

Back to School: One More Chance

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Have you ever wished that you had the opportunity to start over? Probably all of us have longed for another chance to change some areas of our lives. Perhaps we wouldn't have done things differently, just more or maybe less.

Three years ago, I had the immense pleasure of teaching Language Arts to a grade three/four class. It was close to the Thanksgiving holiday. I asked my students to tell the class what it was that they were most grateful for. Many of the students said that they were grateful for their moms, dads, sisters, brothers, and of course, friends. Then one particular little boy stood up, arched his back, and said something so profound that it has stayed with me ever since.

This very precocious student told the class that he was most grateful for today, because he had 'one more chance' to make right all the wrongs that he had done yesterday. At first, I was stunned to hear such wisdom coming from a nine-year-old, and then I was deeply touched by the genuineness of his words. Later on, I began to view it as a message from God. I had one more chance to make right the things I had done wrong; to make changes in the way I presented my lessons, and in my relationship with the students; one more chance to effect change.

As teachers, every fall we bravely venture back into our various classrooms, with a unique opportunity to make significant changes in the lives of our students, and to fulfill the commission given to us by God. We get one more chance to decorate our classrooms, to make new and hopefully exciting lesson plans, to greet our students differently, to be more open and have greater expectations of them. Most importantly, however, is that we get one more chance to reflect and model to our students the character of Jesus Christ. We get one more chance to focus on those powerful words of Jesus as He challenged his disciples to move mountains, walk on water, and organize a picnic for five thousand. He assured them that they would do no less than the impossible. As teachers, we should expect the same from our students.

I remembered one year as I was getting dressed for my first day back to school after a very hectic summer vacation. I was feeling a bit apprehensive about the many challenges that lay ahead, when suddenly I heard a faint sound of drums beating in the distance. I remembered thinking how strange to be having a parade on the morning when children were supposed to be going back to school. I was curious and I went out to my balcony to see what it was all about. That's when I saw it, the most spectacular sight I had ever seen, one that has left me with goose pimples, and a feeling that I could conquer the world. Children from all over the neighborhood with their teachers, parents and local police men and women were marching to school, to the sound of trumpets and drums. I could not believe what I was seeing! It was beautiful! The early morning traffic was diverted, police men and women served as escorts, and parents took the morning off to walk their children to their first day of school. What a great idea! I was awestruck by this amazing and encouraging way of starting off the new school year. I remembered thinking that

schools all over Canada should adopt the idea of doing something spectacular, to make the first day of school an exciting and memorable one. Every year this particular school seizes the chance to make the transition back to school a bit easier for their students.

What do we, at Greaves Adventist Academy, do to make a difference in the lives of our students? Some teachers give students their home phone numbers and email addresses, so that they can be reached when problems arise. We show them daily that we are accessible to them, as we strive to develop a relationship with them. We sincerely care about them. Today, you have one more chance to make a difference in the lives of your students; what will you do with it?

‘Let us not be weary in well doing for at the right time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.’ Galatians 6:9