

Connecting you

Spring
2024

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Scripture
Union

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Did you know?

Grow Communities are peer-shaped worshipping communities, defined by the children themselves and supported by their Faith Guide. They are often centred around the interests of the young people, and we have seen Grow Communities with a wide range of themes springing up across England and Wales, such as singing, drama, mountain biking and other sports, Manga, circus skills and baking. The list goes on! Find out more about Grow Communities and becoming a Faith Guide at su.org.uk/revealingjesus

More about Scripture Union

Scripture Union is a Christian charity, providing opportunities for children and young people to explore the Bible, respond to Jesus and grow in faith. With an estimated 95% of under-18s in England and Wales not part of a church, we help churches to step out and take the good news to them in exciting and culturally relevant ways.

Visit www.scriptureunion.org.uk to find out more.



**Scripture
Union**

Connecting You is Scripture Union's supporter and prayer magazine, keeping you up to date with what God is doing through the work you support.

Connecting You magazine is also available online at: www.su.org.uk/connectingyou. If you have a

story for *Connecting You*, or a suggestion on how we could improve our service to you, please contact the editor: eddien@scriptureunion.org.uk

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Together in mission

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“When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart.” Matthew 13:19



Dear friends,

It is a pleasure to introduce this edition of *Connecting You*, the last of my tenure as National Director. What a pleasure to pass the baton to Dave Newton who has such a passion for reaching the 95 and has been so clearly prepared by God for this role.

With the increasing rate of cultural change, young people – especially those without church backgrounds – struggle more than ever to understand the relevance of the good news of Jesus, with Bible concepts and language that can feel very alien.

However, it remains vitally important, as Matthew emphasises, that every generation can connect with, explore, and respond to the Bible’s message about Christ’s kingdom!

Together, we can all help young people in their understanding by being present right where they are, modelling Jesus’ love for them in word and action, and showing them in ways relevant to today

how Jesus wants to meet their deepest human needs. You’ll see some great examples of that in action within this magazine.

As my time as National Director comes to an end, please continue to pray for SU. It has been the greatest privilege of my life to serve the movement you support, one so dedicated to equipping Christians to reveal Jesus to the youngest generation in ways that make clear the relevance of Christ’s kingdom to their lives today. My prayer is that, with your support, SU will continue to go from strength to strength in this next season. I can’t wait to see all that God has in store for this movement we both love!

Yours, in Christ,

Myles MacBean,
National Director



Amplifying their faith

.....

Thanks to your support, each year dozens of young Christians are able to take part in Amplify. This programme developed by SU and Christian partners helps young people share their faith with their friends. Two of them, Zara and Lydia, explain how it has helped them.



Amplify Young Evangelists Academy involves Scripture Union, Youth for Christ, The Message, Alpha, Festive, Urban Saints, New Wine Luminosity and HOPE Together. It runs from October to March and includes two residentials plus monthly online group mentoring sessions and masterclasses.

Lydia and Zara have both done Amplify more than once and are now young group leaders, working alongside mentors to support other young people that are new to the course.

WHY DID YOU WANT TO DO AMPLIFY?

Lydia: 'I realised our purpose is not just to be in a relationship with God but to tell others they can be too. The good news is too good to keep to ourselves!'

Zara: 'I heard about Amplify when I did a week's street evangelism with my church and thought it would be a great way to learn more.'

HOW DID YOU BENEFIT FROM IT?

Lydia: 'It was amazing being with other like-minded young people on the residentials, which deepened our own relationship with God, so that sharing faith was a natural response to that experience. At the monthly online meetings, we got encouragement, support and advice from our mentors and each other. The mentors really invest in you – between sessions they'd pray for us. I felt more confident and like I wasn't alone.'

Zara: 'At an Amplify masterclass on evangelism, I asked how you deal with knockbacks or feeling like people aren't interested. They explained that the time is never going to be wasted, because you've planted the seed and

.....
 “ The good news is
 too good to keep
 to ourselves! ”



.....
“ They explained that the time is never going to be wasted, because you’ve planted the seed and you have to trust God to water it. ”

you have to trust God to water it – it’s not all up to you.

‘Another masterclass helped us to share Jesus with people of other faiths – I’ve found that harder than sharing Jesus with someone of no faith, because they sometimes try to catch you out and it’s easy to end up in an argument. Now I’ve learned how to hold my ground in those discussions, but also to focus on sharing the love of Jesus.’

