

## Oceania's Blessed Children re-connect at annual Regional Summer Workshop

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Every new year welcomes a fresh start, as well as an opportunity for our Blessed Children across Oceania to re-connect at our annual Regional Summer Workshops. This year, the 10 day workshop, was held in our newly renovated, beloved Belgrave Heights property, just outside of Melbourne. Thanks to the Melbourne community who have consistently been improving the site, through their BusyBee projects & individuals' efforts, we were able to enjoy the natural, peaceful environment, away from the rush of our everyday lives.

The events began from January 3rd- 6th with a leadership workshop for participants interested in taking on more responsibility as team elders (team leaders) and team supporters (team assistant leaders) for the main workshop. With a small but committed group of 10 enthusiastic participants, the 3 days leading up to the main workshop served as a valuable time to develop a mutual sense of purpose and trust amongst the leaders. Our time consisted of leadership guidance and training through talks, bonding activities, time for sharing and reflection, as well as public speaking practice and of course joint creativity to prepare a wonderful workshop banner. "I feel like leadership really prepared me well with my confidence & to trust myself." This core group was able to substantially direct the workshop in a very healthy way, to give individual attention to each participant and to support the development of unity in their teams, all done through their sincere efforts to be good role models. We are very grateful for each of the leaders and their investment.



The main workshop saw the arrival of 23 participants from Australia and New Zealand, with opening addresses from Rev. Lim & Rev. Yoo. The week unfolded smoothly, witnessing a combination of early wake ups, lectures, short talks, team discussions, sports sessions, challenge days, a purity Q&A session, and lots and lots of singing. Throughout the workshop there was an underlying theme, “Understanding Today For The Sake Of Tomorrow.” Our main educator, William Haines from the U.K., offered the majority of content by looking at lessons drawn from Bible stories and unpacking the Divine Principle in a BC-friendly way. We learnt the importance of understanding our identity and our roots in order to be clearer, wiser and stronger people approaching the future. This was summarized in the catch phrase, “If you know who you are, you know what to do”.

The sports coordinators organized a great variety of activities for the 4 teams; North, South, East & West, to participate in. The first afternoon involved each team travelling between posts, identified as the Emotion, Intellect, Will & Heart posts. Each post was designed to challenge individuals & teams in different ways, such as endurance tests at the ‘Will’ post or creating a team identity through war-cries & unique banners at the ‘Heart’ post. These war-cries became each team’s anthem for the remainder of the workshop. A number of sports sessions were held on the Belgrave field, even a traditional capture the flag game, with water bomb modifications.



Many of the participants reflected that a significant take away for them was their recognition for their own presence. “If I make effort or not, it makes a difference. I learnt this in singing – I really tried and contributed, and I grew to love the songs and singing time.” For some, they valued the open and inclusive atmosphere that was generated and built on day by day. “Normally, I would be quiet and independent but this workshop made me open up and learn the value of trust.”

It was very inspiring to contribute to creating this safe and internally nurturing environment for the participants and staff to experience. We are very grateful for all of the support we received from many individuals, including the staff, parents and we especially won’t forget the great food provided by the kitchen staff and the several rounds of sashimi from Mr. Arai!

