

## MAR 2003 EMAIL TEXT

From: "Jskoh Softhome" <[jskoh@softhome.net](mailto:jskoh@softhome.net)>  
Subject: March mailer  
Date: Thursday, March 06, 2003 5:10 PM

It is time again for mailer. First let me thank all of you for circulating – we have been getting people signing up from the web consistently for the last 2 months! Praise God. Our dream is over time, communities of families who believe in similar principles will form and we bring up a next generation that is Godly.

Please feel free to circulate and if there are any topics you are interested in, let us know. Meanwhile, may God continue to watch over your family!

Jeremy and Suan Ai  
on behalf of GFI Singapore  
[www.gfi-singapore.org](http://www.gfi-singapore.org)

## MORAL VALUES AND HELPERS

### Parenting with moral values and helpers – deposit the values into your children’s conscience

In the last few weeks, articles abound in the Straits Times about child-care, maids, falling birth rates, parents bringing their children to court and communication problems being the main reason for divorces. We believe that in Singapore, we are overly concerned about our livelihood and children’s education rather than their moral development. Usually because both parents work, the guilt of not spending enough time subtly manifests itself through excessive material provision and loose moral standards. Parents end up short changing their children by lowering moral standards. Care givers (helpers or relative) complicate matters as they may not have the same moral standards. **Children need our directed guidance and presence more than freedom of choice and our presents.**

What if our children cannot complete their ‘N’ or ‘O’ levels? Most are probably praying against that. Once we as parents can answer that question with God’s guidance, our directions will be clear. Let us just say this: a graduate at whatever level who does not have Godly morals need not be better off than an illiterate who makes an honest living, though the latter may not be living in any comfort! The pursuit of quality of life as we know it need not necessarily be the same as God’s will for you.

We had a Filipino helper ourselves for about 7 years. God has been gracious in providing a very loving and gentle mother of 5 to look after our children. She was extremely patient with babies and toddlers. We as parents know how demanding the little ones are. We had to struggle with the child’s attachment to her as well. The most difficult period was from birth to three where there are usually more night disturbances and thus a tendency for working parents to let the helpers take care of the children. The difficulty is taking turns to attend to the child (or children) should there be a need. Up to a stage, we decided that it would be an exception rather than the norm. So, though we were both working, we took turns taking care of their needs, playing with them after work all the way till the next morning. Of course if you are blessed with children (after going through the Ezzo’s materials) that sleep through the night and rarely has such disturbances, well, you are blessed. We basically found tugging them to bed, attending to them after work is a wonderful relationship strengthening process. From that decision point, the helper was around to take the occasional nights when we were just too tired or needed a break. Play is important – once we have that play relationship, disciplining becomes easier because trust has been build.

Both of us made job adjustments to reduce stress in order to attend to our growing little ones. Again, each family will be different but our point is: **adjustments are likely necessary.** It is either we make the adjustments or change our attitude and accept that since the primary care taker is the helper, the attachment is a natural process and we need to learn to accept. We chose the former. The basic principle of “parenting begins with the parents” remains clear here – we continue to ask ourselves what kind of parents would we want to be. We admit we have difficulties saying, “We seem to be doing everything right but this kid’s behaviour is still not right!” – we guess the attitude should be to ask God to reveal to us where we went wrong. By taking parental responsibility, God will help us.

There are also other informal rules we established over time. We made sure our children address any helpers with “Auntie xxx” out of respect and we will always gently correct them from the beginning and we never had an issue of disrespect. We will discipline when our children show disrespect to their ‘auntie’ regardless of whose fault – wrong doing by another is never an excuse to be disrespectful. Little ones are very easy to teach – that is why if we expect obedience and teach, they will learn. With God’s guidance, we do know better and we establish tighter guidelines so that the children are free to move within those limits. We don’t believe in ‘children like’ so we give – in the first place, many are too young to be presented with too many choices.

On a ‘lighter note’, if you hope not to raise children who are too self-centred – just have more children within two to three years of each other, the Lord willing. The entire family will be forced to share. What better environment to teach and inculcate God’s values in!

Jeremy and Suan Ai  
March 2003

Some things we pay attention to in building moral values and Godly principles. Not that we have arrived but these are some of the things we look out for as we interact with our children (remember, ours are much older but many of these apply from 15 months). Some of these we do better and some we are still struggling but they are what occupies our mind.

- How our children address other adults, including helpers? We never allow them to call simply by first names.
- Whether our children respect the property of others – do not touch things without permission, if things are damaged, they will need to apologise and pay (from their allowances) if they are older.
- Dressings – neat and tidy. We believe that what a child gets used to wearing when young will influence what they wear when they grow up, especially for daughters.
- Meal times – they do not run around. Usually fixed time, fixed location (the only distraction we use is whatever is on the dinner table, not television or computer games).
- How their tone of voice is used when talking to anyone.
- Not commenting on others.
- Giving seats to others who may need it more.
- Helping with household chores (age appropriate) - Keeping their own toys, packing their own bags, washing their own shoes.
- Fun time on the computer use (usually less than 45 minutes per session, usually once a week).
- Meal outings like McDonald is considered a luxury and only special occasions (like birthdays) or if someone did something deserving of celebration will we go. Hawker centres are the norms (prices may be about there but remember, one is in comfort of air-cond and one isn't).
- Family time – includes singing of songs, reading God's word (kiddie types if children are younger), games (bible trivia, Uno) and prayer. (once a week if possible – OK, we do lay off for months at times!).
- Helping needy folks who come across our paths – bringing them home for dinner.
- Enrichment activities – we believe that a sports versus non-sports balance should be achieved. That's why they are all into swimming and some are excelling better than others.

You are not likely to agree with everything but this is to give you an idea what we are going through and for you to assess:

- What are yours as a family?
- Are there differences between daddy and mummy?
- What does your family do besides going to church to show that God is there?