

hands on



Stories, ideas, & news
from Kids Friendly
ISSUE 12: September '08

Exciting times for Kids Friendly

It's hard to believe that Kids Friendly has been part of our church family for nearly five years. Watching one's baby grow into a healthy young child is a true blessing that evokes thanks to a gracious and wonderful God. And that's how I feel about Kids Friendly. Like a new born baby, I held Kids Friendly five years ago (as I began the pilot), with slight trepidation and fearful thoughts of "how will I do this?". But with God's grace and many wonderful mentors, contributors and churches catching the vision, Kids Friendly has evolved into a unique way of being for many of our churches. 109 churches have "joined" Kids Friendly and benefitted from being part of the network. Every week I receive numerous requests for advice, resources and training on a wide range of topics including safety, employment, teaching children, engaging children in worship, community outreach and lots more. As I travel the country I witness many wonderful examples of how our churches are ministering to children in their communities. It's my privilege to share their stories and experiences with you and where possible connect churches so they can learn from each other. I am excited by the reports of progress and achievement and encouraged by the growing recognition of the importance of children's ministry. In a recent Candour article Rev Dr Kevin Ward of Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership wrote: "There is much being said about future scenarios for the church, as vital statistics in just about every area that matters, continue to head in the wrong direction. Many suggestions are announced about what needs to be done to "stop the rot". The more I research, the more I am convinced that of all the

critical factors perhaps the most significant is that of children."

And this view is shared by many of our church leaders reflected I believe, in Council for Assembly's decision to budget for the expansion and long term sustainability of Kids Friendly. Also of great encouragement to me is the commitment of Kids Friendly and Presbyterian Youth Ministry to work more closely together to develop a best practice standard for youth ministry in our churches. Churches currently Kids Friendly will inevitably face the "problem" of St John's Papatoetoe (another inspiring contribution to the children's ministry edition of Candour) and discover before long they have teenagers in their midst. We want to ensure that these churches receive the resources, advice and training needed to minister effectively to and with them.

St John's shares its story of becoming Kids Friendly to encourage and inspire others to embark on a Kids Friendly journey. Kids Friendly is a valued resource of our church that exists to serve you and equip and encourage you to invest in best practice children's ministry. All churches are called to "let the children come". And Kids Friendly is for ALL churches wanting to respond to that call.

I hope you will benefit from reading the stories in this issue of hands on and I encourage you to enjoy a feast of inspiring Kids Friendly testimonies in the September issue of Candour: www.presbyterian.org.nz/Fileadmin/candour/Candour_september08.pdf.

Together we are shaping our church. God bless. Jill

Could you be a Kids Friendly coach?

Our church leaders have given the thumbs up for expanding and embedding Kids Friendly in the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand's culture and budgeted for an additional Kids Friendly Coach. This part-time (20 hours) position will enable Kids Friendly to work with more churches and ensure the long term sustainability of Kids Friendly. We are looking for a passionate and experienced children's minister who would love to inspire and equip our churches to be truly Kids Friendly. If this sounds like you, contact Kids Friendly for a copy of the position description.



Thanks PSDS

For your ongoing generous support of Kids Friendly. 106 churches across the country have joined the Kids Friendly network and receive resources, advice, coaching and training to equip them to deliver best practice children's ministry.

This is made possible because organisations like Presbyterian Savings and Development Society, the Presbyterian Foundation and Dunedin, Wellington, Auckland and South Canterbury Presbyteries caught the Kids Friendly vision and invested in it.

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Presbyterian Church
of Aotearoa New Zealand



Today's Voices



The Kids Friendly review process is designed to create a forum for courageous conversations about how we truly welcome, provide for and celebrate children in our churches. When coaching churches, I often hear conflicting views on how Kids Friendly their church is. I am therefore encouraged by reports of how the "Dream Team" invites feedback from a range of voices. Most inspiring is when a church includes children in its survey. Balclutha Presbyterian asked 7 year old Michelle how Kids Friendly she finds the people at her church. She was very tactful as she responded that some did okay but others could do better. She came up with a range of suggestions including: There should be a kids song in church which children can help lead. We should all have name tags so children and adults can know each other's names. We should hang stars with our prayers on them from the church ceiling. Adults should ask children to help them with their jobs like collecting offering. The leaders of Balclutha took her advice to heart and worked with her to implement her many wonderful ideas. Mornington Presbyterian in Dunedin reported: "We recently surveyed our children by asking the following questions:

Do the people in our church know your name? How many people do you know by name? Children: Only a few in the congregation know us and we only know 1 or 2 adult's names.

Do you feel that children belong and participate in our church? Children: We would like to be more involved in helping in the church like operating the computer, serving morning tea, welcoming people and

collecting the offering.

Do you feel included in the church service?

