

I adopted the role of Children's Ministry Coordinator in May earlier this year and have since focused on providing lectionary-based lessons to engage the children with the stories of the Bible and encourage them to continue thinking about what they learnt after the sessions.

Curriculum

The sessions have been following a lectionary-based curriculum, focusing on the Gospel story each week. We typically begin our sessions with a check-in, allowing the children to share how they are doing and anything interesting they might have done over the week. We then move on to hearing the Gospel story in some interactive way, such as acting it out or filling in a mad lib, which is then usually paired with an object lesson activity or demonstration that helps us think more about what the story is telling us. We then complete a craft or play a game that takes what we learnt and applies it further.

In lockdown, we have continued our sessions over Zoom. While not reaching the same levels of attendance as we did in person as the online sessions are not feasible for everyone after a long week of online school and work, the children who have been attending have been enjoying the chance to still engage with church. (I have kept in touch with those unable to attend to offer resources outside of our sessions if wanted.) The curriculum remains focused on the lectionary but is structured differently to accommodate being online. While we still have check-ins and time to share, I have been relying more on videos to tell the Gospel story and quick chats afterwards to engage the children with the story's meaning. We then play a game, such as Bingo, Simon Says, or Kahoot (a crowd favourite), based on what we learnt. We occasionally complete crafts, but with varying amounts of supplies available to everyone, I have been spacing them apart more so as not to run out before lockdown ends. While online sessions are not ideal, it has been wonderful to see the children continue to engage with and be enthusiastic about their faith.

Logistics

Just before lockdown began, I implemented a flexible schedule for the children's assistance during Communion so that there were more equal opportunities for all each week. The schedule is not set in stone, as attendance varies week by week, but it helped some of the shyer kids get the chance to participate.

I have also been pushing to showcase the great things the kids have been making and doing. I have made an effort to hang more of the children's art projects up in the gathering area and social lounge, as well as bring the children to the front of the congregation more, such as the sign language prayer for Disability Awareness Day.

Professional Development

Upon starting the role, I received training on the St. Aidan's system from both Louise and Anne to help me become acquainted with the resources available to me within the church. In June, I attended the Way2Go conference (organised and hosted by Sunz) and attended workshops focusing on intergenerational worship, creating big impacts in small groups, and creation care. I was unable to renew my first aid training due to scheduling issues with my university courses and then lockdown, but I am aiming to complete it over the summer.

I have since joined the Children and Family Ministry cluster meetings hosted by the Auckland Diocese. This has been a great way of meeting and connecting with other Children Ministers in the local area and sharing thoughts and ideas on the ministry.

Going forward, I am signed up to attend the Boundaries course that has been rescheduled to December. As mentioned earlier, I am also planning to take a first aid training course this summer (lockdown permitting).