



CHIJ ST JOSEPH'S CONVENT

SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER

2017

Dear SJC Community, 2017 marks the 165th anniversary of Catholic Education in Singapore. Our September newsletter highlights various aspects of Catholic Education that the SJC community has taken part in this year.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION SUNDAY, 10 SEPTEMBER 2017

Catholic Education Sunday was held on 10 September 2017 to underscore the importance of the School/Parish/Home tripartite in delivering a unique Catholic Education. The theme for Catholic Education Sunday 2017 was ***Celebrating 165 years of Catholic Education in Singapore – Passing on the Light.***

Rev Father Edward presided over the 11am Mass at St Anne's Church and led the community in worship and another meaningful encounter with God. Our enthusiastic RE Team of teachers, students and PSG were at St Anne's Church bright and early on that beautiful Sunday morning getting ready the exhibition booth which showcased the work of the **7 Teaching Orders** and the diocese in providing a Catholic education. That morning, SJC students with their little brothers from Montfort Junior distributed several hundred prayer cards with a prayer composed by His Grace, Archbishop William Goh, to rally parishioners to pray for our schools. Apart from providing music and support to the commemoration, SJCians were also on hand to explain the poster displays about Catholic Education in Singapore. The Chapel Music Team members also sang gospel hymns outside the church entrance to welcome parishioners attending the 9am and 11am services.



The Chapel Music Team getting ready at St Anne's Church



SJCians with Rev Father Edward, Ms Ho and our RE Co-ordinator, Ms Mary Charles



A Chapel Music Team rehearsal



The Chapel Music Team joyously rehearsing

Women of Integrity with the Passion to Pursue Excellence



Members of SJC staff, students, alumni and PSG awaiting 11am Mass in St Anne's Church



SJCians joining the St Anne's Church Choir as they got ready for Mass

To prepare for the event, the Music Team held several practices in the School Chapel and a selection of close to 24 much loved hymns were chosen. Apart from singing gospel hymns at the entrance to the church, the Chapel Music Team members also lent their voices to the St Anne's Church Choir and served as lectors.



Darielle Cheng of Sec 1C leading the congregation for *The Prayer of the Faithful*.

Here are reflections from 2 student participants:

When I volunteered to participate in Catholic Education Sunday, I was really excited and could not wait for the day to come. The Chapel Music Team members, indeed, made this experience more enjoyable and memorable. We could be ourselves and sing together at a public event for the first time. For me it was special to be able to be together to sing praises to God. - Gwenaelle Marie, 1C



Parishioners at the end of the mass stopping to enjoy the hymns and reading the cards

Singing with the music team for Catholic Education Sunday was a new experience for me. I had only recently joined the music team and didn't know many people. The practices leading up to the event gave me the opportunity to bond with my peers. On the actual day, none of us were nervous as we had our minds set on singing well and enjoying the music. Several members of the public stopped to listen, some even joined in. The inviting atmosphere encouraged many of the newer members, such as myself, to become more active and participate in events like this. I cannot wait for another opportunity like this.

- Isabella Gilbert, Sec 2G

EMPOWERING OUR HEARTS TO TAKE ON A LION'S COURAGE, spiritual wisdom for busy classroom teachers.

Six of CHIJ St Joseph's Convent teachers learnt what it meant to be strong, and **to let the heart take on a lion's courage** when they attended, on the 25 August, 2017, the Faith Formation Programme Workshop held at Catholic Junior College. This workshop was organised by the Archdiocesan Commission for Catholic Schools (ACCS) and Australia's Brisbane Catholic Education (BCE) Office.

In this programme, the teachers explored **three themes modelled by Jesus the Teacher: compassion; authenticity; and prayer.** They experienced practical ways of growing in spiritual maturity and wisdom around these themes through prayer, music and movement; silence and stillness; short seminar presentation; creative responses and scriptural reflection.

