The term "Religious Education," or R.E., is commonly used among our little brethren before they go to college. It is a matter of fact that R.E. improves our spiritual cultivation and is a must for all believers. Therefore, we have recently started the "Adult R.E." program for adults, so that we can broaden the context of "R.E." for all ages, including both parents and R.E. teachers.

One particularly important task for spiritual growth is Bible reading and memorizing verses. They come together. If we don't read, we cannot memorize! It is not a suggestion from the teachers or parents; it is a Biblical learning process. In (Deut 6:6), it says, "and these words which I command you today shall be in your heart." The Israelites truly knew the laws by heart. Consider what they did when they went to the market and shopped for groceries and meat. The questions, ”Does God allow me to eat this?” and ”Would God accept this as my burnt offering?” would constantly be ringing a bell in their minds!

How often have we been asked a Bible or Christian living question and we answer the question with "I guess..."? Consider ourselves lucky when we guess it right, but when we guess it wrong, we may go ahead and do what we think is right, and then sin against God! This guessing game is dangerous. There is no "Start Again?" button in our life. Let us all strive to cultivate ourselves with the Bible and be wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus (2 Tim 3:15).
Central Region Winter SSC Reflections

By Sister Sarah Wong

In the name of Jesus Christ, I’d like to reflect on our past Winter Student Spiritual Convocation. Preacher Jung emphasized the importance of knowing our Ten Basic Beliefs during our Foot-Washing/Salvation Class. Our Basic Beliefs define us as a church and we follow them because we are proud to be a True Jesus Church member. We specifically learned the spirit of foot-washing and how significant the sacrament is to our salvation (Jn 13:1-20). Performing the foot-washing sacrament requires humility and the idea that “the higher we are, the lower we are.” This is important in any holy work we do because we must emulate the spirit of foot-washing which truly represents the love of God. We also reinforced the idea that salvation does not come through our own righteousness, but truly by the grace of God (Eph 2:8).

First and Second Samuel show the success and failure of kings and other people in the Old Testament. Though David fell in his lifetime, there were still attributes we learned to really admire in our class. Even when King Saul persistently wanted to kill him, David would not dare to touch the anointed one. This quality is something I must learn. David followed God and not his own will even in times of distress when his life was at risk. Similarly, when we’re put under trials, we have to remember that God’s will comes before our own and He will take care of our needs.

The 12 Apostles class was where we learned how to strive not to be just disciples of Christ, but true apostles for Him, because they are the ones that are chosen to serve God and work for Him. Living in this world, we often forget the meaning of life and how we shouldn’t set our hearts on this world. Paul set an example for all of us when he said he wanted to help others get to heaven too (Phil 1:24). He also wanted to make sure every man was perfect in the eyes of God before they died (Col 1:28). We must remember this true meaning of life and strive to be like Paul.

Knowing that God is almighty and never-changing, our first instinct should be to turn to Him, but I often forget that He should really be the first one we go to. My goal is that if I ever encounter problems now, God will be the one I go to first. From this SSC, I learned unforgiven sins really hinder us from reaching Him. There are also many distractions such as media and overwhelming stress with school. We must know that God is always there to help us overcome our desires, temptations, and struggles, but we have to make an effort to go to Him first. I hope that we are all able to remember these things and all the new teachings we learned to apply to our lives. May all the praise and glory be unto God.
Foot-Washing/Salvation
I learned many spiritual teachings in this class. For example with the 10 Basic Beliefs, I learned that there is only one True God. There is only one True Church but I didn’t learn just this. One thing that Pastor T.J. talked about most was the Heavenly Kingdom of God. In order to go to the Heavenly Kingdom we need to receive salvation and this is where we will be free with God. In order to ensure our salvation, repentance is needed. This class emphasized a lot on this point. There were so many more teachings from this class that can help me transform my life.

