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## Singapore Newsletter

Dear GFI Family

*This issue we look at fathers—their roles, their influence, their strength, their weaknesses, their calling. All the articles in this issue are written by fathers, their reflections on fatherhood. Perhaps it is the right time of the year, the time when office activity begins to slow down in preparation for year end. The time when most families would be thinking of holidays.*

*Do read and email us your reflections. The outcome of actions taken in response to 'Role of father'. The new year resolution that you may make after reading "Anger". Whatever the results, we would very much like to hear from you.*

*Andj Li*

*Classes starting in Jan 2007*

<i>Infant</i>	<i>6 Jan FCBC</i>
<i>Toddler</i>	<i>10 Jan FCBC</i>
<i>Innocent</i>	<i>21 Jan FCBC/CMC</i>
<i>Virtuous</i>	<i>21 Jan FCBC/CMC</i>
<i>Chinese</i>	<i>Module 3</i>
<i>English</i>	<i>Module 1&amp;2</i>

*Registration from GFI web*

### **GFA National Family Camping Conference**

*Camp Wattle Grove, Perth,  
Western Australia  
Apr 5 to 9, 2007  
A\$195/person  
Children programme avail.*

[www.gfi.org.au](http://www.gfi.org.au)

### **GFI Singapore Conference**

**Keynote Speakers:  
Gary & Anne Marie Ezzo  
8-9 Nov 2007**

*Details will be available on  
website at later date*

### Fatherhood

*Our natural reason looks at marriage and turns up its nose and says, 'Alas! Must I rock the baby? wash its diapers? make its bed? smell its stench? stay at nights with it? take care of it when it cries? heal its rashes and sores? And on top of that care for my spouse, provide labour at my trade, take care of this and take care of that? Do this and do that? And endure this and endure that? Why should I make such a prisoner of myself?*

*What then does Christian faith say to this? It opens its eyes, looks upon all these insignificant, distasteful and despised duties in the spirit, and is aware that they are all adorned with divine approval as with the costliest gold and jewels. Its says, "O God, I confess I am not worthy to rock that little babe or wash its diapers, or be entrusted with the care of a child and its mother. How is it that I without any merit have come to this distinction of being certain that I am serving thy creature and thy most precious will? Oh, how gladly will I do so. Though the duty should be even more insignificant and despised, neither frost nor heat, neither drudgery nor labour will distress me for I am certain that it is thus pleasing in thy sight.'*

*Martin Luther*

**Key Principle:  
Virtuous Way Chapter 4  
The Father's Mandate**

*How can a child trust his Daddy who  
does not love his Mommy?*

## Where Does It Start

*I never really realized the impact that I had on my own children's life, until I started to see them dealing with things the same way that I had been dealing with things, not the way I was trying to teach them. They took the same approach had the same tone of voice, and sometimes the same reactions. They picked it up all by observation, both the good and the bad, unfortunately, there was more bad than good. It then dawned upon me that if I wanted my children to be morally responsible and to have an authentic relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ, I needed to set the tone, I needed to set the example and not just talk about it, but to live it.*

*As I came to terms with this, I quickly realized that if I wanted them to have their own authentic and transforming relationship with God, my own relationship with God had to be authentic and transforming as well. If I spoke to them about love each other, I had to model it by loving my wife. This was about eight years ago. It was about the same time when my wife and I started with the Growing Kids God's Way program.*

*As a father of three children, the realization of the responsibilities and duties of a father suddenly became only too real. There were so many things that I had been doing wrong and had to undo and so many things to teach, where do I start. I turned to the Lord. He made it clear to me that my relationship with Him was the most important and then came my wife, then my children and then friends and work and the other things in life.*

*So I started by surrendering myself to Him, and rededicating myself to knowing Him better. I recommitted myself to a daily encounter with Him in the mornings, as well as a daily prayer and bible study time. It was not easy; I had to make some hard decisions to make for changes to my life so that I could put my priorities right.*

*Over the coming weeks, I was able to see His grace being extended to me and His faithfulness. He then showed me that I needed to improve my relationship with my wife.*

*I thought that I had a good relationship with my wife then, but I did not realize that I had been taking her for granted and had caused her so much pain and frustration. This realization was very sobering and caused me to look deeply into myself to see what was wrong. The answer was*

*simple, I just did not know how to love her and encourage her. I needed to learn how.*

*As I started to work on our relationship, I realized that it was a lot harder than I thought. I was praying for God to change her, but guess what, God did not change her, but he changed me instead. After much perseverance, our relationship started to improve; we were now able to communicate on a deeper level. I learned how to appreciate her and she started to see me in a different light. I started with little things, like taking on some of the load of coaching the children in their studies, to give up some of my activities to ferry the children around for tuition and ECA. This showed my wife that I was serious about improving our relationship.*

*With the knowledge acquired from the Growing Kids God's Way program and God's grace, we were able to teach and train our children. Overall, our relationships have all improved and we now thoroughly enjoy each other's company.*

*Now we have two teenagers and a pre-teen. It has been an exciting and enjoyable journey thus far. We are still very much a work-in-progress as my wife and children will tell you, dealing with issues the come up both in our marriage and with our children. Now, we have the confidence to know that our God is faithful and will see us through all things, as long as we are committed to Him.*

*It has to start somewhere and I believe that as fathers and leaders of our families, we need to step up and take ownership, responsibility and accountability for our wives and children. It starts with us, fathers.*

### *Funny Corner*

*It could happen...*

In heaven, Jesus met a man He believed He has seen before. So Jesus asked for his name.

