

## Diary:



## Faith Awareness in Children Trust



On visiting schools this half term, Simon has received queries about Becky's wedding on the 28th October.

Sadly he was stereotypical as a man with his answer to the question about the dress being "it was white". This photograph is included to give more idea of how gorgeous Becky looked and how happy she is.

Simon, Avril and their spouses travelled to the Isle of Man to attend the wedding and were thrilled to be present at such a happy event.

We wish the new Mr and Mrs Dalglish, Becky and Ben, a long and happy marriage.

Simon, like most of the other men attending were keen to lay claim to the cup cake at the top of the tier. No such luck!

The FACT team would like to thank you for your support during this year and wish you a Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year 2012

### December

- 1st Fordway planning meeting
- 5th Cardinal Newman Year 6 RE day
- 5th Hythe Year 1 + 2 planning meeting
- 6th Fordway RE day
- 9th Hythe Y1+2 RE day
- 8th St Peter's Hospital Schoolroom Christmas workshop
- 9th Playtime Nursery Egham - Christmas story
- 10th Strictly Dads @ The Lawns
- 12th The Lawns Nursery - Christmas story
- 16th Playbox Nativity presentation
- 20th Christchurch Toddlers
- 21st Buckland Children's Centre Christmas presentation

### January

- 4th Alexandra Infant School Inset Puppet training
- 9th St. Annes Year 1 RE day
- 9th Ashford Park infant and junior assemblies
- 10th Meath assembly
- 10th Grange infant assembly
- 11th Riverbridge infant assembly
- 11th Thorpe CE infant assembly
- 12th Littleton CE infant assembly
- 12th Gerrards Cross infant and junior assemblies
- 12th St Paul's infant and junior assemblies
- 13th Hythe infant and junior assemblies
- 13th Town Farm infant and junior assemblies
- 16th Thorpe Lea infant and junior assemblies
- 16th Cardinal Newman infant and junior assemblies
- 16th FACT trustees meeting
- 17th Buckland infant and junior assemblies
- 17th Staines Prep infant and junior assemblies
- 17th Christchurch CE infant assembly
- 18th Ashford CE infant and junior assemblies
- 19th Echelford infant and junior assemblies
- 19th St Lawrence CE infant and junior assemblies
- 20th Trumps Green infant assembly
- 20th Oakfield assembly
- 23rd Grovelands infant assembly
- 24th Stanwell Fields infant and junior assemblies
- 25th Riverbridge infant assembly
- 26th St. Ignatius RC infant assembly
- 26th St Annes RC infant and junior assembly
- 26th Ashford CE Year R planning meeting
- 30th Trumps Green planning meeting

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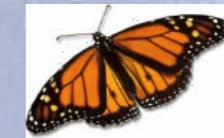
# The countdown has begun!

As you read this we will be near the beginning of Advent which started on Sunday 27th November. For many today it is no more than a count down to the 25th December; that great celebration of turkey, presents, drinking, being nice to distant relatives and fear of the credit card bill that will arrive in January. **Advent is much more than a count down.** It's a time to deliberately stop and wait. By waiting I don't mean as if in a queue with your soul desire being to get to the front as quickly as possible, **but a time to cease, to pause, to be in the moment. For Christians part of their faith is about the imminence of God - God here and now.**

Sadly current trends mean that for many Christians, that can be lost as we look back to the God who was with us in the past and look forward to the God who will be with us in the future and we fail to engage with the God of now. The trustees, staff and volunteers took time to stop and wait at the outset of Advent. They spent Saturday 26th November at Englefield Green Village Centre using the excellent facilities they provide. The rooms and refreshments, including lunch, allowed 14 of us space to be with God. There were times of silence and reflection accompanied with times of chatting, laughing, making Advent crafts and walking in The Great Park at Windsor.

Deliberately stopping to converse with God is always rewarding and it left everyone saying they wish they did this more often but they recognised that the demands of everyday life often suffocated those good intentions. I'm content to wait for Christmas. Yes there is much I want and need to do to get ready for all the festivities but I am happy to be in the here and now without wishing to rush ahead.

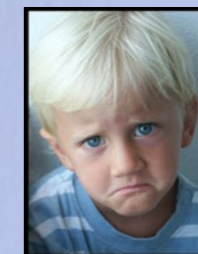
**Advent is the season in which we learn to enjoy the process of waiting.**



Have you ever watched kids  
On a merry-go-round?  
Or listened to the rain  
Slapping on the ground?

Ever followed a butterfly's erratic flight?  
Or gazed at the sun into the fading night?  
You better slow down. Don't dance so fast.  
Time is short. The music won't last.

Do you run through each day  
On the fly?  
When you ask "How are you?"  
Do you hear the reply?  
When the day is done  
Do you lie in your bed  
With the next hundred chores  
Running through your head?  
You'd better slow down. Don't dance so fast.  
Time is short. The music won't last.



