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SALTSHAKER



TRINITY
Methodist Church

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Shaking Salt

ENRICHMENT

The Christian Way



by Lim Sue Yien



Claire (front row, centre) and the staff of The Learning Lab

School has started again. It's that time of the year when children return to the routine of classrooms, learning, homework, CCA and tests. Parents also have tasks, planning for the activities happening outside of school that are meant to help our children do better at school. And by this, I'm referring to the enrichment class.

The enrichment centre is a great money-spinner in Singapore. It is a whole micro economy in itself, offering value-added help for children of all ages, starting from age zero (I kid you not) to teens. From baby gyms to guitar classes to Chinese drama lessons to life skills workshops, there's an enrichment class for whatever you wish to enrich in your child's life.

Meet a different kind of enrichment centre. Meet The Learning Lab, located at Tum Nupterk Chamkarmorn, Phnom Penh, in Cambodia. Here, founder Claire Lowe, a missionary, runs an English-speaking enrichment school offering a nursery, pre-school programme, primary school English and Maths classes, mums and tots programme, and English language proficiency classes.

Claire set up this school in 2006 as part of her mission to put

marketplace discipleship into practice. The welfare and spiritual development of the all-Christian staff of the school is central to her ministry. Her aim is to cultivate Christian values in the workplace, and to transform lives from there. There are no classroom Bible studies here, just Biblical truths and values applied in daily life, such as glorifying God through excellence in work.

Building capacity is important to the long term sustainability of the school. Claire wishes to empower each member of staff to live to their fullest potential in Christ. Her dream is that these teachers will one day set up their own school, so that they can in turn influence other Cambodian lives.

By God's grace, this is slowly becoming a reality. During her nine-month maternity break in 2010, the School Leadership team essentially ran the school in her absence, a fact which she takes great pride in. Chariya, a Nursery II teacher, was formerly employed as a domestic helper in Claire's home. She learnt English along with Claire's children and slowly worked to fulfill her ambition to be a teacher. Speaking fluent English today, this 24-year-old would like

to set up her own nursery school one day.

Walking through the school's white-washed corridors and spotlessly clean classrooms, one gets the sense that the teachers themselves are happy to be part of this family of believers, to have a chance to live their faith out in their workplace. They begin their day with prayer, praying for and with their students. During afternoon breaks and evening prayer, they share their testimonies and issues with each other, thus fostering relationships where accountability becomes natural. When asked what they like most about working at The Learning Lab, all of them say it is the love of a family they experience here.

Love is the main teaching ingredient, and transformed lives are the best testimony. We were assured that the well-behaved children we saw was just not a show put up for our visit but a daily occurrence. Parents also notice the difference at home. Kingdom values are imparted to children through the school's emphasis on character formation. For example, English is taught through Bible stories. The day we visited, Pov was leading a group of Primary 2 students through

the Bible story of the feeding of the 5,000. Vocabulary such as "Miracle", "Disciple", "Preach" were taught alongside words like "Remote" and "Teach". Some weeks are designated story-telling weeks, where Bible stories are taught. On other weeks, values, like loving one's family, are expounded on.

The leadership team is confident in what they would like to see, namely, that students of The Learning Lab become effective and competent in English, grow up to be good leaders of Cambodia with Kingdom values, and that more parents will send their children here so that more can benefit.

"I always thank God for the team He has blessed me with. Without God I am nothing. Without them I have nothing," said Claire.

Find out more on the work of
The Learning Lab at
<http://www.learninglab.edu.kh>.

"Like" them on Facebook at
[http://www.facebook.com/
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Children praying before class starts



Leaders of tomorrow: Bopaa, Mory, and Srey Yin

I BELIEVE THE (CHILDREN ARE OUR FUTURE



Interviewing the parent of a student

Prayers



by Cheryl Sim

We were at the Tuol Sleng Genocide museum when the thought first crossed my mind. It was the team's first day in Cambodia, and we had been walking through rows of deserted prison cells and the remains of contraptions once used to inflict torture on the Cambodian masses. The walls of the museum were lined with the faces of the deceased. Many were young and bespectacled, their faces adorned with the bright smiles of youth.

It was there that I learnt that Cambodia had once been a land of plenty, a gleaming jewel in Southeast Asia, and a place that far outstripped Singapore in promise. All this was lost when the Khmer Rouge obliterated a generation of young Cambodians, particularly the intelligentsia. This large-scale destruction robbed Cambodia of its illustrious past. I was humbled. Who would dare say that Singaporeans deserve our present material success any more than the Cambodian people deserve the suffering and poverty that came of the Pol Pot regime? It was a cruel injustice for a nation that still daily bears the scars of its history.

I went to bed that night with Joel 2:25 on my heart: "I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten..." Would God do this, for this land? And, how?

Two days later, we found ourselves in the Methodist School of Cambodia at Tuol Kork (Tuol Kork), listening to several children tell us about their hopes and dreams.

We spoke to Bopaa, the Head Prefect of the secondary school, a 17-year-old with a girlish smile and youthful eyes, but a maturity and confidence beyond her years.

Earnestly, she told us about how Tuol Kork has given her the opportunity to lead others and set an example for them. She wants to be either a pastor or a government leader when she grows up, she says, to lead the nation in the right direction.

Mory is from the primary division of Tuol Kork. With all the sincerity of her 12-year-old heart, she tells us that she wants to be a fashion designer. On the other end of the age spectrum, a graduating student of Tuol Kork, Srey Yin, tells us that she likes numbers and hopes to be an accountant.

There are others who speak of wanting to give their all to earn a living for their families – children who, with the little they have, continue to mentor children younger than themselves, so that they, too, can have a chance at a brighter future. "I once had nothing, too," they say. Now, they want to help other street children make an honest living.

It was on that afternoon, spent listening to these children vocalise their endless hopes and aspirations, that I realised I had my answer: If there is to be hope for Cambodia's future, it will come through these young lives – Cambodia's next generation. And as if confirming my thoughts, a teacher at Tuol Kork told us just before we left that it was his dream to see the children of Tuol Kork rise up to lead Cambodia – leaders of integrity, who fear the Lord, and who can bring hope to the country.

No doubt, a school with a mission to raise future leaders will have to be set apart from current societal norms. Within Cambodian public schools, cheating and bribing are prevalent. Teachers often change grades in exchange for bribes, teach minimally and charge students if they want extra classes and notes.

Violet, a member of TMC and the current principal of Tuol Kork, tells us that the school does its best to swim against the tide.

