



SUMMER

Father's
Day



The
Olympics



Back to
School

WELCOME

As I write, it's not easy to imagine that summer is almost upon us - the rain still pours and the jumpers are still on!

Nevertheless, the promise of warmer days is there and with it comes a change of pace in Church.

For some of you, this is a quiet season as many families depart for holidays, and the church feels empty. For others, this is one of the busiest seasons as you gear up for summer camps, BBQs and all manner of Family Fun days.

Whatever the pattern of summer activity in your parish, it is important to find ways to stay connected over the summer months.

In this edition, we have ideas for Church based activities as well as "takeaways" for families travelling further afield.

So dive in and see what ideas might inspire you!

As we enter this new season we will continue to pray for you and would love to hear what you are up to. Feel free to contact us with any news, questions or events by emailing: cfm@ireland.anglican.org

Many Blessings.

Rachael.



Church of Ireland +
Board for Ministry with
Children & Families





Church of Ireland ✝
Board for Ministry with
Children & Families



Rachel Turner
Keynote speaker.

Author of many books including:
"It takes a church to raise a parent"
Founder of Parenting for Faith.
International speaker.

Saturday
November 9th
10.30 am - 4 pm
€25
(inc. lunch)

Nearthú (*Irish for Strengthen*)
An ecumenical conference for
Children and Families Ministry.
Portarlington, Co Laois.

Click here to book: <https://bit.ly/nearthu>

Workshops. Marketplace. Worship. Yummy food!

FATHER'S DAY



Church of Ireland
Board for Ministry to
Children & Families



Fantastic Father Figures

Celebrating Fathers and those who are Father figures is something we don't do nearly enough in our Churches. We'd really encourage you to champion Fathers this year and have a number of ideas and resources to help you do just that.

PRINTABLES

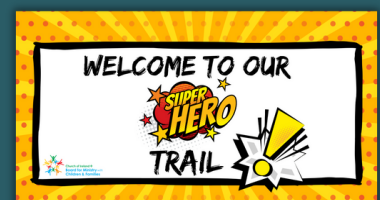
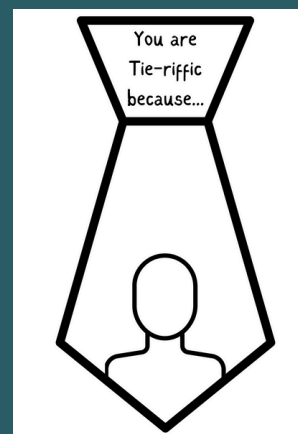
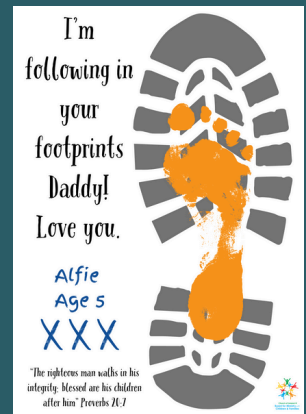
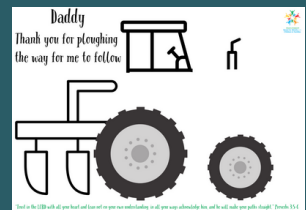
We have created 3 printable pictures for children to add their hands or footprints to make gifts for their Dads. We also have a tie which can be printed onto card and given to all father figures. Children can write on the front of the tie all the things that make that person "tie-riffic"! Simply punch holes into the top and tie elastic so that the tie-riffic recipient can wear their tie with pride! You can download these for free [HERE](#).

PODCAST

Encourage the fathers in your church by sending them the link to the [Legacy Fathers Podcast](#). If you're quick you can also order [The heart of a father](#), a small book with Seven Readings to celebrate Father's Day. Order by June 1st.

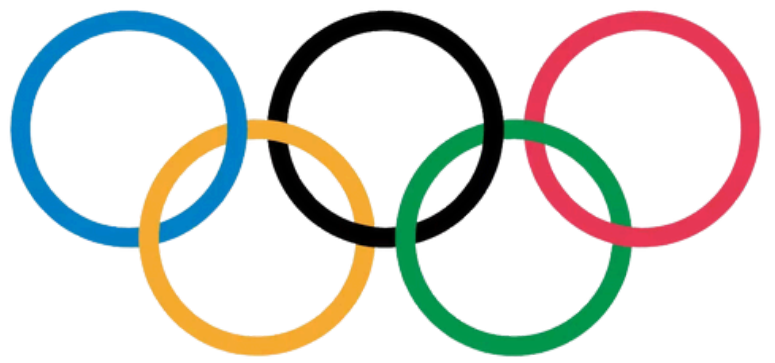
PARTY!

