

# Newsletter

## Summer 2011



### Pray for Schools at Spring Harvest!

The photos through out this newsletter were taken at some of the youth events at Spring Harvest, where young people were given the opportunity to pray for their schools. I hope you are encouraged by them – and lets give thanks and pray for the young people and all other Christians who are living as ‘salt and light’ in the schools around the UK!



### Who works in your school?

Alongside teachers, support and administration staff and many other adults, there are many who work in the Local Education Authorities who would value our prayers. These ‘behind the scenes’ roles include:

- Education Psychologists
- Inclusion Support Co-ordinators
- Area SENCos (These people support SENCos, schools and pre-schools) (SENCo - Special Education Needs Co-ordinators)
- Education Welfare Officers
- Portage Home Visitors (work with children at home before they start Pre-school)
- Youth Workers (Although many work in Youth Centres they are often involved within Schools)
- Case Officers
- Education Officers
- Training Departments (provide, co-ordinate and make all the arrangements for any training within Schools etc.)



There are many within these teams who have specialist knowledge, eg. behavioural problems, Dyslexia, Autism, Learning Difficulties, physical and visual/hearing problems. A lot of these people work with children within the school setting but also within the child/young person's home and for some that can be a very risky place.

They are also, increasingly, working with reduced budgets, resources and manpower but concern for children and young people are at the centre of all they do. **Prayer works and although most of these people may never know that they are being prayed for, God can and does make a difference!**

# Praying the Bible

John Stephenson from Scripture Union has created a great resource based around the Lords Prayer. It is now freely available on the pray for schools website for groups and churches to download and adapt. It can be used as prayer stations, or to focus ideas for prayer. Here's a taster for you:

***'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name'***



There are various names used for God in the Bible. Write one or two of them on a flipchart or piece of paper.

Now pause and think about the local schools in your area.

There are opportunities for God's name to be hallowed in the curriculum through RE & Collective worship. Give thanks to God for these opportunities.

You may know of people with responsibilities for these areas in your local schools: teachers, church leaders, schools & youth workers. If you know their names, write them on a post it and stick it to the flipchart.

Pray this prayer for them: *'Heavenly Father we thank you for the freedom and opportunities we have to share the words of the Bible in our schools. We pray for all those with responsibility for teaching RE and delivering collective worship. Give them clarity, wisdom and clear thinking as they communicate what the Bible teaches about you. May your name be glorified through what they do. Amen.'*



## **News from around the country: Cliff Park Community church - Gorleston**

We are a joint Anglican/Baptist church planted 11 years ago and we meet in the local junior school, also using the Infant school hall for Kidz Church on Sundays and Messy Church in the week. Several of us went to a meeting in Norwich cathedral a few years ago to hear about Praying for Schools, but we sat on the idea for a year before deciding to do anything about it. We have a very good relationship with both Head Teachers as some of us go into the Infant school to listen to the children read, and we have made them a number of story bags, including some Christian ones.

We decided to start a prayer group for our 2 schools and a number of us gathered for our first meeting in a home, but we decided to be bold and ask if we could use the school premises for our prayer meetings. We were so thrilled when both Head Teachers were very happy for us to go into the schools, suggesting we went in at lunchtime so the staff could join us if they wished.

We have been doing this now for well over a year - we go into each school twice a term (4 times in all) and make it plain we are there to pray to their agenda. Whenever possible the Head

Teacher comes in and other staff join us if they are able to, and we are sometimes met on our arrival with prayer requests by staff.

During this time we have built up a very good relationship with the 2 schools and we have seen answers to prayers. Both the Head Teachers tell us how much they value our praying for them and feel it makes a real difference and we feel very privileged to be a part of their school as we share in their difficulties - and their joys. God has certainly opened up doors for us and we praise Him.

## Pray for Schools fortnight:

We've had some very encouraging feedback from Pray for Schools fortnight events around the country and stories will be posted on our website in the next few weeks.

