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CHILD EVANGELISM
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Guiding the Generation of Today

Over the years in the pastorate, I've had people coming to me with concerns like "my child smokes and likes clubbing" or "their peers say it is OK to have ear studs and tattoos - that's art!" Others worry that their children are planning for marriage but don't want to have babies; or that they don't even want to get married.

Recently, I met with a group of educators to chart out the possibilities of operating an international school. One of them shared that when the Ministry of Education (MOE) mooted the Gifted Education Programme (GEP), it was meant to gather gifted kids together to develop their potential. Instead, a survey found that 95% of these kids attend tuition just to make sure they stay ahead of the other students. What irony! Another observed that some parents go all out to bail out their children. When kids tamper with medical certificates to avoid taking a test, their parents would speak out for them. More ridiculous is a parent begging the lecturer to give one mark instead of zero in a case of plagiarism. One parent who discussed with her working child the need to contribute towards the household expenses and give to parents was asked if they are really hard-up for money.

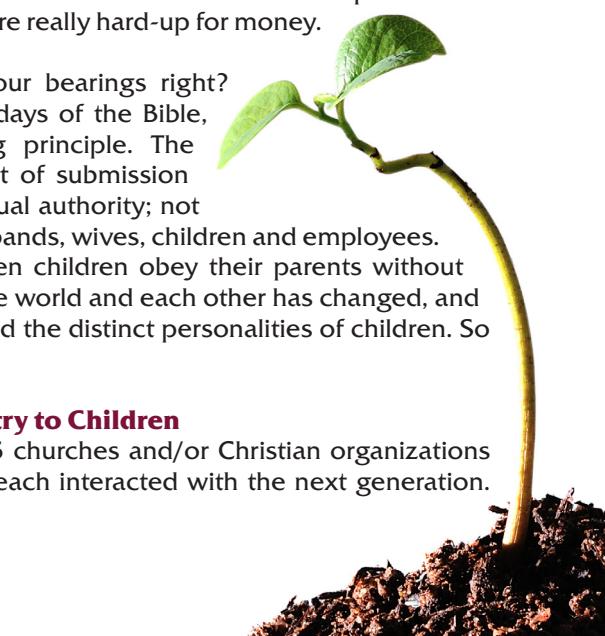
What a generation!

Where can we go to get our bearings right? For many generations, from the days of the Bible, submission has been a guiding principle. The Bible is very clear on the subject of submission to government, parent, and spiritual authority; not just in the church, but also for husbands, wives, children and employees. However, gone are the days when children obey their parents without question. The way we perceive the world and each other has changed, and this is reflected in our lifestyles and the distinct personalities of children. So what is the way forward?

Needs and Obstacles for Ministry to Children

One Hope recently surveyed 125 churches and/or Christian organizations in Singapore, documenting how each interacted with the next generation.

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Sunday School Outreach

“Assemble the Sojourner Within Your Towns”

Assemble the people, men, women, and little ones,
and the **sojourner within your towns**,
that they may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God ...
and that **their children**, who have not known it,
may hear and learn to fear the LORD ...

Deuteronomy 31:12-13

Dear Children's Pastor and Sunday School Superintendent

How can we reach out to “the sojourner and their children within our towns” - to those who are not part of the church?

Lionel was just 10 years old when two young women approached him while he was playing near his home, and invited him to Sunday School (see box). That moment was pivotal. Today, he serves the LORD through Singapore Youth for Christ.

With the vision that there should and can be many more Lionels, Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF) Singapore has introduced the Sunday School Outreach (SSO) programme, which provides you and your church with the framework and proven resources to:

- reach out to families with young children
- introduce their children to Sunday School
- sustain their interest through fun yet meaningful, bible-centred activities and lessons

We estimate that there are over 400,000 children below the age of 12 in Singapore. 90% of which do not yet go to church. Imagine what we can do if we work together to tell them of the Good News of Jesus Christ?

Power of Invite

I was 10 years old, playing “police and thief” near my home with my cousins when two ladies in their early twenties asked if we would like to attend Sunday School, where we would make new friends, play games and hear bible stories.

