Hallelujah! Greetings to all RE parents, students, and teachers! Welcome to the 2010-2011 Q2 RE Newsletter! We have just reached the end of Q1 and there have been some changes to the RE Department in terms of our resources. This year, I have been appointed as RE Coordinator. Thanks to Sister Evelina for serving in the RE Department over the past few years. Our new Lead Teachers for each class are:

Brother Tony Chen for Junior 1, Sister Brenda Wong for Elementary 2, and Sister Lenny Wong for Kindergarten. Brother James Yen is our newest RE student. We have also added two experienced teachers, Sisters Margaretta Soehendro (a.k.a. Marg, Mrs Chiu, and Auntie Bubble) and Deborah Chang, to the team. Praise the Lord!

Here is the list of teachers and students for the coming year:

Junior 1 - Students: Helen, Sarah, and Joshua; Teachers: Tony, Cindy, Iris, Gregor, and Marg

Elementary 2 - Students: Sophia, Timmy, and Deborah L; Teachers: Brenda, Andrew Y, Deborah C, and Patrick

Kindergarten - Students: Grace, Faith, Naomi, Hannah, and James; Teachers: Lenny, Anita, Andrew C, and Garry.

In the coming year, we will focus on improving our intercessory prayers and communication with parents. Since RE lessons take only a bit over an hour each week, we will continue to look for ways to work with parents and nurture our students more effectively at home. May the Lord Jesus guide our RE Department.

"...and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."
(2Tim 3:15)
Every week starts out relatively the same. On Sunday I'm still in bed at 9:30am when most people go to church. I wake up to watch TV and anticipate the weekly Sunday flag football game. I love running around and getting all the energy out of me before I start another work week. On Monday I wake up sore from playing football the day before while running errands. Tuesday, the first day back at work, I'm already hating waking up at 5:00am to get ready for work. It's my first day back at work and I'm taking it pretty easy. Wednesday is the first day I open up my RE textbook to look at what I'm teaching. Bible stories are familiar but because I'm not one to always remember detail, it's good to read the story again. On Thursday I'm running the story over and over in my mind and thinking of how to present the material. I read the story many times over again on Friday to make sure I'm able to go through the story and hit all the key points of the lesson.

Life hasn't always been like this. In fact some of the E2 kids don't remember the time when I only attended church twice a year during college and once every few months after I graduated. It's hard to listen to parents when you are on your own. Many a time I would do the opposite of my parents' advice just to spite them. At that time in my life, I thought life was good. I had plenty of friends, and I was going out having fun every single weekend. Nightlife was common and there were plenty of weekends I would stay out all night long. But God works in unconventional ways, and since we are all Gods' children, He will find a way to bring us back to where we belong.

It wasn't long after that I had a few disagreements with my friends who were experimenting with drugs. Reaching this crossroads of life, I felt that if I kept following my friends I was bound to get in deep trouble. It's not easy giving up the group of friends you grew up with. The decision wasn't easy and for the next two months I spent every weekend home alone. Life came to a halt. I had nowhere to go and no one to do it with. I remembered I couldn't wait until work started again so I could at least get some interaction with familiar faces.

At the end of the two months, I decided I wasn't going to sit around and feel sorry for myself anymore. I picked myself up and drove to the familiar two-storey building of Houston church that I've known since my family moved to the States. I decided to give church a try. I'm thankful after all these years that God still loved a sinner such as me. I gave up on church long ago, but He never gave up on me. I felt like the prodigal son returning home, battered and empty handed from the secular world. My life has changed quite a bit from those days. I wake up every Sabbath morning I'm teaching in bed with the teacher's book reading the lesson over and over. As I drive to church I'm still thinking of how to present the lesson. After church I'm relieved and thankful the lesson

"If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, From doing your pleasure on My holy day, And call the Sabbath a delight, The holy day of the LORD honorable, And shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, Nor finding your own pleasure, Nor speaking your own words, Then you shall delights yourself in the LORD; And I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, And feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. The mouth of the LORD has spoken." (Is 58:13-14)
A Word from Your Newest RE Teacher

Sister Deborah Chang

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, I feel blessed to be able to be part of the TJC family in Houston and look forward to years of growing and learning together. Church has always been a large part of my life, and I am glad to share it now with you.

