



15 years ago the American TV series, 'The X Files' became popular with its slogan, 'The Truth is out there'. So what is truth?

In our Post Modern, Post Christian world, in the SE of England at the front end of the second decade of this millennium, there is a marked change in the way we think and approach issues. This is prominent in education and is starting to be evidenced more in churches. At one time information in the form of facts & figures plus names & places would have been taught as truth. From those truths people would have been encouraged to make sense of their lives and experience. Today this has changed. Now the emphasis is on discovery & questions plus reflection & pondering. Truth is something to be found rather than imparted. Truth has ceased to be an absolute and has become subjective and relative. What is true for you isn't necessarily true for me. So in History we are less likely to be taught the dates of battles and more likely to consider what the social changes were that brought about conflicts. In Science we are less likely to be taught the 4 bases of DNA and more likely to consider the ethical issues about genetically modified crops. When it comes to engaging with the truths of faith, today's churches need to be less focused on teaching the facts of the stories in the Bible and more focused on allowing and encouraging questions about what difference the story makes to them. There needs to be more time and space to allow children to discover things for themselves rather than being told what they should feel or know from a particular story or parable. Belief comes, not from a well constructed argument, but in an honest simple search for what is real and true for them. This process of questioning and discovery can be very messy and less structured with fewer absolutes. Eventually children who are allowed the space to consider the claims of Christianity may discover a truth that isn't in the facts of the text but in a person - Jesus, their friend. At FACT we are gearing up for another year of working with children in schools and churches offering them opportunities to try and make sense of the big questions in life: Who am I? Where am I going? Is there more to life than what I know? Also trying to help them find truth in their own situations of: financially stressful home environments; broken relationships; consumerism; materialism; ambition of fame and the immense pressure of personal image. What, or perhaps who, will be true for them?

September	
10th	Ashford Congregational Church fun day
12th	St Annes RC Year 3 RE Day
12th	FACT prayer group 7.30pm
18th	Walton Baptist Church service and seminar
19th	Ashford Park infant and junior assemblies
19th	Cardinal Newman RC infant and junior assemblies
20th	St Anns Heath junior assembly
20th	Buckland infant and junior assemblies
20th	Grange infants assembly
21st	Meath assembly
21st	Thorpe CE infant assembly
21st	Ashford CE infant and junior assemblies
21st	Meet with Ven. Stefan Welch, Archdeacon of Middlesex
22nd	Stanwell Fields infant and junior assemblies
22nd	St Annes RC infant and junior assemblies
22nd	St Paul's CE infant and junior assemblies
23rd	The Hythe infant and junior assemblies
23rd	Town Farm infant and junior assemblies
26th	Thorpe Lea infant and junior assemblies
27th	Grovelands infant assembly
27th	Staines Prep infant and junior assemblies
27th	Fordway assembly
27th	Christ church CE infant assembly
28th	Trumps Green infant assembly
28th	St Lawrence CE infant and junior assemblies
29th	Littleton CE infant assembly
29th	Gerrards Cross CE infant and junior assemblies
October	
4th	St Ignatius RC infant assembly
4th	Christchurch, Staines, toddler group
5th	Riverbridge Primary assemblies
6th	Echelford infant and junior assemblies
7th	Riverbridge Primary assemblies
10th	Grange infants Planning meeting Year 2
14th	Grange infants Year 2 RE day
15th	St Mary's Church Hampton, training
17th	FACT trustees meeting

Stop Press

We are hoping to run a Time to Wonder week, based at a church in Egham, later in the Autumn and we have two tentative enquiries to run these weeks in local schools in the coming year.

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Faith Awareness in Children Trust

What makes me special?

This was a question that all Town Farm Key Stage 2 pupils had the opportunity to explore during a recent Time to Wonder week.

The two questions we posed were: **"I wonder how important I am?"** **"I wonder how special I am?"** Pupils then participated in a range of activities designed to get them thinking and questioning until they realised the answer to both questions.

They visited three areas called: The Rock tent; The Good Fruit tent and The Prayer tent. In each area, activities had been planned to give the children time to wonder about themselves and to gain insight. Interwoven through each activity were opportunities to think and wonder, from a Christian perspective, about their uniqueness to God.