As well-trained 10-year-olds, we told them they would have to ask our moms. The spunky ladies walked into my granny’s apartment, interrupting my mother’s mahjong game.

Somehow, I was quite certain my mom would be annoyed by the interruption and not allow me to go. To my surprise, my mom agreed: “Yes, provided you are prepared to meet my son every Sunday from our home and accompany him to your church?”

So, for the next three months, the two ladies faithfully took turns to walk with me to church, till I was confident enough to go on my own. I do not recall their names. But, their sincere act of faith stands as a great example of what you can do.

Lionel Chan
Coordinator
Sports & Adventure Ministry
Singapore Youth for Christ

Meeting Needs of the People

Sunday School is a wonderful way to reach out to people within the network of your Church members, as it meets real needs. You will be connecting with parents of young children who are keen for their children to learn moral values and develop positive character traits. Parents themselves can meet and connect with others at the same life stage to share and learn how to deal of challenges of raising children.



Where Do We Start?

Sunday School Outreach suggests a series of steps, starting with a kickoff event for your “sojourners and their children”, where you will have the opportunity to encourage them to come to Sunday School for at least five to six weeks. This should be capped by a continuing focus on ways to keep them engaged and enthusiastic about attending Sunday School. This requires forethought and planning, and engaging the support and commitment of the entire church.

Preparing for Sunday School Outreach

Your church, and particularly the Sunday School leaders, should seek to answer these questions as you think about outreach:

- How can you champion Sunday School Outreach and share the importance of this vision?
- How can you challenge the congregation to help achieve this goal?
- What training needs to occur before this change can be implemented?
- What are the other resources needed to support this change?
- Would these changes require the Sunday School organisation to be restructured?

Planning and Executing a Kickoff Event

Once you are ready to implement Sunday School Outreach, organise a fun kickoff event that will be attractive to families with young children. Your Church members then can invite their friends and relatives to this event. We have the tools to help you with this, such as invitation pointers based on the experience of similar programmes and sample invitation flyers.

How to Keep Them Coming Back

The work does not end with getting the children to attend Sunday School. There is a need to keep them excited about coming back week after week.

CEF has a range of ideas and tools to help



Sunday School teachers inject life and vitality into Sunday School classes, including object lessons for teachers to share the Gospel, the iPEAR method of teaching Scripture memorization in a fun way, and ideas for challenging games to review the lessons taught. Other resources include gospel tracts for children and bible correspondence lessons.

Popular CEF Programmes for Sunday School Teachers

- How to Use the Wordless Book or Gospel Flipper Flapper
- Counselling the Child for Salvation
- iPEAR Method of Scripture Memorisation
- Fun Review Games

Find Out More

To find out more about Sunday School Outreach, and explore how you can successfully implement it at your church with the help of CEF, call Lorita Lim at 6276-1201 to arrange for a discussion or presentation.

Resources for Kickoff Event

Ice Cream Party

Owen and his friends were hanging out on the last day of summer vacation when Owen's friends decided to steal ice cream bars. Owen knew it was wrong and didn't participate. He was in a messy situation but showed Jesus' love to his friends when Owen paid the price for their stolen ice cream. Use the fun, new story and party activities to introduce children to their Saviour. This lesson includes, lesson guide, games, a craft template and more.



Watermelon Party

Through the story of Jon's visit to his grandfather's farm children learn how the colors of the watermelon can be used to share the Gospel. Children will never forget this unique lesson or the fun they have at your watermelon party! Reproducible invitations, games and other ideas included.



Medieval Party

The lesson "Guard Your Heart" talks about the ear gate and the eye gate in the sense of protecting the information you expose your heart to, in the same way that ancient cities used to guard their main roads from unwelcome intruders. Children will learn three important steps to resist temptation and that staying close to Jesus protects and empowers them for victory over sin.

