

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

'GenR8 are a great bunch - really dedicated, sharing the Gospel in primary schools across Cambridgeshire.' Facebook post

21 years old! Not me, as one look at the picture will tell you! But GenR8 turned 21 in 2022. I'm not sure if the years have been kind to me, but they look pretty good on GenR8! From humble beginnings and with a conviction to do something with primary schools - a significant work now happens in the local area reaching out to thousands of children each year. Traditionally when you turn 21 some things change, and for GenR8 it's no different as Siân Thorne will be taking over as GenR8 Director on 1 March 2023. I hope that you will continue to stand with and for GenR8 in all that lies ahead.

We always have a challenge when it comes to our annual review and for the last few years the same conversation:

'Fifteen pages seems a bit long?'

'You're right, but how do we shorten it and cover everything we have done?'

'Not sure, but we need to get it out, so let's think about changing it next year'

And here we are with another 15 pages which we know is a long read (to be fair there are quite a lot of pictures!), but we feel this review reflects in a small way the significant amount of work we have been able to do in 2022. The challenges of the last two years in particular have been significant, and so much of 2022 was about finding our feet again, but we can look back with a certain amount of satisfaction for a job well done. For those of you who find that your tea goes cold working through this review, you can rest assured that we will be having the same conversation again about our 2023 review, although this time with Siân at the helm!

"I just wanted to say thank you for all the hard work you guys did. I left primary school 7 years ago now. I remember you and I was talking about how inspiring you all were to our generation and I know you guys are good at bringing light and telling us then - and the newer generation - stories. Thank you for everything you guys did keep up the good work. Young Person

Steve Whyatt steve@genr8.org

Over the five years I have now spent with GenR8, I have seen it change, grow and develop in its mission of 'presenting Christianity'. I know that as we look back over 2022 as well as look forward to 2023, we can be assured of the same things! One thing though will remain: 'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever'. Hebrews 13:8

Siân Thorne siant@genr8.org

"I was absolutely blown away by the brilliant performance and the amazing impact on the children. They were completely fascinated and exceptionally responsive. Both the head (to whom I spoke very briefly) and the staff who were in the hall were joining in and having a great time. The message was clear - just such a timely reminder of the wonderful work done by GenR8. GenR8 Trustee

"It has been a real blessing to have GenR8 come to our school over this past year. Our pupils are blessed as you share the gospel message and Bible stories with them, particularly the younger children they love the drama and the songs you share. Headteacher

We will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, his power, and the wonders he has done. Psalm 78:4

SCHOOLS WORK

GENR8 ASSEMBLY PRESENTATIONS IN 2022

Easter – Love

The message of Easter is not an easy one to take into primary and first schools, but this assembly shared the events of Easter from the imagined perspective of Barabbas – an outlaw who was released after the crowd chose to free him over Jesus. Barabbas in the sketch says, *“That should be me up there, that guy Jesus is dying in my place. I’ve done loads of stuff wrong, but he’s done nothing wrong. But now I’m free!”*. The assembly shared that Christians believe that God loves us so much that he sent Jesus to die in our place too, and that God raised him back to life again so that we can become his friends. A total of 74 schools booked the Easter tour although some had to cancel due to the rise in Covid-19 cases.



Summer – Forgiving isn’t Easy

Team members had to learn to forgive one another in this fun assembly – not only did someone get water thrown over them, but also their favourite football was punctured! The puppets also learnt that forgiving is not easy – particularly when a friend lets you down big-time by leaving you behind on a trip to the circus! But the puppet eventually recognised that we all make mistakes and let people down, and so forgave their friends. The sketch shared the story that Jesus told, known as the parable of the Unforgiving Servant from Matthew 18:21-35, where Jesus teaches us the importance of receiving God’s forgiveness and extending it to those who have wronged us. The tour visited 68 schools, lower numbers than in the past but with encouraging feedback.

Christmas – The Gift

This presentation shared that Jesus is the most important gift at Christmas - God’s gift to the whole world. One team member forgot to put the present in the beautifully wrapped box they had prepared, so when their friend opened it there was nothing inside! We reflected that sometimes we get so distracted by the Christmas trees, the tinsel, the lights, the food, that we too forget what Christmas is really all about – the gift of Jesus. Our fun re-telling of the Christmas story involved a clueless team member who kept getting the story wrong – but eventually discovered that despite the story having no brave knight, no princess, no fairy godmother, no palace and no golden cot it was amazing as a baby king was born and the birth was announced by angels! Over 120 schools were visited with this Christmas assembly – a great return to pre-Covid numbers.



We recorded versions of our Easter, summer and Christmas assembly presentations for schools that were unable to have us visit them...or wanted to see it all again! These were sent as YouTube links along with supporting material for teachers with 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.

Volunteer Views - Reflections of a New Volunteer – Sarah Reynolds

As a mum to two children (6 and 2) and already in a volunteer role, I wasn’t planning to take on volunteering with GenR8. But then I went to a morning event with Camcan (Cambridge Christian Action Network) where I learnt about lots of local Christian organisations and charities. GenR8 shared how they were visiting over 100 primary schools sharing a Christian message in a fun assembly format but that they needed more volunteers. I heard about a lot of great opportunities that day, but GenR8 stood out. I used to do similar work way back in the dark ages (before I had children) but it had been a while and I was a bit nervous about getting involved. All I can say is that I couldn’t have been better supported. I joined the South team and we had a few rehearsals to go over the script and practice together. We then visited 22 schools over 3 weeks leading up to Christmas. We had a lot of fun together as a team. But more significantly we also got the privilege of seeing children understand more about the real meaning of Christmas and hopefully encouraged many children from a Christian home, all during a really fun assembly. If you are considering volunteering with GenR8 I would encourage you to do it. You won’t regret it!

