



Work with churches

It is always gratifying to be approached by churches who value the expertise of FACT and want our help and support. I have recently undertaken some consultation work for St. Mary Magdalene, Littleton. It has been good to use my experience of different churches and their work with children and families. I look forward to assisting them some more in the future as their plans unfold.



I have recently had two more churches make contact to explore some involvement from FACT in the autumn, both with reference to work with children and families. It's early days in the discussions but I look forward to sharing more as things progress.

The one thing I see time and time again when

working with churches is the mixed feelings of excitement of moving forward to something new while at the same time missing what they are leaving behind. All very normal and natural.

All change is, by its very nature, uncomfortable, but change is the one constant in life.



Don't be frightened to get in touch to chat if your church might like some support or input from FACT.

WARNING - The initial meeting may involve drinking tea / coffee and chocolate biscuits while chatting in a convivial atmosphere! *Simon*

Worship that is changing

I would imagine many of you have lived through multiple changes of worship styles down the decades. When the latest offering first appears we deem it to be radical in its thinking and is both exciting and unnerving at the same time. The 1960's saw the start of 'Family Services' which became caricatured as the singing vicar with a guitar, complete with rainbow strap! Suddenly we were singing choruses! By the 1980's / 90's it had morphed into 'All Age Worship'. This form sort to hold onto what was deemed to be valuable from the past while embracing the new songs, greater engagement of musicians and members of congregations. Drama, poetry, dance, crafts and the like all found their place in this buffet of worship. What was once a homily had become the sermon and was now the talk.

All these changes had at their heart a desire to engage with the worshipping community as a whole. Children were desired to be included (in theory) yet they were still 'sent out' to their own classes for most, if not all the service. There was a growing recognition that the majority of people attending didn't live in families that consisted of Mr & Mrs with 2.4 children. All this while at the same time seeing the decline in church attendance and Christian understanding.

These formats started with promise, but never quite 'did it' for people. They never really delivered on the unspoken desire to somehow be a worshipping community. We had ignored the changes in society that influence our thinking and living, for good and sometimes for bad. Over recent decades the dominant ideology has been egocentric living. Simply put, me first and last. A simple example of this can be seen in so much of what we sing in church starts with 'I' rather than 'We'. We have become independent worshippers, we have moved from corporate worship (everyone worshipping together) to collective worship (being together while worshipping on my own), mirroring the way schools now structure their assemblies. We have lost the ability to be interdependent on each other while as church communities we should also be seeking to be intradependent. So what is next?

Read my thoughts on the blog on the website.

www.thefact.co.uk/factblog/blog.php



Faith Awareness
in Children Trust

Discipline: A dirty word!

With a headline like that, you might expect a rant about bad behaviour of children, but that would fall into the stereotype of 'telling children off' and would be to view discipline as a verb, something to be done. A simple set of rules that need to be kept and followed regardless of the perceived value or understanding of the individual. When we consider discipline as a noun we can see the word in a different light. There may be times when we need to undertake a new project, learn a new speciality or become trained in a new discipline. When it comes to spiritual growth, we live in times that need us to embrace new spiritual disciplines. New ways of doing things to aid and nurture faith development and growth in children and the adults they live with. Perhaps you are currently *being* disciplined during Lent by going without something or doing something extra, however come the end of Lent you will most likely return to your previous patterns of living. It is suggested that most diets fail as once the desired weight has been lost then we all return to the patterns of unhealthy eating and living that caused our original weight gain. The discipline of being on a diet failed to give us a new discipline of living healthily going forward.

We all like the idea of having a new discipline that we stick to; a new regime by which we live or a better way of living and being, but in truth we don't want to make the necessary effort to change our patterns of behaviour to enable that discipline to become second nature and be imbedded into the way we live and think.

We lack the discipline to develop a new discipline!

So it is in the nurturing of faith in our children. We think it's a good idea and desirable but if it is to really happen then we need to change the patterns of living that we currently undertake and develop new helpful ones. There will be new things to take up and new ways to think and be.

A recent Church of England Synod report entitled, 'Growing Faith: Churches, Schools and Households' noted how the church needed to do more to enable faith to grow amongst children and young people, not merely in churches and schools but also in their homes. It noted that the principle influence on the faith of a child was their parents / home environment. Sadly all too often parents seem to think they can delegate this responsibility to the 'professionals', the church, to do this for them. There can be an attitude that hands the child over on a Sunday morning to the Sunday School for them to 'make Christians' of their child. To be fair to parents, many want to take up this role but do not know where to begin with it.

