



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
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RIPON & LEEDS

Kidswork

A NEWSLETTER FOR CHURCH CHILDREN'S WORKERS IN THE ARCHDEACONRY OF LEEDS.

Issue 23

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Hello, and welcome to "Kidswork" – a newsletter for those working with children in the Anglican churches of Leeds.

My name is Clare MacLaren, and I work half-time as Children's Work Advisor to the Leeds Archdeaconry. This is a post funded by the 4 Leeds deaneries – Armley, Allerton, Headingley and Whitkirk.

I am also half-time parish priest of Whinmoor in the Seacroft Team Ministry - where we worship in St. Paul's C of E Primary School – and mother of teenage twins.

"Keeping our Kids" was a title that caught my eye the other day. Chris Leach has years of experience working with children in church, and wrote this Grove booklet to challenge what she says is the myth that, inevitably, most of our children will leave our churches at around the time they leave primary school. Of course, statistically, this is quite correct, but she reckons she's found a way to "buck the trend". I wondered what I might learn from her, and so I bought the booklet and had a read.

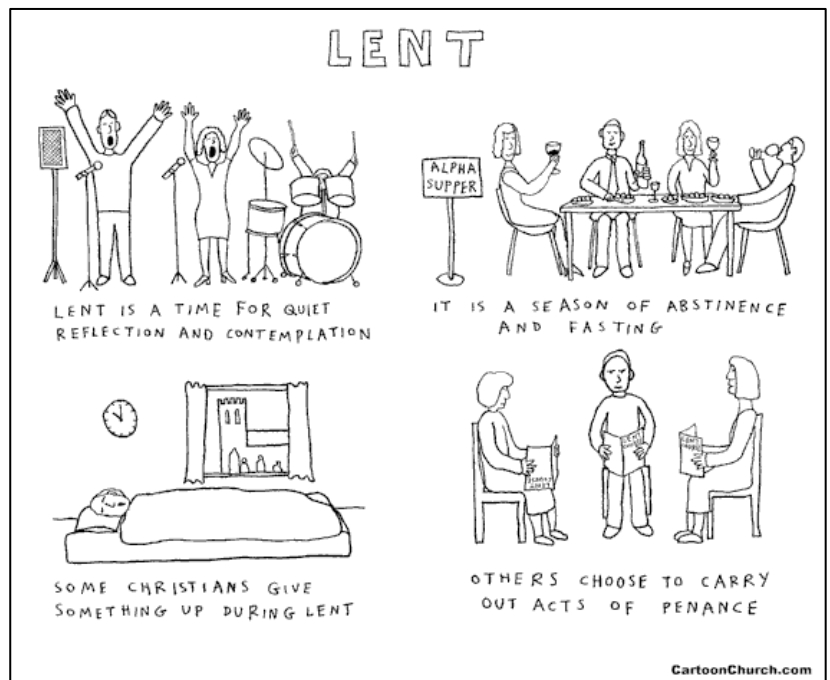
It didn't take long to realise that Chris Leach comes from a strong charismatic tradition, so what she says won't sit comfortably with everyone - but her basic argument is this: unless, from their youngest days, our children are helped into an experiential relationship with God - i.e. a *real and living relationship* - and unless they are led and taught by adults with the same living faith, eventually, they will write Jesus off, along with Santa Claus, as a fantasy figure - someone to grow out of.

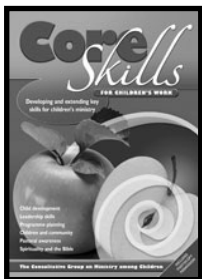
Chris suggests that we nurture this living, experiential relationship with God in a number of ways. There isn't space to list them all, but here are a few of her conclusions (in my words):

- **expect** yourself and the children not simply to *learn about* Jesus, but to be *changed by* Him.
- **share** news of *answered prayer* as well as *praying for others* - and give thanks.
- **encourage** the children to see that the Gospel is *something we do*, not just something we talk about - and then find a way to *go do it together!*
- **involve** the children in *strong, positive experiences of Christian community* - at local events with an unashamed spiritual element, such as X:site or Create - or by going away, whether it be to Spring Harvest, Greenbelt or Walsingham!

I didn't agree with all that she had to say, but if you want to be challenged to think about these issues further, Chris's booklet can be purchased for only £2.95 from Grove Books, online at www.grovebooks.co.uk or by phone on 01223 464748.

May God continue to bless your ministry,





Core Skills for Children's Work

Wetherby / Thorner area

"Core Skills" is a course for church children's workers, which covers topics ranging from "how to plan a great session" to "understanding how children grow in faith"

This course is suitable for those who are already working with children up to age 11 in church, and for those interested in becoming children's workers.

Come along to the introductory session and find out more !

Wednesday 23rd April
Wetherby Methodist Church
7.30-9.30pm
(Coffee from 7.15pm)

Training Opportunities

Wednesday 16th April

Children with Special Needs

How can we cater for the full range of abilities of the children who join our groups?

This session will help to deepen your understanding of the needs of all the children in your care – and give you ideas for how to welcome especially the most vulnerable.

Tuesday 20th May

Developing Work with Under-5's (and their carers!)

Parenting pre-schoolers can be exhausting and isolating too. How can the Church help?

Whether you have a group already, or are thinking of starting one up – this session will provide ideas and inspiration aplenty!

Each of these evenings takes place from
7.30 – 9.30pm
at the Diocesan Offices in Leeds and
costs £5 to attend.

Booking leaflets for all the events advertised here can be found in this mailing. They can also be downloaded from the Kidswork website: www.kidswork.org.uk



The next "Create" event
for 11-15's is on

Saturday 19th April
3-6pm
at St Richard's Church, Seacroft

"SPRING CRAFTS"

"Create" is an ideal event to bring a small group of young people to!

Planned, organized and run by young people, the "Create" team aims to model their participation alongside adults, in the creative life of our churches...

Inspiring - Challenging - Fun!



a "Praise Party" for children
(7 - 11)

from 6-8pm at
St. George's Church, Leeds
on Saturday 15th March

Children and adults can find out more by visiting
www.xsite.uk.net
Cost: £3 per child

Why not bring a group of children to the next X:site?
You can stay and watch from the balcony if you wish.

KEEPING IN TOUCH:

You are receiving this newsletter because you are on my contact list.

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