

The McClures

Suddenly I'm a "Tio"

Tio is "uncle" in Portuguese, but this has nothing to do with the recent birth of my niece (on July 31).

Tio is also a term of endearment, used to address adult friends and neighbors with respect, but that's not what this is about either.

In this case, *tio* is what Brazilian children call their teachers, and was what the little girl across the low, wooden Sunday School table repeated excitedly, hand in the air, barely able to stay in her seat. It took me a moment to realize, however, that *tio*, in this case, was me. Up to this point, I was just the oversized guy (by comparison) sitting in the back of the class, quietly whispering English to the two American kids. Or I was the one tall enough to grab the colored pencils off the shelf. The children hardly addressed me at all, but when they did, I was *pastor*.

But on this Sunday, things changed. *Tia* Ida, their regular Sunday School teacher, couldn't make it to church, and so I left my chair in the corner and sat down in the teacher's chair. After a moment consulting what lesson they were on, I began an impromptu rendition of Joshua and the Battle of Jericho, that made up for lack of preparation by being loud and enthusiastic, and even involved marching around the table in the center of the room, and a bunch of yelling and trumpeting in the end. We sat down and began to work on the craft, mercifully supplied in the SS materials (at least I didn't have to make *that* up on the spot).

That is when the girl began excitedly bouncing in her seat with a raised hand: "*Tio! Tio!*" And she might still be at it, if Ann Janel had not been there to point her out. Without knowing it, I had just been promoted from the scary, important title of *pastor*, to the tender status of *tio*. This status has some unforeseen perks. There is another little girl in class who, despite my attempts at friendliness over the past eight months, has refused to say a word to me; she wouldn't even shake my hand. A few minutes after I became *tio*, she was chatting away as if we had been friends all along.

How long will my new status last? Well, for the time being, Ida, who is an extremely shy and quiet person, has eagerly given me the *tio* chair for story time. So now my Sunday School time won't consist of translating for my

children in the corner of the room, but of keeping the kids coming back to see if *tio's* next Bible story can top that crazy and noisy first time, when we shouted down the walls of Jericho.

--Patrick
Story time with Tio Patrick

July 2:
Mom goes out sporting her cute new wig.



Please continue praying for my mother.

I knew when I left for the field that I was leaving "home and kindred, friend and dear one." Still, I wasn't really prepared for the difficulty of being so far from my family as my mother battles cancer.

From the moment we learned of her diagnosis, Patrick said he would put me on the next plane home if I gave the word. There was just never the right time. In the beginning there was little reason to return to Springfield while she was traveling back and forth to Chicago for treatment. Then Dad asked if I could come home to help when she had surgery.

Thinking she would not have her surgery until August, we planned for our return trip. As it worked out, she was able to get into surgery in July, giving us only three days' notice. It was peak traveling season, so the tickets were going to cost \$4,000 a person. It was a definite closed door. There was no way we could afford tickets.

We can look back and see that even this obstacle worked out for the best. Mom spent her days in the hospital in ICU, then went home and thrived. The surgery went well. The only disappointment was learning that three of the six lymph nodes they tested came back positive for cancer. The doctors told her to rest and recuperate for five weeks, after which they will do more tests and seek treatment. This means August has been a break for all of us.

So, though I never would have imagined it, I haven't been able to be with her at all during this time. Although we are not together physically we are blessed to be able to keep in touch with many e-mails, phone calls, and even video-conferencing with Skype. I'm so thankful for modern technology.

Thank you for your prayers. God has done amazing things in her body and my spirit!

--Ann Janel

Skype: next best thing to being there.



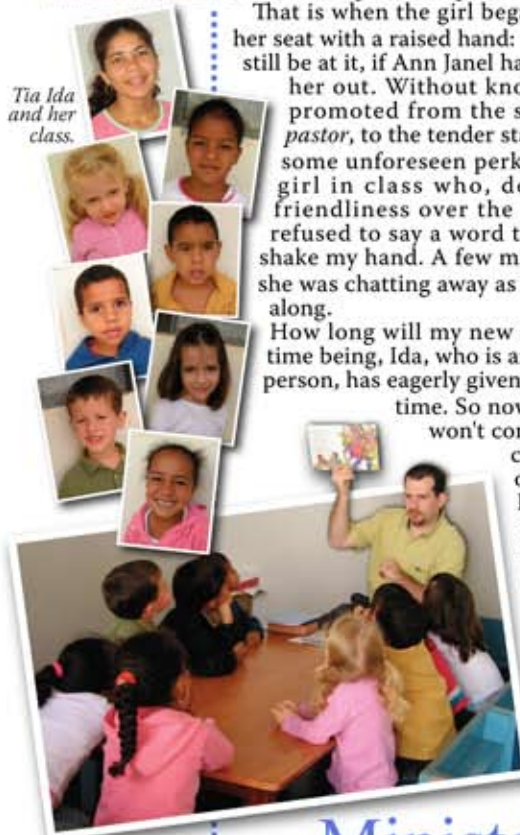
Don't forget to check online!

For more up-to-date news and information about our family, visit www.BrazilianOutreach.org.

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Tia Ida and her class.



.....Ministering to the peoples of Brazil