

hands on

Stories, ideas, & news you can use
from the Kids Friendly project



Seeing ourselves through the eyes of others

As you arrive at church this Sunday, stop outside for a moment, close your eyes and think about how it looks and feels. Does the outside of your church suggest that this is a place that is loved and cared for? Does the inside foyer and sanctuary reflect welcome, friendship and celebration of all ages.

When I present to churches around New Zealand, I always challenge them to look at themselves through the eyes of a newcomer adult and child, possibly coming to church for the first time, maybe with some trepidation.

How will they be welcomed? What will they see, hear, feel as they enter our place?

It is in the first 30 seconds of arrival in a new place that we make up our minds whether to stay or go, or in the case of church whether to return. So first impressions are very important.

A Kids Friendly church is intentional about its attitude to children. The Kids Friendly banner greets newcomers and the Kids Friendly statement of intent is posted liberally around the building and in the order of service. A children's welcome table is prominent in the foyer and children's art proudly displayed for all to admire. Children are greeted by name, like adults, and contribute to and participate in worship equally. The children's programme and rooms are appealing, inspiring and stimulating to a range of senses. The people who work with children love kids and passionately believe in sharing the love of Christ with them. The congregation values and nurtures children and is open to children teaching them. The minister is Kids Friendly.

Step into your kids' shoes and take a walk through your church.

Blessings. Jill

Welcome to the Kids Friendly family



Jane Davis is the new children's ministry leader for Kids Friendly Highgate Parish in Dunedin.

Says Jane: "I returned from living in the UK last year and immediately felt at home at Highgate Presbyterian Church with its informal style of worship within a traditional framework.

With two children of my own and a history of involvement in children's ministry, I naturally volunteered to co-ordinate the children's programme. I'm really excited that my recent appointment means I receive coaching and mentoring from the Kids Friendly Coach and can start exploring ways to minister to the children of our community. Kids Friendly also means I get to network with other children's workers in Dunedin." At present Jane is working with Kaikorai's Children's Ministry Leader Shelley Marks to organise a celebration of children's leaders. Churches all over Dunedin are invited to treat their children's workers to a night out of dining, sharing ideas and fellowship with other children's leaders and the Kids Friendly Coach.

We welcome St Alban's in Palmerston North, St David's-in-the-fields in Hillsborough Auckland, Upper Clutha in Wanaka and St John's Rotorua who have contracted to become Kids Friendly and Hibiscus Coast and St Andrew's Geraldine who have joined the Kids Friendly Network.

The Kids Friendly Coach will be sharing the Kids Friendly vision and running training workshops with Churches in the Dunedin, Wanganui, Hawkes Bay and Wairarapa Presbyteries during the last months of 2006. Please keep her work in your prayers.

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Presbyterian Church
of Aotearoa New Zealand

All ages picture peace in Wadestown



"Picture Peace" arose out of a vision of Jacki Newell, one of our members at Wadestown Presbyterian Church. It was caught by others and together they planned an all age weekend event to inspire as many people from our congregation as possible to commit to bringing peace to our world.

Creating a mosaic was central to our 'picturing peace' over the weekend of Hiroshima Day, August 4-6. The mosaic was created in the hall. Everyone was invited to drop in during the weekend and add a tile or two to the peace picture. A good number of people found that just adding one tile wasn't enough. Mosaicing is addictive!

In addition to this, our church was reorganised into several prayer 'stations' that offered resources and symbols to help us focus our reflection on and pray for peace.

Jacki ran a children's "peace programme" on Saturday afternoon, reading stories about peace and creating some symbols of peace with the children including paper cranes, doves etc.

We also invited some key "peacemakers" to inspire us on Saturday afternoon. Michael Watson talked about peace within ourselves, Chris Marshall talked about peace within our community and Glenn Barclay talked about peace within our world. All of this took place in the hall where some sat and listened and others listened while they continued with the mosaic. Saturday ended with a shared meal and the movie, "Bagger Vance" - a look at a man's story of finding peace within himself and reconciliation with his community.

