

Japan's Happy Family Program promotes Second-Generation Blessing through improving family bonds

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Unification Movement – Japan: *Happy Family Program aims at promoting Second-Generation Blessing through improving family bonds between husband and wife and parents and children. Mr. Toshio Tada, Director of Family Education Department, launched this program and is lecturing across the country to explain the program's complete picture.*

1. What is Happy Family Program?

This program provides parents and children with practical guidance to faith, Blessing and the ideal family (a realm of three generations). In order to pursue the happy family, one of the visions of Unification Movement, the program conducts Parents Seminar to Become Good Parents (Parents' Seminar), Family Gathering and Parents and Child Seminar to Build a Good Family (Parents and Child Seminar).

In short, this is a program for parents to become true parents by restoring (completing) the parental heart. Contents of the Parents Seminar in which parents learn to become true parents are that of the Family Empowerment Lecture.

By sharing Family Practice with a group of 4 – 5 families, they can develop and reawaken each other, building the most fundamental foundation for the church to head for expanding happy families, our mission as Tribal Messiahs, and social contribution through National Movement of True Families.

Our goal is to restore relationship of heart (trust) between parents and children within each family so the children can look forward with Blessing.

What is important is to have the parents share the vision of Happy Family Program in the Parents Seminar. Also through discussions in Family Gathering and Family Practice, they create a basis for parents and children to participate together in the Parents-Child Seminar in order to make a new start.

2. What is Parents Seminar?

It is a program for parents to practice their responsibility as parents. They also reflect their attitude towards their children in order to restore their relationship with them, as they, as a community, help each other on family issues, on the perspective that such issues are common within the church and society.

It aims at restoring relationship not only between parents and children but also between husband and wife. The parents can guide their children to Blessing by becoming happy husbands and wives. The goal of Parents Seminar is to make parents determined to achieve mature character and sound family, which we must have achieved essentially, by facing the children's goal of taking part in Second-Generation Blessing.



Four Perspectives to Become True Parents

When does parenting end? Parenting is not only for children but for parents themselves. Parents establish the substantial Four Great Realms of Heart within the family. True parents are the substance of the Four Great Realms of Heart. Parenting continues until the parents become true parents.

Then, they will be granted the certification of true parents from their children. Let me introduce the four perspectives to become true parents.

First, parents' love must reach children. It is to deepen their give-and- receive action. Parents' loving of children and parents' love reaching their children are two different matters. In many cases, parents' love does not reach their children. This is how a wall between parents and children is built. Parents must learn how to deliver their love to the children.

Secondly, parents must prepare an environment for the children to grow. A child is a subject of growing and the object of nurturing. The subject of growing is the child and the subject of nurturing is the parents.

Thirdly, parents must develop as they head for the goal, which is to become true parents by becoming the substance of the Four Great Realms of Heart.

Lastly, there must be a family goal. It is important for the parents to build a family relationship in which they could frankly discuss their vision of an ideal family. The important point in realizing such four perspectives is that the parents practice the following 3 points: (1) Believe that their child is God's child, (2) Practice sympathetic communication within family, (3) Child has the answer.

Through Happy Family Program, we aim at establishing firm parents-child relationship, holding family meetings and becoming families who could participate in family volunteers. In this way, we could establish the family as a master of Tribal Messiah. Parents learn and practice the above contents in the Parents Seminar.



3. Family Gathering and Family Practice

(1) Family Gathering

Each group of 4 –5 families gathers once every 1 –2 weeks and 4 –8 times in two months, sharing what they have practiced within the family and sympathizing with and encouraging each other. The parents will help each other so they could practice and develop by resetting their goals.

The goal of Family Gathering is for families to establish trust relationship so that they can discuss anything and parents can feel confidence in the progress of becoming true parents. They will pray for each other so they could take part in the Parents-Children Seminar and Blessing, cooperating with each other in confirming their participation in Parents-Child Seminar.

After two months, the families involved in Family Gathering will discuss whether they will continue it or not. They will then hold Family Gathering depending on their circumstances such as once every month. The group leader would not lead the group but facilitate (guide) and act as a liaison.

Basically, the members of the Gathering will not deny or raise opinions against each other. They accept and praise the efforts of each other, encouraging each other's hearts. The families share what they felt empathy for and what inspired or amazed them.

(2) Family Practice

One cannot achieve a happy family just by thinking about it. It is necessary to practice love within one's family. What must we practice in order to build a trust relationship with our children? There are many practices, but here, I would like to introduce the next three things.

1) Your Child is God's Child!

It is often said that a child cannot choose their parents, but this is true for the parents, too. Whatever your child may be, the child is given to you by God. The child may cry, howl or have a fit, but you should face the child on the belief that he/she is God's child.

2) Parents must change!

Most books on parenting almost certainly say that the parents must change. Then, how must they change? Parents always try to change their children's behaviors. They try to make 'a child who doesn't study' study hard or 'a child who doesn't attend church' attend it.