



Children & Families Ministry Newsletter

A Messy Church lunch



Half a dozen Anglicans gathered for lunch with Lucy Moore on Thursday 28 August, at All Saints Mitcham. The fact that we were one of five groups that she was meeting that day, having arrived from the UK the previous morning, speaks volumes for Lucy's enthusiasm and commitment to sharing the Messy Church experience and helping people explore the reasons why they might want to try doing Messy Church in their own setting.

Jeannette Hamilton, the Children and Families Minister at All Saints Mitcham, was delighted with the coincidence that she was having lunch with Lucy on the same day that the monthly All Saints

Messy Church was happening. One of the church members had made pavlova for the Messy Church meal - far more than Jeannette thought they could possibly use. So the simple lunch of soup and bread became a feast with pavlova dessert.

In between mouthfuls of pavlova, Lucy explained that Messy Church began out of the realisation that there were many families living in her suburb that they had never seen in church and had no way of connecting with. The impetus for doing their first Messy Church was a

heartfelt longing for all people to have the chance to meet Jesus, and so they went and spoke to families at the local school, and down at the shops, and asked, "If you went to church, what would you like it to be like?" Amazingly they found that people were not totally adverse to the idea of church as long as it was fun, with things to do together as a family and they wouldn't have to sit quietly for too long.

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From those conversations they developed the Messy Church format of craft, activities and games, a simple celebration with story, songs and prayer, and a shared meal. Lucy confessed that the idea of providing a sit-down meal was added because she couldn't bear the thought of going home and cooking for her family after the busyness of setting up and

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Book review: In their midst—worshipping with children

In their midst - Worshipping with children by Judith F. Hall, Broughton Publishing, 2011

In their midst invites churches to embark on an adventure along a path that has in living memory become the road less travelled. Many churches have shaped their children's ministry around a Sunday school model. They assume the faith education of children is best met by an education program, which removes the child wholly or partially from corporate worship.

Judith Hall has written *In their midst* from the premise that the faith development of children is well-served by their inclusion in the worshipping community. Moreover she has demonstrated, against popular opinion, that children will be engaged and even enriched by liturgical prayer book worship. And far from being unwanted distractions, the presence of children can enhance and even facilitate worship for adults, as the children in their midst respond in a fresh way to the presence of God.

In their midst offers resources to engage children in the key moments of liturgical worship: Gathering; Praise; Ministry of the Word; Creed; Prayers; Confession and absolution; Communion, Sending out. Instead of inventing new forms of worship that are intended to be relevant and even entertain children, Judith Hall invites churches to value their liturgical traditions and to enrich them. By allowing children the opportunity to experience and engage with liturgical worship through the medium of play and multi-sensory activities they are enabled to more fully participate. They embark on an explora-

tion of the various moments of the liturgy which draw the worshipping community into a transforming encounter with God.

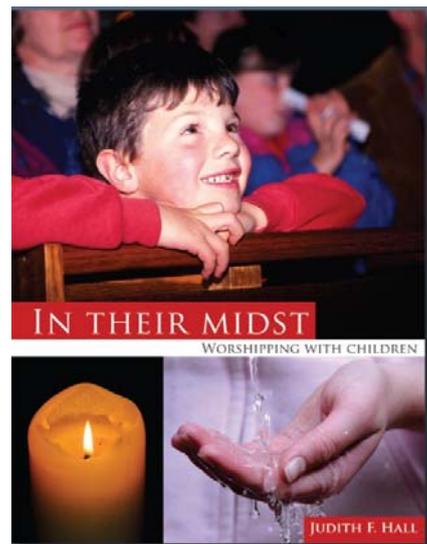
The introductory chapter deals with many of the practicalities of implementing *In their midst*, including facilitation, catering for the requirements of both adults and children, including those with special needs, and acoustics (in particular, the importance of managing background noise). Following chapters each give attention to the different parts of the liturgy, suggesting activities and resources that will enable children to participate in the worship in ways that are meaningful and appropriate.

The best way to use *In their midst* is to read it through and absorb the intent and purpose of the author.

