



Stephen Hatch

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Location: Tanzania



What I do: Working as a maths and IT teacher and chaplain at St John's Seminary.

Dear friends,

In January I taught Form 2, 3 and 4 about code-breaking as a problem-solving activity for one lesson, with the promise that at some point I would leave them a code to break and give a prize to the first person to solve it. In June I provided two codes:

- 1) MVY AVTVVYP'Z JVKL BZL JVKL DVYK
"IYVDU"
- 2) VBJBATJZE VBSBJK VB GVBZB GTJEBIREB
IBJNJK GTSKGB YKDBJB SBST IQSBPE
GTIE JB QESB VBSBLBSB ZBVBWE

I then baked chocolate brownies as a prize for the winners; it took them about 20 minutes to break each code. (Contact me if you want a solution.)

I had not been happy with my "small group" of pupils who help lead chapel services for some time. The group had been expanding year on year and was now over 70 pupils, which meant they were not taking part properly or taking their responsibility (as role models and representing the school) seriously. (I think some were joining just to get a certificate at the end.) So I decided to "do a Gideon" to reduce their number and removed those who were not turning up to chapel, those who had been suspended and those who had too many marks against their name for various misdemeanours. (I keep records, which is useful, as when a pupil says "this is the first time I've done ____", I can check and say "actually this is the fourth time".) This took the group down to about 20 pupils. I was genuinely surprised about the departure of two girls who I would have described as trustworthy, serious pupils. After some investigation I discovered they had been suspended two years ago. On the basis that we do preach forgiveness I went to the headmaster for advice, firstly to confirm that the other remaining pupils were deemed suitable, but also for his opinion on these two girls. He agreed that their behaviour had been good ever since that incident and he was happy for them to be reinstated.

With this new reduced number, the group continued and almost instantly things improved: better participation, less disruption, better quality discussions. One of the points discussed was around Matthew 12:30: Whoever is not with me is against me. This led to discussing wars and interfering in matters that don't concern you. The prevailing opinion on Ukraine was that people shouldn't get involved because it isn't their



Code-breaking winners
eating brownies

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**With Jesus
With each other
To the edges**



war. (Bearing in mind that Tanzanians were forced to fight for Germany in the First World War and for Britain in the Second World War, so reluctance to join another makes sense.) I then asked, if Russia (after taking Ukraine) heads south and into Africa and they take Uganda and Kenya and you are next, would you want others to help you, to “interfere”? I think some of them now see why countries in the West are trying to help Ukraine.

There was a national census in August which has caused some changes to the normal school timetable. Normally we have a break in June, but this was pushed back to August so that all pupils could be at home for the census. This meant that the activities we normally do after the break were

changed or delayed and we had to do extra exams so we could make reports to give to parents on parents' day (in July) before doing the normal government-prepared ones.

Normally by August we have elected a new student government, but we had not even started the process yet and couldn't when pupils returned in first week of September because of mock exams.

I am often also asked to teach technical drawing as part of vocational training, although I haven't been asked to yet. As there is quite a large syllabus and not enough time, I usually start after the break. Knowing that I would lose time from the changes, I tried to start earlier, only for many lessons to be cancelled because of the extra examinations.

On the plus side it has meant that during IT lessons we have begun a project of a school census to give pupils an idea of the entire process involved, including deciding on which questions to ask, creating forms that can be filled in, data collection and entering all the data into a database. When they return they will continue with analysing the data and then present their findings to the school.

While the school was closed I managed to go away for a few days with some friends who came to us a few years ago on their gap year and were now returning to visit the hospital (they are currently training to be a nurse and a doctor). We went to Arusha and visited the Nduruma waterfall, at the bottom of Mount Meru. After trying and failing to find a bus that actually went to the main gate (it is inside Arusha National Park) we decided to walk there instead (about 15km up a mountain) using Google Maps. Our planned bus journey and 45-minute walk turned into about six hours of walking, which I wasn't quite expecting but it was a good day out in the end.

Finally, an update on the school well project: we have dug and found water, now we are waiting for a government official to come and test the water quality (and hopefully declare it safe).

Blessings,
Stephen



Photos from top to bottom: Pupils presenting IT work on parents' day; Nduruma waterfall; progress in drilling well



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