

Find the fun

*In this post, I'd like to share a guest commentary from one of my sixth-grade students, 12-year-old **Alaina Ramirez**. She talks about a recent visit to the NorthBay Adventure Camp.*



Every year, St. Joan of Arc sixth grade students take a week-long overnight trip to North Bay to learn about nature, practice team building exercises and experience a little independence from their parents. This year, it was my turn. I'm going to be honest, NorthBay was an experience I will never forget, but like everything, it had its pros and cons. For the most part, I had fun, but there were more than a few times I didn't.

This is a little embarrassing, but I missed the boys — a lot. I know that it sounds dumb, and I was even afraid to write about this. The first day I was upset because the first thing they did was separate me and my male friends. I thought it would pretty much ruin my entire week, but after I adjusted to being surrounded by girls, I started to have a little bit of fun.

I guess you could say I'm kind of a tomboy. Some of the girls in my cabin liked doing

their makeup in the morning. I have nothing against doing makeup. It's just not my thing. To me, makeup is a mask. It's fake. Luckily, the girls who did makeup didn't push me or anyone else to do it. That's what I like about my friends. I guess you could say I felt out of place. Although the negative thoughts were getting to my head, I tried to forget about them, and enjoy my time with my friends.

On Thursday, at lunch time, everything fell apart. Let me give you some details so this can make sense. At NorthBay, you line up outside in three rows for the girls and three rows for the boys. Then you have to be quiet so that your line can go in. Once you get inside, your food is waiting for you, but you can't eat it until everyone is inside. After everyone is inside, we say prayer.

My friends and I were at our table, bored, so one girl said, "Let's tell each other who our crushes are!"

My face felt very warm. I didn't want to. Then my friend looked at me with an aggravated face. She said, "Hey, you didn't tell me who your crush was at the ice rink!"

I froze. I didn't know what to say. Only bits of words came out of my mouth. I desperately wanted to be sitting at the boys' table, where they were probably talking about video games.

After lunch, we went back to our cabin. I started to feel really sick. As soon as we got back to the cabin, I lay down in my bunk feeling as tired as ever. To our surprise, ants had gotten into one of the girl's and the counselor's bunks. It was a disaster. People were getting angry, and started blaming each other. While this was happening, my friend came over to me and said, "Are you feeling okay?" I answered, "No." She put her hand on my forehead. When she took her hand off, she had a shocked look on her face. She said, "Oh my gosh, you're burning!" Our counselor

came over to where we were and felt my forehead. She then took me to the Wellness Center. That's when my week ended.

As I said in the beginning, everything has its pros and cons. Aside from my frustrations with being separated from my usual friends, I had some fun with the girls, too. My favorite parts were playing beach volleyball, going on the zipline, and going on the rope course. I was especially disappointed that I didn't get to go on the giant swing. To be honest, I was really sad when I had to go home.

The most important thing I learned from this experience was not to focus on the negative all the time. Focusing on the negative blocked out the good times I should have been having with my newfound friends. By the time I started enjoying myself, it was time to go. If I had adapted to the changes sooner, I would have made more positive use of my time and would not have left regretting the happy memories I could have made with people I never would have talked to otherwise. From now on, I will try to look for the positive things that are happening around me before it's too late.