Dear Readers,

Welcome to Year 2010! Here, we have our preacher’s sermon on RE Orientation Day. We hope that this first issue of the year will be able to give you encouragement and help in your pursuits for this year. Once again, do send us your feedback and/or contributions using this email: scb.edu@tjc.org. Enjoy!

The Best Education
Adapted from the RE Orientation Sermon
by Pr. Chin Aun Quek

What is the best education? Does the best education come from the most renowned school or the most renowned teacher? No. The best education comes from God. It is delivered by God-fearing parents.

Proverbs 4: 1-2. “Hear, my children, the instruction of a father, and give attention to know understanding; For I give you good doctrine: Do not forsake my law.”

There are many countries that will make such a proclamation. “Hear children, listen to your government.” Many schools will proclaim, “Hear my children, listen to your teachers.” But the Bible tells us, “Hear my children the instruction of your father.” Why? Because parents can give are good teachings. This is not the higher level education that we can learn from schools; instead this is religious education at home. In the past, schools both in the east and in the west emphasized on both education in knowledge as well as morals. But we see that as time goes by, schools have shifted its focus more towards the imparting of knowledge than the cultivation of morals. The education system now is indeed producing many excellent workers skilled in their own fields in society but yet there are no excellent exemplars in the area of morals. When we talk about being respectful to teachers or being respectful according to ethics, it is now something of the past. We can see that schools have become a place where morals are very loose and where promiscuity is prevalent.

As we look at the future pillars of society today, we can see that they are already seeds of violence, of promiscuity and of loose morals. We know that our children are the future pillars of both our families as well as the church. If these pillars can be strong, our families and our church will also be strong. However if these pillars are gradually deteriorating, our families as well as our church will be on very shaky ground. This is a fact we can see today. Therefore, we must be concerned with how we can strengthen these pillars. How can we stop these pillars from being taken captive by the temptations of the world? Knowledge is important but morals are even more important because it concerns our lives, especially in the future when we need to face the judgment of God. Only if we know God and know how to fear Him will we know how to preserve ourselves from being taken captive.

Ephesians 6:4. “And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.”

When the Bible says “you fathers…” it is simply because the father is the head of the household and he represents the household. Therefore, when the Bible uses the term “you, fathers…” it refers to his wife as well. We must bring our children up in the training and the admonition of the Lord. To give them education in school is a given. To take it a step further, some parents even take time and effort to learn what their children learn so that they can understand and teach their children accordingly in the hope of helping them attain good results. In this aspect we have fulfilled our responsibilities. We have done well. But have we brought up our children in the teaching, the training, and the admonition of the Lord? Have we given our children the best education? This is a commandment that God has given to all parents.

Moses taught us three things in Deuteronomy 6:4-9.

1) Do we believe the Lord our God, the Lord is one? If on the one hand we worship the Lord God, but on the other hand, we worship another god, we are not being faithful to God, because the Lord Jesus tells us we should have only one Lord in our hearts. “Hear, O Israel”, the Lord our God, the Lord is One. Do you worship this one God? Are you faithful to God?

2) Do we love the Lord? How do we love the Lord? Verse 5 says, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength”. We may say we love God in our heart. Yes, indeed we love God with all our heart. Yet, we do not come to church and are not willing to take some time to come to church. Although we have this heart, this heart cannot save us. If we indeed have the heart, we will not be afraid regardless of the long journey or the high mountains. Not only do we need to love God with all our heart, we also need to love God with all our soul and with all our strength.
3) Do we teach our children diligently to love God like the way we do. We must also teach your children so that like us, they will have reverence for God. But why are we only anxious about whether they do well in their studies? What about religious education? Why aren’t we doing the same? Why do we say that it is something to worry about in the future? Why is it that for religious education, we allow our children to enjoy first and suffer later? The knowledge and work in school will only benefit their career in the future and perhaps provide them with good jobs. However, they do not concern their souls nor will they save them. Only religious education that is education concerning God, directly concerns their lives and can save us. If we really love our children, how can we not love their souls? How can we not train them up properly when they are young so as to preserve their soul? The things that our children first come into contact with are not the trends of this world. Likewise, the first people that our children come into contact with are not their bad friends in school so let us not say that it was the bad friends in school that has led our children astray. Actually the first people that our children come into contact with are we ourselves. For this reason, the period of education, when they first come into contact with us is the most important. They are like a plain sheet of paper that accepts whatever is written on them. That is actually the golden period of religious education. If you miss this crucial period, both you and your children will regret. When they try to teach them after they have grown up, they will not be so obedient anymore. When they are grown-up, it is almost impossible to make them listen to you. Therefore as parents and elder siblings, do not miss this golden period. Make good use of this time to teach them properly so that they will know that what their peers do are different from what they have learnt. Then they will come home and tell you, “Hey mum, you said this, but they say that.” And they will discover a difference. At this time they will truly understand what you have been telling them. But if you had not first cultivated the right teachings and values in them, and later discover what they have heard is different from what you want them to know then tell them your values, they will not say, “Theirs is different from ours.” But instead will say, “Yours is different from theirs.” This point of view is completely different.

