

## From Mummy's Heart ... Part 2 (Suan Ai's heartbeat!)

Sounds like a boring family? Waiting around, revolving around dad's schedule and attending wakes. Not really. We had our definition of fun time.

On weekends, mummy would occasionally make simple meals like tuna, egg sandwiches or fried beehoon, and we will head over to East Coast Park for cycling, Marina for kite flying (never succeeded) or just sitting on the beach watching the planes flying. It does seem fairly uneventful, yet the most important thing to us is that the children enjoyed the simplicity of the surrounding, getting fun out of seemingly boring events. Perhaps not everything has to be fun or exciting.

We did play a fair bit of card or board games, from UNO (started when Elliot can recognize colours) to Mahjong (which the parents learn from the kids) to scrabble, 'Sorry' game (A game that you have to say sorry when you land on someone's tile, fun and educational, isn't it?). As the children grew, Samantha and Josiah started running. We started to sign up for Half Army marathon. While daddy and the 2 elder ones will be running progressively from 10 to 21 km over the years, mummy and Elliot will be enjoying their 6 km fun walk ☺. Sometimes even when only Samantha is running, the whole family will be there to cheer her on and wait for her at the finishing line.

With older kids, daddy decided that it is time to get the family involved in community services and we volunteered with CDAC. We volunteered at the yearly "Ready for School" program, family bonding day and project for the elderly (basically the 2 boys followed mummy while mummy spoke to the elderly in their dialect and the boys helped to carry groceries, and Samantha will follow daddy). Over the years, we accumulated 'family' T-shirts from the volunteering projects and all the running events. Perhaps this helped create a desire to wear the same T-shirt as a family!

One year we decided to bring the children for an overseas holiday and just for easy identification at the airport, we decided to wear the same T-shirt. The children enjoyed it and remembered those moments. To them, this is family identity.

Then came church camp 2 years ago, one of them (I think it was Josiah) suggested that we should bring enough "family identity" T-shirts to make our family unique and everyone agreed. So that is how we ended up with the same T-shirts during the church camp, much to the surprised of many people, and ourselves too!

How did we end up that wherever we go, our children will follow? I guess over the years, we never asked, "Would you like to come along?" but rather "we will be doing this or that this week". Of course, as the children grew and started secondary school where there were more school activities, we would let them know our schedules early and we also tried to work around their schedules. This gave each of us some space and yet bonded together. Children will sometimes negotiate with their peers as to the time to meet up for project if we give them ample time to know the outings we planned for the family. I guess this is what GKGW teaches, when the children can take "NO" as a choice, they are ready to make their own choices.

I think it is a comfort to know perhaps we are doing something right when our teenagers asked us, "Daddy, mummy, why don't we play board games as a family tonight?" or "We have not been eating breakfast together for a while" or when at a BBQ, we asked Samantha to go mix with her peers, she said, "What's wrong with hanging out with the adults? If I keep mixing with the same age group, how can I learn to be a grown up!"

I really thank God for the privilege of becoming a homemaker and able to do so many things with my children. When I decided to be a homemaker, it was my way of obeying God. I did it so that Jeremy can have peace working, serving the ministries while his children are well taken care of by the one he can trust. My children are my key ministry that God entrusted to me when they are young. Do the children get disappointed with daddy when only mummy is around and daddy is busy? Of Course, they do. But that is the time we teach them what sacrifice means, teaching them that we are letting daddy go in God's hand. Will all my children turn up to be fine gentlemen and lady? I want to believe so. I believe and I know what we have built up over the years have been implanted in their hearts when I hear how they described what their family, their spouse will be like. We also pray for Godly spouses that are like-minded. The rest is still up to them and God!