

hands on

Stories, ideas, & news
You can use
from Kids Friendly



Dreaming new dreams

ISSUE 8: May '07

As I travel around New Zealand I experience lots of hope and sometimes despair. Sharing the Kids Friendly vision one Sunday with a church of one child and adult worshippers averaging 70 years, I wondered what hope there could possibly be here. A hopeful parishioner asked me over morning tea "Could we be a Kids Friendly church?" My gut instinct was to say "never" but my role as inspirer prompted me to say: "you will need to find a dream team who has the energy and drive to take you on the Kids Friendly journey". Well you can imagine my surprise when the minister phoned a couple of months later to say "we have our dream team can you come back?" We worked together to employ a Kids Friendly coordinator and within weeks children and youth were returning and bringing new life to this community of faith. Churches often ask: "How

long will it take to see change?' It's not a question I can answer definitively, but I can guarantee that when the church leadership commits to become Kids Friendly and develops a dream team to lead them on the Kids Friendly journey, there will be change. It's as infallible as planting a seed. You water it, nurture it, feed it and soon you will have a healthy plant. For some it's a decline that urges them to dream again, while for others dreaming is an integral part of being Christ's church. Healthy Kids Friendly churches dream of being a certain way, build on this dream, are renewed by this dream and inspired by the dream to minister to children and families in their churches and communities. Keep on dreaming because your dreams are reviving our church.

Blessings. Jill

PSDS invests in children

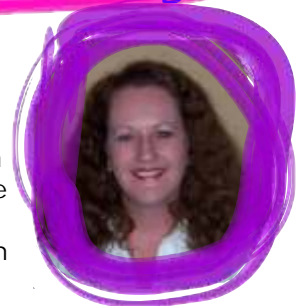


George Wadsworth, Chairman of Presbyterian Savings & Development Society presents Jill Kayser with a big cheque for \$100,000. Kids Friendly is made possible by the generous funding of PSDS and Presbyterian Foundation and donations from Auckland, Dunedin and Wellington Presbyteries.

Welcome to the Kids Friendly family

Letitia Keyte is the new children's, youth and families coordinator for Epsom Community Church in Auckland. Says Letitia: "I grew up attending Epsom Community Church so when the minister approached me to join the Kids Friendly "dream team" I felt compelled to help Epsom become a Kids Friendly church.

Letitia's first idea was to organise a "Light party" for the Epsom community kids in October 2006. She involved local businesses, schools and service clubs and 1000 people attended. "That confirmed that there is no shortage of children in our community" says Letitia and inspired me to accept Epsom's offer to head up children and youth ministry this year. Within months Letitia has established two successful community youth groups, a mums' walking group and a fun Sunday School. She is also working with the minister to explore ways to engage and involve children and youth in Sunday worship services. Letitia's background is in events management and organising schools' overseas sporting trips. "I love children" says Letitia, "and I look forward to applying this passion to my position and learning more about ministry." Letitia is married to Martin and has two children.



Presbyterian Church
of Aotearoa New Zealand

Connecting with Communities

Community outreach is essential if you are to grow your church in post-modern New Zealand today. Research shows that secular Kiwis are open to churches running programmes for children and families and in the event of the un-churched deciding to "try" church, they would choose one that serves its community. (AC Neilsen, "Attracting New Zealanders to Spiritual Life", 2002).

Community outreach responds directly to Jesus' command to us to: "Let your light shine before everyone that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven." (Matt 5:16).

Too many churches launch a community outreach initiative and then sit back and wait for the community to come to church on Sunday. I've heard ministers say: "Oh we tried that, but it was a waste of time because they didn't come to church." Jesus had a "go-to-them" mentality and so too should we explore how we can bring the love of Christ to our communities.

Renowned evangelist Bill Hybel's suggests: "The single remaining common interest or entrance point for non-churched people in the life of the church is children...we have a wide-open door to almost every family in every community worldwide when we love and serve their kids."

The majority of our community have never been or intend to go to church, and yet church-run play-groups, music and movement groups, holiday programmes and kids clubs are full to capacity. We have captured audiences in churches every day waiting to experience the love of Christ through US, his agents of love. Too many churches measure success by the number of seats on pews on a Sunday. Margaret Withers in her book "Mission-Shaped Children" suggests there are a many ways to do and be "church" in the 21st century and if we

counted attendance at church-run outreach initiatives in our growth statistics, we would find that many churches are growing attendance.

But we must be intentional about how we bring Christ to our community. Every community outreach initiative planning team needs to explore how WE are going to use this event to bring Christ to our community. The event should not be left to one or two tired church members or to the paid children's minister to run, but should seek to involve as many "missionaries" from our church as possible. A whole church approach to community outreach would consider "who from our congregation will?"

☺pray for this event?

☺provide and serve morning tea?

☺greet people as they arrive?

☺befriend participants?

☺pastorally care for this group?

"How will we?"

☺ incorporate elements of prayer and worship at this event?