Man: 'I am Joseph.'

Jesus thought: 'My father is also Joseph...' So He asked again: 'Were you a carpenter?'

Man: 'Yes.'

Jesus (getting more emotional): 'Your son...does he have nail marks on his hands and feet?'

Man: 'Yes.'

Jesus (no longer able to hold back his emotions, with tears in His eyes): You must be my father...Joseph!'

Joseph (equally emotional and tearing): 'You must be my son...Pinocchio!'

*By Paul Samuel*

## ***Churches Running GFI Programmes in Nov 2006***

***Most churches have ended classes for the year.***

***Many are in planning stage for next year's class. Keep a look out for updates.***

*If you have a GFI group running in your church and is not listed above, do email  
[dorcas.li@gfi-singapore.org](mailto:dorcas.li@gfi-singapore.org)*

### **Role of a father**

Since when she was very little, my younger daughter always asks me to bring her on an aeroplane ride. She has excellent memory on all the procedure when seated on the plane: straighten the seat, lift up the blind, put on the seatbelt...orange juice or apple juice...pork or chicken...

Knowing this is her fond memory, I do give her a good treat whenever she behaves well (surprise instead of bribe), I will lie on my bed and use my four limbs to support her body. She will open her arms and pretend she is a plane and then announce and perform the safety procedure. I will do some bumpy ride and slowly lift her up and "take off". Then come her food and some turbulence for fun and eventually a smooth landing. By then, my arms and legs are giving way already! My girl is pretty heavy!!

I asked her whether it is more fun to be on a real aeroplane or a "pretend" game. Her answer is that it is more fun to be on the real plane but it is easier to have the same fun if we can pretend and make it into a game. Can we do it again now?!

As a daddy, I know I have to be more imaginative. Money can buy XBOX, PS3, 42" HDTV but they cannot substitute creativity and imagination. Our children need to learn to be pro-active, use limited material and to maximise their imagination within certain boundary. I read a book called Teaching Your Children Joy, inside of which have so many brilliant ideas and ways of doing it.

I have made a small extraction for your reading pleasure. Enjoy as your children also enjoy you Daddies!

## **METHODS**

**A. *Since The old standby: liberal encouragement.*** Give enormous encouragement for the slightest show of creativity—from building with blocks to drawing a picture. Watch as though a masterpiece were being unveiled. Sometimes encouragement involves more than just words. It may involve providing reams of scratch paper for the three-year-old to make pictures on. Often we tend to think of this as a waste because that's what our parents or teachers taught us, when in reality the child is creating something on each sheet and even possibly improving just a bit by being allowed to experiment. Though I have to bite my lip as I say this, recently I scolded my four-year-old for using practically a whole roll of sticky tape to get an old piece of Christmas paper to stick to his door; but it's worth thirty-nine cents to have him feel he has really accomplished something. On closer examination, I found that he had been very meticulous and had covered every square inch of the paper with the tape.

**B. *The other old standby: being a child with them.*** When they imagine, we imagine. Play in the mud with them, for a change. Don't inhibit through restricting anymore than is absolutely necessary.

**C. *Seeing in the mind.*** Listen to classical music with children. Close your eyes and see whatever the music makes you see. Describe it vividly: "Horses with fine ladies and parasols, trotting on the green on a clear summer day." Ask the children to do the same.

**D. *Imagining a space ride.*** Say, "Have you ever been to the moon? Would you like to go there? Would you like to go right now, today? Come on. Let's all get in our spaceships and go up to the moon and see what it's like there."

Sit on the floor with your legs in front of you and pretend that your hands are holding the controls of the spaceship. Lean back a little, as if in a reclining seat. Encourage all the children to do the same. Ask, "Are you all in your spaceships? Do you have your seat belts buckled? Let's go!" Count

down from ten to zero, and as you say, "Blast off!" pretend your hands (palm rubbing palm) are the nose of the rocket and slowly raise them high as you make a swishing noise. The more excited you are, the more excited the children will be. Be a good pretender yourself, and the children will follow along. Pretend to go up through the clouds into the sky. Look down and see the world getting smaller and farther away. Put in some details, like, "See how little the houses look. Now we can hardly see our earth. Be careful, don't bump into any shooting stars." Then, "Look at the moon. We're getting closer; we're almost there. Let's look for a good place to land. There, that looks like a good place. Come on, let's go down."