On Sunday morning we brought the experience of

the weekend to our all-age worship. The service was a pot-pourri of reflections on peace including a short claymation film made by a group of our children based on Joy Cowley's book "The Duck and the Gun". We also placed colourful paper cranes (made by some of our children) on a bare branch as a sign of our prayer for peace and our commitment to being peacemakers.

"Picture Peace" was a fantastic weekend. Our speakers provided us with challenging and 'edgy' thoughts about what it means to be faithful to Jesus' call to live in ways which embrace justice and peace. It was great fun to work on the mosaic together. The project was one which all ages could take part in.

We now have a beautiful mosaic that celebrates peace and challenges us to always 'seek peace and pursue it' (1 Peter 3:11) which we will be displaying outside our church for all to see and enjoy.

Thanks Jacki for pursuing your dream and helping us to get caught up in it.

Sharon Ensor, Minister, Wadestown Presbyterian



All ages in worship together

While Kids Friendly encourages churches to work to engage and involve all ages in every worship service, there is a place for all age worship events that seek to creatively involve all in exploring the faith together. Some churches do this once a month, others once a term. Kylie Pettigrove of St David's, Palmerston North has recently introduced a regular all age event on a Friday evening. Says Kylie: "We see this as an opportunity to invite non-church goers to join regular worshippers in a worship event that is non-threatening and fun. We include a pot-luck dinner as part of the event. The two we have organised so far have been well attended and feedback has been positive." Sharon Ensor, minister at Wadestown, is still remembered fondly by her previous congregation Somervell,

Auckland for the all age events she ran using clips from popular children's movies. Sharon continues to inspire her present congregation with her creativity. Roger Gillies, Minister at St Columba, Havelock North runs a monthly all age

worship service called "The Sunday Special" (TSS) in place of regular church. Response has been great. "We are attracting a whole lot of people we don't see on other Sundays," said Roger, "we are really excited at the possibilities." The churches of the Hawkes Bay Presbytery came together recently to experience an "All Saints" all age worship event led by the Kids Friendly Coach. One young and enthusiastic participant commented:

"I like this kind of church!" If you would like to try running an all age worship event, the Kids Friendly office has sample services. And if you are having success with this type of worship, send through your services to Kids Friendly, so others can try it too.



The reason for the season



A Canadian minister relieving at our church some years back really challenged our congregation when he asked: "How can you Southern

hemisphere folk possibly make time for Christ in a season as frenetic as this?"

He was astounded to discover that instead of Advent being a time of reflection and preparation for the birth of our Saviour, it was a "festive" and stressful season of school prizegivings, dance shows, end-of-year parties, pageants and preparations for summer holidays. He urged each of us to find a way to make space for Christ amongst all this activity.

While we couldn't fathom a way to escape the inevitable madness of the season, our family decided to focus on the real "reason for the season" by creating an Advent wreath for our dining table. Each Sunday in December we committed to have dinner at the table (no mean feat for us) and light the Advent Candle of the day. As we lit the candle, each person would say: "My hope for the world in the coming year is..." Or "I will bring joy to the world this year by..." and "I can bring peace to our world by...". It was a good opportunity to "be still" and put Christ back in the centre for at least one mealtime.

Why not help families in your church focus on Christ in the weeks before Christmas. Maybe you could make wreaths in your Sunday children's programme and send them home with instructions for use. Or you could make advent calendars featuring the many symbols of Christmas. As each day is opened,

children could be invited to explain the symbol relating it to the Christmas story and be rewarded with a lolly from the Advent jar. Ironically even our church Christmas preparations can distract us from the hope, joy, love and peace of Advent. Human characteristics dominate as leaders try to rehearse children, organise costumes and buy prizes to tight deadlines. While the Christmas pageant is an important event in the life of the church try to retain its spirit. And don't make it all work and no fun. In between rehearsing carols, stop and have a fun quiz or game to bring back the magic of Christmas.

