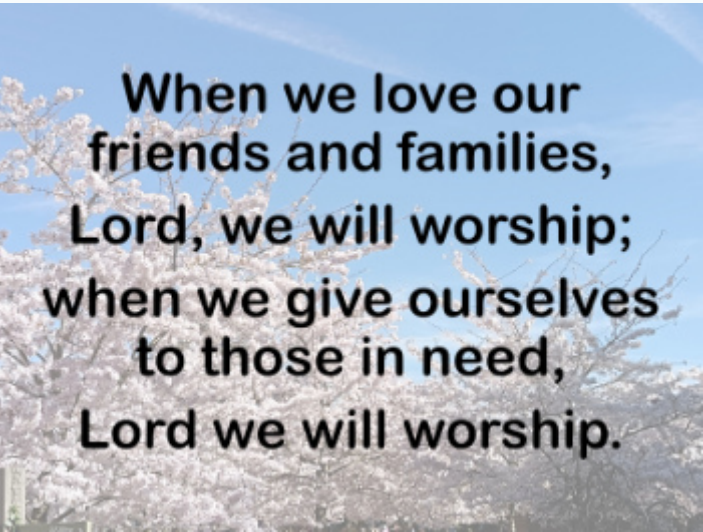


Intergenerational Worship



May saw the theme of ‘*Hospitality*’ explored during the I.W. service. A couple of Bible stories were touched on; Abraham’s visit from what turned out to be 3 angels and Matthew’s calling to follow Jesus. Both involved hospitality around a table of food. We noted how hospitality is now an industry and we do it outside of the home. This isn’t wrong but it’s no substitute for inviting people into your home and allowing yourself to become vulnerable to what people might think of you and the way you live!



There were challenges around who we might show hospitality to and that was echoed in one of the songs that was offered during the worship, shown in the picture above. 4 simple laminated cards created a set onto which people were encouraged to write with a white board marker the names of those to whom they would offer hospitality and when they would do it. They could start with their friends and family, move onto acquaintances that they knew were in need, and then perhaps even offer a stranger hospitality, while recognising their need to stay safe.

Before the end of June churches that I’m currently working with will have to decide on whether they wish to continue for a second year. That will mean demonstrating a desire to establish a team to take these services on from me. I will be offering all possible help and support to make that happen. They have seen and enjoyed the new formats. There’s a general acknowledgement that they are beneficial while being honest enough to recognise that no-one likes change! Some have had training while others hope to do so in the Autumn. As I write, I’m working with 3 churches. They may all continue or all cease to have Intergenerational Worship from September. I look forward to reporting in the next newsletter what has happened. Of course, I’m happy to consider other churches who are thinking seriously about making their services more accessible to the younger generations. They will come to church if invited, but will we be comfortable inviting them to what we currently have to offer?

Diary Dates

June	
15 th June	Staines Methodist 10.30am
17 th June	Tiddlers Toddlers
18 th June	Laleham Playgroup (am)
19 th June	Little Tots Toddlers
20 th June	Minnows Toddlers
22 nd June	Ashford Common Methodist 10.30am
23 rd June	Playbox Pre-school (am)
24 th June	Hope Church Hounslow Toddlers
25 th June	Little Fishes Toddlers
26 th June	Seedlings Toddlers
26 th June	Trustees half day future planning
27 th June	Playtime Toddlers
July	
2 nd July	Footprints Toddlers
3 rd July	Towntree Pre-school (pm)
13 th July	North Hillingdon Methodist 9.30am
17 th July	Trustees meeting
20 th July	Staines Methodist 10.30am
27 th July	Ashford Common Methodist 10.30am

August
A time for holidays and enormous amounts of preparation that will take place in readiness for the new academic year starting in September.

