

# Kids@church

supporting children's ministry  
in the Diocese of Birmingham

Dear Friends

We hope you've had chance to catch your breath during the summer and are re-energised ready for the Autumn term. I'm especially thinking of those of you who've been involved in holiday clubs! This is always a busy time for us with the children going back to school, plans for harvest services, alternative Halloween workshops and (dare I mention it) Christmas! There are some great ideas we think you'll find useful in this issue!


Don't miss the first ever **Birmingham Children's Ministry Conference on October 14<sup>th</sup>**. Claire and I are looking forward to meeting you and your teams at 'Growing with God' at what looks like being a wonderful event with international speakers and what's more it's right here in our Diocese. Take a look at the programme and we're sure you'll agree that there is something for everyone. But be quick - there are only 200 places and we're getting around 10 applications a day, so don't leave your booking till the last minute especially if you want to be sure to hear your favourite speaker. The Post-16 Centre is very convenient to the city centre if you come by public transport and there is loads of parking if you're coming by car. This is an amazing opportunity to hear some of the best speakers in the world of children's ministry.




It is a full day with both lunch and breakfast, with time to chat and share with others as well as visiting the many trade stalls attending. So come along and have a day out! Do encourage others in your Parish to come along too. Why not try and get to all 8 sessions between you, and then share what you discover with one another. If you want more information about any aspect of the conference please call us on 0121 426 0432/27 or Jenny Harris on 0121 426 0437.

See you on 14th October! Jo and Claire


PS Don't forget to pass this newsletter round to everyone in your team!



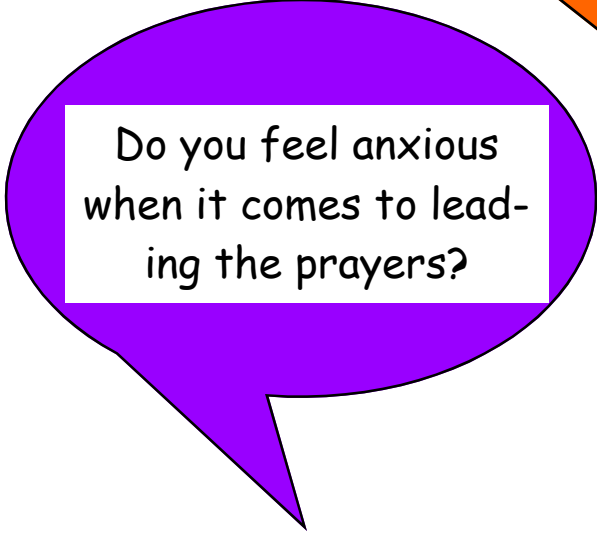
Are you involved  
with leading groups  
at church for  
children?




Do you sometimes  
feel stuck for  
ideas?



Do you feel at a loss  
when a child  
misbehaves?



Do you feel anxious  
when it comes to lead-  
ing the prayers?



Do you wish you could  
attract more  
children?

*Sign up for the*  
**Bishop's Certificate in Children's Ministry**

*Guaranteed to inspire, inform and refresh you!*

If you're working with children, it's worth doing well and if you've had little or no training in nurturing children's faith this is the course for you.

The next course starts in February 2007

Contact Jo Musson for more information 0121 426 0432 or  
email: [j.musson@birmingham.anglican.org](mailto:j.musson@birmingham.anglican.org)

*Some incredibly good ideas come out of the Bishop's Certificate in Children's Ministry. Thanks to Ruth Miller for sharing this initiative:*

**Y** OUNG

**P** EOPLE'S

**C** HURCH

**C** OUNCIL

(Why PCC?)

As part of the Bishop's Certificate in Children Ministry, we looked at how children are valued in the life of the church and how to build bridges between children and adults. The task I took out of that was to begin a forum for children to share their ideas. When I talked to our 7-11s, I found that they all have School Councils with class representatives, most have **been** class representatives and one is currently Chairman! They readily set about selecting their two representatives to join two from the 11-14s and two from the teenage group (under 16).

Our PCC meets on the second Wednesday of alternate months and the agenda is published on the Sunday 10 days before. The YPCC meets on the Sunday afternoon before PCC (one week later) to discuss matters on the agenda for the meeting and to send their suggestions and ideas through their representative. Parents have given their permission for these meetings to take place at my house with cake! It has the added benefit of helping those growing up in the church to understand how decision-making happens in the Church of England.

There has for many years been a teenager on PCC (co-opted if necessary) and this person also attends YPCC to be the channel for any suggestions. Their first meeting brought to PCC the idea of circulating the weekly notice sheet on e-mail as a way of improving communications.

It has been surprisingly easy to organise and met with much enthusiasm by children, parents and PCC members.