Connect Videos

The year saw us continue to provide Connect videos to primary schools. These 12-15 min assembly-style videos aimed to resource primary schools as they adjusted to students being back in school, whilst grappling with the ongoing challenges of Covid-19. Although not providing videos so frequently in 2022, we felt it was important to maintain this area of work and support for schools. During the first part of the year our videos continued to focus on values such as *inspiration, trust, truthfulness, generosity, and hope*. During the latter part of the year we began a series on Jesus with videos titled, *Jesus the Refugee*, and *Jesus the Friend*; something we aim to carry into 2023.

Whilst the videos are a lot of work, particularly as we have increasingly got back into schools throughout the year, we feel that their value has been very significant, and in many cases our relationship with local schools has strengthened through this provision. Indeed, in going back into schools we have often been referred to as film stars!

Steve Whyatt, GenR8 Director



Volunteer Views from a video star – Petal White

It was just great to be a part of the GenR8 videos that were put together both during the lockdown period and after that... Wonderful that through the video work that we did the children could still enjoy seeing us within the schools especially during a time where they possibly needed the fun and encouraging presence of GenR8 in their classrooms. Thanks to all the recordings we did we could ensure the children could still see us, and we were hopefully able to encourage and bless them through what was, I am sure, a difficult time for them. It was really great to be a part of this! I loved recording for the videos and working alongside and getting to know different team members. It was particularly fun to be able to share important messages with the children and work with other team members who were not on my usual team! Great fun, great work and a great chance to encourage children with uplifting and inspiring themes!



Brilliant. I so appreciate all these videos. 😊 Headteacher

MESSAGES FROM THE AFFILIATE TEAMS

West Norfolk team update

At the beginning of last year, the West Norfolk team consisted of Jan Hubbard, Dennis Hunt and myself. Dennis had been unwell and Jan and I were wondering where to go from here! What a lot has changed since then!

Sadly, Dennis passed away before the Easter visits, but we had the joy of two new members joining the team in January '22 – Sue and John Archer.

We continued to pass on the Reflect and Connect videos to our W. Norfolk schools and we had some verbal feedback that many were being shown and enjoyed.

We (rather tentatively) asked the schools if we could visit them with the Easter presentation and were very encouraged when four schools immediately said: "Yes please!" We ended up with 11 schools on our timetable but three of those had to cancel at short notice due to Covid outbreaks, so eventually we were thrilled to be able to go into eight schools – all of whom were very pleased to see visitors again!!

Then, in May, Jan Hubbard, suddenly went to be with the Lord. It was a shock, not only to lose a friend and sister in the Lord, but also yet another member of the team! We had decided not to go into schools with the summer presentation anyway as we were busy preparing for our first Holiday Bible Club at church for some years. However, we were now praying and looking out for more team members – again.

We started rehearsing for the Christmas presentation when we had offers from two people to help with the narration of the 'The Gift' story. Neither felt able to join us full time but were very happy to help out so we jumped at the chance. Consequently Jan Rose (from our church) and Richard Pennington joined us, and we were able to go out to 16 schools. Once again, they were very pleased to see us and two of the headteachers showed their appreciation by saying: "You will come back next Easter won't you!"

So, we're back to three full team members, looking out for others to join us but very grateful to the Lord for providing us with extra help when needed! (Richard has offered to help us out when he can at Easter!)

Anne Sparrow, on behalf of the W. Norfolk team



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)

Suffolk team update



It is with a twinge of sadness that Jo, Margaret and I are stepping back from visiting schools to pass on the GenR8 message. Jo and I were introduced to GenR8 by Amy Robinson about 14 years ago, Margaret a little more recently, and we have thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to pass on the Christian message in an entertaining and informative way. The expressions on the children's faces when they come into the hall and see the GenR8 team are there is priceless; many of them shyly greeting us with GenR8 waves. Sadly, Jo and I were generally behind the puppet screen with our friends Lucy and Adam so we couldn't see the reaction to the trouble Adam always seemed to be in – but we heard it very clearly! It was interesting how powerful some of the presentations were – the mimes in particular had more impact than might have been anticipated. The time has come though when dashing across the stage on a stallion or being a Roman guard one moment before being a reporter for TV becomes too much of a challenge. All three of us wish GenR8 the very best for the future and hope to be able to see a new team formed for our part of Suffolk.

Chris Pitt, Suffolk Affiliate Team

INSPIRE PRAYER SPACES

Reflect Videos

These short reflective videos have continued this year as a way of supporting schools with collective worship. We recognised that not all schools went back to having whole-school assemblies as quickly as others so have produced nine more videos on topics that have included our achievements, fairness, forgiveness, God's love for us, friendship and the power of positive thinking. Each video uses Inspire Prayer Space ideas and encourages children to stop and think, reflect and be still. There is time for discussion, a short reflective activity, a reflection based on a Bible passage and a prayer.



