

## Puppet Training

Simon started the New Year with a morning of Inset at Alexandra Infant and Nursery School, Hounslow. The 32 members of staff enjoyed the challenge and fun of learning how to use puppets effectively with children in many different environments at school. The feedback was very favourable with comments including:

**Learnt more about the practical aspects of puppetry.**

**More confident to try and use puppets when teaching.**

**How you use puppets positively in group work.**

When asked to sum up how they felt at the end of the training the following words were given:

**Content, Positive, More confident, Enthusiastic, Gaining awareness, Nervous, Optimistic, Good, Enlightened, Happy, Informative, Inspired, Exhausted, Hopeful.**

If this Inset or other Inset sessions on RE related topics is of interest to you do get in touch to find out more.

## Diary

	<b>February</b>
1st	Town Farm Year 3 RE day
1st	St Ann's Heath Year 4 planning meeting
2nd	Ashford CE Year R RE day
2nd	Echelford Year 2 planning meeting
3rd	Grovelands Year 1 RE day
4th	Horsham Methodist Training
6th	Trumps Green RE day
7th	Riverbridge Year 2 planning meeting
8th	St Ann's Heath Year 4 RE day
9th	Echelford Year 2 RE day
9th	Gerrards Cross Year 6 planning meeting
22nd	Riverbridge Year 2 RE day
22nd	Gerrards Cross Year 6 RE day
23rd	Littleton CE infant assembly
23rd	St Paul's CE infant and junior assemblies
24th	Trumps Green infant assembly
27th	Thorpe Lea infant and junior assemblies
28th	Buckland infant and junior assemblies
28th	Staines Prep infant and junior assemblies
28th	Fordway assembly
28th	Christchurch CE infant assembly
29th	Ashford CE infant and junior assemblies
29th	Riverbridge Junior assembly
29th	Thorpe CE infant assembly

	<b>March</b>
1st	Gerrards Cross infant and junior assemblies
1st	Echelford infant and junior assemblies
2nd	Town Farm infant and junior assemblies
5th	Ashford Park infant and junior assemblies
5th	Grange Year 1 planning meeting
6th	St Ann's Heath junior assembly
6th	St Ann's Heath Year 3 planning meeting
6th	Meath assembly
6th	Grange infant assembly
7th	Riverbridge infant assemblies
7th	Caterpillar nursery
7th	Littleton planning meeting
8th	St Lawrence CE infant and junior assemblies
8th	Stanwell Fields infant and junior assemblies
9th	Grange Year 1 RE day
9th	Oakfield assembly
10th	Strictly Dads @ The Lawns
12th	Grovelands infant assembly
12th	Cardinal Newman RC infant and junior assemblies
12th	Ashford Park Year 3 planning meeting
13th	St. Ignatius RC infant assembly
14th	The Hythe infant and junior assemblies
14th	St Ann's Heath Year 3 RE day
14th	Thorpe planning meeting
15th	St. Annes RC infant and junior assemblies
15th	Staines Prep Year 5 planning meeting
15th	Fordway planning meeting
16th	Ashford Park Year 3 RE day
20th	Fordway RE day
20th	Meath RE morning
20th	Town Farm Year 1 planning meeting
20th	Ashford CE Year 3 planning meeting
21st	St Lawrence Years 3+4 RE day
21st	Thorpe CE infant RE day
22nd	Manorhead RE morning
22nd	Gerrards Cross Year 3 RE day
23rd	Littleton CE RE day
27th	Manorhead RE morning
27th	Oakfield Years 1+2 RE day
28th	Staines Prep Year 5 RE morning
28th	Town Farm Year 1 RE day
29th	Ashford CE Year 3 RE day

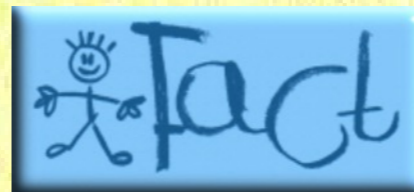
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## Faith Awareness in Children Trust

**A significant step forward**

We are very pleased to welcome Ruth Midcalf as our latest team member. Ruth joins us in a part-time capacity as Director of Operations. This is a dual role, initially for 6 months, predominantly to further develop the sound administrative platform of the charity and also to engage in front line children's work alongside Avril and Simon.

