

NOVEMBER 2021

SPARKFISH Newsletter

Inspiring young people in faith, hope and love!

Message from the Director

I always feel that September is a new start. I love the changing of the seasons - the freshness of Autumn, the beauty of the trees and the excitement of a pumpkin spiced latte from Starbucks! I get the same feeling in September that I do in January; it is a time for new resolutions and goal setting. I am still a big kid at heart, filling my basket with new stationery and coloured pens at the supermarket, starting a new year planner and wondering about what will happen this academic year... It is just as well that I work for a school's work charity!

SparkFish kicked off this academic year by meeting as a staff and trustee team to review our vision and dream big. It was a great time together as a new team with both new trustees and new staff members. We enjoyed looking back over the last eleven years of SparkFish and even further back during the time of Encounters. We spent time thanking God for all of the amazing answers to prayer we have seen and then spent time looking forward and asking for guidance on where SparkFish goes next.

There are so many more schools we would love to work with and so many different avenues we can go down (especially in our Learn strand as the team undertook Walk through the bible training in July and Lindsey undertook Godly Play training in the summer). This year we are also keen to re-establish some of the live events we missed over the last eighteen months – Jen has already had the joy of planning in person Think! Spaces and Lindsey is currently making the final arrangements for Christmas Journey. We are so grateful to be back in schools and we pray that our interactive RE events bringing the bible to life, our Think! spaces and assemblies will become a regular part of school calendars again.

We do ask you to join us in prayer as we seek God's wisdom in how we continue to grow the ministry of SparkFish in local schools this year. We pray for God's protection over the vital work of the Hope strand in supporting children and young people with their wellbeing. We pray for the continued privilege of bringing the bible to life in local schools through our Learn strand and for the opportunity to share prayer and calm through our Think! spaces. None of our work would be possible without the faithful prayer warriors that keep us going!

Maybe this Autumn you feel the sense of new beginnings and new adventure – if so, do chat to us about how you can support the work of SparkFish! Maybe by joining our prayer team, by volunteering, by giving financially, by becoming a church champion or by organising a fundraising challenge. There are so many ways to get involved and we would love to hear from you!

Contact Harriet on harriet@sparkfish.org.uk for more information.

Harriet

"You make me feel so special
and loved, and grateful for
everything I have. I can be calm
in here"

"Thank you for making this
place so relaxing and calm. It
helped me to think about my
life"

PUPIL FEEDBACK – Micklefield School
Think Space

Learn

It has been an exciting term for the Learn strand as we start planning for our events for the current academic year. It is great to be returning to live events after our online resources of the last 18 months.

In July our team took part in training to deliver 'Walk Through the Bible' RE lessons for Primary schools. We completed the 'Old Testament Mini' training to deliver a set of 5 RE lessons for older Primary school children exploring the key themes and characters of the Old Testament through drama and

storytelling. We look forward to leading our first 'Walk Through the Bible' lessons in Spring 2022.

We are also busy organising our Christmas Journey event for the end of November 2021. We are looking forward to welcoming year 2 students from our local schools to explore with us why Christmas is important to Christians. So far we have 14 schools booked in and are fully booked for our Redhill week. We are very grateful to the large team of Trustees, and volunteers from local churches to enable this very special event to take place, and look forward to being able to share the message of Christmas in person with our schools again this year.

Lindsey

Hope

I've had a brilliant year so far with some familiar faces and some new faces too! I'm now working in Carrington, Reigate School and Merstham Park offering 1:1 mentoring sessions - a few students I had seen before the summer holidays but have continued into the new school year to help transition them. It's been a pleasure to see them grow so much across the months and to notice how much more settled into school life they are now. It's also been an honour to meet new students who are struggling with anxiety or motivation and am very much enjoying getting to know them and offering advice where possible.

At St Bede's I am running an Upbeat Course (an emotional wellbeing course for boys) last thing on a Friday - it's a really lovely way to end the week as we all add a song onto a playlist. I often find myself bouncing out of school humming an old school classic a student has decided to choose!

Charles



We are pleased to welcome Almaré van Deventer to the team as our new Secondary School's Worker. Almaré is leading small groups at St. Bede's and she is also working with Charles to lead Drop-In Lunch Clubs at Carrington School and Reigate School.

It is great to have her as part of the SparkFish team.



Almaré van
Deventer

Think!

It has been so good to get back into schools this term running Think! Spaces again. We kicked off the season with a classic Think! Space at Micklefield Prep School which was a wonderful week exploring prayer through God's wonderful world. We transformed a classroom into a beautiful space with different prayer activities to help the children reflect, wonder and pray.

Two weeks later the Think! team were back at St. Matthew's CE Primary School for Think! Outside. We were blessed with beautiful October sunshine which meant most groups were able to explore the Think! activities outside under our new canopies. We had a really special time with the children at St. Matthew's exploring activities around how we are unique, diverse individuals, loved by God and each with special gifts to bring to the world.

Horley Team Ministry

Activity in Horley is starting to pick up! As well as the Youth Club on Mondays with the YMCA I now have a Parish Youth Club each Wednesday evening – Rev Sue Bosley our Pioneer Curate shares that with me and she's great. It came out of the Youth alpha we ran earlier in the year. It's a lot of fun and our theme is "Young People in the Bible".

Going back to July I was able to help in the Training of Lindsey, Charles, Jen and Harriet as presenters of Walk Through the Bible – Old Testament. More about that in the Learn section.

August saw me helping at Mid Wessex Christian Camps and many children and young people who are or were in my groups attended. All of us had a great time in the New Forest and more are interested for next year!

In September I went to Kyrgyzstan to help deliver a crate of Medical Aid to Doctors in the west of the country – however Customs held everything up so the trip turned out differently.

We heard some lovely feedback from students and teachers alike, all appreciated the time and space to slow down, think and pray. The teachers particularly enjoyed the calming effect being outside had on their pupils. How lovely to be able to think about God whilst surrounded by his beautiful creation!

Jen



We got to spend a lovely evening with the Ambassador and his wife Veronique who were very supportive. The crate has now been delivered and the goods are being used already (see Medical Aid International online or Facebook for more info and pictures).

October has been encouraging with some schools bookings coming in and more involvement at my church, St Wilfrid's, Horley. Some training with the SparkFish team was enjoyable and we are planning for at least one Horley school to come to Christmas Journey. Prayers are appreciated for all these activities and for our personal well-being too.

Tim

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