Circle time revealed some interesting comments from the children:



I have learnt that it is not the way you look on the outside it is about who you are on the inside;

I have learnt that when we opened the rocks there was shiny stuff and when I open me there is shiny stuff in me too;

I liked the prayer tent because when you opened the mirror box it was me inside and I was told I was unique;

I learnt that I should open up and should think more about what I am like on the inside not what I am like on the outside.



By the end of the week we had received numerous positive comments from the teaching staff about what they too had experienced during the week. We even had a request to write 'Time to Wonder' activities for Key Stage 1. The team were encouraged by the whole experience and thoroughly enjoyed their time at Town Farm. We thank staff and pupils for making us feel so welcome.

RE days



- All the RE days had positive responses from pupils and staff and below are some pupils evaluations.
- The picture below shows Y4 at Stanwell Fields having a dough reflection finding out "Why should we care for God's world?"

The Summer Term sees the end of another great year of working with schools. We have delivered over 220 assemblies and 59 RE days. We have already booked up 27 schools to work with in the next academic year and others have still to confirm their desire to work alongside FACT once again. The August break allows time for holidays and lots of preparation for the new term as well as catching up on all the things that never quite got done during the busy times of being out there working with children and staff.

We are delighted to be working with Riverbridge Primary which is the new name for the 3 amalgamated schools of Knowle Park, Shortwood and Kingscroft.

Since the last newsletter Avril and Simon have led 20 RE days for a range of year groups. Rather than report on each one, we include some photos, comments and work from the pupils.

- This acrostic poem was written by a Y5 pupil at Thorpe Lea, participating in a day on: Why did Jesus use parables and perform miracles?
- The picture shows Avril leading Y1 at Stepgates as they go on a sheep hunt to hear the story of the Lost Sheep.



What new things did you learn?
really good for helping you with problems working together is

What have you learnt today that will make a difference to the way you act?
if you respect others they will respect you

What have you learnt today that will help you as you move on to a new school?
Sometimes you have to sacrifice things you like to help your class mates



Last half term's assembly



What is 7 x 70?

That was the question that began the final assembly of the year.

Many of the children quickly put their hands up to answer but the question was posed to Declan the dog and Dustbin Dan, Avril and Simon's puppets who had both been boasting about their maths prowess. The children thoroughly enjoyed watching as the puppets tried to work out the answer.

The reason for the question was to introduce the story of 'The Unforgiving Servant' Jesus, when asked by Peter whether he should forgive someone 7 times, answered no, not 7 times but 70 x 7 times. In other words we should always have a forgiving heart.

The children then heard the story of the Unforgiving Servant told by Avril and Simon using props: a crown to represent the king; a chef's hat to represent the unforgiving servant and a tea towel to represent the other servant.

The children listened intently to the story as the strong, powerful King forgave the chef the millions of pounds he owed him. The chef could not believe it. The reaction of the children was audible when the chef could not then find it in his heart to forgive the other servant just a few pounds, instead having him thrown into jail. During the drama Avril and Simon emphasised the emotions of the characters. The king feeling strong and good about himself when he managed to forgive was able to move on with his life. While the chef was left feeling horrid inside and did not understand why, as he had got his revenge. The message was then emphasised that to forgive someone does not make you weak and it does not mean you agree with the wrong the person has done. However, to forgive is a strength, because you no longer feel trapped by feelings of anger and revenge. The children were then asked whether next time someone upset them in the playground, they would choose to be like the king or the chef.

It has been striking how many members of staff have commented on the challenge of the message to them.

Rain doesn't stop play!



The day of our office opening dawned cloudy and later rain fell constantly. This meant a quick change of plan to allow the opening ceremony to take place indoors.

We knew it would be crowded but were amazed at the number of supporters who turned up to participate in the event. A short time of dedication was led by Fr. Rod Cosh, Vicar of Staines Parish and Ven. Stefan Welch, Archdeacon of Middlesex.

Rod provoked much laughter with his tale of a 'tearful and homeless puppet man' who was given a home by a 'very wicked vicar who for once had compassion.'

Stefan Welch's blessing gave us a moment of reflection on the work and purpose of FACT and was followed by prayers led by Rev. David Priddy, Pastor of Ashford Common Baptist Church and Rev. Keith Wilson, Pastor of Ashford Congregational Church. Over 50 guests enjoyed Pimms or tea and coffee, served with cup cakes and fruit kebabs.



The important thing is not to stop questioning - Einstein