Children: We feel included but would like to sing more children's songs during church.

Why don't you stand when we sing or the offering is taken up? Children: Nobody tells us! It would be good if the minister gave more instructions so the children knew what to do.

What do you like about coming to Sunday Seekers? Learning about God, meeting friends, games, Veggie Tales and other stories.

Joanne Hawker, Children's Ministry Leader says:

"This was very helpful for us and we have followed up on some of their comments. We now have children rostered on to welcome, take up the offering, be bible assistant and operate the PowerPoint. The session are making an effort to talk to the children and get to know their names. We are also in the process of setting up a "prayer angel" box where children can post prayer requests and know someone in the congregation will pray for them. We have also introduced a 'Hairy Question' box in which the children can put any sort of question and the minister has to try and give an answer on the spot. The children have really taken to this and look forward to it happening in church. We now have a couple who have offered to lead children's songs in church each week. The children also decided they did not want to be split into age groups, but would rather all stay together with the big ones helping the little ones. This has influenced the way we structure our Sunday Seekers."

New Resources

Establishing a Family Ministry

This Kids Friendly resource was developed in collaboration with Jill Rangeley, Family Director at Clevedon Presbyterian. Jill shares her extensive experience in running outreach programmes for preschoolers and their families. Topics include: our mission in the community, running playgroups and Mainly Music, communicating with families, pastoral care of families, working with volunteers, funding.

Kids Club: connecting with community children

Long in my mind and now finally on paper is this guide to organising a Kids Club outreach programme for primary school kids. Topics include: connecting with community the 5w's and 1h of Kids Club; planning and resourcing a Kids Club, timing, programming, co-opting volunteers, publicity, safety, undergirding with prayer.

To order these resources by email or in hard copy contact jill@sthelierschurch.org.nz. And if you're sitting on a wealth of experience why not consider writing a resource to help others. Kids Friendly is happy to receive rough drafts and shape them into the Kids Friendly resource format. Other Kids Friendly resources include:

The Kids Friendly Self-Review, Branding your Church Kids Friendly, Employing a Children's Ministry Worker, Safety in Children's Ministry, A Kids Friendly Advent, A Kids Friendly Sunday.



A Kids Friendly Journey

Congratulations to Balclutha Presbyterian who has recently become a Kids Friendly Church. I was invited to be part of their special celebrations during September. Says Rev Brian Walker: "We began this



journey two years ago after inviting Jill to speak to our Congregation. Our Kids Friendly dream team met every 6 weeks to go through the ideals and set goals to become Kids Friendly. We are really pleased to have reached a stage where we can tell our community we are Kids Friendly while recognising that this will always be "a work in progress", as we



continue to review everything we do with "Kids Friendly" eyes."

Congratulations also to Massey Presbyterian in West Auckland, who has just been assessed Kids Friendly. We now have 40 Kids Friendly churches around New Zealand with 50 more working to become Kids Friendly.

Building Bridges to Worship

I don't believe in purgatory. It is not a part of my religious tradition. However, if I did, then one of the images of purgatory for me would be spending a prolonged amount of time locked in a crèche otherwise known as the "crying room" of a church. The church crèche in my mind is typically a little claustrophobic room, with dirty old toys, and minimal light. It provides a partial view of the main service and is the place where during the service you are often forced to endure a solo of the minister singing. I am not suggesting your crèche is like this, but I expect you know what I'm talking about. At the start of this year we began at Somervell Church an alternative to crèche. It's a Sunday programme specifically designed for preschoolers. We call it KidzSong. KidzSong is in some ways similar to the mid-week programmes many churches run called Music and Movement or Mainly Music. It is held on a Sunday at the same time as the morning service and Sunday School, but at KidzSong the focus is a Christian programme tailor-made for preschoolers. We intersperse some of the great preschool children songs and nursery rhymes with some of



the wonderful Christian preschool songs that are available. We have a craft activity and we have a short story from the Bible. This has proved to be a great success. Our role for this programme has increased to over 25 preschoolers. We average about 16 a week. Their parents or caregivers are welcome to be there with them for the morning. Of course, we know that it could be even better, but we have noticed, so far, a significant improvement in our ministry to preschoolers and their families. The parents seem happier. The children seem happier. We have had at least seven new families with preschoolers begin to regularly attend Somervell. Look, I'll be perfectly honest, I have vested interest in getting something happening for the preschoolers in our church. I have a 3yr old, a 2yr old, a 1yr old and we are expecting our next baby soon. KidzSong has been a lifeline for us as a family. We know there are plenty of other families out there who long for churches to make it easier for them to bring along their little ones. Surely we can do better than a crèche? I can certainly tell you that after spending the morning at KidzSong, purgatory is the last thing on my mind!
Reuben Hardie (Rev)
Somervell Presbyterian Church

We are all one

I recently witnessed the most amazing example of children's ministry that intentionally connected with community children, introduced them to faith through discussion, modeled the love of Jesus through interactions with Christian leaders, inspired them to share their God-given gifts and encouraged them to practise Christian principles with each other. The result was an outstanding performance featuring 40 children sharing songs, poetry and video clips promoting unity. 21 year old writer and producer Amy Gulvin shares her inspiration and process.