Celebrate the men in your Church by throwing a "super-man" party. We have created a Super-hero trail This trail is created for Father's day but can be used also for general Super-Hero Camps too. If used on Father's day, encourage Dad's to take on the challenge with their trusty sidekick - every superhero has one! - in this case their child/ren. You can also open it up for all men in the church to complete so that no-one feels left out, it doesn't specifically mention being a father. If you are running the trail as part of a church event, give a small bag or box of Cadbury Heroes to the men who give the correct hidden message to you. Download the trail [HERE](#)



3-Week Children's Ministry Curriculum

SUMMER GAMES



OLYMPIC OUTREACH

Harness the Olympic Excitement to engage families this summer.

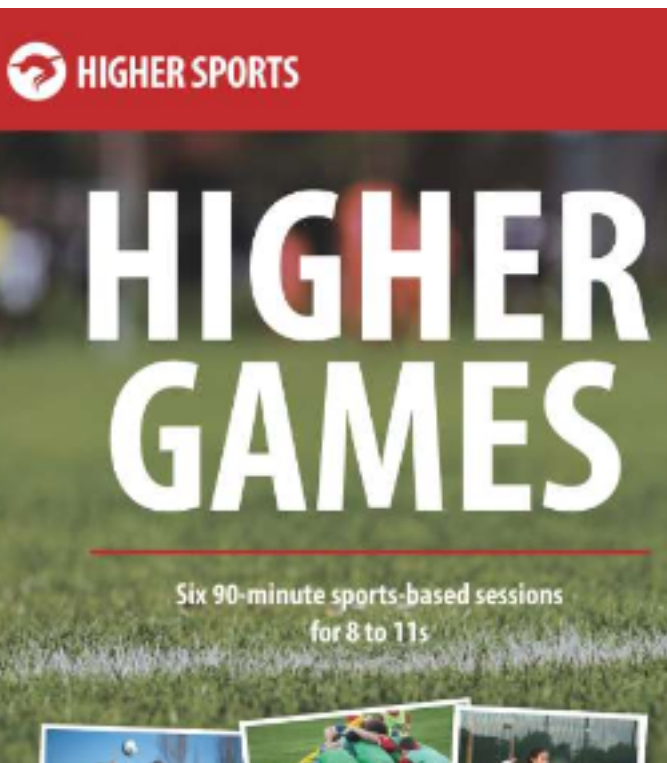
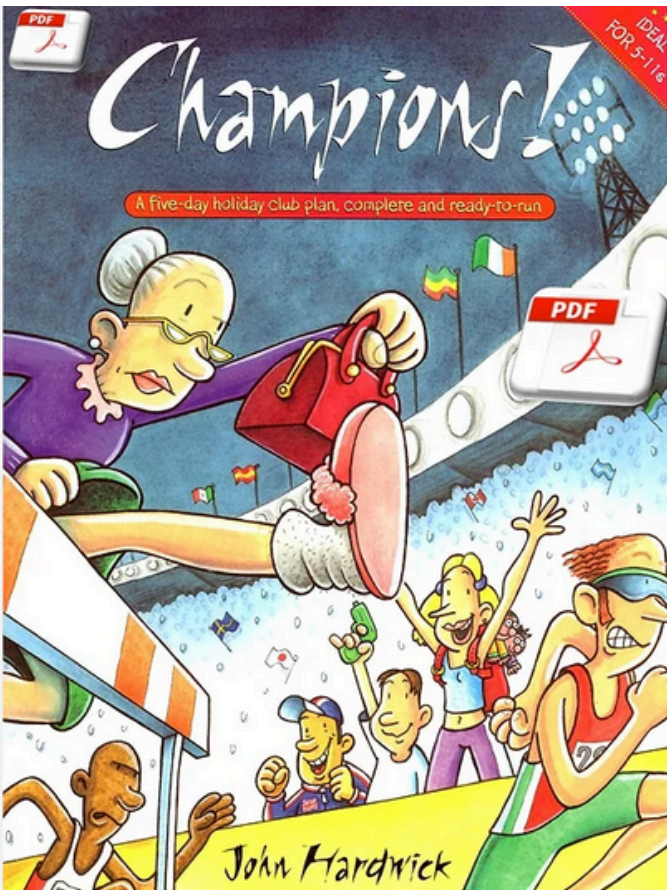
There are so many ways you can use the Olympics as the springboard theme for outreach events in your Church community, we've rounded up a few examples to inspire you!

