

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

This morning I had a Facebook notice to say it was my nephew's birthday. My first thought was, does he have two? It only seems like a few weeks ago since his last birthday! You won't need me to say that the past year has been a strange one, punctuated by shafts of light shining out of often bleak and difficult times. A year where normal has gone out of the window, and time seems to have stood still, yet raced by simultaneously! Where has the year gone?

At times I have looked back over the year and thought what have we achieved? Being unable to run several of our usual initiatives and activities, whilst trying to establish new routines in the midst of constant change, has at times proved frustrating and tiring. YET... we have kept regular contact with well over 100 primary schools through our Connect and Reflect videos; we have provided adapted resources for Inspire Prayer Spaces, Permanent Prayer Spaces, and It's Your Move; and we managed to run an online Xcellr8 weekend, to name but a few key accomplishments.

In addition, 2021 ended with us being able to lead a few 'trial' Cool Choices sessions with Year 6 students, as well as 35 'Advent' themed assembly presentations in person. How good it was to be welcomed back into schools so warmly and to see smiling children participating and listening so brilliantly. The teams were a little nervous after a 20-month absence, but it didn't take long to get into the swing, and as one team member commented after the last school had been visited: *'It made me remember why I love doing GenR8 so much.'*



"Can I say just how much I appreciate you doing these videos regularly. We are still not having worship together as a school ...They have been a really fantastic resource – with just the right balance of story, themes, prayer, reflection, so relevant - just the right length and the themes are always very apt too. Please pass on my thanks to the team. And please don't stop! Headteacher

"As a school we are very appreciative to GenR8 for all the support and encouragement over this past year. We have been very blessed in how you have walked with us over this season of the pandemic. Many thanks. Headteacher

We have been encouraged throughout 2021 by regular feedback from schools, parents, teachers, churches as well as children and young people themselves. In addition, we are extremely grateful for the prayer and financial support we have received during what has been a difficult year for us all. It is this combination that has motivated us to keep taking steps forward and to rely on God's strength for what is ahead.

Steve Whyatt stevew@genr8.org

My dear friends, stand firm and don't be shaken. Always keep busy working for the Lord. You know that everything you do for him is worthwhile.
1 Corinthians 15:58 (CEV)

SCHOOLS WORK

GENR8 'ASSEMBLY' PRESENTATIONS IN 2021

GenR8 Connect

For most of 2021 we were sadly unable to go into schools to do in-person assemblies. Instead, Steve and the team of many volunteers continued to produce regular 'GenR8 Connect' videos for schools to use in collective worship and RE. The over-arching theme for these 10-15 minute videos in 2021 was 'Life Lessons', exploring what Christians believe the Bible teaches about how we should live, and the positive impact that Jesus can have on our lives. Each was based around a bible story or theme, featured an introduction from the local team filmed on Zoom, puppets or a linked illustration, and ended with a time of reflection that encouraged the children to think about how what they had heard could impact their lives.



Making the videos required the large number of volunteers who would normally visit schools to spend many hours on Zoom, but the results enabled the connection between schools and their 'local' team to be maintained in some way. Many volunteers were also involved in the storytelling, puppets, illustrations, links and reflections that made up these videos. A summary of the 'Life Lessons' covered is in the table.



Title	Bible Lesson	'Life' Lesson
<i>I can do it</i> Gideon, Judges 6-8	If you follow God's instructions and trust Him, He will help you to do hard things.	Encouragement to try things that look difficult, even if we feel inadequate.
<i>Working together</i> Neh 8	God has made us all different parts of one body; if we work together with Him in His way we can achieve much.	We can achieve much more if we work together as we all have different strengths.
<i>Changing for the better</i> Luke 19:1-10	Zacchaeus and repentance – Jesus loves us all and we can have forgiveness if we say sorry and follow him.	When we realise we have done something wrong we can say sorry and change the way we behave.
<i>Letting go</i> Matt 6:9-13, 18:21-22	Forgiveness – we should forgive others without counting, as God forgives us.	Forgiving others isn't easy, but it can set us and others free from bad feelings.
<i>Starting small</i> Matt 13:31-33	Parables of yeast and the mustard seed – God's kingdom can grow from a small thing to something great.	The small things that we do can have a big impact.
<i>A time to...</i> Eccl 3:1-8, Matt 8:23-27	Jesus calms the storm – we will all go through difficult times in our lives but God is always with us to bring peace.	It is OK to have difficult feelings like fear and sadness, they are no one's fault. How we cope with them is important.
<i>Asking for help</i> Matt 8:5-13	Jesus heals the centurion's servant – if we ask God for help and have faith He will answer.	It is not weak to ask for help. If we are finding something hard, we should ask for help.
<i>Making wise choices</i> Matt 7:24-27	The wise and foolish builders – Christians build their lives and base their choices on Jesus.	The best choices are not always the easy ones; sometimes we have to work hard.
<i>Keep going</i> Luke 5:1-11	The miraculous catch of fish – God can guide us and encourage us to keep trying if we feel like giving up.	Perseverance – sometimes we need to keep going when things are hard in order to achieve what we want.
<i>Words, words, words</i> Prov 15:4, Phil 4:8, James 3:4-6	Words are powerful. Christians believe we should fill our minds with good things so use good words rather than bad.	The words we say or write can be harmful or encouraging. We should THINK and use good words.
<i>Who is my neighbour?</i> Luke 10:25-37	The good Samaritan – Jesus teaches our neighbours include those we might not agree with; we should help all in need.	Compassion is understanding those in different circumstances to us. We should love those all over the world.
<i>You are precious</i> Luke 15:1-7	The lost sheep – Christians believe God loves and cares for each individual, and he will search for us when we are lost.	Each of us is unique and precious. We should treat each other with respect and care.

