Dear Readers,

This is our seventh issue of encouragement email passages and activities for our RE Teachers. The RE theme for Year 2010 is “Teacher As the Shepherd”, and we are pleased to have one of our co-worker’s contribution for mutual encouragement: We hope you enjoy this issue. Once again, do send us your feedback and/or contributions using this email: scb.edu@tjc.org. We hope to hear from you!

Prophets, Shepherds, Priests

By Deacon Philip Shee, Singapore

Religious Education (RE) teachers must also recognize that they play the role of prophets as they proclaim the word of God to their students.

“God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets…..” (Heb 1: 1). Indeed, prophets of God have long played an important role in proclaiming His word. Through Moses, God proclaimed His commandments to establish the fundamental principles of right and wrong. He also proclaimed the entire system of worship (the feasts, sacrifices, rituals and priesthood) and the laws governing the entire nation of Israel. As time elapsed, God continued to send prophets to teach and remind His people to continue in His ways. When they deviated, God sent prophets to warn them.

Religious Education (RE) teachers must also recognize that they play the role of prophets as they proclaim the word of God to their students. As prophets, it is critical for RE teachers to proclaim the word God accurately, rightly dividing the word of truth (2 Tim 2: 15). As stewards of the mysteries of God, RE teachers must be found faithful (1 Cor 4:1-2). To this end, RE teachers should be diligent in equipping themselves with the word of God, lest they end up being teachers in name, but yet remaining as babes unskilled in the word of righteousness and requiring someone to teach them again the first principles of the oracles of God (Heb 5:11 – 14).

As the role of a prophet is accomplished in the faithful and accurate transmission of God’s word, the RE teacher then takes the additional role of a shepherd. Whilst it may not be difficult to simply dish out the word of God accurately, it takes a lot more care, patience and love to do so in a way that is palatable to the sheep. Good shepherds must be diligent to know the state of their flocks and attend to their herds (Prov 27: 23). To be effective, shepherds then need to exercise appropriate measures in nurturing the sheep. The discouraged requires encouragement, the sad requires comfort, the ignorant requires education, the erroneous requires correction and stubborn requires rebuke (2 Tim 3: 16).
This calls for RE teachers to go beyond the easy path of just delivering the lessons in class. RE teachers must really know each student at a deeper level, their state of faith, their ability to understand the words, their individual needs and how each student can be engaged. Lessons should then be delivered in an appropriate way, pitched at an appropriate level. Bonding and relationship with students should then be developed outside the classroom, where RE teachers, move beyond the teaching of theory to leading their faith practically. Jesus has set the example of a good shepherd being one who is willing to sacrifice even His life for the sheep (Jn 10: 11). Such spirit of service and sacrifice is, likewise needed in RE teachers, who must be prepared to give time and attention to their students, even for difficult ones who may not openly appreciate the efforts. Like Jesus, RE teachers must strive not to lose any sheep that is committed to them (Jn 17: 12), but present every man perfect in Christ Jesus (Col 1: 28).

Finally, RE teachers must also take on the role of priests, to pray and intercede for their students. Apart from teaching and leading His disciples, Jesus prayed for them, that they would be preserved in from the evil one (Jn 17: 9 – 17). Jesus told Peter, “But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fall” (Lk 22:32). Samuel also told the Israelites, “Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you, but I will teach you the good and right way (1 Sam 12: 23). Moses, whom we know more commonly as a prophet, also played the role of shepherd in leading the Israelites on their journey, but more importantly, he also complemented that with intercession for the people when they sinned (Ex 32: 30 – 32).

Hence RE teachers really should have the realization that the role is a heavy responsibility. And to truly fulfill this calling, RE teachers must strive to have the lips of a Prophet, the heart of a Shepherd, and the holy hands of Priests.

The true function of the teacher is to create the most favorable conditions for self-learning...

True teaching is not that which gives knowledge, but that which stimulates pupils to gain it.
One might say that he teaches best who teaches least.

- John Milton Gregory -
TOPIC: Endurance – “A Leg to Stand On”
SCRIPTURE FOCUS: 2 Timothy 4:7-8
SUPPLIES: Bibles

THE ILLUSTRATION: It was a hot day in 1992 when a starter pistol sent Derek Redmond, one of Great Britain’s track stars, sprinting down the track at the Summer Olympics in Barcelona. Years of training had brought him to a point where just a few seconds would decide his true greatness. The crowds roared, his heart pounded, and his legs moved like pistons. But suddenly, all of his training came to a crashing end as his hamstring muscle snapped within his leg. He fell to the ground, defeated. The other runners raced ahead, leaving him slumped on the track, his hopes and dreams destroyed.

Suddenly, a man came running from the stands to Derek’s side. Rather than a crazed fan, it turned out to be Derek’s father. His father helped him up, whispered encouragement in his ear, and began to walk with his son. They did not walk off the course. They began to walk toward the finish line, arm in arm, father and son. Derek was racked with pain from his leg. Still his father helped him on. Derek wouldn’t win. He wouldn’t take a medal. But he would finish the race that he set out to run. He would endure to the end. And he could do it because his father offered him his strength.

Ask: How do you think Derek Redmond felt when he crossed the finish line? If you had seen this firsthand, how might you have been changed?

Read aloud 2 Timothy 4:7-8, then ask: What finish line is Paul talking about here? What does he mean by “fight” and “race”? What will it take for you to endure to the finish line of life? What might cause you to fall? How has God been helping you endure so far?
SAND ART  PAPERWEIGHT

What You Need

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Baby food jars with lids (one per child)</th>
<th>Large plastic cups</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dry Sand</td>
<td>Large paper clips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powdered tempera paint (various colours)</td>
<td>Coloured yarns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plastic spoons</td>
<td>Hole punch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White paper</td>
<td>Pencils</td>
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How To Make It

1. Fill each plastic cup half full with sand.
2. Stir one or two spoonfuls of dry paint into each cup and mix well (one colour per cup).
3. Children will make patterns and designs by carefully spooning different layers of coloured sand on top of one another into the jar.
4. After the jars have been filled almost to the top with the layered sand, the paper clip may be carefully pushed down through the sand to make unusual designs.
5. When the children are satisfied with their designs, have them fill the jars completely with sand and screw the lids tightly on the jars.
6. Have each child print the Bible verse for this lesson on a small strip of paper, punch a hole at one end, and attach to each jar with yarn. This makes an ideal gift for Father’s Day and other special occasions.