Hallelujah! We praise God for the guidance and blessings He has bestowed upon Houston’s R.E. Department. Winter Quarter has now ended for our R.E. classes and it is time for our next R.E. Newsletter.

Our R.E. Department has always had the goal of better communication between students, teachers and parents. This goal was established in order to help the children grow spiritually from an early stage and to help them establish a healthy spiritual life as they mature.

Ephesians 6:4 says, “Bring your children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” Parents play the primary role in a child’s education and instruction in the fear of the Lord, so R.E. teachers are able to better instruct students with help from parents. But teachers may also be able to provide feedback in order to improve understanding between parents and their children.

This past December, Dallas church held the Central Region Student Spiritual Convocation. It was very successful and edified all attendees. We thank God that the majority of our students made the effort to attend SSC. In this newsletter, we include SSC reflections from the students as well as provide some memorable photos.

In the name of Lord Jesus Christ, I share my reflection from the Central Region Winter SSC 2010.

Praise and thank God for the chance to serve as a J2 sisters counselor this past SSC. The theme for Winter SSC 2010 was “A Life of Prayer.” About four weeks before SSC, everyone was notified to expect a big group of students. The total student attendance was nearly 50, six of them being J2 sisters. This was a big attendance since at last summer’s SSC I only had two sisters and I had to leave midweek to attend summer school. I wasn’t sure if I would be able to handle this many sisters and understand what they are going through now in their lives. I sincerely prayed to God to give me wisdom and strength to provide assistance for His sheep.

There were six counselors for all the grades and we were supposed to lead some of the classes, such as Apologetics role-play on basic beliefs, fruit of the Holy Spirit, arts and craft, mock church council, Holy Spirit discussion, and using the Internet wisely. Counselors also had to prepare by praying for students and the SSC, reading the book of James and II Timothy, writing reflections on chapters from those books, and choosing two teachings for life application.

As we grew closer to SSC’s start, the workload seemed to be more intimidating and one of our counselors, James Lee, fell ill unexpectedly and had to be hospitalized. An
SSC is always a wake-up call and refreshes from our daily lives. Not only do we get to study the Bible and worship God, but we also get to spend time, or rather live, with our brothers and sisters in Christ for an entire week. We learn so much in just five days, and it reminds us that we must continue the good habits outside of SSC.

This spiritual convocation always lets us reflect on the past six months of sinning everyday. We have plenty of prayer time, whether prayer sessions or mealtimes and breaks, and we have pastors and deacons to lay hands on us. We also have the opportunity to communicate with brothers and sisters and receive different testimonies from them. We can also receive godly advice and ask all the questions we want to understand the Bible.

Physically, it is very tiring because our knees are very sore with bruises on them and we spend most of the time sitting down in classes or in the chapel. Other than exercise time for 10 minutes, we do a little more exercise back home. Also, we must get ready very fast, which is good because we spend less time on ourselves and more time doing other things more meaningful. I actually sleep more here than I sleep at home, which is also good because sleep is good for you.

The most different thing for me during SSC is probably getting rid of all electronics and media. It is such a difference because we are less caught up in our TVs, computers and phones and more focused on what we are learning, rather than checking on our Facebook status hourly or checking emails constantly, whether on our computers or phones. During this time, we are able to concentrate on our main goal, which is to reach God and be able to feel His presence.

In the name of Jesus Christ I give my reflection. I thought that SSC was easy to survive unless my counselor was super strict. I was wrong.

On the first day I fasted and I felt that I was bored. I prayed after lunch that day in the prayer room. I still felt bored so I took a walk. Some people were playing “Push Out.” I walked in between them and got hurt. On the next day I fasted again. I felt more focused and I was more determined for God to touch me. I waited for the other people to come up and I also tried to get everything ready. I felt that I needed to improve on patience.

Everyday was the same until Wednesday when I found out that I lacked all characteristics of the Holy Spirit. It was a very good way to humble myself. I prayed to have all fruits by the end of SSC. I needed a system to test them. I improved on a few but I remained the same on the rest. I prayed really hard on the last prayer but I didn’t achieve anything. May all the glory be unto God. Amen.

Brother Timothy Yen

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I give a reflection about the teachings I learned at this Winter SSC 2010.

Praise God for all the teachings I learned this SSC. Just from seeing that the theme was a Life of Prayer, I already knew this SSC would substantially make a difference in my spiritual life. I got to learn about so many things I had not known before. For example, I learned about the Holy Spirit and what it can be related to, like wind. You can’t see it, but you can feel it. It comforts you in times of need.

One of the most reflective and helpful subjects was the Fruit of the Spirit. If you don’t have all nine, it is simply easy to say that you don’t have the fullness of the Holy Spirit. “Against such there is no law,” it says in Galatians 5:23.

In the past five SSCs I have been to, during the actual week of SSC, I am very fervent in prayers and live a life for God. But we all know it is so very hard to continue to live this life all the time. But this time, I have the biggest determined mind to keep on living this life. I will pray as much as I can in my extra time. I will concentrate in my prayers no matter how hard the devil is trying to prey on me.

