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Singapore Newsletter



Dear GFI Family

It's Christmas time again. 2005 has been a truly encouraging year for GFI Singapore. We saw more and more churches launching GFI programmes and testimonies after testimonies from all those families that have attended. It made the sacrifice all that more sweeter.

To all the facilitators who have worked this year, here is a deep heart felt thanks from us. Your rewards are eternally recorded in the heavenly accounts. You have added another room in your eternal mansion with the Lord.

For this festive season, make time to get the family together. Round the Christmas tree or sitting down for Christmas dinner, fathers do remember to plan what you want to say to your children. And as you do that do something with your children for the poor and the fatherless.

*Have a blessed Christmas
Dorcas Li*

Innocent Way Course

*13 Feb—10 Apr 2006
Every Monday
7.30—9.30pm*

*IRAS Building
(opp Novena MRT)
\$184 per family*

Virtuous Way Course (GKGW)

Module 1 & 2

*27 Feb—17 Apr 2006
Every Monday
7.30—9.30pm*

*IRAS Building
(opp Novena MRT)
\$240 per family*

*Registration
www.gfi-singapore.org*

Cookies and Kids

Children love to decorate cookies. They can spend hours deciding which colours for what shapes, the silver balls or the multi-coloured sprinkles. Here are some tips on making the occasion as stress-free as possible for all involved.

- * *Schedule the kid's cookie making for an afternoon when you will not need the kitchen.*
- * *Mix up the dough ahead of time. Wrap it in a clean, moist dish towel, put it in a freezer bag, and refrigerate (for perfect sugar cookies, see recipe in this issue).*
- * *Clear off the counter or kitchen table, and clean it carefully so that the children can work directly on that surface. Or you might cover table top with cling-wrap/plastic sheet/etc....*
- * *Mix a variety of coloured powdered-sugar frosting and place them in open plastic containers.*
- * *Take all the different decorating candies you can find and put them in open plastic containers.*
- * *Line up all decorations with plates of already-baked cookies in a variety of shapes.*

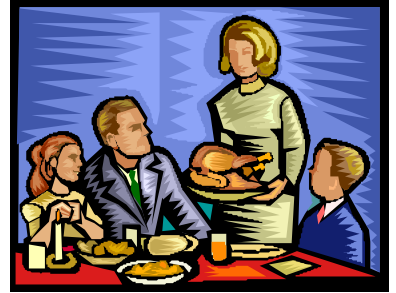
Bring the kids in and let the good time begin!

**Key Principle: Virtuous Way Chapter 7
Character Development Respect for Age**

Love is not rude.

Mealtimes Must Include Discussion of Life Concepts

When a father explains a basic truth upon which life is built, he is teaching a principle. When he weaves together a combination of truths for a life situation, he is teaching a concept. Today, a flood of false concepts is engulfing the home and school and church, and the mealtime provides one of the most important opportunities for a father to discuss them with his family. The following skills are essential in doing this:



A. LEARN TO THINK IN TERMS OF CONCEPTS

Behind almost every decision that your son or daughter faces are underlying concepts which are either Scriptural or unscriptural. It is essential that you not just give your opinion, but rather that you identify and analyze each concept upon which their decision is based.

This means that you must first search out God's concepts in each area of life from Scripture and from the counsel of wise men. Then you must be aware of the subtle undermining which constantly takes place against God's thinking. The wise father will expose the destructiveness of the world's thinking before his sons and daughters become emotionally attached to a decision to follow it.

Carefully planned questions, illustrations shared by the father during a mealtime discussion will provide the daily exhortation so necessary in each life. "But exhort one another daily...lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (the accepting of ungodly concepts). (Hebrews 3:13) One of the most powerful tools against any concept is mocking. Those in the world usually mock God's standards before presenting their alternate views. Either your children will have a godly contempt for the ungodly reaction to the ways of God which you have been seeking to teach.

