Hallelujah! How quickly we have come to the half-way mark for this RE year. At this half-way mark, let us reflect on how we have put our RE theme into practice. Our theme this year is “Walking Hand in Hand to Grow as Disciples,” with a focus on four areas: (1) spiritual cultivation; (2) sense of purpose; (3) love for one another; and (4) unity and teamwork. What effort have we made in each of these areas?

As RE teachers, how well are we meeting the goals set at the beginning of the RE year for this theme? How have our students grown in their discipleship? How have we grown? What improvements have we seen in our teacher-student relationships and our teacher-parent relationships? Are our RE students and parents comfortable in approaching us for issues? We all put forth our efforts to teach the classes, but have we joined the RE team spiritually, mentally, and emotionally?

As RE students, have we grown in our spirituality? Do we know what God wants from us? Do we feel a sense of purpose when we do our memory verses and RE assignments? Do we feel our parents and teachers supporting our walk of faith? Have we found a spiritual friend/mentor we can turn to who will lead us to a godly solution?

As parents of RE students, do we know what our children are learning in the RE system? Have we formed a bond with our children so that they can candidly discuss their faith with us? Have we created a welcoming attitude for our children’s RE teachers to easily approach us to discuss issues? Do we know what more we could do to support our children and our children’s RE teachers?

Let us all take the first step and reach out our hands to our RE students, parents, and teachers so that our children will have the resources and support to grow up as good disciples of Jesus. Whenever our children get sick or hurt, we are often reminded of how great a blessing it is for them to be healthy, and we long to return to the mundane routines of life. Let us spend the time and effort to walk hand in hand now in the RE ministry so that we will not have this same regret for our children’s spiritual lives.

-Sis. Cindy Lee
We thank and praise God for bringing to us another family in Christ in the summer of 2014. After some 17 years living in Chicago, the Chins relocated their family of five to Katy. What a blessing for Houston church! Bro. Franco has joined the RE program as a J2 teacher, and Sis. Jovia, as an E1 teacher. Their eldest son, Jeston is currently in J1, and Preston, in E2. Everston, the youngest of the three Chin brothers, should be able to join Kindergarten next year. Thank God! We asked some questions to a few members of the family as a brief introduction to the Chins. Here are their responses:

**What is your favorite hymn and why?**

**Preston:** One of my favorite hymns is hymn #485 because it tells us God is with us every single day.

**Jeston:** My favorite hymn would be hymn #524. The reason is because I need to rely on God to ask Him for help. So I always remember this hymn as a reminder.

**Jovia:** One of my favorite hymns is #379, “Turn Your Eyes upon Jesus”. Not only is the melody beautiful, but the lyrics are so encouraging. This hymn reminds me that I do not need to carry my burdens, weariness, or troubles alone, as I can always pray to God for comfort and help. “...And the things of earth will grow strangely dim, In the light of His glory and grace.”

**What is your favorite Bible character and Bible verse or story, and why?**

**Preston:** My favorite Bible character is Jesus because He performed lots of miracles and saved us from sin. I like the story about King Jehoshaphat and Kind Ahab because it tells us that God is always with us.

**Jeston:** Job would be my favorite Bible character. The reason why is because Job was always faithful to God even through hard trials and sufferings. My favorite Bible story would be the story about the wise and foolish virgins. I like this story because it shows us how to be prepared and ready for any circumstance.

**Jovia:** I would like to share the Bible character and verses that are most applicable to our recent move to Houston. Abram obeyed and followed God’s instructions for the land that He had designated for him to live in. Prior to moving to Houston, we had been praying for three years to ask God if our family could one day move to a state where there is a warmer weather. I was pregnant with my third child at that time, and the severe winter cold had taken a toll on me, both physically and emotionally.

There were many uncertainties and a big decision to be made when this opportunity was finally granted to us last year, in 2014. We continued to pray for God's guidance as I had become so anxious, not knowing what lay ahead of us, not knowing whether to stay or to move. My husband, Bro. Franco, reminded me that we should be like Abraham, to go to the land that God had designated for us. And since God was guiding us, why should we worry so much?