A newsletter to keep supporters informed, inspired & involved.
Issue number 171 June 2025



Faith Awareness
in Children Trust

Simon Shutt Director of Children’s Ministry
FACT, Ashford Baptist Church, Church Road, Ashford, TW15 2TT
Mob 07733360009
office@thefact.co.uk
www.thefact.co.uk

The Quiet Revival
A Bible Society report on growth in Christianity



A recent report from the Bible Society entitled, ‘*The Quiet Revival*’ has drawn comments from many areas of the Christian community in the UK. The report goes to great lengths to show its polling methods are sound and can be relied upon but the issue of how the raw data should be interpreted is always up for discussion and that’s where there is a divergence of opinions. For some commentators it’s a classic case of what the British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli described as, ‘Lies, damned lies, and statistics’. For other commentators there are whoops of joy and excitement at the new information and articulated trends of growth. I have read the report and recognise that I have my own set of blinkers when it comes to these things. You can read the report for yourselves here.

<https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/research/quiet-revival>

They identify 10 Key Findings. **No. 5** recognises that **35% of 18–24-year-olds say there is ‘definitely a God/ gods or higher power’**. This would concur with the general agreement that this and younger generations have an ease with the idea of something spiritual. The report suggests that in recent decades attitudes in society have journeyed from the hostility of ‘New Atheism’ to apathy and could be currently described as an openness. I think that’s a fair assessment. However all too often I find churches are still working from a position of fear of opposition which by and large no longer exists. Far be it from me to suggest churches are out of touch!

No. 9 shows that invitation is vital to people coming to / getting involved with church. **34% of 18–24-year-old non-churchgoers would attend church if invited by a friend**. They described how this age group might have the highest percentage but across the board the figure only drops to 31% for everyone. As I reflect on this figure it supports the notion of how churches all too often rely on publicity such as flyers and posters both hard copies and soft copies and think that constitutes an invitation when in reality it’s merely information, regardless of the wording. We need to invite people face-to-face and use supporting literature with details that will be needed to know when and where. Other current research highlights how poorly our society communicates emotions with each other. The growing use of digital communication in recent decades has often reduced our conversation to a couple of emojis! To quote the report. ‘*It has been well documented that the emerging generations are more prone to (and aware of) poor mental health with 58% of 18–24-year-olds in our sample saying they ‘frequently feel anxious or depressed’, compared to 29% of those aged over 55.*’ This is a time for invitation and openness about our faith with this generation in our simple day-to-day mission. They are likely to be far more interested and appreciative than previous generations. I would caution that this window of opportunity will not be open for ever. Can we step out of the shadows of fear into the light of hope and help them find a place of belonging?

FACT enabling children and households to reflect on the Christian Gospel

Toddlers and Pre-schools

Following a couple of brief conversations with leaders of two groups recently I found myself, once again, reflecting on the importance of toddler groups and similar initiatives in the missional strategies of local churches. Nationally, the vast majority of these groups are hosted in church buildings and run by volunteers from the church. They often meet weekly and are comprised of mainly unchurched attendees. Predominately it is still mums who bring their little ones but there is the occasional dad, grandparent, or child minder.

Those who attend come for many reasons. Simply to 'get out', to meet up with others in the same stage of life, to be somewhere safe and friendly and many more reasons besides.

At a time when less and less people will enter a church on a Sunday, these groups are often well attended mid-week.

With all this being true, why then are these groups so underfunded, under resourced, understaffed with good quality, trained helpers and, what often feels like, undervalued by the church as a whole? Why don't churches have any strategic missional plans for them? There seems to be an occasional nod to their existence but little or no understanding of what they could achieve or be a conduit for.

Households that attend do so willingly and with open minds. They enjoy and value any form of Christian input, whether it's a story, a song or a closing prayer. They are places for easy and natural conversations about life, values, fears and faith, probably more than at any other church gathering.

If you have a group running at your church and you are not sure what they do or why they do it, and if you would like to be more strategic and see that group develop and become more missional in its existence, then get in touch and start a conversation with me to see how FACT can expand the benefit of the group for its attendees, its helpers and the wider church.

I wonder how God could be encountered in new ways, loving ways, deeper ways, salvific ways in these hidden gems of the church?



The end of March and the start of April gave me opportunities to present the Easter story to children and carers. The story started with a blunt statement, 'Jesus died!' From there it moved quickly through to the empty tomb and the announcement by the angels that, 'Jesus is not here, He is alive!' That phrase, 'Jesus is alive', was repeated over and over again on subsequent pages as Jesus friends see him, talk with him, and eat with him.

