

MARCH 2024

SPARKFISH Newsletter

Inspiring young people in faith, hope and love!

Message from the Director

It took me awhile to write my piece for the newsletter this term as it has been such a long time since I've written anything for the SparkFish newsletter. I have been on maternity leave after the birth of my daughter Beatrice in December 2022. But I am so happy to be back at SparkFish!

The thing that struck me on my return to work was how much has been delivered in the local schools over the last year.

The team, trustees and volunteers worked so hard in 2023 and there were some real highlights:

- Christmas Journey launched in Horley for the first time with a brand new Horley team
- Lindsey and Lizzie designed and led brand new workshops on transition in Carrington School for all of the Year 7's
- Charlie and his team delivered 18 Think! spaces across the year, engaging with over 4,140 students
- Lizzie delivered one-to-one mentoring and group work support to over 100 students
- Lindsey launched brand new Christmas lessons with the help of RE Inspired in Reigate Parish and St Matthew's Schools
- A team from Holy Trinity launched Open the Book in Wray Common Primary School
- Jo kept everything going behind the scenes whilst working on the finance and administration

And that was just to mention some of the activities that were delivered last year!

It is truly inspiring to see all that God is doing in the local schools and we are so excited for the year to come! The staff and trustees are meeting in the new term to discuss the vision of SparkFish and will be asking God what He wants us to be delivering over the next few years in the local schools and local area.

As our local supporters and champions, we'd love to hear your thoughts as well. What do you think we could be doing more of? Or less of? Please do send us your thoughts and prayers for the vision and future of SparkFish. We believe firmly that SparkFish is rooted in the local church and we couldn't do what we do without the support of local Christians volunteering, praying, giving and championing the work SparkFish does in local schools. Get in touch - harriet@sparkfish.org.uk

"I have not stopped thanking God for you. I pray constantly, asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give you spiritual wisdom and insight so that you might grow in your knowledge of God. I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope He has given to those He called - His holy people who are his rich and glorious inheritance."

Ephesians 1:15-18

- Harriet Pearce, Director

Learn

We have had an exciting few months with the Learn strand work which focuses on supporting schools with their RE curriculum. The Christmas Journey 2023 ran very well with 14 classes from 7 schools visiting in Redhill, 14 classes from 8 schools in Reigate, and 11 classes from 6 schools visited the Christmas Journey in Horley. Overall, we saw around 1100 children over the three weeks which was very exciting. The Christmas Journey is an interactive 'walk through' of the Christmas story with actors, puppets, storytellers and craft activities.

We would not have been able to run the Christmas Journey without the support of our staff, trustees, and a large group of volunteers, and the churches which hosted us, Redhill Methodist, Reigate Park Church and St Bartholomew's Church in Horley.

We had some very positive feedback:

"I just wanted to say a huge thank you from children AND adults for the amazing immersive Nativity experience you treated us to a few weeks ago."

"We had a brilliant day. It was organised so beautifully and the children were fully involved throughout! It must have taken so much planning and thought!"

It was also great to support the new Open the Book team at Wray Common on 7th December as we led an assembly on 'The Annunciation', and the school has asked for Open the Book dates for Spring term 2024.

At the end of the Autumn term Charlie and I led lessons on 'Has Christmas lost its true meaning?' at two schools for Year 3 classes resourced by RE Inspired. The lessons went well, and I was very grateful to the knitters from Holy Trinity Church and to Charlie for knitting two sets of Nativity figures for us to use for telling the Christmas story in the lessons.

We are now looking forward to our Easter experience production which starts imminently. We are very grateful to our team of volunteer actors who have been busy rehearsing and learning lines in preparation.

- Lindsey Hardwick, Deputy Director & Learn Coordinator

Hope

I continue to go into Carrington School, Merstham Park and Reigate School weekly to do mentoring with students. I am still focusing on developing courses that we can offer to schools for group work sessions, and have now written a third course looking at friendship. I have had the privilege of being able to run more group sessions this last term, particularly in Merstham Park. It has been wonderful to see how the students have supported one another in these groups and how new friendships have developed.

Give thanks that through the Hope strand we have been able to establish strong and trusted relationships within these schools. Please do pray for the development of this work that through these established relationships we may be able to create ways to bring the Christian message into these schools. Please do pray that I would have more opportunities to share the good news of Jesus with those I meet in school, especially with staff, as it is with them that I am able to be a bit more open about my faith in the school setting.

- Lizzie Baker, Hope Strand Coordinator



Think!

The Spring term is in full swing and, so far, it has been encouraging to see the engagement in prayer during the three events hosted at St Bede's School, Reigate Parish Primary School and The Hawthorn's. At St Bede's, staff spent their INSET day engaging with the space and the whole of year 7 had the opportunity to visit the space. The Chaplains noted that it was, "a very peaceful and reflective space and much appreciated by students and staff."

At Reigate Parish School, the prayer space was part of a school-wide focused approach to learning about spirituality. I most enjoyed the children's responses when asked what questions they would ask God if he was in the room with them. Responses included, 'are there toys in heaven, how old are you, and what do you do all day?'

We have plenty more Think! spaces to look forward to this academic year! If you would like to help support this work in any way, please do get in touch at charlie@sparkfish.org.uk. We are particularly looking for help with the set up and pack down of our Think! spaces. Keep an eye on social media and emails for our summer term dates.

Many thanks to all of our volunteers who support this work and thank you all for your continued prayers and support!

- Charlie Auton, Think Strand Coordinator



Horley Team Ministry

As the dark days of January and February have passed so the excitement has started to build - hope is coming - Easter is coming!

The rehearsals for Easter Experience this term have been going really well and I'm very pleased to have two new volunteers on board to add to the terrific acting team. Linda Pimm and Ken Meech from the Horley Parish Churches have been busy learning their parts and are excited to be part of the team this Easter.

We pray this Easter that the story of Jesus beds into the hearts and minds of people for the glory of God and the growth of his Kingdom.

- Tim Hill, Pioneer Worker & Lay Minister, Horley



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