

Spirituality for Children

Aisha Rafea, a WISE woman based in Egypt, educates groups of children on spirituality. She had a very rewarding time recently at the Ma'adi public library sharing diverse meditation exercises with children, contemplating and discussing spiritual stories, playing games and singing. This was part of a program she has designed for character building based on Islamic values and principles. The program is named: **The True "Me": Focused, Free and Fulfilled.**

The program methodology includes training children, in a world full of distractions, on how to be conscious of their inner beauty and make of every moment in life an expression of that beauty. According to Rafea, "It is by listening to the voice of our inner *fitra* that we learn how to build our own bridges between the divinity that resides deep within, and what comes to us from the Divine. The more the area within us is purified the more capable it becomes of telling us more and more of what the Divine says. And the more we receive from the Divine's teachings, the more capable we become of transforming our lives positively because we become living manifestations of love, peace and gratitude in all what we do."

Some of the values that Aisha presented to children through stories included:

- 1- God loves us in all cases even when we make mistakes;
- 2-Honesty means is making every action of ours genuine by using our minds and hearts, and not by imitating others; and
- 3- A focused life is one in which we fulfill our higher potentials without distractions.

The course has values that help children build a genuine and independent character while nurturing their spiritual roots. Those values were presented through stories and songs. An example of such a song is:

Allah Allah Allah Allah
All around and in the sky
Signs say you love us so High (twice)
You formed us with mind and heart
To be able to love aaand be smart
Allah Allah (twice)
When we do wrong You forgive
And tell us to learn as long as we live
Allah Allah (twice)

The program aims to fulfill these universal objectives:

- Nurturing in children the urge for moral growth and transformation through self observation;
- Developing analytical, critical and scientific thinking;
- Raising a sense of responsibility for their wellbeing and that of others;
- Experiencing the oneness of humanity by exposing them to wide range of cultural experiences, old and new;

- Encouraging their creativity, and promoting their artistic talents;
- Educating them to work in teams with the spirit of completion and integration, not competition; and
- Cultivating an awareness of being good to themselves, to others, to the animal world and to the universe. This awareness is the core of morality, and it brings to their consciousness the extension of life.

Rafea says that the children's enthusiasm for the program was beyond her expectations. The children said that they enjoyed the program including the breathing and stillness exercises that they had not practiced before, and that it would be useful for getting rid of worries and tensions. "We had fun and benefited a great deal," said 12 year old Nour. "We felt free to express ourselves without fear of being underestimated by adults," said the 10 years Muhammad.

If you want to know more about the program, the stories used, and the spiritual songs, please contact Aisha Rafea at aishar@infinity.com.eg.