



Julia



Carrie



Alison (retiring)



Sue R



Sue H



Jackie



Sue A



Fiona

Dear friends,

I have a deep love of fairy lights and all things twinkly, especially on Christmas trees. This year, my mind keeps being drawn to the symbol of light.

There is a simple Christmas tree in the welcome area of St Nicolas' Centre, covered in white fairy lights. It offers a cheerful welcome throughout the day but really comes into its own from about 4.30pm when darkness starts to envelop everything. Glass windows are on two sides of the space, and those tiny lights are bright enough to be seen right across the car park and beyond.

God calls us to be like those little lights bright, bold and strong. Shining in the darkness, reflecting Christ's goodness in the world wherever we are.

Your support this year has enabled REInspired to do just that. With your help we have not only sustained previous local growth but broken new ground. We have added to our number and written new material for Understanding Christianity. 2020 will see us start the new year with several new national opportunities preparing to launch. Thank you. We could not do this without you.

Alison retires this term and is busy passing on her glue stick baton. We will really miss her energy and enthusiasm. Thank you so much for all you have brought to the team and to the work of REInspired.

I look forward to seeing many of you at our next training day in January where we can share with you in more detail all that is 'occurring'.

Wishing you a joyful and light filled Christmas and New Year.

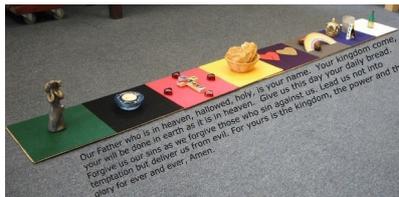
Julia, Project Director



### Prayer with Yr9 students

Recently we have been in Maiden Erlegh, Reading, working with year 9 on the theme of Prayer.

The session starts with statement sorting cards which small groups of students must decide whether to put under the headings, 'yes', 'no', or 'maybe'. Examples include, 'Praying is an experience rather than a ritual', 'Prayer is not necessary as God knows everything anyway', and 'The Lord's Prayer is the best prayer'. This has generated some really interesting and in depth discussion, with small group leaders dropping in some Christian and, sometimes, personal perspectives.



We have looked at Jesus' teaching on prayer, performed a drama based on the Lord's Prayer, and open mic questions. It's all gone really well.

Carrie

### Memories as a Team Leader

It has been such a joy and privilege to have been Team Leader for Alfred Sutton and Redlands Primary Schools for the past 13 years! During that time, REInspired has grown and developed to where we are today.



I was introduced to REInspired about 15 years ago, when I was invited to help at an Alfred Sutton session at Anderson Baptist Church. We had a meal together as a team beforehand, and the children loved exploring the church. Openings in several schools were just beginning and I was excited by an REInspired event where different ways of teaching the children were shared, for example Godly play. I was invited to become team leader when the two previous leaders were stepping down, and accepted with some trepidation, but knowing that God was with me. I have learnt so much, and am so thankful for my wonderful team of volunteers and also for the other team leaders.



Early memories include the priest from Our Lady of Peace RC church coming to St Bartholomew's Church to show the children his garments, a lady from the Greek Orthodox Church explaining what icons were, an artist expressing her beliefs through

paintings, a policeman in full uniform, and tasting different kinds of bread at St Luke's Church! We would meet as a team a few weeks before a new session to share ideas and plan it. Some of our sessions still have elements from those early days.

One time after a Christmas session, I asked the children if they had learnt anything new. One little boy responded, 'I learnt that Jesus is real, my mum says he doesn't exist'. Moments like that, or when the children say, 'I love coming to the church' make it all worthwhile. I shall continue as a volunteer and am excited for what the future holds for REInspired!



Alison

## A little pencil

One of the greatest benefits of REI is that we get to put flesh on the bones of children and young people's understanding of RE, and ultimately their understanding of God.

We serve and follow an incarnational God. A God made flesh. A God who dwells amongst us. The incarnation of God is one of the most significant theological imperatives when it comes to mission amongst children and young people. When we understand that the word became flesh, it transports the idea, the concept of God, from being something children LEARN ABOUT into someone children can RELATE TO. This is our God, a God who comes to us, who moves into the neighborhood, who gets involved in our lives.



And that is where our amazing volunteers come in. It's not over emphasizing it enough to say that when you kneel down with a group of children on a hard school hall floor on those coloured mats, you are being incarnational — helping children to see God as flesh and blood and moving into the neighborhood.

"I am a little pencil in the hands of a writing God, who is sending a love letter to the world" said Mother Teresa

It's God who does the writing, we get to be the pencil, and just like each of our handwriting is unique, so it is that each of us can bring to the children and young people we spend even just a few minutes with. He does the handwriting, we get to be the pencil.

*Chris' talk that he gave at our September Training morning*

## South Reading update

We've been doing REInspired sessions at Geoffrey Field Junior School for two years now.

It's been a huge success and the children and staff are very welcoming. We've covered miracles, Christmas, Easter and, with Year 6, my favourite session of Death, Funerals and the Christian Response.

The children are always so engaged and have such insightful questions. They love the games, drama and craft. I'll never forget the Year 3's acting out the calming of the storm! And, it's fascinating watching them teach each other about our God!

I remember one child, during one of the sessions, put up her hand and say, "Jesus could do these things, because He's the Son of God so He has God's power." Wow!

And on top of the sessions, it has helped me to build relationship and trust with the school, which means I'm now doing a weekly after school club there and they're hosting a Doug Horley panto next month.

Thank you to the REInspired team for writing such great lesson plans!



*Sarah*

## DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

### Volunteer Training

**Friday 10th January**

**9.30 -12.15**

with lunch afterwards

at

St Nicolas Church,  
Earley, RG6 7JN



## Praise & Prayer

- Being a pencil for God
- New sessions written
- A session in Kendrick School
- Sue and Fiona, new team ldrs
- Christmas sessions bringing God's light to pupils
- Volunteers training with us
- Julia leading and mentoring us
- For new Trustees



## Schools continue to engage with REInspired

As a teacher the visits of REInspired are something to look forward to. The detailed lessons plans and any instructions needed are always sent in advance which enables the teacher to plan and pre-teach where necessary.

The children take part with enthusiasm as they enjoy the different style of lesson and working with the enthusiastic volunteers in small groups. The whole group part of the sessions is fast paced and interactive which enables all pupils to remain focussed and engaged with the learning.

The small group discussions are more personal and the volunteers adapt to the needs of the children during the questioning. The craft is always well prepared and a key method of embedding the learning of the session. Any feedback given has been acted upon and lessons adapted and changed where possible.

REInspired sessions are an opportunity for the teacher and support staff to observe the children in a more relaxed atmosphere. As a teacher I have 'magpie' some of the ideas and methods used by REInspired to enhance my own teaching.

In my experience the children are always upbeat and enthusiastically talking about what they have learnt and enjoyed about the session and keen to take the craft home to show their adults.



*Fiona*