Unexpected Easter

At Easter we took the opportunity provided by video presentations to cover many more of the events of Holy Week than is normally possible in a single live assembly. Three videos under the title 'Unexpected Easter' were produced. In the first, Jan told the story of Jesus' entry to Jerusalem on Palm Sunday as an eyewitness account of someone who had been there when young. It was unexpected that Jesus, who had done amazing miracles and was being called a king by some, should look so normal and be riding on a donkey! The second video looked at the events of the Last Supper, and as the story was told, Revd Kate Lees explained some of the unexpected events in more depth – the origins of the Passover, the significance of Jesus washing his disciples' feet, the betrayal by Judas and the institution of the Communion meal. A Roman centurion (aka David) described the events of Jesus' arrest and trial, Good Friday and Easter Sunday from his viewpoint. He marvelled at the unexpected choice of the crowd to free Barabbas and call for Jesus to be crucified; the unexpected attitude and words of Jesus on the cross, to care for and forgive others; and the unexpected empty tomb and reports of Jesus being alive.



Each of the 'Connect' style videos began with a humorous introduction from the local team and finished with a chance to reflect on what Christians believe about the events described and how we might respond. It was great to be able to look at Easter in more depth than usual and we hope that the videos will be a resource that schools can continue to use in years to come.



Advent

Teams were excited to be able to offer 'live' assemblies in the run up to Christmas. The presentation chosen focussed on Advent and what it means to get ready for Jesus (based on a script by Amy Robinson). The team and puppets discovered that it is really important to know what you are getting ready for. The Bible story looked at John the Baptist as he told the people to get ready for Jesus by changing their behaviour and turning to Him. Following Jesus means being prepared to help others in need, as described in our song, 'Jesus went out of his way', by John Hardwick. At the end of the presentation children were challenged to think about what Jesus was like when he came to earth, and why he did so.



Despite continued Covid restrictions meaning many schools were not able to welcome teams in person, some having to cancel at the last moment, a total of 29 schools were visited with this message. A video of the presentation was made and circulated to all schools, so no-one had to miss out.

All of the presentations were accompanied by supporting material for teachers, including video links, questions for further reflection, a prayer space idea and activities to help recall the bible story and the messages shared. The videos and accompanying materials can be found at www.genr8.org/videos.

“ We are really finding these brilliant - thank you. Especially as we have now increased measures in schools and are having less whole school worship. Headteacher

VOLUNTEER VIEWS – Neighbourly challenges... Who is my neighbour?

When the pandemic first hit, we all had to suddenly get used to doing things on video that we hadn't done before. A year later, making recordings of Zoom meetings seemed such a normal thing, even if they included passing coffee cups around or throwing globes to one another. So it didn't seem a big deal when Steve asked me to make a video clip of the Good Samaritan story for one of the Connect videos.

But the challenge turned out to be telling the story in a visually engaging way, without a full cast of actors and without a donkey. So I raided the dressing-up box (left behind by three now grown-up children), and the rarely visited far end of my wardrobe. Then I headed up to the woods with my wife, Ruth, as cameraman.

The idea was to tell the story from the perspective of the traveller and to present it straight to camera, but rather like a news story with still images interspersed. Hence how I found myself posing for the photos, dressed as four different characters. First being mugged and left on the roadside, then passing by on the other side and finally as the true neighbour from Samaria.

Of course, I still didn't have a donkey, but hopefully that didn't matter too much! Fortunately we were only met by a couple of passers-by during the photo shoot – I'm not sure if they were amused or worried by what I was wearing and doing.

Thanks, of course to Ruth for helping out, to Matt who had to glue all the pictures together into a video, and to Steve for the challenge. I know who my true neighbours are!

Paul Brown – Royston
GenR8 team



You can view the final result on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/E2avSQcaOWA>

MESSAGES FROM THE AFFILIATE TEAMS

Dennis from the West Norfolk team writes: *The work that GenR8 do is of the utmost importance! Saying the name of Jesus, loud and clear to young children in many primary schools is a wonderful opportunity that should never be missed - either in person 'on the road' or via Zoom recordings. To be able to stand up and give witness as being a Christian with Christian*



values is a Big Deal! Telling children of God's love for each one of us is something we should never lose sight of as being a Blessing; that is why I stepped forward. Unfortunately, serious ill health has brought me to a halt for the moment: how I wish I could be well enough to rehearse and get out LIVE!

Jo from the Gislingham, Suffolk team said: *We have joined another team to create Zoom presentations and have heard from a couple of the schools that these were well received. We haven't done anything else yet but are hopeful that we will be able to get back to the schools for this Easter.*



May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine on us— so that your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations. Psalm 67:1-2 (NIV)

INSPIRE PRAYER SPACES

Reflect Videos



Over the last year, 14 Reflect videos have been produced (4 in Spring term, 5 in Summer term and 5 in Autumn term) on a wide range of topics. Diversity, resilience, joy and kindness are some of the themes looked at, as well as topics like reducing single-use plastics and overcoming the challenges we face. Each video is about 5 minutes long and is based on prayer space ideas, giving children the opportunity to pause, reflect, think and the chance to pray, if they choose to. Each short reflection video can be used as an act of collective worship in classes or in larger groups.

