



Yr2 Easter



Yr6 Easter session



Difficult Questions Yr8



For our training, we thank you, Lord



Transition Event Yr6

Dear friends,

I hope this finds you and the ones you love well. With the Coronavirus, we are living through challenges not seen in our lifetime. As I write this a week into working from home/self-distancing, I am hugely encouraged by how our community in our part of Early is coming together and supporting one another. The creative ways people are finding to share prayer, have on-line meetings, worship, teaching, craft and wellness ideas ... even my slimming group are meeting via zoom ... there really is no escaping the reckoning of raiding the biscuit tin! The dining room has become the office and I get to work alongside my offspring as they step out of their daughter/son roles into their working adult ones.

As we at REinspired prepare to go onto a time of furlough, like so many people up and down the country, I am reflecting on our work, our team, in the widest sense, and how precious it all is. Time after time I read the positive feedback sheets that come back after every session and it is easy to forget that what we are doing, the way we are doing it and the relationships and trust we are building along the way is, actually, a rare and special thing. We are so used to serving and working this way it is easy to forget that this is not what everyone else is doing. When Fiona told me recently of a teacher's feedback that every child was heard, valued and encouraged what a gift it is to be Christ-like in that moment (you can read more overleaf).

The last session I went to before schools closed was in Maiden Erlegh Wokingham for yr8 'Religious Experiences'. As we went in I heard one student ask 'who are they?' Another, recognising the uniform, said replied 'REinspired'... then another said 'I LOVE REinspired'. This, and other positive reactions, speaks volumes about the impact you/REinspired has made on a generation of young people in this area.

Whilst our sessions have stopped for the moment, and we have decided to cancel this year's **Transition Event** due to a predicted prolonged need for social distancing, we will be back before you know it. In the meantime let us really take



on board the words we share so often with our children and young people ... that Jesus is like the good shepherd, he will never leave us or forsake us. His love is deeper than the deepest ocean, higher than the highest mountain. Even in the darkest of places, he is there with us.

Please keep praying for schools.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank you and wish you all love, peace and a happy Easter. We do not know at the time of going to print, when we will be back in school; we wait for Government information and news announcements.

So, I would like to take the opportunity to thank you and send you a huge virtual hug.



Julia Jones, Project Director

We're saying 'goodbye' to Sue Harris and Jackie Curtis

"It's not easy leaving somewhere is it?" Carol said to me, and it's so true that after 3 years as Hawkedon team leader, it wasn't easy to step down. It's been a privilege to work with all who participate in what the teams do in schools, and exhilarating when a session has gone well as a session leader.

But, there are seasons in life that circumstances sometimes dictate, so I'm still with REinspired, but now as a volunteer—i.e. one of those awesome people that all team leaders know they are truly grateful for.



Sue

I've been with the REinspired (REi) team for a little over 3 years now. I absolutely believe in what REi does and what it is about. It still feels such a privilege to go into schools and share what Christianity is about rather than the children just learning about it from books.

In the beginning I needed a lot of coaching, especially the up-front bit - it has been a good challenge to have and the team were lovely in supporting me. I've loved interacting with the children in small groups and hearing their thoughts on the different subjects we covered. I do have a few favourite sessions, which I shall miss. But for me personally, I feel it's time to work "my side" of Reading.

Thank you to everyone who has volunteered at one of my sessions, you are the real stars of REi and I pray you continue to go from strength to strength.



Jackie

NOTES & SAVE THE DATE

- Our **Volunteer and Trustee BBQ—Thurs 16th July**—work in progress for a different type of get together!
- Our **REinspired AGM—14 October 7.30pm** is still planned but will need to be confirmed later with you—This event will be an opportunity for our local churches and schools to hear first-hand about this exciting work, helping children to understand the riches of the Christian faith, *in line with the RE syllabus.*



Exploring Difficult Questions at Maiden Erlegh in Reading

'What do they teach at these schools?' asks the professor in C.S. Lewis' *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*. In the story, he is responding to the apparent inability of the Pevensie children to properly consider their sister's account of Narnia. It is not the conclusion they have come to that concerns him, rather, it is how they arrived at it. They have not learned to think clearly and logically. More recently astrophysicist, author, and science communicator Neil deGrasse Tyson has said, 'When you know how to think, it empowers you far beyond those who only know what to think.'

