



Youth and Children's News Update

To: All Ministers, Children's and Youth Workers, Safeguarding Co-ordinators May 2011 Issue 15

WELCOME

We are at that time of year when we once again hear the Easter stories. Many churches will have held 'Walks of Witness' on Good Friday and / or 'Sunrise Services' on Easter Sunday morning. This year sunrise where I live was at 5.40 meaning a very early start for many but they were rewarded – by the amazing sunrise and a very hearty breakfast. On Portland the service was held on the cliffs where the three crosses had been placed on Good Friday and the sun rose over the sea and the crosses beckoning in the new life Easter brings to all who take Romans 10:13 to heart; "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved".

The passage continues: "How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?" This reminds each and every one of us of our responsibility to share the good news with everyone around us – and this includes children and young people. If we do not tell the good news to others how will they be able to respond to the God of hope who brings new life and new opportunities?

Within the life of the church it can be easy for the children's and youth work to take on a child care aspect where, as one person said to me in one of the churches in our District, "we are keeping the children quiet whilst the adults worship"! Ministry with children and young people is about far more than keeping them quiet, the key is encouraging them to find a relationship with Jesus that means they want to worship God.

They will only be able to do this if someone (maybe YOU) tells them the story of salvation, the story of a God who has given everything for them out of love.

At the end of the day the thing that should distinguish church children's or youth work from that done by the council or the scouts or the local football club is that we want the children and young people of our communities to spend eternity with God. If you don't do it, who will?

Jesus saw children and young people as crucial to the Kingdom of Heaven. Let us tell them that this Easter season.

Nicola Briggs

Youth & Children's Strategy

On 5th March the Southampton District held its first children's fun day. The aims of the day were to bring children together from across the district to have fun and hear about God, but also for the District to find out what they think about church.

The day was open to children between the ages of 5 and 11. 25 children attended with a mix of groups brought by their leaders and local children brought by their parents. The activities included a treasure hunt, "design an alien church", games, workshops on cooking; craft; puppets and drumming and a sharing and story time at the end.

Information gathered from the children throughout the day will be included in an overall report at the end of the connexional year, but some of the things that came out strongly were:

* The children overwhelmingly preferred to be with friends and family for worship and prayer as

opposed to on their own or in large groups.

* The children's least favourite way to interact with the Bible was to sit and listen to a story with watching or acting out the story being preferred.

*Only a small number regularly attended Church or after school clubs.

Take a look at the District website to see some pictures from the Gillingham fun day.

Sadly the day planned in Basingstoke on 30th April had to be cancelled due to a lack of bookings. It would be really helpful to know why your children did or didn't attend the fun days. Please use the feedback form on the District website to let us know your views so that they can be taken into account with future events.

Christy-Anna Errington

DISTRICT YOUTH WEEKEND "WANTED"

Friday 24th (18.30) – Sunday 26th (14.30) June based in Bournemouth. The cost for 11-18 year olds is £30 if booked before 1st June 2011 and £40 after this date. Leaders pay £20. For every 10 young people one leader can attend for free!

These costs include all food, accommodation and activities. Our special guests are Sounds of Salvation from Reading.

For more information or to book tickets please contact Christy-Anna on 01305 826012 or ErringtonC@methodistchurch.org.uk

Booking forms are downloadable from the District website: <http://www.southamptonmethodistdistrict.org.uk/youth/events73744/>

NEW website focuses on young people

A NEW website from the Methodist church is offering resources for children, young people, parents and youth workers.

The website (www.childrenandyouth.org.uk) has age-appropriate sections offering stories, ideas and advice for children and young people themselves as well as specialist sections for youth and children's workers.

Children and youth development officer for the Methodist Church Penny Fuller said: "This isn't just another website about working with young people. It's a hub of resources for the whole Church as we join children and young people on their journey of faith. It's a place where children and young people can find advice and support as they live out their discipleship in the classroom, on the playground, and in the high street."

The website also has a special section dedicated to parents with guidance and information for parenting children of all ages on topics ranging from bereavement to relationships.

The site's specialist section for children and youth workers, "The Well", is designed to help, resource and support workers or anyone involved in children's or youth ministry. They can access advice, training and information about what is happening in their region and wider and can also register to receive a quarterly newsletter and emails.

The Well Network will enable those who register to upload and share resources. The Network Section will also help to connect Methodist churches that are involved in uniformed groups, Pilots, Godly Play and Messy Church projects and Fresh Expressions.

PRAY FOR SCHOOLS

There are 28,000 schools in the UK and, this May, Christians are being encouraged to make every one of them a prayed-for school. During Pray for Schools fortnight, which runs from May 8-23, there will be a host of events happening in churches, schools and homes, with focused prayer on the needs of one or more local schools. Free resources for groups and churches are available. These include publicity to download and adapt, meeting outlines, PowerPoints and follow-up materials to encourage continuing prayer for local schools. In keeping with the BibleFresh focus on the Bible, the main theme uses Scripture as a starting point for praying about the needs of schools. Further information is obtainable on the Pray for Schools website (www.prayforschools.org) or by email (England@prayforschools.org).



10 July 2011 is Messy Sunday! It's a chance to thank God for all he's doing through Messy Church® all over the world and in particular for what he's doing through your own Messy Church. It's a chance to celebrate and also to inform your other church congregations about what is happening in their Messy Church, to help them to feel part of the adventure and to encourage them to support both local and national Messy Church through prayer, practical offers of help in the different gifts they could use at Messy Church, and financial giving.

Why 10 July? It's before the school holidays, so more people will be around. There is also the prospect that the weather may be fine, so events like picnics and fun days to tie in with the celebrations become more possible.

Resources are available for Messy Church Sunday from Anna Baker, a-baker@hotmail.co.uk our local Messy Church Regional Coordinator.

REINSPIRED

REINSPIRED is a Christian charity based in Reading where they work with 20 local churches, 11 primary schools and 2 secondary schools. Their vision is to see churches fully engaged in supporting their local schools in religious education and the spiritual development of pupils.

My experience of Christian Ministry in relation to Schools has left me convinced relationship between the Church and Schools is of vital importance. REinspired tells an exciting story of the way this relationship has been formed and nurtured in such a way that local schools in the Reading area enthusiastically support the initiatives taken by the Church. Be inspired by this book and then tell others.

Find out more by reading "The Story of REinspired" available from <http://www.brfonline.org.uk/>

Visit <http://www.southamptonmethodistdistrict.org.uk/youth/newsletter> to download this newsletter as a PDF document

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