



Children & Families Ministry Newsletter

Making the Word of God fully known

Did you know the Vision of the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne is, "to make the Word of God fully known"? In 2012 many Anglican parishes are working on "Serving the Parish with Fresh Focus".

Matthew 18.1-14 gives us an understanding of why it is important for churches to think strategically about mission and ministry to children and families:

- ☺ children belong in the kingdom of heaven and therefore in our churches;
- ☺ the Church is held accountable for the spiritual wellbeing of children;

☺ God has a constant and particular care for each and every child.

Deuteronomy 6 also gives us some strategic information: that faith in God is set firmly in the context of community and in particular within the nurture of the family.

Local churches have a strategic opportunity in ministry to children and families.

The three keys are: the innate spiritual capacity of children; that new parents are at a "crisis point" because they are

experiencing a major life change and therefore open to "divine possibility"; and that faith is most effectively nurtured within families, supported by a faith community.

There are many ways to connect with local families. As you think and pray through all the possibilities in your parish, you might find it helpful to ask for a consultation with your friendly Children and Families Ministry Facilitator. (See the back page for contact details.)

There are three keys to the strategic opportunity of ministry to families

National Playgroup Week

Did you know that 25-31 March is National Playgroup Week? It is a great opportunity to raise the profile of your playgroup, both within your church and out in the wider community.

Consider some of these ideas:

Promote the connections that your playgroup is making with local families

to your Sunday congregations with some kind of visual display (e.g. photo story board, PowerPoint presentation, playdough table in the foyer!).

Have an open day at playgroup and invite members of your church to drop in.

Advertise a special playgroup day to your local community.

Register your National



Playgroup Week event at www.playgroup.org.au.

Find out about regional Playgroup Victoria activities for the week and go for a playgroup outing.

Anglican Diocese of Melbourne

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Issue 1 2012

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Helping children to pray

Children have an innate spirituality; if their capacity for prayer is nurtured from the earliest age, they do not have to be "taught" to pray any more than they have to be taught to breathe; but just as we can learn to breathe more effectively, children learn how to sustain prayer as a life-long practice through teaching and example.

Parents can pray for their children (even before they are born) and with their children from the earliest age. A simple prayer of blessing as part of the bedtime routine is a great start to teaching children the language and vocabulary of prayer.

Prayer is not just words we say; it is an expression of relationship with God. So it is also about our attitude and about listening.

Children learn attitude from their parents; if Mum and Dad naturally turn to God throughout the day, asking for help when the going is tough



and giving thanks for the blessings, so will children.

Opportunities to experience prayer in church settings, to participate in corporate prayer and in small group prayer as children grow up will help them develop an understanding of prayer as a dialogue between God and his people.

The amazing thing for us adults is realising that our children are teaching us as we experience their capacity to trust and respond to God.

Why join Christian Playgroup Network?

Playgroups are a major part of the life of the church. Every week hundreds of mums, dads, grandparents and carers from all walks of life take part in a Playgroup in a local Church.

Many of these parents and carers are not Christians and may have never even heard the gospel message, while others have become disconnected from Jesus over the years although they may still believe that God exists.



Playgroups connect families to the church

part of the family of your church - then this won't happen by accident. You need to be intentional about

If the primary purpose of your Playgroup is to be a 'connection point' for these groups in your community to allow them to hear the gospel, accept Jesus and become

having a purpose for your playgroup ministry.

The Christian Playgroup Network serves the local church through encouraging, supporting and equipping those involved in Playgroup ministry to their local community.

The benefits of membership include:

- ☉ Discounted training for Playgroup leaders and teams
- ☉ Discounted Playgroup Victoria membership
- ☺ Regular newsletters full of great articles and Christian Playgroup information to encourage and inspire!
- ☉ Opportunities to link with other Christian playgroup leaders
- ☉ Sharing of helpful and relevant Christian playgroup information and resources
- ☉ Access to the members-only

sections of the CPN website (www.cpn.org.au)

- ☉ Assistance in promoting and advocating Playgroups as part of your church outreach

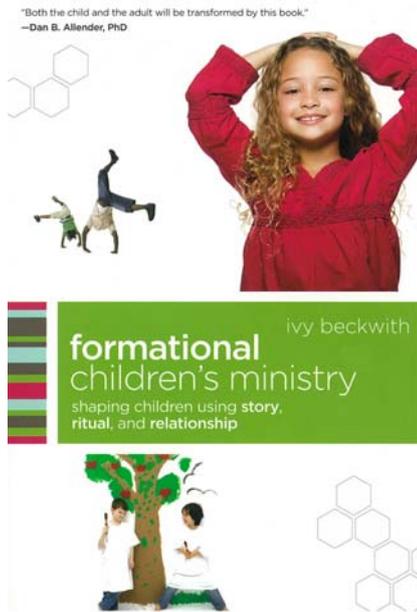
Currently there are just over 30 Anglican playgroups that are benefitting from CPN membership. It would be fantastic to see that number double by the end of 2012. That would be nearly half of all Anglican playgroups taking an intentional step to be being missional.

