Encouragement from the R.E. Coordinator

Hallelujah! In the name of Jesus Christ, I share some news as the Houston TJC R.E. Coordinator for 2013-2015.

First, I would like to welcome Micah, Hannah, and Isaac to kindergarten class and Joseph to senior class! May the Lord bless you in wisdom and truth this coming year.

Second, our first afternoon worship session for K and E1 is now a R.E. teacher-led class. The students will have 30 minutes of children’s choir and then a lesson and activity pertaining to this year’s R.E. theme, “Reverence in the House of the Lord.”

The theme was chosen with two goals in mind. On the inside, we want the students to focus and to dedicate their hearts more to the Lord when they come to worship on the Sabbath day. On the outside, we want the students to act in a more respectful and God-fearing manner when they are at church. From kindergarten to senior class, students of all ages will benefit when they revere God better in His house.

“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 delight 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.” (Isaiah 58:13-14)

Please continue to pray for the students, fellow parents, and teachers; we serve one another as we serve our Lord. May all the glory be unto God!

~ Sis. Margareta Chiu

Important Dates

First Lesson of Q1: September 7
Gospel Tea Fellowship: September 14
Fall ESSC: October 4 - 6
Last Lesson of Q1: November 30

Inside this Issue

Encouragement...............1
East Region SSC Pic..........1
Bro. Andrew’s Interview.....2
Father’s Day Pic...............3
Graduating Students.........3
Class Teachers...............3
Remembering..................3
Reflections...................4 - 7
R.E. Year-End Service.....8

East Region Summer SSC in Hillsborough
Interview with Brother Andrew Hsu

This August, we bade farewell to Brother Andrew who moved to California for work. We managed to ask him some questions before he left, though!

Q. What is your favorite food?
A. I love seafood “char kwai teaw” (seafood fried flat rice noodles).

Q. What is your favorite color?
A. Blue has been my favorite color and is still my favorite now.

Q. What is your favorite childhood memory?
A. I remember I was back in Singapore and was only 7 years old then. My parents took me shopping but then I got lost in the shopping center. I couldn’t find my parents so I decided to go home by myself. The route to go home was about 15 to 20 minutes walk. Thank God, I reached home fine!

Q. What is your favorite kids’ class memory?
A. It was during an afternoon combined class. Another teacher and I were in charge. We asked the kids to do some drawings on a piece of paper. I was impressed because everyone participated to join in the activity and did their drawings.

Q. What is your favorite childhood Biblical character/story?
A. My favorite story was David and Goliath. I always liked any story that seemed impossible so it was great that David as a little boy could defeat the giant Goliath.

Q. As a child, what did you want to do when you grew up? And now?
A. As a child, I always wanted to play. I love being with kids and being around kids made me happy. One day, I can see myself being an R.E. teacher.

Thank you, Brother Andrew, for your love and care for all of our children in the kids’ class in Houston church. We won’t forget you! Please come back and visit us as often as you can! May God continue to guide and bless your footsteps until we meet again!
Happy Father’s Day!

This picture was taken on the Sabbath before Father’s Day, on Saturday, June 15, 2013. May God bless all of our brothers in Houston and remember their love for their families and the house of God!

Remembering...

It’s the beginning of a new R.E. school year... another summer has come and gone; and another R.E. year has likewise passed us by. Thinking back now to childhood days as an R.E. student, those years, and those memories, are as precious as the fleeting summer nights spent playing outdoors, which we hoped would never end. Pictures can never adequately convey the love of the R.E. teachers who shepherded and encouraged us to grow in the Lord; the tears they shed in prayer; their unrelenting patience, dedication, and quiet resolve to pass on the faith and build up the next generation.

As R.E. students, this time is to be cherished. Every moment of learning, sharing, growing, praying, questioning, laughing (and sometimes even crying!) together will form the colors and the patterns of a beautiful patchwork of memories. More than that, though, this is the time when we dare to dream for the Lord; when we form aspirations of becoming Christian soldiers who will march ever onwards to fight the good fight. All the semesters of R.E. classes and the summers filled with SSC, NYTS, and various other seminars—that is where we form lifelong bonds of friendship, sisterhood, and brotherhood in Christ that will endure well beyond our days as R.E. students. The reflections that we write after each seminar are not just a passive recollection of days gone by. Rather, they can be a force and a rendering in black and white of how we wish, and hope, and pray to move forward in our faith, to continue to grow, and to improve spiritually in the days ahead.

As we read and share the reflections from both our students and teachers, let us be inspired by one another to put our best foot forward in this new R.E school year. May all of us offer our very best to the Lord, and to each other, for the glory of Father in heaven.