As well as producing new videos, 2022 also saw us review the 25 Reflect videos created in the last few years. We have refined the selection appearing on the website to ensure that they are relevant and don't contain references to 'being at home' and 'lockdown'! This has meant some needed to be re-recorded and others edited but we now have a resource bank of 16 videos that are available for schools if they are wanting a short time-filler or reflective activity at any time of the day.

“ Thanks for your 'teams' reflection video - we used it today with the children. Perfect timing as well as we are in the middle of an Ofsted inspection, where being part of a team is really pretty important! Teacher

Hope in Brokenness

In response to situations of conflict in the world, we produced a one-off Reflect-style video in March, after schools contacted us and asked if we could create something, showing the high value schools put on the material GenR8 produces. We were happy to



respond with a video resource *Hope In Brokenness* that Siân and Steve worked on together. The video reflected that the world can sometimes seem to be broken; but out of brokenness, out of tough times, out of conflict, there can be hope. It was based around the Japanese art of kintsugi where broken pottery items can be restored and mended and this image was used to reflect that there is HOPE; a hope that things will not only be restored, mended, but once again be beautiful. We hope that this video continues to support other reflective opportunities happening in school in response to situations in Europe, but it could also be used to reflect more widely on the many other conflicts and tragedies happening in the world right now. These videos can be found at: www.genr8.org/prayer-spaces

Permanent Prayer Spaces



GenR8 has continued to support nine schools with a Permanent Prayer Space. Many of the schools involved have been with us for a number of years – a real encouragement that what we are producing is supportive, relevant and very much needed! These spaces range from a chair to a display board in a busy corridor to a small table - the materials are very flexible and adaptable! Themes change every 4-6 weeks and over the last year have included Lent and Easter, celebrations, growing and changing and Remembrance. In all the schools we have built good relationships with school staff and the local church volunteers, who liaise with the school about putting up each new display. This project couldn't continue without the support of all these volunteers, faithfully putting up new displays, talking to the children and staff about the new themes, and passing on information to the wider church body.

We have now started to actively look for more schools to join this project. As the PPS project came out of the Inspire Days and we now have new bookings for 2023, we hope to support more schools with creating a PPS in the future.

Many thanks to Janet King for her role in the Permanent Prayer Space project: supporting a number of schools, delivering the display items and generally collaborating with Siân when thinking of new theme ideas!

Inspire Prayer Space days

This year we ran three Inspire Prayer Space days as schools opened up after the pandemic. May saw our first Inspire Prayer Space Day for almost two years! St Phillips Primary in Cambridge were holding a Wellbeing Week and they wanted Inspire to play a part. We focused on 'me, my community and the wider world' and every class in Key Stage Two (Years 3-6) spent time exploring the activities in the space supported by St Phillips church.



In November we ran an IPS day for Fordham Primary, with the wider aim of encouraging the use of prayer more widely in their classroom prayer space. The day produced some brilliant comments from staff about how they were going to use the calming and thought-provoking activities later on in their classrooms. The day also had an impact on the children:

“ When you are angry, you can sit with the bubble tube for 20 seconds and you are alright - It made me think about the people in my life - The jewels made me think about the future - The scratch art activity made me think of helping my friends when things are tough.

...and on the wider church community as St Peter and St Mary Magdalene Anglican Church supported the day with one local church volunteer saying:



“ Just wanted to say how much I enjoyed taking part in the Prayer Spaces and hearing the children's responses, very humbling. The equipment also was very beautiful and so well thought out. I am going to reclaim a prayer space in our church again and set it up for the coming season. My heartfelt thanks to you.

In the autumn term we also visited Bourn Primary for an IPS based on their school value of 'forgiveness'. We spent two very wet days in St Helena and St Mary's Church, over the road from the school and the whole school spent time in the transformed space. Around 180 children and 30 adults (a mixture of school staff and volunteers from the school community) heard the message that they can pray and communicate with God by talking, whispering, thinking, performing an action, making something or being still and listening. Many of the volunteers who walked the children across from the school commented that "I never had anything like this when I was at school".

“ Thank you for this. It is wonderful to read the positive feedback from the children and see the impact of the day! Staff Member

Easter Prayer Bags



Along similar lines to the Transition Prayer Bags, this started as a one-off project for 2022 based around Easter. We used many of the same features that we know worked well (individual drawstring bag for each child with a video introduction from Siân) but this time we wanted schools to use these bags alongside their RE curriculum to support learning about the events of Easter, Jesus' life and the impact for Christians today.

In March 648 Key Stage Two children (aged 7-11) in nine primary schools across Cambridgeshire received an individual drawstring bag containing the items needed for six prayer space activities on themes linked to the events of Easter: joy, friendship, forgiveness, hope, serving others and our unique gifts and talents. The project allowed children the chance to reflect, think about and explore Easter and why these events mean so much to Christians today. Schools fed back to us that the bags really helped to support learning, as well as

being a fun and creative way to explore and engage with the events of Easter. Therefore, we are currently considering how to develop this idea and use it again in the future.