Toppling Temptation had a Lent focus and looked at the period of time when Jesus was tempted in the desert. Siân, Iris and Bev asked those watching if they had chosen to give something up for Lent - maybe chocolates or fizzy drinks, and then to think about what tempts them - using unkind words, thinking of yourself before thinking of others, to give up when something is difficult, or something else. Siân explained that when Jesus went into the desert, he fasted and was tempted to turn stones into bread! Holding a stone, children are asked to think about those things they are tempted by and how tricky it is to say 'no' and not to do them. A prayer at the end thanked God because he is always with us, helping us to say 'no' when we are tempted.



Bouncing Back encouraged those watching to be resilient. Siân and Iris talked about how resilience means the ability to 'bounce back' when life knocks you down, like a sponge has the ability to expand and retain its shape after being squashed down! The video contained time for children to think about something that has 'knocked them down' recently, e.g. falling out with a friend, problems at home, or not doing as well in a test as they would have liked. Siân explained that to help us get back up, we need something that's going to encourage, strengthen and build us up and as Christians, we look to God for this strength and encouragement. After sharing a prayer, children were invited to bounce a ball in response, reflecting on what knocks them down and what encourages them and gives them the strength to bounce back.

Producing these videos on a regular basis has become a feature of each term and we hope that they will continue to be a useful, informative and thought-provoking bank of resources for schools to use. These videos can be found at: www.genr8.org/prayer-spaces

Siân Thorne – GenR8 Inspire Prayer Spaces Director

“ Re: GenR8 Reflect Video - Plastic Planet. Many thanks! I am now uploading this to our online Learning Platform for the children to access! Headteacher

Permanent Prayer Spaces

The Permanent Prayer Space project is now in its fifth year and we continued to support nine schools with materials in 2021. Schools involved in the project stretch across South Cambs and range from very small schools to much larger ones. Those signed up are: Elsworth, Wilburton, Oakington, Dry Drayton, Barton, Great and Little Shelford, Babraham, Abbots Ripton and Fordham Primary Schools. We were able to maintain good links throughout the year with the school staff and the church volunteers connected with these schools.

We also continued to adapt activities and display materials to allow schools a wide choice of new resources, changing every 4-6 weeks. Themes throughout the year included love and compassion, Pentecost, change and growth, and remembrance. We made sure each display was Covid-safe and didn't require children to touch pencils, paper, ribbons and other resources. Despite access to school being restricted, school staff have been very appreciative that Permanent Prayer Spaces has kept going as can be seen from the comments!

“ Thanks again to the GenR8 team, we continue to appreciate all you contribute to worship and prayer at our school.
Headteacher

“ 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... Headteacher

For Autumn Term, we moved back to delivering each theme to the local church volunteer and offered schools a more interactive and hands-on prayer space activity (similar to pre-pandemic support). Schools have then been able to make individual decisions about what materials they display, with some opting to use all the materials GenR8 provides and others using a slimmed down version. This is a brilliant example of how GenR8 has continued to support schools despite the difficulties and differences between each school's interpretation of the guidance!

So why is having a Permanent Prayer Spaces important in schools?

It creates a small sacred space in a school where children (and visitors and staff) can visit, observe, take time out, think, reflect, maybe even pray.

It's a way of providing Christian input to a school.

It's a way of developing links between schools and their local churches.

It's a way of showing children that God is interested in their everyday lives!

Special thanks to Janet King for continuing to distribute, support schools and liaise with local church volunteers throughout 2021, ensuring the project continues and children in these schools have access to a prayer space. Thank you, Janet!

Siân Thorne – GenR8 Inspire Prayer Spaces Director



“ As a retired teacher, I know how hard my ex colleagues have worked throughout the last two years. Consequently, I'm really pleased that these ready- to-use PPS kits provide a spiritual helping hand to both staff and pupils. Janet King – PPS volunteer



IT'S YOUR MOVE AND TRANSITION PRAYER BAGS

During the Summer Term, GenR8 once again sent out the *It's Your Move* video produced in 2020 to all schools in our area for use with Year 6 moving up to secondary school. The video features many of the elements that would take place during an in-person visit, including the phobia challenge, chill line and discussion of dilemmas, all predominantly led by young people in Years 11, 12 and 13. Schools received a link to the video as well as a teachers pack with guidance for running the workshop. The video is designed to be used alongside the Scripture Union *It's Your Move* books, which were kindly donated by local churches.



Because schools were still limiting visitors and an in-person *It's Your Move* tour wasn't able to take place, GenR8 offered some schools the opportunity to have an Inspire Transition Prayer Space bag for each of their Year 6 pupils. This is an individual drawstring bag for each child to keep, containing six items. Each one of these items was linked to a prayer space activity, each one giving pupils the opportunity to pause and reflect on their time at primary school and think about some of the challenges they may face as they move onto secondary. The bags also included instructions for each activity, plus we produced a video introducing the bags and explaining how to use them. In total 17 schools took us up on the offer, so just over 450 children received one of these prayer bags.

