



ARTICLE

LITTLE FEET, BIG CHALLENGES:
 PARENTING WITH GRACE IN THE 21ST
 CENTURY

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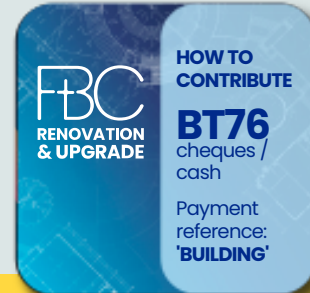
UNLEASHING THE GOSPEL



LITTLE FEET, BIG CHALLENGES: PARENTING WITH GRACE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Hello! My name is Lisa. I'm quite sure you've seen my family around church. There are four of us in my family - Alex Tan, who preaches occasionally on Sundays (he heads a global IT

department in his day job), and there's Aaron, 11, and Ryan, 7. We officially became members of the First Baptist Church (FBC) in 2018. We are also active members of the Christians In Action (CIA) Life Group.



In this article, I would like to share a little bit about our family, with the aim of helping the church understand the joys and challenges of raising a young family in the 21st century, and to see how we can build a stronger and healthier community for young families within the church.

Let me begin by telling you a little bit about myself and my family. Alex and I grew up as Methodists - we attended KL Wesley and the Chinese Methodist Cantonese Church, KL. After we became parents, we looked for a church where we could see our family grow within our community here in Subang Jaya. That was how we found FBC.

I was previously in journalism and design thinking in my last two careers. I am now a stay-at-home mom by choice. Once a week, I do storytelling sessions with Myanmar refugee children from the Zo Community, which our church has been actively supporting.

My older boy, Aaron, is a joyful, playful, mischievous ball of energy. He is very athletic and loves football, badminton, and rollerblading. He also has a creative side, and you will often find him spending hours building his Lego creations. Ryan is a bubbly, affectionate, and thoughtful

child. You will often find him curled up reading about black holes and super red giants, prehistoric animals, and the tallest buildings in the world. He also loves football and badminton and is very much his brother's shadow. We call Ryan our "sound effects guy", as you will often find him playing with a Lego character in an imaginary world he has built, complete with the sound effects - jumping, sliding, bomb blasts, and all. Both boys are drummers, with Aaron serving as a drummer in the Sunday School worship service.

Alex and I have been parents for just a little over a decade now, and I can confidently say that parenting is the hardest role we have ever signed up for. It is definitely not quite what we had envisioned it to be when we first carried our baby home 11 years ago.

There are great moments... like when we have jamming sessions together. Alex on the guitar, Aaron on the drums (or another guitar), and all of us on vocals. We sing everything from Frank Sinatra's "My Way" (from the cartoon Sing), and Steven Curtis Chapman's "I Will Be Here", to NSYNC's "Bye Bye Bye". On long road trips, **car karaoke for the win!**



There are also really sweet and tender moments... like at bedtime. When the world is quieter and the energy is calmer we curl up and chat about our favorite bits of our day or week - what's been going well, what's not been going well, or what we could have done differently. Sometimes, we simply share what's on our minds. Such moments give me an opportunity to get a glimpse into my children's day and their world, a chance to see life from their perspectives. I really love these chats that we have.

Raising a young family in the 21st century comes with its fair share of challenges, as there's so much to balance and manage.

Between work, family, and various other responsibilities, making time and prioritizing energy can be difficult. Alex and I grew up in the 70s, 80s, and 90s, and we're aware that our children are growing up in a very different world. With the internet, social media, and AI, it is an ongoing conversation with our boys about their online activities (eg. gaming), while also encouraging them to enjoy real-life experiences—whether it's playing football, rollerblading with friends, or going on trips and camping. It's a continuous process of discussing their choices, setting boundaries, understanding priorities, and helping them recognize the true costs of these choices, which often aren't financial.

