

F@ITHFUL

Welcome Back!

It's back to school! Are our children and young people eagerly back in their uniforms, or dragging themselves back to lessons and homework? Starting in a new class or beginning high school? In the midst of all kinds of changes it's good for them to know that you're still there supporting them at Sunday School or children or youth clubs. There are plenty of ideas available for activities with youth and children in books, websites, DVDs, and we as Youth and Children's Service are available to help and advise.

We're still here!

At the beginning of term, it's important to invite the children back.

Is an announcement in a Sunday morning service the most effective way of letting the youth and children know that activities have started up again?

There are numerous ways to advertise:

- putting up posters in your local shops,
- advertising through your local school (by permission),
- sending a post card to last year's members, parents, grand parents and neighbours.



Prayer

"Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labour in vain." Psalm 127:1

If we want lasting success in our work with children and young people, we need solid foundations in prayer. How about taking this truth to heart this year, if you haven't already done so. Pray as leaders and as a church. Ask members to pray for specific points by putting them in the church magazine, or create a prayer leaflet.

It's important to remember that youth and children's work is part of the work of the church as a whole and that every member has an important role in supporting the work in prayer, advertising and various ways according to each person's gift (see last issue of F@ithful).

F@ithfulness



The top three for children and young people are friendship, food and fun. They are much more likely to come to chapel-based activities if their friends come, if it's fun and if there is a drink and a biscuit...or more! Pray regularly for each child. Prepare a membership card for each child with a space to record attendance e.g. stickers or stars.

Spend time at the beginning of term building a sense of team as a Sunday School Class or as members of children and youth clubs by playing team-building games or involving the children and youth in activities which require co-operation. Work to create a relationship with the families of the children and young people who attend activities – it's essential that each child or young person's parents or guardians fill in a permission and information form for Sunday School or clubs, and that the information is kept in a safe place.

Don't worry if you only have a small number of young people attending, it's a brilliant opportunity to get to know them well and to create an ethos of belonging. If you want to encourage the group that they are not alone, how about getting in touch with other youth groups locally and arranging an activity together e.g. a games night at the leisure centre.

Planning

If you want to make the most of your time with the youth and children, it's essential to plan ahead. Ideally, planning for a term's activity would be great, or for half a term. It's so much easier to prepare for each week once you have a plan, giving you plenty of time to prepare the resources needed or to invite someone to lead a different kind of session.

Assemble a committee! Pray! Brainstorm ideas ensuring that there is ample opportunity for the youth and children to have fun and develop friendships. Record on a planning calendar what activities or lessons you will be doing each week, and ensure that all leaders have a copy. Arrange a rota of volunteers if needed.

Make sure that Child Protection is given due attention, and that procedures are followed (see "For the Sake of Our Children" document).

Help!

Perhaps you feel lonely as leaders, or that you've been involved in the work for many years and feel tired even before term starts! Don't despair, there are many other faithful, devoted people around! Contact the secretary of your Presbytery to ask about activities planned by the Presbytery's Youth and Children Committee. Contact the Youth and Children Service for support, and for information about events and training in your area. We're here to help.

Contact the Youth and Children Service at Coleg y Bala: 01678 520565

Well done, girls!

Congratulations to these three young ladies who have recently been appointed to work with youth and children.

Meirionnydd and North Wales

Gwenno Teifi started as Youth Officer for Meirionnydd district of the West Gwynedd Presbytery and North Wales in July. In Meirionnydd, Gwenno will establish and run Christian Youth Clubs, but in the rest of North Wales she will be networking, encouraging and helping churches to establish youth clubs. Our hope is to see young people responding to the good news about Jesus through the clubs and to see their leaders confident in the work they do.

So who is Gwenno?

"I am originally from Lanfihangel-ar-arth, Carmarthenshire. One of a very large family, some think I'm related to the whole of Wales! But part of my heart belongs to Aberystwyth where I spent years at University studying Welsh and Politics. I very much enjoyed studying in this beautiful seaside town, but what makes it a really special place is that it is where I came to know Christ for the first time. This is what led me to live in the city of Amsterdam for almost a year in a mission house, working within the local churches with the homeless, prostitutes and disadvantaged young people.

"I've felt over the last few years, especially through being involved with different things over the summer, such as working in the Gorlan (in the National Eisteddfod) and going to Souled Out, that God was calling me to work with young people, so I considered teaching, but didn't feel a great desire for it. Then I received a miraculous email in my inbox: the Presbyterians were looking for a Christian youth worker. I thought long and hard about moving my life to Meirionnydd, but felt sure that God was calling me here, to do this work, and that I should go for it in His strength."



Coleg y Bala

In the last issue of F@ithful we read about Zoe Jones' decision to stay for another Gap year at Coleg y Bala. The good news is that Zoe has now been appointed as Assistant Manager and has started her new job since April.