Putting these bags together was a large project and involved many volunteers. At times it felt like a small army was cutting fabric, sewing panels together, threading string, filling with the items and delivering to schools! Thank you to everybody that has supported this project in prayer, donated their time and/or sewing thread to enable this to happen.

“Our Year 6 children thoroughly enjoyed working through the activities at their own pace. It's clear that a huge amount of work went into producing these (including sourcing the materials, making the videos and making the bags). We found them very helpful, inspiring and relaxing. Thanks to everybody involved. Year 6 teacher



Janet and Siân with the transition bags



VOLUNTEER VIEWS – Telling God's Story

I first came into contact with GenR8 through Xcellr8, their annual residential weekend. I also held a respect for and had a history of serving with Scripture Union. One team member approached me with the idea of joining GenR8. So, I went to watch one of their presentations at a nearby school. I was enthralled – the time allocated seemed to whizz by – I was utterly engaged in all that took place and delighted at the response of the children – and indeed some of the staff. I was already being 'reeled in'! So it was that I joined my first tour in summer 2005.

What has made me continue with this ministry? Each year I become more convinced, amazed even, at the impact GenR8 has on both children and adults. I have become more committed to the cause with each year; more aware of our commission to 'tell the next generation'; more aware of the privilege it is to be able to do that very thing.

So many highlights along the way – perhaps one day we can all write a chapter for a book! The companionship and long term friendships that have grown through serving alongside others who share the same passion; the children's faces as they watch the presentations unfold; when the message has had an impact – their laughter, and at times, their silence; meeting some of those same children several years later who immediately respond with the 'waves,' only this time with deeper voices and far more extended arms! My three words to describe GenR8? **Telling God's Story**

Carol Thorndike – GenR8 West team



COOL CHOICES 2021

Cool Choices encourages children to think more deeply about choices they might have to make in later life and gives children an opportunity to see how Christians make life choices by looking to God.



Should we or shouldn't we? That was the question in early September as we grappled with whether to offer schools Cool Choice sessions for their Year 6 students. Eventually we decided to put our toes in the water and approach three schools with which we have very good relationships to offer Covid-safe sessions. All three schools responded positively, and we prepared and reshaped our session activities to suit, including the introduction of our version of 'Carrot in a Box' (See '8 out of 10 cats does Countdown!')

Here's what Bev said about leading one of the sessions alongside David:

David and I had such a good morning sharing Cool Choices with 17 Year 6 children. From the moment we introduced ourselves we enjoyed working with a very interactive, engaged group of children and encouraging them to explore the importance of making cool choices and how they can affect their lives. That face-to-face interaction really makes Cool Choices a full-on morning!

All three sessions gave the team a really positive and safe experience. As well loving being back in schools we were all impressed and encouraged by the participation and engagement from the Year 6 students.

“ We look forward to having you back for the same workshop next year. Year 6 teacher

VOLUNTEER VIEWS - Reflections from a 'Veteran Volunteer'

GenR8 were leading a Sunday School Leaders Training event that I attended in 2000. I enjoyed the lively way they interacted and could not get them out of my mind. So, I enquired about getting involved, and did!

Being part of a team is a wonderful way to visit schools (it would be much more scary to go alone) but also to learn new skills such as puppeteering and drama. It is great to present a fun assembly to children which tells them about Jesus. Most children do not attend church so have little knowledge of God. Telling them that He loves them and wants to be their friend is so important. That is why, after 20+ years, I continue to be involved!



How good it is to dress up in all kinds of weird and wonderful costumes along with your teammates and let the children see that grown-ups can have fun and to present the Christian message in such a winsome manner. Meeting children on trains, in parks and in shops and having them stop me to say, "You are with GenR8, aren't you?" is great and having teenagers say that they remember GenR8, even years later, is so encouraging.

Telling children about the Lord Jesus is such an important thing to do and we need more people to join the teams so we can continue to do it!

Summing up GenR8 in three words, I would say **Fun, Fellowship and Faces** (all those 1000s of children).

Jane Farewell – GenR8 Central team leader

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. Ephesians 3:20-21 (NIV)

CHILDREN OUTSIDE SCHOOL

XCELLR8



Xcellr8 2021 was called Navig8 - exploring what it means to be on a faith journey.

Planning for Xcellr8 2021 was a challenge – we had no idea whether it would be possible to run the weekend in person as normal. Could we do something online – a scary prospect! Or would we have to cancel? The planning meetings took place in the ever-shifting landscape of changing guidance as we moved in and out of lockdowns. The decision was taken to prepare something online and we had to be creative in working out what a virtual Xcellr8 weekend would look like. We were aware that some families might be fed up with Zoom – even more so when lockdown 3 started. However, we were encouraged after advertising the event when some families got in touch to say how grateful they were that we were able to offer something.



The weekend was jam-packed – and the bonus was that we probably all slept better than when we stay in the church! Despite being online, we kept many of the elements that go to make-up an Xcellr8 weekend. We sang, prayed, listened to talks, watched video clips, did challenges, had a quiz, and spent time in small groups. I had a lot of fun, met new people, learnt about God, and grew in faith – and given the feedback from the parents, I certainly wasn't the only one. God equipped the team of volunteers with many talents which were put to good use over the weekend. I'm sure children and leaders alike all enjoyed our online journey with Navigate.

