



What's Up

for people in ministry with children and families
Issue 78.....April 2011

Mission Resourcing Network of the Uniting Church SA

reflection



Uniting Church. **Uniting People.** unitingpeople.org.au

We've all seen the 'Uniting Church. Uniting People.' banner on churches. But it was only while trying to print a copy of the banner for a KCO activity that I realised a special significance to the banner.



You can fit this much of the banner on a page: It's nice, but something's missing.



You can fit this on another page.

You can join those two pages together, but it's still not a complete picture of our church. What's missing?

It's the child who completes the picture of the church. Not a child tacked on when you've covered all the other demographics of your community. But a child sitting squarely in the middle.



Jesus put a child in the middle. The Bible doesn't suggest the child was wearing a super hero outfit; but Jesus gave children a super role.

Jesus called a little child over to him. He had the child stand among them. Jesus said, 'What I'm about to tell you is true. You need to change and become like little children. If you don't, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Anyone who becomes as free of pride as this child is the most important in the kingdom of heaven.' (Matthew 18:2-4 NIRV)

Jesus said to his disciples: 'Let the little children come to me. Don't keep them away. God's kingdom belongs to people like them.'...Then he took the children in his arms. He put his hands on them and blessed them. (Mark 10:14,16 NIRV)

You do the same in your ministry. Ministry with children is what binds a congregation together.

comings and goings

Staff news After six and half fantastic years of Children & Family ministry I have decided to resign from my position as Children & Family Ministry State Coordinator. I thank all of you who I have had the pleasure of working with and I hope to continue to hear about the great things that are happening in Children and Family Ministry in SA. My final day at Uniting Church SA will be April 27th.

Blessings, *Heidi Jane Harding*

Children for Christ SA is seeking a new Manager. Children for Christ is an interdenominational not-for-profit association, Presently CFC focuses on To train and motivate Children's workers through training days for children's workers, resources for children, working with local churches in outreach.

John and Ros Patterson have served as volunteer managers for many years but wish to relinquish the manager role. Details of the new position are negotiable. Contact childrenforchrist@bigpond.com for further information.





Church & ... is about being all that is church with families. It will be a time to experiencing creative, messy & 'All-Age' worship, explore Fresh Expressions & develop ways for people of all ages, stages & backgrounds to be church together.

The conference will include keynote sessions from Lucy Moore as well as a large range of workshops & sharing of local stories.

Lucy Moore is the inspiration behind the fastest growing Fresh Expression Messy Church with over 300 recorded groups in the UK & who knows how many unrecorded ones! Lucy is fun loving, down to earth & has a wealth of knowledge to share about the church & families.

Conference Details

Dates: 4 - 6 August 2011

Thursday & Friday: 9:15 – 3pm for family ministry leaders

Saturday: 9:15 – 4:30pm for all leaders

Where: Uniting College for Leadership & Theology, Brooklyn Park, SA

Cost: to be confirmed.

Registration: From May 1st, 2011

Website: mrn.sa.uca.org.au/happenings/church-a.html

Child Safe Environments The Synod has organised the following training events which are open to anyone in the Synod.

Date	Location	Type
June 11 (9-5).....	The Corner (Warradale).....	Full accreditation
June 17 (9-5).....	Uniting College (Brooklyn Park).....	Full accreditation
June 17 (1:30-4:30).....	Uniting College (Brooklyn Park).....	Refresher
October 26 (9-5).....	Uniting College (Brooklyn Park).....	Full accreditation
October 26 (1:30-4:30).....	Uniting College (Brooklyn Park).....	Refresher



Other events are being planned by individual congregations and clusters of congregations. If you would like to organise a training event, please contact Karen Parker at office@kingstonuniting.com.au.

Easter Celebration and March

A great way to celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus as a family and experience Christian community beyond the local congregation.

12 noon – Family festival and food in Hindmarsh Square

1:30 Celebration and preparation for the march, which begins at 2:30.

For more info, flyers or to volunteer email statesa@fusion.org.au or ring the Awakening Executive office on 8351 9266 and leave a message if unattended.

Sign In / Sign Out More and more churches are using a Sign In / Sign Out system as part of their plan for ensuring the safety of children. Parents sign in their children before releasing them to the Children's Ministry program and leaders. They sign them out at the end of the program, releasing the Children's Ministry leaders from responsibility for the child.

While some leaders consider this just an unnecessary extra duty, others have found real benefits — beyond child safety. One leader reports that having parents come to the class to sign out the children helps her to see children as part of family groups and to learn something of the child's family relationships. It also provides a clear finish point for the session and allows her to give an individual blessing to each child (and their parent) as they leave.



KCO By all accounts, KUCA Camp Out (March 26 & 27) was a roaring success with over 1000 campers attending. Well done to Jo Lohmeyer and all the leaders and organisers and behind the scenes volunteers who made this the outstanding event in the calendar of children's events in South Australia.