Siân Thorne, GenR8 Inspire Prayer Spaces Director

“ Thank you for the Easter bags for Owl Class... the children spent time incorporating the crafts and challenges within the bags into their RE and reflective lesson time. Teacher



IT'S YOUR MOVE AND TRANSITION PRAYER BAGS

For the first time in two years the It's Your Move tour was back in person! Six young people aged 16 to 19 visited 14 schools alongside Steve and Siân in a very hot week in July. The workshop involves a phobia challenge, chill line and discussion of dilemmas the pupils may or may not find themselves in at secondary school. Being back in person allowed us to really interact with the pupils in each school, listening to their worries and offering support from those who have recently been through a transition of their own, encouraging them that they will not only survive the experience, but they will thrive.



The workshop brings a Christian perspective through the story of Joseph who faced many changes, challenges and choices throughout his life. Despite all those things, he remained faithful, honest and most importantly, he did the right thing. We left each school with a challenge to the children of doing the same – despite the changes, challenges and choices they face! We also encouraged the young people to talk to someone if they feel worried. We suggested those in their family, friends or those they already know at secondary school, people in church, clubs and groups they are part of and also their Year 6 teacher who has probably seen it all before and will probably have some good advice.

As in previous years, all children received a copy of the It's Your Move book, produced by Scripture Union, after the workshop. These books were often donated by local churches as a gift to the pupils. It was lovely to also have the support of church members during the delivery of these workshops and to hear them tell the children that they are prayed for and supported by their local church – a very powerful message!

“ I would like to say a huge thank you to the team who came yesterday. The children absolutely loved the session. The balance is perfect and helps to maintain the children's engagement throughout. We love how the team provides such an important message in such an inspiring way. Year 6 Teacher

To those schools that we unfortunately were not able to visit this year, we sent out an updated version of the video produced in 2020, along the same lines as the workshop. We were encouraged to see that it had been viewed on YouTube a good number of times so decided, once the young people were confident with the message we were delivering, to re-record a version that could be used in 2023 and beyond! We recognise that many schools make use of the videos GenR8 produces so was good to add an It's Your Move workshop video to our repertoire! We are



sure this will be useful to schools in the future but will also contribute to GenR8's reach, as videos are sent to many more schools than we are currently able to visit.

In conjunction with the tour, we also offered Transition Prayer Space Bags, as started in 2021. This is another project to have come out of being in lockdown which has had such a positive impact that it is continuing! A total of 437 Year 6 leavers in 15 schools received a Transition Prayer Bag to keep, containing six items all linked to a prayer space activity. The activities in each bag gave children the opportunity to reflect on some of the themes covered in the workshop and a chance to process their thoughts and feelings associated with leaving primary school and the transition to secondary. As before, bags were sewn, filled and delivered by a team of volunteers, many of whom have been involved for a second year. We are incredibly grateful for all this support - thank you! We are currently looking at how we can make it a regular feature alongside the It's Your Move workshop tour for 2023.



“ They have opened their Transition Bags today and have 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 have found them very helping, inspiring and relaxing. Year 6 Teacher

“ 'It's Your Move' is a great event and so valuable for young people. It's also good experience for the young people so thank you for going to all the trouble you do. Parent of Young Team Member

COOL CHOICES

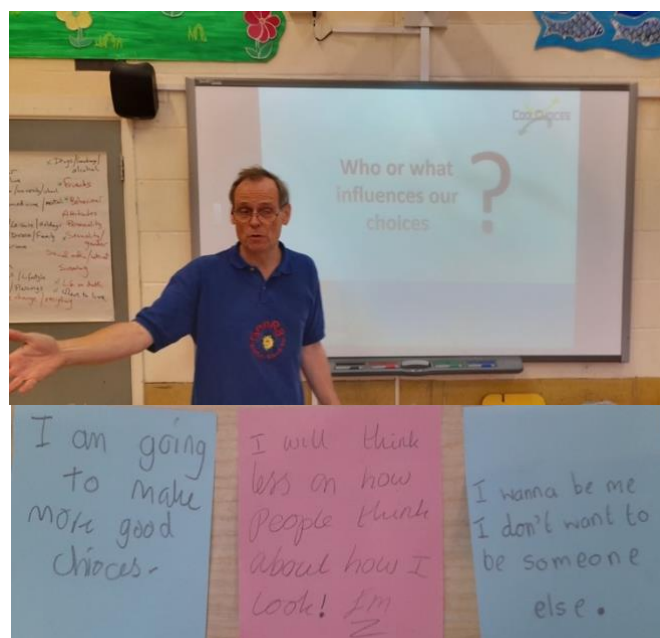
Cool Choices is our workshop that encourages Year 6 students to make positive life choices and provides students with a Christian perspective to consider. It has been running since 2013 and is interactive with drama, video clips, small group discussion, as well as opportunities for students to participate and share thoughts and ideas. The session encourages pupils to think through questions like: What are choices? Who influences our choices? How can we know what are good and not-so-good choices? What are the barriers to making good choices?



One activity in the session involves pupils thinking about as many big life choices as they can: job/career, where to live, education, friendships and marriage to name a few. It was really positive to see how many pupils named 'happiness', 'perseverance' and 'determination', showing how values like these are now viewed as important as other choices we face. This is a marked difference to before the pandemic and highlights just how much attitudes have changed because of our experiences around Covid-19.

It was fantastic to be warmly welcomed into so many schools and to have the opportunity to share with and influence young lives. Our prayer would be that God will continue to work in the children's lives and that many of those we met will find their strength, purpose and foundation with Him.

