

Mannequins and Magic!

It has been so good to get back into schools in person this year! I have had a great time presenting "Walk Through The Bible" at Abercarn Primary. It was quite challenging at first, having to wear a mask and not being able to dress the children up and have them act out parts of the stories as I usually do. I had to come up with some more creative ways to involve the children - like quizzes and questions and various groups reading sketch parts from the screen. The Lord even provided me with some "glamorous assistants",



since every class had been given a shop mannequin, whom I was allowed to dress up! It was so much fun, and I really felt God smile as His word was proclaimed in spite of all the challenges! I earnestly pray that this seed will bring forth good fruit in its time.

It has also been my privilege to present a weekly assembly at Ty Isaf Infant School in Risca this year,

supported by Chris Powell, Ruth Speed and Vera Davies. We have had an amazing welcome by the staff; we feel truly valued there. At first, we just had one class at a time in the hall due to Covid restrictions but, during the last month or so, we have been able to have the whole school again. The children are so receptive: they behave, join in, sing with me and answer questions. I am not sure they always grasp the detail, though. When asked, "What did Jesus turn the water into at the wedding?", one child answered "Coke" and another said "Food Colouring" (I think this one had sussed out my magic trick). Again, may God bless and water this seed.

Maybe the best thing about this work is to be recognised by the children when I am walking my dog or sitting in Risca Park. "It's Auntie Lou!" or "The Bible Lady," they shout. And then I get introduced to various parents, grandparents and aunties. This is a great opportunity to share my faith with grownups - much more scary, but it has helped me grow, to "nail my colours to the mast" and be proud to serve the Lord in my community.

(Louise Bolton)

Dates for your diary:

Prayer meeting:

First Thursday of each month at Bethesda (or zoom) at 7pm.

2022 Thanksgiving Service:

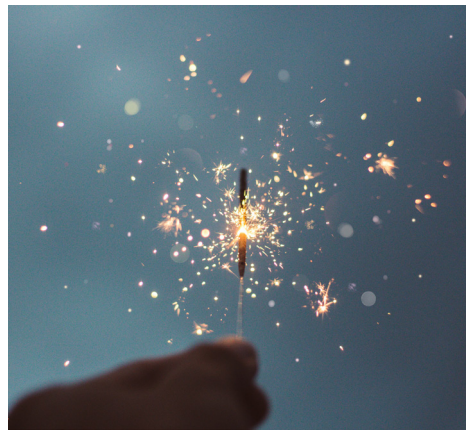
Monday Oct 17th at 7.30pm, Bethesda Rogerstone.

Donations by cheque to:

91 Ruskin Avenue, Rogerstone, Newport NP10 OBD

ICE Wales is very grateful for all the prayer and financial support it receives from individuals, churches and other organisations. Thank you for your "partnership in the Gospel" over many years. Please pray with us that the Lord will continue to "enlarge our territory."

1 Chronicles 4 v10



ICE WALES

Initiatives in Christian Education

SERVING SCHOOLS AND CHURCHES THROUGHOUT WALES

Welcome to the 2022 ICE Wales Newsletter. This is the first full edition since Jan 2020, just before the pandemic started. This was, of course, a great challenge for us as the schools were immediately closed. What were we to do? Was it the end of ICE Wales and our witness to children in school?

