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Singapore Newsletter

Dear GFI Family

Chinese New Year is just round the corner. There will be rites, feasts and visitations. You and family will have many opportunities to sit down with others for meals. Are our children ready for that? This issue we take a look at Courtesy, manners and politeness. Take some hints and help from the masters.

Andj & Dorcas Li



万国万民颂，新禧主恩浓。
福临众家中，宁静乐从容。

Classes starting in Jan 2007

Innocent 21 Jan FCBC/CMC

Virtuous

20 Jan Covenant EFC

20 Jan COS Marine Parade

21 Jan FCBC/CMC

Eng/Chin Module 1&2

Adolescent

Mar COS Marine Parade

Infant & Toddler

May FCBC

Registration from GFI web

GFA National Family Camping Conference

Camp Wattle Grove, Perth,
Western Australia

Apr 5 to 9, 2007

Children programme avail.

www.gfi.org.au

GFI Singapore Conference

Keynote Speakers:

Gary & Anne Marie Ezzo

7-11 Nov 2007

Details on website at later date

Courtesy—a glimpse of the Mystery of Charity

The love that does not pursue selfish advantage respects the property and protects the privacy of others. Here was a lesson to be learned early because I never had a room of my own, which meant that there were boundaries sometimes difficult to keep—her side of the closet, my side, her drawers, mine. Each of us had his own towel and washcloth in the bathroom, always to be hung neatly on the racks. Why? Consideration of others. What kind of bathroom do you want to come into? Recently I saw a lady in a public restroom wipe the sink with her paper towel. I commented on how extraordinary this was nowadays. 'It's just a habit, I guess!' she laughed. Blessings on her parents!

Give up

Give in.

Give way.

Give thanks.

Be ye kind.

Wait your turn.

Serve one another in love.

'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control' (Gal. 5:22-23). It is in the littlest things that these fruits are most often exhibited. This is courtesy—a glimpse of the Mystery of Charity.

Elizabeth Elliot 'The Shaping Of A Christian Family'

Key Principle:
Virtuous Way Chapter 9
Principles of Obedience

There is no better way to teach a child NOT to obey than to give him instructions that you have no intention of enforcing.

Where Have All The Manners Gone?

To be well mannered, our children must confidently meet and greet, introduce themselves and others, use the telephone properly, become gracious hosts and guests, write thank-you notes, and dine gracefully.

Our moral and public behaviour distinguishes us from animals. Parents today have an awesome responsibility, and we get little or no help from society. Something happened over the last twenty-five years that drastically changed our behaviour. Kindness and consideration for others' feelings have traded places with "who care?" and "what's in it for me?"

Where have all the manners gone? Perhaps they disappeared along with family values. One thing we do know: Rules of common courtesy are hardly ever taught in our public schools today, even though many teachers would, if they could. Also, children do not inherit good manners. They get them by growing up with parents who model and teach them. We might say that home is the classroom where students study their parents. How did we plummet from "Please" and "Thank-you" to "Yuk" and "Gimme"?

Parents are not necessarily at fault. Since the fifties our society has forced the proverbial pendulum to swing to the extreme. In less than a decade we went from the silver spoon mentality prevalent in the early part of this century to the hippies and free love of the sixties and seventies. That generation questioned the values and mores of the establishment. In most circles since then the prevailing attitude has been "Do your own thing," "If it feels good, do it," and "I'm not responsible." We find ourselves struggling to return to a more considerate and responsible society.

By the nineties we grew tired of the rudeness and crudeness. Actually, the corporate world noticed that young professionals were so socially inept they threatened the balance sheet. Business was lost because their highly skilled and well-educated young men and women chewed gum, neglected to introduce people, and stuffed their mouths with food while they tried to make the big sale over lunch with a client.

Corporations began seeking etiquette trainers and consultants to come in to smooth out the rough edges. Because money often motivates us where nothing else will, desperate executives are forcing the pendulum to swing the other way. We call it customer service. Of course, manners were originally God's idea. He gave us the Golden Rule which says we should treat others as we like to be treated. Today business publications of all kinds refer to the same rule we see in Matthew 7:12 and Luke 6:31.

Television still makes its contribution to the demise of socially acceptable behaviour with popular comedy shows where the only polite person is a geek. The family with strong moral values is almost nonexistent on many programs. Even commercials for family shows advertise bad manners. Much of the rude behaviour that we see in our children surfaces simply because they do not know the proper thing to do. It is that simple and that sad.

Our children deserve the opportunity to learn. We teach out of love and obedience to God's Word that tells us to nurture our children and build godly character in them. Showing consideration for others is part of that. Luke says that "Jesus grew...in favour with God and men" (Luke 2:52, NIV). The Bible doesn't give us Mary and Joseph's parenting plan, but it does say that with every charge or promise God shows us the way.