Alex and I (and many parents I know) have also been very intentional about caring for our children's mental and emotional well-being. We respect our children as individuals - with all their strengths and areas of growth. The two core reminders we use for ourselves when there is dysregulation in the family are "Connection before correction" and "He's having a hard time, he's not giving me a hard time." These reminders have helped me - allowing me to pause and reframe my perspective, especially when my children are having a meltdown!

Personally, the biggest challenge for me is walking the walk. As parents, we are called to be our children's role models. If I want my boys to grow up with the ability to stay regulated through moments of big emotions - be it anger, frustration, disappointment, sadness, grief, etc - it also means I have to try my best to model that for them.

There are plenty of days when we do not get it right. Those are days when exhaustion kicks in, patience runs thin, tempers flare, and we find it hard to agree with one another. Yet, these are also valuable opportunities to show what healthy disagreements can look like, and how we can communicate better to find solutions that work for everyone in the family. These moments also teach us to have more compassion when mistakes happen, and role model what sincere and genuine relationship repair looks like. This is something Alex and I have been very intentional about.

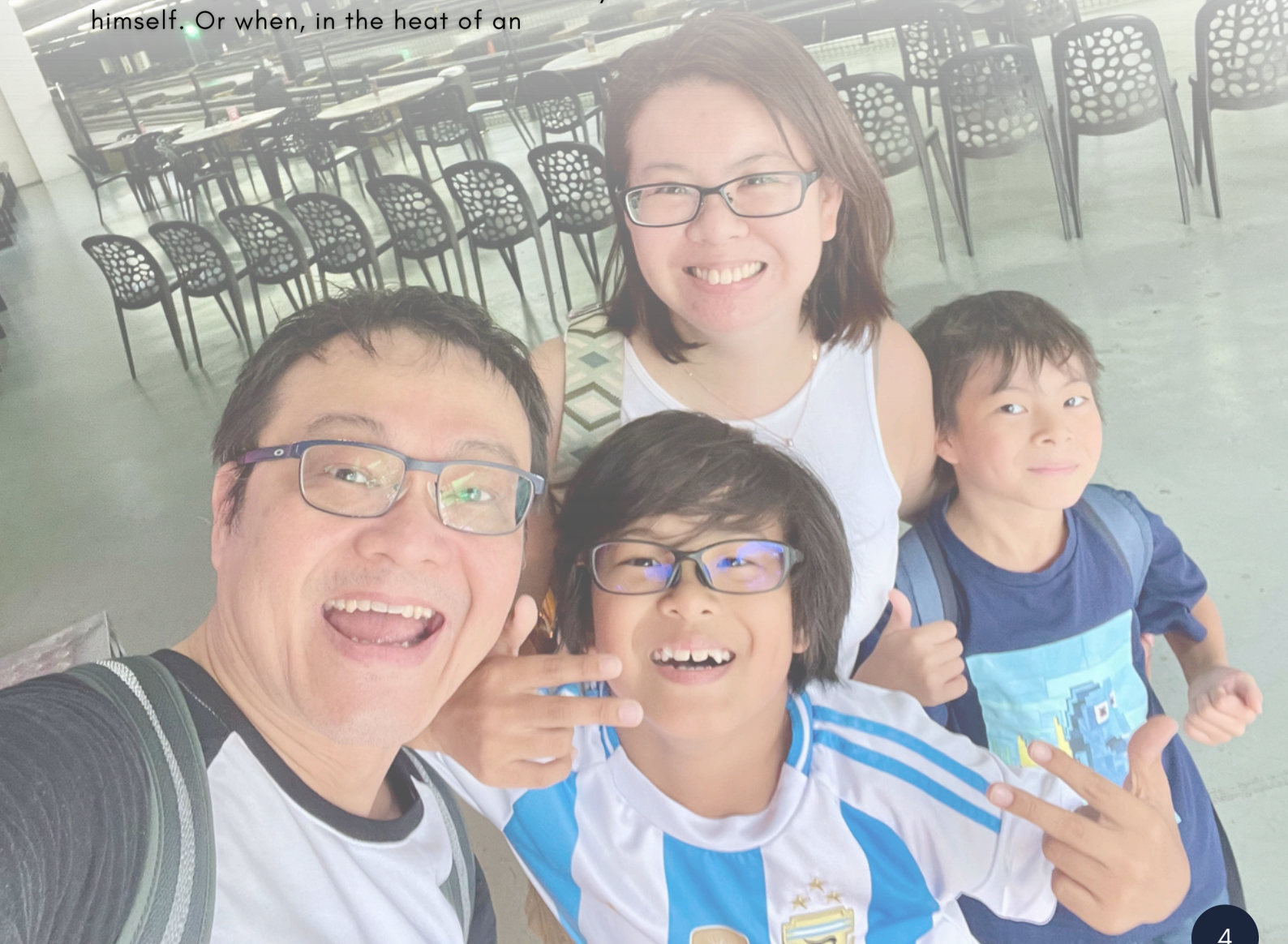


This approach is challenging and requires hard work. It demands time, effort, perseverance, and a lot of prayer. It's about seeking wisdom to discern what aspects of our own childhoods we want to pass on to our children while choosing to leave behind what is no longer aligned with our family values. It also involves personal and parental growth—learning and equipping ourselves with the skills and tools needed to view our children through a lens of compassion, understanding, and grace, all while maintaining firm boundaries as they navigate through childhood.

The moments I am proudest of are in the seemingly small moments, like when Ryan gathers enough courage and confidence to run down to the Speedmart to buy a loaf of bread and some buns all by himself. Or when, in the heat of an

argument, Aaron has the ability to say, "I can see this isn't working for us. I think we can all use a break and calm down. We can talk about this again later tonight and try to find something that works for both of us."

