

Good News for Children

September 2003

Message

To ...
All those who work with children in the Methodist Church

From ...
The Children's Section

Message:
This Link Mailing is full of helpful ideas, suggestions and opportunities. Please read it, take it to meetings, share it with others...

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In the work you do with children in your church – whether it's on a Sunday, as part of a uniformed organisation, midweek club or JMA – have you ever sat down together and thought about strategy? Why do you work with children? What is the most important aspect of the work you do? Where would you like to be in five years time?

Staff in the Children's Section recently met with a small group of ecumenical colleagues and Methodists who work with children in a variety of locations and groups. We began to look strategically at the work we do in the Children's Section of the Connexional Team, as we seek to serve local churches.

This 'Ideas and Wisdom Day' will feed into our planning for the next few years. We would also like to hear how you see the future of children's work and how the Connexional Team can help.

Why not get all the children's workers in your church or circuit together and facilitate your own 'Ideas and Wisdom Day'? Here is a possible programme outline which could be adapted to suit an evening or shorter session:

<p>10 mins Getting to know you exercise.</p> <p>15 mins In small groups, identify the challenges, opportunities and issues facing children today. Use flipchart paper to record ideas.</p> <p>10 mins Short reports from the groups.</p> <p>5 mins Identify three or four common issues from the reports (ours were media, family life, school, the haves/have-nots).</p> <p>15 mins Using the three or four issues identified, form new groups with participants choosing the issue they would like to explore further. Record on flipchart paper three positive and three negative aspects of each issue.</p>	<p>10 mins Reports from the groups, including one positive and one negative aspect.</p> <p>10 mins Draw up a list of things to celebrate in the children's work your church has done. Are there any concerns?</p> <p>15 mins Reflect on the lists you drew up in the first half of the meeting and discuss what should be priorities for your church's children's work in the next five years.</p> <p>20 mins Split into whatever groups are appropriate to think further about these priorities.</p> <p>20 mins Report back to each other and agree what needs to be done next and how.</p>
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New Eyes - the new project for Methodist children's groups, linked to *Our Calling*



New Eyes is a new way of doing and new way of seeing children's work in the church and of seeing the church in children's work.

It is suitable for churches and groups that have many children and churches which have few children.

- Sunday groups
- JMA groups
- Uniformed organisations
- Midweek clubs

It contains games and craft suggestions, ideas for bible work, possibilities for church family away days and ways for all ages in the church to live as disciples in worship and mission.

Say YES to the children in your church and make sure you get your copy of New Eyes, free and full of a variety of activities for use on a Sunday, during the week or as part of a church family weekend.

New Eyes has been sent to all churches together with this issue of the Link Mailing. If you are reading this and haven't seen your copy, ask around at church or send off for your free copy from Methodist Publishing House (address on back page). Contact Leslie Noon (020 7467 5117) in the Children's Section if you would like further information.

If you have various children's groups meeting in your church or on your premises, why not take this opportunity to hold one or more combined events – using New Eyes as your basis. Here are some taster suggestions to whet your appetite!

New Eyes Detectives

Children can be detectives over a period of weeks or this activity could be done in one session. Be as imaginative and elaborate as is necessary. Make it fun to do! This could also be turned into an all-age activity – part of worship or another event. To make the 'game' more authentic, provide various equipment for each child:

- A warrant card (on which each child can draw themselves or stick on a photo).
- A special little notebook in which they can write what they find.



Game: All Tied Up

Children stand in a circle close to each other and stretch out their arms into the middle. Each child then takes hold of the hand of someone across the circle. (Make sure that children are not holding both hands of the same person.) Without letting go of each other's hands they must try to untie the tangle themselves. (Take care that arms are not twisted too much.) When they are all untied you should end up with one large circle or two smaller circles.

Coloured glasses

Give each child a piece of card with an outline of an eye mask/large pair of glasses. These should have frames that are large enough to decorate (and that are the right size). Stick pieces of coloured cellophane to the back of each eye hole. (Cellophane and pre-cut masks are available from Baker Ross, 0870 241 1867 or www.bakerross.co.uk). Attach elastic to the sides of the glasses. When worn, these glasses will give a different view of the world.

Working with Children Consultation: Friday 30 January to Sunday 1 February 2004

- Would you like to be exposed to new ideas in children's work?
- Would you value a weekend in which you can meet other children's workers?
- Would you like to be stimulated in the work you do with children?

Then the Connexional Children's Consultation might be for you...

The Children's Section of the Methodist Connexional Team has decided to open up its Connexional Children's Consultation. It is such a good and valuable opportunity, that it was felt appropriate to extend the invitation. This year, as well each District being invited to send a representative for Children's and JMA work, any church children's worker who feels that they would benefit from or enjoy being exposed to up-to-date ideas

and training is invited to come along.

The dates for the weekend are Friday 30 January to Sunday 1 February 2004. The venue is All Saints Pastoral Centre, London Colney, near St Albans (just off the M25).

You can come for the whole weekend or for part of it. The weekend will include sessions on Godly Play, a new exciting method of doing children's work which is sweeping the country. Contact Mary Roseweir at Methodist Church House on 020 7467 5213 or e-mail roseweirm@methodistchurch.org.uk for more details or a registration form. Expressing an interest at this stage does not mean making a firm commitment! If you have never attended a Connexional event before, consider coming to this – you will be made very welcome!