Ruth's appointment is a significant step forward for FACT and will relieve Simon of many of the administrative duties, enabling him to do more of what he's good at - working with children!

Ruth is a biologist by training; she studied for her first degree at Royal Holloway, University of London followed by a PhD at Bristol University. In 2001, Ruth returned to Royal Holloway as the Faculty of Science Outreach Officer, promoting science in schools and colleges through activities on the campus and in schools. She lectured in the School of Biological Sciences and was Deputy Dean of Science (Teaching), before leaving the College in 2008 to take up the position of Executive Secretary of the Linnean Society of London.

Ruth is married to Graham and they both worship at Staines Methodist Church where Ruth will be fully accredited as a Methodist Local Preacher in February. Eighteen months ago she sensed strongly that God was calling her to full-time ordained ministry and began to explore this calling. Following much prayerful discernment and discussion, Ruth took a step of faith in July, resigning from her full-time role to concentrate on compiling her portfolio, required as part of candidating for the ministry, and to seek a ministry-related role. She knew of the work of FACT, having attended a Church Training Day led by Simon and felt led to

contact him to ask about volunteering possibilities. She volunteered on "Time to Wonder" at St John's Church in Egham in November where she was inspired by the response of the children to this innovative programme. Ruth is now bringing her administrative experience, initially to tackle the key issue of fundraising.

Ruth comments **"It is a great privilege to join the FACT team and to serve God in this way. I look forward to meeting and corresponding with many of our supporters in the coming months and would value your prayers particularly as we seek financial support for this important work of ministry."**



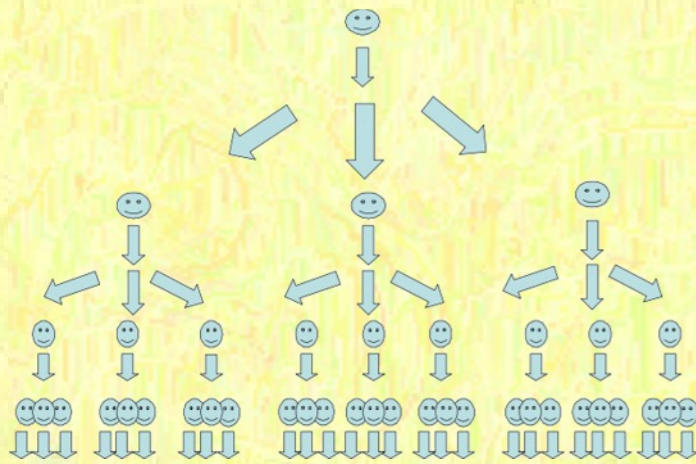
A newsletter to keep supporters informed, inspired & involved.

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**FACT enabling children to reflect on the Christian Gospel**

## Latest assembly



## Pay it forward

In the story of 'The Widow's Mite' Jesus speaks of the rich men giving their spare change and contrasts this against the poor widow who gives all she has, just a fraction of a penny. Jesus is so touched by the widow's attitude that he calls over his disciples and says 'I tell you that this poor widow put in more than all the others. For the others offered their gifts from what they had to spare of their riches but she, poor as she is, gave all she had.' Our assembly entitled 'Pay It Forward' looks at this attitude of choosing to give despite everything. It explores the idea that if we choose to give of ourselves then we can make a difference.

The assembly refers to a book by Catherine Ryan Hyde entitled 'Pay it forward.' In it a class are given an assignment to come up with an idea that will change the world and to put that idea into action. One young boy, Trevor, comes up with the concept of 'Pay it forward.' He explains; 'Just imagine for a moment someone does you a favour that really helps you, something really good. You want to pay that person back in some way but they tell you not to pay it back but instead to pay it forward to three more people who in turn each pay it forward to three more - on and on it goes, an outpouring of kindness and love.'

