

II Shim Ring Ceremony

Prague, Czech Republic, 11. January 2015



Participants read out their pledge in front of True Parents and the congregation - Thirteen-year-old Anna Slezaková signs her pledge

Arguably the most important aspect of second generation education is understanding, valuing and maintain ones purity. The II Shim program (sometimes referred to as 'the Purity Ring') is a structured course designed to help teenaged second generation (HARP members) take initiative and assume responsibility for their personal life of faith. This year our Czech HARP committee coordinated the II Shim program for the second time, welcoming twelve new applicants aged 13 to 15 years old on to the course, all of whom successfully completed it!

As part of the course participants were required to fulfil three main aspects: a spiritual condition, study and a confession.

For many of the participants the II Shim course gave them the opportunity to experience doing their first personal spiritual condition as all of them were required to take the time to choose the condition they felt would be most valuable, commit themselves to a set amount of time and report their condition to their central figure; amongst others, participants reported reading conditions, prayer conditions as well as fasting conditions.

Educational lectures were held at the Czech Headquarters in Prague every Sunday for five weeks, covering topics such as: how to become a true son/daughter of God, God's expectations and the fulfilment of your own potential, building a

relationship to God and the value of purity, and ownership during the Completed Testament Age. We were very pleased to see an increase in Sunday service attendance, with many HARP members traveling regularly to Prague from other parts of the country just to participate. To conclude and evaluate their educational experience, participants were given a final exam that would determine whether or not they could complete the course.

Lastly, perhaps the most transformational aspect of the program, for both the teenagers and their parents, was the confession. No matter how many or how few challenges we have faced, confessing our wrong doings is always difficult. Consequently, we were very proud of each of the participants for making the right conditions and having the courage and humility to conduct confessions with their parents.

It is important to mention that whilst the course is completed by the teenager, parental involvement is a strong component and consequently the program can also be seen as a condition for both parents and children to build a stronger relationship. Ultimately, we believe that HARP should serve as a support for both the children and parents as opposed to simply replacing the educational role of the parent. In terms of whether they decide to stay in the movement or not, for most second generation understanding Principle is secondary to having a meaningful and

trusting relationship with their parents. We were therefore happy to receive feedback from parents that they were grateful HARP could coordinate the time and space for them to address topics that can often be difficult for parents and children to talk about.

All the investment of both the participants and their parents was best illustrated in the culminating event, the Il Shim ring ceremony. Following a moving sermon and in front of a packed audience, each of the participants signed a pledge and received their

purity ring from their parents. Tears of joy, nervous laughter, warm embraces, and a lot of clapping all contributed to the incredibly high spiritual atmosphere! We hope that this occasion can be a springboard for our youth to spiritually mature, not only taking more responsibility for their own life of faith, but also having the confidence to support one another and help others in realising our True Parents vision of families centred on absolute love.

Congratulations to you all!