☺invite these people to attend other programmes and worship events we offer?

And very importantly, if these people decide to come along on Sunday:

How will it be for them? Will it be inclusive, welcoming and engaging for them and their children?

Kids Friendly churches strive to provide a positive experience of "church" on Sundays and during the week.

For assistance in developing community outreach initiatives contact the Kids Friendly Coach. And for inspiration check out www.loveyourneighbour.co.nz. Read on for success stories of our own Kids Friendly churches reaching out to their communities.

Celebrating children

St Ninian's Hawea held a "Celebration of Children" service for all their Mainly Music (MM) families on the first Sunday of November. Parents and children are used to being in the church sanctuary because that's where they meet each week (a key to breaking down church fears), but to ensure they felt completely at home the layout of the church was as it is for MM, in the round. The service began with muffins and real coffee and Mainly Music worship songs led by the church's children's choir helped along by Bella Ballerina and Cowgirl Lil MM leaders. The message for the day was delivered by Cowgirl Lil based on the story of the little lion who just wanted to help not to hunt. A sacred time of parents praying quietly for their children ended the service.

Says Liz Maluschnig, ministry assistant: "The whole service was very moving and was a great way to bridge the gap between community and church."



St Ninian's Hawea share Christmas with Mainly Music children and families

Connecting with communities

St Heliers Church & Community Centre is very intentional about connecting its community preschool children and families to the church. While the preschool welcomes and celebrates all cultures and faiths, it promotes Christian festivals and includes prayer and God songs and stories in its programme. Children visit the church sanctuary regularly where they meet minister Pauline, admire the stained glass windows, get to touch the "big book" and share a story and songs. Children participate in local mission by singing at community events such as a Christmas lunch for the elderly and a service at the local old age home. Children also contribute to key Sunday services such as Harvest, Easter, Christmas and a special Small Miracles preschool birthday service.

The results are positive. Last year the attendance at our church's Christmas pageant service was so overwhelming that we have decided to introduce an additional Christmas service just for preschoolers and their families in 2007." This will be promoted to all the church's community groups for preschoolers and families.



Says Susan Piaggi, preschool supervisor: "Our annual strategic plan details ways we intend to connect the children and families of our preschool to the church and invite families to participate in worship services and contribute to our community.

St Andrew's Howick has a prominent presence in their local community's Santa Parade. A float promotes their church as Kids Friendly and reminds the community that Jesus is the reason for the season. "Miss Sassy" the church's puppet enthralled children along the way. Says Carol: "A prayer of thanks to God for Christmas was towed behind the float and shared with all by the MC. We were so pleased to be able to add some spirituality to what has become a commercial season."

Festive connections with local schools

St Mark's Pinehill involves all children from its local schools in two special services each year. Pentecost and Christmas is shared with children through drama, music, responsive prayers and candle lighting. Children are involved in leading the service and playing instruments. Each child receives a "take home" bag prepared by the people of St Mark's including activity sheets, a craft, puzzle, bookmark stickers and something yummy to eat. Says Benita Barton: "The children love coming to these special services during the week and we have such a good time working out new ways to have fun while learning about Jesus."



Pentecost service with local school children



A picture tells a thousand words

Kids Friendly churches are encouraged to share the scripture with children in creative ways. This can be done in church with the whole all-age community of faith or in Sunday School. If you're sharing scripture in church make sure it is the scripture the children will be studying that day. It's a great opportunity for adults to have a preview of what their kids will be learning and opens up family faith conversations. If the scripture is short and easy to read, invite a child to read it. The children's talk could reiterate it through a story, puppet show, drama or quiz. For the longer loved bible stories why not consider illustrating the story on PowerPoint or overhead slides. And no you don't have to be the next Picasso because there are plenty of enthusiastic Christian artists willing to share their gifts. Henry Martin, an English Anglican Vicar and artist has illustrated all the favourite bible stories and put them on PowerPoint ready for you to use. His work can be accessed from www.sermons4kids.com/hmartin. Scroll down the page until you see the heading "PowerPoint Slides". The art of Graham Kennedy can also be accessed through this site. And for wonderful vibrant modern art on a range of Christian themes check out Dr He Qi, a Chinese Christian artist, on www.heqigallery.com.



Henry Martin's boy
with loaves and fishes

Wonderful websites



A Kids Friendly Sunday

To order this new resource of ideas to help you plan a Kids Friendly worship service and Sunday School, email Jill.



Max7 is a new free curriculum available in 30, 60 and 120 minute lessons. Check out the website

www.max7.org for curricula, resources and media files. Shelley, children's minister at Kaikorai Presbyterian Church, is trialing it and reports that it has lots of good features but like any curriculum needs a bit of tweaking. Consider the words of famous Swiss psychologist Carl Jung: "One looks back with appreciation to the brilliant teachers, but with gratitude to those who touched our human feeling. Curriculum is necessary raw material, but warmth is the vital element for the growing plant and for the soul of the child."

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