

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

Spring term videos

The spring term has been another busy one with three GenR8 **Connect videos** focussed on Life Lessons. In *'I can do it'* we told the story of how Gideon was asked by God to lead the people to defeat their enemies. Initially he was unwilling and did not feel able to do it, but with God on his side, and following God's instructions, he found that he could. We related this to our response to new experiences and challenges in our own lives.



Working together – Ezra and Nehemiah

'Working together' looked at how together we can get things done if we all play our part, using the story of when Nehemiah and the people rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem. Nehemiah trusted God to help, and his faith and enthusiasm inspired everyone to work together. Ezra the priest read from the book of the law and the people were sad because they had not been living the way that God wanted them to - but Ezra told them they should celebrate and follow God in the future. *'Changing for the better'* looked at the story of when Zacchaeus met Jesus and how this meeting changed his life. After talking with Jesus Zacchaeus realised he had done lots of bad things and decided he needed to follow Jesus and change his ways. If we have done something wrong, we too should say sorry, but we should also change the way that we behave to be more like Jesus. These three Connect videos were all sent to schools with accompanying reflection and activity sheets.



Roman centurion in Gethsemane

the arrest in the garden to the resurrection. If you are interested in seeing these and other videos visit

www.genr8.org/videos

Inspire Prayer Spaces

Siân produced four more **Reflect videos** this term, with short thoughts and activities on themes such as Toppling Temptation and Friendship Foundations. **Permanent Prayer Spaces** have also been resourced in the schools that could continue to accept them during the spring and summer terms. Reflect videos are in the process of being made for the summer term - looking at topics such as opportunities and challenges in our lives; joy; how we are all unique and special to God; and the metaphor of God being a shelter we can run to. Each video is 3-5 minutes long and is designed to be a short reflection that classes can listen to as an act of collective worship. All videos so far have been well received and each one has had many hundreds of views on YouTube!

Plans are in place to produce an **Inspire Transition** bag this term for Year 6 pupils containing resources for six reflective activities based on prayer space ideas, plus the Scripture Union It's Your Move book. Children can complete the activities



I can do it – Gideon



Changing for the better – Zacchaeus

For Easter we produced set of three Easter videos that told the Biblical account of Holy Week entitled: Palm Sunday, The Last Supper, and Good Friday and Easter Day. It was a great opportunity to be able to provide schools with these resources and tell the Easter story in a new way that would not have been possible in an assembly presentation in school. The theme that ran through the videos was the unexpected aspects of the narrative. In Palm Sunday a child recounted how unexpected it was to see Jesus enter Jerusalem like a king, but riding on a donkey. In The Last Supper Rev. Kate Lees shared what communion means for Christians today alongside the account of Jesus washing feet, the bread and wine and the betrayal of Jesus by Judas. Good Friday and Easter Day featured the Roman centurion who declared that Jesus was truly God's son at the foot of the cross. He told the gospel narrative from



On our hearts

We often say someone is 'on our heart'. It means we are particularly thinking about that person and we care for them.

Think about the people who you have been friends with over your time at this school. Those you have laughed with and those who have supported you in the challenging times.

Write the names of your friends on the heart. As you do this you might like to say 'thank you' to God for their friendship.

inspire

Butterflies

Changes happen to us all the time. Some people like change, some don't. Maybe you feel worried or excited or a bit of both and that's ok.

If a caterpillar doesn't change it won't become a butterfly.

On one wing, write something you have really enjoyed about this last school year. On the other wing, write or draw something you are looking forward to next year. You could say a prayer to God to ask him to be with you through these changes.

inspire

sitting at a table using basic stationery items. It is hoped that schools will use these alongside the GenR8 It's Your Move video and SU book and together they will give children the opportunity to reflect on their primary school years as well as thinking about the changes to come as they move up to secondary school. We will be offering the Inspire Transition bags to those

schools that usually have a visit on the It's Your Move tour in July. To find out more or to get involved in sewing bags please contact siant@genr8.org

The **Pray for Schools** Zoom event on Friday 5 March, co-hosted with Cambridge YFC, brought together Christian staff from across the region to meet and pray. It was a great time of encouragement and sharing – particularly well timed as it came just before the children all started to return to school on 8 March. It was particularly encouraging to hear from a Chief Inspector who is part of the Cambridgeshire Christian Police Association that they were praying for schools at this time too.

Xcellr8 online weekend

The **Xcellr8 weekend**, Navig8 (exploring what it means to be on a faith journey) was a new departure for us and we did encounter various challenges as we planned a weekend away to be spent at home on Zoom! It was demanding in preparation and a very different experience to our usual annual weekend but was a great success and we received some lovely parental feedback: *'I have to say that as a parent Xcellr8 has been hugely beneficial for the walk of our kids, it has such a feel good in this house, they loved every moment of those weekends either attending or helping, and they all want to get involved and have fun. I always feel it's like a little taste of heaven! It has encouraged them when we go to a small church with few kids their age that there is life outside of that and opportunities to meet with other like aged Christians has been fantastic.'*



One of the young leaders, Emily, summed it up like this: *I absolutely loved leading on Xcellr8 this year, as I do every year. It was very different being online, but just as rewarding. It was so encouraging to see the children really engage in every activity and give fantastic contributions. Zoom was not a barrier at all.*

Looking Ahead

Back to normal or back to a new normal?? GenR8, like many others, is asking this question as it looks to the future. There have been opportunities for our ministry as well as challenges during the Covid-19 pandemic. Could we miss opportunities that God has placed before us if we exclusively go back to our familiar patterns of visits to schools? Should we look at and embrace new possibilities? It seems unlikely that whole school assemblies will re-commence for some time, particularly in larger schools, so for the immediate future we plan to continue to involve the assembly teams in the provision of videos and other resources for classroom use. Other programmes that involve small groups, such as Cool Choices, may become possible first and we may well offer these as soon as we are able. As we look ahead, we need to consider the chances to change and develop our ministry that have arisen during this crisis as we continue with our mission to bring a Christian message to children in 2021 and beyond.

Prayers...

- ❖ Give thanks for the Xcellr8 weekend and all the other activities of the past term and for our willing volunteers.
- ❖ Give thanks that we were able to support schools in the spring term with videos and resources. Please pray that these and future resources will speak to children and staff alike in these days.
- ❖ Pray for the Connect and Reflect videos, Inspire transition bags and other plans for the summer term.

Contact: Steve Whyatt - stevew@genr8.org 01223 237874 or 07597 292239

Important news – We are moving our registered address from the Old Bank to 14 Rampton Road, Cottenham Cambs CB24 8UL – please pray for a smooth transition.

GenR8 is a Local Ministry Partner of Scripture Union