Each Cool Choices session was led by two GenR8 team members; Paul Brown, David Newton, Bev Thomas, Siân Thorne, and Steve Whyatt visited 22 schools between them and led 32 sessions in 2022. Steve also led Cool Choices in four schools in the St Neots area with Jenny from [Actios](#).



“ Student feedback included: *I will do my best to think about what affects my choices will have on me. You don't have to make the same choices as your friends. Choices make who you are and there are lots of small choices every day! Whatever choice you pick there is always a consequence. The choices you make can impact your life.*

“ Year 6 teachers commented: *What you guys do is more important than ever these days. A thoroughly enjoyable and informative morning which our children will all have benefitted from. It was great how involved the SEND (Special Educational Needs) children were and how age appropriate it was. The session encouraged children to self-reflect on the importance of making positive choices. It was age appropriate – sometimes we can patronise Year 6 but this was pitched really well.*

VOLUNTEER VIEWS – Reflections from a Cool Choices Volunteer

David and I really enjoyed being part of a fully booked Cool Choices tour in September/October alongside Steve, Siân and Paul. It has been so encouraging to see how schools want to book in and allow their Year 6 children to participate in this 2-hour workshop. It is a great opportunity to work more closely with a class exploring in a deeper way what choice is, how it can be cool and not cool, and how the ripples from our choices affect us, others, our communities and our world. Different activities, discussion, videos and group work help the children be confident about their own ideas and opinions while listening to others too. We also explore how God provides us with a firm foundation to our choices and how much God knows and values us as unique individuals.

The session is fast moving, fun and thought provoking - you never know what may come up in the conversations and activities and it is especially good to see how the children have had time to consider Cool Choices in a more thoughtful way. They often go away excited by what they have explored and inspired to think more about the ripples they will make in their lives and the affect faith can have too.

Bev Thomas, Cool Choices team

But Jesus called the children to him and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these". Luke 18:16 (NIV)

CHILDREN OUTSIDE SCHOOL

XCELLR8



Illumin8 was the theme of our 2022 Xcellr8 weekend for children aged 8-11, where we investigated Jesus as the light of the world. Our aim was to take the children on a journey to understand Jesus as the light in the world; seeing the power that this light can have in transforming lives, and then recognising that this same light can transform our own lives.

Whilst glad to be back in person, we did decide to be non-residential, and this proved to be a big hit with parents - their children didn't come home completely shattered! - as well as with leaders who could sleep in comfy beds rather than inflatable ones that go flat in the middle of the night!

For safety reasons we limited numbers to 36, although ended up with 37 children as well as a waiting list. As always, the weekend was full of fun, and a brilliant way to support children on their faith journey.

Here's what Lynn Hawkins one of our adult leaders had to say:

'Not only is Xcellr8 a great way to get closer to God; it enables children to meet fellow Christians, build friendships and encourage each other along the path of knowing Jesus. Xcellr8 provides a freedom for children to explore faith openly without judgement. For me as a leader it's wonderful to observe the children: questioning, testing, and growing their faith, while building friendships along the way. I also find that as a leader I can be challenged and encouraged in my faith just as much as the children! There is no one thing I can highlight, I love the wide games as much as the small groups, (the material is excellent!) the food as much as the swimming. The weekends are so well thought through, they bring blessings to all those involved and that's why we keep coming back.'

A young Xcellr8 team member said:

'When I was younger, I took part in Xcellr8 as a child over a couple of years and I remember it being the most exciting weekend which I spent weeks looking forward to. I loved it not only because of the games and friendships I made, but also how special it was to come to a place where faith was at the forefront and I was encouraged to explore Jesus. It remains a significant part of my life as I joined the young team more recently and now I am grateful to be the one helping to encourage other people to open their hearts to Jesus and what he has to offer. It's a privilege to be part of Xcellr8 and get the opportunity to work with a team of people who I used to look up to.'



“ It was my (son's) first time coming and he had the most fabulous time. He has talked so much about the wide game, the fabulous food, the challenges, the swimming, the leaders, the rock star, the songs...he has also remembered lots of the teaching - explaining to us how Jesus is the light of the world so he is the one who can stop us from stumbling. My husband and I have both been blown away by the extraordinarily high level of care, effort and love that went into the weekend. Xcellr8 Parent

“ I wanted to say thank you for the Xcellr8 weekend, (my daughter) had an absolutely excellent time and two weeks on she is still talking about it and sharing things that she learnt ... (My daughter) has said she can't wait until she is old enough to come as a young leader which speaks volume of the value she has put on the event and the impact that the young leaders who were there this time had on her - that she aspires to be like them - all credit to them and the ethos of the adults working with them. Xcellr8 Parent