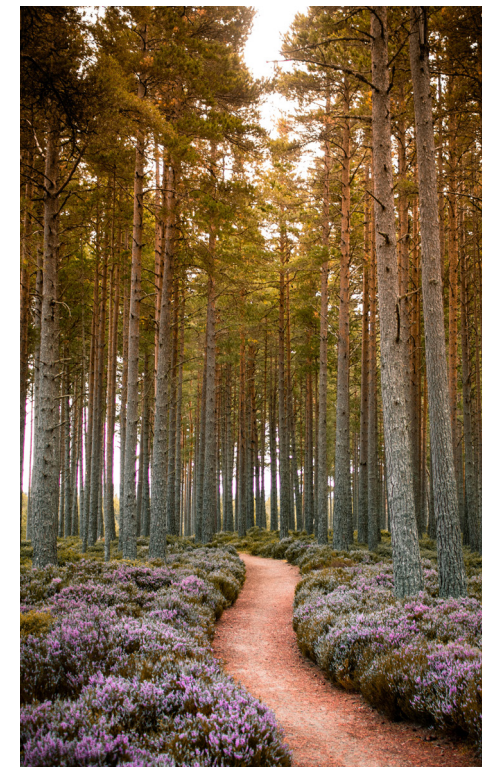


Schools were immediately closed

We felt that was not the case. God had already gone before us and provided us with a way through the pandemic of which we were not aware at the time. Our then fairly new schools' worker Laura Toomer had the technical ability to produce videos. We set up a YouTube channel and assembly videos were sent out fortnightly to over forty schools. From comments we received from teachers via email and the grateful messages when the videos were posted to the schools we can say that this work was a great success. It kept contact with all the schools that had been receiving ICE workers for many years and also brought new ones on board. I believe God's leading to appoint Laura in 2019 was paramount to the success of this ministry. Of course she was helped by many of us who gamely developed acting skills we didn't know we had!!!

us sometimes repeating the same one, four times in each school! A new initiative that has proved very popular this year has been "Bible Storytime", aimed at KS1 children (infants). It involves reading them a Bible story and recalling key moments using props and storybags. In just 45 mins three classes can be visited. ICE supplies the books so, if anyone is interested in committing to a 3 - 5 week programme in a school, please do let me know.

So the outreach work in schools goes on. We have employed Helen Jones for one day a week to meet the demand for visits that is increasing, as schools readjust to the new normal. It is proving increasingly difficult for us to find new volunteers, given that people now have to work longer and, as a result, ICE is looking to increase its financial support to enable us in the future to employ more workers



God had already gone before us and provided us with a way



If you feel that you can make a monthly regular donation, we would be very grateful, and it will greatly assist us in planning for our future ministry.

Christine Thomas

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Easter Visits

The Lord has blessed us in Tredegar with being able to visit our local school since October 2021. We have been able to see the children on a weekly basis, giving assembly-like talks to four classes at a time. The junior children have challenged us on times with their questions about the existence of God and His character. We had a lovely time at Easter: at the request of the school, ninety children came down to Bethel Chapel to hear the Easter message and were given a short presentation of the Resurrection, with some of the chapel members taking part. Cwm Primary has also been visited a few times this term, and we hope to see more of them in September when the new headteacher starts. Please pray for more work to be done in the valleys.

(Ann Ford, Gaynor and Joan, Tredegar)

“Open the Book” and the “Emotional Rollercoaster”

It's always a joy to hear how excited the children are when they hear we are there for an Open the Book Assembly! The engaging way OTB helps children explore God's Word and have a few moments to reflect on His truth and love is what makes it such an effective resource. Perhaps the highlight, (certainly by retweets), was arranging for HM The Queen to visit our schools for the Jubilee. She introduced Open the Book, of which she is a patron, and her most quoted Bible story, the Good Samaritan:

We are glad to be back with in-person assemblies in Monmouth as before the pandemic. We have also begun returning to lunch and after-school clubs in some schools. One of the resources that has kept our contact with schools even during lockdown is the Emotional Rollercoaster

course, produced by 'Transforming Lives for Good'. It is designed to help children with their emotional wellbeing, an important theme for children today. It is not a Bible club but does draw on Biblical ideas and is based around Psalm 23. It was great to hear children say how they think of this Psalm when they have a quiet or anxious moment, and use some of the exercises when their emotions feel like they are taking over. This has been a good way to serve the schools until it was possible to open up again to our regular clubs. My prayer is that *“those with ears to hear, will hear.”*

(Jonathan Greaves, Monmouth)

RE Workshops

One of my favourite stories from the Bible is Jesus's parable of the Lost Son. We designed an 'RE Workshop' based on the story and delivered it to some year 4 and 5 groups this year. They loved the story too and had some interesting opinions to share with me: the younger son, they thought, had been impatient, greedy and unwise;



the Father was loving, but “silly” to have given out the money in the first place; the Father was right to forgive the Son and welcome him home, but he shouldn't have thrown a party – the prodigal son should have been made to do chores, have a time-out, and be given a punishment for his actions! It was a privilege to be able to explore with the children how the character of the Father in this story gives us a picture of God's extravagant love and mercy. Please pray that this story and the image of the open-armed Father will remain with them as they grow and go through life.