Graduating Students

Kindergarten Class
Lydia Chen
Cody Federici
Brian He
James Yen

J1 Class
Joshua Wong

2013 - 2014 Teachers

Kindergarten Class
Lenny Wong (Lead Teacher)
Lisa Chang
Thomas Hsu

E1 Class
Jackie Hsu (Lead Teacher)
Anita Taing
Andrew Chiu

J1 Class
Margaretta Chiu (Lead Teacher)
Brenda Wong
Philip Chen
Iris Franz (on leave)

J2 Class
Cindy Lee (Lead Teacher)
Andrew Yen
Gregor Franz

Senior Class
Evelina Yen (Lead Teacher)
Tony Chen
Garry Hwang
Shu-Jane Wang
Central Region Summer SSC Reflections

Hallelujah! In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ I bear my summer SSC reflection. This SSC was the first SSC I have gone to as a J1 student. This was a big change for me because the classes went beyond what I had learned in E2. The homework also required more reflection on my part.

One of the classes I enjoyed most was apologetics. Apologetics was a fairly complicated topic for me, not because the class was hard, but because there were many things you had to know about. We did role-playing and only then did I realize how hard it could be to preach to other people. We need to have the knowledge of the Bible and the Holy Spirit in order to guide us when we preach to truth seekers.

Another edifying class that I enjoyed a lot was the book of Ephesians. This class taught us what and how to use the armor of God. Without the armor of God we can easily be hit by Satan’s darts. We also learned what we should pray for. This included strength, fullness of God, and the ability to comprehend God’s love. I think that this was very important because sometimes we don’t pray for the right things and our minds go astray.

And lastly, a teaching that many people should be familiar with, the parable of the lost son. I found the lesson edifying because it taught us that even if we wander away from God, He will always wait for us to come home. When we do finally come home, God will welcome us with open arms. He will wait for us forever.

This concludes my reflection. May all the glory and praise be unto His holy name. Hallelujah! Amen.

~ Sis. Deborah Lin
Central Region Summer SSC Reflections (continued)

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I give a reflection about the 2013 Summer SSC. I thank God that this SSC’s topic was a “Life of Evangelism.” For so long, I had never had the courage to preach to anyone. But out of all the classes we went through, the one lesson I really grasped was that we can rely on the Holy Spirit to give us the power to preach and move people’s hearts. Without this promised Spirit of truth, the task of evangelism is impossible. It made me realize how we truly need to rely on God, not only when we’re evangelizing, but in every little thing that we do. We need to have the faith that He will help us as long as we do our best.

At the beginning of this SSC, my prayers made me realize how much my spirituality had suffered during the time between the last SSC and the beginning of this SSC. My faith had hit rock bottom, to the point that I doubted God and His power. But praise God, through all of the wonderful classes and many prayers, my faith had a chance to increase and to be spiritually revived. Although right now I feel that I am still much below God’s standards in faith, I hope that it can continue to increase after this SSC.

I’m very thankful for the loving members that could help out this time, especially with the food. Sometimes it seemed impossible to fast because the smell of the food would easily reach the classroom and sometimes the chapel. But even with this, I had a lesson that I could learn. Although our spirit may be willing, our flesh is also weak, so we have to watch and pray. This verse in Matthew and in Mark can not only be applied to fasting, but also with the temptations we face in the world. Another thing I am also thankful for are the counselors and their hard work. They would never get angry, even at times when I would’ve been furious, especially when dealing with restless children. Thank God that I could experience the godly love manifested in them and learn from them.

Hopefully after this SSC, I can continue to keep up good habits of reading the Bible and praying in order to draw closer to God. Also, I hope I can have the self-discipline and wisdom to meditate on the Word and truly learn from it so that I may know what God desires of me. Through all these good habits and upholding His life of evangelism. This concludes my reflection. May all the glory and praise be given unto His holy name.

~ Sis. Sophia Wong

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I share a reflection about this summer’s SSC. Thank God I was given the opportunity to be a counselor along with Sister Evelyn for the E2 boys. This was my first time being a counselor and I did not really know what to expect. I thought that I would be doing more babysitting than counseling because the boys in my group were notorious for being goof balls. The day finally came when all of the boys arrived for the start of SSC. I enjoyed sitting in the classes with my group and I really didn’t feel like a counselor at all. I felt just like one of my boys, sitting in class and learning the Word of God from the pastors.

All the kids at SSC bonded really well and they seemed to enjoy the fellowship they had with one another. This was a huge encouragement to me because despite their youthfulness, these kids will one day rely on their spiritual friends when they encounter trials in their lives.

~ Bro. Thomas Hsu
Music Camp Reflection

Music camp is a different platform from SSC. It has an energy that is neither good nor bad but is motivational. For example, I would actually walk out of a jam session ready to pray. And right after a prayer, everyone would know it was a great prayer by listening to the hymn right after, which would always be sung in parts. I made friends, both old and new, and really found a joy in singing hymns.

I really liked the elective classes where I learned about hymns and musical arrangement, including Auto-Tune. The classes were edifying and fun. My group was very energetic and unique. I knew a lot of people from there and I matured with them. While it wasn't an ordinary camp, there were the same elements of one, such as friendships, games, food, and endings.

The ending of music camp didn't start right after the presentation. It actually started when the encore piece (hymn 382) started and all the attendees knew it was over. But the ending was a very memorable experience for all the attendees because it contained pictures, meaningful conversations, and contacts. The contacts were meaningful because it would soon lead to emails that could help the attendees develop a spiritual companionship, which always make prayers more meaningful and also gives an assurance that we are truly once family in Christ.

