

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

Easter Assembly Tour 2020: Amazing Love

There is always a buzz of excitement when we prepare for an assembly tour and that is especially so at Easter. We have the opportunity to share with schools the wonderful acts of love that Jesus has done for us all in His death and resurrection: so fittingly this year's e assembly was entitled 'Amazing Love'! As we prayed, planned and worked together we were pleased to see the schools booking in, the timetable taking shape and the script coming to life as we rehearsed. It was fun to be in our assembly teams as we struggled with learning lines, finding props, encouraging each other and delighting in serving God. As we prepared we were aware that the Corona virus outbreak was becoming an increasingly serious situation and the question 'Will we be able to tour?' hung over us. This did not stop us getting ready and being hopeful.



Our presentation explored the fun of Easter chocolate and holidays while pointing to the deeper meaning of this special time of year: Jesus rescued us from the wrong things we carry around with us. A reflective mime illustrated Jesus taking those burdens from us, while the song 'How Broad, How Long' aptly shared the words of Romans 8 v 38 that nothing separates us from the great love of Christ. The excitement of Jesus' resurrection came through in the story of the Road to Emmaus; the race was on to share the good news that Jesus is alive and, as in our closing poem, 'He is the one whose love never ends'.

Some of our assembly teams went out for a few days and were able to visit a number of schools, but once 'social distancing' measures were brought in, the sad but necessary decision was made to stop the tour. Despite this a recorded final rehearsal by the Central team was sent out to all the schools that we were not able to visit and this was used by some in their distance learning and virtual assemblies. It was heartening to see the warmth of our relationship with schools come through messages of thanks and concern for the teams. Praise God that the Easter message was shared and that we will be able to tour Schools again in the future.

Bev Thomas

Xcellr8

So much has been happening in the world since February's Xcellr8 weekend, it is hard to believe that it was only six weeks ago that a group of incredible adults and children met to celebrate investigate the life of Jesus. Despite only being three days long, everyone left with great memories of games, friendship, worship and prayer. Being a first time team member, I have only good things to say about the experience I had on this weekend.

First of all, the team, both new and long-standing, are brilliant and truly deserve the praise they get. The selflessness of everyone to make this weekend meaningful for the children was great to see and I have been truly inspired by the attitude of the people I had the pleasure to serve with. This is no truer than for the young team. Building the next generation of disciples is something that is spoken about a lot in churches and this weekend was an opportunity for all to see this in action. The commitment, enthusiasm and passion they showed can be example to all of us about what it means to serve.

The weekend was, however, made by the children. I was extremely impressed by their attitude to learn as well their energy which did not lessen till the very last moment. Their knowledge of the Bible and their willingness to pray and worship was just great to see and be a part of. As adults, we can learn a lot about being Christians from children and I am sure I am not the only who was reminded on this weekend to never underestimate the faith of children. It is clear that the Xcellr8 weekend means so much to so many of these children and adults alike and I am so happy that I was able to take part. I felt welcome and valued as a team member but the best thing was being on a team that was humble, servant-hearted and transparent in their aims and values. All in all, I have to say that the tiredness (sleeping on the floor can be rather uncomfortable!) was more than worth it. It was fab!



Callum Harding

Staff Changes

We are sad to say goodbye, and want to say a very big thank you to Julia Stone for all the energy and commitment she has given to GenR8 over the past years. Julia's input into the development of GenR8 is much appreciated. At the same time we want to welcome Paul Brown to the staff team. Paul first got involved with GenR8 in about 2010 when he joined the Royston assembly team. After taking a few years break to work as a secondary Maths teacher, he is now back on the team where in recent years he has collected a virtual Oscar from one school, whilst also being referred to as "the very silly one".

He has now taken on the role of Bookkeeper for GenR8, alongside various other part-time jobs including some teaching and looking after accounts for several local organisations. Paul lives in Royston with his wife Ruth and they are part of Trinity Life Church where they were previously leaders. Paul has done a lot of kids work in church and, you guessed it, keeps the accounts. They have three children who are all grown up but seem to be having a bit of trouble leaving home.



Trustee Perspective

Since Easter, the daily readings from the Church of England have been going through the story of the Exodus, when God rescues the people of Israel from their slavery in Egypt. One of the key moments in the story is the first Passover when God tells the Israelites how they should celebrate their rescue every year from then on. When Moses has finished explaining what to do, he says this: "Keep this word. It's the law for you and your children, forever. When you enter the land which God will give you as he promised, keep doing this. And when your children say to you, 'Why are we doing this?' tell them: 'It's the Passover-sacrifice to God'" (Exodus 12:24-27a)

The story of God's dealings with humanity is a story which needs to be told to each new generation, and God has given us the responsibility for making that happen. If we don't tell our children the story of our redemption through Jesus, nobody else will. This is why the work GenR8 does in schools is so critical: most children are not hearing the Christian story at home, nor are they in church to hear it. Even in church schools, they aren't necessarily hearing it from teachers who believe it for themselves.

In the schools I go into myself, I hear first-hand from the children how much they enjoy the GenR8 assemblies! This is why I'm pleased to be associated with GenR8 as a trustee and see it as part of my own work in schools. At the moment, when we can't physically go into school, we need to be more creative in how we tell the Good News to children, and I know GenR8 are working on that, but the imperative remains the same: "Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord To children's children and forever more!"

Revd Stephen Day

Looking Ahead

The summer term activities are all on hold and the future is uncertain due to the pandemic crisis. In the meantime we are spending this term catching up on a number of administrative and background tasks, getting to grips with Zoom, as well as supporting schools by putting together **videos** with puppets, songs and bible stories that relate to the situations that children are currently finding themselves in. Schools can hopefully use these videos for assemblies, RE or at home as part of remote schooling. Depending on government guidelines we may put together our **summer assembly tour** 'Forgiving isn't easy' on video, as well as a revised version of **It's Your Move**, which usually takes place for Year 6s in July. Siân is preparing a post-pandemic prayer space for our **permanent prayer spaces** initiative, to go out into schools as soon as is practicable. Further ahead we are waiting to see how we might proceed from September with **Cool Choices** amongst other areas of work. Your prayers during these unprecedented times are appreciated.

Prayers...

- ❖ Give thanks for the Xcellr8 weekend, for the Easter assembly visits that took place last term and for the video of the assembly going out online to schools and homes. Please pray for a positive impact on young lives.
- ❖ Pray for Paul as he joins us as bookkeeper and Julia as she leaves us.
- ❖ Pray for Steve and the rest of the staff team with the challenges that the current crisis brings.
- ❖ Pray for the videos and other plans for the term – that we will be led by God in everything we do.
- ❖ Pray for the financial situation within GenR8, which like many charities may suffer in these times of uncertainty.

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