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Singapore Newsletter

Dear GFI Family

May...the month of exams! Want to just encourage you and to remember that though academic has its place; virtues and capturing the hearts are the real focus. Knowledge alone will only get your child that far. An article about exams may offer some food for thought.

Take time off this Vesak day to do something really eternal—become super dad/mom to your children. We have a suggestion. Look out also for the many events coming in June. A group of parents from a GKGW class went on a Nature outing with their children and tried out the super dad & mom. See their photos.

Dorcas Li

Infant Way Course Toddler Way Course

27 Apr—1 Jun 2006
Every Thursday 7.30—9.30pm
FCBC Church Office
#04-01 technopark@chai chee

GFI National Leadership & Alumni Conference

Plano, Texas, USA
July 13-15, 2006
www.gfi.org

Virtuous Way Course (GKGW) Module 3

3 Jul—4 Sep 2006
Every Monday 7.30—9.30pm
IRAS Building
(opp Novena MRT)
\$180 per family

Registration
www.gfi-singapore.org

A Child Is For Moulding

I took a piece of plastic clay,
And idly fashioned it one day,
And as my fingers pressed it still,
It bent and yielded to my will.

I came again when days were past,
The bit of clay was hard at last.
The form I gave it still it bore,
But I could change that form no more.

I took a piece of living clay,
And gently formed it day by day,
And moulded it with power and art
A young child's soft and yielded heart.

I came again when years were gone,
He was a man I looked upon.
The early imprint still he bore,
But I could change him then no more.

Anonymous

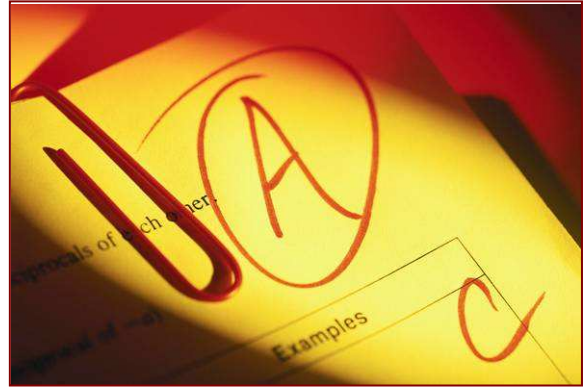
From: "Never Too Early" by Doreen Claggett, Claggett Ministries, Inc
Thanks to Grace Wong for sending in this lovely poem

**Key Principle:
Virtuous Way Chapter 9
Principles of Obedience**

**Children will rise to the level of expectation of
their parents. Many parents expect little and
receive exactly that.**

Tests & Grades

We are so indoctrinated by conventional school methods that the fundamental law of classroom instruction is etched on our minds: "Thou shalt test and grade thy children." Only it is not a fundamental law of education—only of classroom teachers. Testing and grading have gained ascendancy only since the advent of public schooling in the last 150 years or so, and then more as a matter of administrative expediency than instructional necessity. Before that, students were tested orally to determine whether or not they knew a subject—the ability to discuss a concept was more important than the ability to *know a fact*. Tests and grades reduce the learning process to one of "getting the right answer." But your children can become highly educated and go to most colleges without ever taking a paper test or receiving a grade. The bottom line is, you don't have to test and grade any more than you have to take roll everyday. You're free to do what is best.



Grades measure both what your children have learned, and what they have *not* yet learned. However, does it make any sense to "grade" your children for what is not yet completely learned or understood? Wouldn't it be just as effective simply to continue teaching until they have learned or acquired the skill?

If lack of self-discipline is a problem, a poor grade will do nothing to motivate your child to be more diligent. If character is the problem, then your child needs to be properly disciplined and trained, not academically "shamed" by a poor grade.

And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

Luke 2:52

Standard grading (A, B, C, D, F) can create a motivation to do better, or not to do badly. But does allowing mediocrity as an acceptable "grade" in your home encourage excellence? Your children's best should be judge by their ability, not by an arbitrary or even a curricular standard. Take away grades and the standard becomes personal excellence in order to please God, parents, and self.

Testing is just the vehicle for grading. If you ask your child to complete an assignment, does it make it any more effective to call it a "test"? If you want to know what your child has learned, just ask.

Extracted from "Educating the WholeHearted Child" by Clay & Sally Clarkson
www.wholehearted.org

Churches Running GFI Programmes in May 2006

Infant Way

FCBC • GFI • His Sanctuary

Toddler Way

FCBC • GFI

Middle Years Way

FCBC

Innocent Way

Covenant EFC

Adolescent Way

Covenant EFC • Queenstown Baptist Church • Holy Spirit Church

Virtuous Way

Bread of Life • Bethesda Frankel Estate Church • City Missions Church • Covenant EFC • Church of S'pore • Overseas Christian Mission Fellowship • Central Christian Church • Emmanuel Evangelical Free Church • FCBC • GFI

If you have a GFI group running in your church and is not listed above, do email
dorcas.li@gfi-singapore.org

Super Dad & Super Mom



One of the key roles of parenting is to put into the hearts of our children biblical moral principles; virtuous that has withstood the test of time. When parents constantly explain and give children the moral reasons behind why we do or not do something, we bring our children up one level. We help our children to stand apart from the circumstances and see the issues clearly by checking the issues against the principles instilled within their hearts. In doing so, children will begin to look upon us for wise council.