God had mercy on me for He knows my weaknesses. He comforted and reminded me through the following verses: “For I, the Lord your God, will hold your right hand, Saying to you, ‘Fear not, I will help you.” (Isaiah 41:13); “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.” (Philippians 4:6).
What is one thing you miss about or one thing we can learn from Chicago church?

**Preston:** I miss my friends there, but I’m getting used to the people in Houston church.

**Jeston:** One thing I miss about Chicago church is my friends.

**Jovia:** One important thing we learned from Chicago church is that the members are like our family. We are part of each other in one body (Romans 12:4-5). If a part of the body suffers, the whole body suffers (1 Corinthians 12:26). The brothers and sisters there also showed us many other important things, such as their love, respect, and compassion for one another, their dedication to serve in the Lord in every way, and to be sensitive to truthseekers.

What is one thing you really like about living in Houston?

**Preston:** I really like the warm and hot temperature.

**Jeston:** One thing I like about living in Houston would be the wonderful weather, and the little kids in Houston church. I like their teaching system in church.

**Jovia:** We really treasure the warm weather and having a TJC in Houston. We enjoy the mild winter here and being able to continue Sabbath worship in church every week. Also, seeing so many talented and dedicated workers in the Lord, and knowing that my children are in the very good hands of the RE program in Houston are truly a great joy and blessing from God. May all the glory be unto Him!

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**Some Thoughts From Senior Youth...**

I feel that Senior Class is very beneficial for me. Many of us have to work during the weekdays, and we usually don’t have much spare time to serve God. In class, we are able to learn God’s teachings through the teachers and also apply it in our daily lives. We don’t feel bored by the content in class because we can learn a lot of teachings through talking with our teachers.

- **Bro. Peter Fang**

I hope our Senior class will keep getting better and better, so that our faith will grow even stronger, and we will not lose ourselves in this world but draw ourselves closer to God.

- **Bro. Paul Fang**

I hope our Senior class will become more lively and interesting, so that more and more people will come to join us. I hope this class can continue on.

- **Bro. Joseph Lin**

God gives me joy. Thinking back to the time when I was living on my own, I had to work and study; and that pressure almost took me away from church. But thank God that in the summer, I had the opportunity to attend NYTS. During that time, I felt peace and joy filled my heart and I felt no pressure at all in the house of God.

- **Bro. Henry Lin**
Introducing Our Littlest Members!

**Tessa Yu-En Truong**

Baby Tessa arrived on October 24th, 2014, weighing 8lbs 13oz, and measuring 23.5 inches tall. She loves singing, and listening to her mommy sing children’s hymns. These days, she is also delighted by the sight of her own reflection in the mirror!

**Enoch and Joseph Lin**

Twin brothers, Enoch and Joseph Lin, were born on October 5, 2014. Enoch, the older brother with lots of hair, arrived weighing 5lbs 10 oz. Younger brother, Joseph, was born weighing 6lbs 3oz. Both brothers were 21 inches long at birth. Enoch has a calm personality and loves to smile. Joseph tends to cry more but is a very observant baby, and loves to take in his surroundings and the people around him.

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**K and E1 2015 Resolutions**

**Kindergarten Class:**
What would you like to do for God in 2015?
在 2015 年裡，你們想要為神做些什麼？

_Hannah:_
Wants to give God gifts, such as to always come to service/RE class every Sabbath.
想給神的禮物，譬如：經常來教會守安息日。

_Isaac:_
Would like to pray every morning and night. He would also like to sing more hymns.
願每天早晨和夜晚都禱告。也想唱更多的詩歌讚美神。

_Micah:_
Wants to pray and read the Bible, but if he doesn’t have much time, he will catch up on the weekend.
時常禱告，讀經。若沒有太多的時間，自己也會在週末時趕上進度。

**E1 Class:**
What are your resolutions for 2015?
在 2015 年裡，你們想要為神做些什麼？

_Brian:_
Pray to God before I sleep. Read the Bible every day. Do something good for God. If I do bad stuff, ask God to forgive me.
睡前向神禱告。每天閱讀聖經。為神多行善事。倘若我做錯事，也求神能夠原諒我。