A favourite with our kids is the Christmas memory game. Print out Christmas symbols from "clipart" (candy cane, star, bell, tree, angel, Shepherd, gift, manger). Glue two of each on a large piece of cardboard away from each other. Cover the symbols with cardboard flaps and write numbers on them. Kids get to choose two numbers to try and match the symbols. Those who can match the symbols get to pick a lolly from the Christmas stocking and the child who gets to explain what the chosen picture tells us of the Christmas story also gets a prize. A great reminder of the Christmas story and way to break the monotony of rehearsals.



Wonderful Christmas Websites

FOR ADVENT IDEAS
www.cecm.vistas.uca.org
www.kirkweb.org/advent
FOR CHRISTMAS IDEAS
www.childrensministry.com
www.daniellesplace.com

Introducing Kids Friendly promotional DVD

The Kids Friendly vision can now be shared with even more churches with an "Introducing Kids Friendly" promotional DVD. The 10 minute DVD features the Kids Friendly Coach and photographic and video footage to introduce churches to Kids Friendly

including "What is Kids Friendly?"; "Why Kids Friendly?" and "Becoming Kids Friendly?" Says Jill Kayser, Kids Friendly Coach: "I have personally shared the Kids Friendly vision with 70 churches this year, but this DVD will enable so many more churches to catch the Kids Friendly vision.". To borrow a copy of the DVD email kidsfriendlyjill@sthelierschurch.org.nz.



Kids in Local Mission

Children are capable of enormous empathy and their efforts to make the world a better place can be astounding. Empower your kids to know they can make a difference in big ways as well as subtle small everyday ways.

- J The children of so many of our churches take books and reading for granted. How about setting up used-book collection bins in your church to donate to more needy children. We once donated over 100 books from 3 church families to a local needy school.
- J Do your kids know that poverty exists in New Zealand? Consider sharing the harsh fact that many people in New Zealand don't have enough money to feed themselves. Invite children to do chores at home and earn \$10. Talk with children about what food is nutritious, then put children in teams, take them to the supermarket and see which team can buy the most nutritious food with the money they have. Deliver the food to a local foodbank and ask if your kids can help pack shelves so they can see for themselves the people who come to get food.
- J If you have families with large gardens invite children to grow food specifically to donate to a local soup kitchen?
- J Or look for ways to respond to crisis in our own land. Recently when Oamaru experienced terrible flooding, families from our church picked citrus fruit from church members' gardens to send to the South Island.
- J All children love to do art. Buy brown lunch bags in bulk and let them go wild decorating them to

create lucky dips for church members to fill and donate to shelters. You could staple it together with a card depicting a bible verse.

- J Children really know their way around a computer? Invite them to serve their church by preparing the PowerPoint for a Sunday service - this is particularly good for involving intermediate age children.
- J Instead of offering entertainment for your next family event, organise a trash bash. Invite families to come with lots of plastic bags and organise a walk along popular routes such as the beachfront or parks and get them to collect all the rubbish they see. Stop for lunch along the way.
- J Have a bake-off with your church kids to make lots of cookies that can be wrapped in cellophane to deliver to the elderly in pensioner flats or to teens of your church writing NCEA.
- J Invite kids to share their talents at a concert for the elderly at a local old age home.



Eleanor entertains the elderly

Celebrating children



Fortunately for many of our children every day is Children's day, but as this day falls on Sunday 4 March 2007, you may like to seize the opportunity to open your church to the children of your church and community. Or you could join with other churches in your area to organise a

community event at a park or facility. This year's theme is "giving time" and will be represented by the Hector's Dolphin. For ideas and event planning tips visit www.childrensday.org.nz.

Our thanks goes to:

Wellington Presbytery who have just announced they will be contributing \$5000 to the Kids Friendly fund to enable the Kids Friendly Coach to work with churches in their Presbytery wanting to become Kids Friendly. The Methodist Church PAC Distribution Fund for donating \$4600 to Kids Friendly to develop a coaching clinic for potential Kids Friendly regional coaches. The key to Kids Friendly sustainability is to train coaches across New Zealand. As I travel across the country I meet many passionate Kids Friendly people with whom I look forward to sharing Kids Friendly coaching skills. For more info contact: kidsfriendlyjill@sthelierschurch.org.nz

