

Sunday School report for APCM 2017

Since April 2016 the Sunday School has continued to run on its usual pattern for the year. Although we lost Helen Hall as a leader in July 2016 we have been joined by Sarah Way; who has committed to helping with the Sunday School even though her own children are beyond the age range of our Sunday School and she did not previously attend St Mary's. Sarah has made a significant contribution to the Sunday School and events such as the Light Party in October and the popular pancake making could not have gone ahead without her support. She has also been DBS checked so that she can support in the Sunday School should parents, or volunteers other than the Sunday School leaders be running the session.

The three Sunday School leaders are Nicola Joyce, Jo Adams and Anne Straight. From July 2017 both Jo Adams and Anne Straight will be stepping down as Sunday School leaders. This is a very significant loss in leadership capacity and it is unclear at the moment in what format the Sunday School will continue in September 2017.

In order to address the need for more Sunday School leaders, parents will be asked to volunteer to lead some of the coming summer term Sunday School sessions. Daphne Harrison is also planning to lead some training during June or July for anyone who is interested in becoming a Sunday School leader.

The Sunday School has tried some innovations to its usual activities this year. In the October half term a great deal of effort was put into running a 'Light Party' to reclaim Halloween as a Christian Festival. A Party for around 20 children was prepared for and around 12 children attended.

In the autumn term we looked at Old Testament stories as usual but with a particular focus on prayer. Caroline Rink, a children's outreach worker, was invited to the Prayer Day held at St Mary's in November. She prepared a range of children's craft activities linked to prayer, different ways to pray and aids to prayer, but sadly no children attended the event.

There have also been two social events organised for Sunday School parents; 2 or 3 parents attended the first event in November but only the Sunday School Leaders attended the second event in February.

Although there has been greater fluctuation in week on week Sunday School attendance this year in comparison to last year (ranging from 1 child on one week to 30 children on another), the overall number of children on the Sunday School register remains between 40-50. Activities organised outside of normal Sunday School sessions have not been as well attended or supported as activities which happen within the normal Sunday School sessions. For example Saturday events like the making of the Mothering Sunday posies and the Sunday School church flower arrangements were completed by 2 or 3 of the Sunday School leaders alone, however Sunday School family support for the Queen's Jubilee street party prepared during the Sunday Service in June 2016 was much higher.

The Sunday School leaders are grateful to Daphne Harrison who has supported the Sunday School by helping with planning and events and also to Diane Williams who has led Sunday School sessions when none of the other leaders have been available.

Nicola Joyce

April 2017