



Helping churches and schools bring RE to life in Reading and beyond

Volunteer Training Event – September 2017 'Community coming together'

Our first for this academic year and, as usual, we started with prayer working around three prayer stations:

- Reflecting on the summer holidays and giving thanks for holiday fun and reflecting on what God might be asking us to put down or pick up.
- Consider how God has made us unique, that our gifting means we all occupy a special place in life's puzzle.
- And the last, Where in the world? Praying for needs outside of our immediate community and reflecting on our role – being the difference - we all have a part to play. We pray for communities and their pulling together in times of need. We pray for those who would do harm, for those in power to make good and fair choices.



Carousel of workshops – with upcoming sessions in mind

1. Yr2 Teachings of Jesus, reshaped



This workshop gave volunteers the opportunity to consider what are the higher-level questions we are looking to ask our children. During this time volunteers find out how to put forward a good question and to add value to these 8-yr old pupils.

2. Create a session for Yr2 Christmas and Pick & Mix

This was an opportunity to share wisdom and experience. We have an additional Yr2 Christmas session we needed to revisit, to ensure resources and strategies are not duplicated. We showcased this term's crafts, story bags and Godly Play tools so that volunteers are comfortable with the way they work. There are Christmas crafts for a variety of year groups, from the Christmas card activity to sheep to the Yr4 booklet (how do you fold it again?) and to our new Jairus daughter finger puppets.

Volunteers practiced the reflective story telling for the Godly Play Creation and Noah, the Christmas story bags for Yr3 and Yr5, Baptism story bags for Yr1 and practiced 'Role on the wall'. Staff were on hand to help and support.



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3. Mind your language



In this workshop volunteers are playing a version of Taboo, to consider appropriate language. A few 'churchy' words have been added too. Describing a word without saying the word brought about hoots of laughter. Volunteers looked at this term's session dates and thought what churchy words would be likely to come up? These were captured and volunteers were challenged, which words could you use instead? How would you describe the word or its concept concisely, quickly and in an age-appropriate way?



The volunteers' feedback was wonderful: "I always value the opening prayer activities. I don't know how you keep coming up with three different great ideas every time, or maybe I do ... Even though I'm a teacher I valued reminders about closed and leading questions – also valuing contributions from children and thanking them. Love the Baptism story bag and Jairus' craft." One of our volunteers said, "I hadn't realised how much teaching happened in the small groups until the training session. I thought it was teaching from the front and group work was a little bit of craft. Now I understand the importance of training; to have a go with the resources. I'll be spreading the word to the rest of my team!"