and a connecting flight scheduled to depart about 5:40. The flight was about three hours long plus we gained an hour on the way back since Belize does not participate in Daylight Savings. This meant we'd be arriving in Houston about 3:00pm.

As we neared Houston, our pilot made an announcement sharing how the airport had been experiencing some bad weather. Although we made good time and arrived a little early, we couldn't land due to the weather. Eventually, the weather cleared and we landed. What I didn't realize was there were other flights waiting to land and they landed at the same time we did.

Once we landed, it was about 2:45 and we had until our next flight to make it through customs and grab dinner. Usually this isn't a problem, but when multiple planes land at the same time, this create a long line to get through customs. It took about two hours to clear customs giving us about an hour to eat, but the new issue was our connecting flight didn't have a set departure time. Due to the weather Houston was experiencing and the weather at home, our flight was still in limbo. One minute, the flight was delayed while the next minute it was in operations. Operations means the flight was not completely determined most likely due to needing a plane, from what I was told. The good news...we had time to eat dinner.

Most of us didn't want to spend the rest of our evening at the airport and watching our flight departing later and later while hearing other flights being cancelled was sort of unsettling. About 6:00p, we looked at the departure board and it should have been the time we could have boarded, but it said the flight was still in operations. At this time, James decided it was time to pray about this. Although many of us were praying silently, it really was time we came together to pray. Shortly after the prayer ended, we heard our boarding call over the PA system. It really was a testimony. We had a safe flight home and made it home at a descent hour. God is so good!