Ruth Miller St Germain's, Edgbaston

# New Publications

## **Mission-shaped Children**

This excellent book from Margaret Withers, who was the Archbishop's Officer for Evangelism among Children until May 2006, is featured on the leaflet 'Transform your children's ministry!' included with this newsletter. Take a look at Margaret's thoughts about children and Holy Communion on page of Kids@Church and come and meet her for yourself at the Conference on 14th October

## **Not Sunday, Not School!**

Author: *Eleanor Zuercher*

Price: £9.99

Published by: *Barnabas (www.brf.org.uk)*

ISBN: 1841014907

Through-the-year programmes for small churches. Many churches are realising that struggling with the traditional model of Sunday School is not the only, or even the best way, to engage with children effectively. This book provides the tools for looking beyond Sunday to after school, Saturday morning or holiday times. The material comprises a set of two-hour thematic programmes that go right through the Christian year, plus a five-day holiday club programme and stand alone workshops for the summer months.

Each session includes:

- Suggestions for Bible stories based on the theme
- Suggestions for prayers
- Creating displays for the church
- Craft activities
- Games

It also gives ideas for worship with parents and carers after the session. It has a full introduction of sensible information and advice on using basic skills. The programmes give background information and clear instructions on timing, equipment, and graphics to help with the craft activities. It starts with the assumption that the children know a little about the Christian faith, but the sessions give time for comments and reflection, so it would reach many children who rarely darken the doors of a church.

Any church, whatever its size, that wants to develop its children's work beyond Sunday would find this an invaluable and accessible handbook.

## **From the Ground Up**

Author: *Kathryn Copsey*

Price: £6.99

Published By: *Barnabas (www.brf.org.uk)*

ISBN: 1841013862

Understanding the spiritual world of the child. The insights in this book come out of the experience of working with children in the inner city. In other words, they have started in the world of the child and been developed 'from the ground up'. In a broader sense, however, it is about the spirituality of every child whatever the context.

# New Publications

## **Flexible Kid**

Author: *Kay Kinnear*  
Price: *£3.99*  
Published By: *Scripture Union Publishing (www.scriptureunion.org.uk)*  
ISBN: *184427165X*

Making friends never used to be difficult, but suddenly a new arrival turns Cassie's world upside-down. Difficult choices lie ahead! Aimed primarily at girls aged 9 to 10, the book explores friendships in a school context, and how wanting to live God's way can affect decisions and behaviour. Issues included are grief, multicultural friendships, bullying and truancy.

**Helping Christians be a good friend God's way.**

## **Say and Sing**

Compiled By: *Maggie Barfield*  
Price: *£9.99*  
Published By: *Scripture Union Publishing (www.scriptureunion.org.uk)*  
ISBN: *1844272451*

*Say and Sing* uses speaking, singing, chanting, dancing and shouting which encourages social development in children under 5. This is a flexible, fun and creative resource that will not only amuse children but also help them to remember verses of the Bible. It's ideal for playgroups, carer and toddler groups and church children's groups.

**Another exciting Tiddlywinks resource book!**

## **Bible Code Crackers**

Authors: *Gillian Ellis (Jesus, Peter & Paul)*  
*Valerie Hornsby (Moses)*  
Price: *£3.99 each*  
Published By: *Scripture Union Publishing (www.scriptureunion.org.uk)*  
ISBN: *1844272079 (Jesus), 1844272087 (Peter & Paul), 1844271811 (Moses)*

*Bible Code Crackers* retells the stories of Jesus, Moses, and Peter & Paul using Bible text along with challenging and fun puzzles ideal for 9 to 11s. These are a must have for children's workers and parents who want to expand children's knowledge of the Bible. The *Bible Code Crackers* books are a light and amusing read whilst on a family holiday and are also perfect for prize giving.

**Retelling biblical stories in a fun and challenging way.**

Copies of all these books are available in the Resources Library at Diocesan House, 175 Harborne Park Rd., Harborne, Birmingham, for you to borrow.

# Children and Holy Communion

*By Margaret Withers*

Margaret Withers was the Archbishop's Officer for Evangelism among Children until the end of May 2006 and has now joined BRF as an associate member of the *Barnabas* team. You can hear her speak about children and evangelism at the Birmingham Conference 'Growing with God' on 14th October.

## **Twenty-five years ago, a mother took her baby to church ...**

When my daughter was a few weeks old, I started to take her to church with me. The first Sunday was Harvest Thanksgiving. We sat through a lively family service. When the time came to present the gifts, I carried her up there and helped her to present a small orange. People were pleased to see us. They said, '*Wasn't she good?*' That meant that she had been quiet.

We went the next Sunday. I parked her pram beside me. This time it was a Holy Communion service. People welcomed us again but the comments were different. They said, '*Don't you have any one to leave her with?*' and '*Would you like me to take her out for a while?*' They were puzzled that I took her with me to the altar for a blessing. Someone even said that it was not suitable for children. The vicar was delighted!

I soon became friendly with a family who had a baby girl of the same age. The mother went to the early Communion service alone. The father brought the two other girls to the main service, but they parted at the gate. He went into church to sing in the choir while they went to the hall for Sunday School. That led me to question why this family was not worshipping together and why the service, which was called, 'Family Eucharist' was for adults only. The vicar said I was an answer to a prayer – and we all know what that means! I started by creating a crèche area and eventually, after a lot a persuading on my part, the children started to come into church at the Offertory and receive a blessing at Communion.

