



# Classes Teach Chinese Parenting (and More!)

By Sarah Schafer

Even before H\* arrived in St. Louis, Mo., for a stint as a visiting economics professor, he and his wife, Q\*, registered for parenting classes at Light of Christ Chinese Lutheran Mission, a mission of Immanuel Lutheran Church in the suburb of Olivette, Mo. Located in the heart of a 40,000-strong Chinese community that includes Chinese grocery stores and restaurants and Chinese students who study or work at nearby universities, Light of Christ offers human care and the Gospel.

"[H and Q] told us they had three goals: to learn English, learn about American culture, and find out about Christianity," said Becky Shaw, secretary of Light of Christ. Through the parenting class, they accomplished all three and much more.

The couple heard the Gospel message through the parenting class. They also attended worship and Bible classes at Light of Christ. One day, in conversation with Rev. Dr. Paul Shaw, pastor of Light of Christ, Q shared that she did believe in Jesus as her Savior. Within three months of arriving in the United States, she, H, and their young son were baptized.

"It changed their lives," said Rev. Shaw. The couple became very active in the congregation, attending worship each Sunday and helping wherever they could. Q attended the women's English as a Second Language (ESL) Bible study. H also began ESL classes. They took the parenting class once more in order to teach it when they returned to China.

Immanuel members and the LCMS Missouri District partially fund the mission, but Becky says Light of Christ depends on grants to meet budget expenses each year. In 2009, LCMS World Relief and Human Care (WR-HC) provided a \$7,500 domestic grant to cover expenses of one seven-week parenting course for 17 parents of children ages 8 to 12 and a 19-week basic parenting class.

Rev. Paul Rueckert, Immanuel's senior pastor, said the parenting classes allow for ongoing engagement between the families and the mission. Since 2006, seven parenting classes have helped parents, who are often advanced-degree holders, use the Bible and other educational materials to improve their parenting skills and interact with their children who live in two cultures.

"... we learned how to parent the children



A group of parents meet in fall 2009 for a Bible-based parenting class, just one service provided by Light of Christ Lutheran Chinese Mission in Olivette, Mo., a St. Louis suburb. The mission received a grant from LCMS World Relief and Human Care in 2009 to offset the costs of these classes.

with the principle based on the Bible . . . We will definitely take the class again to reinforce what we learned from the first time and used in everyday life," wrote Xinfeng, a parent of eight-year-old daughter, who participated in the WR-HC-funded parenting classes.

Members at Light of Christ are transient, often visiting on temporary visas to work or study. "There haven't been more than 10 to 20 Sundays where there wasn't someone new at church," said Becky. Despite the revolving door of attendees, more than 100 people worship at Light of Christ on an average Sunday.

Many participate in the variety of classes and gatherings at Light of Christ but do not become Christian during their time in the U.S. Every so often, the Shaws receive e-mail or phone calls from people who thank them for planting the seeds of their faith that they now share in their home countries.

The church requested prayer, volunteer, and financial support. To learn more visit [www.immanuel-lcms.com](http://www.immanuel-lcms.com) or call 314-993-2394, ext. 39.

*\*Names changed to protect sources' identities.*



Babysitting is provided during parenting classes offered at Light of Christ Lutheran Chinese Mission.

**Jesus said, "I am the light of the world, whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12).**

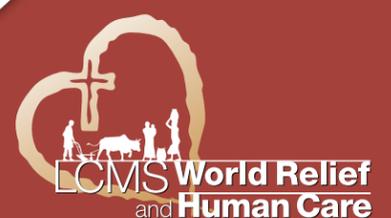
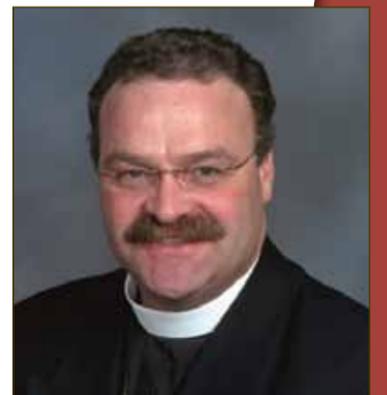
## There is No "Life Unworthy of Living!"

Jesus expressed His attitude of joy over the oppressed, the least, the worst, the hungry, the sad, the sinner, in beatitude after beatitude. Only the merciless escaped His mercy. "Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh" (Luke 6:21). He bid His disciples rejoice at being reviled for His name's sake. And they did (1 Peter 4:13; Acts 5:41; Acts 9:16). "Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets" (Luke 6:23). Even enemies have lives worth living! "Be Merciful to all, even enemies!" (6:31). Christ is God incarnate, Joy in the flesh, LIFE, sent to redeem life. His joy for life, over life, tells us who our God is. "Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful" (6:36). The centurion's daughter (7:8ff), the widow's son (7:12ff), the blind, the lame, the lepers, the deaf, the poor all were healed and heard the Gospel (7:21ff), again and again. The least are the greatest in the Kingdom (7:46f.). Jesus ate and drank and enjoyed time with His band of misfits, "tax collectors and sinners" and even prostitutes (7:34; 7:49; 8:1ff.). The "good soil" are – according to Jesus – the refuse of the world, the despised of the world. The Good News knows no genetic preference (8:9ff., 19). The Gerasene – after so much pain and suffering, joyless and "dead" while he lived in the cemetery, dragging his chains – was put at rest, "sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind" (8:34). The poor woman whose livelihood had been exhausted by hemorrhage, was healed, finally healed body and soul, after 12 joyless years (8:41ff). Jairus' daughter was raised – life from death!

There is much, much, more in Luke's Gospel alone, including all the rejoicing over the prodigal son, the lost coin, the great banquet ... and finally, the greatest affirmation of human life in time for eternity, the resurrection of Jesus. Each and every one of these references is a testament etched in stone bearing witness: There is no "life unworthy of living!"

Pastor Matthew Harrison

Excerpt from "A Little Book on Joy" (Lutheran Legacy Press 2010)



Mercy forever.