I would love to talk to you about how CPN can serve you, your parish and your playgroup ministry. Why not call or email me today to start the conversation! (See the back page for contact details.)

Be intentional about having a purpose for your playgroup ministry

Recommended reading

Formational children's ministry



If you are looking for a book about ministry with children and their families that will inform and transform your approach, Ivy Beckwith's "Formational children's ministry" is a must-read. She writes of story, ritual, worship, spiritual disciplines and relationship and her heart-felt belief that children need to have their imaginations captured for God's kingdom.

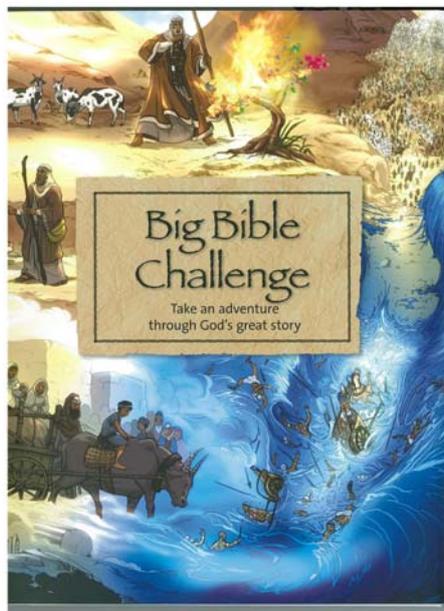
\$24.95

The Big Bible Challenge

The Big Bible Challenge is designed for children 7-12 years. It explores the big story of the Bible through 100 selected Bible passages.

The book has three components—the fantastic 128-page fully illustrated book, online resources for adult "coaches" and online supplemental material and activities for children.

Each section includes a Bible text, questions to help explore the Bible passage, prayer ideas and activities. \$19.95



Parenting beyond your capacity

Written by Reggie Joiner (Think Orange) and Carey Nieuwhof, this is a book to give to parents who know that parenting is beyond their capacity. It will help them think about how belonging to a Christian community (your church) and being part of God's big story will give them the resources to parent beyond their capacity.

This is also a book for those who minister to children and families—read it to be reminded about the challenges of parenting and also to think about how the church can play its part in nurturing families and in providing a context for God's story to work its way into their lives.

\$22.95

Each of these books is available from Scripture Union Victoria, 9482 5700

www.suvic.org.au

Working With Children Checks

Did you know that WWC cardholders can now go online to update their personal details with the Department of Justice? It is quick and easy to change contact details (a new address or phone number) or change the list of organisations that you work for (volunteer or employed). Go to <http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/workingwithchildren> and click on 'Maintaining your check', then 'Change of details'.

There are three options:

- ⇒ Change your details online (you need to register and receive a password)
- ⇒ Call the Information Line, 1300 652 879 (you may have to wait for some time but you can then speak to an officer and update all your information).
- ⇒ Download a 'Change of Personal Details' form to fill

out and post to the Department of Justice.

Now is a good time for parishes to remind volunteer leaders and paid staff to update their details. In the next twelve months many WWC cards will be due for renewal. This process will be much smoother if personal details, including current employers, are up to date.

The Anglican Centre
209 Flinders Lane
Melbourne 3000

Children don't grow in status and importance in the eyes of God as they grow up. Being an adult doesn't make us more able to please God, or even better able to serve God. Children are precious to God just because they are children.

For information and support in your ministry with children and their families (including support for Playgroups) contact:

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Training calendar 2012

Going to a couple of training events each year is a great way to be equipped and refreshed for your ministry with children and families.

Learning together and hearing the stories of others opens up amazing possibilities to encourage and to be encouraged, and helps us realise the bigger picture that we are part of by God's grace.



**Be refreshed as you
learn with others**

- 31 March** Stories of Childhood (Playgroup and preschool ministry)
- 5 May** Boost—Frankston
- 5 May** Boost—Western suburbs
- 19 May** Boost—Greensborough
- 2 June** Orange conference—Carey Nieuwhof
- 7–10 July** National Godly Play conference—Adelaide
- 12 & 13 July** Child Theology—Marcia Bunge (more details soon)
- 28 July** Overflow (Children, Youth & Families Ministry Conference)
- August** Messy Church—Lucy Moore (more details coming soon)
- 11 August** OAC Creative Children's Ministry Seminar
- 11 August** Mainly music conference
- 1 September** Symposium
- 13 October** Torque—SU Missions Training
- 20 October** Christian Playgroup Network Conference/AGM
- May 2013** Leaders to Go

Please ask if you want more information about any event (see contact details above).