

Diocese of Peterborough

To recognise the 30 years that have passed since the first Year of the Child, Peterborough Diocese have 30 ideas to start you thinking what you could do to mark the year in your church:

- 1 Arrange for the needs of children, and those who work with and for them, to be included in the intercessions every week in 2009
- 2 Find a way to celebrate all those who work with children – teachers, children’s workers, nurses and GPs, social workers, librarians, family therapists, family lawyers... Gift? Celebration meal? Special service?
- 3 Give children a ‘voice’ within the church. Ask for their views on worship, fellowship, teaching – and promise to see if they can be put into practice
- 4 Ensure that children and young people’s work is discussed at every parochial church council meeting
- 5 Arrange for children and young people to attend a pcc meeting to discuss matters of mutual interest – this may mean holding the meeting at a weekend or earlier in the evening
- 6 Make a donation of books to your local school(s). *Speaking Volumes* is an organisation which provides discounts on Christian books for donation to schools:
<http://www.christianbookpromotions.org.uk>
- 7 Enable children to lead worship both for their peers and for adults – release them from just handing out the hymnbooks and taking the collection
- 8 Have a *Changing Places Day* where the children stay in church and the adults go out to wherever the children usually meet
- 9 Sponsor a child through *World Vision*, *Smile International* or a similar organisation
- 10 Have an all-age activity session planned and led by children and adults of all ages
- 11 Decide to provide fairtrade juice, fruit and biscuits at children’s activities, rather than cheap squash and biscuits
- 12 Organise a parenting course – advertise it at church, in the health centre and local school
- 13 Hold a fund-raising event for a children’s charity
eg *The Children’s Society*
- 14 Resolve to use the authorised *Additional Collects* [isbn 9 780715 120873] when children are present – they are less complicated and ‘wordy’ than those included in *Common Worship*
- 15 Set up a lending library of children’s Christian books and DVDs for families to borrow. Ask the children in church for suggestions to stock
- 16 Arrange for different groups within the church, such as the flower-arrangers, bell-ringers etc to invite children to taster sessions
- 17 Ask children to organise their own flower arrangement or display for Christmas, Easter, Pentecost or Harvest in part of the church – explain the task and then hand the responsibility to the children
- 18 Create, or re-create, a children’s corner in the church to be used in services that are not designed to be ‘family-friendly’. Ensure that there is a child-sized table and chairs, or beanbags; a good supply of

Christian books for a range of ages; jigsaw puzzles with pictures illustrating Bible stories; activity sheets that relate to the season of the church year with colouring pens that work; a few good quality cuddly toys.

19 Develop the children's corner to provide dressing up clothes -shepherds' and kings' outfits for Christmas and Epiphany; and small versions of cassocks and vestments for role-playing if they are worn in your church. How about sometimes putting out a pretend font and a baby doll after children have taken part in a baptism service?

20 Get down on hands and knees to find out what the church building looks like from a small child's point of view. Or ask a 6 year old to show you the important bits of the building – which will give you an insight into their view

21 Research the needs of families with special needs at www.throughtheroof.org and see what could be improved in church life to support them

22 Fill the church with children's artwork to celebrate a festival. You could do this in partnership with the local school

23 Create a special children's banner with adults and children working together

24 Debate introducing Communion before Confirmation for children

25 Plan a *seder* meal for Maundy Thursday so that children can ask the questions that Jewish children ask at the Passover meal. Find instructions in *Step into the Story* by Margaret Spivey published by barnabas isbn 9 781841 010021

26 Create a children's guide to the church, to go alongside the adult guidebook. Apart from identifying a few of the key features, plus some fun items to spot, provide some suggestions for things to do such as writing a prayer for the prayerboard, drawing a picture of themselves to add to a display in the children's corner, or climbing into the pulpit and imagining what good news about Jesus they would tell people

27 Send a baptism anniversary card to every 'child' who has been baptised in your church since 1979. It may take some detective work to track down current addresses, but it is a good opportunity to remind them that they are still prayed for

28 Encourage tweenagers to sign up for the Methodist Children's Text Service. Look at <http://www.methodistchildren.org.uk/>

29 Build up a list of Christian websites to share with children

30 Organise an all-age party for the church family to have fun together

Bonus ideas:

Fund a visit from the *Rhema Theatre Company* <http://www.rhemaschools.org/index.cfm?site=schools> or a *Barnabas RE day* <http://www.barnabasinschools.org.uk/> or even the recording of a pop cd with <http://www.popconnection.co.uk/> for your local primary school. These organisations are great if your church lacks people to work regularly with children but is willing to pay for mission in the broader sense.

EVENT

There will be a major one day event for everyone who works with children on Saturday 9 May 2009 10-4pm at All Saints' School, Northampton NN2 7AJ with the amazing **Lucy Moore, the originator of *Messy Church***, as the keynote speaker. Book the date in your diary now and then look out for further details as they are planned! We hope to welcome 200+ of you to this exciting event – and the more who attend, the better it will be!