## **Children in church today**

That was in 1980. Since then, there has been an increasing awareness that children are part of the Church of today, not potential Christians to be kept entertained until they are old enough to worship and think as adults do. We have become aware of children's own spirituality and the importance of helping it to develop and blossom as they mature alongside their fellow Christians of all ages. At the same time, we are beginning to recognise the need to take children's faith seriously and see them as ministers of Christ with much to give as well as to receive.

It has become common practice for children to be present for part of the service of Holy Communion, the service the Lord gave us, whether they receive the sacrament or not. In some churches, where this service is the norm, the monthly 'Family Service' is a 'Family Communion' with children taking a major role, simple music, readings and prayers, and possibly a commentary and an interactive sermon.

Whatever the style, it is important that worship where children are present is accessible in every sense. This is an enormous subject, but can be summed up under three key words: 'Welcome', 'Quality' and 'Depth'.

How do we welcome children? This is more than smiling at them and using their names, though, with children who attend regularly, that is essential. It is about recognising children as fellow Christians and ministers of Christ with something to give to the Church as well as to receive. This has implications for everything that a church does.

Is your worship of high quality? If children find it dull and irrelevant, it could be that the adults also feel the same. This is not a recipe for being loud and brash, though lively worship has its place. It is about offering the best that we can to God in a way that every person can contribute. Children deserve the best and that is about helping them to explore the riches of the Gospel and the beauty of holiness as signs of the depths of God's love for each one of us.

## **Pressure, pilots and permission**

While I was busily making a crèche area and collecting the children from the hall, pressure was taking place all over the country to move forward, to have children present at Eucharistic worship, and for them to receive Holy Communion before confirmation. Reports were written, pilot schemes were set up, some children were confirmed aged nine or ten, and it is even rumoured that a few clergy turned a blind eye to parents sharing the bread with their youngsters! Eventually the ground swell was so persuasive that, in 1997 the General Synod agreed that children would be allowed to receive Holy Communion if the diocesan bishop gave permission.

In the diocese of Chelmsford, where I was children's officer, we set up open meetings. They were packed

out. Parents said how important Holy Communion was to them and they wanted their children to be included. People from parts of the Anglican Communion where they had been admitted to Holy Communion as children said they rejoiced that this was going to happen here. Others expressed reservations: Would the children understand what was happening? How would we know that they would stay faithful? It was good for children to wait – as they had to – until they were older.

My experiences of those meetings and visits to parishes led me to write, *Welcome to the Lord's Table*, which BRF published in 1999 and which has been revised in 2006. It was clear that people needed guidance, and that included having an attractive but comprehensive preparation course for the children, with activities, games, craft, music and worship that was suited to their age and not too like school. It is still being used widely, and by several denominations, but I am delighted that a revised edition with information about admitting children to Holy Communion in school and the new forms of worship will be published in May of this year.

### **What has happened since then?**

Eight years on, the bishop in thirty-nine dioceses has given permission for children to be admitted to Holy Communion before confirmation and it is under discussion in a further three dioceses. There has not been the explosion or the problems that people feared, but a steady trickle of parishes discussing the matter, and then moving forward when they felt that the time was right. According to the Church of England's review in 2005, about 11% of parishes now admit children to Holy Communion and, as with any collection of information, there will be parishes that did not reply or lost the form! The pattern of ongoing nurture leading up to confirmation at an older age of about sixteen is beginning to happen and the general feeling is that children who have been admitted to Holy Communion have stayed and feel that they are valued members of the Church.

### **Children change hearts and minds**

In July 2005, the General Synod held a debate on children receiving Holy Communion. It had first given permission for it to happen in 1997, after nearly thirty years of discussion. Now the practice had been reviewed and was to be discussed again. The atmosphere was warm and accepting as person after person spoke about how children receiving Holy Communion had transformed and enriched their churches, and how their faith and reverence had been an example to everyone. They came from rural, urban and suburban areas; they are large and small congregations; they were evangelical, catholic, traditional and modern. They all said the same thing; the children themselves had changed people's hearts and minds.

Maybe the children receive Holy Communion already at your church. If they do, rejoice, but always consider whether the worship is truly inclusive or can be improved. If they do not, perhaps this is something that you could think about or ask your church to discuss. We are a very mobile population, and a family with communicant children could move into your district or visit your church at any time. It is important that your congregation recognises the children's communicant status and is aware of the background.

If you start to explore this, you will find that it is not just about smaller people at the altar rail. It will affect every person and many of the things that are done, starting with a major change of thought about children as part of the worshipping community. Views will be expressed which range from proscriptive statements about 'suitability' to sentimental comments about 'little hands being stretched out', neither of which is helpful. There will be worry about the disappearance of familiar practices but excitement and a desire to learn more. Teaching through sermons, study groups and maybe an open meeting will be vital so that everyone can feel informed and be part of the process of discussion. Most Anglican dioceses have a dedicated children's adviser who will be glad to work alongside you and answer questions.