First up is a three-session curriculum from the Sunday School Store called [Summer Games](#). This can be used in Sunday Clubs over 3 weeks, or as a one-day holiday club. In their own words, they say: "This study is perfect for children aged 6-12 years old.

The Bible often compares the Christian life with the challenges of athletic competition. This curriculum series draws on those themes to help children understand the importance of spiritual training in their daily lives.." It's a digital download that costs €35 - click on the image above to open the webpage.

Next up is John Hardwick's ["Champions"](#). As always his packs are full of all you need, really well thought out. It costs just €14/£11 and you get: songs, theme illustrations, daily dramas, puppet sketches, Bible stories, quizzes, crafts, games, and fun sheets for younger and older children. Once again, you can adapt this for Sunday Club, One off events or Intergenerational services. Click on the image to the left to download.

Scripture Union have 3 sports based sessions called [Higher Games](#). The pack costs €18/£14 and contains six sessions, each lasting 90 minutes, aimed primarily at children aged 8 to 11. These are best carried outside and offers a very different approach to really engage sport-minded children. Lastly just a heads up to keep an eye open for Muddy Church's Olympics pack which will appear in June - full of games, crafts, trail and worksheets - we can't wait!!



FAMILY FAITH & FUN IN THE SUN

Ideas to encourage families to stay faith connected through the holidays.

How ever your families spend their summer holidays - on the beach, in a caravan, up a mountain or at home, it is still possible to encourage them to focus on faith. No matter where their summer adventures take them, infusing moments of faith can deepen the family bond and create lasting memories centered around spiritual values. Here are a few ideas you might want to pass on to the families you are connected with.

Bumper Fun Faith Pack

Muddy Church has put together a holiday pack so amazing, it would make your eyes water!

There is SO much to keep children engaged as they read God's word, reflect and wonder their way through the holidays. There's puzzles, prayers, trails, scavenger hunts, pictures, journals...and the list goes on!

[Download](#) and gift these packs or send the link out to your parents to print themselves.

Whilst the pack is free, like all the amazing Muddy Church resources, do please give what you can towards the costs, time and talent involved in creating. Muddy Church has been such a blessing to so many churches, maybe now it's time we started giving some blessings back!



Bucket loads of faith filled fun!

Roots have a beautiful pack which can be used as a Summer Camp or community event. But if your families can't make the summer camp, why not give the summer camp to them?! With just a little thought and adapting you could give your families the activity ideas, templates and teaching sheets to share with each other on holiday.

The pack includes 6 flexible session plans, packed with inspiring ideas. 6 illustrated Bible stories to accompany each session. Printable templates as well as video and audio links.

If you already subscribe to Roots you can access this resource automatically. If you don't, it will only cost you £12/€14 to order

[HERE](#)



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THE START OF THE HOLIDAYS

DEAR LORD,

WE THANK YOU FOR THE RHYTHM OF LIFE, FOR THE ROUTINE OF SCHOOL, WORK AND HOME. HOW BLESSED WE ARE NOW TO HAVE A CHANGE OF RHYTHM, TO REST, EXPLORE AND MEET NEW FRIENDS.

AS WE BEGIN THIS HOLIDAY HEARTBEAT, INSPIRE US TO SHARE YOUR LOVE WITH THOSE WE MEET. TO TAKE TIME OUT TO LISTEN TO YOU THROUGH YOUR AMAZING CREATION, THROUGH YOUR WORD AND THROUGH THOSE AROUND US.

AND TO LEARN MORE OF YOUR DESIGN FOR OUR LIVES.
IN YOUR PRECIOUS NAME WE PRAY. AMEN.

ON THE BEACH



FATHER GOD. THANK YOU FOR THE OCEAN SO DEEP, SO VAST AND SO FULL OF LIFE. THANK YOU FOR THE SAND, SO WARM, SO PRETTY AND SO MUCH FUN TO PLAY WITH. HERE ON THIS BEACH WE WONDER AT YOUR GREATNESS AS WE LOOK AT THE SEA. LOOKING AT A GRAIN OF SAND WE REMEMBER THAT YOU MADE EACH ONE OF US UNIQUE, AND WE ARE PRECIOUS IN YOUR SIGHT.
AMEN



AT PICNICS OR BBQ'S

LIVING GOD. WE GIVE THANKS FOR THIS FOOD. FOR THOSE WE ARE SHARING WITH. AND FOR THE BEAUTY OF NATURE THAT SURROUNDS US AS WE EAT. MAY THIS FOOD NOURISH OUR BODIES, LAUGHTER FILL OUR HEARTS AND YOUR CREATION INSPIRE OUR CONVERSATIONS.