During dinnertime, the father must be skilled in showing a godly and wise contempt for the logical-sounding but distorted conclusions of the world with a clear reinforcing of Scriptural concepts which the very spirit of their children reaffirm. God illustrates this spirit in I Corinthians 1 and 2, Colossians 2, I Timothy 6, II Timothy 3 and Jude."...Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? (I Corinthians 1:20)

B. CONQUER PRIDE BY SHARING WHAT GOD IS TEACHING YOU



Most fathers fail at this point. They have important information to teach, but they cannot understand why their children lose interest in what they are saying or are easily distracted by competing thoughts. There are usually two reasons. Either he has not created sufficient curiosity for what he wants to say, or they are resisting a spirit of pride within him of which he may not even be aware.

God resists the proud and so does a man's family. Just as it is important for the father to maintain an open spirit with each child, so it is important to communicate to that spirit. But this is only possible if he has an attitude of humility. The concepts he teaches must grow out of the painful lessons that God has taken him through. In this way he is on their level, humbling himself by telling them how God has been dealing with him rather than speaking on an authoritative level and telling them what he thinks they should know.

It is so easy for a father to expect his children to pay attention, but he must give up this right. He must use their inattention as God's gauge to him of whether he has adequately prepared both himself and them for what he is trying to share. Most men feel inadequate in effective conversation with their children, but this is certainly a cause for claiming the promise of James 1:5, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

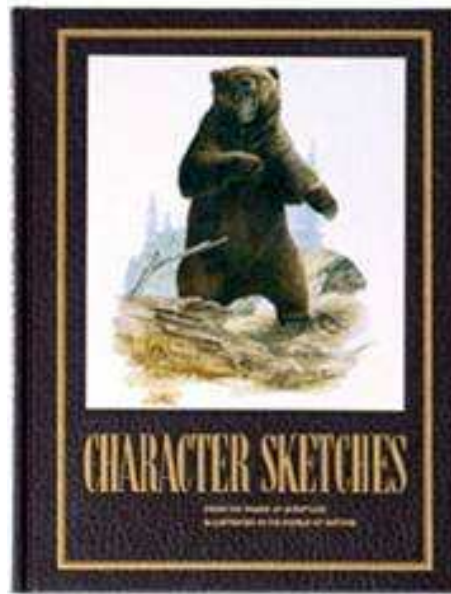
If a father is to be successful he must ask his family to look at him as a learner and expect many times of failure in clearly explaining himself. If he allows these failures to drive him back into the Word, God will give him the grace of new desire and power which will be that much of a greater heritage for his children.

C. CRATE CURIOSITY BEFORE COMMUNICATING CONTENT

It is a common fallacy among fathers to think that their children are not interested in spiritual matters. But fathers have the ability to create great anticipation and response to these truths. This is done by using the interests and concerns of his sons and daughters to create curiosity for information which he knows will meet deep needs in their lives. The phrase—you can lead a horse to water but you can't make it drink—is not entirely accurate. You can salt the oats. In the same manner you must learn to sprinkle “salting statements” in your conversation which will direct the natural curiosity of your children to consider the concepts of Scripture. Christians are to be the salt of the earth. This means that we must learn skill of creating thirst in the hearts and minds of all those around us for the refreshing truth of God's Word. Our Lord was a master at creating curiosity by asking questions and giving parables which forced his listeners to ask further questions. Expect your children to have at least one question in their mind whenever you start talking to them. “Is this really important for me to hear?”

A wise father will design a preliminary question, statement, story or situation which will answer this question before he even tries to present the concepts of Scripture. This is a practical application of breaking up the fallow ground before the seeds of truth are planted in it.

From “Character Sketches” Vol.1, Institute of Life Principles
Book is available from IBLP, Blk 472, Tampines St 44, #01-63
Tel: 62602080



*Our
Lord
Jesus
came to
the world
long ago to
give His life
that we and all
others might have
life abundantly. He
is the One altogether
worthy of first place in
our hearts. There was no
room for Him in the inn, so
He was born in a manger. Let
us give Him His rightful place
in our hearts so that we may feel
what the shepherds and the wise
men felt long ago. O Come
let us adore Him,
Christ
the
Lord.*



Blessed are the poor...

Here are the central ideas in remembering the poor. If you apply the same standards for giving money to the poor that you apply to your other giving, you will never give any money. The poor cannot perform. The poor will not be accountable. The poor are not going to miraculously change their whole life because we magnanimously give them a little money or briefly love them.

