



Brentwood Schools Christian Worker Trust Newsletter, Spring Term 2024

BSCWT, 49 Coxtie Green Road, Pilgrims Hatch, Brentwood, Essex, CM14 5PS
Phone: 01277 523522 E-mail: office@bscwt.org Website: www.bscwt.org

Registered Charity
No: 1172358

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"Serving school communities by providing Christian learning and support"



'Easter Eggs'

In the world of video games, films and computer software, an 'Easter egg' is a term used to describe a hidden message, image or feature, such as a 'hidden Mickey Mouse' in a Disney film. But, as we approach Easter this year, we are grateful that the Christian hope present in the Biblical Easter Story does not need to be a hidden message!

For as many years as I can remember, BSCWT has had some wonderful opportunities to engage with schools at Easter time, whether through our assemblies, lessons, projects, lunchtime clubs or prayer spaces. In the Christian calendar, Easter is the most important festival of the year and so we seek to make the most of these opportunities to help pupils explore the story and meaning of Jesus' death and resurrection.

Along with other aspects of our work, our Easter projects (see page 2) rely upon our wonderful team of volunteers and we are very much on the lookout for the right people to join our volunteer team (see www.bscwt.org/vacancies). Thank you so much for all your support for, and interest in, our work serving local schools.

Ian Kemble, Director of Schools Work

Pray for Schools Fortnight

Is from Sunday 5th May to Sunday 19th May. This is great time to be praying in our local churches for local schools, especially for everyone involved in exams this summer.



Primary Assemblies

Continuing our 'God's Greatest Rescue Plan' theme for the year, this term we are exploring the ways in which Jesus is The Rescuer, sent to save God's precious children. In the first half of the term, we posed the question of what Jesus rescues us from, giving an answer from the passage in Mark when Jesus declares that God's Rescuer will bring good news to the poor, sight to the blind and will set the captives free. Using the story of Blind Bartimaeus, we draw out how the things Jesus says, and the things that he does, restore people from different kinds of brokenness: Bartimaeus is given back his sight, but also a new purpose and chance in life. Our second assembly of the term focusses on the forgiveness and hope to be found in the Easter Story of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection.

Sue Evans, Lead Schools Worker

6 things we are doing with schools this term.....

- 18 'Love Easter' sessions
- 18 'Sadness to Joy' Easter lessons
- 68 school assemblies
- 15 'OT/NT Mini' lessons
- Weekly lunchtime clubs in 4 schools
- One-to-one pupil support in 8 schools

Being an Associate Worker

As an Associate Worker, I help support pupils at a primary school one afternoon a week, providing a listening ear and a safe place for children who need to share difficulties they're experiencing. We take time to play a game like Uno or Jenga to lift their hearts and give them a sense of achievement.



Prior to Christmas and Easter, I also help with BSCWT's projects with primary schools. These are an opportunity to explore aspects of Biblical accounts in a thoughtful and reflective way. They often take place in a church and provide an interesting, thought-provoking outing for children and school staff.

Although I am retired from teaching, I appreciate these opportunities to interact so positively with this generation of children. It keeps me feeling young and purposeful!

One of my weekly highlights is attending BSCWT's weekly Team Prayer Meetings. I meet up with local Christians and we pray about all aspects of the work in schools, asking for God's help and committing ourselves and the children into God's capable hands.

Anthea Lincoln, Associate Worker

Inside this issue:

	Page		Page
From Ian: 'Easter Eggs'	1	Lunchtime clubs & Secondary assemblies	3
Pray for Schools Fortnight	1	Pupil Support / Exam Stress	3
Primary assemblies / Being an Associate Worker	1	OT/NT Mini & It's Your Move	3
6 things we are doing with schools this term	1	View from the Chair (of Trustees)	4
Christmas Wonder & Darkness to Light	2	Finance Update	4
Love Easter & Sadness to Joy	2	How can you be involved?	4



Christmas Wonder

We had a wonderful time taking our *Christmas Wonder* sessions last term, meeting with more schools than ever. We ran a total of 17 sessions, meeting with over 500 pupils and linking with 10 different churches!

