

# The Circle Games

Good morning teachers and students,

Today is the last normal school day for this school year. However, today is not the end of this school year as we have to face the final examination and other activities after the examination. Furthermore, the end of this school year is not the end of our school lives as we have to face the beginning of another completely new school year. As a matter of fact, every school year goes from the beginning to the end and then another one comes immediately after the end of the preceding one. It means that the school years appear one after the other, without any gap in between two consecutive years. To me, they are like many mutually connecting small segments on the circumference of a circle. The word “circle” reminds me of a poem entitled “The Circle Game” that was written by Joni Mitchell. I notice that one of the paragraphs of the poem is repeated frequently. Now, I am going to read this paragraph for you.

“And the seasons they go round and round  
And the painted ponies go up and down;  
We’re captive on the carousel’ of time,  
We can’t return, we can only look behind  
From where we came  
And go round and round and round  
In the circle game.”

According to this paragraph, the author expressed 2 main points to us :

- (a) 4 seasons come in to our lives one after the other throughout the year. They will come again in the same sequence next year.
- (b) we, being attached to a circular conveyor belt of time, are going to be faced with different events that happen according to certain rules year after year. We can look back to our past but we are not able to return to the past and re-start again.  
I call this circle game a “nature circle game”.

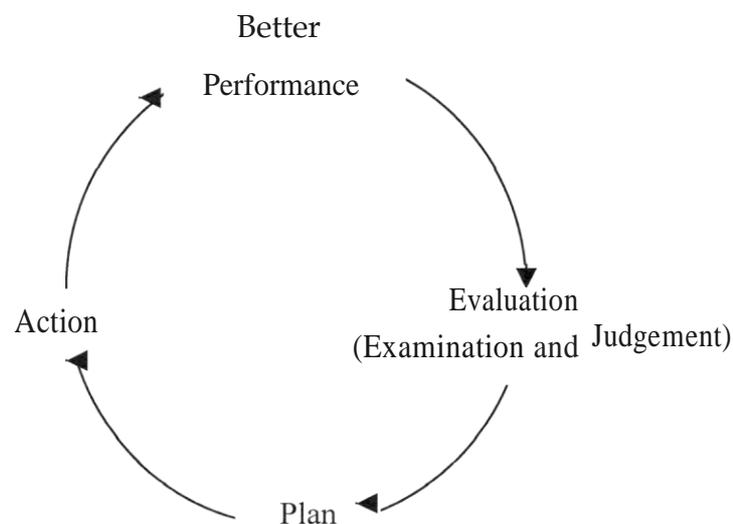
The final examination is ahead of us. It is time for us to evaluate<sup>2</sup> our performances throughout this school year. You might have gained good results, average results or poor results in the first examination and the two uniform tests. Now, you have another chance to improve your academic performances. So, identify your strengths and weaknesses and then do your final examination conscientiously in order to gain better results.

At this particular moment, let us look back at our academic and non-academic performances throughout this school year. For the purpose of evaluation, you may ask yourselves the following 5 questions :

- (a) Why did I fail in one or several subjects in previous examinations or tests ? What shall I do so that I will be able to pass it or them in the future ?
- (b) Have I done at least one good thing and hence got at least one merit during this school year ? What shall I do so that I will be awarded merits in the future?
- (c) Why was I given a demerit during this school year ? What shall I do so that I will not be given a demerit in the future ?
- (d) Have I been attending school punctually ? What shall I do so that I will be able to attend school punctually in the future ?
- (e) Why was I given a penalty for not handing in all assignments according to the teacher's instruction ? What shall I do so that I will be able to hand in all assignments according to the teachers' instructions ?

After finding answers to your questions, make a plan for your own Improvements and then act on the plan in the school year ahead. The new school year is probably more or less similar to the **current** one. It means that you will have another chance to improve yourselves, upgrade **yourselves** and excel yourselves.

Today, I have introduced to you another "circle game" which is called the "improvement circle game". It is illustrated by the following process :



In order to improve ourselves, we take the following steps:

- 1<sup>st</sup> We evaluate our performance during this school year,
- 2<sup>nd</sup> We make a plan that is based on our evaluation,
- 3<sup>rd</sup> We act on the plan,
- 4<sup>th</sup> We expect the better of performance,
- 5<sup>th</sup> Go back to the 1<sup>st</sup> step and then repeat the same sequence of steps.

I hope that you will make use of the “nature circle game” and “improvement circle game” to strive for excellence in your lives.

Thank you very much.

Let us pray.

Dear God, thank you for guiding us throughout this school year. As we come to the end of this school year, help us to evaluate our performances. Teach us to make a plan for our own improvements. Lead us to act on our plans. Give us the joy of success when we complete our tasks according to your will.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Carousel<sup>1</sup>: a circular conveyor belt, especially one at an airport displaying baggage for arriving passengers to pick up.

Evaluate<sup>2</sup>: to put a value on or to judge on