In their midst recognises the value for both the community at worship and the child when children are engaged actively in the worship life of the congregation

Then decisions can be made about how to use the ideas that are offered. The advice at the beginning of Chapter One should be noted: find the entry point that will be helpful for your congregation and give them a clear understanding of the purpose of the *In their midst* activities and approach.

In their midst recognises the value for both the community at worship and the child when children are engaged actively in the worship life of the congregation. The needs of the adults (including parents) and the needs of children are taken into consideration. However, *In their midst* will not be implemented without some cost of time and money to create the resources and people willing to produce the resources; this is a hands-on approach, and some churches may struggle to find people



with the time and skills. Nevertheless, there is ample instruction provided, as well as explanation about the purpose and implementation of each activity or resource.

In their midst is a gift to the Church. It is the resource that I have been waiting for, a powerful tool for encouraging churches to have a go at including children more fully in their worshipping community. I am looking forward to seeing the fruits as *In their midst* is implemented. I am confident that churches will be enriched. I believe that children and their families will be encouraged in their faith as they encounter the welcome of churches that have been adventurous enough to have children "in their midst".

To find out more about *In their midst* contact Dorothy Hughes (see back page).

Messy Church lunch – from front page

then leading Messy Church. Far easier to find a couple of volunteers to cook a simple meal for 100 or more Messy Church participants! In reality, the shared meal was a God-inspired idea that added a sense of community and hospitality.

During the conversation Jeannette mentioned that one of the people coming to Messy Church at Mitcham was travelling all the way from

Sunshine. This lady had recently arrived from the UK and had been to a local Messy Church in her home town. She looked up the Messy Church website and found that Mitcham was her closest Messy Church, and has been making the trip across town ever since. Lucy loved this story, and we were all sobered by the thought that Messy Church had the power to break the

barrier between the west and east of Melbourne, but also challenged by the potential of many more Messy Churches.

The fun factor

As children's ministry leaders we endeavor to teach the truths of Scripture and help the children in our group to understand the Bible so that they can come to know God and live in relationship with Jesus. This is a serious goal with Kingdom consequences and we can have a lot of FUN achieving it...

Children love to have fun! In fact we all like to repeat experiences that

The goal is to present God's word to children who are engaged, open and ready to hear a message presented in a relevant way.

are fun. As children's ministry leaders, we want to engage children in ways that create in them a desire to return to our group week after week.

One thing that can make a big difference here is the 'Fun Factor'. If the children have a great time, they will want to keep coming and they will probably tell their friends as well. This is not to entice children to a program that is big on hype and low on meaning. The goal is to present God's word to children who are engaged, open and ready to hear a message presented in a relevant way.

Experiential games, activities and challenges are a fun way for children

to



Play and having fun allows children to trust, connect and learn

learn. It is also helpful to play games that promote 'team building' and 'getting to know you' as we often have more fun and connect more deeply as we come to know each other better. You can also choose games and activities that promote the kinds of behaviours you would like to see in your group like sharing, serving, taking turns or co-operation. There is often a game that becomes a favourite in a group and it is great to be able to add this in when you have extra time as a reward or treat for your group.

It is important that the majority of the leaders are also a part of the

games and activities. If the leadership team are having fun and sharing that enthusiasm with the children, it is more likely that the children around them will also be having fun. Leaders can model how to have fun in a way that is pleasing to God and be of great assistance to those children who may behave inappropriately at times. It is the light and shade in our programs – it is the fun and the seriousness that help children to connect joyfully with each other, build trust in their leaders and develop a better sense of what is appropriate behavior for different circumstances.

Your time together can be made very special as you allow and encourage an appropriate sense of fun – for you, your leaders and the children.

Leader's Training Tips,
www.max7.org

Visit the Max 7 website for this and many other resources for children & families ministry.



Ready for anything—Duty of Care

What would you have done in this situation?

Recently a question was asked about whether churches running children's ministry programs need to be licenced by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development as a 'licenced children's activity'.