Over a hundred carers plus staff and of course, the children will have heard that story and for most of them it will have been the only time that they would have encountered it in the Easter season.

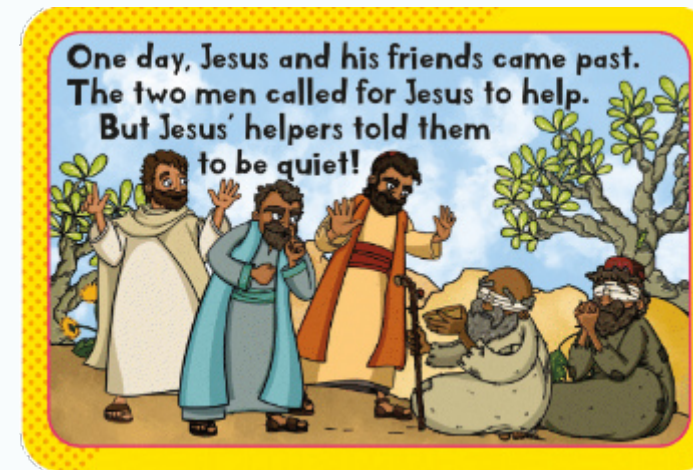


In May I found some new images to create a new big book which helped me tell the story of Jesus calming the storm. The emphasis was to allow a 'Wow' moment. How could Jesus do that? What did his friends think? Wow that's incredible! In the simplicity of children's thinking, it is quite believable. Oh that we could be more child like!

I have indulged myself by using a puppet that gets used very infrequently, Juan-Carlo Fizzy-Cola, that well known F1 racing driver, was first used decades ago when I co-wrote some holiday club material. I have tamed his character for these young lives as I'm not sure they want to hear him belch!

Time 2 Share at Home

Every time I write an article about the **Time 2 Share at Home** boxes I feel a little like the voice in a launch control centre, counting down to blast off! I hope that you have had a growing sense of excitement as you have followed the progress of the revamp and overhaul of the design and illustrations. We are in the final throws of completing the last of 8 sets of session cards. This is one card in a set that tells the story of Jesus and the 2 blind beggars.



This card below is from a set that tells the story of the lost coin. The illustrations are simple yet beautifully drawn with subtle details.



A timetable for the next stage of development is on the drawing board. That will include trials of the new boxes with chosen households to get their feedback on certain elements that we need to test.

This is where **YOU** come in!

If you would like to be involved in that, do get in touch quickly so we can organise that in the near future.

The labelling for the boxes have been completed and a new set of logos produced. I hope to use the logos in the near future to update our website.



The production of these materials involves laminating, trimming to size, clipping sharp corners, assembling and packing boxes, gluing labels and the like. It is very repetitive but this part of the process must be done accurately to maintain the high standard of the product.

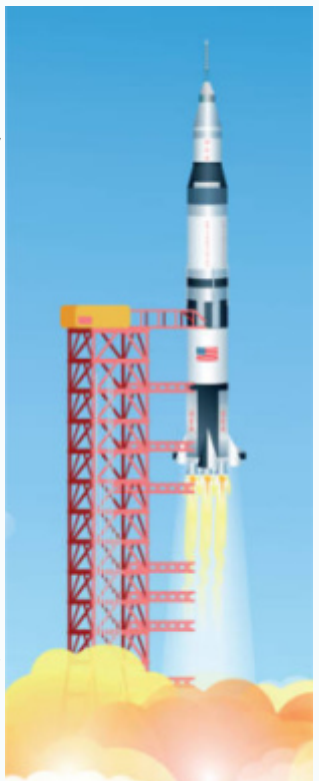
Once again this is where **YOU** come in!

Could **YOU** come into the office and give a few hours occasionally / regularly to undertake some of this work?

Please get in touch so we can arrange a visit and discuss what might work for you and for us. Endless tea and coffee plus choccy biscuits will be on tap!

We are working at pace and hope to launch the new boxes this autumn, but before that we have so much to do and consider.

I guess in the count down we have moved from ten to two and all ears are listening out for 'one, lift off!'



Later, Matthew invited Jesus and his disciples to his home as dinner guests, along with many tax collectors and other disreputable sinners.

Matthew 9:10 NLT