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE SINCE TO SHARE JESUS AND HOW HAS IT GONE?

Lydia: ‘I was the only Christian in my sixth form, so I set up a “Grill a Christian” session. I’ve also done some street evangelism. I’m now at university in York, and at a church that wants to share Jesus with students on campus, so I work with

them. University students are more open to faith than sixth formers were! They are looking for some meaning in life – but the downside is that they’re open to everything, which can be dangerous. So I try to guide them to Jesus.’

Zara: ‘I felt challenged to set up a Christian Union at school, which was well outside my comfort zone! We ended up with about 20 people. Several weren’t Christian but wanted to find out more, and some were Christian but didn’t go to church. Delving into the Bible, praying over things, and encouraging each other is so amazing. But you do have to remember to unpack things a bit more for those people who don’t have that Christian background – once you understand that, it gets easier.’



AMPLIFY YOUR FAITH TOO!

Many young people have found faith through the influence of other young Christians. But while many young Christians are happy to talk about their faith, 80% want more confidence to do so¹.

So if you’re a young Christian, or know a young Christian, who would benefit, why not consider doing Amplify this year?

Find out more at www.amplifyacademy.co.uk

¹INFLUENCERS: Peer-to-Peer Evangelism Amongst Young People in the UK (SU and others, June 22) – download available at su.org.uk/research



WEEK
BEGINNING
FEB 25

Prayers

.....

Please pray for those young people who have been through Amplify and for all those involved in organising and running it.

SUNDAY 25

Give thanks to God for Zara, Lydia and all the other young people who have taken part in Amplify. Ask God to continue to bless and strengthen them to share his message of hope boldly and effectively with their peers.

MONDAY 26

Praise God for all those staff and volunteers of SU and our partner organisations who develop and deliver Amplify. Ask God to help them to keep it really relevant to the needs of young people who want to share their faith.

TUESDAY 27

Please pray for those just finishing Amplify this year. Ask God to guide them as they make important choices about the next steps in their lives.

WEDNESDAY 28

Give thanks to God for all those young Christians who are involved in ministry in any way. Ask him to give

them the right words as they share Jesus with their peers, especially those not from church backgrounds.

THURSDAY 29

Please pray for young Christians who are considering doing Amplify starting this October, and for breakthroughs in any barriers to their participation that might not be of God.

FRIDAY 1

Ask God to protect those young Christians who are leaving home for the first time and to guide them to supportive churches. Ask him to help them make wise decisions that enable them to stay strong and to grow in their faith.

SATURDAY 2

Give thanks for graduates of Amplify, including Lydia and Zara who continue to be involved so that they can encourage the next intake of young Christians who want to share their faith with their peers.

Prayers

WEEK
BEGINNING
MAR 3

SUNDAY 3

The Scripture Union Global Gathering starts on Monday. Please pray that the discussions around bridging the gap between the Christian and non-Christian world will be fruitful and will result in more effective ministry across the world.

MONDAY 4



Pray for Wayne Dixon of Mission Partner **Christian Connections in Schools** and the team of volunteers, taking Easter

presentations into around 45 local schools reaching over 2000 pupils from 11–22 March. Pray also for wisdom for the Trustees as they plan for the future.

TUESDAY 5

Thank God for the technology which keeps us in touch with other staff, volunteers, customers and supporters. Pray for Technical Services Manager Ian Gooding as he guides staff and volunteers in effective use of our IT systems, including the fast-paced world of artificial intelligence, protecting our technology and data, and finding better ways of working together.

WEDNESDAY 6

Please pray for the Holidays and Missions team as they support our amazing volunteers and help them



to get everything ready for the programme of Easter events.

THURSDAY 7

Please pray for the Grow Community 'Rooted', run by 15 Faith Guides who are part of the Ross Deanery, as they look to engage more of the 95 in their area of Herefordshire with the help of Rooted and Rooted Junior resources.

FRIDAY 8

Join Mission Partner **IMPACT** in Bedford as they give thanks for the number of schools, staff, volunteers and churches who work with them. Praise God for the opportunities primary workers Becky and Trish have to develop Prayer Spaces in schools.

SATURDAY 9

Please pray for Maggie Barfield, as she navigates the priorities and workload of her two Development Hub roles as the *Guardians of Ancora* Mission Leader and Senior Content Innovator. Maggie's Revealing Jesus projects currently range from ages 5 to 18; please pray for mental agility, energy and creativity.

