



Name: Rachel Ullmer

Location: Lahore, Pakistan

My call: To love children, to be a teacher and to support teachers.

My role: Primary school teacher working for the Diocese of Raiwind and helping to train teachers, undertake curriculum development work and run workshops.

Link letter: Read my latest news from Pakistan

Hello from Pakistan!

Dear friends,

Thank you for all your support over the past few months. It has been a complicated time, planning and trying to decide what to do during a change from one bishop to another! I have been working in three of the diocesan Wesleyan Schools, Abbotabad Christian Girls' School, three small mission schools, one of which is at a brick kiln, and in St Peter's School which caters for the wealthier students.

I try not to despair too much at the education in Pakistan, as it has one of the lowest literacy rates in the world and one of the most divisive school systems. One can see all the coaches and posh cars loaded with school children, but go into the bazaars and busties (poor housing areas) during school time and there you will see many out-of-school children working or playing in the streets and bazaars.

It is very difficult to get teachers to use interactive methods; however, despite this, many

teachers do want to teach well and like to teach with me in the classroom. This term has seen the nursery children using the apparatus in the Montessori bags. Once a week I go to some of the schools and the children choose the activity – puzzles, counting tasks, shapes in holes, and concentrate on the activity. It is a bit difficult when the electric goes off as the rooms are very dark and there are no tables, but I always say that it is the teacher that matters!

One popular song is "Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed", and I have five monkey finger puppets that the children love. Their favourite Montessori things are measuring with the red rods, threading the beads and making the wooden steps. Older children like matching the letters to pictures and making



Top: Playing sport in one of the mission schools, held in a brick kiln

Above: A science lesson, looking at flowers



Top left: Children warming their hands over a fire



Top right: Girl Guides swinging on the bars

sums with the button counters. They are so pleased to finish a difficult puzzle or task! (Even the teachers enjoy having a go!). As I travel to the schools on the bus or rickshaw, people ask what is in my bag and I say it is things for my school. They say "lucky school!"

Bible teaching is being developed in the schools and the nursery syllabus has been written and I got some friends to translate the book. I saw a lovely lesson for Palm Sunday with a drama of Jesus riding on a donkey (the back of a larger child!) and children waving and shouting "Hosanna". The older children are doing a course from the Open Theological Seminary for teenagers, which teaches the Bible stories, relating them to modern day issues in Pakistani life. A friend comes occasionally to teach the course and encourage the teacher.

Recently, I told the Easter Story using the Godly Play story and the children made Easter gardens on a plate with a clay tomb. I also joined in with a Scripture Union lesson and the children enjoyed the games, singing and story.

"In January, we started a junior Girl Guides at one of the schools. The guider in charge is a very talented lady and was pleased that our schools were having guides. She came and did a session at the school and was very impressed. She was a good role model for our two teachers who run the guides. Both teachers have increased in confidence since they began the group."

Children love sports, especially as many schools don't have play area or nearby parks. They play turn by turn in the small spaces – kicking a football around, playing badminton, catching a small ball or frisbee: and other relay games. The children in the brick kiln sat huddled around a fire in the courtyard, but were soon rushing around playing games! One time we went to a small play area near a school and I had to send the class back as they were so naughty! The next week I came to take them, they were really good! Another time I met my friend from OM Sport Team with another school and we all joined in. Some men then came

to erect a wedding tent on the space and we had to give the men sweets and ask them to wait for half an hour!

In February I went to do some training at Abbotabad School once again. They are planning to set up a play school and are very keen on training. Sessions included spoken English for early years, Montessori, Christian school ethos and maths. The teachers spent a lot of time doing the activities and working out the maths problems!

In January, we started a junior Girl Guides at one of the schools. The girls wear a blue sash with a white shalwar kameez. They have learnt the promise and laws, and motto, which is "hath batie" or "lend a hand". The guider in charge is a very talented lady and was pleased that our schools were having guides. She came and did a session at the school and was very impressed. She was a good role model for our two teachers who run the guides. Both teachers have increased in confidence since they began the group.

The girls have learnt about guides in different parts of the world, put the uniforms on a world map, made bird posters of their groups and been on a visit to the park. They had never been to a big park before and loved the climbing frames, picnic, watching the peacocks, drawing the flowers and playing in



an exam, Rs 20,000 for a green card!) and poor people are being tricked. They raise money for fake projects too, so please be careful when giving money abroad! At the Miracle School mothers' meeting, many mothers had been tricked and we told them that Jesus demands no money for prayers – he cares for

us for free if we allow him to enter our hearts.

Please continue to pray for the schools, and for my spiritual well-being and that all goes well at this time of changing bishops.

Love

Rachel

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the woods. The teachers also had not been to a park before and were a bit bewildered at first!

At St Peter's school I took two sessions on Christian Schools. The teachers compared the way in which Jesus taught and how they can teach. They found it interesting to do a "learning styles" activity and realised that God has made all children differently and that it is important to try and have a balance of activities suitable for all children. We discussed ideas for the nursery teachers on how to encourage the children to speak English. It is increasingly the case that English speakers are getting jobs, and many books and internet articles are in English. So teachers have a task of teaching good Urdu and English.

Unfortunately, there are some fake pastors here, demanding money for prayers (Rs 5,000 for

PLEASE PRAY...

- For the schools and teachers, especially in the hot weather, that they will be able to implement the Bible curriculum and good teaching methods.
- For a smooth transition as a new bishop comes to the diocese and the current bishop retires.
- That money will be used to disciple the people of the diocese and used wisely.
- For me to prioritise the teaching needs of the teachers and form good relationships with them.
- For safety on the roads as I walk around (especially from the crazy motorcycles!).



Above: Little monkey finger puppets, which the children love!

Left: A Bible story being told about a blind man