You may think that this is nothing to do with you, but it is! Every member of the Church is involved in every child's nurture at every occasion. The way that a child sees an adult's faith expressed in worship of God and behaviour towards other people will have far more lasting influence than all the teaching and preparation classes in the world.

Holy Communion is about grace. It is a sign of God's generosity being poured out to us, and our response to him. It is not something that we deserve or can receive in our own strength. Children who are perceived as 'difficult' may be those who are most in need of this expression of God's love, which can change their lives and in its turn the lives of those they meet. It cannot be earned and is not a prize for being good or for reaching a particular age.

*Welcome to the Lord's Table* by Margaret Withers provides more information. There is also an Activity book for the children to use as part of the course. Both books are available to borrow from the Children's Department at Diocesan House, 175 Harborne Park Rd., Harborne, Birmingham as part of the 'Children and Holy Communion' Resources Box. Contact Jo Musson (0121 426 0432) or Claire Wesley (0121 426 0427) to borrow.

A decorative border made of a repeating musical staff with notes, framing the entire page.

## ROMANY WOOD – SING FOR CHILDREN

If the children in your Church are musical and like singing, then this could be for you!

Romany Wood is a unique musical project which aims to involve 250,000 children in classical music performances and to raise £1m for children's charities. The project also presents an opportunity for schools, music services, churches, choral and orchestral societies to raise funds for their own organisations.

Romany Wood, is a 35-minute work for children's voices, narrator and orchestra and is aimed at ages 7—13. It was first performed in 2002 at Hagley Park, Worcestershire to 4,000 people. Further capacity performances in Birmingham Symphony Hall and Worcester Cathedral convinced composer David Gaukroger and librettist David Carr that Romany Wood had the potential to introduce children of all races and backgrounds to classical music.

The writers have given over the rights for Romany Wood to a charity that will encourage performances of Romany Wood. Money received from concerts will go to supporting the work of children's charities at home and abroad.

Quentin Letts, Daily Mail's Arts Correspondence, has called Romany Wood, "England's answer to Peter and the Wolf. Wonderful". The patron of the project is Sir Peter Maxwell Davies CBE, Master of the Queen's Music, and many messages of support have been received, including from the Archbishop of York, David Cameron, leader of HM Opposition, Hilary Benn, MP, Minister for Overseas Development and Sir Digby Jones, Director General of the CBI.

Participation in the project is free, as are all materials. Performances can be with live orchestra, with orchestral backing tracks, produced by the orchestra of Trinity College of Music, or by piano. Also available is a rehearsal CD. Participants agree to donate at least 50% of the profits from the concert(s) they stage to a new Romany Wood Charitable Trust. Only performances that form part of the Romany Wood – Sing for Children project are exempt from copyright.

The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and the New London Children's Choir will make a recording of Romany Wood and CDs at discounted prices will be available to participants.

It is intended to end the first phase of the project with a Royal Charity Gala concert in the spring of 2008. Organisations that raise the highest amount of money, either in real terms or in relation to their size, will be invited to join the choir for the Charity Gala concert.

Information on how to take part can be gained from [www.romanywood.co.uk](http://www.romanywood.co.uk) For further information, contact: David Gaukroger on: 01905 20121 07973 280150 or [ross.gaukroger@virgin.net](mailto:ross.gaukroger@virgin.net)

This Maasai Creed, composed in about 1960 by Western Christian missionaries for the Maasai, an indigenous African tribe of semi-nomadic people located primarily in Kenya and northern Tanzania, seems to express the essentials of the Christian Faith within the Maasai culture so eloquently that it got us thinking about how a creed might be composed that expresses the essentials of the Christian faith within a child's world.

*We believe in the one High God, who out of love created the beautiful world and everything good in it. He created man and wanted man to be happy in the world. God loves the world and every nation and tribe on the earth. We have known this High God in the darkness, and now we know him in the light. God promised in the book of his word, the Bible, that he would save the world and all nations and tribes.*

*We believe that God made good his promise by sending his son, Jesus Christ, a man in the flesh, a Jew by tribe, born poor in a little village, who left his home and was always on safari doing good, curing people by the power of God, teaching about God and man, showing that the meaning of religion is love. He was rejected by his people, tortured and nailed hands and feet to a cross, and died. He was buried in the grave, but the hyenas did not touch him, and on the third day, he rose from that grave. He ascended to the skies. He is the Lord.*

*We believe that all our sins are forgiven through him. All who have faith in him must be sorry for their sins, be baptized in the Holy Spirit of God, live the rules of love, and share the bread together in love, to announce the good news to others until Jesus comes again. We are waiting for him. He is alive. He lives. This we believe. Amen.*

If anyone would like to have a go at writing a Children's Creed and send it to us, we'll print all those we receive in the next issue of 'Kids@Church'.