What inspired you to do this? My life experience - changing countries (I came to NZ when I was 15) and seeing different parts of the world - I realised that life can be SO different for everybody and there is huge inequality between countries. I think if we change our attitude towards others we would literally change the world. As Jesus said, 'Love your neighbour as yourself... we are all part of one body.' The message 'We Are All One' says it all - if we truly LIVED this message every second of everyday, the world would be a different place. That is my inspiration.

How did you develop the process? Songs are really important in my life - listening to music affects my attitude towards things, my emotional state, it makes me think more deeply about things.



I wrote my first song at 16 and one day I came up with the idea of connecting these two important parts of my life, that is working with children (which I had been doing at St Heliers Presbyterian Church), and making music. What were your objectives? To expand the minds of local children beyond their community, beyond the boundaries set by everyday life - school, even church - sometimes we too easily accept what people tell us and don't think for ourselves. I wanted to enable them to explore the possibilities of life, show them how to do it from a young age so they can take it with them through life, share with each other our ideas and worries or responsibilities about the problems in the world, and empower them to feel that they can make a difference. Our generation is going to have a lot to deal with in their lives.

Continued on p4.



Hand Outs - News from you

Vital to my role as Kids Friendly Coach is the ability to tell stories. "Key to effective leadership is storytelling" says Harvard Professor Howard Gardner. It's YOUR stories that inspire, encourage and equip others. It's my privilege to share them. I love receiving your progress emails. They are like sunshine on a gloomy wet Auckland winter's day (and there's been plenty of those lately). Your stories featured in hands on and retold as I travel the country are inspiring and shaping our shared vision of building a truly Kids Friendly church. So keep them coming:

From St Margaret's Silverstream: Hi, Jill the success of our holiday programme means we will have to re-think the structure to cater for the number of children coming! 90 children enjoyed each of the two afternoon sessions last holidays. Making caterpillars from egg cartons, fancy boxes, felt mobile phone covers, fairy cushions, collage, dough and acetate pictures were just some of the crafts they enjoyed. Also popular was the drama and movement session and the wood construction. Begun in 2005, the programme is staffed by a large band of keen volunteers who willingly share their faith in action in our local community. An interesting spin-off is our Sunday School is attracting new children who have had fun in the holidays. Blessings, Pat Lerwill, Family Worker

From Knox, Waitara: Hi Jill, just sending a copy of the Daily News article featuring our Dynamite Bay Extreme Boys Club. It is wonderful to see 30 plus boys work and play alongside older male leaders each week. They learn lots of new skills and attitudes as they see how their male mentors live and relate to others. Lots of these boys don't have dads or positive male role models in their lives. We try to impart valuable lessons that they can take back into their families and communities. Jennie McCullough, Children, Youth and Families Minister



Boys and toys. Silverstream boys (top) and Waitara boys (below) have lots of fun doing woodwork with older male mentors.

We are all one

(Continued from p.3)

How did you promote it? (recruit the children?) That was a challenge! I worked on this for many months - it was difficult to get people to understand the concept without being able to show them any kind of example - at the time, it was all in my mind! My church supported me all the way which made it a lot easier. What were the challenges and successes? I think the greatest challenge was the fact that nobody had done this before, and it was down to me to communicate the process and the message to everyone involved, when quite honestly I wasn't 100% sure myself exactly what the end result would be. The only way through was to focus on the spirit, my aims and to trust in God, and in what I was doing, and not worry too much about the logistics. It was wonderful to work with the children to share a message that moved the audience. The greatest success is that these children have 'become We Are All One'. It was astonishing to see their excitement, their pride and the relationships they formed the way they

treated one another with such respect, the way they worked so incredibly hard to create a good show, and the way they truly had understood, could explain, and were emanating the message. I am sure it will be a lasting experience for everyone.

What worked well, didn't work that well and what would you do differently next time? I can't really say that anything in particular either worked, or didn't work because everything combined to create the creation. I think the structure of rehearsals worked well. We had singing, dance, scrapbooking and video diaries. I included every child in every activity and every-one had the same opportunities. There were no auditions whatsoever. Combining the video dairies with the performance worked really well.

Anything else you would like to add? I can't wait to do it all over again!

"We are all one" will be performed at General Assembly in October.



Christmas
Is
Coming!



Its time to send
me your
Christmas plays
so we can share
them with others