

Welcome to our termly newsletter which aims to update you on our activities over the past term as well as keep you informed about future events.

Providing an opportunity for primary school age children to hear about and learn from the Christian faith

Christmas Assembly Tour 2019: A gift worth searching for

The Christmas assembly told the story of the shepherds through the song, 'A Band of Angels', and the journey of the wise men in a sketch; they all searched for and found the 'greatest gift ever' – God's son sent to live among us. The presentation ended with a puzzle – you had to search hard and sometimes you looked in the wrong place – but the word Jesus was there. Tony Daggianti joined the assembly team for the first time this term and he reflected: *"What a privilege to serve God and be part of a team who are so professional, (and I so average!). I really felt God's presence in all we did. God called me to this, with a nudge from my wife, Sally, and I wish to serve in any way I can, so bring on the next tour! Teams may need to be patient with me as sometimes my hands and mind go in different directions, but God-willing on tour days everything comes together as I focus on presenting the message. My team deserve so much love and thanks for what they have done in my life."*



We thank God for His provision, with seven teams visiting 140 schools with this message of hope this Christmas. It was especially exciting that Anne Sparrow had three others join her so that they could again visit schools in West Norfolk after the retirement of Brian and Josephine Griffin last year.

Growing Young Disciples - GYD



I really enjoyed and gained a lot of experience helping out at the GYD day in November! The day was all about developing young people in discipleship, as the name suggests, and from my point of view they responded and engaged really well. One of the sessions that worked particularly well was about the 'front lines' of our faith. Here we talked about the interactions that we have with all sorts of people on a daily basis and the places where these might occur - at home, in the local area or at school. In small groups we highlighted things we could do to show kindness in these areas and to these people, which corresponded to us learning of Jesus' acts of grace to random people in the gospels. It was brilliant to see the young people act upon

these teachings in the sessions at the end of the day when we went outside in groups and tried to show kindness and love to passers-by on the street. One young person in my group was pretty quiet at the start, but as the day went on and as we learnt and discussed how we could show grace in our own lives, they became very enthusiastic and inspired. I'm sure that the same can be said of others who attended. It just goes to show what one day can do in growing disciples in this new generation. *Daniel Stone* (GYD is a joint initiative between GenR8 and the Eastern URC)

Staff Changes

Since the last newsletter there have been changes in GenR8 staff. Iris Considine took over from Julia Stone in late September as our administration and booking co-ordinator. We are so grateful for all that Julia has brought to the administration, bookings and bookkeeper roles. Julia has done much to update our organisation and has helped GenR8 maintain a professional approach in our relationship with schools, as well as amongst the staff and volunteer team. Julia will be much missed by everyone within GenR8. Thank you Julia. Julia will remain with us as bookkeeper until the end of March.

Iris reflects: *Three months into my role as administrator for GenR8... I can best describe the journey as being on a fast train - whatever I find myself doing there are many scenes to see and many people to communicate with on the way! (I have spent some Christmas putting a jigsaw puzzle together and there is nothing more satisfying than finding a piece that fits and makes the picture clearer). Having worked in schools and witnessed the GenR8 teams coming in for assemblies, I now have a better picture of the work that goes on behind the scenes for each presentation with travel and booking arrangements. I had the pleasure of attending an Xcellr8 meeting in January and met face-to-face some of the volunteers who make GenR8 what it is. There is so much commitment and enthusiasm for the work. I look forward to getting to know more volunteers and the roles they play as time goes by, thus adding to the picture.*



GenR8 Website

The new and improved website is now online – so do check it out. It has taken us longer than we originally anticipated to arrive at this point, but we are pleased with the final result and trust that it will be useful for schools, churches and supporters. We hope that the website will give a good overview of the scope and range of our work and will aid in our stated mission 'to provide an opportunity for primary school age children to hear about and learn from the Christian faith'.



Cool Choices

Back in September seven GenR8 team members led 26 Cool Choices sessions with Year 6 primary school students. All together reaching over 600 students! Cool Choices aims to help students make positive life choices and includes a Christian perspective using video clips, the wise and foolish builder bible story as well as from the team themselves. Cool Choices sessions are quite different from usual Year 6 lessons and activities and give students an opportunity to express a range of thoughts, feelings as well as reflect on their lives and what the future might hold. The success of Cool Choices is reflected in the fact that schools invite us back each year and in the feedback we receive from Year 6 teachers and students:

It is always a thought-provoking session that we feel really benefits the children. - Year 6 teacher

The children found the video of Nick's faith though provoking and it made them think about their own lives - Year 6 teacher

We'd like the next year 6s to do it. – Year 6 class

As someone involved in leading sessions, Cool Choices really builds on the termly assembly work we do in schools. It gives us an opportunity to interact with students more directly and it's great when students come up and talk about faith and the impact GenR8 has had on their time in primary school. At the time of writing we are about to embark on our January Cool Choices sessions please pray with us that these sessions will have a positive impact on student's lives, in particular how God can be the foundation stone for all of life's choices.



Looking Ahead

The spring term looks set to be another busy one with lots of activities on the horizon.

The **Xcellr8** residential weekend on the theme of 'Investig8' is already full, with a waiting list for places. This year the 64 children who are booked to come along will spend time investigating who Jesus is whilst having lots of the usual fun.

Inspire Prayer Spaces - Siân is having discussions with schools and we hope some of these will result in bookings for this term.

The **Easter assembly tour** has the title 'Unselfish Love' and tells of the events of Easter through an imagined conversation between friends remembering their encounter with Jesus on the road to Emmaus.

Permanent Prayer Spaces is expanding, with the addition of Fordham Church of England Primary School – there will be eight schools involved now and we are always looking for churches to work in partnership with us to help us expand this work.

Prayers...

- ❖ Give thanks for the Christmas assemblies tour, GYD, Cool Choices and Inspire plus Inspire Permanent that all took place last term. Please pray for a positive impact on young lives.
- ❖ Continue to pray for the future of the West Norfolk team and for Anne Sparrow as she leads this group.
- ❖ Please pray for the preparations for the Easter assembly tour and especially the need for new volunteers to join the teams.
- ❖ Please pray for the Cool Choices sessions this term.
- ❖ Pray for Iris in her new role and Julia as she leaves us.
- ❖ Pray for the GenR8 trustees and the decisions that they will make in 2020.
- ❖ Pray for Steve, that he will be equipped for the challenges that the year ahead will bring.

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