### **FROM THE MOTHERS' UNION...! PARENTING BOOKMARKS**

These provide 'top tips' for parents - things to encourage and affirm them in their parental role. Such as:

- A Sense of Security - try and make their home a safe and loving place
- Unconditional love - love them always no matter what they do

Good for information, discussion starters, etc- as well as keeping the page in your book!

The first 20 are free, but donations are always welcome. Subsequent copies are £1 for 20.

Mailto:centralservices@themothersunion.org and for more general information visit <http://www.themothersunion.org>

### **AN EXCITING NEW RESOURCE!**

The Diocesan Children's Work Advisers' network generates a HUGE amount of educational, spiritual, liturgical and theological material in the course of their work - mostly original - from themselves, or folks in their dioceses. Some is from other sources, which they have found to be particularly helpful in their work. They have always shared generously with each other throughout the network. Now, due to the magic of the technology currently available and enabled by the skill and enthusiasm of Paul Godfrey, Children's Adviser in Chelmsford, they are developing a web site for themselves, for all this material, but which has a public access area, so you can share it too!

It offers ideas for many aspects of children's work - including worship resources, seasonal ideas - not only for children's work leaders, but clergy as well. There are also items to make you think, sermon/session-starters, ideas for sermons/talks and assemblies, plus 'clever' reflective stuff. You will also find material here, which may not be easily available to you, elsewhere. If you'd like to have a look, go to:

<http://www.cwanetwork.org.uk/home.html>

# Ideas for the Autumn Term

## All Saints Day- 1st November

One take on All Saints' Day is that it is less about individual saints than about the Christian hope: *the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.* So you could emphasize baptism (with the renunciation of Satan); the Body of Christ into which we are baptized; and the fact that nothing, not even death, can separate us from God's love. All Saints' Day can be presented as the flip side of Halloween: on Halloween we pretend to be scared of the Devil -- and the Devil IS scary -- and/or we pretend to be evil like the Devil -- and evil IS attractive -- but on All Saints' Day we rejoice that Christ has made us able to renounce evil and not to be scared of the Evil One. On Halloween we pretend that the dead are skeletons or ghosts or spooks, and we fool around with all kinds of ideas about death and dead bodies and spirits, without admitting to really believing in any of these ideas, all of which are actually sad and scary. On All Saints' Day, we rejoice in our actual, serious faith: that death is not the end, and that though the body decays and the spirit departs, Christ will raise us to new life that includes a risen body as well as a redeemed soul; and that we are saved not just as individuals but also as a community.

Try decorating candles as an activity for All Saints'. This is especially cool if you have a baptism on All Saints' Sunday: the kids can decorate a candle for the candidate. Or (especially if baptismal candles are NOT part of your baptismal tradition) you can have each child make him/herself a baptismal candle, expressing the light of Christ received at baptism and growing towards increased maturity in Christ ... OR they can make candles in memory of a "saint" of their choosing, whether a canonized saint or someone they have known and loved who has now entered new life in the presence of God.

It's least expensive to recycle used altar candles for this project, which is good when you have a large number of kids all doing it at once. Obviously, it's nicer to use new candles. You can check out the decorating materials at [Hearthsong.com](http://www.hearthsong.com) (<http://www.hearthsong.com> Type in 'candle decorating waxes' in the 'product finder') or for a UK site try [Fullmoons-Cauldron](http://www.fullmoons-cauldron.co.uk) (<http://www.fullmoons-cauldron.co.uk>) Another possibility is to make a collage or bulletin board or mural of the communion of saints, with a Halloween-type graveyard at the bottom, with crosses; a church in the middle with the living in it, and at the top, a rainbow-coloured array of the blessed from all times and places. Let the kids put themselves inside the church and their chosen "saints" in the rainbow array.

By Gretchen Wolff Pritchard

Gretchen is Children's Mission at Children's Mission of St Paul's & St James, New Haven and author of 'Offering the Gospel to Children'.

# Ideas for the Autumn Term

## Harvest Festival

Looking for something different this Harvest festival? Methodist Relief and Development Fund's free Harvest Pack includes a school assembly outline, creative activities for children's and youth groups, colour posters and a delicious Fairtrade cake recipe. The materials focus on 'small miracles' - the power of small actions to have a life-changing impact - and on Harvest in Cameroon, Nepal and Ethiopia. Order your free pack from [mrdf@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:mrdf@methodistchurch.org.uk) or download the material from [www.mrdf.org.uk](http://www.mrdf.org.uk)

Why not also check out the following sites -

<http://www.christianaid.org.uk/worship/resources/index.htm>

Christian Aid's Harvest Resources this year have the theme 'Change a broken world'.

<http://www.tearfund.org/Extra/Glorious+food/>

Learn about Bolivia with Tear Fund's Harvest resources.

[http://www.wateraid.org.uk/uk/learn\\_zone/](http://www.wateraid.org.uk/uk/learn_zone/)

Although not specifically Harvest focused, Water Aid's materials will help your group appreciate the importance of clean water which is so often not available in poorer countries.

