

GROWING FAITH: FLOW CHART CHILDREN IN CHURCH

“The Growing Faith Adventure is a call for the renewal of hearts and minds so that it becomes second nature to include children, young people and households in every aspect of church life for the lifelong formation of faith in the whole of life”

IT DOES MATTER if there are no or very few children in your church family!

Jesus welcomed children, in the Old and New testaments children sing and shout God’s praises... use this flow chart to find some useful ideas!


MAKE YOUR CHURCH MORE CHILD FRIENDLY!

Churches sometimes seem a bit gloomy! Could you add some pictures or bright cushions? Could you create a small collection of lovely new Christian books? Don’t go for donations of books which look old and dusty – find some new ones! There are some suggestions at the end of this document. Could someone create some Bible Bags with interesting and good quality books and games in. The bag on the left is one made by church members at St Mark’s Brampton – amazing knitting was involved! If a child or two comes to their church an adult can read the book with them and they can recreate the story with the toys. ASK [SARAH](#) ABOUT EXAMPLES OF BIBLE BAGS



**IS THIS LIKE YOUR CHURCH?
FOLLOW THE
ARROWS FOR SOME IDEAS!**

1. We are a small and mostly retired congregation. We almost never have any children and only have our church building – no hall or other place to meet. Money is very tight.




THINK ABOUT LOW COST, EASY TO ORGANISE EVENTS – MAYBE OUTSIDE!

a) Invite (posters, leaflets, word of mouth) local families to come for a ramble! First thing on a Saturday or Sunday morning is often a good time. First check that the route is safe and do a risk assessment ([Sarah](#) can help) Maybe you could give everyone a challenge – find the biggest leaf or four blue things etc. When everyone gets back to church offer a drink and snack with a two minute “thought for the day”. Make sure you invite everyone back for the next one!

b) Go for an evening event – a church recently invited all their families plus baptism families to come and have fish and chips in the churchyard. 70 people came! You could extend an idea like this maybe with some torches/glo-sticks and help everyone think about Jesus coming to us at Christmas.

Worried about the weather? Obviously don't expect frail people to be out in the cold/wet, but for most of us we need to remember the words of the great walker Alfred Wainwright, “there is no bad weather only inappropriate clothing”!

2. We are a small and mostly retired congregation, one or two of our congregation have worked with children in the past. We occasionally get a couple of children joining us and aim to provide some things for them to do.



HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT CONTACTING LOCAL SCHOOLS?

a) [Sarah](#) can provide a list of local schools. Ensure you comply with school Safeguarding requirements. The first step should be to ASK if there is anything you could offer to help the school.

Anything practical? Helping in a library, school garden, helping staff prepare resources. When you are known as someone helpful and reliable, maybe then you could offer help with Assemblies/Collective Worship, or other lessons.

b) OPEN THE BOOK – watch the introductory video <https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/get-involved/open-the-book/> – this is a fantastic resource. You will need around 4 or 5 people in your group and some basic props. It is appropriate for children of all religions (or no religion) If you are interested in starting a team, please contact Sarah, who will be running training in the New Year.

3. Our church is within walking distance of a local school. We have some members of the church who are good at setting up displays, and some who would feel able to talk to a small group of children when given a script to use.



HAVE A LOOK AT THE EXPERIENCE JOURNEYS

<https://jumpingfishpublications.co.uk/product-category/experience-journeys/>

There are four to choose from: Christmas, Easter, Pentecost and Harvest. The Diocese can lend you all the resources you need at no cost. You set up 6 “stations” in your church and children visit, a class at a time. At every station there is something to think about and something to do.

HAVE A LOOK AT PRAYER SPACES IN SCHOOLS

<https://prayerspacesinschools.com/>

Great for all ages, perhaps especially good for secondary schools. You would need to have some training. I am planning to organise this so please let me know if you're interested.

OR, HOW ABOUT A DROP OFF COFFEE FOR THOSE WHO HAVE JUST DELIVERED CHILDREN TO SCHOOL? Supply some toys for small brothers and sisters and let the parents/carers/grandparents etc. have a quiet sit down and chat after the rush of getting to school. A great way to start getting to know families...

4. We get a few children in church, but before the pandemic, our real success was our Toddler Group.

We used to have around 40 carers and pre-schoolers and they're starting to come back now.

We do Christian teaching and songs, but once the children go to school we rarely see the families again.



TALK TO CARERS SOMETIME BEFORE THEIR CHILD LEAVES AND ASK...

What would help you as parents/grandparents/carers? Look on the **CARE FOR THE FAMILY** website <https://www.careforthefamily.org.uk/> There are lots of resources to support family life.

What would your child/children like to do now they are too big for Toddlers? What about an occasional **MESSY CHURCH** <https://www.messychurch.org.uk/> There is lots of support available if you'd like to do this. Sarah can advise you.

Finally have a look at the “**KITCHEN TABLE PROJECT**” <https://kitchentable.org.uk/> which has lots of things to try out at home.

5. We used to have a good group of children, but we are now just getting a few, of mixed ages.

In the past we have run Sunday school (or another name) groups, but some of our leaders want to step down.

TRY FLEXIBLE ACTIVITIES AND GAMES

You can borrow one of the Bible Boxes (there are 3 – Water, Fields and Deserts) Each box has 10 planned sessions with all the resources you need for a group or mixed age and variable numbers. They use, games, drama, discussion and NO writing or colouring!

BITESIZE TRAINING

<https://derby.anglican.org/en/training/learning-in-faith.html> Select **CHILDREN AND YOUTH**, and then **RUNNING A CHILDREN'S GROUP AT CHURCH** for a quick look at some of the things you could do.

MORE TRAINING

If your team would like a longer training time, with lots of activities set out to try, please contact me. I can usually arrange to visit you within a month or so. There is no charge for this.

6. We have some established groups of children who attend fairly regularly, but we are looking for some more exciting material to use.

HAVE A LOOK AT SOME RESOURCES

YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S WORK

<https://www.youthandchildrens.work/Resources> Register online to get access to lots of resources

ENERGIZE URBAN SAINTS <https://www.energize.uk.net/about> Subscription needed

ROOTS ON THE WEB (Fits with Lectionary) also involves a subscription
<https://www.rootsontheweb.com/>

RAISE UP FAITH – <https://www.raiseupfaith.com/> by far the most appealing, adaptable and easy to use, but at a cost. You can do a 14 day trial for free. If you do this and would like to subscribe please can you let me know? It's possible that we might negotiate so a contract deals with them.

THERE ARE LOTS OF LOVELY BOOKS!

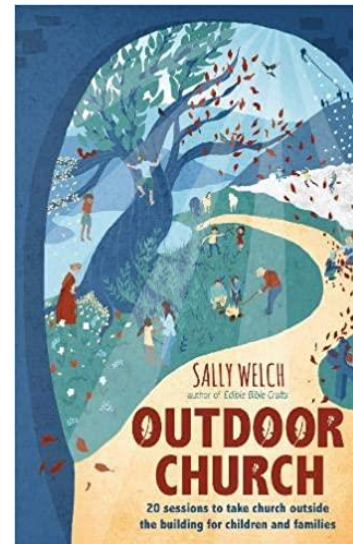
<https://www.thegoodbook.co.uk/children/>

<https://www.eden.co.uk/christian-books-for->



Is your situation not here?

Let me know and I will aim to make some recommendations for you



And, if you are lucky enough to have some outdoor space near your church – have a look at this book, “Outdoor Church” by Sally Welch

Some churches have been running Outdoor Worship times especially since Covid– they are especially popular with families.