All parishes in this diocese are expected to adhere to the guidelines provided in the Duty of Care Handbook

This enquiry was made after representatives of DEECD made an unannounced visit to a church's school holiday program in response to a complaint that the church was running an

unregistered service.

Please be advised that the *Children's Services Act 1996, amended 1 July 2010* states:

"Nothing in this Act applies— to a service principally conducted to provide instruction in a particular activity or sport;

Example Instruction in a particular activity could be instruction in dance, music or language or religious instruction."

This Act covers the regulation of children's services providers; churches that are providing any form of children's ministry are exempt and not required to be licenced.

The parish that was visited was able to demonstrate that they were operating in accordance with Diocesan guidelines and the visitors were most impressed with the standard of care, the awareness of safety issues and the quality of the program. They commented that the children (100 attended on each of three days) were happy and engaged.

It pays to be well-prepared. Because this parish is very aware of their duty of care, they had nothing to worry about. All parishes in this diocese are expected to adhere to the guidelines provided in the Duty



of Care Handbook. The most recent version of the Handbook is available on the [Children and families page](#) of the website.

Luke 14—Disability Inclusive Christian Communities

Luke 14 is a CBM Australia initiative to encourage and enable your church to welcome and include people with a disability. Around 20% of the Australian population live with a disability - is that reflected in your church and in your children's ministry?

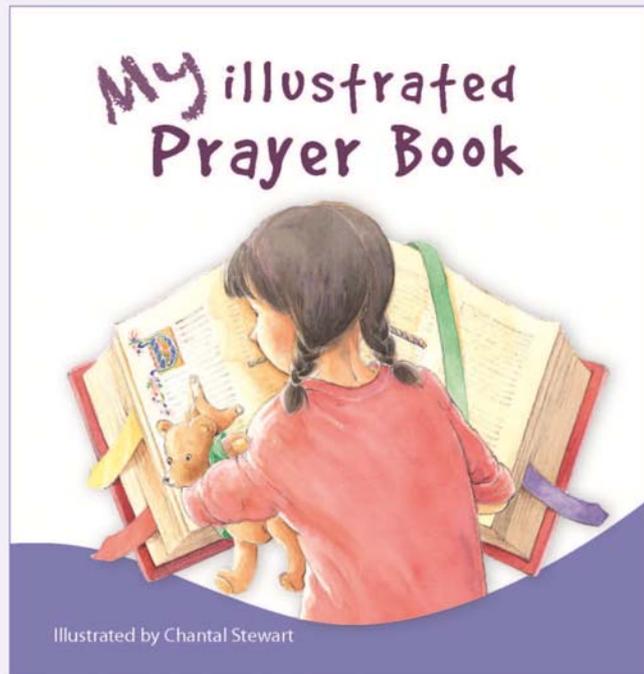
Luke 14 recommends a four-step process for churches to become disability inclusive. To look at resources go to the [Luke 14 website](#). Look out

for workshops at children and families ministry training events as they are introduced through 2012.



My Illustrated Prayer Book

Illustrated by Chantal Stewart



For young readers aged 4-6 years.

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My order

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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:

Dorothy Hughes

**Children & Families Ministry Facilitator
Playgroup Ministry Coordinator**

(03) 9653 4275

0400 484 131

dhughes@melbourne.anglican.com.au

www.melbourne.anglican.com.au



The CPN celebrates 10 years !

Saturday 17th September 2011

'Dreaming big in your ministry'

Guest speaker—Kaye Plowman

Kaye is a great communicator & has a wealth of knowledge and experience to share with us .
Inspire your playgroup team to be mission focused.

VENUE

Ringwood Church of Christ
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Melway 49 J8

TIME 9.30 am—1pm

COST

CPN members \$15 pp

Non members \$20pp

- Come and enjoy a yummy brunch
- Network with others in playgroup ministry
- A wide variety of resources for you to purchase

Bookings essential by Monday 12th September for catering purposes to ruth@kernlcks.com or (03) 9873 7730

**A Christian Playgroup Network event and
Annual General Meeting**