Apart from starting each morning with staff Bible study, Violet hopes to instill integrity within each educator, so as to provide quality education to each child. This remains an ongoing challenge – to run a school that develops the whole child, and to encourage teachers to catch the same vision. Violet also makes it a point to pray with the school's leadership and support staff, so that the key leaders – not all of whom are believers – will eventually come to know Jesus, and lead the school in a godly direction. Only then can Tuol Kork continue to fulfill its mission.

Thankfully, Tuol Kork's efforts to differentiate itself from other public schools in Cambodia have not gone unnoticed. Two parents that the Saltshaker spoke to were generous in their praises for the school, particularly the quality of education that their children receive. They noted a difference in their children's attitudes after they transferred to Tuol Kork – they now look forward to school, are taught to love God, and (one parent noted) especially look forward to the soccer games that are organised for them by visiting Singaporean students. Each child is also enrolled in either the Girls' or the Boys' Brigade, which lays foundations for their faiths.

If it was the destruction of youth that robbed Cambodia of its past, it will be through its youth that Cambodia is given a new lease of life. All the more, let us join together to support the mission of Tuol Kork, and other schools like it, to nurture youth of character and Christ-likeness. As we intercede for the school, we indeed rally behind the future of a nation.



Violet (front row, centre) and her staff



THE METHODIST SCHOOL OF CAMBODIA

by Violet Khor

THE SCHOOL VISION

The Methodist School of Cambodia aims to be an excellent Christian school that provides a value-added National Khmer curriculum.

It is an institution where each child is valued, loved and nurtured with relevant skills and knowledge, godly values and good character to meet life challenges.

THE SCHOOL MISSION

To nurture and prepare future citizens of Cambodia to:

- know and believe in God
- value teamwork and excellence
- possess relevant skills, knowledge and determination
- have healthy bodies and minds
- care for oneself, one another and the environment

THE SCHOOL MOTTO - RISE AND SHINE

To "rise" indicates a movement upwards.

To "shine" is to radiate light and radiance.

To rise and shine therefore signifies a school that is dynamic, improving and transforming.

It is also a school that shines the love and light of Jesus Christ to all those around.

THE SCHOOL BADGE

The School Badge has the following symbols: a shield, a banner, the cross and the country of Cambodia.

The shield and the banner depict the shield and banner of God (Psalm 28:7 - The Lord is my strength and shield, Song of Songs 2:4 - His banner over me is love).

The shield of God protects us. The banner of God grants us victory. The Cross demonstrates the love of God for all people.

All these symbols together symbolise the presence of God with us in the School and over Cambodia.

The purple surrounding the shield reminds us that we are the royal priesthood of Christ and this should guide us in our conduct.

The colours are vibrant depicting a School that is dynamic, achieving and transforming.

The banner bears the words 'Rise and Shine' which is the School Motto to remind us to have a positive mindset and to shine the love and light of Christ in our lives.

Letters to God revealed: Learning from the Greatest Teacher



by Sin Cher Khee

Dear Lord,

Since my first silent retreat in July 2009 organised by TMC, I had wondered when I would be attending the next one. When brother William Goh, LCEC chairman, revealed that part of the 2012 LCEC Retreat would include a "silence and solitude" segment, I felt quite excited as my wish had been graciously granted!

I thank You for the retreat at Pulau Desaru Beach Resort as it gave me the time and space to be alone and to rest - at least for a day or so - as well as to spend time with You. This retreat also provided an opportunity to relate a bit more with fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.

Our silent retreat director John Chong from Trinity Life Center guided us through lectio divina, or divine reading and meditation. We listened to the passage in Matthew 17:1-9 and imagined being there with the three disciples on the "Mount of Transfiguration". During the first two phases of lectio divina, the sustained listening of the Word engaged our minds and hearts to understand the passage that was being read.

Then the third phase followed, with the prayerful reading of the scriptures hopefully forming the very words of our personal prayer and commitment to God.

The fourth and final phase - contemplation - is to simply enjoy Your Presence and being in communion with You like the weaned child described in Psalm 131:2. This may take half an hour, one hour or even a much longer time.

For me, lectio divina has given me two new perspectives. Firstly, it breaks the myth that reading scriptures means one is listening to God. It does not, especially if my mind, ears and heart are not attuned to Your Word! Secondly, I was amazed from the sharing by other brothers and sisters afterwards that the very same passage we had all listened to revealed a different yet appropriate personal word from You to each one. I am therefore grateful to learn this lesson and would encourage my readers to practise it.

More specifically for me that day, the personal word from the passage was that the Heavenly Father was well pleased with the Son, whom the Father loves. Also that I would do well to listen to the Son. That set the basis for making my personal commitment to You - to be a child of God whom the Father loves and one who pleases the Father well.

May You Lord Jesus be magnified in my life and that of my brothers and sisters at TMC!

Amen.



Cher Khee is a teacher, and finds that this gives him an appreciation for God as the greatest Teacher who ever lived.

Do you have your own letter to God? We would love to hear from you! Please email tmccomms@gmail.com to share your letters with us

PSLE

PARENTS' STRESS LEVELS ELEVATED



There has been much in the press about the academic stress and competition that Singaporean children face, and the love-it-or-hate-it PSLE which sends Parents' Stress Levels Elevating.

The Saltshaker was privileged to hear the views of Alvin, Monica and Daphne for this issue. All of them worship at TMC.

Having read about parents worried that their children cannot catch up in school and sending them to enrichment classes, do you have the same worry?

Alvin and Monica Chia are parents to Michael, aged 13 and a post-PSLE student, and Stephanie, aged 10, and yet to take the PSLE. Daphne Lim is mother to Joshua who is 13 and happy to put the PSLE behind him. Daphne used to teach in a mission school, and now teaches in one of the premier schools.

Alvin & Monica:

Yes, because we know the academic limitations of our children and the competition they face.

In some cases (e.g. Chinese) we do not have the ability to guide them ourselves so we need to engage external professionals to help the children expand their vocabulary. But we know that God has made our children and given them their academic abilities and talents, so while the worry and anxiety is there, we love them for who they are.

Daphne:

Of course I do. The PSLE T-score determines which secondary school your child will end up in for the next four to six years as a teenager - the most turbulent period of a child's life before adulthood!

PSLE sorts every child into a rank list according to academic ability based on only one examination. As a result of this, you certainly don't want to be flippant and leave the PSLE outcome to chance without rigorous preparation.

If your kid is not up to scratch, you would want to march him along so that he does perform to his best potential. Being a Christian parent lessens the worry of the outcome in that you can claim the peace that whatever the resultant T-score, expected or unexpected, God is in charge of your child's life. It does not, however, reduce the actual stress of having to walk with your child through a very high stakes national examination that takes more than a year to prepare for.

