Dear Readers,

This is our tenth issue of encouragement passage and activities for our RE Teachers. We would like to dedicate this issue to all teachers and all of you who have helped to make this work possible.

Thank God we are reaching the end of this project. Hope you enjoy!

MY CHURCH WORK IN BATAM
By Linda Kim, Singapore

In the name of Jesus Christ I shared on how I started my church work in Batam.

First and foremost, I like to give all glory and thanks to God for His great mercy, grace and help bestowed upon me, and for the opportunity to help out in the Batam church work. Hope that my sharing can encourage more members to step out and take up the church work for overseas ministry.

My Service to the Lord

Every time someone approached me to do a certain task, like leading a hymnal session for the middle age fellowship, cooking a simple meal in church, cleaning duties and others like befriending duties, or taking care of little kids, these are what I am quite comfortable and confident to help out in and I usually don’t reject. I usually accept and take on these works without much hesitation. However I tend to get apprehensive when I am approached to undertake tasks such as conducting bible studies, interpreting from Indonesian language to English for visiting Indonesian members or to conduct religious education lesson in Indonesian language. In short, I am well aware of my limitation in the Indonesian language as well as in my level of bible knowledge, thus it is quite apparent that I will turn down these duties when someone asked me.

My Obstacles and Struggle

The first time when I was approached to help out in the Batam church work, I did not accept immediately. I was only asked to give some RE lessons to the children while the adults had their service. I had no reasons to reject such calling as I am currently teaching in the nursery class in Telok Kurau True Jesus Church already. My fear comes from having to use the Bahasa Indonesia to lead the children in prayer, to relate about Jesus and to converse with the people. Though I was born in Indonesia, I came to Singapore to receive my education when I am still very young. It really isn’t too much a problem for me to use Bahasa Indonesia to talk about mundane things but to use it to teach, pray and relate bible terms or even the names of the books in the bible is not easy at all. I was disturbed by these thoughts thus I could not give a positive answer then.

My second obstacle is whether I am willing to give up my personal time or even evening family time on Saturday nights. This is because I will need to stay over in Batam (this was the initial arrangement when our brethrens started going for the Batam work, however we are currently not required to stay over unless there’s some visitation work to be done on Sunday).

My third concern is the ferry ride to Batam puts me off because I will get seasick. This is unlike going to Sentosa where the journey is short; it takes an hour to go Batam and another hour to return back to Singapore.

Next is the anxiety as I do not know any of the children in Batam, like how are their temperaments, how much is their desire to learn about God, or what am I going to teach there, etc. Loads and loads of excuses get piled up in my head and I simply didn’t feel like taking it up. In short, I am not willing to leave my comfort zone to go to other places to do work for God.

How I Accept the Batam Church Work

I thank God for His soft prompting. I prayed about it, and then a brother in the Batam Ministry told me to get an Indonesian bible and start reading it to get myself prepared. Even so, I still cannot convince myself to go. I must admit I was just not willing to make the sacrifice.

James 2: 26 – “For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.”

James 2: 22 – “You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected;”

Abraham’s faith and actions were working together and his faith was made complete by what he did. When other brethrens, youth, middle aged and even evergreen members go for church trips to India, Myanmar, Batu Pahat, etc to help out in the church
work or to conduct RE lessons there, I would see them off and say to them, “I will pray for you, have a good trip. May God bless you!” I realised they had gone for trips to assist in church work in other parts of the world by sitting for hours in the car or plane, but here I am only using my mouth to say a few encouraging words and let them do the laborious work. I really feel ashamed of myself because I could only read and listen to what the bible and sermon says, but I don’t actually carry out what is required of me. Is this how I show my love for God?

Thank God! I finally accepted submissively and took on the church work in Batam. Whenever I am scheduled to go to Batam, I will pray and ask God to give me strength, wisdom and good health to perform my work dutifully. So far I had gone on 3 trips and every time I will come home with a joyful and thankful heart that the trip was indeed good and motivating.

To sum up my sharing, I would like to share the following on how we can cast our anxieties to God and actually get on with the church work despite all uncertainties:

1. If you have been approached to help out in church work in any way whether big job or small job, remember first to thank God for it. Take time to think about it. If you think you really can’t fulfill the duties, reject it nicely. Nevertheless take time to ponder about God and His sacrifices for you during your prayers, consider the church’s needs, and think through about what others have encouraged you through the bible and in sermons. PRAY and you will soon take up the offer.

2. If you have agreed to take on the church work, be responsible and loyal to your work and carry them out dutifully when your duty comes. Take extra care of your health and well being if you know your duty is coming.

3. Do your homework ahead of time especially if you have to conduct RE lessons and remember to pray for God’s guidance.

4. Always approach and ask your co-workers what they had done with the class earlier, especially if there isn’t a fixed syllabus. Enquire about the children, their age and if possible their temperaments from others who already had contact with the children. We need to know our sheep in order to cater to their needs in terms of bible knowledge as well as level of understanding.

5. Be diligent in both studying the bible and in prayers.

6. Be humble; give glory to God for everything. You can plan and want to do the best lesson, but if God does not bless your work, things will not go as planned.

7. Pray to God to help you manage the class.

Finally for my own reminder as well as to share with everyone:

UNLESS I AM HOLY, MY SERVICE TO GOD WILL NOT BE PLEASING

May all glory be given to God!

A Teacher’s Prayer

Each time, before I face my class,
I hesitate a while,
and ask the Father, “Help me, Lord,
to understand each child.”
‘Help me, to see in every one
a precious soul,
most dear;
And may I lead that child
through paths of wonder
- not of fear.”
‘Dear Father, as they look at me
for Christian guidance true,
I look to Thee and humbly ask
that Thou wilt teach me, too!”
Amen.
Read the following information, and then choose one of the scenarios to talk about.

As a good listener, you want to give your student three important messages:

1. I'm interested in you.
2. I care about you.
3. I want to help.

To communicate these messages, follow these simple steps:

1. Find a quiet, private place to talk.
2. Sit down next to him/her.
3. Make frequent eye contact.
4. Don't criticize or judge.
5. Try some active responses to encourage him/her to open up, such as “You sound unhappy,” “I'm sorry you feel so bad,” or “How can I help?”