Poverty is a culture. Poverty is a lifestyle. People are not poor without reason. Giving to the poor can be discouraging. Giving to the poor is like pouring money down a rat hole. You will get little, if anything, in return. The only enduring motivation for remembering the poor is a consuming desire to please Jesus. Do it for Jesus.

Extracted from “Discipleship for the Man in the Mirror” by Patrick Morley

What Should I Tell My Children About Santa Claus?

Thirty years ago, questions about Santa Claus' effect on your children were not an issue. However, in a society that does little to protect the real meaning of Christmas, these questions become pertinent.



As we move closer to the holiday season, the debate about the legitimacy of Santa Claus hears up in the Christian community.

The debate centres on two issues. The first is the charge that parents who propagate the fantasy of Santa Claus cause their children to think of Jesus as a fantasy. As a result, the true meaning of Christmas and the message of the Bible are undermined.

Such confusion occurs most often in families that make the Lord real to their children only twice a year—at Easter and Christmas. However, if you teach your children about the reality of Jesus throughout the year, you will not have to worry about their being confused over the meaning of Christmas. As you continue that practice, you will help your children separate reality from fantasy. Santa Claus will become just another character to them, like those found in Mother Goose, Dr Seuss, and Veggie Tales.

A second question raised from this debate is also legitimate: When a parent tells his child there is a Santa Claus, isn't that a lie? Of course it is, if your child asked you a direct question about the reality of Santa.

So how can we tell our children the truth about Santa without destroying their fun at Christmas? It is important to preserve the innocence of your child's adventure fantasy, but you must do so without compromising the truth. Here are some responses you may want to consider when your child asks you about the reality of Santa.

You can tell him about the historical Saint Nicholas. He was a church bishop approximately 400 years after the birth of Christ, and was famous for his generous spirit. Explain to him that the Christmas tradition of Santa Claus is based on his life. Then tell him that instead of a real Saint Nicholas, Mommy & Daddy pretend to be Saint Nicholas and leave gifts under the tree each Christmas season.

Another response you might consider is to ask you child some questions about Santa Claus. Be sure to be sensitive to their response when you do so. For example you might ask, "Do you think there are reindeer who know how to fly?" "Do you believe Santa can really fit through our chimney?" And if you don't have a chimney, you can ask, "How do you suppose Santa gets in our house?" One question you should ask is, "Do you think Santa brings toys to you, or do you think Mommy and Daddy are the ones who put gifts under the tree?"

By answering your child's question, you can lead him to the right answer in way that won't crush his spirit. That's one way you can preserve your child's fantasy world while at the same time providing him with accurate information. It will ultimately cause him to understand and accept that Santa Claus is not real. Yet he will also be able to have fun pretending that he is real.

When our children were at the age where fantasy was great fun, Santa Claus was just one of many gifts-givers in our household. Some of the others included our cat Mittens, our dog Pooch, our pig, Wilbur, and Henrietta the hen and her four sisters. Of course our girls understood that Mommy and Daddy were the ones who actually provided the gifts. In our family the traditional Santa Claus ranked no higher than our feathery and furry friends from the barn. Our children knew that and had a good time with all of them. What you tell your children about Santa Claus is up to you. But whatever you decide, remember that Christ is the King—both of Christmas and every day. That is the most important message you can communicate to them.



By Gary Ezzo, "Along the Way" Christian Family Heritage Newsletter Vol Two, Issue One

Perfect Christmas Cookies

2 sticks sweet butter (room temperature)

2/3 cup sugar

1 large egg

1 tsp. baking soda

dash salt

2 tsp. vanilla

2 cups all-purpose flour



Beat butter and sugar into fluffy mixture; add egg, baking soda, salt and vanilla, mixing thoroughly. Stir in flour. Chill mixture before rolling out. Bake cookies on greased cookie sheets in 350-degree oven for about 7-8 minutes



For unto us a Child is born,

Unto us a Son is given;

And the government will be upon His shoulder.

And His name will be called Wonderful, Counsellor,

Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 9:6

GF/ wishes all a very blessed Christmas

