

PARENT TALK

SUPPORTING AND ENCOURAGING PARENTS AT CHRIST CHURCH

Holding onto the true meaning of Christmas... by Jo James

As Christians we look forward to celebrating the birth of Jesus at Christmas time, but as this cartoon of 'Super Mum' well illustrates, even with the best will in the world, it's easy to be overtaken by the hectic demands of the season; the busy last few weeks of term, those family get-together negotiations, the rushed, last minute shopping sprees... There seem to be so many things which can distract us from taking time out to reflect on the birth of Jesus. Here are some ideas which might help to keep the focus on Christ this Christmas time.

- Put some time aside in the diary & use it for some 'quiet time' with God. An Advent Bible study book, for example *A Journey through Advent* by Rob Frost, or a compilation of Readings, like *Watch for the Light* (publisher Orbis Books/Alban Books) can help focus the mind. Check out the Christ Church book stall, go to Cornerstone or look at www.eden.co.uk for more ideas.
- Read the Christmas story with your children. There are loads of books available – *Getting Ready for Christmas & Follow the Star* by Jesslyn DeBoer are good for very young children, *No Tree for Christmas*, *The Story of Jesus' Birth* by Marilyn Lashbrook is good for ages 4-7. With older children you could read through Luke 1:5-2:20 together.
- Buy an Advent calendar with pictures of the nativity story.
- Light an Advent candle each day and say a prayer together.
- Set up a nativity scene for younger children to play with.

SUPER MUM

By Christine Smith



- At a time when children are obsessed with what **they** want to receive, why not consider giving a gift as a family via sites like www.worldvision.org.uk or www.presentaid.org as they have some very creative ideas.
- If your kids like singing, why not sit in the twinkling lights of the Christmas tree and sing some carols together!
- Look out for more ideas coming soon from Promiseland!
- Finally, don't forget that the Christmas Services listed below are all great opportunities for families to remember & celebrate Jesus' birth together.

Christmas Services at Christ Church



CHRISTINGLE
SUNDAY 27th NOVEMBER
10.30 am



CAROLS ROUND THE CRIB
CHRISTMAS EVE
3 pm & 5 pm



FAMILY SERVICE
CHRISTMAS DAY
10 am

In At The Deep End

by Paul Lewis

Most couples have one child at a time. Most move house less than three times a year. Most go through primary and secondary transfer once in a blue moon. Having gone through all of these experiences in the space of one year (and getting married!), it has felt like the deepest of deep ends one could possibly dive into where raising a family is concerned. Having been a single man for many years and suddenly having a family all at once, my world has changed dramatically. Although I've missed the 'baby' years, the Lord has given me this unique opportunity to raise children in the best way possible.

Julie and I were married on July 24th 2010 and we've seen some amazing things already. Even before we got married, the Lord showed me that there was no way I could do this on my own. The truth is, I haven't got a clue how to be a step-parent, a husband and a carer for a disabled child. But this is where God comes through amazingly. On a small piece of paper that fell out of an old diary in 2009 were the words "Not in your own strength, Paul." To this day, I've still no idea who wrote those words. I felt they were from God Himself.

The short answer to parenting? Give all your worries to God - all the difficult situations - let Him help you. Firstly, you as a parent will be encouraged and feel empowered, secondly He'll do things that you can't do and thirdly, He'll give you a perspective that you don't normally have. An example - a stressful Sunday evening last week was transformed by God. A maelstrom of homework issues, potential arguments, short tempers, sudden illnesses and mealtime dramas were calmed amazingly by choosing to

DADS' BLOG

deliberately step away and pray for God to intervene. I wasn't running from the situation. All I thought was "How could I best help Julie here?" The answer isn't always practical. If I'd waded in, I may have even made matters worse. "I need to pray," I thought. In short, I escaped to the cellar and admitted to God that I didn't have the answers here and gave each and every situation to Him. For one, the stress that was building in me was immediately calmed and two, Julie and I didn't get caught in the tail of the expected tornado. Events suddenly improved - and it wasn't of my doing - it was the Lord's.

When we as parents are placed in impossibly difficult situations with family, we have two choices. DIY or GITG (Give it to God). Watch and see what happens when you choose the latter. I am learning so much about God and what being a Christian parent is all about through this process. It's so easy to feel alone and that your problems with your children are unique and everyone else is sorted. We're all in the same boat, but we have a magnificent captain who loves nothing more than to hear us talk to him about his children.



The Best New Wine Ever? by Matt Ewins

The weather behaved itself this time and many in attendance did consider it to be one of the best ever. Part of the appeal of New Wine is the excellent provision of activities for children, especially in the age 5-13 bracket. The 5-8 year olds were dropped off, whilst the older ones disappeared on their bikes, but the main point is that they were having fun somewhere else for three and a half hours, allowing parents time to go to the main meeting, wander round the market place, attend a seminar or, my own preferred option, fall asleep in a deckchair. Later in the day the children met again in their groups for a couple more hours, to allow parents to go to the evening meeting, which tended to be followed by a family meet up in the food court for a healthy and nutritious chips-based concoction. Children love the independence that they are given at New Wine as well as the fact that their friends are camping just yards away, whilst parents enjoy the chance to relax in the knowledge that the children are safe and having fun. Everybody wins! Please see Jo James if you would like to book your family's place at New Wine for July 2012! Booking is significantly cheaper online before the end of Nov 2011.



SPOTLIGHT FAMILY



The Wood Family:

Victor, Jill, Ben & Lily

Ages: Ben is 13 and Lily is 12

Pets: Jemima the tortoise is 4 years old - a wonderful surprise Christmas pressie for me (Jill) from the family as I am allergic to anything fluffy!