Again put your hands in the air and slowly bring them down (with a swishing sound) and slap them on the floor as you "land on the moon." Say, "Now, don't get out yet. I'd better get out first and see if it's safe." Pretend to climb out of your spaceship and onto the moon, and with appropriate actions and words discover that the moon is *very hot*. It burns your feet. Tell the children they can get out too but to be careful because it is hot. After they hop around a little on the "hot moon," say, "Let's get back to our spaceships and see if we can find a better place to land on the moon." Blast off again in the same manner, look for a better place, and land again. This time, "discover" a different kind of surface—slippery. Continue exploring different areas of the moon by going up and coming down. You might find a rubbery, bouncy place: a place with big, deep holes— "Watch out or you'll fall in one"; a place with sharp, pointy rocks. Let the children have turns to get out first and see what it is like. Let them make their own discoveries.

Teaching Your Children Joy, Linda and Richard Eyre, Published by Simon & Schuster, New York  
Ch 5. Teaching the Joy of Imagination and Creativity, pg 85 -87

### Anger : Yours and Theirs

Many a time, as fathers, we have a hard time controlling our anger and when it comes out, it is always not pleasant. Our children may be having the same problem with anger as well. Here is an excerpt for the book, "How to get your teen to talk to you" by Connie Grigsby and Kent Julian with some tips that may help you out.

*If you want your teen to talk to you, there's one thing you'd better get a handle on quickly – your anger. Why? Because teens have no desire to talk to a parent who erupts easily or often. They quickly learn to save their efforts for something that has a greater chance of paying off – like the lottery.*

*For the sake of our marriages and relationships with our children, we need to get control of this if it is a problem for us. With God's help, we will be able to change our destructive patterns into constructive ones.*

*When taking strides to control your anger when you are talking to your teen, consider taking the following steps;*

1. *Admit you have a problem*

*This requires great courage, but when you consider the toll your teen and the rest of your family will continue to pay if you don't, it becomes easier. Write this phrase down and say it out loud to a trusted friend: "I have a problem with anger; I say and do things that are hurtful to others, especially to those closest to me. I want to change. And with God's help I will."*

2. *Stop trying to do everything in your own strength*

*Seek counselling. Your emotional health is every bit as important as your physical health.*

3. *Devise a plan of attack*

- *Ask your teen and others closest to you to help you realize when you're losing it*

- *Walk out of the room when you feel yourself becoming angry, or allow your teen to withdraw from the scene when he or she sense an explosion is coming.*

- *Go for a walk when anger begins to boil too close to the surface.*

- *Count to ten. Or one hundred. Or one thousand. Or as high as it takes for the vein in your neck to no longer jut out past your chin.*
  - *Involve yourself in some form of physical exercise or exertion.*
4. *After you are in control of your emotions, approach the person with whom you are angry and discuss the situation. Remember, there are two sides to every story. Consider saying, "I felt when such and so occurred. Because I love you, I'd like for you to tell me your perspective of what happened, and then I'd like to share mine."*  
*Don't try to put all of the blame for the source of conflict on your teen. Instead, be willing to accept that some of the problem could lie with you. And by all means, don't try to blame your teen – or anyone else – for your near explosion.*
  5. *Use "I" statements instead of "you" statements*  
*For example, "I feel upset when such and so occurs." Instead of "You make me so angry when you act this way."*
  6. *Don't interrupt*  
*Interrupting shows a lack of respect for your teen and will frustrate him or her. Remember that you're seeking peaceful, honest, and open communication, not a full-scale war. You can give your two cents when the floor is yours.*
  7. *Don't bring up the past*  
*Again, this is overwhelming and puts your teen on the defensive. It also makes him or her feel shamed. You should be your teen's ally, not his or her adversary.*
  8. *Make certain you understand what your teen means.*

*If uncertain, ask questions like, "Are you saying....?" This invites your teen to be more specific – without fear of reprisal.*

9. *Compromise when possible*  
*If neither of you is going to budge, ask your teen for his or her suggestions on how to arrive at a better compromise in the future. Remind him or her that it's okay to disagree with you.*
10. *End on a positive note*  
*Tell your teen how much you respect his or her efforts to work through the disagreement in a peaceful manner. Share what you've learned in the process. Let her know how much you love him or her. This will encourage him or her to work hard at peacefully resolving conflicts in the future. It will also let him or her know that your love for him or her is not contingent on his or her always agreeing with you.*

*Negative patterns of behaviour can be broken, including anger. You don't have to remain in bondage to something so hurtful and destructive. If you continue to struggle with an inability to control outbursts of anger, seek professional help. While this problem won't be conquered overnight, you can make tremendous strides by showing your teen that you are sincerely working toward managing your anger. Your humility will speak volumes to your teenager's heart and will cause him or her to want to speak volumes to you.*

*If your teen has a problem with anger, discuss strategies with him or her to help him or her get a handle on this early in life. Seek counselling if the problem persists. Most of all, keep in mind that your most effective teaching tool is your example of how you handle conflict.*

Extracted from the book "How to get your Teen to Talk to you" by Connie Grigsby and Kent Julian.

*I Myself taught Ephraim to walk, I took them in My arms; yet they have not understood that I was the one looking after them. I led them with reins of kindness, with leading strings of love. I was like someone who lifts an infant close against his cheek; stooping down to him I gave him his food (Hos 11:3-4 JB)*