



Church of Ireland Children's Ministry AUTUMN NEWSLETTER

We have compiled some simple ideas for families, pods, and Sunday Clubs, always with prompts for the wider parish to be involved so people stay connected with the full life of the Church. Much of our focus in this edition is outdoors, encouraging faith in everyday life.



WE'RE GOING ON A PSALM WALK

Prayer walking became more popular when church buildings were closed. Psalm Walks help us connect with God through his Word and his Creation – and can be done as part of a wider Church initiative. Then families or pods can send pictures of highest point reached or updates on how many bees counted to the Church or Sunday Club with permission.

You can see the example for Psalm 3 here, but Jess from Together at Home – [tath.co.uk](https://www.tath.co.uk) - has two packs complete with 11 Psalms, some of

which are suitable for Harvest. Find them here: <https://www.tath.co.uk/unpack-a-passage>

'We're going on a Psalm Walk...

Before you set off read the Psalm and ask God to meet you through his creation and speak to you as you walk. Take time to wonder at the creation all around you.

Psalm 3
"LORD, rise up! My God, come save me!"

v5&6 – I can lie down and go to sleep, and I will wake up again, because the Lord gives me strength. Thousands of troops may surround me, but I am not afraid.

- Find a sheltered dry place to sit or lie down.
- Give any fears or worries you have been holding onto over to God.
- Feel yourself wrapped in God's love and protection.
- Ask God to give you His perfect rest as you lie down and strength as you get up.

v3 – "But, Lord, you are my shield, my wonderful God who gives me courage."

How many shields can you find on your walk today?

You could find a shield-shaped leaf, a shield bug or a shield on a sign.

v4 – "I will pray to the Lord, and he will answer me from his holy mountain."

- Climb or look up to a highpoint
- Remember that God our heavenly father sees everything
- Remember that wherever you go, God is watching over you and listening to your prayers.
- What insight into the big picture does God want to give you today?



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CHALK PRAYER WALK

This is a fantastic way to engage families safely. You can run a Chalk Prayer Walk on the Church grounds or another suitable area and invite people to drop by. Click on the link for a complete prayer walk that you can use and adapt to your own context.

It's a walk filled with memory trees and boats in a storm and alphabet prayers and you are invited to add your art and prayers and movement and ideas to it!

<http://www.cm.ireland.anglican.org/chalk-prayer-walk/>



NATURE BRACELETS / WRIST BANDS

Use a strip of paper around the wrist and cover the outside with double sided tape. Alternatively you can use duct tape with the sticky side facing out.

Invite people to add their own leaves, buds and twigs to adorn their bracelet. Remember, adults can take part too.

Chat about what you have found. Identify plants and birds from berries, leaves and feathers. Count how many different species were used to create the bracelets. Thank God for his creativity.

Count how many different species were used to create the bracelets. Thank God for his creativity.

Notice that the bracelet wraps around your wrist. Notice that nature is all around you. God our protection and our shield is here.

There are so many Prayer ideas and Bible Passages that can be used alongside this craft not least the story of Creation. Or how about making one as you go on a Psalm walk?

Have you ever noticed that there are often leather wrist or arm bands in the pictures of people from Bible Times?



It's hard to tell if it's an historically accurate depiction, however, we do know that there are later practices of writing scripture and keeping them hidden on the arm or head to remind the wearer of God's promises.

What promises did Esther hold on to?

What about David?

Or Daniel? Moses? Noah?

Explore God's promises that were held onto throughout the life of a Bible Character. What promises do you hold on to?

What about hiding his promises to you in your nature bracelet? Write down one of your favourite promises of God, maybe it's:



His promise to always be there: "I will never leave you nor forsake you" Hebrews 13:5

His promise to love you unconditionally: "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Jesus Christ our Lord" Romans 8:38-39

His promise that you are redeemed and belong to Him: "Do not fear for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine..." Isaiah 43:1

Now roll them up and stick them onto your nature bracelet or tuck them inside the band.





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NATURE PRAYERS

Assign each item on your wrist band / bracelet a theme. For example:

- twigs - thankfulness prayers
- leaves - prayers for loved ones and those who are tough to love
- buds - prayers for ourselves
- feathers - prayers for the world



JOURNEY STICKS

<https://www.kozikidz.com/blog/create-a-journey-stick>



You can provide double sided tape or wool and ribbon to allow people to stick or tie different things to their stick as stories from their journey. When you come back together each person tells the story of their journey through what they have put on their stick. (this can be their journey through the Club session or their journey through the week or day.)

