

Most cold countries have a midwinter festival which existed before Christianity came, but the Christians said, "Don't stop! That is a nice tradition. We shall use it to celebrate hope in the middle of winter, green amidst white and brown and the light and joy of Christmas in the middle of darkness.

The tradition came to Britain because our great Queen Victoria married a German Prince called Albert. Prince Albert liked having a Christmas tree so the Royal Family always had one – and the British thought it was a lovely idea and copied them. When they and other European people went to other countries, they took the tradition with them and so it spread all over the world.

Here, it is a hot country and many trees have leaves all the year round. But please imagine how important evergreen trees are in winter in a really cold country. I hope that some of you will learn how to be like the evergreen tree – strong and useful in the difficult times. It is not difficult to be good and helpful when life is easy but what happens when the difficult times come? That is the test of true character. We hope that this school will help you to be strong people, for both easy and difficult times.

God bless you.



LEARNING TO SHARE YOUR WORLD

Assembly 2 January 6th 2003

How many of you have babies at home? Or maybe you can remember what it was like when your little brother or sister was a baby? Babies think only of themselves and their needs. When they are hungry, they cry for food. It is ME ME ME all day long – and that is how they are.

But, as you grow older, you learn that you have a mother and father and they cannot be with you ALL the time. You have

brothers and sisters that you have to share your life with. In fact, you learn that there are other people in the world – and not only ME ME ME. There is US – and so you learn to share with your family – although there are some small children whose parents allow them to be little kings and queens and get rather a lot of their own way...!

And then you come to school! Your world is getting bigger! You are a very precious person at home – maybe you are the center of attention and suddenly you are one of 20 in a class and 300 in a school. Of course you are still very precious but so are other children and you cannot get your own way all the time and have to learn to share the teacher's attention with them also! You cannot just behave as you do at home but think of others in a new and different way. (I saw one little Nursery Class new boy downstairs with his father yesterday who had obviously decided he did not like school and wanted to go home!)

Please remember that we are many people sharing an up-down building. When you are on the stairs, please do not push and race. Keep to the left and move at the same pace as others. If you do not behave properly on the stairs, you could have a nasty accident. Also, if you scream and shout at home, maybe no one minds but here, we cannot have 300 pupils screaming and shouting!

There are some very big pupils in the school now and you must remember that we have a lot of very small children here so please be careful. Remember to look down from your great height sometimes and check that you are not treading on one of the little ones!

Sharing is a very important part of being a human being. During your time at school, I hope you begin to learn that you are not only part of a family and a school but a country – Bangladesh – and a great world of other countries and people. We all must learn to live together, in respect and care. If we do not know how to share our world properly, then we end up fighting each other – and that is very bad.

So the big word today is – SHARING. Maybe some of your teachers will speak more to you about this word and its meaning.

God bless you.



I AM LEARNING! *Assembly 3 January 7th 2003*

Do you remember the theme of yesterday's assembly? SHARING. Today, I want to show you what, in England, we call an L-plate. (*Show it*) Do you know what L is for? Do you know where you see L-plates in England and other countries?

We see them on the front and back of cars? What does it mean? That the drivers are Learner-Drivers! ? The L-plate tells people I AM LEARNING. Learner-drivers are the drivers who are preparing for their driving test. They have to drive on the roads in order to practice but all the other drivers know they are learner-drivers and usually keep their distance and are especially tolerant.

The driving test in England is very difficult. Some people take it many times before they pass it. When you pass, you are very happy and sometimes you invite your friends and you burn your L-plates!

But when it comes to education, we can never burn our L-plates. We are always learning. In fact, in the business of being alive, of being human, there is always something new to learn. Especially now, the world is changing very fast. In education, every teacher is having to learn new methods, even ones who are good teachers – *especially* ones that are good teachers. But it is also true in every job. Everyone is having to re-train. None can say, "I have been doing my job now for so many years, that no one can teach me anything." None can say that.

In the more developed countries, there is a culture of re-training. Everyone is being re-trained! Directors of big companies – and hospital cleaners, doctors, teachers and musicians – everyone goes away for re-training. People are networking to share new ideas. Here in Dhaka, the English-medium schools are beginning to network with one another and we are beginning to organize united cultural events – we are having a dance exhibition in May and Miss Nehreen is already training a group for that. We are also expecting to have some teacher-training events. No one can say, "We do not need this. We have nothing to learn from each other!" We learn from each other when we listen and work with each other.

When you come to school, the most important thing you learn is HOW TO LEARN. You are learning how you are going to learn the skills you need to live. What is our school motto? 'Education for life'. We are all students, all our lives long. We have to wear our L-plates all our lives. I AM LEARNING is a verb in the continuous present tense.

God bless you.



LEARNING FROM OUR MISTAKES *Assembly 4 – January 8th 2003*

(*Show L-plates again*)

Do you remember what these were? Learning for a life-time - Education for a life-time.

Have any of you seen a baby learning to walk? What happens?It keeps falling down. When we see a baby falling down when it is learning to walk, what do we do? Are we angry?No, of course not!What would you think if someone said, "You naughty baby! How dare you fall down? How stupid you