AMEN

ON RAINY DAYS



HOLY GOD. THE RAIN IS SPLASHING DOWN WHEN WE WERE HOPING FOR SUNSHINE. OUR PLANS HAVE NOW CHANGED. AS SAD AS WE MIGHT FEEL, HELP US TO REMEMBER THE BLESSINGS EACH RAINDROP BRINGS. WITHOUT THE RAIN, THERE WOULD BE NO GRASSY FIELDS TO PLAY ON, NO TREES TO CLIMB, NO FLOWERS TO SMELL, AND NO FOOD TO EAT. THE RAIN DOESN'T STOP US FROM LAUGHING, PLAYING, AND HAVING FUN - IT JUST BRINGS DIFFERENT FUN THANK YOU GOD FOR THE RAIN. AMEN

WHEN IT'S HARD TO GET TO SLEEP



LORD GOD,
EACH SEASON YOU CREATED BRINGS US THINGS TO ENJOY. THE AUTUMN LEAVES, THE WINTER SNOW, THE SPRING FLOWERS AND THE SUMMER SUN. WE LOVE THESE LIGHT SUMMER EVENINGS LORD AS WE PLAY OUTSIDE UNTIL LATE. BUT LORD AS I NOW REST MY HEAD, THE SUNSHINE IS STILL AWAKE AND IT'S HARD TO FEEL SLEEPY. HELP ME NOW TO REST, TO SLOW DOWN AND TO DREAM SO THAT I MAY WAKE REFRESHED IN THE MORNING, READY ONCE MORE TO ENJOY ALL THE NEW DAY BRINGS. AMEN

You can download and give this out to your families. Download [HERE](#)

Back to School..!

I know that if my younger self read this article in June I would be very indignant at hearing the phrase "back to school!" However, as the saying goes, time stands still for no man - or woman - and especially not for those in ministry. So to help you plan ahead here's some ideas to encourage and dare I say even celebrate the back to school season.



BACK TO SCHOOL SERVICE

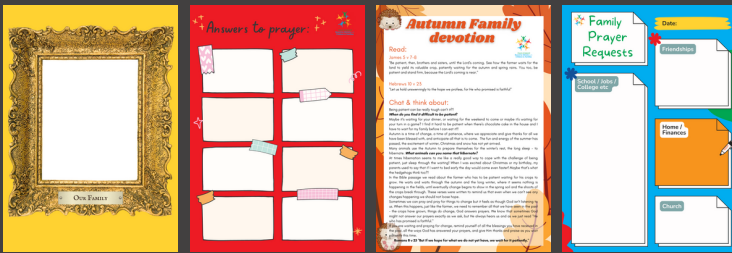
Many churches hold a Back to School service early in September. It can be a wonderful way to reconnect with families after the holidays and provide much needed prayer and support for students, parents and teachers alike.

If you are not sure where to start with your service, here's a few ideas to help inspire you.

Scripture Union NI Spot the Difference: This a fully comprehensive pack that includes powerpoint slides, Bible readings, dramas and sermon outline.

Faith in Kids: The team have produced 3 sessions that can be adapted to your needs and helps give 3 compelling reasons why Christian children have more reasons to look forward to going back to school than anyone else.

Back-Pack Blessing: We have a simple intergenerational service & resources that can work in tandem with the Faith Locker or on its own.



FAMILY FAITH LOCKER

We produced this a couple of years ago, but you might have missed it first time round!

The idea is based on the concept of a school locker, which starts the year empty and new, and gradually gets filled with books and drawings of all the things we have learned and experienced. By the end of the year, when we clean out our lockers, we find memories that show how much we've grown and changed. We get to reflect on important lessons and challenging moments. Similarly, this pack can be given to families so they can create a faith locker to capture the start of the school year, concerns, prayer requests, and as the year progresses answers to prayer. At the end of the school year, the family can sit together and look back at all that God has done in their lives, discuss it, and reminisce about the memories and achievements, leaving them with a box of treasure for future years. Create the lockers using pizza boxes, or families can make their own using large cereal boxes. [DOWNLOAD THE PACK HERE](#)



Click on the images to
open the links

THE MUSTARD SEED CHALLENGE—2024 MUSTARD SEED BANNER

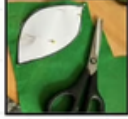
1^o STEP

Find your materials. Use any green fabric—felt, off cuts. You can use any thread that can be seen when you sew on the shape.



2^o STEP

Cut out the template and pin to the material. Cut it out.