We had some great responses from both children and staff, who appreciated time to be still and reflect, to think about Christmas in a different way, and to consider their own ideas about it. My favourite conversations were with children thinking about which character in the Nativity they would like to be with: one child said 'I'd go with Herod as I would help him make good decisions' and another said that they would 'go with the poor shepherds and help them get richer'.

We are thankful for the increasing opportunities we have to engage with so many children and for the amazing team of hardworking volunteers who make each session possible.

Sue Evans, Lead Schools Worker



Sue and Frances with eager pupils at Christmas Wonder

Darkness to Light

Darkness to Light is an interactive retelling of the Christmas story for year 2 pupils. All children are included and encouraged to take part. Last term, with the help of our two resident puppets, Lucy Light and Frightened Freddie, and our beautiful 'knitivity' set, made by a team member, we led 15 lessons, with over 450 pupils, on the journey through the Nativity story. Pupils got the opportunity to consider what the 'dark' and 'light' aspects of the story were, and it was amazing to hear their insightful responses! It was lovely to hear one student apply the lesson to our pre-Christmas primary school assembly, declaring, "It's like everything has been turned from darkness into light!"

Holly Coleman, Schools Worker



Sadness to Joy

What do you get if you mix together...

Palm leaves, a donkey and a parade? (Palm Sunday); bread, wine and washing? (The Last Supper); boxes, a cross, Jesus and Barrabas? (Good Friday); an angel, a tombstone and some cloth? (Easter Sunday); a cross, stone and spring items? (An Easter garden).

Add these together with infant children and some puppets and you get **SADNESS to JOY!** 18 sessions have been booked for us to take the children on an interactive journey through the events of Easter Week. Pupils will be asked to identify the **SAD** and **JOYFUL** parts of the Christian Easter events.

Last year, a school said, "Thank you for bringing Easter to life for us and providing a new insight into the festival" - a perfect comment because Christians believe that Jesus brings new life to us all at Easter.

Frances Coe, Schools Worker



Feedback on our Christmas projects from school staff:

"Really good session. The children were all engaged throughout. Lovely activities that the children don't usually get to do."

"The events that you have run with our children have been amazing and we would like to thank you for all your hard work and effort that you put into these days. The children have loved taking part in them."



Love Easter

'Love Easter' is our Easter project for Year 6 pupils in Primary Schools. Pupils explore the Easter Story as a story of love and consider different aspects of love shown throughout the events of Palm Sunday through to the resurrection of Jesus. As we tell the story from Biblical accounts, we use the dramatic analogy of a smashed up Easter egg to show how Christians believe that God planned to fix our broken world by sending Jesus. The children then move around 5 different zones in small groups to reflect upon various ideas and questions relating to the story: **who we follow, remembrance, forgiveness, hope and faith**. Each zone involves an interactive task to help children engage with the theme and to help them ponder the relevance of Easter to their lives today. This term, we are excited to be leading this project with 18 primary schools throughout Brentwood.

Alison Carmichael, Schools Worker

Thank you...

After such successful Christmas project sessions, with great responses from schools and churches, I have recently been organising our Easter projects. I would like to say a huge 'thank you' to churches for your ongoing support and prayers for our work, and for generously allowing us to host our Year 6 project sessions (*Christmas Wonder* and *Love Easter*) in local church buildings. Being able to hold these sessions in local churches near to each school makes such an impact on the pupils attending.

Evie Bartlett, Project Administrator





Primary School Clubs

Larchwood *Bible Club* and Warley *Jaffa eXplore* are our two primary clubs running this term. The Larchwood club has an enthusiastic group of year 5 & 6 students. This term they have been

looking at the life of Jesus and his miracles. The group love sharing the reading of the stories from the Bible as well as the craft and games.