"Five months have now passed since I began my job as Assistant Manager at Coleg y Bala. I have been seeking the Lord about the work here, and He has given me a real passion for children's work here in Bala, and the job allows me to be involved in this too. It's an exciting time for me, because I will be starting a children's club with Capel Tegid and a Little Children's Club here at Coleg y Bala. Please will you pray for me as I start my new job, that the Lord will be glorified in everything."



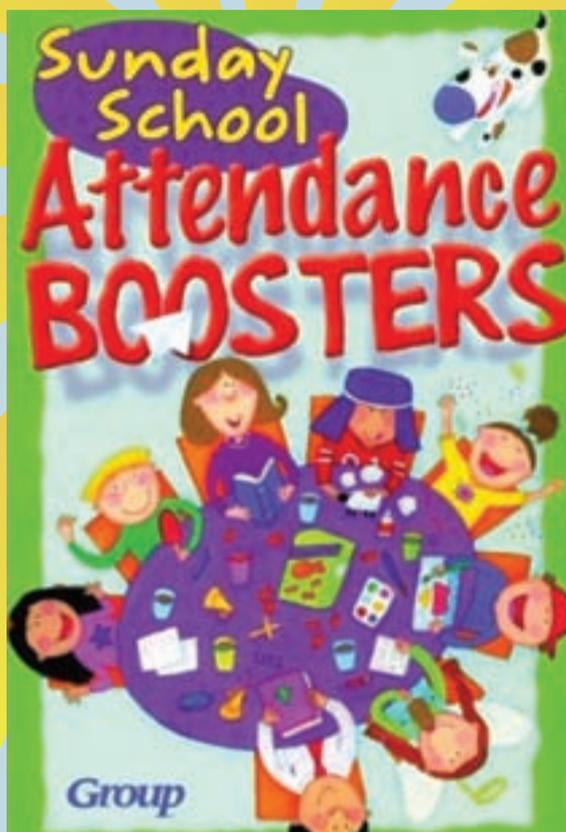
Llandudno

Sophie Ponsford has been appointed as youth worker with "Youth for Christ" Llandudno, a national organisation but with a local Committee made up of representatives from local churches and Christian organisations. Sophie, who is 27 and married to Kristian, will be working with schools and churches in Llandudno.

"We are very excited at the prospect of coming to Llandudno," says Sophie. "I love working with teenagers and have a great admiration for the work of Youth for Christ across the UK. Their resources for schools and churches are so relevant. I look forward to working with other Christian youth workers in North Wales, and to the challenge of learning Welsh!"

For four years Sophie was a team leader, overseer and dancer with the Christian organisation "Innervation Trust", Manchester (www.innervation.org). She has taken part in over 30 schools' weeks with the band Collective, participating in numerous assemblies, lessons, concerts and youth events. Sophie first came to Llandudno in February 2008 with "thebandwithnoname" for a school's week at St David's College.

The project is funded by the gifts of Trusts, local churches and their members including Gloddaeth United Church (PCW/URC), Emmanuel Christian Centre (AOG), United Welsh Churches of Llandudno, Penrhyn Bay (PCW), Llanrhos Church and St John's Methodist Church.



Sunday School Attendance Boosters

(Group Publishing, approx £6)
ISBN 0764421530

This book is packed with fun and creative ideas for making your Sunday school a place that kids want to be. No matter what Curriculum you're currently using, you'll discover great tips on growing your group by making Sunday School a fun time to share with friends and a Special place for experiencing Jesus' love.

You'll explore ways to...

- Involve parents on a regular basis.
- Create a warm caring environment that children will love coming to.
- Develop long-term, on-going projects for children to carry through from Sunday to Sunday.
- Communicate with children and their parents in fun ways that encourage regular attendance and more.

Reaching and Keeping Tweenagers

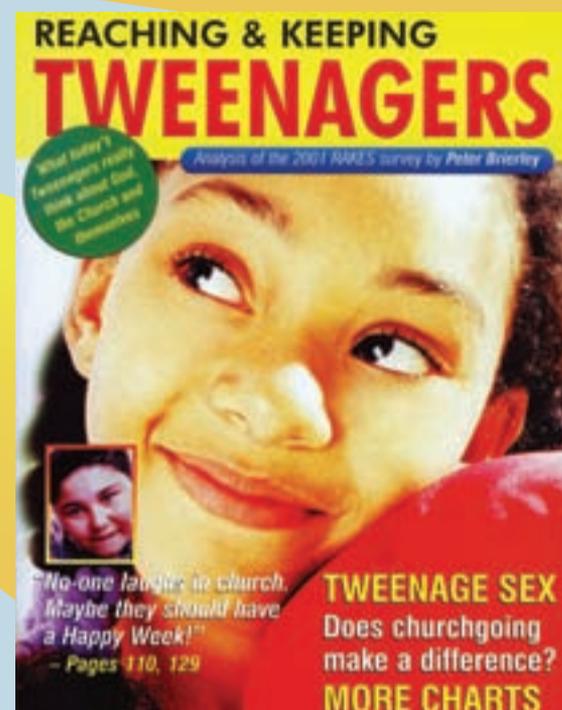
Christian Research, Crusaders and Youth for Christ, £9.99) ISBN 1-85321-147-8

Have you noticed that the age at which children stop coming to Sunday School is getting younger and younger? You probably have many ideas about why this is happening – sports, shopping, family situations and many more. This book contains a detailed analysis of the varying reasons based on research carried out at the end of the 90s where it was found that 1000 children under the age of 15 leave church or Sunday School each week, and don't come back. Although 10 years have passed since the study discussed, as I read this book I realised that not much has changed.

