

A Caribbean cruise with a difference

St Lucia to Barbados

'A month on a ship in the Caribbean – how wonderful!' That was the reaction of family, friends and church members when we told them we were going on the Operation Mobilisation ship *Logos 2* to teach in the small school on board. Since retiring from teaching we have done work for the Senior Volunteer Network (SVN) in various countries, so when we heard that *Logos 2* needed a couple of teachers for a month we believed that the Lord wanted us to go. This fitted in well with a wedding we had been invited to in Mexico City.

We boarded the ship in St Lucia and spent three weeks at the quayside before a 12-hour sail to Barbados for our final week.

OM Ships International

Operation Mobilisation (OM) has over 3,000 people from 80 nations working in more than 83 countries, seeking to bring hope to the peoples of the world by sharing and proclaiming the love of God in Jesus.

OM Ships International is a ministry partner of Operation Mobilisation. It maintains two ships, *Doulos* and *Logos 2*, which sail around the world to share the Christian message. Each vessel carries a huge, permanent Christian resources exhibition. On average, approximately 2,000 visitors come on board each ship every day to browse and buy from the thousands of inexpensive Bibles, books and audio materials available. Every visitor is invited to a Gospel presentation and absolutely everyone leaves with a Christian book or cassette! Local Christians are invited to the ship to take part in meetings and training to help them in their various ministries.

Whilst on ship we were 'adopted' by a mixed group of young people with whom we occasionally prayed, ate and went on trips.



Logos 2 in St Lucia



A day at school aboard *Logos 2*

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Sharing the Gospel

There are about 200 young Christians (aged 18 to 30+) from 45 nationalities, who help in the running of the ship by cleaning, washing, cooking, working on deck and staffing the book exhibition. They go ashore periodically to work in schools, hospitals, prisons and churches, or to get stuck into 'open-air' work as and when the needs or opportunities arise. For example, following the hurricane (which swept through the Caribbean after we had left) OM volunteers helped with re-building work on Grenada.

In most ports the *Logos 2* hosts an 'International Evening' which involves dressing up in national costumes, dancing, singing folk songs and presenting the Gospel in words, mime and music.

School

The children in the ship's school are mainly English speaking and follow the English National Curriculum. Their parents are crew or staff members. During our time there the children's ages ranged from 3 to 13. They are taught in three small, well-equipped classrooms in the ship's hold (where temperatures reach 80°F). There is also a library-cum-computer room and a play area on the top deck. Key Stage 2 and 3 children have access to another computer in their classroom.

Although we mostly taught in Key Stages 1 and 3, we did spend the occasional lesson with the Key Stage 2 children – who had a permanent teacher. As well as teaching the children every day (except Sunday and Monday) from 9am to 3pm, we took them on outings to a local hotel swimming pool, a playground and the beach.

Water

On reflection, teaching on *Logos 2* was similar to teaching in a small school on dry land back in England. Working with a small number of pupils with a wide range of abilities always brings its own challenges and rewards.

The usual core subjects are studied and there is plenty of material for Arts, Crafts, Music and Science. In Key Sage 3 it was exciting to do a project on Water, part of which involved being lowered on to the sea in a lifeboat, taking part in a 'man overboard' drill and scaling a rope ladder up the ship's side – not the kinds of activities experienced in a regular landlubber's school!

The children inevitably know a great deal about various countries of the world and in Key Stages 2 and 3 everyone keeps a log about the places they visit. Yet sometimes their recollections are of whether the place had a good McDonald's, pizza place or ice-cream parlour!



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Memories

Whilst on ship we were 'adopted' by a mixed group of young people, with whom we occasionally prayed, ate and went on trips. We became good friends. In fact we still keep in touch with some of our new 'family' – we recently received an email from our 'Sudanese daughter'! We also joined teams to help in Sunday services in local churches and became involved in the daily programme of worship and teaching aboard *Logos 2*.

On our last afternoon in Barbados we went into Bridgetown with the children. Sitting in a circle near the harbour, each of the children prayed for us. This was a moving and memorable experience.

Would we do it again? Certainly, and *Logos 2's* replacement ship *Logos Hope* will have a lift!

■ Michael and Barbara Priestley

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