The innovative Explore activity on Saturday afternoon gave kids and leaders time and resources to explore some important aspects of church life and faith.

Messy Church We've been hearing the term 'messy church' lately and wondering — is it really good to be messy? Heidi attended a Messy Church conference in the UK last year. She explains what the term actually means —

Messy Church is church for families, primarily families with young children. Messy Church is about making church a time for families and faith. Its theory is inspiring yet practical.

A Messy Church session usually involves

- a brief greeting including introducing the theme
- a time of creating — be that crafts, art, science, whatever that families do TOGETHER! Families to work together and talk about guided questions from the leader of that activity based on the theme.
- a brief worship time which usually involves some accessible songs, a story presented in a creative way and then prayer
- a meal — families are then invited to eat together.

It's short and busy. The messy church also builds leaders by engaging them in SMALL roles that they are interested and gifted in.

All-age worship 'Hungry for More' is an all age worship service for Easter. It develops the Synod's Easter poster.

Lots of chocolate and activity, with a clear message that Jesus is the 'more' we are all seeking.

Download the resource (general ideas plus a fully scripted service) from

<http://mrn.sa.uca.org.au/childrens-ministry/all-age-worship.html>

Coming soon: all-age worship resources for Mothers Day and Pentecost.



Faith Family The theme of the term 1 issue of *Faith Family* is 'forgiveness' — what it means for children and in families. The issue of *Faith Family* has been sent to congregations who subscribed in 2010 to the resource. Those congregations and schools will soon be receiving invoices for the year 2011, still \$1.00 per family per year, plus postage.

For more about Faith Family, or to subscribe for your church, contact Melissa or Mary Jo.

Playgroup Ideas Our Playgroup Ideas resource for Term 2 is available from <http://mrn.sa.uca.org.au/childrens-ministry/playgroups.html>. The resource contains a possible theme for each week of the term with a range of activity ideas related to the theme. Each week includes a few simple ideas for including faith content in the session. This term's Professional Development page deals with mathematics.

Resources to borrow Our corner of the Synod Office now has a bookcase (three, actually) full of books, leaflets, CD's and other forms of resources for children's ministry resources. They are there for you to browse or borrow. Most of what is on the shelf is aimed at Children's Ministry leaders and parents, but there are also some for children, eg . . .



Big Thoughts for Little Thinkers

by Joey Allen
New Leaf Press, 2005

I was pleasantly surprised by this set of four attractive small books for children age 2-7 (I'd suggest 4-8). The books introduce children — little people, not people with little minds, to theology — big thoughts, not Bible stories. Carefully worded text at children's level of understanding is presented in small bites with colourful illustrations.

The big thoughts are: the Gospel, the Mission, the Scripture, and the Trinity.

People working in ministry with children can learn from the way these books deal with ideas that are basic to our faith, but not generally considered 'child-friendly'. MJZ

Christianbook.com describes the series this way:

"The *Big Thoughts for Little Thinkers* series introduces preschool and elementary children to the most foundational teachings of the Christian in this four-book set at a level they can understand. Colorful illustrations compliment every page, creating an enjoyable learning experience for the child. The *Big Thoughts for Little Thinkers* series promotes God-centered theology with simple and precise teaching while offering stability and a strong, lasting connection with the faith."

Children and Family Ministry Team:

Heidi Jane Harding, Melissa Cellier and Mary Jo Zwar are part of the Uniting Young People Team, which is part of the Mission Resourcing Network of the Uniting Church in South Australia.

Jo Lohmeyer is also part of the team, assisting with many administrative details.

Our phone number is: (08) 8236 4281. The same number for all of us. It will take you to the team member who is in the office when you call. If we're all out and about at the time of your call, please leave a message and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

Our mailing address is: Children and Family, Uniting Church, GPO Box 2145, Adelaide, SA 5001.

We are located physically at the Uniting Church SA Synod Office, Level 2, 212 Pirie Street, Adelaide. Our desks face a huge window looking out on City Beach.

Our email is: children@uca.sa.org.au If you want to contact an individual, use 'hharding', or 'mcellier' or 'mzwar' in place of 'children'.

Our web site is: <http://mrn.sa.uca.org.au/childrens-ministry/all-age-worship.html>

Outreach opportunities? Do you or someone in your church dream of connecting with children and families in your local community? Are you currently running a program for children and families beyond your church but are feeling stuck?

Melissa's role as the Children & Family Ministry Team Outreach Coordinator is to help churches to extend their ministry through responding to outreach opportunities. This is done by training and coaching leaders in effective models of outreach, skills development and practical matters as well as through resourcing and networking.

If you currently do, or want to, run a playgroup, kids club, church service or a community event for children/families; or connect with a local school; or have some other dream, then please feel free to contact Melissa via phone 8236 4281 (usually Mon & Fri) or email mcellier@sa.uca.org.au to chat about possibilities, resources and to be encouraged.

The photo on page 1 is from KCO, Nuriootpa, 25 & 26 March 2011