Could you please share your journey with your child as he took his PSLE?



Monica, Alvin, Michael & Stephanie

Alvin & Monica:

Michael's preparations for the PSLE started at the beginning of that year. Monica and Michael focused on his areas of weakness eg. Chinese reading and comprehension, some mathematical concepts, and they practised these.

We also had to give encouragement throughout the year, assuring Michael that he could master his subjects with hard work and perseverance. The challenge was not to give Michael too much stress, as the school system already imposed a lot of homework and additional lessons. The key was to provide a warm, nurturing and assuring environment at home so the child would be motivated to study and not be afraid of failure.

We also discussed with Michael the various academic options available after PSLE eg. express or normal stream, choice of feeder secondary school or specialised school, so that he would be assured that no matter how he did, he would be able to progress to the next level of education.

While Michael took the School of Science and Technology Direct-School Admission (DSA) tests, we prayed for him and Monica felt the presence of the Holy Spirit very strongly. When he received the offer of admission, we also prayed for wisdom and guidance. We were assured that the Lord had led Michael to this school and decided to allow him to go there in place of his own feeder Secondary School (which was a mission school).

We believe that ultimately God is in control of the situation and he has a perfect plan for both Michael and Stephanie, so although we may be disappointed or confused when things do not pan out the way we expect, we know that He has a purpose for their results being what they are and He does not make mistakes.

Daphne:

Joshua was blessed in that he was all set up to go to his affiliated (mission) secondary school in the first place. The most significant turning point in our PSLE journey was when Joshua decided he wanted to study Visual Arts seriously. He asked me if God would help him with his studies to qualify for SOTA and we prayed hard for an answer together.

But I felt God was telling me that this was where Joshua when we visited SOTA. So I shared that experience with my son and that reassured him a lot, even though he wasn't doing terribly well academically at school at that point. We decided that if Joshua cleared the SOTA audition, that would be the sign that we had God's blessings on this.



Daphne & Joshua

How do you try to inculcate Christian values to your children at home?

Much of the pressure then went into preparing his final Art portfolio and clearing the one-day audition at SOTA, which happened during the June holidays. The good thing was that by August, he'd already accepted the offer to SOTA, pending only his qualifying to Express Stream.

I believe that God does not test you beyond what you can bear. It really had a calming effect on us to have a DSA offer in hand, so that we could just focus on doing the best that we could for PSLE.

The preparations were gruelling enough, working non-stop through tons of assessment papers for each subject. But we just worked consistently. The lowest point was during the PSLE itself when Joshua came home from a disastrous Mathematics paper.

He was so traumatised that he couldn't recover to do as well as he should have in his Science paper the next day. He got scared that he wouldn't make the minimum T-score for SOTA. When the results came out, he was also sad because he had been looking forward to ace-ing the Science paper and he was disappointed with his final score.

Alvin & Monica:

Monica prays with the children and we talk about stories in the Bible when an opportunity arises eg. when Monica is doing her Bible study while the children are doing their homework. When we talk about certain things that have happened, we also try to bring in the "why" and the "values" we hold, eg. why we have not changed our car in seven years for financial prudence, to be content with what we have, not having to "keep up with the Joneses".

Daphne:

School and schoolwork is a focus through which you can contextualise the inculcation of these values, and guide the application of Christian responses to what your child is experiencing in his life journey. For example, we pray with our child when we are working through his stresses and worries, if he is struggling with schoolwork or with peer relationships.

We are careful to include thanksgiving beyond only when good results are earned through hard work, for example thanking God for a kind gesture from a friend, or the opportunity to help and show love to a classmate.

We also take care that schoolwork doesn't become exclusively the only subject or dimension for interaction between us parents and our child in his formative years. "Train up a child in the way that he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

As a Christian parent, how do you help your children to cope with failure?

Alvin & Monica:

We ask the children to give thanks to God in all situations, and to know that he is in control of every facet of their lives and that he has a purpose for everyone and in all situations. We tell them that whatever God does is for their good, so if the children have not done well in an exam or face a setback, God has a reason for this eg. to build up their perseverance, so the children should not give up but continue to press on (assuming they have failed in something that is good to pursue).

Daphne:

You only fail if you can't get up and give up. Not when you fall down. As parents/teachers, we walk alongside our children through their journey of school and constantly point them back to God as the source of their strength at every opportunity, including setbacks.

Alvin & Monica:

Alvin & Monica:

A God-fearing, loving, kind, considerate and filial person, one that can make a positive contribution to society.

Daphne:

When Joshua comes out of school, we want him to be a wise and mature boy, secure and confident in the knowledge and understanding that he is a child of God, and caring towards others. We want him to always have the assurance and peace that he is able to call upon his heavenly Father to help him in all circumstances.

When your child completes his/her formal education, what kind of person/character would you like to see?

GLOSSARY

Direct-School Admission – An admission exercise that allows participating schools to select some Primary 6 students for admission to Secondary 1 based on their achievements and talents before the PSLE results are released. Also applies to secondary school students going on to junior college.

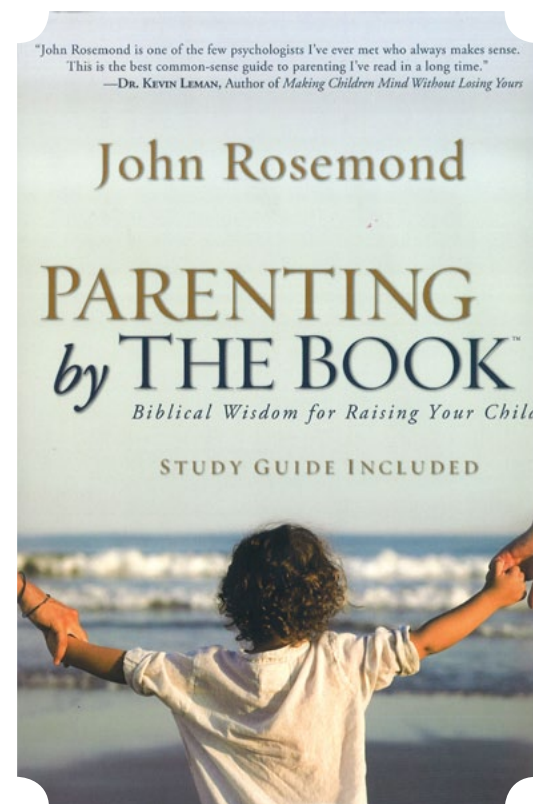
Express and Normal Streams – These are courses which students in secondary school are placed in according to how they perform at the PSLE. The different curricular emphases are designed to match their learning abilities and interests.

