

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 plans.

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

Looking back at the spring term

This term we sent schools two **Connect videos** for use in their collective worship, class assemblies or RE lessons.

Life Lessons – Hope

In this video John Hardwick told the story of how Jesus healed a blind man called Bartimaeus, giving him hope and a future. We shared that Christians believe that we can all have hope in God and that he can give us a reason to hope even in the dark, difficult days, like a light shining in the darkness.



Life Lessons – Generosity



Using the story of the widow who gave her last coin to God we shared that it is good to be generous with our resources; our time, our energy or our money. Children from a local primary school recorded their definitions of 'being generous' in the form of a 'Vox Pop', and Jimmy and Joe, our puppet friends, also shared their thoughts about giving their time to others even when it's hard to do.

Easter Presentation – Love

It was good to visit schools again this term and share the Easter story with an emphasis on how Jesus died in our place because he loves us. Assembly teams were booked to visit 74 schools although a few had to be cancelled due to Covid-19 cases, both within team members and in the schools. At Easter, just as at Christmas, we produced a video of the presentation so that no school missed out.

It was a joy to be out on tour again. The lovely faces of the children bring the whole assembly to life. We had a warm welcome from everyone even if the last day was far from warm - performing in the playground in a windy eight degrees was unforgettable!! Linda Hardy

It was a joy (albeit tinged with nervousness) to be back visiting schools in person. At the first school our stage was the playground – but the sun shone on us at 9:10 on 21 March. Our last day also saw us sharing the presentation outside – and in the space of three weeks the seasons had changed; we held onto our puppet theatre as well as our hats – in the cold wind – but it did not deter our delight in being able to visit the school again, nor the children's as they laughed at the puppets and sang with us. In summing up, this tour was indeed very welcome and a very poignant one for me personally - 15 schools where children heard of how Barabbas was given a second chance and that every child is a child of God. Carol Thorndike



Inspire Prayer Spaces

Siân produced three **Reflect videos** in the spring, with short thoughts and activities entitled *At the mountain top*, *Letting Go*, and *That's not fair*. These videos have become central to our support of collective worship in schools and continue to elicit encouraging feedback from teachers. A further video - *Hope in Brokenness* - was produced after a request from a school to respond specifically to current world events. This video was quickly recorded and edited at the beginning of March and offers a short encouraging reflection for children that even when things seem broken, there is always hope.



Easter Prayer bags - In March 648 children in nine primary schools across Cambridgeshire received an individual drawstring bag containing the items needed for six prayer space activities all linked to the events of Easter: joy, friendship, forgiveness, hope, serving others and our unique gifts and talents. The activities allowed children the chance to reflect, think about and explore Easter further and why these events mean so much to Christians today. These bags, which link to the RE curriculum around the life of Jesus, were offered to children in KS2 (aged 7-11) and feedback afterwards shows they really helped to *'focus our thoughts on Easter'*. Thank you to all those involved in sewing, packing and delivering these bags – it truly was a joint effort!

Please get in touch with Siân (siant@genr8.org) if you would like to be involved with any of the Inspire projects – we are still on the lookout for bag sewers and packers, as well as those keen to support children on Inspire days too!

Xcellr8 – Illumin8

Despite some apprehension in the lead up to Xcellr8 2022, the weekend was fully booked (36 children aged 8-11) and everyone had a brilliant time! Our theme focused on Jesus as the Light Of The World with teaching sessions taking us on a journey of - understanding Jesus as light in the world - seeing the power that light can have in transforming lives through two case studies - and then recognising that the same light can transform our own lives. We have had lots of fabulous feedback from parents, here's a few to give you a flavour:



It was my son's first time coming and he had the most fabulous time. He has talked so much about the games... he has also remembered lots of the teaching - explaining how Jesus is the light of the world who can stop us from stumbling. We have both been blown away by the extraordinarily high level of care, effort and love that went into the weekend. The whole way home my child and two friends just talked about all the fun and highlights from each day. They loved it all. The weekend has left a really positive impact and for that I am really grateful.

Now to think about a theme for 2023 that can end with an '8'!

Changes



Iris Considine, our administrator, sadly decided it was time for her to move on at the end of March. Kathryn Gee is stepping in as the interim GenR8 administrator and Paul Brown will also take on some of Iris's workload. Thank you Iris for everything you have contributed over these testing times. Iris said: *"What privilege to work with GenR8 over the last two years - I have had the pleasure of working with colleagues who are tireless in their commitment to delivering the Good News of Jesus to primary aged children... where do all those ideas come from!!! Thank you all"*.

Jackie and Peter Smith, long standing volunteers have decided that now is the time to step back and hang up the blue t-shirts as we mentioned in the annual review of 2021. They have been involved in all aspects of GenR8 – assemblies, Cool Choices, Inspire and Xcellr8 and will be greatly missed. We had one last chance to get them doing very silly things at our goodbye gathering.



Sadly, **Dennis Hunt** (top left on this Zoom assembly recording of the West Norfolk team) passed away on 15 March 2022.

Dennis had not been in the best of health for some months being in and out of hospital, but it was a shock when we heard of his death. Dennis had a young person's zeal for the Lord after coming to faith not many years ago, and he was passionate about sharing his faith with others. On hearing about GenR8 in King's Lynn in 2019 Dennis was blown away by the

opportunity to reach so many children with the Good News. *'I might not be any good, but I'm in!'* said Dennis at the end of the session Myra and I led. Thank you, Dennis, for being a wonderful servant and a great ambassador for GenR8.

Looking ahead

Inspire Prayer Space days – we are currently taking bookings for Inspire Prayer Space days which have not been possible until recently but can go ahead now that visitors are being invited back into schools.

Transition bags for Year 6s – we are planning once again to offer schools the opportunity to have a 'transition bag' for their Year 6 leavers containing items for six reflective activities. The activities give the children an opportunity to reflect on their time at primary school and challenge them to think about upcoming changes as they move onto secondary school.

It's Your Move – a team is being gathered to visit schools and give reassurance to Year 6 student as they move schools.

Summer assembly tour – teams are currently rehearsing and booking for our tour entitled *Forgiving Isn't Easy*.

Prayers...

- ❖ Give thanks for the spring term resources and thank God for all those who gave time and energy to produce them.
- ❖ Please pray for the summer term with a busy schedule ahead for assembly teams and Inspire activities.
- ❖ Give thanks for the continuation our Permanent Prayer Spaces in schools, and the support of volunteers and churches.
- ❖ It's Your Move is planned for 11-15 July – pray for the young team and for the Year 6 students they visit.
- ❖ Please continue to pray for the search for a new GenR8 director and the way forward.

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