



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
DIOCESE OF
RIPON & LEEDS

Kidswork

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

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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 part-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 part-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.

"Between Two Worlds?": I'm sure my church family is not alone in cherishing a number of children who are only with us every second Sunday, because they spend alternate week-ends with another parent. I have searched unsuccessfully to find a book about helping children to cope with divorce, from a Christian perspective, so I was interested to be referred to a recent interview in "Christian Century" Magazine, with Elizabeth Marquardt, US author of a study of 1500 young adults, comparing the moral and spiritual impact of living with married and with divorced parents. (*"Between Two Worlds: the inner lives of children of divorce"*)

This is an emotive issue, of course, but one which we should be aware of as we think of the spiritual needs of the children in our care. Marquardt says that while a marriage is a bringing together of two worlds - two sets of values, life experience and interpretations of the world learning to rub along in some kind of harmony - after divorce, a child has to work out how to live between these two worlds as they diverge, and often become still more markedly different. Somehow, the child must forge an understanding of right and wrong, of good and bad, of truth and falsehood for themselves. This must be very hard if the answers they learn from each parent continue to conflict with and undermine each other!

Many of us will have observed how maturely some children seem to handle their new lives - but perhaps this is because they have successfully learnt to become "independent moral thinkers" before their time? As Marquardt says, *"even as pre-teens, they're attuned in many ways to paradox, to suffering, to the deep questions of faith."*

So how can we offer spiritually meaningful care to these "children of divorce"? Well, first of all by being "real" about it. Elizabeth Marquardt says that we must acknowledge that there is no such thing as a "good" divorce... a "necessary" divorce, perhaps, but never "good". Some of these children look to God, through us, and their church family, to offer a coherent sense of meaning and stability. *"The story of the exile is really powerful...their sense of being torn between two worlds... (But) in Christian tradition, exile is not the end of the story. Those in exile can come home to God... and find wholeness in God's presence."* Food for thought, eh?

What do you think? I would be very interested to hear!

To read more, see www.christiancentury.org/article.lasso?id=1763

With prayers for your ministry and the children in your care,

Clare

**When we
smile
you smile
back**

**Jesus
spends a lot
of time**

**So don't be
scared
Jesus is
here**

**So we thank
you for
being a
great king**

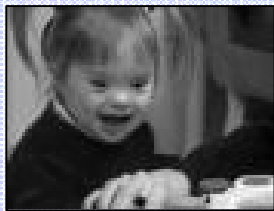
**Eoin Manson
Age 7**



Bob Brooke, Diocesan Chaplain for People with Learning Disabilities is interested to know how well church based groups doing work with children and young people have been able to include and involve those with disabilities in their activities.

§ If you have some stories to share, about things that worked well, or things that didn't work so well, let Bob know.

§ If you would like to involve more disabled children in your activities and are not sure how to go about it, or feel you need help or training, Bob would like to hear from you.



§ He is interested in knowing about work with children and young people with any kind of disability – but especially any who have a learning disability.

Bob can be contacted on 0113 270 2829 or bob.brooke@another.com



"Create is Magic!!"

Sorry about the awful pun – but this was feedback from one of the young

people who came to the February "Create" event for 11-14's – "Christian Conjuring"!

Alan Stanley had us all laughing in amazement as he demonstrated God's endless love, with a jug of water that was never empty, and unlocked us from our chains by identifying the only key in the bunch that worked, though we thought we'd tried every one!



About 30 young people plus assorted adults shared in youth-led worship and workshops, making connections between the tricks we were learning, and bible truths... and went home itching to have a go in our home churches!

Pouring a jug of coke into your fist! Yup, everything is possible with God!!

If you are working with this age-group – or would like to be! – why not bring them along to the next "Create" event:

Easter Crafts,
Saturday 8th April
3-6pm

Details and booking form on the website soon:

www.createleeds.me.uk



"Band 66" led our worship this time.



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

from 6-8pm at St. George's Church, Leeds
on Saturday 18th March
(and then next on 13th May.)

Children and adults can find out more by visiting

www.xsite.uk.net

Cost: £2.50 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.

If you want to get involved, we are keen to recruit more team members both behind the scenes and working in small groups with the kids. (CRB check required) Contact Mark Scrimshaw 01423 867761

Check out this slightly cookie but fab website:

www.thebricktestament.com

for illustrated bible stories in "lego" bricks!!

(Can you guess this one?)

These worked brilliantly as a Powerpoint show at the last X:site. You must ask permission first – but creator "Rev. Brendan Powell Smith" was happy to say yes!



KEEPING IN TOUCH:

You are receiving this newsletter because you are on my contact list. Please let me know if there are other folk I should send it to!

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