Source: "You Can Raise A Well-Mannered Child" by June Hines Moore.

One of the greatest powers for good is a family whose members respect each other and who have learned to function, however poorly, with the rich concepts of the Word God gives us as human beings. It is almost incredible to think of the stabilizing effect ordinary families can have: not only for themselves, but as a light in a troubled generation.
Susan Schaeffer Macaulay
For the Children's Sake

Manners

“LET’S MIND our manners!” I’m sure that everyone has heard that saying more than once while growing up. But, why do we? Basically, minding our manners makes us all easier to be around. Manners are what oil the cogs of human interaction. Manners are a way of communicating to others that they are important and of great value. Without them, people would always be acting like...well ...just use your imagination.

Parents have no way of knowing where their children will be or what they will be doing in the future. The options are limitless. Your child may become an ambassador for your country, a missionary in a foreign land, a pastor, or president—appearing before monarchs, heads of state, congregations, or jungle tribes.

He or she may become an executive, computer technician, mechanic, teacher, doctor, nurse, mom, or dad. Wherever it is that the Lord leads them, children need to be prepared to behave in such a way that their message of Christ’s love is unhindered. Their manners may be shown in what they say, how they dress, or how politely they eat the unfamiliar foods placed before them.

As you teach these different acts of courtesy, remember that this training is a process. As a baby learns to walk one step at a time, so it is in many other areas of life. Don’t be discouraged if your children forget what seems obvious to you, and they make an etiquette *faux pas*.

Many guidelines are written down in the following pages, however, it is impossible for rules of behaviour for every possible situation to be documented or remembered. Whatever is not “Specifically” taught to your children can be governed by the principles given in the Scriptures. These are three passages in God’s Word that provide an umbrella to help cover most of the situations your children will ever encounter:

Matthew 7:12 So in everything do to others what you would have them do to you. (this is known as “The Golden Rule”)

Mark 12:31 Love your neighbour as yourself.

Romans 12:10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honour one another above yourselves.

Not only does the Bible give us guidance for our behaviour, but it is also from the Scriptures that we can observe the life of Christ, who is our greatest role model. In addition, it is by the Spirit of God that our hearts are prompted to holy and righteous living. I fully believe that Christians, above all others, should be the most gracious, hospitable, and mannerly group of people on the face of the earth.

Source: “What Every Child Should Know Along the Way” by Gail Martin

Teaching Manners to children

How do we go about instilling good manners to our children? By working on one rule at a time! Make a list that you deem to be those you wish to teach. Have one copy of the list for each child . When you think you child has mastered one of the manners listed, put a checkmark next to it. In “What Every Child Should Know Along the Way” by Gail Martin, you can find suggested lists for a) Mannerly Attitudes and Actions, b) When You Have Guests c) When You Are the Guests d) In Your Own Home (with your own family) e) Communication f) Ways to Resolve Conflict g) For Gentlemen Only h) For Ladies Only i) Shopping j) Travelling k) Appearance l) Mealtimes m) At Church n) Miscellaneous Moments (such as sneezing, gases, scratching etc...)

Churches Running GFI Programmes in Jan 2007

<i>Infant Way</i> <i>FCBC•GFI•Bethesda Frankel</i>	<i>Toddler Way</i> <i>FCBC•GFI</i>	<i>Innocent Way</i> <i>City Missions Church • FCBC•GFI</i>
<i>Adolescent Way</i> <i>NA</i>	<i>Middle Years Way</i> <i>NA</i>	
<i>Virtuous Way</i> <i>City Missions Church • Covenant EFC• Church of Singapore • FCBC•GFI</i>		
<i>If you have a GFI group running in your church and is not listed above, do email</i> <i>dorcas.li@gfi-singapore.org</i>		

Courtesy

Little Jim puts down his spoon and begins the slow careful climb down from his high chair.

"Thank you, Mama," he says in his southern accent. "Ah enjoyed that!"

What a lovely thing that was for his grandmother to hear! How unusual in our times—courtesy from a small child who had not been prompted. He had picked up what he heard from his elders. The power of example again. So often what is picked up is quite the opposite—the flung-down spoon, the rush from the table with nary a thought for the meal or the one who prepared it.

Courtesy is plain old-fashion thoughtfulness—what will make the other person most comfortable? Do for him or her what you would want done for you. Nobody is born thoughtful. We must all learn it.

Someone has said that civilization is an exercise in self-restraint. My daughter and I lived with a jungle people considered highly uncivilized by outsiders, yet on the very first evening of our arrival they gave us all they had to give—a house wood for a fire, water, and a supper of fish and manioc. In our two years there I learned a great deal from their example of self-restraint. With no idea of 'etiquette' they were kind, generous, peaceful, easy to live with. I never heard them complain. These wives of one man lived next door to me. They were the best of friends. I never heard a cross word between them.

