

From the desk of James Chua

Zion (Bishan) B-P Church Children's Day Camp 23-25 November 2009

All praise to God for 3 hectic days of cookie-cutters, cupcakes, quail eggs and Eagle-and-Egg games. It was an opportunity to come face to face with disciples who walked with Jesus many decades ago and some modern day ones like the transformed Breakthrough brothers. It was also a chance to ask perplexing questions like "Who made God?" and "Is the Holy Spirit a ghost?"

FarmArt

Everyone sat rooted to their seats, absorbed by the animated presentation of Uncle William. With his authentic Singlish, he clued us in on quail lifecycle, incubators, guinea fowls and on why "roosters" don't lay eggs. Yes! Bird brains won't understand it.

Pastry Fun

Under the guidance of Uncle Harry, baking brought smiles and giggles to the flour-smearied campers. The kids took creative reign and surprised their parents with freshly baked vanilla cupcakes topped with multi-coloured Froot Loops and mouth-watering pizzas.

Amazing gRACE

If not for His amazing grace, the race would have been a washed-out. His answer to our prayers saw sun-kissed campers running North, South, East and West, like free-range chickens all over the Botanic Gardens. Uncle Bob's treasure hunt raised heartbeats and brought about unbridled laughter. All praise to Him for lovely sunbeams enveloping the large expanse of the Gardens.

Paraphrased excerpts from interviews of shepherds and Committee Members

1. Homecoming Gift

What made me come forward to serve was the result of progressive promptings by the Holy Spirit. The repeated 'calls to serve' hinted at a slow response of people coming forward as helpers. Instead of waiting for others to make that move, I put my reservations about serving aside and took the plunge. It was my 1st time as a shepherd and I have no regrets making this choice. The experience of God's empowering in bonding and controlling the P6 kids spurs me on to keep an open mind about serving. In fact this experience is so fulfilling that I have made the commitment to co-teach in Sunday School and serve in the Camp Committee come 2010. I have been away from Zion for some years and since I came back, I felt 'at home'. My commitment to serve in more ministries is my Homecoming Gift to the Lord.

Serene Teo – Shepherd

Editor's Note

Welcome home!

2. Heart for kids – especially the unchurched ones

I have a soft spot for kids and so it was a natural response to want to volunteer as a shepherd. As a father to a son with special needs, I know what it is like dealing with kids' tantrums, mood swings and challenging behaviour. Kids may be hyperactive, unpredictable and noisy but at the same time, they are innocent and spontaneous. They wear no masks and hold no hidden agenda. If we were only to reach out to them and envelope them in the love of God, we may impact them positively. When we make camp a good experience for the unchurched kids, we open the doors of the church to them and their families. It should come as no surprise if in the coming months we see unchurched kids entering our church sanctuary, hand-in-hand with their unsaved parents. Our hearts may miss a few beats but what joy that would be in knowing that I have played a part in that.

Jason Goh – Shepherd

Editor's Note

I admire Jason & Molly coming forward to serve kids from other families even though they have a son who throws them "curve balls" every other day. When you honour God with your service, He will honour you in return. What a testimony.....God Bless!

3. Gifts & Gifting

I can attest to the perfect timing of God, when He paved the way for my involvement as a shepherd. I was exploring as to where I could serve and the privilege came. A swap of leave from work meant I could spend 3 days with hyperactive and curious kids. It was an exhausting but meaningful experience. I was fruitfully occupied and touching the lives of kids in more ways than one. The personal bonding with the Breakthrough brothers captured the attention of the kids. The brothers' honest sharing of the transforming power of God in their lives is fresh, informative and touching. In trying to be a blessing by shepherding the little lambs, I was blessed in return with new insights into the changed and empowered lives of the disciples. I hope to be a better disciple myself by committing to co-teach in Sunday School and planning the next camp. When first approached, I was in two minds about serving. Upon further reflection I could enumerate the number of gifts God has given me. With the correct exposure, opportunities and guidance, I too can bloom like others. When we lay our gifts at His feet and use them for His glory, He will honour us by empowering us further. That's what gifting is all about.

Eunice Lim – Shepherd

Editor's Note

Welcome on board to next year's Camp Committee. Touched by your indomitable spirit of hopping around the lush expanse of the Botanic Gardens in spite of your sprained ankle.