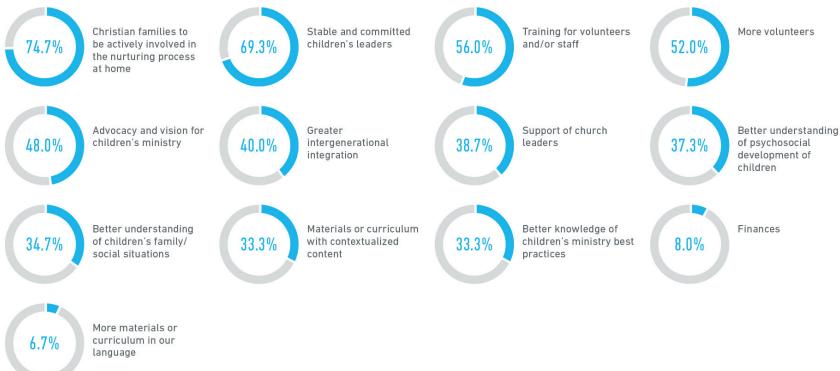


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The findings reveal important outreach gaps, ministry opportunities and evangelistic trends. They provide insights that support Singapore's churches and Christian organizations as they seek ways to better share Christ with the next generation.

- Churches indicated that family involvement and stable leadership were their greatest needs for both children and youth.

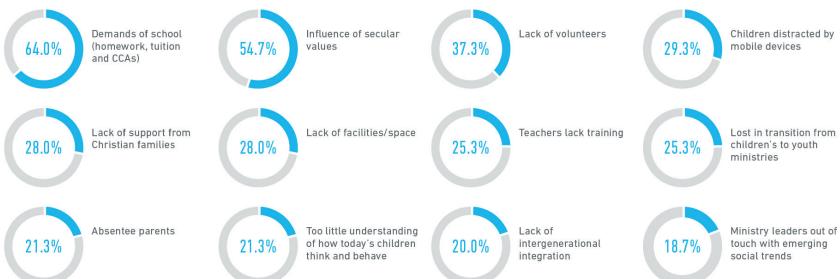
Church Needs for Ministry to Children



Singapore - Connecting with the Next Generation, One Hope Survey Reports pp. 26,27

- The two biggest obstacles in ministry was again the same for both age groups - the demands of school and the influence of secular values.

Church Obstacles to Ministry to Children



Additional obstacles to ministry to children include: lack of creative teaching and engaging learning 18.7%, lack of support from church leadership 16.0%, video game addiction among children 16.0%, children leader burnout 13.3%, lack of contextualised curriculum 12.0%, little attention given to children with special needs 12.0%, opposition from non-Christian families 10.7%, too much focus on activities 9.3%, dwindling numbers 9.3%, high turnover of leaders 8.0%, focus on developing programs and not the children 8.0%, children from broken families 6.7%, lack of godly models in church 6.7%, lack of focus on Biblical foundations 6.7%, exposure to pornography at an early age 4.0%, language barriers 4.0%.

*Singapore - Connecting with the Next Generation, One Hope Survey Reports pp. 26,27.
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It appears that the younger generation often take their parents for granted. Parents are nothing more than a source of income who just happens to provide food and a roof over their heads. Teenagers these days are less likely to have to worry about finances. So they turn their attention towards pursuing their own aspirations rather than focus on gaining full-time employment. Young people postpone their careers, as they fear boredom and confinement. They want marriage, a house and children but all in their own time; professional success has higher priority.

One of the reasons behind such attitudes and behaviours is that parents have allowed their children to grow up without the guidance and counselling they used to give. They assume their children are aware of the basic life skills. But the sad reality is that the younger generation is not always smarter than their parents were at their age.

Reaching Out to Our Children

The question then is: how can we mobilize to guide the generation of today? Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF) Singapore shares this burden of reaching our next generation and we have worked out a strategy with you in mind. We have introduced the Sunday School Outreach (SSO) programme, which provides you and your church with the framework and proven resources to:

- reach out to families with young children.
- introduce children to Sunday School.
- sustain interest through fun yet meaningful, bible-centred activities and lessons.

For more on this new programme, check out the article in this newsletter. We look forward to embarking on this exciting venture with you, and sowing the seeds of a stronger generation.

Rev Tan Cheng Huat
Member, CEF(S) Board