Secondly, how many hours of secular education are our children exposed to in school every week? At least 30 hours, perhaps more if we add in the tuition classes that parents subject them to? In contrast, how many hours in a week are used for religious education? Only one hour. If we were to think about it, can this ever fulfill the objective of religious education? Can they ever keep and retain whatever they have learnt in that one hour?

Therefore as parents, religious education is something that one must assume direct ownership of. Other than the one hour of religious education that our children are exposed to in church, parents also have to teach them at home during the other six days in the week. It is easy for them to forget what they hear in church, but if we were to remind them again, and again, these matters will be on their minds. Consider this: How can we effectively achieve the objective of religious education so that our children will have God in their hearts?

The third thing we have to consider is this: We know that our children learn from observation and there is a saying “Like father, like son”. When we tell them, “Hey children, listen to what we say but don’t follow what we do. This is an order.” Do you think this order will be effective? No. Although if we have something to entice them, they will agree to what we say this time but they will still commit the same mistake next time. As parents, when we blame our children for not learning to be good, do we reflect upon ourselves? If we ourselves are not fervent in attending services, how can they ever learn to be fervent?

Children are very intelligent and they are observing us. Therefore the Bible tells us, “Do not provoke your children to wrath”. We have to reflect upon ourselves. Have we set a good example? Are we truly reverent towards God? Do you know why in 2 Timothy 1:5, when the workers of God were persecuted and suffering, Timothy was still willing to offer himself as a preacher? Where did his faith come from? Was it something that came automatically to him or did Paul cultivate this faith in him? Paul knew very well that Timothy’s faith was not to his credit thus said very clearly that the genuine faith which was in Timothy was first in his grandmother then in his mother and he now says “I’m persuaded that same genuine faith is in you also”. What is it that we will leave behind for our children? Therefore, as parents, we need to pay attention to religious education so that the grace and truth of salvation can be rooted in the hearts of our children.
5-MINUTE DEVOTIONS — From Publication: GROUP (www.grouppublishing.com)
Extracted from Group Publishing Magazine – 01/02.2003

Short and easy ways to get your teenagers talking about the Bible’s impact on their real world.
Stuck for something to do next Sabbath class—or activity? These easy, surprising devotions are just the tickets.

TOPIC: Dating – “Pucker Up”
SCRIPTURE FOCUS: Philippians 1:9-10
SUPPLIES: Bible

THE ILLUSTRATION: When Katie and Tim at their wedding in church. During their two years of dating, the couple decided to live by a biblical standard of purity. They decided to not kiss during their courtship.

Katie’s parents supported the idea and usually prayed with the couple before Katie and Tim left the house on dates. Because the couple focused on talking about important issues and getting to know each other rather than kissing and other sexual conduct, Katie’s mother says Katie and Tim are likely far ahead of some couples who have been married for years.

Ask: Do you admire Tim and Katie, pity them, or fell something in between? Explain. Dating without any intimate physical contact, evening kissing is a rarity. Do you think it’s a good idea? Why or why not? If someone asked you to date and suggested keeping this level of sexual purity, how would you respond? Why?

Read aloud Philippians 1:9-10, then ask: In what ways can you live this out in your own dating relationships? What seems most challenging about doing so?

Pocket Hearts

Whatcha Need:
Felt, sew-in interfacing, or construction paper (6” x 12” or 12” x 18”)
Scissors
Glue or stapler
Lace, pom-poms, rickrack, buttons
Marking pens

Whatcha Do:

1. Fold the fabric (or paper) in half vertically.
2. Cut the top as shown in illustration 1.Unfold.
3. Fold the bottom up to the top and crease (see illustration 2).
4. Fold the lower right and left corners toward the center (see illustration 3).
5. Fold the top flap down and glue or staple it in place (see illustration 4).
6. Use lace, rickrack, pom-poms and/or buttons to decorate the heart.
7. Write messages about God’s love and forgiveness or a Bible verse on the flap. Then give the heart away.

Option: Fill the heart in with flowers, cookies, or candles.

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