Prayers

WEEK
BEGINNING
MAR 10

SUNDAY 10

Pray for the leaders in Scripture Union Madagascar as they meet this month. Pray that they will hear from God, that each participant will renew their commitment to the work and for the materials they will use to welcome these leaders.

MONDAY 11

Pray for the ongoing creation of the monthly *Mission Sparks* resource for those who have signed up to receive Mission Support from Scripture Union. Pray for smooth cross-team working and creative ideas to inspire and equip churches to reach the 95.

TUESDAY 12



Please pray that Ruth Anderson (Faith and Sports Hub Coordinator) and the Sports Mission team will have wisdom as

they create resources for sports and fitness ministry. Pray that these resources will enable children and young people to hear and respond to the good news of Jesus in a sporting context.

WEDNESDAY 13

Pray for the team at Mission Partner **Thrive Youth Ministries** in Warwickshire (Andy, Fiona, James, Ryan and Rose), as they visit churches encouraging them to use

their Manifesto for 21st Century Youthwork to equip them to reach out to young people in relevant and creative ways.

THURSDAY 14



Give thanks for the schools, outdoor centres and other venues that

welcome our holidays every year. Please pray that our holiday teams will be a blessing to the staff who they work with at all our venues.

FRIDAY 15

Last year, the north region ran some new Faith Guide holidays (holidays for children and young people that Faith Guides have been connecting with across the region). Please pray for wisdom as they seek to learn from these and to build on them creating new opportunities for the 95 to meet Jesus.

SATURDAY 16

Every six months the SU Council meets. Drawn from across the country, and with wide and differing knowledge and experience relevant to SU ministry, its members aim to help the movement think through the most effective ways of reaching the 95. Pray for wisdom and clear thinking as they meet today.



Broken bikes, restored lives

.....

Why has a small church in rural Wales been mending bikes for young people? It's because that's what those young people really want – and meeting that need is a brilliant way to build a relationship with them and introduce them to Jesus.



Faith Guide Huw Ellis helped to plant New Life church in Llanfair Caereinion three years ago. He says,

‘We wanted to be

a church for people who think church isn’t for them. We love reaching out to our community, building relationships with them and supporting them to get the most out of life.’ And the community responded to the church’s involvement; around 40 local children come on the summer residential to explore faith. In a town of just a thousand people, through a church with fewer than 20 people, those are astonishing numbers.

THE VALUE OF FAITH GUIDES

Huw’s SU Mission Enabler, Keefe Owen, says, ‘Huw demonstrates

how valuable

Faith Guides are

– he and his church

noticed how important bikes were to kids in this rural area, but families often didn’t have the money, time or skills to maintain them. So Huw asked

if I could help the church put on a bike repair event.’

Keefe just happens to be a qualified British Cycling mountain bike guide and bikes have played a huge part in his own life and faith. He says, ‘As a kid, I was always out cycling – in the wilds was where I prayed most freely and connected most with God.’

So one bright summer’s day he brought his tools and bike stand to Llanfair’s school grounds, and a dozen youngsters came with bikes in various states of disrepair. Aided by volunteers from the church, a local farmer and a council youth worker, Keefe helped to mend the cycles and teach the young people how to look after them, which led on to talking about Jesus and how he can repair our own lives.

Then Keefe led some bike-based games including a unicycle demonstration and letting the young people ride a mini bike around an obstacle course.

Huw says, ‘It was a fantastic atmosphere, and the young people didn’t want us to stop – we were there for an extra hour! The parents were amazed that we didn’t want to charge for the event, but we just wanted to bless them, get to know the young people better and share why the church was doing this. When we asked the group if they’d like to do it again, they all shouted “yes!”’

The church already had some contact with some of the children, but the repair event deepened those relationships. Later, one young

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“ In the wilds was where I prayed most freely and connected most with God. ”

.....
“ We just wanted to
bless them, get to
know the young
people better. ”
.....

person was interested in going on the residential weekend and others wanted to join the youth group.

This spring, Keefe and Huw have plans for a guided mountain bike

ride. Keefe says, ‘It will include a few stops at which we’ll encourage those young people to start exploring faith. For example, we can pause at a junction and discuss good and bad choices – why and how we sometimes take a wrong turn in life, and how God can help us get back on the right route.

‘It’s so powerful, using what young people naturally enjoy to help them really connect with the God who they’re learning to love.’