As a quick introduction, my name is Deborah Yuan-Yueh Chang. I was named after the judge in the Bible, and love that my name means "honeybee" in Hebrew. It is, I think, one of the main reasons why I now love insects and bugs and creepy crawlers of all kinds, including snakes, spiders, and snails. I figured, I can’t fear the creatures I’m named after. My mom always told me as I grew up that honeybees work extremely hard, so I should as well. My Chinese name, 元悦 (yuányuè), comes from a family tradition of beginning each name with the character 元 and having the second character have 心 (meaning heart). Together, 元悦 also sounds like Chinese for full moon. This has reminded me throughout my life to really appreciate God’s wonderful creation, the natural world.

My name is also part of who I am because I have always been inspired by strong women in the Bible. The story that I have most read is the story of Hannah in Samuel 1. Hannah has one of the most beautiful prayers in the Bible, beautiful not necessarily for its poetry (see Psalms or Songs of Solomon for those), nor for its content (for many women in the Bible prayed for children), but for her perfect faith and sincerity. Hannah prayed for a son earnestly, holding nothing back but laying all before the Lord. "[I] have poured out my soul," Hannah says, and she did so through tears and anguish (1 Samuel 1:15). Yet, her faith was so complete that when Prophet Eli told her that God would grant her prayer request, Hannah immediately got up, ate, and was no longer sad, even though God’s promise had not yet been fulfilled. There was no difference in Hannah’s life yet. She was not pregnant. She hadn’t even seen her husband. And yet, when God’s promise was given to her, she immediately acted like God’s promise was already fulfilled and was no longer sad.

I pray for Hannah’s perfect and sincere faith this year as I begin serving as an RE teacher; I pray that our students, teachers, and families can all together grow in this faith; and, I pray that our identity, though tied to our names, begins first with our identity as Christians.

Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

(Mt 11:28-20)
This ESSC, we had many good encouragements. Attending convocations like these allow us to review our spiritual lives and remind us about our spiritual goals. This time, Pastor Huang and Pastor Yeh were able to assist us. Listening to their sermons and testimonies was entertaining, but, they also contained beneficial teachings. One main thing we learned was to preach to everyone and aim to be like Jesus Christ. We should be able to tell people about what we believe in and our end result on this earth. Going to ESSC reminds us that we must be like Jesus, that we must love our enemies and leave no foothold for the devil to sin.

On Saturday morning when my family arrived at church, Preacher Huang spoke about how we can influence people to come to Jesus Christ and how we are the witnesses of God. I agreed with him and that we can help get more people to church. In the afternoon, Auntie Evelina gave a testimony about her son, James Yen. After listening to her testimony, we prayed and I prayed that God will continue to help James.

On Sunday, my family first drove to Galveston to witness three people become church members. I was so happy to see them get baptized. After the baptism, we drove back to Houston to get to church. Preacher Huang was talking about the time before Jesus was crucified on the cross. It was sad to be reminded that Jesus Christ died on the cross for my sins. He loved me very much to do that. Our next sermon session was on foot washing. I was moved to get closer to see the newly baptized church members. It was joyful to see three people wanting to become part our church family. We then heard a sermon on Holy Communion. This sermon moved me. To hear that Jesus Christ loved that greedy Judas even though He knew he was going to betray Him, this is truly love. Then, we ate of Jesus’ body and blood after it was sanctified. Boy, even though it was a good Holy Communion sermon, I was starving. Thank God lunch was after prayer!

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I give a reflection about the 2010 ESSC. I praise and thank God that I was able to attend. I really think the best part was just listening to both Pastor Huang and Pastor Yeh speak. They both have their own style of preaching and it’s very entertaining and fulfilling to hear both. I learned so much from them.

Pastor Huang and Pastor Yeh are both so funny and it keeps you so interested. The main thing I learned is to preach the Gospel to all nations. It doesn’t matter if you are young or old, anybody can preach. We have responsibilities in this world given by Him and we certainly need to keep them. I thank God that He could send Pastor Huang here and also Pastor Yeh to be our resident pastor. They are both the best testimony tellers and the messages that they deliver are very edifying.

The memories I have gained from this spiritual convocation are very precious and I hope I can cherish and be able to keep them forever. May all the praise and glory be given unto His Holy Name. Amen.
"Everyone, Paint what you want to thank Jesus for....."

Thank You, Lord

Some thank the Lord for friends and home, For mercies sure and sweet;
But I would praise Him for His grace, In Prayer I would repeat.

Some thank Him for the flow'rs that grow, Some for the stars that shine;
My heart is filled with joy and praise, Because I know He's mine.

I trust in Him from day to day, I prove His saving grace;
I'll sing this song of praise to Him, Until I see His face.

(Chorus)
Thank you, Lord, for saving my soul;
Thank you, Lord, for making me whole;
Thank you, Lord, for giving to me
Thy great salvation so rich and free.