_Cody:_
Learn The Lord's Prayer. 學習主禱文。

_Evan:_
Pray and put God first. 禱告，把神擺在第一位。

_Lydia:_
Pray every day. 每天禱告。

_Zacchaeus:_
Read the Bible every day. Try hard in class at church and don’t play games too much.
每天閱讀聖經。在宗教教育課堂上認真學習。減少玩遊戲時間。
In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, I bear my reflections on this winter SSC. I realized and learned many things about love this SSC, many of which I intend on bringing home into my daily life. In the Bible, there are three types of love: love between humans; love between us and God; and love between us and our parents. After reflecting upon this, I found out I am lacking in all of them. My first goal was to mend my relationship with God. If I can become a holy person and love God, naturally I’ll also love others. God loves me a lot. I love Him, too, but only in my heart. I never took action. I spoke profanities and unedifying words. This didn’t express my love whatsoever. I meant to change that. I want God to be able to see my love for Him, and others to also see my love for Him. I want to live my life for God.

I also learned that parents don’t decide your future. All along, I’ve been blaming my lack of faith on them. I kind of made up excuses like, “You never pray,” or “I learn all my bad habits from you.” I learned that it is my fault for the way I act. If I loved God, I could have chosen a different path. I could have prayed about these things.

In the name of Jesus Christ, I bear this reflection. This winter SSC, our topic was “A Life of Love,” and I learned so much about love. I really appreciate all the hard work that the counselors and the pastors did. Also, I really appreciate how the members cooked food for the students. It really touched my heart, and I will try to repay their kindness back someday.

What I learned this SSC was more about loving God, our parents, and other people. Loving God was always hard for me, but after learning in SSC, I will always love Him. Ways to love God are by praying, reading the Bible, and going to church. If God sees that we love Him, He will make our lives wonderful. The part I found really easy is to love my parents (thank God!) because I always appreciate what they do for me. My mom, like most Asian moms, wakes up early to cook lunch for me and my sister, and I am grateful. My dad works to support my family. To love other people is very hard, and I’m currently trying every day to be nice and bring Jesus Christ into their lives.

Bro. Helmmy Chiang (J1 student)
In the name of Jesus Christ, I bear this reflection. I had a wonderful time in SSC this winter. I learned about God’s amazing love for us and all the sacrifices He made for us. I also learned about two kings, Hezekiah and Jehoshaphat. I learned that these two kings are very good kings and obeyed what God had asked. We should be just like them.

I learned that we should all be nicer to our parents because they suffered, sacrificed, and gave things to us so we can have a better life. I am determined to make a difference and to not take things for granted.

I’ve learned about God’s love, and want to repay Him to the best of my abilities. I’ll obey Him as best as I can. I’ll serve Him with a diligent and willing heart.

I also really enjoyed the food and the classmates that talked with me and fasted with me. I hope I can come back next year!

- Bro. Jeston Chin (J1 student)

In the name of Jesus Christ, I bear a reflection of this past winter SSC. This SSC, the RE kids learned about love and the deeper meaning of it with our relationship with God. I learned about the relationships between man, close family, and God. This SSC, I learned about how to apply our love to each of these relationships that we talked about.

The first relationship we talked about was between man and man. This is the lowest level of love we show to others. In this relationship, many people shallowly like or even just respect other strangers or friends. As Christians, we should show love to strangers, friends, and even to those we do not like. We can help open doors, serve others, and have many more actions to show our love to other people.

The second relationship we learned about was between families. This is the second level of love we show to our family or even our best of best friends. This love comes a little easier because we see them more often and we spend time getting to know each other. As a son, daughter, brother, sister, or best friend, we should show love to each one of these close people and cherish them. We can be a shoulder to cry on, help with a personal issue, and do other things for them to show we love them.

The third relationship we talked about was between man and God. This level of love should be our number one priority. This love should come the easiest because He made everything in this universe the way it is. He cares for us and we can tell Him all our problems, and He can fix anything if we truly want Him to and if it is His plan. As His sheep, we should cast all our worries and rely on Him to guide us in our life. We can repay His love by bringing other people to believe in Him, helping other church members that need help, and we can show much more love to God by serving Him and His children.