<http://www.branabasinchurches.org.uk>

On the 'Ideas' page of this website there are lots of ideas for a Harvest theme, including lots of tips for doing art and crafts with the under 5's

Or check out this publication from Tearfund:

**The Whole Wide World**

This is a great resource containing 42 interactive devotions on issues that impact the world and its people, suitable for use with families and 4 - 11 year olds Each imaginative session describes simple and effective ways in which children and families can make a real difference. Suitable for use at home or at church, themes covered include water, weather, food, clothes and school. The book comes with a CD-Rom with videos, photos and worksheets

Available from: <http://www.tearfund.org.uk>. Cost £6.99

There is a copy available to borrow in the Resource Library at Diocesan Office, 175 Harborne Park Road, Harborne, Birmingham B17 0BH

## Alternative Halloween 31st October

For a different approach to Halloween, try 'Better than Halloween' which suggests 'Bright/Light' parties instead. The book, from Church House Publishing is written by Nick Harding, Diocesan Children's Adviser for Southwell, and is featured in the enclosed leaflet 'Transform your children's ministry!'

## 'Perfect' Christian Toys for Pre-School Children?

An email request for some ideas for 'Christian' toys for a Church toddler group provoked some interesting responses, here are just a few of the replies:

- ◆ ELC sells a very 'colourful' Noah's Ark and a shape sorter whale - perhaps Jonah could be painted onto one of the shapes! ([www.elc.co.uk/](http://www.elc.co.uk/))
- ◆ Articles of Faith is a supplier of schools RE resources and they have quite a few toys. ([www.articlesoffaith.co.uk](http://www.articlesoffaith.co.uk))
- ◆ Beulah Enterprises [www.beulahenterprises.org/](http://www.beulahenterprises.org/) has loads of stuff. You have to import it from the US but much of it is quite light so it's not a major problem.
- ◆ The Festival Shop, another RE/PSHE supplier has a few suitable things. ([www.festivalshop.co.uk](http://www.festivalshop.co.uk))
- ◆ Nativity sets or dressing up clothes are widely available on the High Street, especially near to Christmas.
- ◆ A knitted Nativity or Last Supper (the Mother's Union sometimes have patterns)
- ◆ Puppets are available from [www.puppetsforjesus.org](http://www.puppetsforjesus.org); [www.puppetsbypost.com](http://www.puppetsbypost.com)
- ◆ If you're working on a tight budget have a go at making your own 'toys'. Try "Sunday School on a Shoestring" by Beth Parr and Sandy Svercek (Abingdon Press - ISBN 0-687-03073-0) for ideas. Or try turning Bible story pictures into jigsaw puzzles.
- ◆ County Educational Supplies sell small magnetic boards - magnetic patches could be securely fixed into laminated story pieces.
- ◆ ELC does a happy family church - great for playing weddings!
- ◆ You could have fun making your own toys. We have a great 'Father Ken', some others have Rev Barbie. This is just regular Ken/Barbie who has been kitted out in liturgical garb for us. I had trouble with his shoes. When I went to buy a Ken it was summer, and the only Ken's on sale were 'Hawaiian Ken' - with plastic flip flops. I had to ask the toy shop to search there accessories to see if they could sell me some alternative shoes for him - 'What kind?'. they asked, to which I rashly replied - 'Well, more like a priest might wear'. They nearly called security! I rather like it that Father Ken changes outfit depending on the liturgical season, but NEVER changes his underpants - his only ones are Hawaiian style boxer shorts!
- ◆ Why not Godly play toys? They are made to last, made to be played with, and made of environmentally responsible materials. And as the whole idea of Godly Play materials is that there is not 'one correct way' to play with them - there is no need to buy into Godly Play in order to offer them to the children. A few of their things are perhaps a bit small (swallowable) for 2 year olds.

# **GOD'S CHILDREN: OUR DIOCESE**

## **Child Protection Awareness Raising Training**

Places are still available at the following training sessions. Please remember that it is a recommendation in 'Safe From Harm', the Code of Practice for voluntary organisations, that all those involved in children's work are trained in the prevention of the abuse of children.

**Sat 30 Sept** - Church Centre Balsall Heath (10 a.m. - 12.30 p.m.)

**Tues 10 Oct** - St Michael, Gospel Lane, (7 - 9.30 p.m.)

**Fri 3 Nov** - Diocesan Office (10 a.m. - 12.30 p.m.)

**Sat 11 Nov** - St James Hill, Sutton Coldfield (10 a.m. - 12.30 p.m.)

**Thur 16 Nov** - St Paul, Blackheath, Halesowen (7 - 9.30 p.m.)

**Tues 21 Nov** - St Bede's Brandwood, Kings Heath (7 - 9.30 p.m.)

Cost is £10 per person. This includes all resources and refreshments. Contact Jenny Harris on 0121-246-0437 to check availability and to book places; or if you are interested in hosting a session in your parish.