Family Quotes: We struggled with this - Ben's contribution were his ones which we hear as a family on a regular basis: 'I'm bored' (loved the Taylor's response to that one) and 'please can I have a TV in my bedroom?' Victor often treats us to snippets of his highly amusing joke repertoire but has now gone strangely quiet!

Top Tip: Have lots of chats, hugs and kisses!

Memorable Holiday:

We visited Victor's family in Lake Garda at New Year. It was great to meet all his family again as we had not seen some of them since we had got married. In true Italian style the children were smothered in kisses. The children went skiing, Ben had a go at driving and Lily helped with the animals on their great Uncle's farm. I was just blown away by the spectacular scenery. Fabulous!

Introducing... AMY CAHILL

Hi! I'm Amy Cahill and I've been running Mothers and Others (or M and O as it is affectionately called) since Easter 2010 and I just love every part of it. M and O is a unique, lively playgroup for local parents/carers and their pre-school children. We aim to provide a warm, welcoming environment for all involved, where hopefully they will experience God's love for them. Each session consists of free play, arts and crafts, singing and a short bible story as well as a healthy lunch for everyone. We also have a special Golden Time for the parents and carers, where we offer half an hour away from the children to enjoy a range of activities or short talks. We have done so many fun things in our Golden Time slot, including sushi making, manicures and cupcake decorating. Our talks have included topics such as 'Inner Beauty' and 'What is Love?' M and O is great fun and I work with an amazing team of volunteers with whom it is a privilege to serve God with. I really feel like I am in the right place leading M and O; God has blessed the group so much, it is wonderful. We are always looking for more volunteers to join our team. Please do contact me if you have any time to spare and you feel God nudging you to get involved!

STOP PRESS!

M and O is NOT just for mums and other female carers! We have several Dads who bring their little ones, so please do come along if you are a Dad!!



M AND O

Meets on Wednesdays during term time from 10.30-12.30 at Christ Church.

A healthy lunch is provided for children and adults.

Contact Amy for more information via email:

christchurch-barnet@london.anglican.org

AMY CAHILL FACT FILE:

1. Significant Others: My husband Nick and daughter Ruby aged 4.
2. Favourite colour: Red and turquoise, but not together!
3. Hobbies: Cooking and baking
4. Favourite drink: Real coffee, I'm a coffee snob so please don't ever offer me instant!
5. Favourite Bible book: I John, a book just bursting with God's love and a clear command to love other people.
6. Favourite Bible verse: Proverbs 3:5-6 (Look it up!)
7. Favourite Film: Breakfast at Tiffany's and Annie Hall
8. Favourite holiday destination: Anywhere by the coast.....

Trusting God as a Parent...

By Ai Saruhashi

"I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made, your works are wonderful, I know that full well."

(Psalm 139:14)

It's not a nice feeling when you see your child nervously walking into an entrance exam for secondary school. Will she be ok? Will she come out with a smile or in tears? That day I didn't feel like driving back home to do 'normal stuff', I just wanted to stay by the school praying for her.

As I opened a book called 'The Power of a Praying Parent', which I always carried with me during that exam period, and began to read a chapter called "Releasing My Child into God's Hand" the verse above from the Psalms came into my mind very clearly. Then God's voice came to me: "Don't just sit there being worried. Go home and do some ironing! Leave your child to me. I am taking care of her." I am sure it wasn't my husband's voice! This verse reminded me that God created me, my daughter and everybody who I care for. Each one of us received such love and care from God when we were made and He will continue to take care of us. My prayer was then filled with thanksgiving, I went home, did the ironing and when the time came I went to collect my daughter from her exam. I knew my God is her God too and He has an amazing plan for her. I prepared myself with faith to receive any news in the following months.

Whether your prayer is for a child who starts a new school or who struggles with friendship, a husband who is facing an unsteady future or a family member with a health problem, remember you are talking to a Father who has their best interests at heart. Who else can you trust?! When you come to Him with such a faith, doors will be opened and blessings will flow.



WHAT PEOPLE SAID ABOUT THE FIRST CAFE CHURCH @ CCB...

"Great atmosphere and good to see new faces. We felt relaxed to stay on afterwards"

"The variety of the content and testimony was excellent."

"A great way to invite people with no faith into a church building."

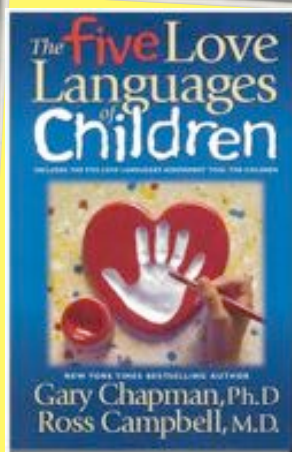
"Great cakes and coffee and superb layout - this is it!!"

"Lots of chatter and a good buzz - a very relaxed atmosphere."

"Loads of fun activities for children."

WHY NOT COME AND EXPERIENCE IT FOR YOURSELF AND BRING SOME FRIENDS!

11am on SUNDAY 4th DECEMBER



BOOKWORM BY AI SARUHASHI

As parents we all want to make sure that our children know we love them and that they will also become loving people themselves one day. This book tells you that each child has his/her own way of communicating love and receives your love best from one of these five languages - *Physical Touch, Words of Affirmation, Quality Time, Gifts and Acts of Service*. To understand your child's love language enables you to understand the motivation behind their behaviour. This is a quick-read, practical book and makes you want to try these "languages" as soon as you put the book down!



There is now a Parent Talk Facebook group! Find it via Clare Hallam's Facebook page.

The Editorial Team would love to hear all your views and ideas!

PLEASE CONTACT US!

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