MAKE MORE MISSION POSSIBLE

We’re so grateful to all of you who give financially to make stories like this possible. It’s not too late to make a gift to our latest appeal to support Keefe and our other Mission Enablers across England and Wales, as they work with Faith Guides to reach the 95 in creative ways. Visit su.org.uk/give to donate today. Thank you!

Prayers

WEEK
BEGINNING
MAR 17

SUNDAY 17

Please pray for the SU New Zealand team retreat from March 18–21. Pray that this time for sharing, prayer and spiritual refreshment will be used by God to make the team more effective in ministry.

MONDAY 18

Pray that the seasonal resource *Easter Matters* will be effective in helping those seeking to connect with children and young people from the 95. Pray that as they explore the Bible together and think about the Easter story they will connect with Jesus.



TUESDAY 19



Mission Events Coordinator Heidi Beckham will be on the team of Create 1, a three-night holiday for ages 12–15 starting on 2

April. Pray that as the guests spend time on different art and craft projects, socialise and chill they will meet with God in fresh ways.

WEDNESDAY 20

Pray that Dave Newton may know God's wisdom and blessing as he brings his gifting and experience to his new role as National Director,

helping us to broaden and deepen the impact of the Revealing Jesus mission framework in the local church (see page 16).

THURSDAY 21

The Amplify residential for young evangelists starts tomorrow. Over 100 young people will be coming together from across the UK to learn more about what it means to share their faith in modern youth culture. Pray that the young people will be bold in sharing their faith with their friends.



FRIDAY 22

Give thanks for our army of faithful supporters who regularly pray for and give to the ministry of SU helping to reach the 95. Pray that God will meet all their needs spiritually, physically and financially as they sacrificially give to support all we do.

SATURDAY 23

Pray for Mission Enabler Chris Eales as he supports an increasing number of Faith Guides, asking that the Holy Spirit will guide his conversations with Faith Guides and children and young people. Pray too for the development and use of Go Wild in year-round ministry as well as residential.

Prayers

WEEK
BEGINNING
MAR 24

SUNDAY 24

SU Northern Ireland has an increased focus on special needs. Pray for Anita Conkey, Special Needs Coordinator, as she works alongside mission teams, supports training in various contexts, develops and delivers resources and discerns their role in the increasing number of Learning Support Units in schools.

MONDAY 25

Pray for the team at Mission Partner **YoYo** as they share the Easter story across the primary and secondary schools of York. Pray that as they bring Christian truth to life it will ignite imaginations and inspire students to reflect on The Greatest Story.

TUESDAY 26



Pray for Mission Enabler Matt Farley as he works with the many churches in the East Midlands who are looking to engage

with schools as a way to connect with children and explore the Bible with them. Pray especially for open doors of opportunity and the willingness of volunteers to take those opportunities.

WEDNESDAY 27

Pray that as the South West team seek to develop more Faith

Guide holidays (including a surfing weekend, Go Wild! weekend and a primary age weekend) they will have vision and faith. Pray for the emergence of holidays that will have real impact.

THURSDAY 28

The SU Bake Off and Create holidays start early next week. Please pray for great conversations with the young people as they develop their baking and artistic skills and pray that they will encounter Jesus while they are with us.



FRIDAY 29

Mission Enabler Geoff Brown asks us to pray that many church and school groups would use the Shine in Schools programme to help Christian young people share their faith with their friends at school.

SATURDAY 30

Pray for Mission Partner **Bridgebuilder's Easter Cracked** workshops where they introduce Year 6 children in Milton Keynes to the real meaning of Easter. Pray that staff and volunteers will be empowered as they present the material to children, many of whom have no contact with church.

Prayers

WEEK
BEGINNING
MAR 31

SUNDAY 31

Pray for the success of a project launched last autumn by SU Germany to support teachers at Christian schools aiming to make the daily morning devotions in school classes more attractive and encourage pupils to read the Bible.

MONDAY 1

Pray for the Year 6 Easter Eggsplored events being run in primary schools across Newbury by Mission Partner **COINS**. Pray too for the team of school workers, Kate, Kristina and Clare. Kristina and Clare joined the team in September; pray for them as they bring fresh insights to the work.

TUESDAY 2



Pray for wisdom and creativity for Communications Assistant Nozipho Dube as she plans and creates content for SUM,

our new social media channel to engage young adults in the work of Scripture Union. Pray that the content will build and inspire a younger generation of supporters.