At Warley we have a mixture of children from years 1 to 6, who come at different times through their staggered lunchtime! There is a ten-minute slot in the middle when they are all present, and we play a game together and tell them the story for the day, and the rest of the time is spent on a craft linked to the theme of the day. This term we are looking at stories about Jesus, from his birth through to his teachings. Our clubs cannot run without help from our amazing volunteers. We are so thankful for those who help us on these club teams and we are looking out for new volunteers to help us start up more clubs!



Craft at a club

Sue Evans, Lead Schools Worker



Secondary School clubs

We currently run lunchtime clubs in two secondary schools. The *Christian Union* at Shenfield School has involved some incredibly deep discussions, all initiated by students, wishing to explore the differences between Abrahamic religions, whether good works alone can get you to heaven and whether you can truly live a good life without God.

At St Martin's School, *Wonderspace* is considering a variety of "I wonder..." questions as well as giving opportunity to the students to share their own "I wonder..." thoughts. We pray that all the children we encounter would continue to be curious about these spiritual things and that God would equip us to help them in this exploration.

Holly Coleman, Schools Worker

Exam Stress Assemblies

Recently, Holly and I led assemblies on 'Exam Stress' with Years 11 & 13 at Shenfield School. In the assembly we refer to the childhood book and rhyme, 'We're going on a bear hunt'...: 'We can't go over it, we can't go under it, oh no, we've got to go through it!' Using this to illustrate exams and challenges we'd rather avoid, we share how learning to cope with stress helps in many life situations. We share practical tips for home, school and self-help, as well as information about the physical feelings of stress. We conclude that Christians believe prayer is a powerful way to cope with stress and share encouraging Bible verses. We had a lovely comment from a staff member after our assembly who said 'I feel very peaceful; what a lovely start to the day!'. It is a real privilege to have the opportunity to speak from a Christian perspective to students facing exams.



Fiona Mason, Operations Manager & Schools Worker

Chaplaincy Pupil Support

At a recent training session, Chaplaincy was defined as: presence (I am with you), accompanying (I am walking alongside you); a gift from God (to people) and 'L-shaped' (loving, looking, listening). The story of the resurrected Jesus walking, speaking and listening to his disciples on the road to Emmaus illustrates this perfectly. Our Chaplains continue to provide pupil support in 8 local schools. These are precious times and safe places where young people can share their concerns and struggles in a busy school day, being listened to and given space to help navigate challenging situations. We are so grateful to be able to serve schools in this way.

Fiona Mason, Operations Manager & Schools Worker

Feedback from a parent via a school:
"My daughter really appreciates your support. The Chaplain is lovely and we are grateful for the support".

OT/ NT Mini

As an Associate Worker with BSCWT for over 20 years, I have the privilege of being involved with various activities. For the last 12 years, my main focus has been taking *OT and NT Mini* lessons with 9-11 year olds in primary schools. These programmes comprise five one-hour sessions each, developed by *Walk Through the Bible*, aiming to teach children the big picture of the Bible. The use of drama, storytelling, keywords and hand signs, accompanied by writing in a 'work map', is a winning formula for explaining to children in a fun, dynamic way the overarching storyline of the Bible.



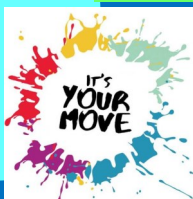
The challenge of keeping lessons fresh and true to the Bible is a positive one and demands that I constantly review the accounts of the original stories. It's a joy to work under the umbrella of BSCWT and I love bringing the Bible to life for children who, in many cases, have not heard the story of God's great rescue plan.

Barbara Clark, Associate Worker

Secondary School Assemblies

This term in local secondary schools, once again, we have the tremendous privilege of speaking in assemblies to many hundreds of pupils, inviting them to reflect on themes such as 'Curiosity', 'Success', 'Perseverance' and 'the Resurrection', as well as 'Exam Stress' (see Fiona's article above). Whilst it takes a great deal of hard work and creativity to prepare these assemblies, we are so grateful for the trust our local schools continue to place in us and for the positive feedback from pupils and school staff.

