

Seminar for Sunday School Teachers

Glanow, Poland, 10. – 12. May 2013



Sunday school teachers' seminar was organized in Glanow, Poland. Tim Atkinson, the brother with 21 years-long experience of developing and teaching Sunday school programs in Sweden, shared his vision of education of the second generation with 17 participants representing 6 countries (Albania, Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Poland and Slovakia).

At the beginning all the participants introduced themselves, shared their experiences of working with 2 generation in their respective countries and then explained, what were their reasons for participating in the seminar. Even though many of the participants have been involved in education for many years, practically all of them expressed concern for lack of the wholesome systematic approach to 2 gen education.

Responding to that, Tim Atkinson first spoke about the situation of 2 gen in the world in general and in Sweden, and then, following True Mother's words, expressed, how important it is to give priority to education of 2 generation. We could see how the system of Sunday school classes developed and applied by Tim Atkinson in Sweden, influenced the situation of 2 gen in this country (far more 2 gen are actively involved in the Church in Sweden, than in majority of other countries).

Following that, Tim Atkinson spoke about the general principles of 2 gen education, the purpose of Sunday school and reasons to be a teacher. It is also important to stress, that there was not only him speaking – all the participants were actively involved in discussing these issues, which made the seminar far more effective.

The participants learned that over the years Tim developed a wholesome program of Sunday school classes embracing 9 years of education for children of 3 – 11 years of age. We were shown the outlines of particular courses (the whole period of 9 years of education is divided into 3 stages: for children of 3-5, 6-8 and 9-11 years of age). The children of particular age groups learn the general material on moral values, Old Testament and New Testament stories, the Principle and the life of True Parents, all of those areas being taught at the levels appropriate for that particular age group. Tim also stressed the importance of using different approaches which would make the learning process both effective and enjoyable (like using stories, different types of activities and games).

It has to be stressed that over the years Tim developed materials that proved to be very clear, concrete, elaborate and easy to use even for people who have no experience in teaching young children. Those materials include detailed lesson plans for teachers and handouts for children. All the participants of the seminar were particularly happy and grateful to their lecturer when they learned that Tim was ready to share all those materials so that they could be used in different countries.

Tim Atkinson also showed the examples of typical Sunday School classes dedicated to different themes, as well as a schedule of a typical workshop on virtues. At the end of the seminar there was time for questions and answers (and there were many of them!). We also discussed, how the curriculum we were presented could be applied in different church communities according to the local needs.

All the participants of the seminar were very inspired by the vision of developing a system of 2 gen education and plan to use the materials obtained from Tim Atkinson in their work with 2 gen in their countries.

I can only add, that this seminar has really changed my approach to educating our children, and I hope, it will help us create a wholesome system of education in Poland, both for younger and older kids, through regular Sunday school classes and workshops. Right after the seminar 6 of us from Poland had a 3-hours long meeting to discuss how we can apply what we learned during the seminar in our communities. I would very strongly recommend these Sunday School Teachers seminars with Tim Atkinson for all the brothers and sisters in our Church, who are involved in educating 2 generation. I also need to say, that as now in Sweden it's mainly older 2 gen who teach Sunday School classes (having completed this education themselves), these seminars are also very valuable for those older 2 gen, who want to be involved in education. The fact that Tim Atkinson managed to create a functioning system, where he could pass his role as the Sunday school teacher to those older 2 gen, is also very important. It means, that this system does not depend on the personality of this concrete person, but it can be inherited by others.

At the end I only want to express my deep gratitude to Tim Atkinson for his 21 years-long investment into education of 2 gen and his readiness to share his experience (and materials) with others. Special thanks go also to Reiner Fuchs who helped organizing the seminar inviting representatives of all the different countries to the workshop. I can only hope, that as the time passes by, more people will be joining these seminars and through our joined efforts we will find the best ways to educate all of our children.

Anna Brzyska, Poland