I learned how to use music to glorify God and about the power of music in ministry. I also learned about the future of the TJC music ministries in addition to some new praise songs. May all the glory and praise be unto His holy name.

~ Bro. Timothy Yen

National Youth Theological Seminar (NYTS) Reflections

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I testify. Praise and thank God I attended NYTS at Baldwin Park church this summer. NYTS had a reputation for being intense yet spiritually edifying and it held up that reputation. Physically, we may all have been tired from all the classes and homework; but spiritually, we were gaining strength day by day.

Thank God I feel that NYTS covered more topics that were relatable to college students because college was the time in my life that my faith was tested and I will admit, I did not pass. I came to NYTS with a heart of sorrow and repentance for all my previous sins to the point that I questioned whether or not I still had the Holy Spirit in me. I prayed earnestly for repentance and a pastor told me to not hinder the Spirit but to let it flow out. My own doubts were keeping the Spirit covered so that it could not fill my heart. Once I did, I felt all the burdens of my sins and of life just lifted away and a huge burden was taken off my shoulder. Every prayer after that, it was just pushing further up the spiritual mountain and I don’t think I have ever been this satisfied and joyful.

I wished that NYTS would have lasted forever because of all the great brothers and sisters who were great influences on me. They shared all about their problems and we all prayed for one another. These were the connections I needed for my upcoming years in college. I needed some people to share my burdens and to receive good godly advice. I also learned the importance of being a vessel for God. I used to think that as long as I was physically capable of doing the work, then God would be glorified. I was terribly wrong. Everything is based on your heart and how clean you are in God’s sight. I realized that I was a filthy vessel and needed some serious cleansing before doing any more work for God. Now I am committed to living a clean life for God so that He will be pleased with the holy work I do, and be glorified. I miss all the brothers and sisters dearly and I wish to see them grow and strengthen one another in the faith. Hallelujah! Amen.

~ Bro. Thomas Hsu
NYTS Reflections (continued)

In the name of Jesus Christ, I reflect on my experience at the 2013 NYTS held in Baldwin Park, California. Praise and thank God I had the opportunity to attend this seminar full-time. My last year in school was rough—classes got harder, I had many standardized tests, and worse, I had a close friend pass away. By the end of the spring semester, I knew many church members were praying for me and I realized God had tried to teach me many lessons that I had failed to learn. I became fully aware my spirituality was suffering. I knew my heart was thirsting for God and I needed to be recharged again before entering the world again.

I had a few main goals before coming into NYTS, one being that I wanted to be able to feel God again during my prayers. Before entering this particular seminar, I had the chance to attend the Ministry Volunteer Program (MVP) in Irvine, but I realized over the past year, I had built up a lot of sin and I had many things to repent for. Most of my prayers during MVP were spent in repentance, so I was glad I felt more at peace with God before NYTS started. Usually during church events, the first few days are difficult in terms of prayer, so I was glad I had the previous few weeks to get used to praying around two hours every day. That being said, I had many great prayers in the first week.

On the fourth day into NYTS, I felt I had touched God during one of my prayers. It was a prayer I’d been yearning to have in such a long time, so I knew I had to write about it right after so I wouldn’t forget the experience. We knelt down to pray during the evening prayer and as soon as we started, I told God that I was at this seminar only for Him and no one else, because I truly wanted to know and feel His love again. I poured out how scared I was about my last year in high school and starting college. Soon after, I really felt the Holy Spirit was praying for me, because I was praying about things I didn’t even think of before even coming to NYTS. I truly realized how many things there were to pray for! I felt wrapped in God’s love…almost like He was hugging me and I immediately started shedding tears, because I didn’t know whether to take or reject His love or comfort, because I knew I wasn’t worthy of it. I really thank God for that prayer.

I also had another prayer soon after that touched me. During that prayer, I started thinking about my friend who recently passed away and I prayed for God to comfort her family. For months, I didn’t understand why this incident happened, but I think He finally gave me the answer. During that prayer, I was crying about the fact that I never had the chance to continue talking about our faith to her. The thought of her suffering made me very upset, because even though it is God’s will for someone to be part of the body of Christ, I know I did not make my effort to preach. After I got up from prayer, I knew I had the answer: I needed to be more bold and courageous in preaching the gospel. In prayers afterwards, I thanked God for teaching me this lesson, and I soon added another item to pray for on my list.

I had one prayer on a Friday night Sabbath that really touched me as well. While I was praying, I kept seeing Jesus’ hand laying on a piece of wood, and every time the nail was hammered in, I cringed and started shedding tears. Once again, I was reminded of His love for me and when I stood up from that prayer, I knew I wanted to kneel down and pray again. This NYTS, I’m truly thankful I was able to experience God again in my prayers. I’m also thankful that I was able to experience the sweetness and joy in praying again. May all the glory be unto God.

~ Sis. Sarah Wong
2012 - 2013 R.E. Year-End Special Service Pictures