A simple yet brilliant idea. Whether it would work or not the author suggests, is up to us. Perhaps if we all took on the attitude of the widow in the Bible story, to give despite everything, it couldn't fail.

## Christmas feedback

Simon & 'Baby' tell the Christmas story to eager listeners at a Sure Start Children's Centre



Each year Christmas is done and dusted before it even arrives as at FACT we serve so many different groups of children before the holidays start. We have had one of our busiest and most varied years for Christmas presentations. They have included:



3 schools with Christmas RE Days; 1 Pupil Referral Unit that made Christingles; 2 Sure Start Children's Centres with parents attending; 2 toddlers groups, 2 nurseries and 1 hospital school room. Not a partridge in a pear tree to be seen anywhere! Over 450 children and 140 adults attended these times and for many this would be the only time they would hear the story but all were very grateful.

## Children's feedback from a recent RE Day

Do you feel the day helped you to understand God better?  
Yes now I think that I could say confidently that I now more about God.

Do you feel the day helped you to understand God better?  
Definatley!!!

What do you think is the most important thing you have learnt?  
That Jesus is here through scary things and happy things.

## Simon Says

**Great Expectations** was one of the few dramas that was screened over Christmas that I watched and enjoyed. A great tale with many twists and turns that fulfilled the drama's title seeing the different characters **great expectations**. By the new year advertising was in full flood with an expectancy of the grandeur of the Olympics and Queen's Jubilee. The SUN newspaper's TV advert had the strap line of; 'Let's make Britain Great in 2012'. This was typical of so many adverts hailing their great expectations of others in this year.

I found myself wondering what **great expectations** I have. I concluded that I had high expectations of myself, people, FACT and of God. On further examination of these expectations I could quickly see that many were unreasonable and unlikely. As I considered my expectations of God I quickly remembered that God's favour isn't given on merit, on the contrary God gives to all, freely, regardless of status or ability, which is just as well for me! What would I dare to believe that God could and might do for me, the ministry of FACT and others around me? This would involve an act of faith on my part and not certainty, a step into the unknown with possibilities that things may not go quite to plan or as originally thought. It would be easier to have low expectations and perhaps play it safe with a small vision of a small God.

**Godly expectations** are more than wish lists, desires or dreams. They are intentions or anticipations of what could be, might be or even should be. Things that are possible for God but beyond me.

So **my expectations** of God include:  
That He will be with me this year, in the highs and lows;  
That He will be found when I search for Him;  
That He will be in the ordinary and the extraordinary;  
That He will be in the noise and busyness of the day and in the silence and stillness of the moment;  
That He will be in the spoken questions of the child and in the mumbled enquiry of the adult.  
I won't be surprised to see God in others and their actions but thrilled and encouraged when **my expectations** are fulfilled, not because of me but in spite of me.

My **Great Expectations** will be to see God act and move where I am powerless to influence or change situations. To see Him mend what is broken, to add to what is deficient, to stand alongside those who have no one to stand with them. To quote the Queen in her speech to the Commonwealth this Christmas, '**God sent into the world a unique person - neither a philosopher nor a general, important though they are, but a Saviour.**' This year I have **Great Expectations** of God. Do you?

## Please give

FACT has ambitious plans over the next few years that will need your support. The employment of Ruth is a very exciting development that we hope will lead to further opportunities for ministry. We would hope to develop her role beyond its initial term but that will be finance-dependent. Having Ruth as part of the team is only the start and there are numerous projects waiting in the wings to be investigated, developed and delivered.

Please consider giving to FACT. If you have never given please read and complete as necessary the donation form that is included with this newsletter and return it to FACT. If you already give please consider increasing your giving. We are all acutely aware of the personal financial strains that households are under at this time but we would ask you to go an extra mile with us at this time.

We have set ourselves an ambitious target to raise a further £30,000 this year. If the many give a little this target will soon be reached.

Thank you in anticipation of your support.

**Ps.** Don't forget to Gift Aid your donation if you are able as this will increase the amount of money with no extra cost to yourself.



Real generosity to the future lies in giving all to the present. Albert Camus