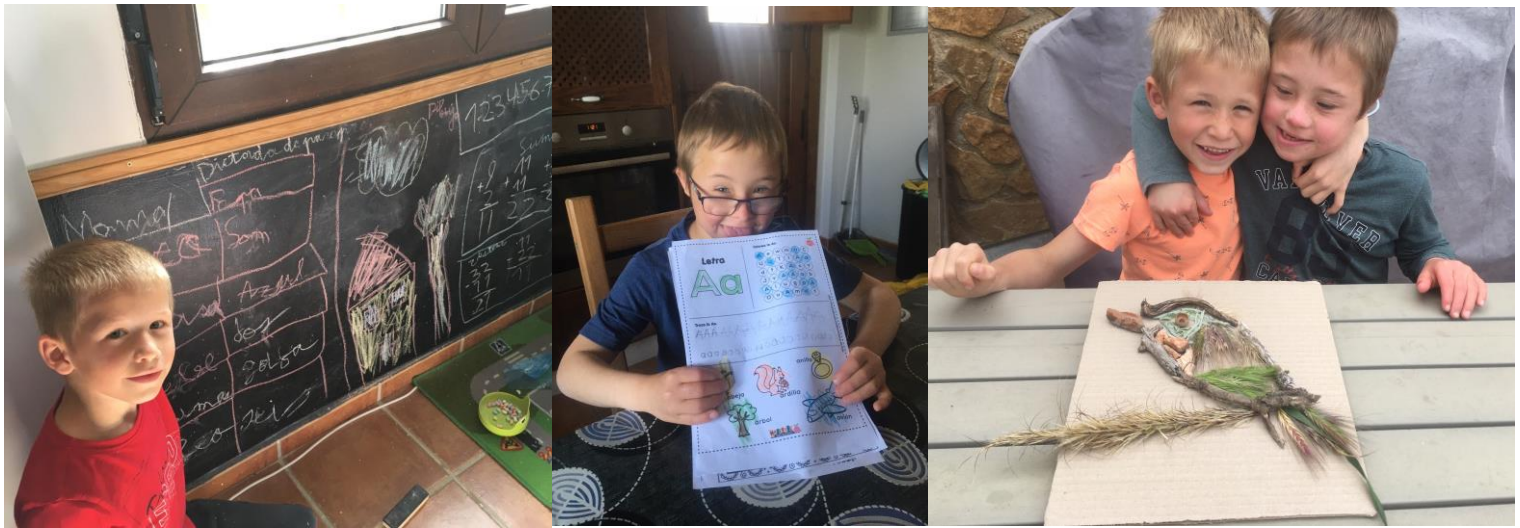


thewhitesinspain

August 2020

Dear St James,

It has been a long time since we last wrote to you. The World looks very different from how it did at the start of the year and we are all connected by this shared experience. We know people for whom lockdown has been a time to reflect, slow down and been a time of refreshing. For us the experience has been very different with a long, very strict, lockdown here in Spain since March going straight into the 11-week summer holiday. We have found ourselves often in survival mode trying to occupy, engage and parent well 2 very different boys, equally frustrated and confused by this new reality. We know many of you have similar experiences so don't feel we have much to share with you that you aren't experiencing yourselves. In the midst of this we have tried to enjoy the moments together as a family which, looking back, I know we will treasure.



The boys have done amazingly well but home-schooling in our 2nd language has been challenging. We have learnt loads of new vocabulary which has been fun and it has been nice to see what they are doing in school. As we have mentioned before the education system here is not very good but we know God will look after our boys in this area. It has been so nice to do school as a lifestyle, working in the garden, looking at the wildlife around our house and doing creative things together. (Above right: A bird artwork made from plants growing around our house)

Taking the opportunities

During lockdown the only valid legal reason for leaving the house was food shopping and dog walking. As we don't have a dog we borrowed Royston's (our elderly British neighbour) dog so we could escape every now and then! Our relationship with Royston (and his wife Angela) has really deepened over the past year. In the autumn Angela broke her wrist and Chris took her to hospital and waited for the hours needed to get here fixed up. Things like this, and generally sharing life together, has taken the friendship from people who would barely open the door to them now being part of our family. Many times we chat about our faith, our hope in Jesus and share verses and stories with them. This is a couple with millions in the bank facing the latter years of their lives. Please pray that they come to know Jesus as their Saviour. Angela was raised Catholic but is now into all kinds of Spirituality and regularly visits a witch. Pray for supernatural encounters with God and that we will have the words and opportunities to keep sharing with them.



Chris has been preaching online in several UK churches over lockdown and since the restrictions have lifted we have been meeting regularly friends and families in small groups to invest into their complex lives where we can. We had a few zoom family church gatherings where a few families connected and have sent messages of encouragement to our friends over WhatsApp. We pray that these interactions will bear lasting fruit in people's lives.

Quarantine – again!!

As soon as the UK cancelled enforced quarantine for travellers returning from Spain we booked flights to come to the UK and visit family. We fly back this Monday and last week the rules changed back! There has been an outbreak in the North of Spain so the UK government has imposed a nationwide ban. This is very disappointing as 2 weeks of our 4 week trip we will have to remain at one address and isolate. Please pray that the boys enjoy being with their grandparents so much that the times flies and it can be some kind of a rest for Liz and I. We will be in the UK on the 4th September to celebrate Leo's 10th birthday (only his 2nd spent in England). It doesn't seem possible that he is now 10! Please pray that his 10th year will be a happy year full of breakthrough for Leo. He is the most beautiful boy but is struggling to express himself with words. He understands and speaks some English and Spanish but we are believing for God to do something supernatural, to strengthen his muscles in his mouth and to make connections so he can tell us what he has in his heart.



Looking Forward

We don't know what life will look like after summer. There is a provisional date for school to restart in the middle of September, but we don't know if it will be everyone. For some time now Liz has been looking for something outside of life as a mum. She has been exploring a few possibilities for work with a UK company that help companies assess and improve staff wellbeing. They are wanting to launch in Spain, and most probably, Gibraltar. Liz has always enjoyed meeting people and the workplace so this could be a really exciting possibility but at this stage it is very embryonic and may not lead to anything. Chris is still looking after the gardens of some Swiss friends of ours which is a flexible work and a time to be alone in nature with God. We have both always seen work as an important part of how we live in a community. Financially it is helpful but more than that through it we are able to meet people and build relationships that aren't possible other ways. We want to have integrity amongst our Spanish friends who work very long hours for not much money, but also its part of who God made us, to be creative and use our skills in this way. Please pray that God opens the right doors, shuts the wrong ones and gives us favour and the right balance of work, family and time for the gathered part of Church Life.

Thanks for journeying with us, we really appreciate it! With much love
Chris, Liz, Leo & Samuel.