WEDNESDAY 3

The Finance team working with the Digital Solutions team have introduced a new financial system which will improve the efficiency of our processes and make reporting

more widely accessible. Pray that this will prove helpful, especially as the Finance team start producing the year-end accounts.

THURSDAY 4

X:Site Keighley Easter holiday club is running this week sharing the good news of Jesus and providing children with breakfast and lunch. Please pray for great relationships to be built with the children and that they will experience God's love for themselves.

FRIDAY 5

Pray for the staff and trustees of Mission Partner **Engage** in Woking, as they look to expand the work and recruit new trustees, especially a new chairperson. Pray for strong candidates with passion to share faith, hope and love in the local schools and colleges.

SATURDAY 6

Pray that the weekly football and multi-sports club on Fir Vale estate in Sheffield run by Holly Phipps, Sports Mission Pioneer, will help many young people to learn more about how sport and faith connect and that they will meet Jesus through the annual SU Easter camp at Fir Vale School this weekend.





Introducing our new National Director

.....

Dave Newton joins Scripture Union England and Wales in March, following in the footsteps of Myles MacBean. He explains how his life to date has prepared him for the role, and what he hopes to bring to it.

‘Sharing Jesus has been my lifelong passion – I decided to follow him when I was four, and immediately went to tell my brother he should follow Jesus too (only to find that he already did!). In my teens I got involved with beach missions and mission trips and later I did youth and schools ministry in the Wirral. That connected me into Youth for Christ, and I eventually became their National Mission Director.

‘I’m an ordained minister and for the past decade I’ve been Director of Training for Elim UK and principal of Regents Theological College, helping to equip and enable others to share Jesus.

.....
“ We must take seriously the priority to share the good news with **all** children and young people including those far beyond our church buildings.”
.....

‘So, my new role as SU’s National Director really brings together all that enthusiasm and experience!

‘What initially attracted me was SU’s focus on reaching the 95% of children and young people who aren’t in church. Many years ago, I spoke to around 300 young people at a large church – it seemed an impressive number until I discovered that over 18,000 young people lived in the area, most of whom weren’t

.....
“ What initially attracted me was SU’s focus on reaching the 95% of children and young people who aren’t in church.”
.....

hearing about Jesus. That’s when it dawned on me that, as the church, we must take seriously the priority to share the good news with all children and young people, including those far beyond our church buildings.

‘The Revealing Jesus mission framework and the development and support of Faith Guides is proving a wonderfully effective way of doing that. I’m excited to see how we can generate momentum behind this vision and build on the solid foundations laid. I’m also really keen to further explore how we make Jesus known to children and young people in today’s culturally challenging and changing landscape – to meet and connect with them where they are, and mobilise ordinary Christians to confidently share Jesus in their language.’

PLEASE PRAY!

Please join us in praying for Dave as he starts his new role, and for Myles too as he embarks on the next stage of his journey.

Prayers

WEEK
BEGINNING
APR 7

SUNDAY 7

Pray for SU Peru as they resume the work with revitalised Bible ministries and children's clubs and stronger programmes in schools. Please pray for the recruitment of volunteers and new materials for ministry.

MONDAY 8

Pray for Mission Partner **Schools Christian Worker Project** in Oswestry as they celebrate 25 years of ministry. They hope to welcome three new trustees at their AGM next month. Also pray for *It's Your Move* workshops taking place this term in 11 primary schools.

TUESDAY 9

Pray for Nic Findlay, Revealing Jesus Pioneer, as she supports churches in the Liverpool area wanting to reach the 95, but who lack volunteers. Pray that small churches would find simple, creative ways of connecting with children and young people outside the church building even though they are short of people and resources.

WEDNESDAY 10

Please join the SU Central team in praying for the Regional Gathering at the beginning of June – that this would be a time of refreshment,



discernment and inspiration as they come together to enjoy fellowship, worship, sharing, learning and hearing from God.

THURSDAY 11

Pray for Sally Nash who has recently taken over as freelance editor of *Daily Bread* and is currently editing notes for the April–June 2025 issue. Pray that she will build good relationships with the writing team and that together they will help readers to grow in their faith.

FRIDAY 12

Pray for the work of Mission Partner CICS and their partners as they work in several secondary schools across Calderdale. They are reaching young people through mentoring, Question Point, Chilli Tuesdays, after school clubs, lessons, assemblies and general support to students and staff.

