



# Scripture Union

## Reflections on my first year as National Director

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### LOOKING BACK ON YOUR FIRST YEAR IN POST, WHAT HAS SURPRISED YOU?

Well, first of all, I can't believe that it's 12 months since I started in this role as National director at scripture Union England and Wales! But it's an interesting question – what has surprised me? Probably it's the reach of scripture Union.

It feels like we're everywhere, that everybody's got a scripture Union story to tell.

Did you know that it's the 25th anniversary of *It's Your Move*, one of Flagship resources that enables children to transition well from primary school into Secondary School?! What a wonderful mission opportunity to Reveal Jesus to the 95%. I was speaking to one young woman at a conference who ensures that on the island she lives every child gets a copy of that book as they move from primary to secondary.

Another thing that surprised me is the quality and fervour of our Faith Guides. Faith Guides are people who walk with children and young people to Reveal Jesus to them – often volunteers – who use their time and energy to do that, and I've been just amazed and surprised by the commitment and the stories that come back of the impact that they're having as they help young people Connect, Explore, Respond and Grow in their faith.

The final area is probably our Local Mission Partners. Some people don't realise but Scripture Union has almost 60 Local Mission Partners – schools work projects, community projects, individual charities that work with us to Reveal Jesus in the contexts they find themselves in, so the biggest surprise to me has been the reach of scripture Union.

### WHAT HAS EXCITED YOU THIS PAST YEAR?

What has excited me? Well, so much has excited me, actually.

It's been brilliant working with a fantastic staff team, but in terms of our mission and our impact one of the things that's been really excited about 2025 is the launch of our brand-new Resource Centre. Did you know that so much material to help people engage with 'the 95' is available on our website, completely free of charge? And it's been exciting to see the team working, developing quality resources and building a platform to make them accessible to so many people.

Another area that scripture Union is known for is our Bible-reading guides. We still produce daily Bible reading material, used by our supporters and a wider audience, to get them committed in reading the Bible and prayer. You know, we're convinced if people read the Bible, they will be more committed to make Jesus known. The Bible's the greatest missional text we've ever been given and this month we're going to be launching a brand-new app that will make that available to so many more people. So if you haven't checked it out, get on your phone and have a go at downloading it!

Another thing that has really excited me has been on Mission through Sport work. Sport is a



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fantastic vehicle for connecting with children and young people, and our team have been developing and finding ways that can enable us to do that. A couple of months ago, in Liverpool, we had a fantastic sports day that gathered about 19 or 20 unchurched young people. They explored the Bible together, did sports activities and finished around a campfire discussing the difference Jesus can make in their lives. One of the projects for 2025 we're calling Holy Ground. We recognise that in every community there's these Sports cages and multi-use sports cages where we would love Faith guides or churches to adopt those spaces, to go down to find young people that are there to work with them, to pray that they can find ways to use sport to engage with those children and young people we're committed to Revealing Jesus and we want to use every means possible to make that a reality.

### WHAT ARE YOU THANKFUL FOR?

Well, after 12 months what am I thankful for? The answer is there is so much to be thankful for. Firstly, our incredible supporters – people who tirelessly and faithfully give and support our work. It's been incredible to get together on our supporter prayer mornings and share stories and see people committed to praying for what we do, people who write us emails of encouragement or cheer us on in what we're doing. Thank you for the support that you give financially or through prayer or through encouragement; it makes a huge difference to our work!

Secondly, I'm thankful for the volunteers – those people who give of their time. Did you know that over 1,200 volunteers made our holidays and events program happen last year? That's people taking their holidays from work to be able to serve children and young people in our nation. We had a great story come in by email a couple of weeks ago where two young people who had had a fantastic holiday and journeyed with Jesus, and one of our staff team had had a significant impact in their lives. They emailed in to say that they were getting baptised in a couple of weeks and they would love this staff member to tune in online to be able to watch their baptism! Isn't that incredible – young people's lives being changed and transformed.

One of the other things I'm thankful for is an incredible staff team. It's been humbling to come and work alongside such a gifted team – a committed team – people who are innovative, imaginative, prepared to use their skills to Reveal Jesus to children and young people who don't engage with church. There's so much to be thankful for and it's been brilliant to Journey with volunteers, with supporters and with staff.

### WHAT ARE YOU EXCITED ABOUT FOR THE YEAR TO COME?

One thing I am particularly excited about for 2025 is this is the year we'll be holding our national conference. We have an opportunity every two years to gather people – volunteers, staff, Faith Guides – from across the country to come together. The theme this year is 'In it Together'. You know, we believe that when we realise we all have a part to play in this mission that God has called us to, our impact can be greater! So, please pray for us as we prepare and plan and enjoy that time of Celebration and challenge together in June 2025.

Another thing I'm excited about is continuing to add to the number of Faith guides who are faithfully serving in mission. We're keen to see that number increase from 550 through 600, seeing many, many, more people committed to Revealing Jesus.



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Another thing I'm particularly excited about as we get towards Easter is the start of our holidays and events program. We'll be having a host of events, in fact some new holidays starting for 2025. If you know somebody who would benefit from one of those, why don't you get them to sign up and be part of it, or maybe you want to volunteer and enjoy what's going on? I was blown away as I travelled around the different events last year, in fact I was in one particular field in Oxford and a girl runs over the field waving her bright yellow Bible. It was so bright I needed to put my sunglasses on because it was glaringly yellow! She asked me a question from Isaiah because one of the leaders felt that I might have a slightly better answer to the question. I tried my best to answer this question from an obscure passage at the end of Isaiah but then I noticed in her Bible that there were so many comments in the margins – so much stuff had been read – so I said to her, 'how long have you been a Christian? I'm assuming you've been a Christian ages?!'. She said, 'Only 3 months. In fact, I got baptised 6 weeks ago, which was when I was given this Bible.'. She said 'I've read the New Testament, so I thought it was about time to dive in to the Old!'. Isn't that incredible someone with such a hunger and thirst for scripture, that after 6 weeks of having this Bible already read the New Testament. I'm encouraged that children and young people around our nation are not just connecting with faith, they're not just exploring faith but we're starting to see children and young people respond and grow in their faith with Jesus Christ. Without your help it wouldn't be possible. Join with us in our mission to Reveal Jesus to 'the 95'.

### PLEASE CONTINUE TO PARTNER WITH US

One of the things that really excites me about scripture Union's Work is our commitment to equip the church to Reveal Jesus. If we can multiply a movement of people across this nation to Reveal Jesus to children and young people, we believe great things can happen!

Do you know your support could help us coach a Faith Guide, to give them ideas and methods to be able to make Jesus known. Your support could help us run training events for groups of Faith Guides in various communities, or your support could help us put on event days to model ways of mission happening in local villages, towns and cities.

Thank you for your support! It makes a difference, and we ask you to get on board this mission of Revealing Jesus to 'the 95'.

**You can make a donation at [su.org.uk/donate](https://su.org.uk/donate) and find daily prayer points at [su.org.uk/pray](https://su.org.uk/pray). Thank you!**