Susan Meah – Xcellr8 Core Team



When the Core Team started planning Xcellr8 2021 back in July 2020, it seemed a long way off and filled with lots of uncertainties, questions and doubts as to how best transfer online an energetic and full-to-the-brim weekend while keeping the spirit of it... It was indeed a case of how we could 'navigate' this transition and I am still amazed at how everything, step-by-step, meeting after meeting, fell into place and difficulties were lifted one at a time.

One of the best things for me as booking officer doubling as a helper in the kitchen in normal times (it has its advantages though... being in close contact with all the scrummy cakes...) was that I could follow the main teaching sessions and had the privilege to even join one small group session. Whether it was walking with Tim along his faith journey, being sustained and transformed in our lives by reading the Bible with Steve, taking time to pray and even shout at God with Nicola, or making 'church' with Ruth and the people

who journey with us, each session brought thoughtful reflection and has stayed with me... my journey is still on, every single day, and I am not on my own to navigate the present times... God is never too busy to provide us with maps, signposts, stars, compass, sat nav and telescopes on our journey this way and that way!

Eliane Hamaia – Xcellr8 booking coordinator and team member

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Please pass on a massive thank you to all the team who put the weekend on. My daughter wasn't at all sure if she wanted to join an online weekend but once she had done the first session was so excited and loved each and every session. Xcellr8 Parent

“

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. Emily Staplehurst – Young Xcellr8 leader



Sadly, we were not able to run GYL or GYD for those in schools Years 6-8 during 2021. If circumstances allow, we hope to be able to look at doing so in 2022.



ADULTS – SUPPORT AND SUPPORTERS

STAFF

Oh what a joy to join in with most of the nation's work places and other establishments in experiencing Zoom meetings in 2021! We had regular staff meetings, at least once a fortnight, and learnt many new skills; how to share a screen, change your background settings, not to talk over others, looped with all the Zoom frustrations of frozen screens, Wi-Fi problems and folks who speak with slurred (Zoom) speech. All part of life's rich tapestry in taking hold of a situation and running with it! We are now all fully qualified in the great Zoom programme!

But there is nothing like meeting in person, and this year really brought this home to us all, how it is so good to see folks in the flesh, which we did once and when restrictions were lifted whilst of course following all the guidelines from the government. Let us continually hope that in this new year we will hopefully meet in person at some point.

Iris Considine – GenR8 Administrator

The staff team has remained stable this year. Siân been working for GenR8 4 days a week over the past 6 months and has kept very busy, with new projects in the pipeline as well as all the other Inspire activities detailed above. Matt Allin has faithfully worked on the 'assembling' of our videos from the components parts and is now being paid for this vital work. Other members of the paid team are Iris, Helen, Paul and of course, Steve. Kathryn is a volunteer on the staff team and has worked throughout the year on much of the Connect material, alongside Helen and Steve.



Chilly staff gathering on Royston Heath

VOLUNTEERS

Team Gatherings

This year there have been very few opportunities to gather in person as a full team to pray, share, laugh and eat together. However, it has been a blessing to be able to meet on Zoom so that we could at least do the first three! Steve has been brilliant in putting together Zoom quizzes, challenges, and also outtake videos to keep us all humble! In June a group did manage to get together socially-distanced to share cake and say thank you and wave goodbye to Myra as she re-located to Scotland.



Booking Coordinators

Thanks goes to our fantastic team of booking coordinators who have been largely responsible for keeping up a good relationship with schools in the absence of school visits. They were emailing schools with Reflect and Connect videos and accompanying resources most Mondays throughout the year – no mean feat. They were also able to book in some schools for the Advent assembly tour (and unfortunately also deal with the cancellations due to Covid outbreaks). Thank you to Bev, Dianne, Iris, Jennifer, Kathryn and Helen for all for your reliable work in this vital unsung role.

Goodbye and thank you, Myra

As detailed in our Autumn Newsletter, Myra moved to be closer to her family and can now view submarines sailing by her abode on the west coast of Scotland – a far cry from the Cambridgeshire fenlands! Myra was part of the assembly team for 18 years, leading the West team; we miss her so much. One of the advantages of these times is that she can still join us virtually and can even get involved in videos as long as the dog does not bark and the Wi-Fi signal is strong!



Myra with John and some puppet friends

“ GenR8 has been life changing in my walk with Jesus. How wonderful it has been to share the love of Jesus with so many children who will be able to hold onto that for the rest of their lives. Three words to describe GenR8? **Committed, Faithful and Visible.** Myra Gaunt

Two Awesome, Incredible, Remarkable Volunteers

At the end of 2021 Jackie and Peter Smith stepped back from our GenR8 assembly teams visiting schools. They have both shown incredible commitment, loyalty and faithfulness not only to GenR8, but to the children and primary schools in the Cambridgeshire area over many years.

Jackie has been with GenR8 from the very beginning in 2001, when she was part of our very first assembly team! Peter has always been closely connected to GenR8 and in the early days stepped in when he could, but it wasn't long before Peter became a 'GenR8 regular', again serving for 11 years!



In addition to our assembly presentations Jackie and Peter both served on our early Xcellr8 weekends for children aged 8-11, and more recently led Cool Choices sessions with Year 6 students in primary schools. But more than this, they have helped lead, shape and champion the work of GenR8 over the last 20 years.

