

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

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

Autumn term videos



Steve as Joseph



Siân as Miriam



Over the summer a lot of work went into preparing videos ready for the new school year when pupils were returning to school – many for the first time in months. On Monday 7th September the first of our series of **GenR8 Connect** videos was sent to 140 schools across the region. Each video was 10-15 minutes long and featured stories from the Bible chosen as relevant to children’s experiences. The videos all started with an introduction from the GenR8 team that normally visits the school, recorded on Zoom – a fun challenge for many team members. The themes this term were: **New starts and changes** with the story of the challenges that Joseph faced; **Why worry?** which looked at Jesus teaching that God provides and cares for us; **What’s on the inside** looking at Samuel choosing David because he had a heart for God; **Good friends** with the story of Naomi and Ruth; **Trust** recounting how Moses was saved as a baby because of his mother and sister, Miriam’s love and trust in God; **Facing Giants** with the story of David’s faith and courage in defeating Goliath. All the videos were accompanied by reflection and activity ideas and a link to a song with actions which followed up on the themes.



Ben and Jasmine



Jan as Naomi

Siân moved online this term too and produced **GenR8 Reflect** videos. The short thought-provoking films had the following subjects this term: **Be Still** – reflect in the quiet; **Transforming Butterflies** – thinking about change; **Overcoming Challenges** – reflecting on the challenges we face; **Hope Blossoms** – reflecting on the hope that we have; and **Amazing Angels** – thinking about angels.

Siân, Janet and the team have also continued to deliver **Inspire Permanent Prayer Spaces** to 8 schools despite the challenges this has presented, plus added a new school this term.

Christmas Presentation: Immanuel, God with Us

The **Christmas video presentation** was based on a script written by Amy Robinson in 2015. The video was 25 minutes long and included puppets, a song and poem much like our usual school assembly presentations. The shepherds in their retirement home reminisced about the special night when they met Jesus – Immanuel. One of the shepherds, Jackie, reflected on taking part, *“Aarh, being in one of them special homes for retired shepherds is all very well - but with this social distancing stuff nowadays, it gets 'arder and 'arder to have a chat with each other - specially as some of us are getting a bit deaf! When that man come by and asked to film the story of our special adventure we was thrilled, but we all 'ad to sit with a coffee table between the chairs in a separate room so we could talk freely without them face mask things on. Mind you, we made sure 'e kept 'is on so we wouldn't catch any of his germs! Ah, but it were luvly looking back on that special night... aye, it were a great night.”*



Jan, Paul and Jackie as retired shepherds

Many schools have been in touch to say how much they have appreciated what we are doing to support their collective worship in their class bubbles:

‘We miss your team visiting us and we have enjoyed watching all the wonderful assemblies that have been sent.’
‘Just to say thank you to you all for your faithful support over this past year. We have journeyed through some challenging times and we very much appreciate your continued support and prayer for us.’
‘We want you to know we have used all your material this term through our remote/bubble/class collective worship. The children love your assemblies...’

All these videos are available on the GenR8 website under Resources – please check them out!

The assembly **booking coordinators** were busy this term, despite there being no bookings to deal with, sending links to the Connect and Reflect videos to schools each Monday throughout September, October and November. Thank you to Dianne, Jennifer, Bev, Iris, Kathryn and Helen and their vital role in keeping up our links with schools and local churches.

Heroes...

The wider GenR8 team has been getting together for prayer and encouragement on Zoom throughout the past months, as has the staff team. It was at one of these meetings that someone suggested that we could send a gesture of encouragement to school staff to let them know they were in our prayers. This led to us producing a poster with a prayer of blessing and small prayer space cards, which were delivered to over 130 schools with tubs of Heroes chocolates at the end of November. This was all made possible by a generous donation and was much appreciated by many schools.



'Thank you... how very kind and thoughtful.... We would like to thank you for the brilliant assemblies and materials you send through to our schools. We really appreciate these and the Christian message that shines through your amazing work.'
'Just wanted to say a big thank you for your kind thoughts and generous gift this Christmas. We have missed you in school...'

In amongst all the challenges this year there has also been fun taking part in the GenR8 videos and meeting online. If you want to see Outtakes from some of our videos follow this link: <https://youtu.be/OOGJhvrBRHw>

Looking ahead to 2021

Xcellr8 is happening online from 12-14 February with the title **Navig8**. The Bible focus for the weekend is the Road to Emmaus story and will look at aspects of our journey with Jesus. The main topics will be: What is our faith journey; What guides our path – the Bible; What sustains us on our journey – prayer; Who travels with us on this journey – the church. The preparations are very different to other years, with no menu to plan, food to buy or sleeping arrangements to organise. However, the task of getting the technical aspects organised is a big one as we have not done anything on this scale before. At the time of writing, we are working on a final draft for our small group teaching material, discovering who is definitely available and up for the online challenge, sorting our booking form, as well as making plans for meeting together on Zoom early in the New Year. It's all a bit challenging, scary, and unfamiliar so your prayers would be greatly appreciated.



*Xcellr8 core team pic from 2019
(Siân joined this year!)*

As it seems doubtful that schools will start to have all school assemblies for some time yet, we have plans to produce **GenR8 Connect** and **GenR8 Reflect** videos for the spring term, as well as a series of three Connect-style videos for Easter. The **Permanent Prayer Spaces** programme will also continue, but all other activities that we would normally plan for the spring and summer term are uncertain, with programmes such as **Inspire Prayer Space** days and **Cool Choices** are unlikely to happen for a while. However, we will continually evaluate what we can do to support schools and share a Christian message of hope whilst visits are not possible.

Prayers...

- ❖ Give thanks for all the resources we managed to produce and send into schools in the autumn term.
- ❖ Pray for schools – the staff and the children as they face uncertainties and challenges each day.
- ❖ Pray for Xcellr8 online – that all the planning and preparations will go smoothly and that children will meet with God.
- ❖ Pray for next term's videos, including three planned on the Easter story from Palm Sunday through to the resurrection.
- ❖ Pray for guidance in 2021 – that we will rely on God in everything we do and look to Him as we navigate our way.

As we are writing we have just heard the sad news that Brian Griffin, who led the West Norfolk team with his wife Josephine for many years, died on Boxing Day. Please uphold Josephine and the family in your prayers at this time.



*Brian and Josephine with
the team in 2014*

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