

AUTUMN 2024

SPARKFISH Newsletter

Inspiring young people in faith, hope and love!

Message from the Director

We have had an incredibly busy half term at SparkFish HQ! We started the academic year on an incredible high with our SparkFish Service at Redhill Baptist Church and then held our first ever SparkFish Quiz night at St Mary's Church.

Our Quiz night raised over £1000 so thank you so much for all who came, helped out and got involved! We had an amazing night and hope to be able to organise another quiz night in 2025.

As well as the highs we also sadly said goodbye to our Hope Co-ordinator, Lizzie Baker, at the beginning of the year, as she has taken on a new role as Youth Minister at Oak Hall Church in Caterham. We are so grateful to Lizzie for the energy and enthusiasm she gave to SparkFish over her two years with us (and the many years she gave as a partner church youth worker) and we wish her all the best in her new role!

As I write this message, we are gearing up for Christmas Journey and for the amazing opportunity we have to share the true meaning of Christmas with over 1000 children over three weeks. Our Christmas Journey is such a magical experience for the children as they journey through the scenes of Mary's kitchen, the fields where the shepherds heard the Good News, the stable where Jesus was born and the wise men's tent.

It is such a privilege to be able to share a story that for many of us, we know so well, but for some is completely new! Sometimes we forget how incredible the Christmas story is, yet seeing it through the eyes of a small child really brings it to life.

It's not too late to get involved with Christmas Journey and come and experience it for yourself - if you would like to volunteer or help us on the set up and pack down team (which is much needed) then please do contact Lindsey@sparkfish.org.uk. We'd love to hear from you!

Harriet Pearce - SparkFish Director

The Big Give Christmas Challenge 2024

We are so excited to launch the Big Give Christmas Challenge again this Christmas. Last year you helped us raise over £7000 which helped sustain our Think Spaces throughout 2024.

This year we are fundraising for Think Spaces again as they are such a special part of SparkFish and we would love to continue to offer them to as many schools as we can.

The SparkFish Think Spaces provide a unique opportunity for schools to focus on spiritual well-being, identity and relationships, values and faith. We create peaceful Think Spaces in schools, where students come in small groups to draw and write, create and relax, play and pray.

This year Charlie and his team were able to offer 18 Think Spaces in local schools - how amazing is that!? An opportunity for 4000 young people and children to pray in 18 local schools in 2024. Charlie would love to increase this offer next year but we need your help.

The demand is great for Think Spaces but the funds continue to be short and we need your help again to sustain Think Spaces for 2025.

If you make a donation through The Big Give Christmas Challenge, it will be match funded by kind sponsors. So if you give £5, it becomes £10. If you give £50 it becomes £100, and you can add Gift Aid too.

Just visit our [BIG GIVE PAGE](#) (which can be found on our website) between 3rd - 10th December.

Please make a note in your diary and give to local children - twice over!



Learn

It is exciting to be back in our local schools again after the long summer break and we have been busy planning and preparing for our RE events this academic year.

The first of our major events is our 'Christmas Journey' where we run an interactive RE lesson for school Year two to explore why Christmas is important for Christians. The children can explore the Christmas story with music and song, craft, drama, puppets and storytelling. This would not be possible without our large team of volunteers from local churches, and the support of our three venue churches, Redhill Methodist Church, Reigate Park Church, and St Batholomew's Church in Horley. Schools have been booking their Year 2 classes to come along and we look forward to welcoming them again this year.

During the Autumn term we are supporting two local 'Open the Book' assembly teams, visiting schools to share Bible stories using drama. This term so far, we have shared the story of Jesus walking on water, and the story of Jesus being baptised. We are also taking bookings for our school Year 3 Christmas lesson which we lead as part of our partnership with RE Inspired. We lead an hour's interactive RE lesson on the topic of 'Has Christmas lost it's true meaning?' and have bookings to visit schools later this term.