THANK YOU feels very inadequate, and personally I am humbled by their love of Jesus. Jackie and Peter's devotion to children and their amazing passion to share the Good News of Jesus with children is inspirational; they will continue to do this through their church as well as their 'Light and Life' assemblies. We hope too that they can continue to contribute to aspects of GenR8 using their experience and wisdom. Indeed, at the time of writing they have agreed to visit our West Norfolk affiliate team to give some advice and support. It is a

privilege to have worked alongside Peter and Jackie. We have shared many incredible and special moments, and along the way we had quite a lot of fun too!

Some Memorable Moments...

Peter – We were halfway through an Easter sketch when Peter decided to relocate the tomb to an open cupboard at the side of the hall. We went with it, but it would have been nice if he had told us beforehand!

Jackie – One of our early assemblies when we were using a plastic worm which was dropped down David's top. To our astonishment at the last school Jackie produced a real worm! Thankfully Jackie palmed the real worm and continued to use the plastic worm although we didn't know that until the end of the assembly!

Steve Whyatt – GenR8 Director



“ Working with GenR8 over the last 21 years has been a privilege. There's nothing more rewarding than knowing that you are sharing the 'good news' with literally thousands of children in a fun, but meaningful way. God showed me quite clearly that we were planting seeds which He would build upon in the future lives of those children who remembered our words and as a result, called on Him in their time of need. My hope is that I will be greeted by many of them once we get to heaven. Jackie

“ Since retiring 10 years ago I joined GenR8 'full time' and have been in almost all assembly tours since then. In addition, I have enjoyed contributing to the ministry of GenR8 through Cool Choices, the Xcellr8 weekend (which included sleeping across a cold doorway!), script writing, as well as Sunday services in various churches across the region. Peter

TRUSTEE NEWS

The last year has been a season of change for the GenR8 trustees. We were so very sorry that Ian Sanderson, one of our founder trustees, and Chair since GenR8's inception, has had to lay down his commitment to the charity after so many years, to focus on his health. We miss his wisdom, compassion and sense of humour hugely. We lost another very experienced trustee, Lynn Murdoch, in the summer, as she moves on to other things. Her vast experience, refreshing viewpoints and impressive list of fundraising contacts are likewise greatly missed. Needing someone new to Chair GenR8 became a priority, to which I responded, (to paraphrase the words of Moses) *'Here am I, Lord – send someone else!'* However, God has not as yet sent anyone else, and so it is with trepidation but also much trust in Him, prayer from all our supporters, wisdom from trusted advisors and support and tolerance from my fellow trustees that I have taken up the role. And what a huge task we have before us! Appointing a new director is top of our 'to do' list, so as we look back at God's favour to us over the years, so we trust in his continued provision in the year ahead, as we seek to introduce thousands of children to the Christian faith.

Liz Jenkin, Chair of GenR8 Trustees



Trustee Perspective



My name is Penny Kite, and my first involvement with GenR8 was meeting Steve and a small team who came to take an assembly in my school (Barton Primary) in about 2001. I was really surprised and delighted by the presentation, because it seemed quite light-hearted and yet clearly showed the pupils how Jesus was relevant to them. Most children in primary schools do not go to any place of worship themselves, and have no idea that faith can be personal and precious.

Thinking that other teachers might benefit from some support material that was designed to follow up these visits, from summer 2002 and for the next 13 years, I wrote some light-hearted worksheets on behalf of GenR8, playing a small part in the 'relevance' link for schoolchildren, and indeed for their teachers.

When Steve Whyatt left Scripture Union and became employed by GenR8, I became a trustee, but only stayed for a year in that post, due to family commitments. However, I have continued to support GenR8, watching the work growing around the county and beyond, and re-joined the team this year. As I moved on to Foxton Primary School, I was able to enjoy many of the presentations from the audience perspective, and was heartened to discover how much the pupils looked forwards to the visits, and welcomed the team.

I have been a member of Great Shelford Free Church since 1976, participating in children's work of various kinds, and have been so impressed with the range of outreach that GenR8 performs, from assembly presentations to prayer spaces, from Xcellr8 (the annual residential weekend for 8-11 year olds) to 'Cool Choices', the teams show a degree of love and commitment, combined with presentational excellence, which is compelling.

During the pandemic, GenR8 has shown itself (along with all primary school workers) to be brilliantly flexible, and has taken to video presentations like a proverbial duck to water, taking seriously the command of Jesus to let children come to him, and that of Paul in his letter to the Romans:

'But how can people call for help if they don't know who to trust? And how can they know who to trust if they haven't heard of the One who can be trusted? And how can they hear if nobody tells them?' (Romans 10:14 – 17, The Message)

That is what we do.

