

F@ITHFUL

Welcome to the second issue of **F@ithful**. We hope that you received and enjoyed the first issue. Your response would be appreciated. Contact **Nia W Williams, Glasgoed, Yr Ala, Pwllheli, Gwynedd, LL53 5BL** or **niacolegybala@btinternet.com** with your comments.

SUNDAY SCHOOL / JUNIOR CHURCH - BEST HOUR OF THE WEEK!

Sunday School

"Get up, it's a quarter to eight and you'll be late for school," shouted Elen.
"I don't want to go to school today, I've a stomach ache!" said Dafydd.
"I don't like going to school. Nobody's nice to me. I'm bored there. We never do anything interesting."
"But you have to go, Dafydd," said Elen gently, "you're the headmaster!"

Do you enjoy going to Sunday School? It's natural that we should feel like giving up on occasions. But what if this feeling persists? I'd like to propose four answers as to how we can make Sunday School the best hour of the week for the children and for ourselves!

2. The Vestry

What's the state of the vestry?

If the workplace isn't comfortable, then going to the Sunday School venue will be tedious. Most of our vestries are not suitable for today's children's and youth work!

School classrooms are by comparison so agreeable and appropriate for our children. Don't the children and young people of our Chapels deserve the best? Spending £1000 on the vestry will ensure proper chairs, colourful paint on the walls, a carpet on the floor and curtains at the windows.

So how do we get hold of £1000 to renovate the vestry?

- Ideally, Chapel funds should pay for the work.
- A special appeal to members.
- Fund-raising through various activities arranged by the Sunday School.

Discuss with your colleagues:

For the sake of our children, we must think of ways to spend, not save!

1. Us

"85% of the success of a Sunday School depends on the teacher."

It is easy to blame football, rugby and computer games for stopping the children from coming to Sunday School. But I believe we should sometimes include ourselves in that list! If we are to be better teachers, consider the following:

What does Jesus Christ mean to us?
Do we like being with the children?
Do we teach what the Bible says?
The children live in a very uncertain world. It's important they know about the Bible.

Let's remember that the Bible:

- is true
- helps us in our daily lives
- shows us the meaning and purpose of life
- shows the way to God through knowing Jesus Christ.

3. The Children

A recent survey by the Children's Society showed that:

- only 43% of children in Britain thought adults were kind and helpful!
- only 29% believed you could trust an adult.
- 91% of children in Switzerland thought adults were kind and helpful.

The Sunday School should be a safe, secure and constructive place for the children. They should know that they will be accepted, whatever their background or circumstances.

Here are some recommendations for your consideration:

- Enjoy the company of the children.
- Be playful if it is in your character to be so.
- Be yourself. Tell them about the scrapes you got into as a child! The children will love it.

Ask questions:

Was school OK this week? What did you see on the TV? How are your Mum and Dad? I like your new shoes!

Do we believe that what we are doing is important?

Do we want to influence the children's lives? Children need heroes! Who better than their Sunday School teacher?

Are our lessons interesting?

Use some of the five senses when telling the stories, e.g. Feeding the Five Thousand - eat sardines and pitta bread! Or show pictures!

Do we prepare our lessons thoroughly?

Do we do our very best?

We can't do more than that!

Discuss with your colleagues:

Do you try and look at everything you do through a child's eyes?

Do you do things the children enjoy?

Do you sing songs the children like?

Do you teach in a way the children can understand?

Would the children invite their friends to Sunday School?

Do we pray for the children individually?

Try to praise the children rather than chiding them:.

- Praise them publicly if they do something well.
- Share some sweets.
- Go and talk to them if you see them on the street.
- Once again, remember good practice when you're among the children.



4. Church Members

Some church members have special gifts and are ready to help at Sunday School!

But you need to ask for the kind of help which allows them to make the most of their gifts. Occasionally, you can ask for help from individuals who possess the following gifts...

- Using a computer to prepare resources
- Sewing costumes
- Craft, Art
- Acting
- Administration
- Welcoming / hosting
- And why not ask individuals to pray for the work of the Sunday School?

Over the years, some Sunday Schools and churches have tended to grow into two separate communities. It's important that the relationship is restored.

How can you create a better relationship with the chapel?

- Hold an all-age service.
- Give a monthly report in one of the Sunday services.
- Invite the church members to the Sunday School each quarter.
- Take a small Easter egg to the older members.
- Sing carols at Christmas.
- Visit members' homes.
- Sunday School Supper.
- Invite the members for supper and games in the (newly-decorated) Vestry!

Discuss with your colleagues:

What can be done to reinforce the Sunday School in your local Church?

