

Children and Families Work September 2011

Noah's Ark:

We welcomed around 30 families on a regular basis in the summer term, losing some as their children started playgroup/nursery. Worship in July had 20 attendees—the most ever! Children are very keen to come through and bring their parents/carers too. Freecycle has had an influx of new clothing and continues to be used by a number of families—they still can't believe that it's for free!

Baptisms:

Zachary Walker was baptised on the 29th May and welcomed into the church at the June Xpressions café. Matt and Jenny (parents) both said how much they had liked the service—everything they had hoped for—and that their visitors, many of whom were unchurched, had felt really comfortable and welcome; "A good first experience of church", said Matt. Henry Frost was baptised on 17th July at the annual service in Hales Church, Ella Clarke and Joshua Hayes were baptised in Holy Trinity on 14th August and Adara Mai Sayer was baptised on 28th Aug, also in Holy Trinity. There was a thanksgiving service for the birth of another Zak that afternoon in Hardley. Max George was baptised in September. All of these children come to Noah's Ark with their parents and carers. Altogether there have been 6 baptisms since May plus Zak's thanksgiving.

Holiday Club: Paul Aboard

Our final planning meeting whetted the appetite of our adult helpers for the first week of August! We had 6 young leaders this year and around 40 children booked in for the club; many of them were returnees, some were younger siblings of families that we have seen before and some were new to us. It was a fantastic week! Everyone enjoyed the times on board the Paul Aboard bus which mysteriously turned into a boat on Day 5. The children were eager to have their passports stamped for each destination. The drama went well with a guest star as Paul (our new, at the time, incumbent, Willi Stewart) and the children thoroughly enjoyed the activities. Greek Day, visiting Athens, was popular with Greek food-tasting and Greek dance, and the chance to make their own statue. We were grateful to be donated the profits of a raffle from the Chet Ladies club in support of what we were doing. It went towards our final day pizza picnic which many of the families attended—a good outreach opportunity.

Schools' work:

Assemblies These have been led by Alison and Richard all year in school with a final leavers' assembly for the Junior School as usual in Holy Trinity Church. We have noticed recently that sometimes the children are coming to talk to us or ask us questions about God, Jesus, faith when we are in the school, or immediately after assembly. It is encouraging that they are comfortable with us so that they can do so, but, more exciting from my point of view, that they are interested enough to ask anyway and that assemblies are not just passing them by.

Infant School

We held a textures and surfaces morning in July for the children in Y1 and Y2. The three classes came one after the other and enjoyed the activities that I had planned for them. They did a texture trail, took photos of things to make a clay tile on return to school, made plasticene impressions of some of the carvings and wrote riddles or poems about what they had felt and seen. The children really enjoyed themselves ("especially the refreshments at the end", said Callum!) and the staff were delighted with what I had arranged. Thanks as usual to the volunteers who came along to make the morning possible.

Junior School

Lunch club The Y5 children are already putting themselves forwards for the team for the next academic year so enthusiastic are they about the club. We are now down to 4 regular visitors + those that drive and one or two regular but infrequent visitors. It would be great if we could attract some more people who would like to come. It is a very valuable experience for the children. The change in the kitchen arrangements at the school have not proved too problematic. We were invited to the end of term Y6 show which was great fun and our visitors were delighted by it, particularly that all of the children in the year had a part to play.

Choir At the suggestion of some of the members, choir held a concert in aid of school funds. The children performed well singing a whole variety of songs, some in two parts, and were given an enthusiastic reception. We even persuaded the audience to sing too—quite an achievement! One of the Mums told me the next day that her daughter was extremely displeased with me that choir had finished now until the new term in September.

Training:

Alison successfully completed the first year of her OLM training and has begun Y2. We visited Chet Valley Benefice Xpressions café from Summer School this year as we were studying mission and ministry. It was a somewhat strange experience for Alison as she was leading to her own cohort of students and the year above! Members of the children's team who have not yet managed to attend child protection training will be encouraged to try to attend one of the diocesan training evenings.