This SSC, many members showed their love by bringing excellent food, helping teach the RE students more about the topic of love, and praying for the SSC to go well. I thank all the members that helped in SSC and showed their love for all the students as we want to draw closer to God. After this SSC, I will apply these teachings in my life to show my love for the counselors and pastors because they taught us that we should love all.

- Bro. Joshua Wong (J2 student)
I learned from SSC that you don’t have to only love God, but you have to obey, be honest, and be kind, too.
- Sis. Faith Wong (E2 student)

My reflection of SSC is that I learned about how God provides a life of love, and what I liked about SSC is I got to draw closer to God.
- Sis. Grace Wong (E2 student)

I learned and got to understand more about God’s love/Jesus’ love to us and what He did and made for us because He loves us.
- Bro. Preston Chin (E2 student)

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I give a reflection about the 2014 Winter Student Spiritual Convocation in Houston. This SSC’s theme was “A Life of Love,” and I’ve learned more than I could have ever imagined about love and how it takes its place in the Bible.

Through this SSC, I have been able to gain a better understanding of “what is the width and length and depth and height” of the love of Christ (Ephesians 3:18). His love is truly so great, and it is impossible to understand why He loves us the way He does. In the Bible, God’s love is manifested everywhere, even in the time of creation. In one class I learned that true love is to transform yourself for the other person, to do the right thing, to make a sacrifice, and to fear no more.

My prayers this SSC really reminded me and made me realize how great His love is, and how truly intimate His love can be. His love covers us and can fill us from our head all the way to our toes, and it is so hard for me to comprehend that His love is not circumstantial. Although I have sinned an innumerable amount of times, He has overlooked all of them, forgiven me, and loved me.

Thank God for a wonderful SSC where I could learn about God’s love. This concludes my reflection. May all the glory and praise be unto His holy name.

-Sis. Sophia Wong (J2 student)
Winter SSC Reflections (continued)

In the name of Jesus Christ, I give reflection. So this winter SSC started out quite generic for me. I showed up, checked in, and unpacked. Coming in, I knew that I needed to change myself as a Christian, but I really didn’t know in which aspect. But then I saw what I really needed to improve on: servitude. Just before opening ceremony, a younger brother was having a hard time propping the table up, but at the time, I didn’t think too much about it. During the concluding prayer for the opening ceremony, I couldn’t stop replaying the scene: a young brother struggling and me just sitting there. Feeling guilty about it, I was determined to work on both the amount that I serve and the attitude I have towards servitude.

That Monday, we started our classes. One of the classes that I felt was directed towards me was the lesson about Hezekiah. I learned a lot from that class because I felt that Hezekiah and I were in the same situation. He restored faith to the nation of Judah while I was in the process of making my faith my own. Another class we took was about Jehoshaphat. In this class there are two kings, Jehoshaphat of Judah and Ahab of Israel. I didn’t feel my spirituality was bad to the point of Ahab nor to the point of Jehoshaphat, but I slowly realized that I was closer to Ahab. I was indecisive much like Ahab was, and while Ahab had a bad wife who led him in the wrong direction, there was many things such as habits and ideas that weren’t very Godly either.

On Tuesday, I learned more about the Bible, especially about the letters of John. I go to a school where there are many devout members of other churches which made think of the false prophets of the time. However, after the afternoon prayer, I felt that I didn’t have the quality of prayers as previous years. I don’t know if that prayer was fulfilled, I felt very joyful after that prayer. That was the first time I had decided to intercede for someone that SSC. While I was praying before tests, I saw the joy of all the brothers and sisters, of the SSC. There was the “Clean-up Fellowship” which was a name I made fun of, but when it actually happened, I saw the joy of all the brothers and sisters, which also let me feel joy in servitude.

I would like to conclude by saying that I really thank God that I could attend this WSSC, and I really learned more than I had expected. I made new spiritual friends who I have been in contact with since then, and I have also developed more spiritual habits, such as praying before tests. May all the glory be unto His name. Amen.

Bro. Timothy Yen (J1 student)