

WHAT'S UP?



A newsletter for people in ministry with children and their families

Prepared by your **Resource Centre for Children's and Family Ministry**
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RELATIONSHIPS

It seems like everyone is in a rush these days. Our lives are filled with busy — possibly with good and godly things — but busy. We need to be reminded that life is about relationships not to-do lists.

Relationships take effort and time and may even cost. That's because the focus of relationship is to think of the other.

People of Israel, you have only one Lord and God.

You must love him with all your heart,
soul, mind and strength.

The second most important commandment says:

'Love others as much as you love yourself.'

No other commandment

[can we add 'no other task or commitment']

is more important than these.

(Mark 12:29-31).

This is what Jesus taught. It's what we teach our kids. But are we taking the message to heart: are we living this in our lives?

We pray that God gives you and us the wisdom and strength to observe these priorities in our life and ministry.

Melissa and Mary Jo

NEW RCCFM RESOURCES

Find these resources at

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

1. ADORABLE AN INTERGENERATIONAL WORSHIP RESOURCE FOR CHRISTMAS

Have you looked at the calendar for Christmas 2010? Christmas Eve is on Friday, Christmas Day on Saturday, and the following day is the Sunday after Christmas. Three days of worship in a row —

or do you skip one of them? Or do you do something different for one of them?

Adorable is a simple worship service that can even be adapted to an informal café setting on one of these occasions. The premise is that although all babies are adorable, only one baby was truly adore-able — worthy of being adored because he was God as well as a human being. The story of the birth of the adore-able Son of God is linked with the verses of the familiar carol 'O come, let us adore him'.

The resource includes some general notes plus a complete worship order/script which you can use as is or adapt to your needs.

2. SUMMER SUNDAYS AN INTERGENERATIONAL APPROACH TO WORSHIP IN JANUARY

Looking beyond Christmas, there is the month of January: hot weather, holidays, lazy days, recharge time, break time.

But our 24/7/365 God keeps serving us, and we his people keep worshipping him.

Summer Sundays is an idea for making the most of those quiet times; challenging and serving people who are at loose ends during the down time, and having a great time together as God's people.

For **Summer Sundays** all generations come together for an enjoyable event that includes learning, playing, eating and celebrating.

Summer Sundays can be developed around your existing lectionary based program or other thematic worship plans. However, there is one completely developed program available: 'Celebrate Jesus'.

3. CELEBRATE JESUS A SUMMER SUNDAYS PROGRAM FOR JANUARY 2011

At Christmas we celebrate the birth of a baby. In this series of five events, we come together as people of all ages to celebrate the life of the man.

The **Celebrate Jesus** resource is a complete planning guide covering the four Summer Sundays components: learning, playing, eating and celebrating. Events celebrate Jesus, who:

- is always powerful
- always loves us
- always listens to us
- always cares for us
- lives forever.

EVENTS

EVANGELISM EVENT



The northern Christian churches have partnered together in a unique evangelism event called The UPSIDE DOWN Circus specifically designed to share the message of Jesus with children and families in the northern community.

The UPSIDE DOWN Circus will run in the second week of the school holidays from Wednesday October 6th to Friday October 8th from 2-5pm on Ridley Reserve, Main North Road, Elizabeth (south of the Elizabeth Shopping Centre).

Children and families will wander through a FREE festival of fun exploring and experiencing values of the Kingdom of God. There will be a range of Activity Tents and Short Shows at The BIG Top creating an interactive environment with games, craft, dance, drama and stories. There will be an Op-Shop, Food Bank, Puppets, Face Painting, Hall of Fame, Clowns, Food, Jumping Castle and Street Performers all adding to the festival atmosphere.

Every child will also receive a free Show Bag containing a 'Top 10 Stories from Mark' book.

A low cost BBQ on Thursday, 5-6pm is being held before a **BIG TOP Show, 6-7 pm** that uses an evangelistic drama to present the Gospel: a creatively told story of a young boy who runs away to the circus and discovers it is not all he had hoped it to be. An opportunity will be given for children and families to respond to the Gospel.

There are a variety of ways you and your church/school may be involved with this event.

- **Promoting** the UPSIDE DOWN CIRCUS in your church/ school/ kids club and encouraging kids and families to attend and bring their friends. Please find attached a promotional poster.
- **Praying** for the event.
- **Participating**
 - Attend, bring family, friends, your kids club, church group. *Adults must be accompanied by a child.*
 - You are welcome to join in and volunteer. The more people involved the more we can offer!
- **Helping with:**
 - Activity Tents (help run a game or craft)
 - Clowns
 - Security
 - Ushers
 - Kids Coaches (counseling children who respond to Jesus)
 - And of course . . . if you are a magician or have a circus acts to perform as a short show... we'd love to hear from you!

All volunteers must:

- have a current and satisfactory National Police Clearance
- complete an Application Form
- **attend the Training Session on Wed 29th Sept, 7 - 9:30pm at Parafield Gardens Uniting Church, cnr Shepherdson Rd & Salisbury Highway.**

We are excited about seeing God work in the lives of children and families - healing lives, restoring hope and reconciling families. If you would like more information please contact Melissa at the RCCFM on 8285 7104 or contact Elizabeth Church of Christ on 8255 2467. Promotional fliers and sign up forms can be downloaded at www.northernelaideoutreach.org or requested via email upsidedown@adam.com.au

KIDS CONFERENCE – RISE UP

Date: Saturday 9 October

Time: 9.30am - 4.15pm (doors open and registrations commence at 9am)

Where: C3 Church Salisbury, 16-22 Clayson Road, Salisbury East

Cost: \$10 per child (includes morning tea & lunch)

Age: Reception to Grade 7

With the church looking like the base camp at Mt Everest, this conference will focus on showing kids that they can achieve, conquer their fears and they can rise up to take on challenges. Through music, a message and fun electives the principles of "Rise Up" and leadership will be explored.