Sacred Space Retreat: Friday 30 April to Sunday 2 May 2004

"Thank you for organising such a wonderful weekend with a relaxed atmosphere and a truly 'sacred space'".

"It gave me much needed space to unwind and become aware again of God's presence".

"Time out, opportunity to meet other workers. Ready to go back with a clear head and maybe better organised".

Following on from the very successful first ever retreat for children's and youth workers, the Children's Section



and MAYC are planning a second retreat.

Sacred Space will take place at Whirlow Grange Conference Centre, Sheffield from Friday 30 April to Sunday 2 May 2004. The cost per person is £75.

The intention is that participants will leave the retreat relaxed, recharged and re-focused. The leaders of the retreat are Leslie Noon and Liz Sturgess (Children's and MAYC sections) and the facilitator will be Helen O'Connell from the Iona Community.

There are only 20 places available on the retreat, and the first one was oversubscribed. If you are interested in finding out more, contact Mrs Leslie Noon in the Children's Section on 020 7467 5117 or e-mail noonl@methodistchurch.org.uk

Useful websites and organisations

There are many useful publications, organisations and websites out there which can be of tremendous benefit to those who work with children. Here are just a few good examples:

Bible Reading Fellowship's Barnabas Ministry: Excellent range of good resources for church-based children's work plus the Barnabas Ministry Team who offer training events for local churches. Check out their website at www.brf.org.uk or ring 01865 319700.

When working with children on a theme or producing fun and relevant themed material, do you ever create puzzles? If so, or if you would be interested in doing this, here is a very clever website which allows you to easily create your own puzzles on any theme you choose. puzzlemaker.school.discovery.com

This is a gem of a website! It contains loads of games, puzzles, dramas, useful links and lots of other activities. Truly a life-saver and we're sure you'll quickly add it to your list of favourites! Check out this UK based website at www.funandgames.org

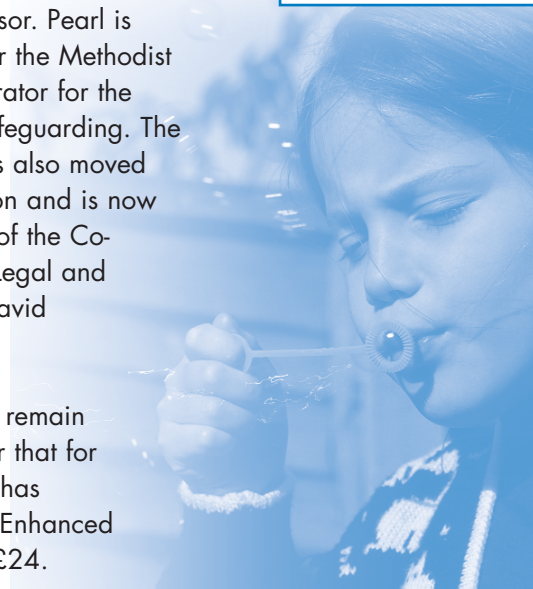
And lastly of course, the Methodist Church website at www.methodist.org.uk Go to the section on information and then to the section on work with children and the JMA pages. But there's lots of useful other stuff on the website as well!

Safeguarding



Over the summer there were some changes in Safeguarding matters. David Dalziel retired in August and we have welcomed the Revd Pearl Luxon as his successor. Pearl is Head of Safeguarding for the Methodist Church and the Administrator for the Churches' Agency for Safeguarding. The work of safeguarding has also moved from the Children's Section and is now part of the responsibility of the Co-ordinating Secretary for Legal and Constitutional Practice, David Gamble.

Disclosures for volunteers remain free. Please note however that for paid employees the CRB has increased its charges for Enhanced Disclosures from £12 to £24.



Timetravellers

By popular demand, Timetravellers (the Methodist Children's Project) will be extended by a further year, until August 2004. Resources will continue to be available from Methodist Publishing House. Large numbers of churches and children's groups have been involved in Timetravellers in one way or another. Some have raised money, others have learnt about street children in Kenya, and more recently many have used the John Wesley material in book 2 to think about the tercentenary. If you have heard about Timetravellers, but haven't seen the material, or if this is the first time you've heard about it, why not contact MPH for the material. It contains lots of useful programme ideas for all sorts of children's groups and all the resources are now FREE!

- Timetravellers Book 1 GA157
- Timetravellers Book 2 GA957
- Timetravellers street children poster GA300
- Timetravellers inter-generational poster GA299



Further Information

Please contact Leslie Noon, Children's Section at Methodist Church House, 25 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5JR
Tel: 020 7486 5502 Fax: 020 7486 7792

This insert is free. **Further copies** are available at £2.25 per 10 copies as a contribution towards the distribution cost from MPH (see address below). Copies of the **New Eyes Booklet (GE233)** as advertised on page 2 are available free from MPH. Donations towards post and packing welcome.

This is part of the Connexional Link Mailing, provided for the Methodist Church in Britain. Methodist Churches and others in linked ecumenical projects may freely copy this resource for their own use. © **Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes**

Who else in your church might find this useful?

- Children's Club leader
- Junior Church leader
- JMA Secretary
- Uninformed leader
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Please write their names and get them to tick the box when they have received or seen a copy.