Ian Kemble, Director of Schools Work



It's Your Move is coming!

We are already planning for our *It's Your Move* project next term, designed to help Year 6 pupils as they prepare to make the transition to secondary school.



VIEW FROM THE CHAIR:

As I write this, we have just entered the New Year, a time when many look back over the past year and look forward to the next. Again, we have much to be grateful for. We have now been in our new premises for just over a year, have settled in well and are making good use of the improved facilities and space.

We are grateful that so many schools are continuing to welcome us and allow us to lead so many different events in their facilities. We want to thank all our supporters, both churches and individuals, who continue to support the Trust by volunteering to work with us as Associate Workers and by providing both financial and prayer support.

We have been privileged to receive in recent years significant legacies from supporters and a large gift from a local church. These gifts have allowed the Trust to almost double our staff team. These funds are slowly being used up as our regular expenditure exceeds our regular income. We will need, in the next few years, to consider where the Lord is leading the Trust and address the difference in our regular income and expenditure. Please continue to pray for the Trustees and Staff as we seek God's guidance on these challenges.

Mick Bastable, Chair of Trustees

Finance Update from the Treasurer & Trustees



The Trust, as always, is extremely grateful and thankful to all individuals, churches and charitable trusts for their continued generous support of BSCWT working with the young people in our local schools.

To the end of December, regular income was £46,160 and expenditure was £89,731 giving a deficit of £43,571. The deficit is covered by previous legacies and one-off larger donations. In order to continue the work of the Trust we are dependent on donations from both individuals and churches. If you are a UK tax payer, you may be able to make your donations go further by allowing us to claim gift aid. The charity would receive 25p for every £1 that you give.

If you are not currently a regular donor and would like more information on how to become one, or would like to make a one-off donation, or are a current donor and would like to allow us to claim gift aid on your donations, please do contact me on treasurer@bscwt.org.

Please continue to pray for the work of the Trust and for the children that we are reaching on a regular basis. Please also pray for new opportunities that allow us to communicate with young people in the local schools. *Claire Lim, Treasurer*



Some of the BSCWT team

How can you be involved?

If you are a Christian with a passion for schools, education, children and young people, and think you might be interested in being involved, please get in touch with us at the BSCWT office. Please join with us to:

GIVE: BSCWT depends on the continued generosity of people who support us financially. If you'd like to support the work financially, please:

- Set up a standing order or a donation via your online banking. Please contact us for a Gift Aid Declaration form, if applicable (or download one from www.bscwt.org/downloads).
- Contact us for a standing order mandate (or download one from www.bscwt.org/downloads).
- Donate online at www.stewardship.org.uk/partners/20028156 or send a cheque to our office.
- For on-line banking/standing orders, please contact the BSCWT office for our bank account details.

If you no longer wish to receive communications from BSCWT, please contact us via the office at office@bscwt.org to be removed from our circulations.

PRAY: We believe praying for our local schools, children and young people is really important. Please contact us to:

- Request our weekly prayer email, termly prayer calendar and newsletter by email or post. Contact us at office@bscwt.org or 01277 523522 or visit www.bit.ly/BSCWTconsent
- Start a prayer group for schools in your church or start/join a prayer group for a particular school.
- Just pray — on your own or with others!

VOLUNTEER: There are over 40 people who give their time and energy to volunteer with BSCWT:

- Our **Associate Workers** volunteer with us in schools, working with children and young people.
- Our **Trustees** oversee the running of the Trust.
- Our **Support Teams** assist the Staff and Trustees by doing important tasks in areas such as prayer, finance, human resources, policy-writing, events, monitoring and publicity.
- Our **Church Reps** help us to liaise with our local churches.
- We are also open to applications from people interested in doing an internship or work experience with us.



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