Some electives are: I can be a masterchef!, I can be a mad scientist! I can change my world! etc.

For more information or registration flyers please contact Cherie Cooper on 0413 319 856 or Nigel Cooper on 0433 494 202.

Alternatively flyers can be downloaded from the church website www.c3salisbury.org.au

TRAINING

PARENTING SEMINARS WITH STEVE BIDDULPH

Uniting Church. Uniting People is pleased to present three parenting seminars with Steve Biddulph, in partnership with **The Journey UC and Pedare Christian College, The Corner UC and Adelaide West UC on November 2, 3 and 4.**

If your church can help promote these events, contact Sarah Urmston, surmston@sa.uca.org.au, 8236 4260 for flyers and more information. All details are available on unitingpeople.org.au.

GODLY PLAY TRAINING

Rev Dr Mark Hillis from the UCA Assembly will be conducting a basic introduction to *Godly Play* on **Tuesday 12 October at Uniting College** choose either: **12:30-2:30pm or 7:15-9:15pm** (the same program will be repeated).
Cost: \$5.00
Register by Oct 1, phone the college 8416 8420.

ADVENT RESOURCES

We recently had a request about where to find Advent Calendars. Here is what we discovered.

- The **RCCFM** has previously had family-based Advent resources with an Advent-calendar-like activity (eg paper chain).

'Glossy' Christian Advent Calendars are available in bookstores. Here are some starting points:

- **Koorong** lists 8 Advent Calendars (out of stock)
- **Word** lists 8 Advent Calendars (all on order)
- If you are willing to order by internet, **Rainbow Books** has available a wide range of Bible-based Advent Calendars. Visit www.rainbowbooks.com.au

MediaCom have no Advent Calendars. However, the MediaCom Advent catalogue lists these two resources for children:

The Advent Jesse Tree (by Dean Lambert Smith) This book offers 25 devotions for children and adults for each day from December 1st to December 25th, Christmas Day. Each devotion traces the heritage of Jesus through the stories and prophecies of the Old Testament. Each devotional story is paired with a representative symbol that traces the heritage of Jesus.

Christmas Gifts That Won't Break (by Daphna Flegal) Designed to be used in conjunction with the Adult and Youth versions in an all-church Advent study, this study focuses on four gifts — Hope Love Joy and Peace — that coincide with the four candles of the traditional Advent wreath.

ARTICLES

LIGHT THE DARK — BOOKS

Article by Mary Jo Zwar, RCCFM.

I've just had a very interesting meeting with an exuberant lady by the name of Julie Riemann. Julie is SA representative of *Light the Dark*.

Light the Dark is an innovative company that 'aims to bring positive Christian and family-friendly products, produced by Australians and New Zealanders, to consumers in an engaging party plan type environment'.

When I first heard about *Light the Dark*, I was thrilled that someone was publishing and

supporting Australian Christian writers, who generally struggle to publish in our limited market.

Listening to Julie and looking at her selection of party plan goodies, I was struck by the possibilities they offer our congregations, eg

- parties in homes, where a Christian hostess could invite a mixture of Christian and non-Christian friends and open conversations
- shed parties, where a Christian bloke could do something similar
- women's/men's groups in congregations devoting a meeting to browsing through the resources — many of which are not available in regular book shops
- Sunday school (of playgroup) parents having a get together to see some of the resources they could use in their own homes.

As with other party plans, there is an 'incentive' for hosts — books representing 15% of sales can be used to build up the congregation's (or the host's) library or used as gifts, awards, encouragement, etc.

We have copies of the *Light the Dark* catalogue here at the Resource Centre or you can find it on their easy-to-navigate web site www.lightthedark.com.au

FROM PARAFIELD GARDENS UC GOD'S KIDS

Early last year the leaders of Parafield Gardens' children's ministry program (God's Kids) held a retreat to look at what they would be doing over the following three year period. It comes as a surprise to realise we're half-way through those three years.

This past term, we faced a special challenge. We wanted to help the children understand what it means to be a part of Parafield Gardens Uniting Church. There were no external resources for this one. We had to come up with our own material.

But we did have some starting points. Over the years, the congregation has worked hard at clarifying its 'DNA'. We have a vision statement, a core values statement, a bedrock beliefs statement and a purpose statement: all well-thought-out and relatively concise, but not necessarily child friendly.

We decided to work with our purpose statement:

GO and make disciples.

GATHER them into God's family

GROW to Christ-like maturity

use our **GIFTS** in ministry and outreach to the world

in order to **GLORIFY** God.

That gave us five sessions over five weeks, each one relating to one g-word.

Each g-word was approached in a different way, with lots of interaction with congregational members and hands-on experiences.

The 'grow' topic was tied to the renovation of the church's garden area with children and their parents doing some of the planting. They now watch with interest the progress of their plantings.

Now when the children see the *Go, Gather, Grow, Gift* and *Glorify* banners in the church they will have the memory of some experiences to attach to the words.

Now when they see people in church who shared stories with them, they will see them as friends.

What about your congregation?

Do your children know what your church is on about? Do they understand your unique mission? Are they a part of that mission?

You might consider a series like the one at PGUC where you unpack your church's corporate statements.

Or you might refer to your statements regularly as they relate to other topics. (eg we will remind children of our 'go' purpose when we discuss stories about people going in mission and ministry, of the 'gifts' purpose when we look at examples of God's gifted people, and we will remind one another that it's all about 'glorifying God'. And/or you might — as a leadership group — consider your church's documents and how your specific program reflects the congregation's purpose and mission.