Our work at SparkFish includes supporting young people at times of challenge and change, so I am involved this term in supporting children regularly in St Matthew's and FurzeField Primary Schools. We are also leading a series of workshops for the new Year 7 students at Carrington School on the topic of 'friendships and social interactions' as part of their Excellence programme, which is a great opportunity to support students at the beginning of their time at Secondary School.

- Lindsey Hardwick, Deputy Director & Learn Coordinator



Volunteers Needed!

Can you help?

Our RE events would not be possible without the support of volunteers from the local churches. This year we are looking for some more volunteers to support our Christmas Journey event which last year welcomed 1100 children over three weeks.

We are particularly looking for people to help with the setting up and packing down of our venues, and also volunteers who would be happy to take on small acting roles or puppeteering.

If you could be available between 25th November and 13th December and would like to get involved please do contact us - lindsey@sparkfish.org.uk

Some of our volunteers support us for one or two days, others may like to be involved across the different venues.

Set Up Days

Sunday 24th November at 2pm - Redhill Methodist Church

Sunday 1st December at 2pm - Reigate Park Church
Horley - TBC

If you are available and interested in helping please contact Lindsey@sparkfish.org.uk



Think!

I am thrilled to share some exciting updates about our Think Spaces! For those who may not be familiar, a Think Space is a dedicated area and time in a busy school environment for students to reflect on what truly matters. I am reminded of Proverbs 22:6 which says, "Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old, he will not depart from it."

My prayer for each Think Space is that the children who attend gain a deep appreciation for pausing, being still, and taking time to think about faith, spirituality, their emotions, and life's big questions. In our modern world, especially for young people, there is so much to fit into the day - so many things on the to-do-list, clubs to attend, homework to complete. Having an opportunity to pause and be still is rare and often impossible. Young people love the time they are given in a Think Space to do this, and if they can build in a similar time into their own lives, it opens up more possibilities for them to think about things that really matter.

This term we were delighted to lead several Think Spaces in local schools. Micklefield School's Think Space took place in October and focused on the topic of responsibility. The activities guided students in understanding how to be responsible friends, care for the planet, and look after themselves. The children also had the chance to pray and create their own prayer boxes, which helped them reflect on kindness and responsibility in all their actions.

Additionally, I am excited to visit Reigate School each week for one-to-one mentoring sessions with students who need support and a listening ear. I am passionate about coming alongside young people, meeting them where they are, and supporting them on their life's journey. With experience as a Youth Pastor in various capacities, I have had many wonderful opportunities to mentor young people, and I am thrilled to bring this experience to Reigate School.

Please continue to pray for the Think strand. Your prayers and support are greatly appreciated as we strive to make a positive impact on the lives of the students.

- Charlie Auton, Think Strand Coordinator



Horley Team Ministry

People often ask me what I enjoy most about my job, I don't know if dentists or delivery drivers get asked this, but my honest response is usually that I enjoy speaking to groups. Perhaps the dentist would reply that looking into the mouth of someone who claims to brush regularly but clearly doesn't is fun. Perhaps the delivery driver gets huge satisfaction from balancing three boxes right to the door without dropping them, I think I would. I just love talking about the Bible, answering questions where I can and finding out answers if I don't know myself.

I love seeing people light up in recognition as they see how the Bible clicks with them. God begins to speak to them, they begin to listen to God, my job is done.

I also enjoy the relationships that build up over time, with students and school staff, with youth group members and staff, they start to share their thoughts and ask questions. We become friends and hopefully children of God together.

You may be thinking "that's not exactly hard work... sounds fun!", then maybe it is for you too! Of course there is prep and admin, no fun there. But the presenting is fun. However, there are days when the energy is lower and you have to step up - but you find God blesses your efforts, even when you think it hasn't gone well.

We live in a land where we can teach about God and share our faith openly - thank God for this - let's make the most of it eh?!

- Tim Hill, Pioneer Worker & Lay Minister, Horley



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