4. Being a Blessing in return

As a parent of 3 kids, I have 'deposited' my kids at various camps for shepherds to babysit them. However that blessing can be easily taken for granted without us realising that we should be a blessing in return – by serving kids from other families. I believe that there is always a need for people to come forward to serve. I availed myself as a shepherd and more recently as F&B I/C. When I took up this portfolio, little did I realise the enormity of the tasks involved, with the many allergies the kids have and the types of food they abstain from. My time spent with the Committee in meticulous planning and settling logistical matters is a humbling experience. With the best of intentions and planning, I realised that anything can still go wrong during camp. The next time I 'deposit' my kids – I will be mindful to be more appreciative.

Goh Bee Wan – F&B I/C

Editor's Note

Yes! It's good for all of us to be more thankful than critical, as organisational hiccups are inevitable – Hic! Hic!

5. Catch them young

All my life I have been involved in children ministries as shepherd and camp speaker. The tender years of a child's development are of special significance, so Proverbs 22:6 "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it" echoes my feelings.

Children are loveable, innocent and of course hyperactive. At times while playing the shepherd's role, we were more like sheepdogs nibbling at the lambs and getting them in line – but their childlike faith and the chance to impact these impressionable minds is worth the effort. One big plus factor in serving is that of setting an example for my daughter to follow.

Serving is heart-driven and is indicative of your relationship with Him. Just as love drives the wife to serve her husband a warm cup of tea, our love or the lack of it, for the Lord, will determine our service.

Simon Wong- Shepherd

Editor's Note

You can serve without loving, but you can't love without serving.

6. 'ENTHU' people

Over the years, I have served as Sunday School Teacher, counsellor and song leader in my former church. When the opportunity to serve in the Committee came, I grabbed it. The many hours spent in planning for camp, with ideas and views flying across the table faster than you can blink your eye, spoke of one thing – that of an 'enthu' Committee. We all come from different walks of life and each one has a different personality, yet there is a great sense of unity. The fulfilling thing about this experience is that we are like-minded, focused, open to change and cohesive. In fact, many were so committed as to go beyond their call of duty. This positive encounter of the Body of Christ working harmoniously to extend His Kingdom, warms my heart. For those of you standing at the sidelines with reservations about serving, it is time to

make that decision. Put your unfounded fears, discomfort with uncertainties and inexperience aside. There are experienced people, shadow committees and His guiding hands to show you the way. It is now time to perish the excuses for not serving. Count me in for next year's camp.

Christina Yeoh – Treasurer

Editor's Note

I had the "happy problem" of dealing with super enthusiastic committee members. How about YOU, the reader? – are you "enthu" for God?

Unseen Hands

From the fine stencilling of the camp logo to the graphic depiction of the disciples at the various camp stations, we can sense the unseen hands that made all these happen. From the hot stoves to the cold pots of Milo, we can also sense the labour of love. The kids enjoyed the hot dogs and spaghetti while the shepherds love the... shepherds' pies.

Editor's Note

Hands, though unseen, did not escape the notice of our unseen God. Your labour isn't in vain.

Talent Spotting

Please tick where appropriate :

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> record minutes | <input type="checkbox"/> tell stories |
| <input type="checkbox"/> balance budget | <input type="checkbox"/> role play |
| <input type="checkbox"/> design logo | <input type="checkbox"/> organise games |
| <input type="checkbox"/> make crafts | <input type="checkbox"/> snap photos |
| <input type="checkbox"/> bake cupcakes | <input type="checkbox"/> shepherd kids |
| <input type="checkbox"/> cook spaghetti | <input type="checkbox"/> befriend someone |
| <input type="checkbox"/> analyse spreadsheets | <input type="checkbox"/> encourage the committee |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ALL of the above | <input type="checkbox"/> NONE of the above |

Editor's Note

If you ticked "ALL of the above", dinner is on me. If you ticked "NONE of the above", dinner is on you.

Christmas Reflection

What you are is a gift from God
What you become is your gift to Him

Discover the gifts He has showered you with.

Make this Christmas special by developing the gifts He has blessed you with and becoming the person He wants you to be...His Servant.

The world clamours for business cards with the status of MD, Senior Manager, etc. but there can't be a more valuable one than the one that humbly states – "Servant of the Lord"

Heed His clarion call to serve - step forward this Christmas!