SATURDAY 13

Pray for the ongoing Rooted hubs taking place in secondary and primary schools across England and Wales and for the development of new Rooted content to support young people and children in their faith journey.



Prayers

WEEK
BEGINNING
APR 14

SUNDAY 14

Join SU Sierra Leone in giving thanks for the rapid spread of the ministry into all 16 districts of the country, particularly in predominantly Islamic communities, leading to transformation of children in these areas. Please pray for ten motorcycles, to give easier access to those hard-to-reach terrains.

MONDAY 15



Having relocated to Cornwall, Faith Guide Community Coordinator Eddie Howlett is excited about introducing churches to the

Revealing Jesus framework, helping them set up new projects to reach the 95, and growing the network of Faith Guides throughout Cornwall.

TUESDAY 16

Thank God for the creative gifts which Alex Taylor brings to the Development Hub as a Freelance Consultant producing resources to support the Revealing Jesus mission framework. Pray that God will guide his thinking as he works on new material to help the 95 respond to the good news of Jesus.

WEDNESDAY 17

April for SUMT (SU on the Isle of Man) is taken up with preparation for the year's biggest event,

Lifepath. Pray for Linda and Laura as they lead preparations and for the wider team as they coordinate volunteers and create the many resources.

THURSDAY 18

Praise God for the Easter holidays and holiday clubs that have taken place and pray for all the children and young people who attended, asking that they will hold onto the truths they have encountered as they return to school this week.



FRIDAY 19

Give thanks for all our Faith Guides across the country, for their passion and commitment to the Revealing Jesus Framework. Pray that as they work with the 95 God will enable them to use their gifts to the full and give them a sense of his presence.

SATURDAY 20

At the start of this new financial year join Kathy Brooks, Appeals and Legacies Manager, in giving thanks for all our supporters and praying that over this coming year we will continue to build good relationships with them.

Prayers

WEEK
BEGINNING
APR 21

SUNDAY 21

At the start of the year Carla Yik, Secretary of Children's Ministry for SU Hong Kong, moved from being part-time to leading children's ministry full time. Please pray for her as she transitions asking that God will encourage and equip her.

MONDAY 22

The South East regional team give God thanks for all he has done through their Faith Guides and Local Mission Partners over the Easter period. Give thanks for those who have met Christ for the first time and pray that as they begin their journey with him, they will grow in faith and knowledge.



TUESDAY 23

Pray for Christopher Baker, Schools Worker at Mission Partner **Christians in Schools** in Letchworth, as he prepares to take a sabbatical from June to August. Pray that he will enjoy rest, refreshment and renewal during this time as he reflects and gets ready for the coming academic year.

WEDNESDAY 24

Praise God for the ongoing mission of *Guardians of Ancora* clubs

in schools, churches and community settings. Pray for those leading the clubs and those attending; may these small-scale events bring big opportunities to share the good news of Jesus.

THURSDAY 25

The Josiah Spiers Fund offers financial and practical help and encouragement to retired former staff of Scripture Union. Pray that their Trustees will know God's guidance as they meet on 9 May.

FRIDAY 26

Over 1200 volunteer places need to be filled each year to allow our holidays and missions programme to run. Please pray that volunteers will come forward and will be excited to serve in this way this summer.



SATURDAY 27

Pray for the Youth Alpha course Mission Partner **FACCTS** in Fleet and Crookham are planning to run this term for children in secondary schools. Pray that many young people will come, enjoy the sessions and come to a genuine faith in Jesus Christ.

Prayers

WEEK
BEGINNING
APR 28

SUNDAY 28

Pupils from Lusoti High School in Eswatini enjoyed an SU trip to Durban in South Africa in August. The aim was to promote fellowship and unity among the SU members in the school. They came back more united and with new purpose. Pray that this will strengthen the work of SU Eswatini.

MONDAY 29

Pray for freelance editor Sally Nelson who is currently editing *Encounter with God* notes for the April–June 2025 issue, asking that she will have wisdom in decision-making and good relationships with writers.

TUESDAY 30



Steve Vis, Director of Finance and Services, is preparing to take time for spiritual refreshment, reflection and

seeking God's priorities for our work as a movement, and for him personally for the year ahead. Pray that he may know God's presence and guidance.

WEDNESDAY 1

Prayer for Mission Partner **BSYW** and their ministry in and around Blackpool, visiting primary schools with assemblies and workshops in line with the RE curriculum for each year group. Schools appreciate

what they offer and there are opportunities to do more. Pray for more volunteers and the finances to enable this.