Nehemiah
Nehemiah was such a good person. He did not abuse his authority of being the governor, but rather used it to glorify God. He prayed fervently and even prayed quickly before doing an action in order to make sure God was guiding. His heart was in the church even though his physical body was somewhere else. He took the blame on himself when repenting to God. He confessed the sins of the people to God because he loved them. He helped rebuild both the spiritual and physical wall of Jerusalem. Every little thing Nehemiah did glorified God. I can surely learn from his example.

The 12 Apostles
These classes really encouraged me to work hard for God. I learned that salvation is received by grace through faith.
By Sister Anita Taing

In the name of Jesus Christ I share some reflections on RETS. I really thank God for the opportunity to attend this seminar in Dallas on February 4 - 5, 2012. Although I initially struggled with whether or not to attend, it ended up being a truly fruitful, edifying, and humbling seminar. Here are a few of the teachings which struck me the most –

1. **Be Faithful.** As R.E. teachers, we need to be faithful, committed, and dedicated. We must always be faithful to our consciences. Have I given my best? Have I given my all? Have I invested enough time in preparation for class? Have I devoted enough time in prayer for the lesson and my students? In addition, we must be faithful to the church and to the Bible. Whatever the task may be that is given to us, we should complete it wholeheartedly and remain true to the Word of God, regardless of any obstacles in our way.

2. **Reach Out to Their Hearts.** In every lesson, we must reach out and touch the hearts of our students. We are not only delivering words or a story. We are delivering LIFE. Just as the Lord Jesus came to grant us life more abundantly, we must pass this abundance on to our students so that their faith can become deeply rooted and built up in Him. We must always remember that we are not merely impacting one student or a particular class of students. Rather, we are having an effect on the faith of multi-generations for years to come.

3. **Set Spiritual Goals.** Teachers play the role of shepherds who must walk before their sheep. To do this effectively, we need to constantly spiritually cultivate ourselves and set spiritual goals for ourselves, so that we do not backslide in our faith or become spiritually stagnant. We must demand of ourselves to continually improve and grow in the Lord so that we may be worthy of this calling and our service to Him can be full of joy and full of vitality. If we have a vibrant relationship with the Lord Jesus, even when faced with difficulties in our R.E. ministry, no-one and nothing will be able to take our joy away from us.

Let it be our prayer that our teaching can be a spiritually transformative experience for both ourselves and our R.E. students. May God’s Spirit and His Word dwell richly within us and let us strive to be faithful servants. May all glory be unto our Father in heaven. Amen.
By Sister Brenda Wong

In the name of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, I offer my reflection for His glory.

I praise and thank God that I was able to attend the Special RETS during the weekend of February 4-5, 2012 at TJC Dallas. Even though I was not aware of just how "special" this RETS was, my experience became profoundly more meaningful in hindsight due to the revelation.

My initial reaction when asked to attend the seminar three weeks prior was that I was not sure if I could take the time away. However, after arriving and discussing the purposes of the Special RETS being held, it seems that most participants were in the same predicament (being a teacher-in-training and finding it difficult to take a week's time away from caring for children during the standard RETS to become certified teachers). With this new-found-knowledge, I became even more grateful of USGA's abetment. They sent helpers to assist us in reaching our goal of receiving our own Letter of Appointment.

As expected, the sheer amount of information which was condensed from a full-packed week seminar down to 2 days was horrifying to a mother who has been out of school for a great many years. It was downright daunting...and I thought my "school-days" were supposed to be over!! But, by God's grace, the time simply flashed by. Looking back, I KNOW there are a few things that I could have done to make my personal account more momentous. For example, we were asked to read over and study the R.E. Teacher's Manual. Due to the fact that I did NOT study the R.E. Teacher's Manual (simply "skimmed over" it...IF I can even call it that), I felt that I cheated God, the teacher, AND myself out of a more rewarding experience. If I took a little bit of extra time to study the manual, God would have revealed more of His purpose to me as a teacher so that I can reach out to His students at a deeper level. Plus, if I took a little bit of extra time to study the manual, the teacher would not have "cut-corners" from her original intentions by taking "baby-steps" that should have been covered during our self-manual-study-time. And above all, if I took a little bit of extra time to study the manual, I would have been rewarded by being better equipped to be God's vessel. I would have been able to delve deeper into His overall plan to use me. When voicing this revelation during our closing ceremony (reflection time), I could not help but weep from my own guilt.

