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Mum's the word for poignant CNY commercial

KUALA LUMPUR: The scene shows seven-year-old Tan Tiam Hock staring blankly at his classmates, unable to proceed when his art teacher asks the class to draw a reunion dinner scene.

Later, we see him waving goodbye to his friends and happily running off. But, when all alone, his cheery little face crumples.

An Indian woman later picks him up from the bus stop and they return "home" to an orphanage.

It becomes obvious to the viewer that Tiam Hock was not able to draw a reunion scene because he had never had one.

Titled "Nobody's Child", Petronas' Chinese New Year advertisement carries the tagline, "Please be home for the reunion dinner, if you can."

The three-minute commercial is the brainchild of Ken Wong Woon Kian, a 24-year-old visualiser with ad agency Leo Burnett.

He is the youngest person to have a script approved by the national petroleum company, and admits to being surprised when his script was short-listed and then chosen as this year's advertisement.

He said he was inspired to write the script after his mother died from a heart attack just two days before the Chinese New Year last year.



Wong: The visualiser scripted 'Nobody's Child' based on his own experience of losing his mother last year.

"My mother was the pillar of strength in our family. She bought clothes for the family, spring-cleaned the house and cooked for reunion dinner," he said.

Wong said the idea later evolved to that of orphans because he felt that his loss was not as big compared with that of those who had

lost both parents, or those who had never known their parents.

Shot over two days around Jalan Ampang, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) and SJK (C) Lai Meng, the advertisement was directed by Yasmin Ahmad, who has also helmed many other festive season advertisements for Petronas.