For more information on children's work contact Gwyn Rhydderch, rhydderch@tesco.net / 01758 770490



A Week in the Life of a Youth Worker Nathan Davies, Cardiff

Nathan Davies grew up in a non-Christian home in Dinas Powys, finding a relationship with Christ when he was 15. Since leaving high school and taking a gap year at Christian youth charity Ignite, he has started a degree in theology at Wales Evangelical School of Theology.

Nathan is learning on the job as Park End Presbyterian Church Cardiff have taken him on as a Part Time Youth Pastor and support him through University. His first contact with the Church came after going on a soup run with one of the church elders during his gap year. The church were praying for a youth worker and he was praying for somewhere to take him on!

"Fruit flies like bananas but time flies like the wind! There are not enough hours in the day! In between my own relationship with God, study for university, preparing youth groups and going to administration meetings, there just is not enough time!"

"This week I do not have enough nights to meet up with all of the people I would like but thank God for the opportunities I am getting to share with people about Jesus. Three different meetings, one person a new Christian who is struggling, one person is seeking and the other is a good friend who I meet up with for encouragement and prayer. Even though these people are at different stages – I only have one thing to talk to them about, Jesus Christ our Lord! It is an amazing privilege to be able to do that. It is amazing that God uses us to further His Kingdom!"

"Also every week it is exciting to meet with the young people of the Church. One midweek prayer and worship meeting and Bible study on Sunday night, I know that I need to seek God's guidance for where to lead the young people! It is so encouraging to see them growing in their own personal relationship with the living God! I'm starting to learn that God gives you strength enough to do what He has planned! I am made strong when I am weak before God. Youth workers are not perfect and we should always realise this – and ask God to make us more into His likeness."



Coleg y Bala Diary

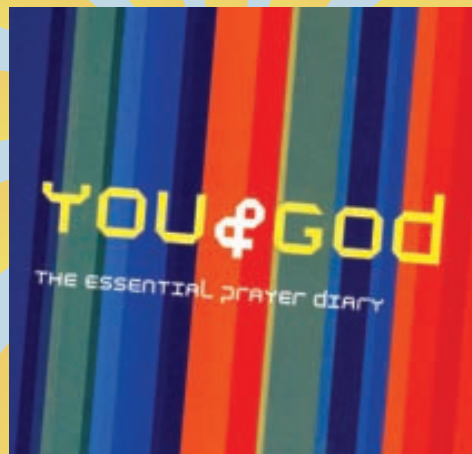
May	
6	Miri Mai: Fun and Worship for Children
8-10	Gower Pastorate
June	
4	Association in the East Women's Retreat
5-6	Wigwam: Family Weekend
12-14	St Mary's, Aberystwyth
17	Ministers' In-Service Training Day
20	The Big Picnic: Fun for Sunday Schools
26-28	Aberystwyth, Treorci, and Noddfa, Caernarfon children
July	
3-5	Youth Forum



Summer courses at Coleg y Bala

July
20-24 Cwrs Ieuenctid (12-15)
Welsh language

August
14-21 Souled Out (15+)
24-27 Anhrefn Awst (8-12)
Welsh language



You & God The Essential Prayer Diary

Elaine Carr (Scripture Union £4.99)
ISBN 184427 025 4

We often find talking about prayer easier than praying. There are a great many books available which encourage and instruct us about prayer. Here is a book for youth which leads them to pray for a variety of subjects quite naturally. The introduction sets the scene:

“It’s just you and God, talking about stuff which really matters to you. And get this: when you pray, the God of the whole universe stops to listen... Not only does he listen, but he also answers and acts... How awesome is that?!”

You & God is a prayer diary which leads the young person to pray for ten everyday topics e.g. friends, family, belonging, school. It can be used in a variety of ways, by choosing a theme or following from page to page, but whichever way is chosen, the reader is encouraged to revisit pages and see how God has answered prayers. It’s interactive and detailed but not too scary.

Here is an excellent resource to encourage young people to pray, and could be adapted to create a session on prayer with a Youth Club or Sunday School class. Elaine Carr has written many books for 11-14 year olds. She was a secondary school teacher for ten years and pastoral head of year.

Nia W Williams

Go Teach

Sunday School Resources

(www.goteach.org.uk / 0845 430 9739)

Go Teach is available for four age groups: 3-5s, 5-7s, 8-11s, and 11-14s. The leaders’ guides are about £6.90 and each one contains 15 lesson ideas, enough for a term or season. Several topics are covered in each guide, e.g. 4 weeks on Abraham, followed by three weeks on Jesus’ teaching, then more from the Old Testament, then the Easter story. The lessons are VERY Bible based and detailed, maybe sometimes being too detailed in using less-known stories. But there are lots of ideas for teaching the application of the stories and why they are relevant to us and our children today.