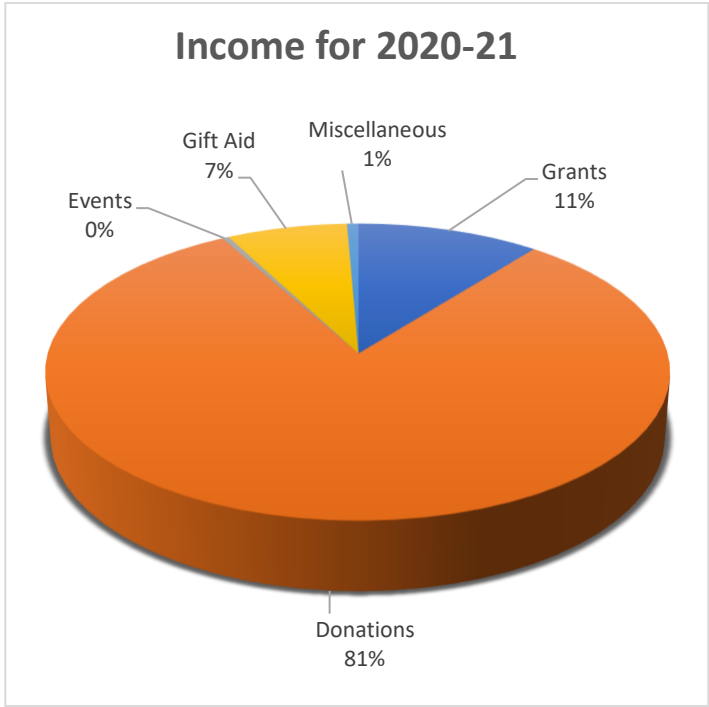
Penny Kite – GenR8 Trustee

GenR8's Objectives

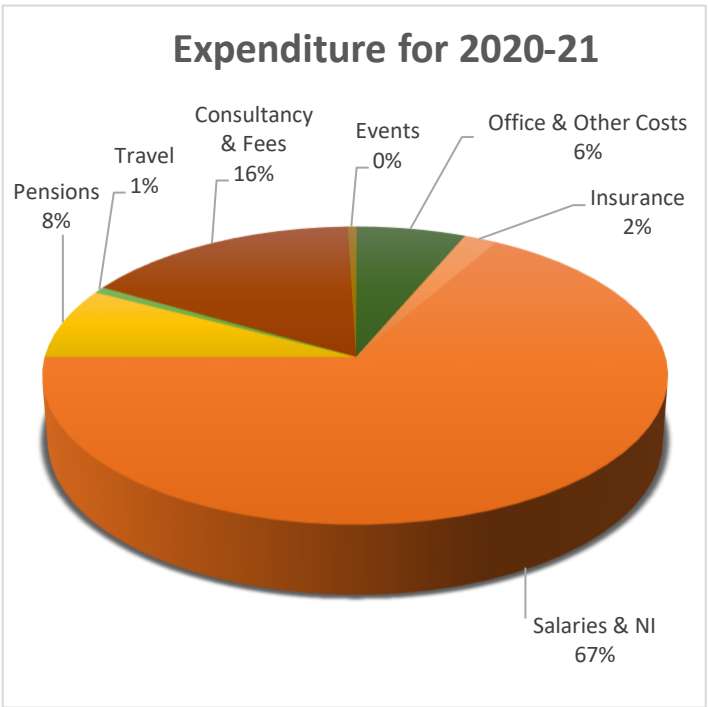
- To present the Christian faith to primary school age children in partnership with local churches and Christian volunteers.
- To work in partnership with local schools to promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- To communicate Christian values and themes with integrity and sensitivity.
- To present a positive image of the Christian faith and the Bible.
- To equip, inspire and enthuse children's leaders, local Christian volunteers and churches in their work with children and schools.

FINANCES

Where do our finances come from?



Where is our money spent?



For the financial year 2020-2021, the total income was £61,043 (down from £82,374 in the previous year). This was as expected due to the Covid restrictions that took effect at the start of this accounting period. Donations from individuals were only slightly affected, for which we are very grateful. Donations from churches actually increased, but unsurprisingly donations from schools dropped to almost zero as we weren't able to visit any schools. Also, the income associated with events such as XcellR8 and projects such as Inspire Prayer Spaces dropped significantly.

Some of our associated costs were also reduced by not visiting schools, making the total expenditure £58,618 (down from £63,206 in the previous year).

During the current financial year, started in April 2021, things have carried on in a similar way with just a small further drop in donations from individuals. And now that we have started getting back into schools, we expect some of the other revenue streams to pick up again.

If you don't do so already, could you consider making a regular donation to GenR8?
Even a small amount on a monthly or quarterly basis would help us to plan for the future and continue the work.

“ It has been a privilege to support all the good work you do in schools in Cambridge and around Royston, where we live. I have enjoyed reading about it all in the newsletters. I hope your work grows from strength to strength in the future and will continue to pray for God's blessing on you all. Financial supporter

We can make our plans, but the LORD determines our steps. Proverbs 16:9 (NLT)

Support us

If you would like to give to our work there are several ways you can do so: by cheque, BACS payment, online or with a standing order. Gift Aid can also be reclaimed on your donation if you are a UK taxpayer. If you shop online then you can also give without any cost to you by signing up with 'Amazonsmile' and 'Give As You Live' – a small proportion of each transaction goes into our funds. Visit our website for more information www.genr8.org/support-us. Thank you.



CHURCH SERVICES & EVENTS

West of Cambridge Churches Joint Service

It won't be a surprise to hear that we took part in very few of these during the last year. So it was exciting when we were invited to lead the children's work at the annual Comberton Ecumenical service in November that brings together a number of churches in the area. This year's theme was 'Earthed - recovering our connection' with Brother Samuel, a Franciscan Friar as the main speaker.