Here are some short snippets:

*“Some parents, school workers and teachers, church members with a heart for praying for schools attended our event, and it was a real highlight seeing a few church members really getting a hold of praying for local schools.”*

“This was the first Pray4Schools day we have put on. We had about 50 people from all denominations, including 8-10 different leaders of churches and Christian organisations works from our area. The afternoon started with tea and coffee and fellowship for about 3/4 of an hour and then we had a time of worship. We used your DVD. We chose to have the day as a information day so people had something to go away with and pray over for the next two weeks, and beyond of course. The highlight of the day was our MP. We had used the theme of 'Invite, Inform and Inspire' for the afternoon and after she heard this she threw away her notes and spoke from the heart a very encouraging and inspiring view of the schools here.”

*“The presence of God was felt in the upper room in our church that morning. It was wonderful to have time set aside strategically to pray in groups. 12 people attended, and each offered prayers for different focuses in their own creative way. Teachers shared their experiences related to the prayer points, We had a session to pray for each other and it was a refreshing time as a teacher to be refreshed with the vision God has given to me for the school I work in.”*

“During break time we had a great opportunity to meet with the pupils as we gave out sweets and told them what we were doing. We had very good responses and many gave us prayer requests which we prayed through during the next session. A 'prayer tower' had been placed in reception during the week for pupil's requests, and we received about 50! The leader of the school's own prayer group led that session, highlighting topics affecting the youngsters. We divided into groups of 2-3 and prayed for each topic. Lunchtime saw an influx of pupils, mainly boys, saying they wanted to come into pray. They were rather boisterous and one of the teachers was about to evict them but I said if they respected the building they were in and respected what was going on in it, they were welcome to come in. It was quite amazing to see the change in them as they came in and as they shared concerns for prayer, it was a real privilege to pray with them - we do believe that God will honour those prayers.



## Encouragement from Wales:

We currently have around Welsh schools registered as being prayed for regularly, This year 24-7Prayer came alongside us to do a weeks' internet prayer diary with hour-long slots during Pray for Schools fortnight. Some of those praying registered several times over the week including a schoolgirl, and we subsequently heard of quite a few others who had been praying, but had not registered; so felt it was a good start, and we gathered several new

contacts. Please continue to pray for us as we work at building partnerships and getting our name known in Wales.

Claire Wall, Pray for Schools Coordinator, Wales.

You can also download the latest Pray for Schools Scotland newsletter from the Pray for Schools website at <http://www.prayforschools.org/regions/praying-for-schools-in-scotland/>

## Back to School with God

**Don't stop reading this** because you think September is months away! This is an ideal time to encourage your church to plan ahead and mark this date in the church calendar. *Back to School with God* Sunday is an ideal opportunity to have a service to affirm support for young people and school staff, and encourage ongoing commitment to pray for them.



You can download a host of resources produced by Pray for Schools Scotland – and even a simple 'commissioning prayer' as part of a regular service will help people feel they are going 'Back to School with God'. To find out more go to <http://www.prayforschools.org/events/pfs-events/back-to-school-with-god/>

### A last word: Out of our comfort zone

At times supporting our schools in prayer means taking risks, or doing things that we might not naturally feel comfortable doing. Approaching the headteacher of a school to let them know you are praying might be or standing up in church to encouraging your fellow members to 'adopt a school' and pray for it, are examples, and I'm sure you can think of plenty more.

But sometimes we can have the impression that being uncomfortable or finding things hard earns us more 'heavenly brownie points' than when things are going OK – and we can feel a bit guilty admitting to others that everything is going great!

I've recently been challenged by Paul's words in Philippians 4: *"I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength."*

Paul had experience of having plenty, as well as knowing what it was to go without, and he had learned to accept being in either situation through Christ who gave him strength.

It's alright for things to be going well, for us to see blessing and we should rejoice in it as a gift from God. And the times when we are out of our comfort zone? If we are being led and guided by God's Holy Spirit, then being out of our comfort zone is right in the centre of the will of God – and is there anywhere else you would rather be?

**Keep in touch: If you would like to know anything about Pray for Schools, or to find out which groups are praying in your area, do please get in touch – just email [england@prayforschools.org](mailto:england@prayforschools.org)**

**We can also send you postcards and bookmarks to encourage others to pray.**

**With thanks,** Joanne Appleton, Pray for Schools Coordinator, England

A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN...

