

There are three short articles in this edition of Educare. On page 1, there is an inspirational feature for teachers, based on a talk given by a retired maths teacher. On page 2, there is information about an excellent free online course on parenting, and on page 3, there are some extra tips for families where students are leaving home for college or university for the first time.

Godly teaching – the glory of mathematics

I recently attended a devotional talk at a private Christian school. The speaker was a retired maths teacher, and he inspired his listeners by defining godly teaching, and illustrating how mathematics displays the glory of God.

Godly teaching requires a big heart, and it is a big challenge. We should do it 'as working for the Lord' (Colossians 3) and display the fruit of the Spirit. The whole context of our teaching should be God-orientated.

We have the privilege of moulding children and young people into the image of God. Teaching is not something that you 'put on' like a coat or a pair of shoes. It is more like gardening – the children require constant care and attention. We are assisting the parents to grow their children.

There are some constraints. We have to leave the children in God's hands. [I planted, Apollos watered, but God made it grow].

Why is maths important?

Let's start by saying what it is not. Mathematics is not a tool to create efficient economic units. Those who achieve a high level of proficiency in maths – A level, IB and beyond – may find some excellent career paths open to them. But that is not the point. Mathematics reflects the way that God thinks. It is rational and logical, and full of deductions.

There is absolute right and wrong. Two and two always equals four. Maths acts as a dyke that protects society against the idea that anything could be true. [If precision didn't matter, what would happen to the tides? The orbits of the planets around the sun? And many other things....]

The universe is complex, but it contains simplicity. Just like God.

Parentalk Course

A British organisation called Care for the Family has produced two online parenting courses, one for the primary/elementary years and the other for parents of teenagers. Each course is available free, although participants need to register with the website at [Parentalk courses - Care for the Family](https://www.careforthefamily.org.uk/courses/courses-for-parents/parentalk-courses/) or <https://www.careforthefamily.org.uk/courses/courses-for-parents/parentalk-courses/>

The courses consist of six online sessions which can be accessed at whatever time or frequency suits the participants. They can be done by individuals or a parent couple on their own, but there are interactive phases which work best in a group. In each unit, there is a video lasting 25 to 30 minutes, including several pauses for discussion or reflection. The materials for parents and a leaders' guide are also available on the website. The videos include short interviews with a wide range of parents, children and teenagers, from diverse cultures within the UK, and including single parents. There is also a humorous drama sketch each time. The courses are accessible to anyone with a reasonable level of English, bearing in mind that the video clips can be paused and repeated, and the notes in the downloadable resources contain similar information. The courses are also available in British Sign Language.

The topics covered are relevant to all families everywhere. For the primary years, the themes are:

1. *It's not just me.* Adjustment to parenting
2. *Love them and let them know.* Conveying love to your child
3. *It's good to talk.* Encouraging communication with your children.
4. *Boundaries and battles.* Putting good discipline in place.
5. *Parenting with elastic.* Helping them to develop decision-making skills and increased independence.
6. *Creating a sense of belonging.* Build a strong family using laughter, traditions and memories.

For the teenage years, the topics covered are:

1. *Understanding your teenager*
2. *Staying connected*

3. *Identity*
4. *Communication and conflict*
5. *Big pressures ... good choices*
6. *Letting go*

The founder and chairman of Care for the Family, Rob Parsons, has written numerous books on parenting, such as *The 60 minute father*, *The sixty minute mother*, and *Bringing home the prodigals*. The Parentalk courses have been accessed worldwide, and we have no hesitation in recommending them.

Tips for families – preparation for student life in the United States

In the June 2022 edition of Educare, we featured an article about adapting to studying in the USA, based on the experience of one of our MKs. This article drew some helpful further comments from missionary parents, so they are summarised below.

Some of the information is applicable to other countries as well as America.

These 'preparation for independence' suggestions are so important. Knowing a bit about personal health (taking your temperature, when and how to get medical attention), keeping your computer secure (our son's university roommate used our son's credit card online!), how to apply and interview for a job, organizing important documents and records, dating guidelines.....all of these were things our sons needed.

Knowing about drugs and alcohol is important. (See the FRANK website for comprehensive information about drugs and their effects.

<https://www.talktofrank.com/>

Students coming to the USA, especially non-white students, need to understand certain characteristics of the culture before they come. Here are some examples.

- Gun culture – some Americans have guns in their homes. This can be terrifying to those who are not used to it.
- Polarisation in society

- Black Africans often experience racism, and it is assumed that they are African Americans. They need to be taught about the history of African Americans before they come, so that they understand the background and context.
- Some universities have more experience than others of welcoming overseas students from diverse cultural backgrounds. It is important for parents and students to research this aspect of how the university functions.

Next Time

In the next issue of Educare, we will be revisiting one of the themes of the June edition. We said....

Our young people need to be prepared spiritually, nurtured and encouraged in their identity in Christ. They also need to be prepared intellectually to understand what is happening to Western culture, where the new ideas are coming from, and how to evaluate them in the light of Scripture.

How do we train and mentor our children so that they can engage graciously with those who hold different opinions from the Christian world view?

Watch this space!

Gill Bryant

Educare is a ministry of WEC International