If you are leading a session, use the sharing time to tell a Bible Story. I find it easier to have the items in a story bag and to take them out and place them on or beside the stick as I go. For example:

Jonah and the Whale

DTLK has a really good version of the story here: https://www.dltk-kids.com/bible/cv/jonah_and_the_whale.htm

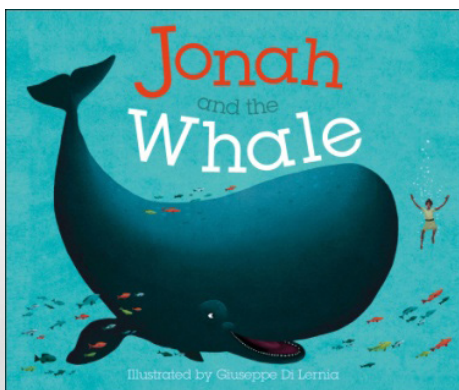
As you tell the story take out objects to represent different parts.

- A duplo man running in the wrong direction.

- A toy boat (you can make an origami one as well)
- A bottle of water to shake or a streamer to wave to show the storm (this can be replaced by sounds and actions)
- One toy whale or picture of a whale. (mine was a squirt gun shaped as a whale!)
- A duplo man walking in the right direction
- A heart to represent God's unending compassion.

Activity: Afterwards, take turns hiding the objects and then looking for them.

It sounds crazy that Jonah made life so hard for himself running away from God when God is all around us. And yet we can run and hide from God too. As we find these objects, be reminded that although they are hidden from you, they are never hidden from God. What journey will we take with him today?



BUILDING BLOCKS

Save the Date! Join us for Building Blocks webinars over several days in November. The main conference will be run online on **Saturday 7th November 10:30 - 1:00**. We will resource people with techniques for self care in ministry, and lots of ideas for online and outdoors and pods and more! Book in

on time to get your snazzy pack which we will open together throughout the morning. Lucie from Muddy Church and Melanie from Children's Ministry in Oakhill College will be training us up on the day. Follow Building Blocks Children's Ministry Conferences on Facebook to keep updated.





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CRAFTS & CHALLENGES

Which challenge will your parish take on? There are ideas for younger and older children here and they can be adapted for prayer ideas, competitions, or messages of God's Hope.

In particular, we love Down and Dromore's Butterfly Competition, where parishes fill the outside of their church with crafted butterflies, with a message of hope and new life for the community in which they live and serve.

Here's are some links to origami and crafts for Harvest. How can your

parish engage families using these during this season?

Flower Origami: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JkguW4TU6Go>

Flower craft: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YzpwLKRIZA>

Corn origami <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=USRrASMTjB0>

Corn craft: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p0gyixkj_kI

Butterfly craft: <https://www.thesprucecrafts.com/butterfly-crafts-for-kids-4129196>



Down and Dromore Butterfly Competition: https://www.downanddromore.org/cmsfiles/*down/files/ddyc/Butterflies-of-Hope-Competition-September-2020.pdf

DRIVE THROUGH CHURCH & FAMILY POD CHURCH

Many churches are getting creative and worshipping together outdoors - they are even using cars as pods! This has worked well for short services and with a few thoughtful additions, can be very suitable for families. Here is a link to a Harvest chant that mentions holding hands but can easily be adapted to the current context (eg., stretch your hands out the window of your car!) <https://ideas.brf.org.uk/a-harvest-psalm>

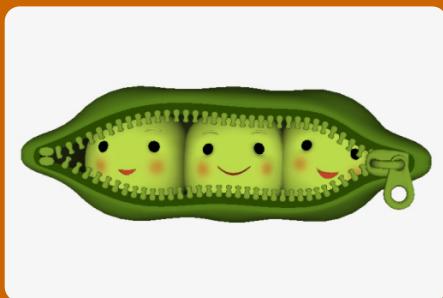
Other churches have used the Church Hall with one family per table to hold short family services. These are proving hugely successful with ideas from switching on a battery operated tea-light for prayer time, to a different family each week leading the actions to the Lord's Prayer, to covering the tables in paper table clothes and letting people draw their prayers or count how many times the minister or leader says a key word. We hope

to interview a parish soon to glean more ideas from them!



A PEA INSIDE A LITTLE POD

By Revd Cathy Hallissey (Children's Ministry Network Representative, Dublin & Glendalough)



Today I feel just like a pea inside a little pod
Things aren't the way they used to be
(In fact they're rather odd!)
My Classroom's slightly different
and my teacher said today
We have to stay inside our groups
Each time to go to play.

But sometimes small is wonderful
And only peas can tell
There's something rather comforting
Inside a little shell.
And so today, I stop to pray
And ask your blessing God
On friends in tiny places
And on every little Pod.