PSLE – The Primary School Leaving Examination is a national examination taken by all students near the end of their sixth year in primary school, before they move on to secondary school.

This examination tests students' proficiency in the English language, their respective mother tongue languages, mathematics and science.

T-score – 'Transformed Scores' are used to standardise raw scores across the level or cohort. T-scores give the relative rank or position of a pupil's performance compared to all the other pupils in that subject in the same exam.

BIBLIOTHEQUE

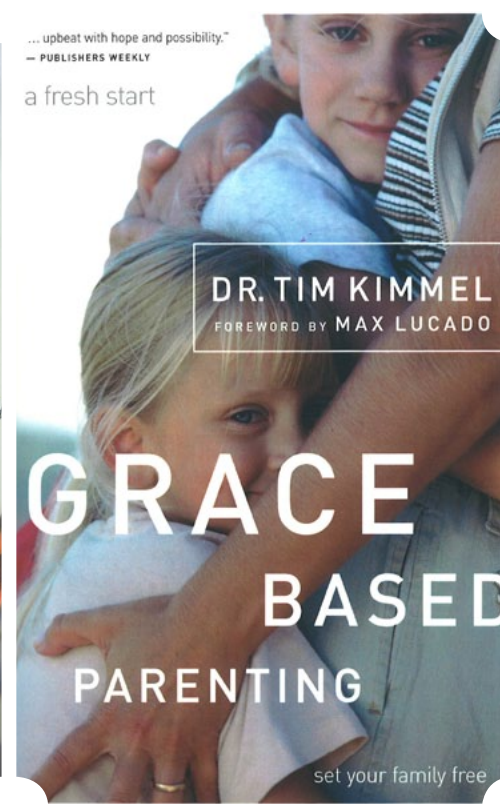


PARENTING BY THE BOOK
Author: John Rosemond

Raising respectful, responsible, obedient children who can entertain themselves without television or video games, do their own homework on their own volition and have impeccable manners can be a reality, according to family psychologist and bestselling author John Rosemond.

Any parent who so desires can raise happy and emotionally healthy children who honour their parents and their families with good behaviour and do their best in school when they raise the child according to Biblical principles.

John Rosemond brings parents back to the uncomplicated basics that will help them bring up to be the children who will be, as the Bible promises, "a delight to their soul".



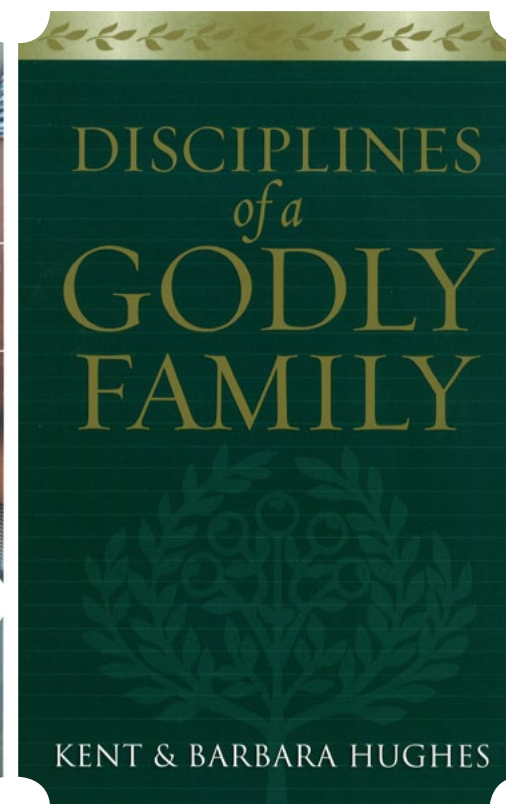
GRACE BASED PARENTING
Author: Dr. Tim Kimmel

Most parenting books on the market today are about the rules, methods and approaches and applying all these to achieve results and success in parenting their children.

While effective in the short run, these books are often not in line with Christian beliefs. Dr. Tim Kimmel, founder of Family Matters ministries, offers a refreshing new look at parenting.

In this book, he recommends a parenting style that mirrors God's love, reflects His forgiveness and displaces fear as a motivator for good behaviour.

As we embrace the grace God offers, we begin to give it - creating a solid foundation for growing morally strong and spiritually motivated children.

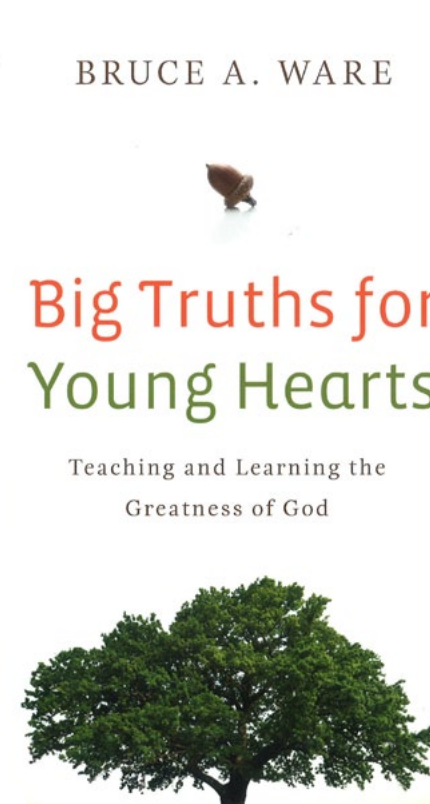


DISCIPLINES OF A GODLY FAMILY
Author: Kent & Barbara Hughes

This book covers topics such as how parents can establish a solid family heritage, promoting affection between family members, encouraging godliness in children through the use of appropriate discipline.

The authors also offer tips for fun family vacations, creating family traditions and cultivating prayer as a lifestyle in your own home.

