

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

You are my refuge and my shield; I have put my hope in your word. Psalm 114:119

Here is a snapshot of some activities last term.

Christmas assembly – No Room

Our fun Christmas assembly looked at the ways in which people sometimes



leave Christ out of their Christmas. One of the puppets had arranged a surprise party but had forgotten to invite the other puppet whose birthday it was and a song with a mime illustrated some of the many reasons that there is no room in many people's Christmas for Jesus, just as there was no room at the inn. The children joined in with a chant telling the story of the wise men who, although busy, took time to find Jesus: we encouraged the children to do this too. We are grateful to John Hardwick who put this presentation together many years ago and some lovely emails were received from some of the 125 schools that we visited with their thanks for the assembly.

Inspire Prayer Space Days

Two IPS days were held in the autumn term. The one in November was at a school we last visited in 2022 and had the theme *Me, Others, the Wider World and God*. A variety of tactile and creative activities were used with the one most mentioned by the children afterwards being the *Be Still* activity (a challenge to be still for 2 whole minutes!). The second was a first visit to the school and looked at the story of Jesus' birth and what it means for us today. The children's most mentioned activity for that one was *The Journey*, which encouraged children to look back on their journey through 2024, pausing to reflect and be proud of their achievements in that time. Staff at both schools commented on the calming, reflective atmosphere created allowing space for the children to think, pray (if they wish) and make a connection with God.

The Inspire team have been to Make Lunch Royston five times now, offering the families a chance to explore prayer activities after they have had a hot, healthy meal. The half-term visit was close to Halloween so we looked at light – how we can be light for others, how Jesus is the light of the world and how light can always drive out darkness!



Team Day

The team day on 30 September was attended by 23 of our volunteers. It started with a time of



worship led by Matt Farley, our regional Scripture Union mission enabler. The main session was led by Amy Robinson who talked about spiritual styles and helped us consider their impact within our ministry. We then had the opportunity to think more about these as we split into four groups and tackled the challenge of re-telling the parable of the Pearl of Great Price (*Matt 13:45-46*) in each of these styles. It was amazing to see the creativity in the room! Amy is a brilliant storyteller and after lunch she inspired us as she shared the story of the widow who asks Elisha for help, from 2 Kings 4. The day also gave us time to reflect in prayer spaces and to connect and chat.

Cool Choices

In September and October the Cool Choices team (Siân, David, Bev, Liz, Cheryl) visited Year 6 students in 15 schools with this informative and thought-provoking workshop looking at how we each make choices all day every day, some of the influences on our choices, and a Christian perspective on making 'cool' choices. All these schools have had Cool Choices visits before, and it was good to hear many teachers comment that they had found them helpful and referenced the discussions throughout the year – something we at GenR8 don't get to see!

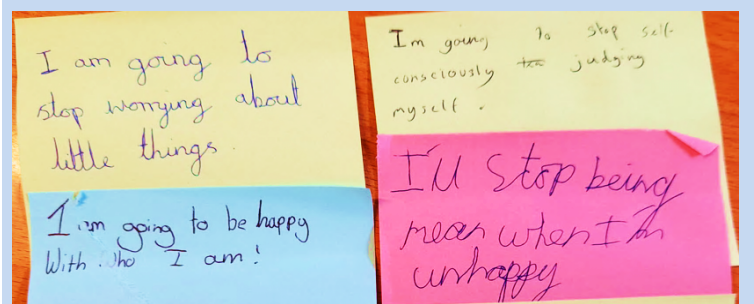
Some of the comments were:

Excellent workshop and delivery. My class really enjoyed it.

Extremely well planned and inclusive.

As always, the team delivered a fun and interactive workshop which kept the children's attention throughout

It was a very good session that made the children think.



Looking ahead

Xcellr8 weekend

We are now fully booked for the *Cultiv8* weekend on 15 and 16 February 2025 with names on a waiting list too. Ros and Issy (who are taking on some of the up-front leading) have prepared a programme outline which includes favourites from previous years – teaching sessions, swimming and carrot flinging, as well as some new additions including hot chocolate under the stars! Please pray for:

- ❖ Ros, Issy and Siân as they lead the training evening for all volunteers on Monday 13 January.
- ❖ more small group leaders to come forward so we can offer places to those on the waiting list.
- ❖ the children– *before* the weekend as they prepare; *during* the weekend, for an enjoyable, meaningful and safe time; and *after* the weekend that the message they have heard will sink into their hearts.
- ❖ Ruth, Issy, Ros and Nick as they lead the teaching sessions.

Cool Choices

We are currently booking more Cool Choices workshops for January and February. So far 10 schools have booked in and we have 10 spaces left to fill.

- ❖ Pray for the team – Gillian, Liz, David, Bev, Siân, and Cheryl.
- ❖ Pray for a positive response from the schools that Ruth will contact in January, and that we will be fully booked!
- ❖ Please pray for the Year 6 students and a positive impact on them.

Permanent Prayer Spaces

In January a new theme will go up in the 14 schools supported by GenR8, to create a prayer space ready for the start of a new term in a new year. The space will encourage children to realise that talking about our thoughts and feelings if we are worried, concerned, excited or feeling other emotions is really positive. We ask the questions: What is on your mind today? How are you feeling?

- ❖ Siân and Janet would value your prayers as they travel, delivering the packs to schools.
- ❖ Also pray for the local church volunteers as they set up the new spaces and seek to lead and share the theme with the school.

Easter assembly – Choice

The Easter assembly that we plan to take into schools this term begins with some corny egg yokes jokes and a puppet sketch about taking the blame for something someone else did wrong. These are followed by a sketch which imagines how the events of Easter might have been reported on TV in Bible times. The assembly also includes John Hardwick's song that teaches the words of John 3:16, and shares that Christians believe that because of His love for us Jesus chose to take the blame for all the wrong things we have done by dying on the cross. We believe that He then came back to life again and we can choose to acknowledge his sacrifice and follow Him.

- ❖ Please pray for volunteers to join the teams and for the rehearsals and school visits.
- ❖ Pray for our booking coordinators and their work contacting schools and juggling the dates and times of assemblies.

New post within GenR8

This term the trustees are going to be looking for another *Project Worker* to join the GenR8 team in a paid capacity; someone with skills to lead an area of GenR8's ministry.

Look out for more information coming soon and please pray:

- ❖ For the trustees and Siân throughout the process – writing a job description, advertising, having conversations with people and that the right person will be prompted to apply.

Also:

- ❖ Give thanks for our financial supporters and pray for our continued financial health in 2025.
- ❖ Pray for the spring term and for energy and inspiration as we seek to reach out through GenR8's ministry.
- ❖ Pray for our volunteer team and for new people to join us.

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