This is certainly a book for the analytical mind, but more than that, it's a book for those who are serious about reaching young people with the good news of Jesus. A discussion booklet accompanies the book, a good starting place to take a positive step forward to develop youth and children's work in your local chapel. Although the cover advertises "more tables than Ikea", there is much more, especially in the conclusions and lessons to

be learnt at the end of each chapter. Some patterns become obvious time and again, e.g. that friends, food and fun are three important factors for 8-14 year olds. There are many challenges here, but they are presented in a way which inspire us to think of positive ways to respond creatively to reach our children and young people.

Nia W Williams



Useful websites

by Gwyn Rhydderch

For the minister:

<http://tiny.cc/youthwork>

<http://tiny.cc/youthwork2>

Even though the articles are on an American website the principles are important to Welsh ministers too.

For the children's worker:

www.presbyterian.ca/resources/online/230

12 articles, not all of which will be of interest but some may be useful. One is entitled "Forty Ways to Increase Sunday School Attendance."

For the youth worker:

<http://tiny.cc/youthwork3>

An article on building youth work which will last for years!

Ordering resources

Do you have difficulty ordering resources? Do you live far from a Christian Book Shop? Contact Delyth Williams, Coleg y Bala, to order: 01678 520565 or colegybala@ebcpcw.org.uk.

Need advice on appropriate resources? Contact Nia W. Williams through Coleg y Bala, or e-mail niacolegybala@btinternet.com.

Grants

Need financial help for your youth or children's work? Gwyn Rhydderch is available to advise on grants. Contact through Coleg y Bala, or e-mail rhydderch@f2s.com.



Coleg y Bala

Well what a year we have had so far here in Coleg y Bala!

Singing, study, noise, quietness, laughing, fun, these are all words that can be used to describe us here! The verse "Let the children come to me and do not hinder them, for the Kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." (Matthew 19:14) has been of great value to us here in the Coleg and is what drives the vision of the work here. The Lord has such an important place in His heart for children and youth and what a privilege it is to be part of that work. Our priority at the Coleg is to show children and young people Jesus, and what a fantastic time we have doing this. We get the opportunity to show Jesus through all the work and activities during the weekends. It is great to get to know the children and young people and build relationships with them. It is wonderful to see them return time and time again to the Coleg. If you haven't experienced a weekend at Coleg y Bala or would be interested in finding out more, why not contact Haf on 01678 520565 and see what we can do for you!



Coleg y Bala Diary

September

- 11-13 St Thomas', Denbigh
- 24 Association in the North Women's Retreat

October

- 2-4 Wrexham and Mold Children (Welsh)
- 10 Youth and Children Service Dept.
- 9-11 Youth Weekend (Welsh)
- 23-25 Conwy and Dyffryn Clwyd Children (Welsh)
- 30 -1 Children's Weekend

November

- 6-7 Family Weekend
- 10 Ministers' In-Service Training
- 20-22 Youth Weekend
- 27-29 Llŷn and Eifionydd Children (Welsh)

December

- 5 Hwyl yr Ŵyl

Training evenings

Training, advice, support, resources, cuppa!

Evenings for Sunday School Teachers, children and youth leaders and schools workers.

- September 23** Carmarthen, Peniel Baptist Church
- September 28** Llandudno, Gloddaeth Church
- October 1** Bridgend, Brackla Tabernacle
- October 15** Wrexham, Capel y Groes
- November 12** Abergavenny, Whitefield Presbyterian

6.30pm arrival for 7pm start, with a choice of workshops.

Jointly organised by CCSW, Scripture Union, the Presbyterian Church of Wales, Urban Saints and the Welsh Sunday Schools Council.

For more information contact Gwyn Rhydderch or VickiB@scriptureunion.org.uk.



If you know of a youth or children's event in your area please let us know by phoning Coleg y Bala (01678 520565) or e-mail **Nia Williams** at niacolegybala@btinternet.com. It could really help encourage other children and young people in your area.

SOULED OUT Cymru

Following the summer course for young people (15+), local groups will be meeting again. For more information, contact Meryl Walters at Coleg y Bala 01678 520565, or visit the Souled Out website: www.souledoutcymru.net.