THURSDAY 2

Pray for the SU England and Wales Board as they meet today. Pray for fruitful discussions and a clear sense of the Spirit's leading as they discuss important matters relating to the governance of the movement.

FRIDAY 3

Faith Guides in local churches are passionate about sharing the good news of Jesus with the 95. Pray that God will call others into this role so that many more children and young people can be reached.



SATURDAY 4

As summer approaches, Ian Kent (Revealing Jesus Pioneer in Durham), will be supporting Faith Guides in planning for holiday clubs, residentials and other special events. Pray that they and their churches might use these opportunities to help children and young people explore, respond and grow in faith.



Playing, praying, praising

.....

The church is the biggest provider of playgroups in the UK. However, for fear of alienating parents, many fail to include any element of faith in the format. Through your support, here's how one church bucked that trend and in doing so bonded church and community together.



TINA
JOHNSON

Faith Guide
Tina Johnson
belongs to
a traditional
Anglican
church in
Knotty Ash. She
has a background
in Early Years

education, so when one of the few
mums in church asked if they could
set up a weekly playgroup, Tina
offered to organise it, supported by
others in the church and Diocese.

Although the playgroup was aimed
at non-church families, all agreed
that faith should be part of the
format. Appropriately named Praise
and Play, it's very relaxed and
informal – a safe space for parents
and children where they all feel
valued and accepted. Tina says,
'We start by sitting in a circle to
sing a welcome song which leads
to a Bible story. Then we get up
and move around to more music,
or the toddlers and mums might
just sit and cuddle. We also have

really simple crafts or activities that
include even the babies. Then we
have a snack, and the mums have
a chat and the kids have a chat.
Finally, we pray – mums, helpers
and children right round the circle
pray now. Some of the children are
actually leading the prayers by the
time they're school age!

NOT JUST FOR THE CHILDREN!

'Praise and Play is aimed at parents
as much as at the children. It's so
important that parents feel at home,
that the group is theirs. As they join
in, the idea is that they get a basic
understanding of faith, because
children really need that support at
home if they're to keep journeying
with Jesus.

'Often non-Christian parents have
a real fear around the language of

.....
“ You've got to build
relationships, get to
know them. ”
.....



faith and not being good enough or clever enough. You can't just go steaming in with the Bible. You've got to build relationships, get to know them, show that you really care about them. It starts to challenge their preconceptions.

'Only then can you really start talking about Jesus and the difference he makes to life. Only then will they be receptive. And the biggest lesson I've learned is that this all takes time.'

But patience has paid off: some of the Praise and Play parents and children have found faith for themselves. A few mums have even started to come to church services.

BUT WHAT NEXT?

More recently, Nic Findlay, SU's Revealing Jesus Pioneer based in Liverpool, has been helping

Tina to think through, 'What next?'

'I really wanted to bring together the playgroup on one side of the street, and church parents on the

other,' says Tina. 'Both groups were desperate for something to do with their children over the summer. So Nic and I set up "Praise and Play" sessions for them all – an hour of group games to get them mixing, then a communal lunch and chat.'

Nic says, 'We went from "What's your favourite tea?" to sharing what was going on in our lives and by the second week, the two groups really became one, all praying together for each other before we left. It was a really beautiful space to be part of.'

“ And we're so excited to see what God does here next! ”



EASTER WITHOUT THE JARGON

As Tina says, non-Christian parents can have a fear of the language of faith. It's vitally important that we communicate key Christian truths to them and their children in clear, simple terms. And there's a whole section on how to do that in terms of the resurrection in our latest Easter resource, *Easter Matters*. Download your free copy at www.su.org.uk/easter!

NIC
FINDLAY

JESUS

WEEK
BEGINNING
MAY 5

Prayers

Please pray for Tina, Huw (see page 10) and other Faith Guides, as well as the SU staff who are supporting them, as they connect with the next generation in relevant ways and help them to get to know Jesus.

SUNDAY 5

Give thanks to God for Praise and Play – for Faith Guide Tina, for her Early Years skills, for her responding to the need of a young mum and others in the community, and for making the group a safe space for caregivers and children to explore faith together.

MONDAY 6

Please pray for all in the Praise and Play playgroup, that all involved may discover the joy of knowing Jesus for themselves and have the opportunity and support they need to grow in faith.