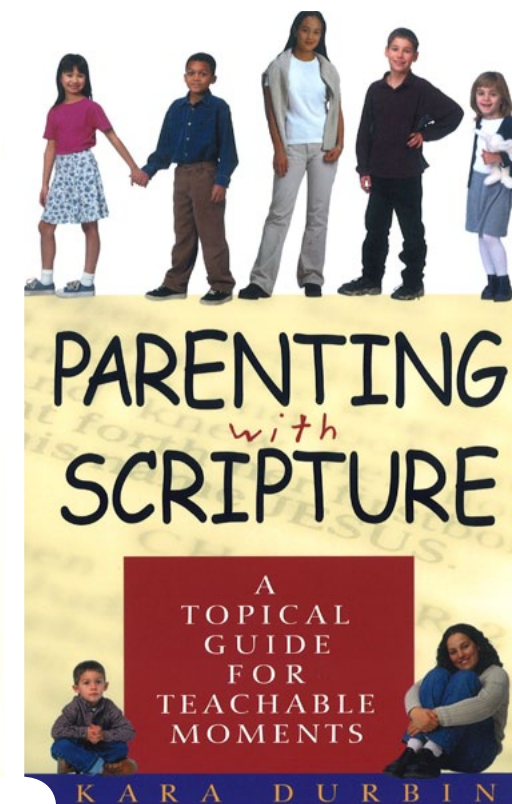
For those struggling to parent their own children, you cannot find a more practical and honest guide than "Disciplines of a Godly Family".



BIG TRUTHS FOR YOUNG HEARTS
Author: Bruce A. Ware

Bruce Ware, a theology professor, encourages and enables parents to teach theology in a way that is easily understood by children aged 6 to 14.

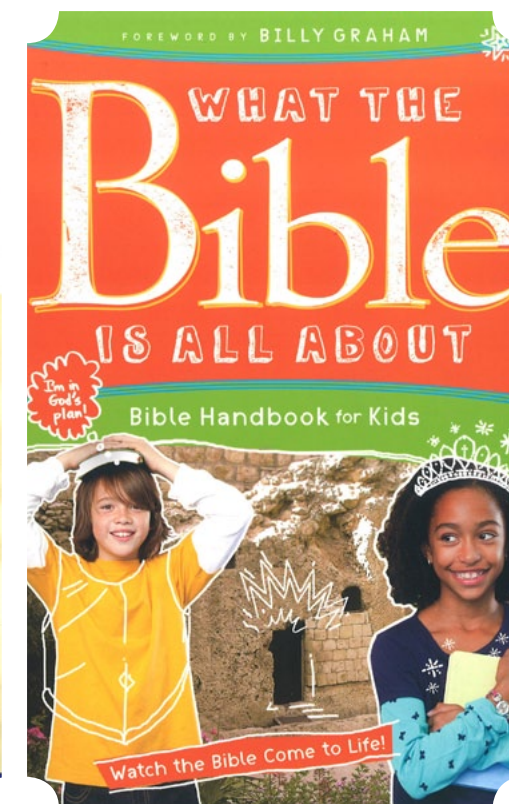
The book devotes several brief chapters to each subject, making it possible for parents to read one chapter per day with their children. With this non-intimidating format, parents will be emboldened to be their children's primary faith trainers and perhaps learn a few things themselves along the way.



PARENTING WITH SCRIPTURE
Author: Kara Durbin

"Parenting with Scripture" is an easy to use topical resource when teachable moments arise. This effective guide helps the parents to teach the children to think and apply God's Word in their daily lives.

The book contains 101 subjects arranged in alphabetical order such as the meaning of friendship mean or the impact of gossip. Scripture passages are used to reinforce the Biblical principles for each subject. This book is useful for parents regardless of the child's age as the topics covered are universal.



WHAT THE BIBLE IS ALL ABOUT
Author: Frances Blankenbaker

"What the Bible Is All About" is a kid-friendly, visually exciting resource designed to help children, tweens and younger teens read and understand Scripture's revelation of God and His great plan to save the world.

Based on Dr. Henrietta Mears' classic Bible handbook, parents will appreciate this book as it is chock-full of maps, charts, time lines and fun illustrations that will help kids make sense of the Bible's big picture.

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We are the parents of Fabian Ong, who graduated from TMCK in 2011.

We would like to express our sincere thanks to TMCK for providing a wonderful kindergarten education and a nurturing environment.

We witnessed very positive developments in Fabian as he was going through Nursery 2, Kindergarten 1 and 2 in TMCK. Fabian has not only grown intellectually, but also spiritually and emotionally. As believers of Christ, we are both drawn to Christian teachings, and we are really glad that we found Fabian such a good school that focused a lot on Christian values.

Every time he came back from TMCK, Fabian would excitedly share with us what he had learnt and what he had experienced in school. We saw his enthusiasm and keen interest in going to school each and everyday. He was very motivated indeed.

At his graduation day in 2011, all three of us felt very sad as we knew that he would be leaving the kindergarten that he loves so much and heading for Primary 1.

By God's grace, Fabian managed to get into the primary school of our choice. The beginning of primary school life marked a very significant milestone in his life.

In the beginning, both my wife and I were quite stressed as we saw our son crossing into an unknown arena. We didn't know if he would continue to enjoy his new school life just like he had in kindergarten. Our worries soon faded as we learnt that Fabian was doing well and excelling in every area, keeping the same positive attitude he had during his kindergarten days.

We attribute much of this to the strong foundation that was established in his kindergarten days, the excellent

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Every time he came back from TMCK, Fabian would excitedly share with us what he had learnt and what he had experienced in school.

”

teaching and values that were imparted to him, and the positive, nurturing environment that TMCK offered. We are very thankful indeed.

Fabian has just completed Primary 1 and was given the following awards:

Top Student (First Prize) in Class
Top Ten Student (4th Position) Overall for P1
Best Progress Award in Class
Star Award for Excellence in Character

We are very thankful to the Lord for what Fabian has achieved today, and to Him who first placed Fabian in TMCK, which provided him with a solid foundation early in life. All glory to Jesus!

We thank you for your dedication and excellence in making TMCK such a great place of learning, and a nurturing environment for your students.

Thank you and God bless TMCK!

Max & Anna Ong

(This letter was received by email in November 2012.)



4岁多的儿子Michael做出一件让我始料未及的事情。早已睡着觉的他忽然跃身而起，跳在床上，紧握双手嘴里面在祷告。一旁的我静静看着这突如其来的一切！他是在为家人在祷告，口里讲着：“非常感谢我的上帝！倾听我此时此刻的祷告。我要祷告给我的家人”，然后一口气道出十多位人的名字。看到此景，我的心激动万分，无语言表！

感谢我们的神！唯一的神！

当我不知为Michael该选择吉隆坡或新加坡的学校的时候，神把他的旨意通过Melina Chen姐妹传达给我！让我做出了这美好的定！在TMCK, Michael学到了宝贵的知识，扎根神的话语，事事祷告，事事感恩！

一切荣耀归于我们的神！

Michael的母亲

Translation:

Four-year old Michael did something I could not in my wildest dreams have imagined. One moment he was sleeping. In the next moment, he suddenly jumped up onto the bed with his hands tightly clasped in prayer. I watched this quietly. He was praying for the family saying: "Thanks be to my God! Please hear my prayers. I want to pray for my family." And in doing so, he rattled off 10 names in quick succession. I was deeply moved and rendered speechless.

