



Newsletter 1:

March

Hester says 'hi'!..

The aim of this newsletter is to give monthly updates on the work undertaken in the Children's and Families Project. Crosstalk features a brief article sharing what has been happening but my hope is that this newsletter provide a little depth on what has been going on.

Upcoming tasks

In the next term I am planning to:

- Complete launch of Sensory Bags to support worship.
- Restart lunches after the 11.15 service.
- Develop the carpeted area that the back of church that children often access.
- Develop a Children's Trail for young visitors in the building.
- Host a parents evening to talk to church families about their experiences in church
- Develop a Baptism Ministry pack to give to families as they prepare for Baptism.

Octotots update

Octotots continues to be a happy and much loved community for local families. We have an average of 12 families attending and a team of 4 supporting the sessions. Families frequently tell us how much they value coming and feel so welcomed. We have recently introduced new toys and crafts for the older children.



Values underpinning the role

- Deepening Connection to God
- Practical Inclusion
- Spiritual encounter for all
- Relational



CHILDREN'S AND FAMILIES

PROJECT

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One of the eight aims for this role is to offer a clear and all age relevant set of themes for the 11.15 service. The intention is that the chosen themes can, in time, be reflected throughout various other ministries including Octotots, Sunday Club, and Sensory Bags (which are just launched and aimed to support preschoolers and others if helpful).

One of my tasks in this project is to propose themes to the clergy and after agreement, I then create a master document which outlines the theme focus, provides weekly content; gives Bible passages; song suggestions; supporting notes; links to Sunday Club and the forthcoming Sensory Bags. The intention is to enable different areas of the children's ministry at St MM to all consider the same ideas. Therefore if a family from Octotots joins a Sunday service they will recognise that the craft activity in Octotots and the talk at the 11.15 correspond. Then if they pick up a Sensory Bag to support their preschooler or bring their older child in Sunday Club, again all the themes should match. This should create a holistic experience; which builds confidence for people entering church having come to a midweek ministry; and it should provide continuity across church encounters.

This term so far the 11.15 congregation have therefore explored a series based on the theme: People of...

Each week we have considered our identity as children of God and our identities as the gathered church. The weekly themes have been:

People of Purpose - People of Peace - Power - Participation - Prayer - Passion - Potential - Praise.

During Lent we are looking at the same themed series alongside the 9.30 congregation about Christian living. In the summer term our first is theme is a Life of Prayer. This considers questions such as: why do pray; how do we pray; what happens when our prayers aren't answered... In the second part of the summer term we are going to explore Old Testament Tales and over the summer holiday period we will explore various Psalms.

So far the 11.15 congregation report positively about this approach and it enables us to uniquely shape the 11.15 service to reflect people's interests and experiences. It has often been the case that when following the lectionary readings we have defaulted to New Testament passages on the sermon. Now following this thematic approach we can intentionally focus on Old Testament stories which we have not addressed for some time. Additionally some of the lay leaders and speakers at the 11.15 have spoken positively about their experiences preparing talks, delivering ideas from this approach. It is really gratifying to hear that lots of people are finding it helpful and engaging!

I hope to continue building on this early start and drawing together more of the ministry areas using the themes as outlined. If you are interested in following the sermon series', I have produced blue term cards, which outline the themes and weekly content. These can be found at the back of church in or near the leaflet rack.

Latest pictures from Sunday Club

Our latest theme was 'People of Potential' and we talked about GROWING in grace and kindness through the love of God. We reflected on how this is like how tiny seeds grow into something wonderful and planted our own seeds to remind us of this theme. We also talked about the kind of people we want to grow up to be. 10 children attended and the ages spanned from 18m to 11 years. Everyone had a great time!