Each time we do that—presenting virtuous, the moral reasons why we do what we do—we are letting our children see how we choose to live our lives according to God's standard. We begin to show how we are different from others because of God's virtues in our hearts. We begin to show what we the "XX family" represents. We begin to become, in the eyes of our children, a man of principles, a man with a sense of purpose, a hero. Children need heroes. Our children want us to be their heroes—to be their super dad & mom.

For this coming Vesak Day break, try below activity with your children.

- Bring your children to a park. Ask them "Can we pluck flowers in the park?"
- The children will usually answer "NO !!!"
- Then ask them : "Why can't we? I am only taking one flower. There are still so many flowers out there?"
- There will definitely be various answers from the children.
- Below is a suggested answer you can give:
 - o Flowers in the park, like the sun and the air, are given by God for everyone to enjoy. No one can take these flowers just for themselves to enjoy and depriving others a chance to enjoy it. Most importantly, the flower does not belong to you alone and it is a selfish act to want to keep it just for yourself.
 - o For example if daddy gives 10 sweets for you and your siblings (if no other siblings, can use friends) to share. Daddy gives these 10 sweets to your brother (or friend) to bring them to you. However while he/she is bringing the sweets to you, he decides that he can eat 1 or 2 first and then, share the rest with you equally. Is that a right thing to do?
 - o Children will answer: "No..."
 - o You are right. The sweets are to be shared with all. No one can decide for you that 1 sweet less is alright. And for this case, no one can decide that 1 flower less is alright for other people.

Have fun super dad, super mom!

IBLP Basic Seminar and The Children's Institute

Basic conference will be on from
19-24 June
Early registration closes on 23rd May 2006

Contact Mr Thomas Teh at

Tel: 62602080 email: blptom@pacific.net.sg

www.iblp.org



Hospitality

From New Zealand GEMs

1. It is commanded in Scripture—as a part of how we show Christian love. Romans 12:13 says, “practice hospitality.” It is not only food and shelter, but also sharing a part of our lives and the love of God—and “by this shall all men know that you are my disciples” Luke 13:35.

“Above all, love each other deeply because love covers a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ.”

1 Peter 4:8-11 brings out four points:

1. It is a way of showing love to others (v. 8)
 2. We need to do it without grumbling (v.9)
 3. We need to serve in God’s strength (v.11)
 4. We do it so God may be glorified (v.11)
2. Don’t just invite the beautiful people. We need to invite those in need of fellowship, food, and shelter. Consider inviting those who can’t return the favour. Luke 6:30-36 “Even sinners love those who love them.”
 3. Don’t make excuses. Don’t think your circumstances are too humble—if the surroundings or meal is humble greater can be the impression. Think about what the excuses you make teach your children: “My house is a mess”—letting go of this teaches that people are more important than your house. “I don’t have time” and other excuses do not teach our children that “love must be sincere” Romans 12:9. Let’s not be Martha, but model the right attitude. Maybe you could write out 1 Peter 4:11b and put it on your windowsill as a reminder.
 4. Remember the season you are in. (The balance of point 3)—Having a young family with or without pregnancy and/or breastfeeding is very busy and tiring. Check your priorities to get a good balance. Hospitality should not always be to the detriment of your family and likewise being so family-centred as to have no outreach to others is not right either. So be creative—enlist the help of your spouse and children. Preparing for hospitality can be a great teaching tool for your children. Have BBQs, potlucks, desert, instead of a full meal, meet for a picnic.
 5. Involving your children—A good practical way to cultivate attitudes such as “honour one another above yourself,” Romans 12:10 Even from a young age encourage basic courtesies of saying hello and goodbye—being a part of the family welcoming committee. Children can help with the planning and preparation. A little extra time may need to be allowed for this! Making special table settings, decorating the desert, helping to ready a room for guest, drawing a “Welcome” picture for guest’s bedroom can be some ways to involve them.
 6. The blessings of hospitality.
 - Lives out the principles of being other centred and the preciousness of others.
 - Shows mom and dad practice what they preach
 - Broadens your horizons and that of your children. As a child I had all sorts of overseas visitors in our home from which my brothers and I learned a lot. Hebrews 13:2 “Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by doing so some people have entertained angels without knowing it.” Who wouldn’t like this?

It was a Nature Day on Good Friday



A group of Virtuous Way parents went on a Nature visit on Good Friday. About 20 families decided to brave it out by bringing our city kids to see God's creation. Yes there were mosquitoes, dirt, heat and sweat but boy did we have fun!

We started early by reaching Sungei Buloh by 8am. The children were briefed on the various bird life that they will see on the reserve. Activities were given out with older ones doing worksheets while the younger ones had to collect leaves, seeds, sticks, etc... They saw birds, crocodile and monitor lizards in their natural habitat.



Lunch was at a fish farm. Lunch was all but forgotten when every child was given a net to catch fish from structured pools. They could catch as many fish as they want. All fish were release back into the

pools at the end of the visit. Children were also educated on fish life.

Parents gets to try out the Super mom & dad exercise and we believe that many love the experience of seeing their words reaching the hearts of their children.



7-9 June—Children's Conference
Early bird registration closes
15 May 2006

10 Jun —ARISE! Praise and Worship
Tickets avail from ACTS, Crest, Scripture Union
www.arise-praiseandworship.com

June 12-17/19 Children Mission
to Thailand / India **www.gofestasia.com**