Available separately are the visual aids booklets (£5.75) which are excellent, with detailed pictures for each story which can be displayed on a board. The children like to stick up the pictures themselves. Each guide also contains ideas for craft, memory verses, background info for the teacher and family service ideas. The one thing that is not included is ideas for active games which go with the theme of the story.

Alongside the Go Teach leaders’ guides are the Come Learn children’s workbooks, again available in four age groups, all excellent. All four age groups cover the same story each week, in greater or lesser detail, so are ideal for a large mixed group. The workbooks are produced in beautiful colour: there are puzzles, words to fill in, things to cut and stick, memory verse reminders, and just the right amount of colouring. Children who struggle writing often excel at careful colouring, giving them a sense of pride in their work.

The pictures in the workbooks correspond closely to the visual aids used in the story, thus offering more reinforcement. I think the workbooks are quite expensive (£2.20), but well worth the money, especially if you have a regular group of children who will take a pride in their work. At the end of each series the children can take their books home and finish off any pages they missed, and hopefully enjoy the stories over again.

Janet Jewell, Gloddaeth United Church, Llandudno



Working with 11-14s

Tricia Williams and John Stephenson
(Scripture Union £8.99) ISBN 184427 098

Grapple with the big issues of life and faith: practical advice on everything from understanding faith development to praying and working with 11 to 14s.

Useful Websites

For volunteers working with children:

www.daniellesplace.com

A site full of ideas for crafts, games and activities. There are free resources or you can join for the full service for an annual fee.

For volunteers working with youth:

www.youthministry.com

A site full of good ideas for your youth group.

Gap Year @ Coleg y Bala

In the first issue we heard from Lois and Aaron about their Gap year. It's Zoe and Eleri's turn this time.



"It's incredible that I'm in my second Gap Year at Coleg y Bala! I enjoyed my first year so much that I felt the need to stay on. Before coming to Coleg y Bala I didn't have much idea what a Gap Year would involve, but the things that I've experienced have been amazing! I've had many different experiences from running children and youth clubs to cleaning toilets...that was not a highlight!! A Gap Year is much more than a year out; you're here to serve others, and through this to grow in your faith. I feel it a privilege every time I have the opportunity to share my faith with children and young people and I'm still excited by the way God uses us in every situation. I would encourage anyone who wants to give a year to the Lord to come here to be part of the family of Coleg y Bala, to work with youth and children and have loads and loads of fun!!" **Zoe**

"I'm now half way through my gap year at Coleg y Bala and have had so many opportunities which I hadn't imagined. The hectic pace as we run a youth club, Christian union, help with a children's club, help on weekend courses, and travel to numerous places across the country to different clubs, and much more, is amazing! All these experiences are a fantastic opportunity to learn more about my relationship with God and to teach others about what God can do in their lives too. I'm so glad that I had the opportunity to take this gap year, and would encourage anyone who wants to serve God for a year to come here to Coleg y Bala." **Eleri**

If you know of a young person who would be interested in spending a Gap Year at Coleg y Bala, contact: **Siân Edwards, Coleg y Bala, Ffordd Ffrydan, Bala, Gwynedd, LL23 7RY** or on **01678 520565** or **colegybala@ebcpcw.org.uk** for more information.

souled OUT Cymru

"It's great to meet up with older youth, students and young adults in the Souled Out groups! This year there are groups meeting in Manchester, Bala, Cardiff, Ammanford, Llanrug, Pwllheli and in the North East. This warm fellowship gives us the opportunity to support and encourage each other in our Christian lives throughout the year. We meet to share a meal and then have an opportunity to praise the Lord and apply the truths of the Bible to our everyday lives in an informal atmosphere. We also have an opportunity to pray for each other and for those around us."

Meryl Walters, Older Youth Work Officer

For more information, contact Meryl on 01678 520565 or visit the website: www.souledoutcymru.net



Training Day at Coleg y Bala: Responses

"It was a good day, both for the useful teaching/information provided but also for hearing God speak to us and challenge us over what we are doing with the young people and what He may be calling us to. It was also a real encouragement to see so many gifted folk so committed to serving God amongst the young people of this region and doing it together. So thanks to you and all who set it up - much appreciated. We look forward to discovering what God has in mind to do this year."

Jim Mason, Llandudno

"An excellent day."

Beth Bailey, Dolgellau