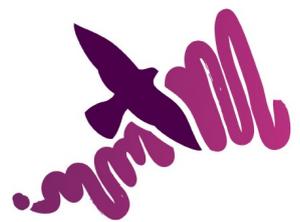




# Reaching out to families with primary age children

**Parish Resources:  
Children & Young People**



**DIOCESE OF TRURO**

DISCOVERING GOD'S KINGDOM  
GROWING THE CHURCH

# Where to start

**It's always best to start by thinking about why you want to do something and what you want to achieve.**

Then look at what is available locally. Where are the gaps in provision?



- Talk to children/carers/parents at the local school to find out what their needs are and when would be the best time to run a group for the children? Would the adults like to be involved?
- Decide on a suitable warm safe venue with toilets, do a risk assessment.
- Decide who is available to help/run/co-ordinate/staff the session? Discover the gifts they can bring to the sessions. Who needs a DBS check?
- Are there any training needs? There is training available 'Core skills for Children's Workers' and 'Core skills for Family Ministry' as well as bespoke training.
- Decide what resources you need to buy and explore sources of funding.
- Decide on frequency of provision, costs, charging, hospitality, activities.
- Think about what opportunities you are providing for parents and carers to be involved in the faith development of their children. Keep them in touch with what you are doing and send activities home for the whole family to explore.
- Think about communication - how are you going to keep in touch with those attending? Email, Facebook, Twitter, website page - ask what they prefer.
- Build on relationships formed through baptism and links with church/school activities.
- Use Christingle/Crib and other family friendly services to maintain contact.

# Planning to work with families

**Be Intentional.** Make yourself a faith based group from the start.

**Be Inclusive.** Involve the whole family wherever possible.

**Be Prepared.** Send activities & ideas that can be explored by the family at home after each session.

**Be Flexible.** If one family asks about Baptism explore the concept with the whole group. Could the baptism take place within Messy Church, Toddler Group?

**Think all week.** We are encouraged to 'Grow the Church' but that doesn't mean just Sundays. In today's society, Sundays are not always the best time for families.

**Think Motivation.** Is the intention/ expectation to see families in church on Sunday or can their group be their church?

**Think Church.** If you are expecting families to join you in church on Sunday, what are you offering? What needs to change? How different is it from their group experience?

**Think Social.** Arrange suitable opportunities for all the church groups to come together socially or in worship more than once a year!



# Useful Resources

- There is a page of links to useful websites when working with primary age children and their families on the Diocesan website at [www.trurodiocese.org.uk](http://www.trurodiocese.org.uk)
- There are many organisations that provide session material to engage specifically with this age group—Scripture Union Light, Urban Saints, Barnabas in Churches (BRF), TnT ministries—links to their websites can be made through the page above.
- Consider ‘family together’ activities such as Messy Church, Café Church or activity led ‘church’.

An idea:

Organise a morning or day with lots of activities to try in your church ie playing the organ, bell ringing, investigating or tidying the churchyard, singing in the choir, exploring the history of the church, being part of the Open the Book team, art activities, prayer stations, an all age treasure hunt, include an opportunity to talk/find out how the community would like to engage with the church, have a keeping in touch board, provide hospitality, begin and end with informal worship relating the to activities. Send invitations to all the baptism families and through the local school. Make it a real community occasion but advertise all the current activities that you do ie Foodbank, Bible study groups, Open the Book and so on. Evaluate the day and build your strategy on the responses you receive.

Some session resources are available on loan from Church House or Archdeacon’s House at Bodmin.

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## CONTACT US

Shelley Porter, Discipleship Project Officer,  
Children and Families and Lay ministry  
T: 01208 892811 E: [shelley.porter@truro.anglican.org](mailto:shelley.porter@truro.anglican.org)

Rebecca Evans, Parish Support Advisor  
(funding advice)  
T: 01872 360039 E: [Rebecca.evans@truro.anglican.org](mailto:Rebecca.evans@truro.anglican.org)

Sarah Acraman, Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor  
T: 01872 274351 E: [sarah.acraman@truro.anglican.org](mailto:sarah.acraman@truro.anglican.org)



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