In further contemplation, there were many areas which I realized need immediate improvements. With the strength coming off of the Special RETS, I pray that I can be a more effectual teacher to our kids. Our children are our future and rearing them and preparing them for the spiritual battle is one little part I can assist with. However, in order to do so, I find that I need to pray more and read the Bible more (no matter how cliche it sounds, it is still the absolute truth of the whole matter). These action items are the immediate items I can do myself and I pray that God can sustain me in my efforts to be consistent.

Finally, I am truly appreciative of the Dallas Church's love and sacrifices during this seminar and for making our stay seem effortless and proficient. God has certainly gifted our sister church with the talent of hosting events. During the closing ceremony, I found out that the last time it was held was nearly 10 years ago and that it is extremely rare for it to occur in the first place. The discovery that it took two years in the making for it to come to fruition and that it occurs infrequently makes me feel inadequate for the role which God calls me to fulfill. However, with His help, strength, and guidance, I know that all I simply need to do is fully trust in the Lord and He will use me as He sees fit.

May all the praise, glory, and honor be unto our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.
Our R.E. Students & Kids
Question: What do you like best from your R.E. classes?

**Grace** - I love it to when we get to watch movies (about Bible stories) and to sing hymns from print-out sheets (*Give Me Oil in My Lamp*).

**Faith** - I love snack time and Bible stories.

**Naomi** - I like Bible story time and also like to watch the story of Adam and Eve on the computer.

**James** - I like reading memory verses.

Children expressing their love for God
In the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ I share. I feel very blessed to be an R.E. teacher. R.E. teachers are edified as much, if not more, than R.E. students. Below I share the benefits of being an R.E. teacher:

**Having the opportunity to learn**
An R.E. teacher must be knowledgeable about the Bible stories and the teachings behind them. Therefore, I have to spend time and effort to prepare every class and thus learn more from the Bible.

**Serving as an example to students**
An R.E. teacher should serve as an example to the students in attire, speech, and action. This keeps me on my toes. Before I became an R.E. teacher, I sometimes used inappropriate words. However, Paul tells us, “neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting,” should be named among us, “but rather giving of thanks” (Eph 5:4). After I started serving as an R.E. teacher, I pay more attention to what I wear, what I say, and what I do so I do not fail the Lord Jesus.

**Preparing to be a parent**
My students are teens, and thankfully they are open to me. This way, I understand the students’ thoughts and the challenges they face. This prepares me in teaching my own children, as I have just become a parent myself.

**Great RETS training**
All our R.E. teachers are required to attend the Religious Education Teachers’ Seminar, which is great training for our doctrines. Although I had been baptized for more than 10 years, I was not entirely clear about our doctrines before I attended this seminar. After the attending the seminar, my faith is strengthened, and I am more ready to answer questions regarding our doctrines and faith.

**Wonderful teaching experience**
The R.E. teaching experience is truly rewarding. God has blessed me with wonderful students who often inspire me. For instance, they all sincerely love their family members. One (who serves as a waiter/waitress) is very considerate: he/she kindly forgives customers who leave too little tips at the restaurant because “they might have financial difficulties.” Another works hard to support his/her family. Still another often cleans up the classroom and fetches the required materials for the teacher. It is encouraging to see Christ’s love in the students and we can really learn a lot from our students.

**Trophies at the Lord Jesus’ feet**
Last but not least, being an R.E. teacher gives us an opportunity to lay trophies at the Lord Jesus’ feet. We should all remember the warnings from the Parable of the Talents (Matt 25:14-30). Since God has given us the talent to serve Him, we should not bury this talent underground. Rather, we should strive to serve Him with the talent that He gives us so freely.