## **Training for Parish Child Protection Co-ordinators**

Places are available on **Tuesday 3rd October, 19.30—21.30** at St Matthew's Nechells for those responsible for co-ordinating Child Protection in Parishes. This two hour training course has been specially designed to provide:

- Information about the role of the co-ordinator
- Discussion about real issues illustrated through case studies
- Resource materials (including a copy of the Diocesan child protection policy 'God's Children: Our Diocese')
- Opportunity to meet other Parish Child Protection Co-ordinators

To book a place please contact Jenny Harris at the Diocesan Office, 0121 426 0437

# CURBS

CURBS is about a different way of working with children, one which starts in the child's world, is about earning the right to be heard, and is about building relationships.

CURBS Resources have also been successfully applied and used in rural settings.

## **CURBS has two main aims:**

- ⇒ To provide Christian resources specifically geared to the needs of inner city children and those on outer urban estates.
- ⇒ To provide support, training and encouragement for children's workers in such areas by means of networking, training and resource days and partnerships.

Underlying CURBS is a philosophy which challenges traditional approaches to working with children. We do not see children as 'jugs to be filled' but as 'flames to be fanned'. The Project is about building bridges into the children's world. To this end, the philosophy underlying CURBS marries up three important strands of thought and practice:

- ⇒ **Children's spirituality:** CURBS takes seriously and works with the belief that children are made in the image of God and therefore have an innate spirituality.
- ⇒ **Understanding children:** CURBS values the insights to be gained from the processes involved in child development, and believes that we need to integrate these insights into the way we work with children.
- ⇒ **Urban context:** CURBS seeks to understand and work with the pressures faced by children living in inner cities and on outer urban estates. The building of quality relationships and the discovery of creative approaches which value the non-book world of the children are at the heart of what CURBS is about.

## **Resources**

The CURBS resource material is made up of a number of packs called CURB-Stone Kits. These are primarily issues-based, starting in the child's own world using themes such as unfairness, self-esteem, friendship and so on, to enable the children to make links between their world and God's story. Each Kit contains biblical material related to the theme.

The material explores different approaches to learning such as discovering ways of touching the child's spirituality through the use of games, imagination and creativity.

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For further information go to [www.curbsproject.org.uk](http://www.curbsproject.org.uk)

## **Beyond the Horizon**

### **a request for help from Jo Musson, Bishop's Advisor for Children's Ministry**

As part of my role as Children's Adviser I have had the privilege of being part of the management committee for an important and extremely worthwhile project. Beyond the Horizon is a charitable organisation that provides counselling and support for children and families who are bereaved or experiencing loss following divorce or separation. The initiative is supported by the Diocese of Birmingham and its operation is underpinned by Christian values. The service exists to demonstrate Christian love in action by providing an open and accessible service to all, of any faith or none.

In the last 12 months the Beyond the Horizon team have provided one to one counselling for 69 children in almost 500 individual sessions. They also support children and adults through group sessions, and provide training in children's bereavement for professionals, a resource centre and a telephone support line for parents and children.

Some of these children have needed support 2-3 yrs after their bereavement. Many of them experience additional problems if the parent who has died was the sole carer, or if their brothers and sisters have had to be placed in different families. Some of them may have been experiencing problems for many years through a parent's depression, violence or addiction. Many of the children live in happy, secure families, but the loss of a parent/carer or sibling can cause long-term problems. There is evidence that provision of appropriate support for bereaved children in the early stages following the death of a significant adult, can prevent serious emotional/behavioural problems later on.

There is very little free support for children in the Birmingham Area and Beyond the Horizon is unique in providing support to children in their own community location. The team includes 2 full time paid staff, 2 part time administrators and a number of sessional counsellors and volunteers. The project depends totally on funding and donations. As the reputation of their work grows, the number of referrals has increased dramatically, and the team now cannot meet the demands. A number of children are now having to wait several months to be allocated a counsellor.

Could you help?

Beyond the Horizon are looking for volunteers who have the following skills:

Child Counsellors

Adult Support Workers

Administration

Word Processing

Database administration

Fundraising

Advocacy – could you be an ambassador for the project, speaking at churches and other sympathetic organisations and encouraging people to sponsor or support the project financially

If you would like to be part of this invaluable work, please contact Jeanette Rawlinson for more information. Tel: 0121 430 7529 or mobile 07906 621345

## Planning an Event?

If you're planning a special event or service for children the following offer workshops or praise parties:

**Jo Squires  
BIG Ministries**

**Tel: 0121 453 8301  
Email: [info@bigministries.co.uk](mailto:info@bigministries.co.uk)  
Web: [www.bigministries.co.uk](http://www.bigministries.co.uk)**

**A specialist in  
praise parties**



**Jon Webster**

**Tel: 0115 9398231  
Email: [puppets@education8.  
freeseve.co.uk](mailto:puppets@education8.freeseve.co.uk)**

**A specialist in  
Educational Puppetry**

**Kids UK Office (Andi Markham)  
25 Cherry Lane  
Sutton Coldfield  
West Midlands  
B73 5TW**

**Land: 01212 44 55 79  
Mob: 7932 96 50 34  
Web: [www.kidsuk.org](http://www.kidsuk.org)**

# PROMOTE

In June of this year the Youth and Children's Work Departments of the Diocese began a review of Youth Work and Children's Work called **PROMOTE**. Having completed our pilot in Coleshill, **PROMOTE** will take in all the parishes in the Diocese over the next 18 months, starting with Parishes in Bordesley and Yardley Deanery, and then Edgbaston Deanery. **PROMOTE** is an amazing and exciting opportunity for us to learn more about some of the great work going on in our churches.