Give thanks to the one and only God!

I was initially undecided as to whether to send Michael to school in Kuala Lumpur or Singapore. Through Melina Chen, God led me to make this beautiful decision to send Michael to TMCK. In TMCK, Michael has acquired precious knowledge, and become rooted in God's Word. He prays and gives thanks about everything.

All glory to our God!

Michael's mum





We are so grateful to have found such a good school for our daughter.

Our daughter started going to school when she was two-and-a-half years old. I was concerned about whether she was ready to go to school because she is very attached to me, never wants to be with strangers, and takes a long time to adjust to new surroundings.

On the first day of school, as expected, she cried loudly and this went on for the whole week. But praise the Lord, after that one week, she woke up and asked for her school uniform and said she wanted to go to school. I was very surprised. I thank God and give all the credit to the teachers who won her heart.

Though the teachers tell me that she is very quiet at school (even after six months), at home she keeps singing songs learnt from school. She also likes to trace alphabets and sometimes at home she holds her baby doll's hand and helps her doll to trace the alphabets too. It is funny. I believe that she mimics what the teachers do at school, helping her to trace such that she "revises" it with her doll at home.

Christina, a joyful parent of Carissa Susanto Lee (Nursery 1)

Jynette has blossomed into an expressive, articulate and confident child.

TMCK has provided Jynnette with a warm and conducive environment that has allowed her to be herself and yet has given her the discipline and guidance that all children need.

The young ones, as well as the parents and grandparents, have all been made to feel part of the school!

The teachers are dedicated, kind and helpful. They work together, looking out for the children as a group. This is an important characteristic of a good kindergarten, where the general welfare of all the children is the focus of all the teachers.

Grandmother to Jynnette Tan Shu Ping



Since Sean Ethan started K2 this year, he has been reading story books borrowed from the library and he has taken the initiative to do assessment books at home.

We were concerned about him learning Mandarin as we speak only English at home. Sean looks forward to his Chinese speech and drama classes and he is more open to speaking in Mandarin now.

We are thankful for TMCK's teaching methods as we have experienced changes in Sean.

Mrs Josephine Cheo, mother of Sean Ethan



I would like to say a big THANK YOU to all of you who have made my son's journey in your school a memorable one. He has grown a lot not only academically. His faith in God has also grown.

The stories of Bible heroes have given him great insights to God and made him interested in the Bible. The time of prayer has also taught him to pray not just for himself but for others as well. Now every night during our bedtime prayer, he would tell me who was absent from school that day and would ask me to pray for that friend of his. He has grown to become a very caring boy. As a Christian myself, nurturing my son to have strong faith in God is one of my goals and I'm thankful that the school has helped instill that. He now understands how much God loves us and he always says that he wants God to come down and give him a big hug.

I thank God for helping me chose the right school for my son. He enjoys the daily classes, enrichment classes, field trips, school celebrations and performances. He loved the angklong performances in April so much that when he knew there are angklong lessons in the primary school that he will be going to, he said he wanted to continue that as a CCA. His academic progress has also been great especially for Chinese. He can now read both English and Chinese books on his own.

He is now ready for Primary 1 thanks to all the hard work put in by the teachers. I sincerely thank each and everyone in the school for everything that all of you have done. We will miss all of you when he leaves. The school will always be in our prayers.

Sharon Loi, Mommy of Spencer Lavern Tupac (Kindergarten 2)



TMC Kindergarten aims to provide age-appropriate curriculum and a nurturing environment to:

- Ensure **T**otal development of every child through play and orchestrated self discovery
- Foster **M**otivation for life long learning through cultivating the child's curiosity about the world at large
- Instill **C**hristian values through opportunities for the child to appreciate and experience God's love and goodness
- Enlarge the **K**ingdom of God through frequent partnerships and interactions between the school and the community

Visit www.tmc.org.sg/kindergarten.html for details.

God's Hand at Work in TMC

Genesis

By God's grace and blessings, and after much prodding by Lee Park Ming, our small group KAIROS took off in 2010. After the completion of the Disciple I class, which I facilitated, my wife Veronica and I were asked by Violet Khor to start a new small group. Some were new members of the church while others had been at TMC for a long time. Most came from the just completed Disciple I class. Along the way, more members joined us and today we number over 15.

We began meeting in church once a month to get to know and interacts with one another. As we gathered in the name of the Lord, we became more familiar with one another and began Bible Study together. We also prayed for one another and shared our cares and concerns.

HELPING EACH OTHER

When one of our members, Richard Tay, had a relapse with his knee problem, he was hospitalised for a long period and needed several rounds of surgery to rectify and mend his knee. Group members rallied around and helped him in his recovery. When he was discharged from hospital, he was still unable to move around. By then, he had also shifted to a new place that was undergoing lift upgrading.



To make it more convenient for him to attend our small group meetings, we moved our meetings to his house. We encouraged him and prayed together for his speedy recovery. One of our members, Evangeline, a trained nurse from India who is working at NUH, moved in to stay with Nancy and Richard. She helped to provide medical care for Richard when she was at home and helped Nancy in other household chores.

The Tays' new place was also just a block away from two members - Ella and Willie. They helped to provide transportation for Richard and accompanied him at home when Nancy had to be out to run errands.

Other members like Lucy and Alice would visit in the afternoon to play the game Rummikub with the Tays. All of them have since developed into good players and Richard even took part in the recent GYM Rummikub Competition! Geok Kee and I helped out as drivers when there was a need. Other members would also pop by to lift their spirits.

Tan Poh Liang, who was serving in Outreach & Social Concerns (OSC) activities with Nancy, also joined small group. Other than meetings, the ladies have fellowship together, learning from one another how to cook and bake. We have meals together during festive seasons. We are all united in one body of Christ.

At one of our recent meetings, we held a house blessing at the request of Lelia and Lilian who had just completed their recent home renovation. And finally, our newest member, Rose Tung, joined us in April this year after being invited by the ladies who were all helping out in Contact 123. Most of our members are now serving actively and faithfully in the OSC ministry programmes like St. Luke's Eldercare Centre and Contact 123, the GYM ministry programmes like Yum Cha and Tea@3, and WSCS activities like the Good as New Sale, food sales, home visitations and mission to Cambodia.

Due to health reasons, I have stepped down and James Tang has assumed the responsibility of being the leader of the group.

