

OCT 2003 EMAIL TEXT

From: "GFI admin" <admin@gfi-singapore.org>
Subject: October Mailer
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Clear DayHi folks

Sorry this is a little late - was abroad and when Jeremy was back, he was not feeling too well. But, better late than never! Pray for us as he will be travelling a little more now that he has joined his family business (long story, buy us coffee and we will tell you!!!).

Before we forget, the November conference (Nov 14-15) - early registration is still on till mid-October! The forms are attached again for your convenience. We have received quite a lot of registrations and appreciate the early birds! We are sure you will have an enjoyable time! For those who are still 'thinking', sign up first, the auditorium is not that big! Bring your family friends because that will hopefully become your family community!

We have also just completed Childwise and are very encouraged by their sharing. One thing we long to do is to spend time with individual families, just to chat, catch up and have fun but we understand it is not possible. But we are starting - even if it means meeting only one to two family a month. We encourage you to do the same, invite families within your community to meet up, chat, and catch up. We need to make time for these, if not we will never do it.

Again, we welcome new members to the mailers. Thanks to those who circulate. It is an encouragement to us because it means the mailers are helpful to some degree and you hope to pass it on. We are back sharing this month and thought of touching on value of labour linking with choices. Pray that you will be blessed and encouraged.

God bless!

but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles;
they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint Isaiah 40:31

Greetings from Jeremy and Suan Ai

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We are all experts in child rearing until we have our own children!

Greetings! Glad to be back sharing with all of you.

Last month's poll on time spent with our family was encouraging! The next reasonable question would be what do we do when we are together that adds to building family identity or is the time spent bringing our kids from lessons to lessons (food for thought). Let us remember that learning usually takes place in a non-confrontational and/or fun setting!

Value of labour followed by choices. We learn that it is important to teach the value of labour to our children as it is a way of instructing responsibility, among other values. We also learn that children are ready for choices when they can live without any choices. This principle also follows through to adults - these grown children will be better equipped to take 'No' (no choices) as answers to some of life questions! May we suggest that teaching the value of labour in some ways lead to children appreciating having no choice.

In terms of labour, toddlers are taught to keep their toys or clear their plates. These are not optional, they are part and parcel of life. The choice here is either they help clear or the parents or helpers clear. So, it is well linked. After a while, they will learn that it is good thing to do and choice is not even thought off, they just gladly perform the duty!

We would expect older kids to help with laying the dinner table, washing the plates, mopping the floor or laundry - there are so many things to do! Yet, if we as parents have been allowing our children to make choices - including choosing 'no' to chores, what reason do we have to expect any difference when they are older? They will also say 'No' to many other things to us parents! We in Singapore missed the point most of the time because either mum does all of the chores or the helper does! (Yes, we have been through that!)

In an Asian culture, parents are usually very protective and children end up not helping in the house, thus not understand what the value of labour is. Perhaps one excuse is that when children are young, we are afraid they would mess things up and do not ask them to share in chores. When they are older, because they never do any household chores, they do mess things up and get verbal discouragements (scolding!) and they end up not doing anything! Or, it could be that parents see the amount of homework the children have to do and end up 'doing them a favour', we believe it is a 'disfavour'! Perhaps we can moderate the amount they have to do but to eliminate chores is not a good idea. Fair enough, while the degree of involvement vary with families, it is good to maintain some form of duty.

When there are additional chores that are not done on a regular basis, maybe once a year or every few months, they can be used to encourage children to earn for something they long to have, maybe a music CD/DVD, a toy or an outing. If some think it is ineffective, it is only because in a reasonably affluent society, children may already be getting these things from us (no questions ask) and they do not have to earn for the thing they desire! We probably missed quite a few teaching moments here. Think about it, as grown ups, do we get all we desire, or do we save towards our dream thing? The point is clear. Besides, doing different chores as a family builds family identity - it's precious!

As the child ages, a budget would be good. We started when ours start primary one. They get a daily budget of maybe 80 cents. If they have proven themselves to be prudent, we will give weekly or monthly. Of course, you may choose to give this budget at a later age, that varies with each family. With this, we can teach tithings and savings.

When Elliot was young, he saw the two older siblings washing dishes and thought it to be fun and asked to join. We stressed that there is no backing down. He agreed. Well, he therefore started younger, but within 2 weeks, he is ready to give up but too bad, his name is on the roster! He still grumbles at times but hey, do you mums or dad like ironing or washing the toilets? You get the drift. Just in case you are wondering, all our plates are plastic!

Jeremy and Suan Ai