**PROMOTE** gives Youth and Children's workers, PCC's and congregations a chance to take a step back from the daily routine for a moment and reflect upon their ministry, its effectiveness and to discern where God might be leading them.

**PROMOTE** is a fantastic opportunity for the whole parish to work collaboratively in assessing and reflecting on their ministry to Children and Young People, so look out for the PROMOTE pack in your church in the coming months.

Once we've received all the information from the packs, we'll be hosting a local event in each Deanery to celebrate all the wonderful work being done. This is definitely an event not to be missed! - a real chance to meet other children's and youth workers in your area, for PCC's and congregations to find out what's going on and for all of us to be inspired and re-energised in our own ministry. Individual Parishes will be advised of their Deanery's events as they go through the **PROMOTE** process.

A major part of **PROMOTE** is finding out what children and young people really think about God. Get all the children / young people in your church to visit [www.b-cent.com/promote](http://www.b-cent.com/promote) and play the GODgame!



Play the 'GODgame' @  
[www.b-cent.com/  
promote](http://www.b-cent.com/promote)

# X:site

## Get X:sited in Birmingham!!

1000 under 15s are leaving the church each week. The Reaching & Keeping Tweenagers Report concludes that tweenagers (ages 9-12) decide for the church while they are still children, mostly between the ages of 7-10. It concludes that their experience of church at Sunday school or equivalent often 'makes or breaks' their later participation of church. As many as  $\frac{3}{4}$  of 12 year olds in church will leave in the next 2 years.

X:site Birmingham intends to change this! X:site is a bimonthly, city wide, high energy event which aims to reach children aged 7-11 (school years 3-6) to provide opportunities for:

- **Developing** a real and lasting relationship with Jesus
- **Teaching** the Bible faithfully in a way that is relevant and exciting
- **Challenging** children to live out their faith
- **Enabling** children to see themselves as member of the Christian community in Birmingham
- **Envisioning**, equipping and encouraging children's ministry leaders throughout Birmingham

X:site Birmingham is co-ordinated by a group of experienced children's workers and volunteers from churches across the city working in partnership with Scripture Union. We aim to support and enhance the vital work taking place in Sunday schools and midweek groups, by providing opportunities for church children to worship and learn with others, and have an exciting place to bring their non-church friends to hear about God for themselves.

The first X:site will be on January 13<sup>th</sup> 2007, 6 - 8 pm at the Salvation Army Citadel in the city centre.

*For more information please contact Karen on 07891 540382 or email Birmingham@xsite.uk.net*

# FORTHCOMING DATES AND NEWS

## **SOLIHULL DEANERY**

Tuesday 26th September  
Knowle Parish Church  
7.30—9.30  
Contact: Jan Wilson 01564 779123  
Topic: Flags, Music, Dance led by Susan Larkin

## **MOSELEY DEANERY**

Thursday 21st September  
St Bede's, Bryndale Avenue, Kings Heath  
7.30—9.30  
Contact: Vicky Preece, 0121 458 4719  
Topic: Godly Play, led by Jo Musson

## **YARDLEY & BORDESLEY DEANERY**

Wednesday 29th November  
All Saints, Herbert Road, Small Heath  
7.30—9.30  
Contact: Eileen Thomas, 0121 779 7034  
Topic: Godly Play, led by Jo Musson

These 'get-togethers' are a wonderful way to share ideas, resources, and encouragement. Come along with your team and enjoy an evening with people from other local churches.

**Everyone involved in children's work (paid workers, volunteer leaders, helpers, Clergy, Readers) is welcome to come along.**

# 'GODLY PLAY' 2006

## **Getting Started Day**

Are you planning to do an Advent Godly Play story this year? Then why not come along to our 'Getting Started Day' on

**Thursday 16th November  
9.30am—3.00pm**

at Diocesan Office,  
175 Harborne Park Road,  
Harborne,  
Birmingham B17 0BH

You'll hear the story, make it, and then practice it in a nurturing environment. This event is open to anyone, not only accredited teachers.

*Contact Claire Wesley on 0121 426 0427 for more details*



This newsletter was produced by Claire Wesley and edited by Jo Musson. If you want advice on any aspect of your church's work with children please contact us:

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Email: [j.musson@birmingham.anglican.org](mailto:j.musson@birmingham.anglican.org)

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