Coincidence or God's Hand at Work?

Upon reflection of all that has happened, is it coincidence that everything has been so well planned? Richard's illness, followed by Evangeline's appearance, the Tays' moving into a flat in the block next to Ella and Willie's, and the availability of our members to help as drivers and friends to accompany the Tays...only God knows for His thoughts are much higher than ours. We are just faithful followers of Christ Jesus our Lord. When we are united in the body of Christ and pray in unison, our prayers will be answered. What happened is our testimony of God's hand at work.

More about small groups at TMC can be found at www.tmc.org.sg/smallgroup.html. Or contact Park Ming at parkming@tmc.org.sg / 9671 7100



by Mike Yang

An Angelic Sighting



by Sophia Tang



Back row: Mr & Mrs Tang
Front row (from left): Desmond, Sophia, Valerie, Timothy



18 Nov 12

Diana will be going for a knee replacement surgery for her left knee at 2pm tomorrow. Please pray for a successful surgery and quick recovery for her.
(posted on the TMC Prayer Net)

While sleeping, mum suddenly burst into tongues. Val has a recording of this. It included shouts of "hallelujah"! If you hear the recording, you would not believe that it had been uttered by a person who had just emerged from an operation, and in pain just minutes earlier.

19 Nov 12

Operation went well for my mum today. She is out but the pain is very immense. On strong morphine that needs to be injected every five mins. Pray for pain to ease away so that she won't be in so much discomfort. Thanks!

- Valerie

(posted on the TMC Prayer Net)

Mum then woke up. Although she had no recollection or any idea that she had spoken in tongues while sleeping, she actually saw angels in the room. Apparently, one was by her bedside, and others were flying above the bed.

We thank TMC for keeping my mum and our family in prayer.

Peace and joy replaced the pain completely. She was able to wave her arms, give thanks to God and speak with the strength and attitude of a "normal healthy person" to Tim, Val and my dad.

We thank God for hearing our prayers and for meeting us in such a special and powerful way.

Jesus took away the excruciating pain. Mum was discharged on the following Friday.

After the knee replacement operation on Monday, mum was in a lot of pain.

Jesus is so good. We just want to give Him all praise and thanks!

Post-dinner on Monday, Timothy and Valerie went to visit mum who was suffering from extreme pain. She told Tim that she kept seeing a white hand trying to grab her. Tim prayed for her and then ...

We thank those who have been prayer warriors and for being a wonderful TMC community.

We are very blessed by all your prayers and concern. Mum says a BIG THANK YOU to everyone.

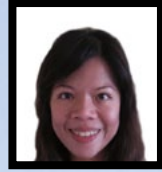
Mum said that Jesus had come by. She felt a lot of heat in her left (operated) leg. Tim and Val also witnessed how very hot she was. The intense heat seemed to take her pain away so that she was able to fall asleep.

The TMC Prayer Net is a prayer network which is connected online. The community intercedes for many in TMC who send in requests for prayer. Visit www.tmc.org.sg/prayer.html for more details.

A PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

What the Holy Land Taught Me

by Amanda Yong



MY nine days in Israel taught me many things.

One of the first was this: Sometimes, clichés are there for a reason. “See the Bible come alive as you walk the land where Jesus himself once walked.” Now that was the message I picked up in almost every brochure and handbook I received – including one I had helped compile and edit – as part of my preparation for my trip to Israel.

It was a line that registered but didn’t completely resonate with me. After all, it did sound like a very well-worn cliché. And you know what they say about clichés. I had also watched a few DVDs meant to educate the more than 80 of us who were going on the tour in the months leading up to the actual visit. These were stirring and thought-provoking. They presented vivid images of Israel past and present and the dramatic stories in the Bible as well as the secular history of the Jewish people. Still, I wasn’t quite convinced. Maybe because I had skipped most of the trip preparation sessions where all the DVDs were screened (sorry Pastor Peter!) But truth be told, in any case, I was rather excited about the trip. I was eager to find out what all the fuss about the Holy Land was about, to see for myself a country that has been so deeply dissected in the news media, a nation that has so sharply divided world opinion, and a place and a people whose past, present and future are so intimately interwoven with the Word of God.

As it turned out, within a day or two of the trip, I too started spouting the cliché myself. Travelling through the harsh wilderness of the Negev desert, reading the Bible passages relating what Jesus did at the very places in Jerusalem where he did them, singing praises to God aboard a fishing boat on the Sea of Galilee, and spotting a rainbow through the rain-stained window of my tour bus in the Galilee area. These were some of the remarkable experiences that made the trip so much more than a holiday. It was a pilgrimage where I, and I dare

say my fellow pilgrims too, had powerful personal encounters with God.

The people I met along the way also reminded me of God’s loving and generous heart for all people and showed me how He is turning the hearts of the Jews to Himself. Hearing their stories left me feeling impressed by their faith and moved by the goodness of our great God. One of them was my Israeli guide Erez who came to Christ when Jesus healed his baby boy of a defect in his kidney more than a year ago. In his typically understated yet intense manner, he spoke about how God met him in a powerful way, how he sees his work as less of a job and more of a mission and how he saw us and every group that he leads as his congregation.

Then there was Marco, a guide at the Timna National Park in the south, who shared about how many of his friends cut off ties with him once they found out he had received Christ. With his dreadlocks and boardshorts, he came across as more surfer dude than earnest believer. But as he explained the different parts of the reconstruction of the Tabernacle and how they revealed the character of God, his speech surged with a passion and fervour that could only have come from a deep conviction.

How did he deal with his friends’ reactions, we asked him. “It’s not easy,” he said. Then, with a wistful smile, he added: “But life is not meant to be easy.” Now, more than a month since my return home, I look back at my journey through the Holy Land and can only be thankful for the privilege of such an indelible experience.

So did the Bible come alive to me, as the cliché went? Yes, definitely. But so much more than that, it wasn’t just the Book, but the Person without whom the Book would not exist who came alive to me – the God of the Bible, of Israel and of the world. And for that, my heart rejoices and is glad.

Israel in 9 Days

The packed itinerary took us from Eilat, at the southern-most tip of Israel, to its northern-most border at Mount Hermon. These are some of the places we visited:

Dead Sea

Bethlehem

Garden Tomb, Jerusalem

Believed to be the tomb where Christ’s body was kept and the site of his resurrection, this was a tranquil garden where Pastor Peter conducted the first of our two Holy Communion services during the trip. The guide at this site, an Englishman named Tim, said that while the tomb here had been identified as the one that held Jesus’ body, it could not be verified as fact. Archaeologists can only say for certain that the tomb was in that area. “But it doesn’t matter where it happened. What matters is that it happened,” he said.