Brothers and sisters, let us all live a life of prayer. May all the glory and praise be given unto His holy name. Amen.

Sister Sophia Wong
In the name of the Lord Jesus I bear a reflection of my second SSC. Things started out okay until a particular sister came into my world. I know the Bible tells us to love our enemies but she just got on my nerves. Fortunately, when I tried being nice to her, she began to be nice back!

SSC was ok: my notes, my homework and sleeping on time, but the problem was that I couldn't concentrate in prayer. I would try not to think about what other people around me were doing but it was tempting.

My best prayer was on either Tuesday or Wednesday afternoon when I was fasting lunch. I told God my feelings, burdens and guilt so after prayer I felt so good inside! :) God really loves us that He took away our burdens.

The theme of this SSC was "A Life of Prayer." The most edifying thing I learned is that if we pray more our hearts will become soft, so if we pray, God will remove our heart of stone and give us a heart of flesh just like in Ezekiel 36:27.

I also learned if we get bored we should pray. Praying should become a good habit. Some people sin because they get bored.

The last thing I’d like to share with you is that the world belongs to Satan. After man sinned, God handed the world over to Satan, but God still loves us. God wants us to know and understand what we’ve done and turn back to Him. Also remember the fruit of the holy spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control just like in Galatians 5:22-23! May all the glory and praise be onto His holy name.

Sister Deborah Lin

The gift of Holy Spirit has changed me in several different ways. Holy Spirit is like water and river, which soften my heart. Before receiving Holy Spirit, I used to be a kid who only care about myself but not everyone around me. After receiving Holy Spirit, it soften my heart, and whenever people need help and I have the power to help them, for instance, help out in church, hymn lead, audio, etc, I am more than happy to help them instead of finding excuses and get away with it.

Holy Spirit is like the rain, which cleanse me in and out. Living in a society today, there are many temptations and bad things around me: television, games, Internet, even the clothes that other people are wearing. I like to get on-line, play violent games, and wear cool clothes with bad stuff on it. After receiving Holy Spirit, I start to change the way I dress, do different things during my fun time.

Holy Spirit is like the wind, make me believe that God exist. With Holy Spirit, there are many different miracles that God has performed in my life: healing sickness, praying for school work, and many other things. With Holy Spirit, I've experienced all.

Holy Spirit is also like the fire, which guide my way. Before receiving Holy Spirit, I felt empty inside. Even though I went to church when I was little, all I care is having fun with the younger ones and not worrying about listening in class. But after receiving Holy Spirit, I start to understand the teaching of the Bible and the importance of the Bible.

Last but not least, Holy Spirit is like the fire, which unifies all the members in our church. With Holy Spirit, brothers and sisters helps each other just like everyone is in one family.

Brother Henry Lin
urgent prayer request was sent and everyone understood that the battle was not just about workload but also fervent prayers. James 5:16 says, “Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”

Two days before SSC started, counselors came for training and did some more preparations. We truly saw the power of prayers as we experienced the presence of God during SSC. By His mercy He guided everything to go really smoothly, and all the counselors and workers worked really well together. James, who was gravely ill weeks before, was quickly restored by God and was able to make the trip to join us in Dallas on the third day. I was in awe and nearly in tears to see God’s miraculous healing and to see this brother come to help out in this holy work.

Praise and thank God that during SSC our J2 sisters group bonded really well together. Sis. Chou roomed with us and we had a wonderful time with her. She is a great example of a faithful and excellent worker of God. Our group shared some precious times together sharing wonderful and edifying testimonies. God worked within each and every one in the group such that everyone decided to fast and pray during breakfast everyday and two other meals. Everyone wanted to use the time in SSC to really touch God and have communion with Him. We had no behavior problems and everyone was obedient to follow the rules.

After the morning fast-and-prayer, students had classes until about noontime, but we, J2 sisters and brothers, spent an extra 10 minutes to pray before lunch. Since the last day of SSC is a half-day, after Holy Communion and closing prayer concluded I really didn’t expect them to stay for prayer after we broke for lunch. But while I was talking with another counselor, all the J2 sisters waited and asked if they could pray for 10 minutes before lunch like we did for the past four days. We all prayed together one last time before SSC ended.

This truly touched me and left me with a deep impression of our J2 sisters. The night before SSC ended we shared our post-SSC goals and decided to continue to pray together every Sunday evening.

I hope that even though Winter SSC has ended everyone is still living “A Life of Prayer” every day and putting God first in our busy lives. Remember: “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you” (James 4:8). May all the glory and honor and praise be unto our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

The newest addition to the Houston TJC family is Michaela Chong! Born on December 7, 2010, Michaela will be shy of her third month when this newsletter comes out.

Because she is less than three months old, little is known about Michaela’s temperament, but she is a healthy eater, weighing in at 11 pounds and 6 ounces at last month’s doctor’s visit, and a sound sleeper, already clocking eight hours through the night!

Her mom, Sister Cindy, says Michaela especially loves it when people talk to her, and from her latest picture, you can see that Michaela has started smiling. So if you chat her up, chances are you’ll get a grin.

Look for her at your nearest R.E. kindergarten class in 2014!