How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news. Isaiah 52:7a

GROWING YOUNG DISCIPLES

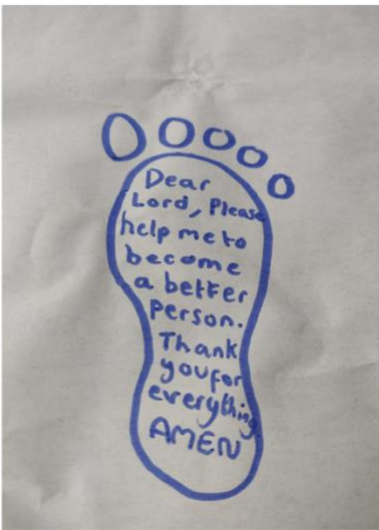
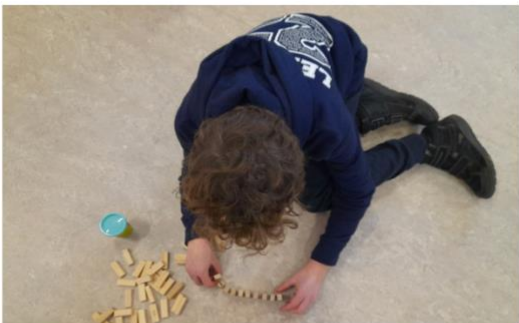
November this year saw the first Growing Young Disciples day since 2019, run in conjunction with Nicola Grieves, Children and Youth Development Officer with the Eastern URC Synod and distinguished GenR8 alumna! This day for children in Years 6-8, looks at how we are all disciples of Jesus, following his example and learning from him. The programme was adapted this year to be run on a single day (our last GYD day was an overnight residential) and included teaching sessions, games, food, discussion time as well as time for reflection and a creative response to what they had heard. We looked together at how we need to model Godly character, minister grace and love, become a messenger for the gospel and grow in fruitfulness.

Ten children from churches in the local area came together on a grey November Saturday, leaving as a result of the day with “new friendships”, “more confidence” and a desire to “share their faith with others”.

We plan to run this day once every few years, alongside Growing Young Leaders, aiming to ensure that children have at least one opportunity to come to each day. By using GenR8 connections with churches and families, we hope both these days serve as the next step for young people after Xcellr8.



“ My child really enjoyed the day & was keen to tell me all about it! It is such a good idea to have something for the kids (young people) of this age group to get involved in something that’s not ‘normal’ church! Thank you for organising it & continuing to encourage the youngsters in their walk with Jesus. Parent My child had a fantastic day! Parent



ADULTS – SUPPORT AND SUPPORTERS

STAFF



It was with sadness that we said goodbye to Iris Considine in March. Iris had taken on the part-time role of GenR8 administrator in the autumn of 2019 and just as she was getting to grips with the job it completely changed when we were all hit by the pandemic. However Iris threw herself into the new challenges that were presented and, along with the rest of us, became adept at meeting online and doing everything remotely. She also appeared in a number of our videos and so can now add YouTube star to her CV! Thanks go to her for being adaptable and willing to carry on despite everything! Her admin role is at the moment being ably covered on a temporary basis by Kathryn Gee – who is juggling being on the Royston

assembly team, booking assembly tours and GenR8 administration with a part-time job at a Cambridge college – no mean feat! Paul Brown, our bookkeeper, has also taken some of Iris' work by tackling the paperwork for DBS checks and safeguarding.

The big news on the staff team is of course Siân Thorne being appointed as GenR8 Director in late 2022 with the official handover on 1 March 2023 (see Trustee news on page 12). Our current director, Steve Whyatt, is not going anywhere and will remain on staff but drop down to working 4 days a week soon. Steve will hopefully have more time to concentrate on the face-to-face work. Matt Allin has continued to work on the 'assembling' of our Connect and Reflect videos from the components parts and is now being paid for this vital work. Helen Tobiss continues to work part-time on various tasks behind the scenes including producing the newsletters and other paperwork as well as helping with the scripts for both assemblies and Connect videos, alongside Kathryn.

VOLUNTEERS

Booking Coordinators

We need to acknowledge the contribution to the work of GenR8 made by the fantastic team of booking coordinators who have been emailing schools with Reflect and Connect videos and accompanying resources throughout this year. They were also able to book school assembly presentations this year with many schools relaxing their restrictions on whole school assemblies and on visitors. Thanks go to Bev, Dianne, Jennifer, Kathryn and Helen for all for their reliable work in this vital area. Jennifer has now stepped back from the role after three years and we are grateful for her commitment to us during that time, with all the changes and challenges that the pandemic brought. Ruth Gabe is joining the team and planning to take on the task of booking the West team's assemblies in 2023.

Team Gatherings



It has been lovely to be able to meet together in person this year rather than on Zoom and there have been several opportunities. In May we had our post-Easter assembly tour gathering combined with a celebration and thank you for two of our longest standing volunteers, Jackie and Peter Smith. Jackie and Peter have served in virtually all areas of our ministry over the past 20+ years so it was great to be able

to eat cake together (and feed them with doughnuts on long forks as in the photo above! – a reference to a video they took part in!). A longer article on their contribution to GenR8 over the years can be found in the 2021 Review.

The team day in October was a chance for anyone connected to GenR8 to gather, drink coffee, worship, pray, have fellowship, eat lunch, and have fun together. The focus, unlike past days like this, was not on training but just to be together. It was a brilliant day of refreshing and reconnecting. The prayer space activities were a highlight of the day for many and were an opportunity to reflect on why GenR8 exists and the importance of our mission to reach this generation.