TUESDAY 7

Give thanks to God for Faith Guide Huw (see page 10) and his church, and the deeper connections they have made with young people through the bike repair event.

WEDNESDAY 8

Please pray for Tina, Huw, Keefe and Nic, and for other Faith Guides and SU field staff across England and

Wales. Ask God to guide them as they look at ways to deepen connections with children and young people in their communities and help them to explore, respond and grow in faith.

THURSDAY 9

Give thanks to God for Nic, Keefe and the other SU Revealing Jesus Pioneers and Mission Enablers. Thank him for the skills and experience that each of them is able to bring to their role in supporting Faith Guides like Tina and Huw.

FRIDAY 10

Please ask God to inspire other ordinary Christians to become Faith Guides, and to use their situation and the gifts God has given them so that many more children and young people can discover Jesus.

SATURDAY 11

Praise God that faith can be simple and as small as a mustard seed – and simple enough for even young children to grasp!

Prayers

WEEK
BEGINNING
MAY 12

SUNDAY 12

Pray for the impact of SU Austria's Lego Town project which visits churches with 450 kg of Lego. Thirty to fifty children build a 10m² Lego Town and the team engage them in conversation and tell Bible stories.

MONDAY 13

Thank God for the work of SU across the world. Pray for Sue Winning as she oversees the grants process which enables projects and national movements to be supported financially.

TUESDAY 14

The Development Hub and Digital Solutions team are working together to make major changes to the resources section of our website, to enhance the experience for users and help them understand better how they can use the Revealing Jesus framework to reach the 95. Pray for the team as they turn ideas and designs into working solutions.

WEDNESDAY 15

Along with three Faith Guide churches, SU Cymru/Wales are developing a Revealing Jesus on a Bike project, involving bike repair and mountain bike trail rides (see page 10). Pray that a



Grow Community might develop out of this project, along with a camp for the young people involved, and that the young people might meet Jesus.

THURSDAY 16

Mission Partner **Christians 4 Education** in North Wales would love to see 'every school in our area a prayed for school' and, where possible, each local church sharing the good news of Jesus with a school. Join them in praying as they work towards this goal.

FRIDAY 17



Pray for Supporter Care Assistant Debbie Edge as she communicates with those who support us generously, both

in prayer and through donations. Join her in giving thanks for those who subscribe to our Bible Reading Guides and ask that God will continue to encourage them.

SATURDAY 18

Pray that more churches will catch the vision of the Revealing Jesus mission framework, and will look to appoint Faith Guides who can help children and young people explore faith together. Pray that we will be able to support them in appropriate ways.

Prayers

WEEK
BEGINNING
MAY 19

SUNDAY 19

Pray that the children, teenagers and families who are participating in the trauma healing groups led by a member of the SU Chile team who is a psychologist will experience deep healing and find the love of Jesus.

MONDAY 20

Thank God for all he has provided and pray that we may trust him for an increase in giving, so that we can reach more of the 95% of children and young people who have no connection with church.

TUESDAY 21

May is the birthday-month for two of the six language versions of *Guardians of Ancora*. Please pray for all the children playing the game but especially for those enjoying *Rojet nga Ankora* in Albanian and *Arwyr Ancora* in Welsh; it means so much for them to be able to use the app in their heart-languages.

WEDNESDAY 22

Families Inc. (which starts on Friday) is a new holiday for families with children who have additional



needs. Please pray for Helen Vinter and the team as they lead this, that it will be a place of welcome for everyone and that the families who attend will be refreshed and inspired.

THURSDAY 23

Pray for Mission Partner **Gobaith Mon** in Anglesey as their worker Amy returns from maternity leave and settles back into the work of the trust. Pray also for the trustee body as they look for new members.

FRIDAY 24



Pray for Sarah Bowey, Sports Mission Pioneer in the north east, as she encourages more churches to have a vision

for working with the 95 through sport. She asks that young people will, through the medium of sport, move from exploring the gospel to responding to Jesus' invitation to follow him.

SATURDAY 25

Bookworms is a fresh Faith Guide collection for 5- to 8-year-olds, introducing them to the person of Jesus through the Bible accounts and the idea of having a friendship with him. Please pray for the Development Hub team as they shape the resources.



Scripture Union

**EASTER
MATTERS**
RESOURCE PACK

GO WILD!
TO EMMAUS

EASTER
AROUND THE
WORLD

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STORIES
FROM
BOB HARTMAN

EXPLAINING
THE CROSS

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