

AUTUMN



September 2022



Can you believe we're nearly at the end of summer? What a sun filled time it's been this year - summer camps, long evenings, beach days and BBQ galore! We hope your summer has been full of fun and laughter with a good dose of rest too. And now as we enter that beautiful season of "mists and mellow fruitfulness" we want to share some ideas to help you through the Autumn fog!

WHERE TO START

Hopefully you have already seen our **Back to School Family Faith Locker**.

*This resource includes activities and faith discussions for families to do together **through the school year**, capturing memories along the way. There are family devotions for each term & seasonal craft ideas.*

*The pack also includes an **all-age service outline** that can be used and adapted by your church.*

*If you've not got your copy yet please email us: **cfm@ireland.anglican.org***



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Stock Check Before You Start



From the outside looking in it can seem as though Children and Families ministers / volunteers have it cushy over the summer - the photos showing water fights, bouncy castles & gigantic slip and slides!

However, summer can be just as exhausting between summer camps, toddler picnics and everything in-between, especially if you add in your own children looking to be entertained!

Then before you know it September rolls around and you're straight into new school term mid-week & Sunday club planning.

So this year we want to encourage you, to sit down and do a stock check before you start again.

We don't just mean checking up on your resource supplies like markers, paper, glue & paint, but more importantly taking stock spiritually.

Taking time to consider all the aspects of your ministry and how they spiritually impact you, your team and the children is important so that you know for sure you aren't just doing things for the sake of doing them.

Each aspect of our ministry should intentionally support our children and their families in developing faith. Sometimes we need to step back and ask if this is actually happening? How is this club / this group / this meeting or even this activity encouraging and equipping our families?

It is also vital that we are taking time for our own spiritual development & growth. Children and families ministry can often be a solitary role and one which can easily lead to you carrying other peoples' burdens. So it is really important you seek support, reflection time and spiritual feeding. As the saying goes, 'you cannot pour from an empty vessel'.



One way to gain extra support and learning this year, with like minded people, is to join Paraklesis UK.

Paraklesis is a newly launched Association of Children's, Youth and Families Ministers based in the UK but also open to those in the Republic of Ireland.

The Association is an ecumenical space offering support, training, mentoring and encouraging good practice for both salaried children's, youth and families ministers and churches as they seek to support those who work for them.

Very kindly we have the opportunity to take advantage of a **10% discount** on membership - there are slightly different rates for full time or part time workers, but the 10% discount applies to both.

To get the discount simply email Rachael at **cfm@ireland.anglican.org** and let me know which parish / diocese you are part of.

You can check out the website here : **www.paraklesis.org.uk**

Harvest time

ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS

What's the difference between empathy and compassion?

In a nutshell compassion is the act of coming alongside those in need, being present in their situation and acting to help them, whereas empathy is more emotional mirroring, understanding how the other person must feel but not necessarily doing anything to bring about change.

What does that have to do with Harvest? Well it's at this time we give thanks for all that we have been blessed with and take time to find ways to help those less fortunate. So it is an ideal time to encourage compassion within your church & the families you work with.

*The **Bishops' Appeal** will be sharing stories of harvests supported this past year as well as an update on the Ukraine support, so keep linked with them so you can share the opportunities for your church to show compassion.*

We will soon have an all age harvest service to send you but for now here's a sneak peak at some of the suggested activities.



HARVEST ALL AGE SERVICE IDEAS

- Compassion tree
- Sensory Farm play
- Harvest Trail



Compassion Tree - using large sticks create a tree in your church. On the branches hang cut out card leaves each with a suggestion of ways to show compassion for people or random acts of kindness, such as inviting a family to your house for a meal, offering to tidy someone's garden, spending time with someone who lives alone. Each family takes a leaf from the tree and promises to fulfil this task.

Sensory Farm Tubs - as part of the focus on our farmers create sensory farm tubs for the children in your church so they can play through the work being done on the farm. Use seed trays for each farm and cereals, dried beans / peas for fields. Gather toy tractors and animals. This might be part of messy church or gather the children to play at the front during the service on a large mat to save hoovering up peas and animals later!



LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

Over recent years Halloween has become increasingly popular in our country. Whilst there were always traditions around All Hallows there wasn't the same level of all out focus on the macabre and evil as there is now. Even as I write this in August – the shops have begun to stock their skeletons, masks and witches outfits. As with so many things where there is money to be made there will be those pushing us in every way possible to say "sure, it's just a bit of fun" Whilst some Church members may see no issue with the holiday, we wanted to take time to promote the positive alternatives that you can provide for your families.

Options that enable us to be the light in the darkness during this season. You may have heard about "light parties" before. These are parties where the focus is positive, where the children can enjoy themselves without a scary mask in sight. Take a look at the website www.lightparty.org where you will find a wealth of FREE ideas and resources & you can register your party online. Despite what the stores would have us think, there are many families who, regardless of faith, are not keen on Halloween so light parties can be a great outreach opportunity.

Promote the party in your local school, consider ways to connect with the parents. You could create a parent area for them to chat over a cuppa while the children party. This is also a great way to involve congregation members who are more adult focussed, they can chat away with parents and build connections. You must still ensure that safeguarding is in place for your event so do ensure you have any helpers vetted and follow your safeguarding policy. Be clear about the dress code if you are allowing fancy dress – no masks or outfits that are scary or glorify evil.

TRICK OR TREAT

A few years back this short Halloween spoken word piece was created by Go Chatter and we still find it a positive way to get across a tricky message. Click the link to play it if reading this on a device, or download it for free here: <https://gochattervideos.com/downloads/halloween-trick-or-treat/> For a really good outline of the dangers of Halloween read Canon J. John's article here: <https://canonjohn.com/2017/10/31/the-tragedy-of-halloween/>



Light Party Crafts

Clay tea light holders - grab a big bag of clay, some bright beads, shells or glitter if you're feeling brave!! Whilst wet push the tea light into the clay and wiggle a little so that they can be changed in the future. kids will enjoy squishing the beads or whatever you choose to use into the clay.

Glow in the dark Chalk Painting - Ingredients:
Neon Washable Paint (you can buy at Argos)
Cornflour & Water. 2 tablespoons of Neon paint, 2 cups of water and one cup of cornflour and mix. If you have a pathway you can paint on - either writing scripture or allowing the kids to go free and decorate with their own designs. If you have access to a UV light (you can pick up UV torches online quite cheaply) it will make your designs shine even brighter :)



www.sunhatsandwellieboots.com

Light Party Games

These always go down a storm with our Kids aged 5+ but not suitable for smallies who get very attached to their balloons!

Glowing Balloon Stomp:

Buy packs of LED balloons (Woodies / B&Q etc) enough for each child and plenty for all that will be burst before the game even starts!! Tie a balloon to each child's ankle leaving about 30 cm of string between balloon and leg. Turn off the lights and the challenge is to stomp on everyone else's balloon whilst protecting your own. Winner is the last one with an un-popped balloon.

Tip the can in the dark: This is best played outside in the dark if you have an enclosed area, but if you have a large hall clear of trip hazards it would work too. Give each child a lit LED balloon they can either tie it to their wrist or ankle. Designate the "can" or "base" (usually this is in the middle of the play area). Turn off the lights. Everyone hides with their balloon apart from one child chosen to be "it." The aim is to get back to "base" before the person who is "it" gets there.