“Build the Bible” Lego Clubs

This summer, we have had a total of 28 children participating in our two after-school Bible Lego clubs in the Wye valley: 25 boys and 3 girls! They have been given the opportunity to take on a weekly Lego challenge, show and tell their models, hear a story about Jesus and build something from the Bible.



We have made a house with a hole in the roof; a boat with a tired man asleep on a cushion; two houses with different foundations; and a tree with a tiny man in the branches – can you guess the stories?

The children have been curious about Jesus and asked some interesting questions. I'm grateful to the volunteers who with much grace gave their time and energy to support the clubs, tackle the questions, and pray for the children. I became used to seeing one local village vicar on his hands and knees under classroom tables, scouring the floor for tiny pieces of Lego left behind each week: may we all take great joy in the opportunities we have to serve the Lord and share his message with children in schools!

(Laura Toomer, Rural Schools)

“Bible Story-times” with the young ones.

My work with ICE has once again revealed what an awesome GOD we serve. Repeating stories over and over from the Bible might seem as if we should develop a “robotic numbness” to what we are sharing: but each time I tell a child or a class about God's great love and plan for each one of us, I am just in awe that God could love me and use me. During Storytime with year 1, I told them the 'Noah builds an Ark' story: one boy said, “I know this story!” “That's great,” I replied, “and every time we see a rainbow in the sky it can remind us of the story and how God doesn't break his promises.” Year 1 boy: “No miss, I know this story from my grandad

because I'm sure he helped Noah build the ark - he is *really* old”.

(Helen Jones, Newport)

Counties “Life Exhibition” Event

Bethesda Rogerstone hosted the Counties Life Exhibition at the end of June. We were able to renew contact with many local schools and the experience was very positive, with the children extremely enthusiastic about what they learnt about Jesus on their tablets. Approximately 560 children attended and went back to school with a copy of the 'Discover' book donated by the Gideons. This is a colourful publication with scripture passages and questions for the children to answer. The teachers were impressed with it and ICE hopes to become part of an annual distribution into schools, starting next July.

YouTube Assemblies

This year we have continued providing regular online assemblies via our ICE Wales YouTube channel. These have been well used in classrooms throughout the year, with most schools still not gathering altogether for whole-school hall assemblies. We celebrated Harvest, New Year, St David's Day and the Queen's Jubilee, amongst many other events throughout the year, with all video assemblies containing a Bible story, prayer, and a Christian message in a fun format. Thank you to everyone who has taken part in filming – a new and strange experience, but an unexpectedly fruitful ministry!

(Laura Toomer)



Thoughts of a new volunteer

First, how and why did I get involved? The 'how' is easy: I logged into a few of the monthly ICE Wales prayer meetings on Zoom and it would not be an exaggeration to say that I was inspired by the prayers, dedication and the expectation of the few people who gathered together regularly.

As for the 'why': since joining Bethesda in 2019, I have been seeking God's will in what I could do for his Kingdom work and, looking at the age of most people involved in ICE Wales, I could not use the excuse that I was too old for children's work.

I have been really blessed by going into schools, notably with Helen, over the last four months and I have really enjoyed the after-school clubs. Finally, hearing monthly how God has blessed the work and how prayers have been answered, particularly but not solely, with the re-commencement of the work in Merthyr with four dedicated volunteers who have served in the local area for very many years, has given me a new commitment for schools work.

Dave Pinnell, Rogerstone



Queen visits for Open the Book



“Build the Bible” Lego Clubs



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