Jaffa

A beautiful port city, known in ancient times as Joppa. This was where Peter visited and raised Tabitha from the dead.

Caesarea Maritima

A great harbour city with an ancient Roman theatre and aqueduct, Peter preached the good news to the household of Cornelius the centurion here, placing them among the earliest Gentile believers of the new covenant. The apostle Paul often travelled here.

Mount Carmel

Elijah defeated the prophets of Baal here.



Mr & Mrs Peter Lai, one of many couples who renewed their marriage vows



tabernacle

Sea of Galilee

Also known as the Lake of Gennesaret, Lake Tiberias and Lake Kinneret in the Bible, it is a small lake lying about 180 metres below sea level. This was where Jesus rebuked the winds and the sea, taught from Peter’s boat and walked on water. Here, we went on a boat ride in a traditional fishing boat of first century design and listened to a sermon preached in Mandarin by Eddy and interpreted into English by Pastor Peter. We also worshipped the Lord through a time of singing led by one of the boatmen, Daniel Carmel, a Messianic Jew with a beautiful baritone of a voice.

Cana in Galilee

Many of the couples in our group said their vows again in a wedding rededication ceremony conducted by Pastor Peter and held in this town where Jesus performed his first miracle – turning water into wine.

Beth Shean

The bodies of King Saul and his sons were hung on the walls of this ancient city after they were defeated and killed by the Philistines at nearby Mount Gilboa.

Sea of Galilee



Beth Shean



Trip Trivia (Jordan & Israel 31 Oct – 11 Nov 12)

- For most of us, including members of our Mandarin service, this was our first visit to Israel. But not for our spiritual director, Rev Peter Goh, who has led groups from his previous churches on similar pilgrimages and has now been to the country 13 times.

- Pastor Peter and the organising committee started preparations more than a year in advance and conducted trip briefing sessions to prepare us for the pilgrimage about six months before the trip.

- Our Israeli guides, Erez and Avi, are Messianic Jews – Jews who believe in Jesus (whom they call Yeshua) as the Messiah of Israel, Saviour of the world and Son of God.

- We entered Israel from its southern border with Jordan after spending two days and one night in Jordan. In Israel, we travelled northwards and exited from its northern border with Jordan.

temple mount



In and About TMC



EVENTS

**Wed, Jan 2, Feb 6 and every 1st Wed of the month
10am – 12pm**

Yum Cha@10 is an opportunity for people to come together for fellowship, and serves as a platform for TMC-ers to meet one another as well as non-Christians in the community mid-week.
www.tmc.org.sg/regular.html

Sat, Jan 5, 10am – 1pm

Small Group Leaders' Get-Together. All queries to Colin (colinyip@gmail.com) / Park Ming (parkming@tmc.org.sg)
www.tmc.org.sg/smallgroup.html

2pm – 4.30pm

GRACE - God in the RACE. "Victory over Worry", "The Full Measure of Jesus", "Restful Increase" - these are just some of the topics covered in this series of talks by Mrs Lee Joo Choo, a leader in the ladies' ministry at Community Praise Baptist Church. Sat, 5, 12, 19, 26 Jan and 2, 9, 23, 30 March.
www.tmc.org.sg/highlights.html#grace

Sun, Jan 6, 8.45am and 11.15am

Children's Ministry Orientation for Children

Mon, Jan 7, 11.30am – 4.30pm

Glowing Years Ministry – Hillary Francis & his band, lunch and tea at the Esplanade

Wed, Jan 9, Feb 13 and every 2nd Wed of the month, 3pm – 5pm

Tea @ 3 organised by Glowing Years Ministry

Sun, 13 Jan, 8.45am and 11.15am

Children's Ministry orientation

Sat, Jan 19, 3pm – 5pm

Healthy Bones Begin With You. A talk on osteoporosis. Contact Victor (vseah@singnet.com.sg)

Sun, Jan 20, 2pm – 4pm

Baptism classes begin.
www.tmc.org.sg/baptism.html

10.15am – 11.15am and 12.30pm – 1.30pm

Children's Ministry - Parents and Teachers Meeting

Sun, Jan 20, Feb 17 and every 3rd Sunday thereafter

WSCS Visitation to Homebound. Those interested to cheer up old folks, please contact Lucy Chan at 9748 2733.

Wed, Jan 16, Feb 20 and every 3rd Wed of the month, 10am – 12pm

God's Master Works. A Concerto in 39 Movements is an overview of the Old Testament conducted by Rev Peter Goh
www.tmc.org.sg/regular.html#gym

Sun, Jan 27, Feb 24 and every last Sunday of the month, 9am

Visit to Institute of Mental Health by Outreach & Social Concerns
Contact Yvonne Tan at 9091 8589 / yvnn_tan@yahoo.com
www.tmc.org.sg/osc.html

Thurs, Jan 31, Feb 28 and every last Thurs of the month, 10am – 12pm

St Luke's Eldercare Centre Devotions at Blk 217 Serangoon Ave 4 on how to handle one's inferiority and temptations. TMC's ministry to SLEC brings hope, help and the love of Christ to many needy elderly.
www.tmc.org.sg/osc.html#slec

Sun, Feb 3, 10am to 2pm

Chinese New Year Outreach: Distribution of oranges to households in Serangoon North

Sun, Feb 10, 8.30am

Chinese New Year Combined Service. Only one English service this Sunday.

Sat, Feb 23,

Baptism of Youths and Adults

Every Fri, 9.15am-11.15am

WSCS Bible Study on Psalms by Mrs Esther Wong
<http://www.tmc.org.sg/highlights.html#wscsbs>

8pm – 10pm

Healing Ministry in the Prayer Chapel

Every Sat fortnightly, 9am – 11am

Fellowship of Ukulelians meet to fellowship and play the ukulele of course
www.tmc.org.sg/regular.html#ukulele

Every Sat, 9am – 12pm

Contact 123 IT Courses from basic computer, to the use of Facebook and movie-making.
<http://www.tmc.org.sg/c123/c123course.pdf>

2pm – 4pm

Contact 123 - Soccer Training at Blk 143 Serangoon North Avenue 1.
<http://www.facebook.com/Contact123>

Every 2nd and 4th Sunday (not on Feb 10), 7.30 – 8.30am

Church Prayer Meeting in Prayer Chapel
www.tmc.org.sg/prayer.html

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Further details on TMC's events can be found at
www.tmc.org.sg