

Thinking about children

On your marks:

Although we will always need new ideas and inspiration for what we can 'do' with our children's groups the next time we meet, it is also really important every now and again that we stop and think not just about what we will use but **why** we will be using it! Unless we have thought through the methodology behind the materials we use and what it is we think we are trying to do in sharing the stories of the Bible and the love of God with our children, we may just completely miss the mark!

The following simple game should lead into some important discussions about all this and of course opens up the whole area of what we think about children's innate spirituality and what it is we can do to nurture the children into having a living faith of their own.

Why not set aside part of your team meeting time to this as a way of looking afresh at then 'why' behind what you do? After this, look again at some of the key verses about children in the Gospels and what Jesus has to say about his little ones.

Get set:

You will need to collect together the objects suggested below and place them on a large tray so you can play a Kim's game to kick off this exercise.

Have fun!

Go!

Place the following objects on a large tray and then give the group about a minute to look and try to remember as many as they can. Maybe they could work in twos for this game?

How many can they remember?

A knotted rope, a small toy,
an empty cup, a strip of negative film,
a tea light, a memo pad,
a blank sheet of paper, a 'cute' picture of a child,
Seeds, a item of jewellery,
an arrow, a ticket,
a door, a small weight/suitcase,
a piece of playdough, a bee,

a small mirror, an egg,
a small present, a clown

Now ask what connections they can make between the objects and our attitudes to children. They will probably come up with all sorts of ideas... but here are some possible associations to explore and debate!

A knotted rope: *a problem to be solved*

An empty cup: *an empty vessel to be filled*

A tea light: *a flame to be fanned*

A blank sheet of paper: *a blank life to be written on*

Seeds: *a life to be nurtured into growth*

An arrow: *a life to set free**

A door/window: *a way to step into something new*

A piece of playdough : *a life to mould*

A small mirror : *a life to make like yours*

A small present: *a gift to be received*

A small toy: someone to be entertained

Strip of negative film: *someone who needs developing properly*

A memo pad: *someone to remind us of what is important*

A 'cute' picture of a child: *someone to 'coo' over*

A piece of jewellery: *someone to be admired/shown off*

A ticket: *someone who will help us in later life*

A small weight/suitcase: *someone that's a bit of a burden*

An egg: *an adult in waiting*

A clown: *someone to entertain us*

A bee: *someone who is a nuisance at the moment*

Other suggestions from the group??

* see the poem below on children by Khalil Gibran (a writer and prophet from Lebanon, 1883 - 1931)

Your children are not your children.

*There are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.
They come through you but not from you,
And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.
You may give them your love but not your thoughts,
For they have their own thoughts.
You may house their bodies but not their souls,
For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow, which you cannot visit, not even in your
dreams.
You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you.
For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.
You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth.
The Archer sees the mark on the path of the infinite,
And he bends you with his might that his arrows may go swift and far.
Let your bending in the Archer's hand be for gladness;
For even as he loves the arrow that flies,
So he loves the bow that is stable.*

Now open out the discussion further: which of these symbols do they like and which do they find unhelpful in describing how they work with the children in their groups? Which of these objects do they think best correlate with Jesus' attitudes to children?

Downloaded from Barnabas in Churches - resourcing work among children and families - www.barnabasinchurches.org.uk

Visit our website for ideas, books and resources, news and information about our work and ministry. All that we do is only made possible through generosity of those who support us. Find out more about supporting us - www.barnabasinchurches.org.uk/support-and-donate/

© BRF 2012 | Visit www.barnabasinchurches.org.uk/terms/ for copyright.