There were no words in jungle languages for *please, thank you, and you're welcome*. This always left a sort of hole in the conversation to me, *please* having been one of the first words I learned as a baby, and the other expressions soon after. I was used to acknowledging others' kindness.

The word *manners* comes from the Latin *manus* meaning 'hand.' It is to *take in hand* and do things in a certain way. My mother and father took us in hand, individually and collectively, as they instilled into us the obligations of living under their roof.

'When I grow up I'm not going to make *my* children do thus and so,' we sometimes said. They reply was simple: 'Maybe so. But as long as you live in *our* house this is the way you'll do it!'

It was a daily exercise. Line upon line. Precept upon precept. We were reminded, corrected, urged, helped. Each rule was a good bridle for our egos. We needed those bridles.

Why must I sit up straight, keep elbows off the table and napkin in lap? *Why* does it matter that I eat quietly and chew with my mouth closed? *Why* shouldn't I talk with my mouth full? *Why* can't I reach for what I want? *Why* pass the butter to my brother first if I need some too?

The basic answer is that it makes things more pleasant for everybody. 'Only a great fool or great genius is likely to flout all social grace with impunity, and neither one, doing so, makes the most comfortable companion,' says Amy Vanderbilt. Children do learn, and soonest taught soonest learned. Training six children is not six times as difficult as training one, for the younger ones learn even more quickly from each other than they do from their parents. I know several large families of young children who know how to behave at the table. A meal with families who don't is an ordeal.

Manners, said Emerson, are made up of petty sacrifices.

'Love has good manners and does not pursue selfish advantage' (1 Cor. 13:5 PHILLIPS).

A simple gesture like passing the butter plate to someone else before helping oneself is the outward expression, small and unobtrusive but deeply telling of the sacrificial principle, 'My life for yours.' When there are only a few muffins left, the one who passes up the second helping lives out the words 'in humility consider others better than yourselves.' A child can easily learn the gesture. When he wants to know why it matters, he can be taught the Bible verse. It's someone else's comfort I should be concerned about, not my own.

At the supper table we were sometimes asked about our schoolwork or the happenings of the day, but were not expected to interrupt others or dominate the conversation. We learned to listen. When we had guests, which was often, my father was keenly interested in them and always tried to draw out as much as possible about their lives and work. The impression these stories made on us was deep and lasting.

Elizabeth Elliot "The Shaping of a Christian Family" chapter on 'Courtesy.'

General Etiquette and Mealtime Behaviour

Your child's social conduct (showing respect and politeness to others) will reveal much about you as parents. One visible test of conduct comes during mealtime. It has consistently been our experience that the little things children say and do at mealtime reflect more about their parents than anything done during any other activity. Why? Because it requires self-discipline on the part of the parent to train a child in the rules of etiquette. One of the nicest compliments you can receive about your offspring is, "What a well-mannered child you have." Such compliments are the result of correct training in social graces, particularly in mealtime etiquette.

Etiquette refers to one's behaviour when in the presence of others and should manifest itself in a demonstration of courtesy, politeness, and respect. Proverbs 20:11 says, "Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right." Not only is he known by his doings, but his actions are a reflection of the parents who have trained him.

This appendix covers etiquette and behaviour during mealtime. Your goal is to train your child in such a way that he practices these courtesies both at home and away. Listed below are some basic guidelines of politeness and respect as they relate to mealtime behaviour.

General Courtesies

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|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Compliment the cook 2. Chew quietly, keeping your mouth closed. 3. Say, "Please," and "Thank you." 4. Do not lean on the table. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Do not reach across the table. 6. Do not stuff your mouth. 7. Do not comment unfavourably about the food. 8. Do not talk with your mouth full. |
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Guidelines for Mealtime Settings

Below guidelines will assist you in training your children to view mealtimes as an opportunity to demonstrate respect for others. These are for when there are guests home for dinner.

Guideline	Principle
No one begins to eat until the hostess sit down.	Respect for the one providing the meal.
Older children should follow the parents' lead in the serving of food.	Giving honour to the parents.
Children should eat what they are served.	Showing respect to the one providing the meal (host/hostess)
Children may not play with their food.	Showing respect to the one providing the meal and to those with whom the meal is shared.
General requests such as, "Pass some potatoes," are not acceptable; only specific requests are allowed, such as, "Mom, would you please pass the potatoes?"	Showing respect toward others in the way you address them.
Whatever a child touches, he must eat. If you touch a piece of chicken, you take it!	Respect for those with whom the meal is shared.
Do not touch the dessert until the hostess begins to eat.	Respect for the hostess.
No one leaves table until everyone has completed their meal.	Respect for one another.
Children should ask their father if they may be excused.	Respect for father's authority.

Extracted from "Let the Children Come Along the Virtuous Way –Student Handbook" By Gary & Anne Marie Ezzo. Detailed guidelines for five different mealtime settings are listed