TRUSTEE NEWS

Looking back over the year, it seems hard to believe that for many schools, the spring term of 2022 was the hardest one of all in Covid terms. Worn out after months of restrictions, staff were dropping like ninepins, and supply teachers were nowhere to be found. GenR8 did what had by now become its default 'opus moderandi' – in other words, we made videos. Despite the gratitude with which they were received, and the proficiency with which we can now produce them, it was with great relief that gradually as the spring progressed, we were at last able to visit schools in person once more. Although we were challenged by depleted assembly teams, the show went on, and what a joy it was! The summer and autumn terms have been, as far as possible, 'business as usual', although it has been sad to lose a number of volunteers because of ill health or anno domini.

Meanwhile, behind the scenes, the trustees have been continuing our strategic role of leading GenR8 through these uncharted waters. You can see from the picture below that we are few in number, especially given that although Steve and Siân meet with us, their role is distinct from ours. Having deliberately kept our number small as we went through such a turbulent time, we are now mindful that new trustees would be very welcome. Our current skill set encompasses educational, financial, legal and technical expertise, so fundraising competence and church leadership experience would be particularly well received. However, the main requirement is a heart for serving GenR8 in this way, so if you know of anyone interested in joining our trustee board, we would love to talk further.

Last year I wrote, '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.' It was with much relief then, that after months of praying and seeking, God revealed that the answer to our prayers was 'hiding in plain sight', in the shape of Siân, who was appointed to direct Prayer Spaces in 2018. Looking back to Siân's original interview, I remember her saying that she knew God was calling her from primary teaching to something new. As her Prayer Spaces role was part time and she took on several different small jobs so that she could be available when God made that way clear to her. Seeing her grow and mature over the past few years, it is clear (with the wonders of hindsight) just what that something new was to be. We look forward then to walking together with her and Steve as they navigate uncharted territory in the shape of their handover, and pray that it will be a time of blessing for both of them. Steve is still very much part of GenR8 and we are so grateful that his many accumulated years of experience and wisdom are available to us during the time. So, it's not time to say goodbye yet! We anticipate the next year with confidence in our great God, and all he has planned for GenR8.



Liz Jenkin, Chair of GenR8 Trustees

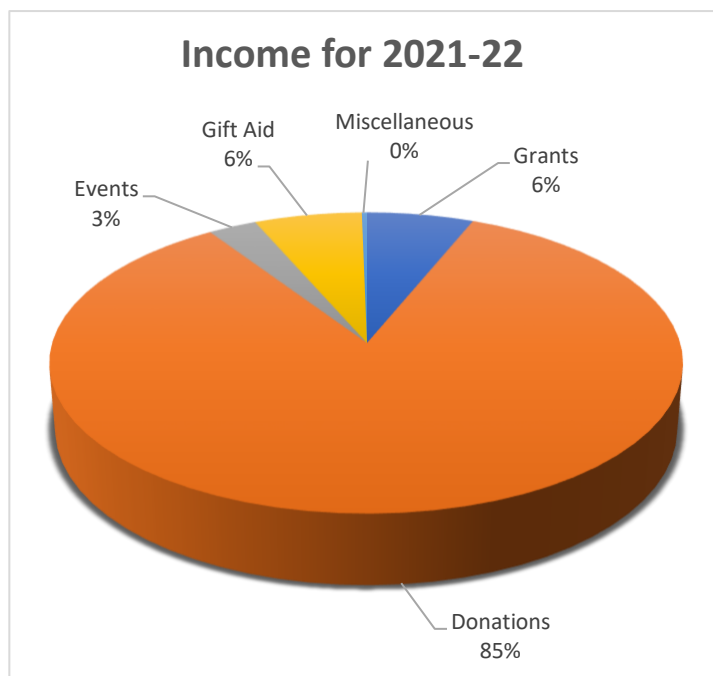
GenR8's Objectives

- 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.

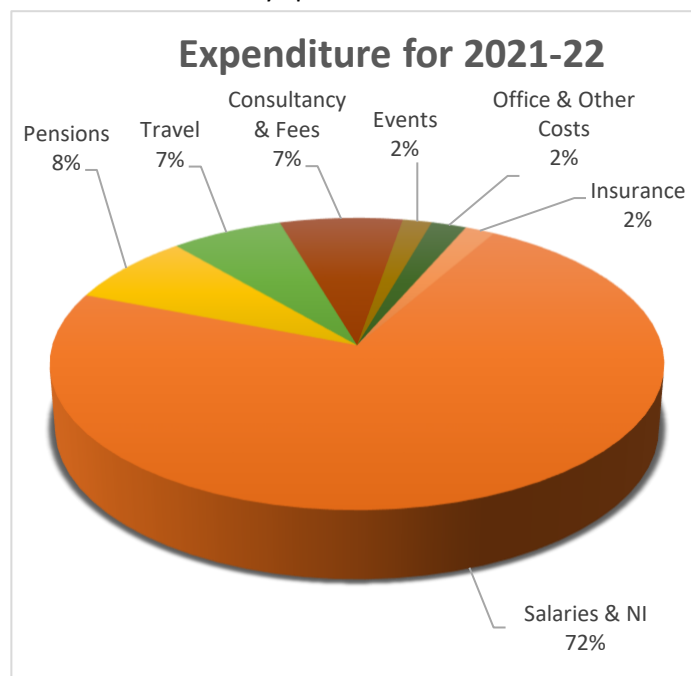
May the favour of the Lord our God rest on us; establish the work of our hands for us – yes, establish the work of our hands. Psalm 90:17 (NIV)

FINANCES

Where do our finances come from?