This focus on learning to think for ourselves forms a central part of our approach to Religious Studies at Maiden Erlegh School in Reading. It has therefore been a great opportunity for our Year 8 students to bring their questions about life and faith to the volunteers of REinspired in their recent 'Difficult Questions' lesson. Students submitted questions that might test the most experienced Christian if caught off guard! For example: Are Christian prayers optional? What makes you believe in God? Why do Christians eat pork? Are you allowed to be gay in Christianity? Why go to church? Do you pray every day?

The honesty with which the volunteers answered gave students an insight of the journeys of questioning and reflection undertaken even by people committed to the Christian faith. Their willingness to do this with our students is greatly appreciated.



Andrew

Understanding Christianity (UC) Sessions

OFSTED reports were showing that there were weaknesses in pupils understanding of Christianity in RE lessons and the Church of England (CofE) commissioned its own review of RE in CofE schools, subsequently choosing to write a new syllabus. The Chief Executive officer of the CofE began investigating this and RE Today took on development. It was written with the idea that state schools would also find it useful.

The syllabus was prompted by the 'desire to see pupils leave school with a coherent understanding of Christian belief and practice as part of a wider religious, theological and cultural literacy'.

The UC syllabus addressed the problems it found by:

1. Reducing the content, concentrating on 8 Core Concepts: God, Creation, Fall, People of God, Incarnation, Gospel, Salvation & Kingdom of God.
2. By selecting these concepts they reflect a Biblical Christianity by following a salvation narrative.
3. Pupils revisiting the concepts to deepen their understanding of the 'big story' of the bible.
4. Exploring ways in which beliefs in the concepts have an impact in the diverse Christian community and lives of Christians today.
5. Giving opportunities to reflect and respond.

REinspired are working with 4 CofE schools who are implementing this new syllabus: Earley St Peter's, St John's, Robert Piggott and New Christ Church Primary Schools. One of our workshops centred on these new sessions at our recent training event for volunteers.



We have loved this opportunity to write new sessions for these schools and creatively tweak others to fit with this new syllabus and questions. Some have already been delivered and some will be delivered next term. A selection of sessions are:

GOSPEL—Yr3/4—What kind of world did Jesus want?

GOD—Yr5/6—What does it mean for Christians if God is holy and loving?

KINGDOM OF GOD—Yr5/6—What kind of king is Jesus?

SALVATION—Yr5—What did Jesus do to save human beings?

Feedback from the teachers is great: 'The children were engaged. The adults were calm and attentive to all children in their group and made effort to refer to names and notice children's interests'. 'The children enjoyed the session particularly the chance to express their own ideas in a creative way of their choice.' 'You're very welcome to help support any of our UC units.' We are blessed indeed.

Sue

UC 'Salvation' - 'Why does Easter matter to Christians?'



We delivered our first Understanding Christianity session to 140 Yr1&2 pupils at Earley St Peters in March. We

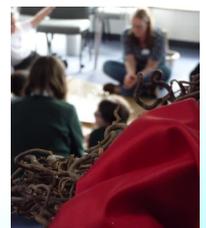
started with an interactive Palm Sunday story in which the pupils helped with actions, followed by making their own palm leaf. Then Holy Week was told using visual props, story telling and drama. The pupils went into their small groups again to discuss the symbols of bread & wine and hot cross buns and made a cross craft to remember the crucifixion. After the story of Easter Sunday they returned to their groups to learn about how Jesus saved us from our sins by dying on the cross and rising again to life, finishing by making a rolling rock Easter card to remember that Jesus' body was no longer in the tomb. All in all this was a packed session of activities, discussion and crafts explaining why Easter matters to Christians.

Sue

Yr6 Easter Session Feedback

Sometimes we receive a joyful reassurance of our time with the school and this is one of those moments:

"At the session today the teacher said she was amazed at how quiet her class were. She said that it was great to see them being nurtured by the group leaders who were listening and engaging so positively with them as only a few get that at home.



It made my heart sing and was very happy to pass it on to all the lovely volunteers during feedback."

Fiona

If you want to know more please get in touch with us:
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