3^o STEP

Think about how you want to decorate the leaf ... use running stitches, blanket stitch, backstitch, french knots.



4^o STEP

Write the name of your group and where it is on the leaf. Stitch the name with a contrasting colour so it stands out.



QUESTIONS

- What if I can't sew? Ask someone who can to help—it's a great way to involve others. Or use fabric pens to decorate a leaf.



Where should I send the completed leaf to?

Please send to Jo Gordon, Mustard Seed Challenge 2024, 38 Berkhamstead Ave, Wembley HA9 6DT

-What if I don't have any green material? Ask others if they have any, use an old t-shirt

- How big should the leaf be? Download the template or draw your own - the size is A6, a quarter of an A4 piece of paper.



This years theme is -
The parable of the mustard seed

1 2 7 7
make them count

NATIONAL MONTH OF PRAYER FOR TODDLER GROUPS JUNE 2024

Pray for your local toddler group, its leaders and all the families it comes into contact with.

For more information, ideas and resources visit;
FB GROUP - 1277 National Month Of Prayer
[www. 1277.org.uk/resources](http://www.1277.org.uk/resources)



1 2 7 7
make them count

Let's GROW

22nd February is 50 days
until the National Month of Prayer for Toddler Groups.

We would love for you to join us to plant seeds

Jump In!

Leaping into Faith with Little Ones

THE MUSTARD SEED

A special session for use in the National
Month of Prayer for Parent-and-Toddler
Groups based on Matthew 13:31-32.

It's not 'just' a parent & toddler group



12 TOP TIPS
FOR SCHOOL READINESS

WWW.NOTJUSTAPARENTANDTODDLER.GROUP

Caroline Montgomery

Refresh

Introducing adults
to faith through
toddler groups

June heralds the arrival of the month of prayer for toddler groups in the UK and Ireland.

Over recent years there has been growing recognition of the importance of Toddler groups and rightly so. Not only do they provide a lifeline of relationships for parents who are navigating the often lonely task of raising a toddler. But - as outlined in the fantastic booklet "It's not 'just' a parent and toddler group" - they are a vital place of growth, development and preparation for school.

Churches also have woken up to the gem they have held all these years, previously mistaking it for a pebble of little value. Ministers have realised the huge depth of connection they gain with parents and grandparents when attending the toddler groups - people who would never come across the threshold of the church for any other reason.

This month encourage your Church to pray for toddler groups - whether you have one in your church or not. If you don't yet run one, take time to consider how you could start one - if you are not sure where to begin, get in touch with us and we can help offer guidance.

If you want to bring more "faith light" content (as Jo Gordon from [1277/Daniels Den](http://1277/DanielsDen) would say!) to your group, grab yourself a copy of "Refresh" by Caroline Montgomery as a great place to start with practical advice and 33 sessions that will help you to share something of God in a gentle, relevant and accessible way



SELF CARE

When involved in ministry, finding personal time can be challenging but essential for serving effectively. Incorporating moments for reflection, prayer, and studying scripture into our daily routines is crucial.

Prioritizing mental and physical well-being is key. Whether you're wrapping up your regular clubs or gearing up for summer events, take some time in the next few days to identify activities that help relax your mind and body. It might be a nature walk, seaside visit, reading - just for pleasure not research! or engaging in art or music. Be intentional, schedule these into your diary and ensure they have as much importance as any other meeting you have that week. Giving your own mental and physical health priority will ultimately boost creativity, motivation, and enthusiasm in your ministry.

An Attitude of Gratitude

When it comes to cultivating positive habits Paul hit the nail on the head when he wrote to the Colossians, and his words are just as relevant for us today:

Colossians 2:7

"Keep your roots deep in him and have your lives built on him. Be strong in the faith, just as you were taught.

And always be thankful."

As Lydia Monds from the **Church of Ireland Ministry of Healing** says:

"look for something you are grateful for, and offer it to God. Gratitude boosts wellbeing and is so important for self care."

Take it further

Whilst there are any number of articles on wellbeing and mental health, it is good to acknowledge there is a specific and unique pressure on those of us working with children, families and youth. Here are some suggestions for extra support and advice specific to youth and children's work - click on the bold word to open the link:

[Paraklesis](#) - an article on Wellbeing by Rachel Newham

[National Youth Council of Ireland \(NYCI\)](#)

[Wellbeing Hub](#) - videos, advice, support.

[Kintsugi Hope - wellbeing groups](#). Issues covered include; disappointment, loss, anxiety, anger, perfectionism, shame and resilience



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**CONNECT WITH
US**

FEEL FREE TO CONTACT

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