Where is our money spent?



The financial year that ended in March 2022 was again hugely impacted by the Covid restrictions that limited the amount of access we had to schools. The total income for the year was £64,840 (slightly up on the previous year). Donations from individuals dropped slightly but gifts from churches and schools started to pick up again as the pandemic restrictions eased. Income from events such as XcellR8 was once again becoming significant.

Expenditure picked back up to pre-Covid levels, at £67,134 for the year (compared to £58,618 in the previous year). Expenditure on travel and resources for schools work increased, along with staff costs and the cost of running events such as XcellR8 and Prayer Spaces.

During the current financial year, starting in April 2022, both income and expenditure on schools work have continued to increase, as would be expected. We are presently running at a deficit and would benefit from some fresh sources of income. 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.

Paul Brown, GenR8 Bookkeeper

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. Alternatively you can give via: [CAF \(Charities Aid Foundation\)](#) using the keyword *GenR8*.

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 '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.

The Amazonsmile programme ended on 20 February and we would like to thank those of you who added GenR8 as their chosen charity. The total raised was £104, so thank you for your contribution.



Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. Philippians 1:6

CHURCH SERVICES & EVENTS

After an absence of almost two years, it was wonderful to have the opportunity of participating in and leading church services and events once again. It's a real privilege to share in this way and fantastic when children recognise the GenR8 t-shirts as people who visit their school! It's nice for them to be able to turn to those they are with and say, 'I know them!' During the last year we have led all-age services at St James Church in Queen Edith, Cambridge and Melbourn Baptist Church, as well as contributed to all-age slots at Godmanchester Baptist, Emmanuel Church Northstowe and an annual ecumenical gathering of churches that meets in Comberton. It was also great to share about GenR8 in an evening prayer meeting at Christ Church, Huntingdon, whilst Bev was able to speak at a women's breakfast in Over. Here's what Bev says about the opportunities GenR8 has to share with churches: *At GenR8 we value and want to develop our relationships with local churches. This year we had an invitation to take a church service at Melbourn Baptist Church, lead the children's activities and teaching at a special Ecumenical event in Comberton and, for the first time, share a talk about faith and GenR8 at a women's breakfast at Over Baptist Church. These visits give us the opportunity to share the Gospel in a creative, fun and thoughtful way but are also a chance to share about GenR8's vision and work.*

Many churches have been long-time supporters which we appreciate and want to nurture, and for those that hear about us for the first time they are often amazed by the number of children GenR8 reaches out to and the variety of ways in which we do this. At a recent talk a person commented 'I thought you just did assemblies'. Understanding more about what we do in local primary schools and beyond helps churches support us in prayer, giving and, we hope too, some are inspired to join us as volunteers.



THE YEAR AHEAD

As I think about the future and the year ahead for GenR8, there seem to be so many questions, alongside so many possibilities! We are in a period of change and growth for GenR8, but I am certain that the mission statement and the objectives of GenR8 as a charity are still relevant and very much needed as we continue to work closely with schools and churches in Cambridgeshire. I have seen first-hand the impact that GenR8 has – on my mum when she volunteered on an assembly team, on the children when I watched the presentations and workshops as a teacher and on the volunteers, prayer supporters and financial donors too as without this support we wouldn't be able to do what we do!

We hope and pray that 2023 continues to bring much of the activity that has been a feature of GenR8 for so many years with Easter, summer and Christmas assembly presentations, Cool Choices in January and September, Xcellr8 weekend in February, It's Your Move with the transition prayer bags in July, and a Growing Young Disciples day in November to name a

few! Our work also now includes the video content, started in the middle of the pandemic. As we seek to find a way forward merging old with new, we look to God for wisdom, strength and a renewed motivation for GenR8's work – bringing high quality, creative and dynamic input into schools and churches so that...

- Every generation has the opportunity to make an informed choice about the Christian message and not write Christianity off without looking at it.
- Children see that there is a relevance to Christianity, that it can make a difference to their lives.
- Children get a positive image of the Christian faith.
- Children who are already Christian feel supported in their faith.
- Children can come into and develop their friendship with God, and understand and experience that following Jesus is anything but dull and boring!

(GenR8's motivation statement)

I recently read the poem 'At the Gate of the Year' by Minnie Louise Haskins, and this verse struck a chord:

And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year:

"Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown."

And he replied:

"Go out into the darkness and
put your hand into the Hand of God.

That shall be to you better than light
and safer than a known way."

We do not know the future path, but we do know that God is with us, and will lead us as we step out.

So please do continue spreading the message that God is at work across Cambridgeshire and you can be a part of it too!

Siân Thorne, *GenR8 Director from 1 March 2023*

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11

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 inform you about our ministry and current needs. Please contact Helen – helent@genr8.org to be added to the mailing list. Thank you for praying and please do continue to pray for our work, for school staff, children's workers and, of course, children that we might make a positive impact on young lives.

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? All you need is a willingness to join with likeminded people and, as the Nike logo says 'Just Do It!'. No experience necessary. We really do not know if this opportunity to visit schools with a Christian message will continue into the future so the call is an urgent one. For more information about volunteering with us please visit: www.genr8.org/volunteer-with-us

Keep in touch with us

If you do not already receive our termly newsletter 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 Siân Thorne, GenR8 Director siant@genr8.org or tel. 07598 378800