It starts with a desire to learn and live a new discipline. This will involve change to the way we live, not for a while, but for good. The discipline and grit of changing from what we currently are, which is shown in what we do, can be costly and time consuming, but will eventually bear fruit.

At FACT we are trying to wrestle with ways to support and enable households and churches to take on this new discipline. The 'Time to Share at Home' project is one way. The development of Intergenerational Worship in churches is another. Ultimately, there needs to be a deep desire by Christians to move from where they are, to this new way of being.

Simon

A newsletter to keep supporters informed, inspired & involved.
Issue number 134 April 2019

FACT enabling children and households reflect on the Christian Gospel

Time to Share at Home

The faithful team of volunteers in the office have continued to create the materials and boxes for Time to Share at Home. We have even dedicated a shelf in the office to store them! We are ready for your orders which can be easily dispatched to you. The simplest way to place an order and pay for it is via our website. So don't delay take a positive step towards the new discipline of faith discovery together at home. You can of course get in touch directly and we will be happy to ensure you receive the materials ASAP.



Faith Activity Kit to use at home

All ages and those of any faith or none in your home can share reflection and faith awareness with our **Time 2 Share at Home** activity kit.

You can buy our faith activity kit box for £35.00.

[More about Time 2 Share at Home](#)

The activity kit has been bought by two churches who used it in their mid-week small groups. They saw this as a starting point in aiding the adults in these groups to experience the kit with its possibilities of being shared in their group and to see for themselves how they might then use the it with those they live with.

Another church took some boxes to give away to families on the fringe of their

congregation. To be offered these as a gift had a profound effect on how they viewed their church. The generous attitude was about offering an opportunity with no pressure on households to complete everything, merely to taste and see.

One grandparent told me that they had only done a couple of sessions but because they felt there was no pressure they really enjoyed and benefited from doing it. She said it was wonderful to simply be together as a little family unit, talking, sharing, discovering with each other.

Toddlers at Easter



When it comes to toddler groups no two visits are the same. There are many variables that affect what I'm able to achieve. The total number of children and adults, the age of the cohort of children on the day, not to mention the weather! They all make a difference. Yet, even in what sometimes appears to be 'organised

chaos', there are precious moments of discovery and engagement with God. I have learnt to watch out for them.

The child who is sat motionless and transfixed on everything I do or say and who is unphased by everyone else around them; the child who simply can't contain themselves and has to stand up having been encouraged to sit down numerous times by their parent; the child who simply wants to be in physical contact to get as close as possible; the child who mimics what I say and the child who cosies up to their carer while listening to what I'm sharing via a story book, a song or a puppet. All of these encounters can be seen and are happening in these pictures.



Thank you Mike



We have spoken on many occasions about the family of FACT. There are so many unseen heroes in this close knit community who support the work and ministry in quiet, yet faithful ways. Mike has been one such member of the family. He was instrumental in the creation and, most importantly, upkeep of the previous website. With our new, all singing, all dancing version of the website, Mike's contribution was now complete. He's been very supportive of the development of the new website and had many kind things to say about how it looked and functioned. The Trustees and I didn't want to let Mike simply slip away unnoticed or unthanked for all his hard work and support over many years. I was able to present him with an inscribed pen and box made from bamboo when he dropped by recently. The inscription on the box lid read, 'Thanks for supporting FACT' while on the pen it read, 'Top FACT supporter'.

Simon

www.thefact.co.uk

If you haven't taken the opportunity to navigate our new website please do. I think you will be pleasantly surprised and encouraged. Having done that why not share it with others you know. It never ceases to surprise me how people love to see and hear about some of the fantastic things FACT is doing. I can easily fall into the trap of thinking they won't be interested.

The latest change on our website has been to our online donation page. We were previously using BT MyDonate who had been very good and ensured that the totality of all gifts came to us without any fees being added. Sadly they are closing this facility on the 30th June. We have now set up an account with -



It's direct link to our fundraising page is www.wonderful.org/charity/faithawarenessinchildrentrust

or you can go via our website www.thefact.co.uk/supportFACT.html

It is a simple page to navigate. You can make a donation to FACT, of which every penny will come to us or you might like to organise a fundraising event and have a page which supporters can access and donate to. Once again all the money comes direct to us with no fees added.

Perhaps you would like to hold a cake sale, run a marathon, tap dance in fancy dress, throw a dinner party for paying guests, wash cars or any other skill you could offer that people would pay to see happen.

If you need help with setting up a page then drop me a line. I wonder how imaginative you could be at finding a way to draw your friends, family and work colleagues in to support you and in so doing support FACT.

**But if you refuse to serve the Lord, then choose today whom you will serve.
As for me and my family, we will serve the Lord.** Joshua 24:15