The participants learnt the following six attributes of courage:

1. *Feeling fear yet choosing to act.*
2. *Following your heart.*
3. *Persevering in the face of adversity.*
4. *Standing up for what is right.*
5. *Expanding your horizons; letting go of the familiar.*
6. *Facing suffering with dignity and faith.*

3 EXAMPLES OF ART ACTIVITIES THAT PARTICIPANTS EXPERIMENTED WITH DURING THE WORKSHOP AND WHICH MAY BE BROUGHT BACK TO INCORPORATE INTO RE LESSONS

There was art-making to elicit a reflective response. Teachers were asked to choose from the three types of hands-on-activities:

- 1) using dot-style painting to express their connection with the courage of the cross,
- 2) the making of a lion using clay to reflect on the call to build a community based on Gospel values,
- 3) creating a heart winding wool around a heart shape cardboard, to reflect on the moments when one sought courage to act, show heartfelt love, and commit his or her own thinking and use it to action through compassion and care.



Clay work may be a means of promoting meditative mindfulness as shown by this example made by Ms Mary Charles and Mdm Tan Eng Lian



An example of another meditative, reflective art activity as shown by the heart of wool with encouraging messages that was made by Ms Angela Tan

Ms Nisha Anthony's example of dot-style painting to express one's connection with the courage of the cross



I enjoyed blending in the different colours of the clay, in the making of the lion's face. As I pressed the ball of clay to flatten and spread it out to form the Lion's mane, I saw the different hues of colours, grey merged with the orange and red colours and thought to myself, that in our darkest moments, all we need is to be brave like the lion, calm and confident in knowing that God's presence is always with us. God is the one who radiates the bright colours of faith, hope and love to transform the darkest moments to brighter hues. He reduces the intensity of the black and grey to more accepting colours. There is a streak of joy and happiness if only we open our hearts to the Holy Spirit within us and allow the bright streaks of positive thinking to penetrate through the darkest moments of our lives. I would use this as an art therapy lesson to demonstrate to my students who feel helpless in despair that they need to have a lion's heart, be brave

and like the golden colours of the lion's mane, we have the capacity to bounce back and manage our feelings if we stay focused in knowing that God's warm love radiates through us.

The verse from Isaiah 41:10 resonates with me.

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand".

Reflection by Mdm Tan Eng Lian, Senior Teacher and member of the RE Team.

IJ SPIRIT BURNING BRIGHT: IJYM HOME OUTREACH ACTIVITY ON SATURDAY 29 JULY 2017

One of the annual outreach events planned and carried out by members of the IJ Youth Mission CCA is their IJYM HOME Outreach Activity. Every year, staff and students of IJYM invite 30 ladies from the HOME Shelter for abused domestic workers to SJC for a Saturday morning of fun activities. Here are some reflections from student participants:



Our guests playing Musical Chairs with us



Recently, we had another impactful activity, which was the HOME visit. In the morning, the IJYM members woke up early to get ready breakfast for our guests. We screened a movie for them to watch, which they enjoyed very much. Next, we played some games, and did some craftwork with them, followed by lunch.

Through this activity, I saw how the visitors found joy in the littlest of things. The games that we played with them were as simple as musical chairs, yet they filled the atmosphere with laughter and fun. They were also very grateful for the meals that we provided. When it was time to say goodbye, I felt very sad to have to part with them although we only spent a few hours with them. - Natasha Fernandez, 3H

Every single one of them was having fun and laughing together. Even the simplest games delighted them. I found their positivity and the way they "lived in the moment" utterly refreshing, as most people nowadays are always rushing, to work or to school or to meet a deadline, never having enough time to relax. Despite their past abuse and mistreatment, they could still smile, still laugh, still enjoy the simple things in life. I found that strength and positivity really admirable. - Xandra Hay, 3E

I noticed that throughout all the activities, all the domestic helpers supported and motivated each other and I was really touched by that because it was like they were this huge family that loved and cared for one another.

I hope that our CCA could be like them too. I want everyone in this CCA to feel like they belong here and that they can count on one another whenever they need a hand in anything. I feel like it is important for all of us to build a strong bond with one another as that is how this CCA will grow and at the same time we can build strong friendships. When the domestic helpers left, I felt sad as I had had a lot of fun but at the same time I felt proud that we had made their day better. I was proud of everyone who contributed to the activities that day because without them, this event would not have been a success.

- Alessandra Sophia Bien, 2C