

Name: Yuqi Ma

Position: Large Group Coordinator

Years at CCF: 2

Years as Christian: 7-9

Current Church: East Toronto Chinese Baptist Church

Home Church: East Toronto Chinese Baptist Church

Vision Statement

Growing Up in Christ

For the longest time, I have always considered myself an infant compared to other brothers and sisters in Christ. When I arrived at CCF in first year, this perception of myself made me feel right at home. Every Friday I would happily return into the loving arms of older brothers and sisters who are further in their spiritual walks with God and willing to point me in the right direction.

However, something that I have come to grasp about growing up in God's love is that you start off receiving, and continue to RECEIVE until one day you begin to PERCEIVE the fact that hey God Really Loves You. From that moment onwards, you begin to wonder whether it's time to RECIPROCATE.

My hope for large group this year is for all of us to "Grow Up" together in Christ. I want to see everyone fully engaged in these continuous cycles of receiving, perceiving, and reciprocating.

The cool thing to realize about CCF large group is how short those 4 hours are compared to the remaining 164 hours of the week. Yet during this time that we share every Friday, we have the opportunity to reconnect with each other and with God through sharing, prayer, bible study and worship. This brief point of intersection helps us to realign with the rest of the body of Christ and initiates for each of us new cycles of receiving, perceiving and reciprocating God's love.

When Jesus asks Peter: Do you love me? He repeats the same question three times. As children of God, how do we respond to this question? How willing are we to grow up today? Tomorrow? The day after tomorrow...?

Personal Evaluation

1. Name 2 weaknesses that you possess, and please indicate if and how you are addressing each weakness.

One of my weaknesses is that I tend to act like a ""Martha"" in many situations. I like to have everything planned out and know with certainty the direction in which to proceed. To answer the second part of this question, it's more accurate to say that God has been patiently addressing this particular weakness in me. Many times over the past three years, I have found myself stressing out over uncertainties about future plans and decisions. Each time, God would make things happen in such a way that showed me how much better His plan is than what I wanted for myself. A lot of these experiences I understood only in retrospect but I know much greater blessings come from surrendering myself to His will BEFORE I take each step.

Another weakness that I have always struggled with is in how much I cared about other people's view of me. This is my slave master in the sense that growing up, I never felt the freedom to fully be myself. To add to the complexity of this problem, I also discovered that I didn't particularly like some of the thoughts and actions that resulted from me being myself. So, as you can see, I was pretty stuck in this limbo of wanting to be myself yet not wanting to. Thankfully, I discovered that God provided the unique solution to my problem. All I have to do is remember my identity as a daughter of God and His amazing love for me. In His love and grace, those old chains are slowly removed as I begin to feel the freedom in choosing to love Him back in all that I do.

2. Name 2 strengths that you possess, and please indicate how you believe it will benefit the CCF family.

Something that comes quite naturally for me is the ability to approach people with the desire to make them feel included. This is especially true in a setting like CCF where I feel most at home and where we are blessed with the opportunity to project an image of God's love; reaching out and embracing all those who enter into His arms.

Something else that I really enjoy is drawing the connections between things we learn from bible study and stuff that happened in the week. To me, sharing about how God works in each of our lives is one of the best parts about walking on this journey together with so many brothers and sisters. What's most amazing is that each of our paths is unique, yet all of them lead to God.

3. Critically evaluate your ability to work alongside others and provide an example.

In a group setting, I tend to take on the role of the cheerleader. I find great satisfaction in getting people pumped about what lies ahead and providing encouragement through the hard time. On the other hand, the Martha in me sometimes gets in the way when I feel compelled to be in control of

the situation. Thankfully, God has been pruning me continuously in this aspect through many of my group projects. Even though I had to learn it the hard way, God has already shown me that trusting in Him requires me to let go of the steering wheel.

4. Critically evaluate your openness towards receiving criticism and provide an example.

Hmmm, when I receive a criticism, my first instinct is to defend myself by coming up with multiple arguments to justify my actions. If that fails, my second line of defense is to think that the person really doesn't understand me and woe is me for being misunderstood. It really wasn't until recently, while reading a book about humility that I made the connection of how both of those instincts are sure signs of pride. I find it funny that because I have been brought up to be self-critical, the pride that I took in being self-critical has made me less receptive of criticism from others. Similarly, the feeling of self entitlement that accumulates as I receive praises from others also quietly adds to the problem. I think C.S. Lewis describes it best,

“Indeed the safest road to Hell is the gradual one--the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts...”

The devil is devious indeed! However, now that I have identified the enemy from within, I know that God offers me the most powerful weapon of combat: humility.