As well as running the children's work, we also provided material for those children who joined online, and we recorded a video for the all-age part of the service. It was encouraging for the team of Paul, Bev, Siân, and Steve to get positive feedback on the day, as well as after the service from a parent to say how much her child had enjoyed the session with us. Thanks too goes to Kathryn for producing the accompanying activity sheets.



The Lord God placed man in the Garden of Eden as its gardener, to tend and care for it. Genesis 2:15 (LB)

Pray for Schools



In March 2021, GenR8 worked in partnership with Youth For Christ to put on Pray for Schools: an evening event to encourage, support and share vision across Cambridgeshire. Gathering on Zoom, Christians working in primary and secondary schools were invited to come along for an hour that included worship, time for prayer and sharing, a short reflection based on Psalm 91, and the opportunity to hear from Joe Lowther at KICK and his vision for Cambridge. A hospitality pack was sent to all those who signed up - so everyone had all the tea bags, sweets and biscuits they needed for the evening! Also included was a wooden coaster and a selection of coloured pencils that we could use to create a

reminder of the message given – 'I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."' (Psalm 91:2). It was an uplifting evening with a message that very much needs to be heard by those working in education at the moment and it is hoped that more events can be planned for the future too.

God is our safe place and our strength. He is always our help when we are in trouble. Psalm 46:1 (NLV)

VOLUNTEER VIEWS – Practice (and Patience) Makes Perfect

Being a member of GenR8 during the last year has been interesting, and challenging, to say the least. Trying to organise Zoom presentations which ran smoothly and without jumps, pauses and other hiccups was fun and sometimes frustrating, leaving Steve with some great bloopers and blunders! Fortunately, the teams have a good sense of humour (and a lot of patience!) The old adage springs to mind - I asked God for more patience and boy did He let me have it 😂.

While we had our struggles, Peter and I were blessed in that we could both work together on various skits and puppet presentations without having to worry about social distancing - although, at times, it could have been useful to be distanced 😂!

My favourite sketch was when Peter had to feed me doughnuts on a stick! I thoroughly enjoyed having to practice a few times before the real take - the only downside was that Peter enjoyed waving the doughnut about in front of my face a little bit too much!

Jackie Smith – GenR8 North team leader



THE YEAR AHEAD!

2022 may well be a year of change in GenR8. Back in August we advertised for a new director. Sadly, we were unsuccessful in finding someone to take this role but will be advertising again during the first half-term of 2022. Steve plans to stay with GenR8 in a reduced capacity moving forwards, but feels the time is right to step aside and for someone else to lead GenR8 into the future. Do pray with us that the right person will apply and help develop the future direction of the work.

We are hopeful that 2022 will eventually give greater opportunity for us to be involved with children and schools 'in person' through our different initiatives. In addition, we will look to continue to develop videos for schools to use in assemblies and Religious Education (RE) although at a reduced rate. We also hope to be able to pilot an RE initiative with Year 4 students looking at the life of Jesus.

We are hopeful that more people will catch the vision of GenR8 particularly with our assembly presentations as there are opportunities and a real need for people to join the team in 2022. We are actively looking for people to share in the great commission to GO into local schools. It's a real privilege to be able to visit primary schools and share something of Jesus and what Christians believe. This opportunity is on our doorstep, but may not always be so as a current private members' bill is working its way through parliament looking to repeal the requirement for schools in England without a designated character to provide daily acts of collective worship. Now's a crucial time to join the GenR8 team!

As with last year it's likely to be difficult to plan too far ahead. But we seek to rely on God for tomorrow, knowing that today is challenging enough as we seek to provide opportunities for primary school age children to hear about and learn from the Christian faith.

Give your entire attention to what God is doing right now, and don't get worked up about what may or may not happen tomorrow. God will help you deal with whatever hard things come up when the time comes. Matthew 6:34 (The Message)

Pray with us

If you would like to become our partners in prayer then please consider signing up to receive Elev8. These prayer updates are sent out by email every few months with prayer points to help you be informed about our ministry and current needs. Get in touch with Helen – helent@genr8.org to be added to the mailing list.

We are so grateful for your prayer support during 2021 – please continue to pray for our work, for school staff, children's workers and of course children in these challenging times for us all.

Volunteer with us

Do you have a heart to share with this generation of children what it means to be a Christian and the difference it can make to our lives? Can you make time in your busy life to join a team that is sharing a Christian message in schools? No experience necessary - just the willingness to join in with likeminded people and GO! For more information about what it might mean or see what you might be doing please visit: www.genr8.org/volunteer-with-us

Most of the current volunteers, as you have read in the 'Volunteer Views' within this Review, never imagined that they would be standing in front of a group of children sharing Bible stories, singing (out of tune sometimes), acting out sketches and having a lot of fun together whilst sharing about God!

Keep in touch with us

If you do not already receive our termly newsletter and Steve's prayer letter by email or post and would like to do so, then please get in touch with Helen at helent@genr8.org. We would love to keep you informed about our ministry.

GenR8 is a Cambridge based Christian charity working with primary schools and churches in the Cambridgeshire and North Hertfordshire region. We support learning about the Christian faith in schools through a variety of different programmes including presenting assemblies and prayer spaces. We also support churches in their work with children and work in partnership with them and their local schools.

For more information about any of the activities mentioned in this Review please contact Steve Whyatt, GenR8 Director steve@genr8.org or tel. 01223 237874