Ever told your child,  
We'll do it tomorrow?  
And in your haste,  
Not see his sorrow?  
Ever lost touch,  
Let a good friendship die  
Cause you never had time  
To call and say "Hi"?

You'd better slow down. Don't dance so fast.  
Time is short. The music won't last.

When you run so fast to get somewhere  
You miss half the fun of getting there.  
When you worry and hurry through your day,  
It is like an unopened gift...  
Thrown away.  
Life is not a race.  
Do take it slower  
Hear the music  
Before the song is over.



Slow Dance by Anon

A newsletter to keep supporters informed, inspired & involved.  
Issue number 91 December 2011

FACT enabling children to reflect on the Christian Gospel

## RE Days

This half term, both Avril and Simon have been leading a number of RE days and these will be completed on the 9th December.

The focus for the majority of them has been Christmas and its importance to Christians.

One teacher wrote about the day:

**"It certainly helped the reinforcement of what Christmas is really about!"**

We continue to use a range of activities, to explore RE topics, that allow pupils time to reflect on what it means to them.

This year the new John Lewis advertisement has helped reinforce the message that, **"It is better to give than to receive"** and was used to aid pupil reflection at Gerrards Cross. We continually review our RE days and write new elements to keep them fresh and contemporary.

Below are some children's comments following an RE Day on, 'Why do we give presents at Christmas?'

What do you think is the most important thing you have learnt?

That giving presents is just as important as getting presents.

We considered that the angels brought Good News and wondered how we might be an angel to people this Christmas.

What do you think is the most important thing you have learnt?

The most most important thing I learnt today was people can be angels because you don't need wings all you need is to be kind.

I think we may have been slightly off message with this child or they are very concerned about what they may get this Christmas!

What do you think is the most important thing you have learnt?

To be grateful for everything you get even though you don't like it.

## Time to Wonder



Avril lights the candle at the start of the session

St. John's Church in Egham hosted a week of **Time to Wonder** sessions, which were attended by pupils from St. Jude's CE Junior school and The Hythe Primary school.

Avril and Simon took turns at leading the days and were thrilled with being able to use the church. They were supported by a dedicated, trained band of volunteers who were both inspiring to the children and inspired by what they experienced with the children. The gazebos for each reflective time were constructed under the gallery, which left a large open space for the sessions where all groups meet together. The overall atmosphere was one of calm and reflection with pupils completely focussed on the different activities.

Avril and Simon were overwhelmed with children telling them that they had learnt they were special and important. One child put it simply:

**"Thank you for today, I have learnt lots."**

We look forward to being able to continue the partnership with St. John's and hope to hold more



Time to Wonder weeks in the future.

**Any other churches interested in hosting?**

## This half term's assembly

Our assembly for this half term looks at how we can handle negative words said about us. How easy it is to respond to a child who has been taunted with unkind words by saying 'sticks and stones may break my bones but words can never hurt me.' Is this saying really helpful? Does it give the whole picture? Is there anyone who has not been hurt by words? We cannot give a flippant answer to a child who is hurting because of the things said about them or to them. The Bible does not invalidate people's feelings neither does it pretend that life will always be kind. Instead it offers us tools to protect ourselves from that unkindness. Philippians 4:8 tells us:

**Finally, my friends, keep your minds on whatever is true, pure, right, holy, friendly, and proper. Don't ever stop thinking about what is truly worthwhile and worthy of praise."**

Our minds easily turn to negative words said in jealousy, anger or frustration rather than focusing on the positive words said in love. With this verse the Bible empowers us to fight against the destruction that unkind words can bring.

The song used in the assembly is a new one to our collection entitled 'Don't go listening to lies' by Mark and Helen Johnson. The lyrics clearly make the point that we have the choice whether to believe unkind words or 'think of healthy things instead.'

No need to shout, no need to cry,  
Know the truth about yourself  
And hold your head up high.  
You can be free, free from the lies.  
What you choose to believe  
You decide!



Perhaps the saying should be: 'Sticks and stones may break my bones but **I've decided** that words will never hurt me!'

## Simon out and about



Story time at Caterpillar Nursery

Simon has enjoyed a very diverse role this half term. He has relished visiting a number of nurseries and pre-schools for multi-sensory Bible story sessions and is looking forward to his visits to a number of other pre-school settings to tell the Christmas story.



Children at St Simon's

His church work has included further visits to Staines Congregational Church to assist with changes to their Sunday morning children's sessions and leading a Family Service on 'Stir Up Sunday'. He also went to St. Simon's church in Shepherd's Bush where he was privileged to lead a children's session at the end of their Mission week. More than 40 children engaged with a fast moving program that helped them think about Jesus as their friend.

Let's approach Christmas with an expectant hush, rather than a last-minute rush. Anon.