To the young couples in church who are thinking of starting a family, I will be honest to say that parenting can be challenging. It is life-changing. But the beauty of parenting is that it will push you - to learn, to grow, to step outside of your comfort zone, and to love more deeply than you've ever thought possible. The wonderful thing is, you don't have to walk this journey alone. Come join us in the CIA Life Group, where the majority of us are families with young children, and we are all journeying alongside one another.



I'm deeply grateful for the support I've received from my friends in this community — through prayer, encouragement, a listening ear, and thoughtful conversations. I've even had a family step in to babysit my children during a family emergency. I've also witnessed how other families have experienced this same love and care, and seeing this kind of support for young families in action is truly inspiring and empowering.

I view parenting as both a calling and a ministry.

We are entrusted with the responsibility of raising the next generation of godly men and women — leaders, thinkers, creatives, innovators, teachers, collaborators, and more. If we approach this journey with humility, a willingness to learn, and an openness to heal and grow, it becomes an incredibly fulfilling and rewarding experience.

We humbly ask the church to pray for us parents with young families - that we will be filled with God's wisdom, His love, His



race, patience (lots of it), strength, courage to make the right choices (even the hard ones), and for us to have faith that God is working in our families, through the easy and hard days. We are in the thick of it, and what we need most is prayer, kindness, empathy, compassion, and encouragement as we navigate through the joys and challenges of parenting little people, and discover what works best for our families.



By Lisa Goh

Lisa attends the CIA Life Group and is mom to two very energetic and bubbly boys



PRAY FOR FBC (E) CHURCH CAMP

- Pray for tender hearts to receive God's word and a good time of discussion and learning with one another.
- Pray for God's protection throughout the camp, especially for safe travels and good health during the camp, and smooth camp execution (e.g. logistics, speakers).
- Pray for a time of spiritual rest and encouragement too, as we spend time together as a church family.
- Pray for God's anointing on Ian Buntain and worship team that they may effectively convey God's message and lead in authentic worship.
- Pray for the camp committee and group leaders for wisdom and discernment as they guide and encourage the campers.