

ST MARY'S RIVERHEAD SUNDAY SCHOOL

REPORT TO APCM APRIL 2013

St Mary's Sunday School has had another busy and successful year. Around 20 children are currently registered and on average 17 children attend each term time session; slightly down on last year. In all groups we continue to benefit from former Sunday School children returning and joining in. We welcome the participation of the older children as they support and inspire the regular attendees and generate an extra element of fun. We have also been delighted to welcome some younger members and their families to Sunday School.

Overall, our basic routine has not changed significantly. We start with a short greeting and prayers and then the children are divided by age into one of three groups for their teaching and activity work. We welcome all children aged 3 to 11 years. Red group is for year 5 & 6 children, Blue group for years 2,3 & 4 and Green group is for reception and pre-school children. We find that there is normally a significant drop in attendance over the half term holidays and so we have tended to combine some or all of the groups at these times. These sessions tend to incorporate some kind of game or activity in order to demonstrate to the children that we can learn from play as well as from more structured teaching. For example, during the February half term we had a pancake making session, which was great fun (and incident free) whilst on other half term Sundays the children practiced their acting skills.

Although the basic structure of the sessions may not have changed very much, we have endeavoured to vary the content of the sessions. We started off the church year with a series of sessions on the Old Testament (Creation, Adam & Eve, Cain & Abel etc); then a return to the Susan Sayers 'Living Stones' for part of the programme up to Christmas; followed by a series of sessions on The Miracles in the spring term. The Sunday School children were thrilled to have the opportunity to present one of the Old Testament stories in the form of a skit to the full congregation. "Noah's Ark" was greatly appreciated by the all age congregation. I would like to thank Gaynor Perry for making this so successful.

Apart from our regular sessions we have had an active programme of events during the year. In June we helped arrange the flowers in Church and decorated the window sills with a fine display of baskets and vases. In September we ran a very successful cake stall to raise funds for a local schoolboy requiring a big operation (Johnny Pantry). Then in December the children performed our traditional nativity play, which was loved by all. We had some brave young visitors on the day who got dressed up and joined in which made the event all the more special. Once again many thanks to Diane Williams for providing material and support and to Robert McClintock for his technical help and guidance.

Earlier this month members of the Sunday School helped present the Mothering Sunday service. The format of the service was very varied encompassing a talk on the history of Mothering Sunday and specific bible stories about mothers (Moses, Ruth, Solomon and Hannah) as well as prayers and beautiful music. The children were delighted that so many of the congregation took part in the "butterfly" session – capturing so many special thoughts and memories of our

mothers. The vicar has asked us to compile a special scrapbook! The service was rounded off with a presentation of hyacinth bulbs to the mums of the Sunday School children and, of course, the traditional spring posies for all the mums and carers in church. The Mother's Union helped us to make over 90 posies in total and this allowed us to provide one to each of the elderly residents of Abbeyfield.

Looking forward to next week, the floral theme will be in evidence again as the Sunday School children set up the Easter garden on Good Friday (already freshly dug up and ready!). We hope that members of the congregation will be able to admire their handiwork. For Easter day the children will be helping to decorate two Easter trees, which will be placed on the Church window sills.

Sunday School is supported by a faithful group of leaders and helpers and we have enjoyed superb levels of continuity and commitment over the last couple of years. I would like to say a big thank you to all the leaders and helpers for their support, particularly to Ruth Merson and Gaynor Perry who have worked so hard over the last year in so many different ways and Helen Hall for leading many of the introduction sessions. We continue to be a committed team who all work together to provide a happy and enjoyable environment for the children in our care.

We look forward to another successful year, and hopefully, just a few more new faces!

David Holmes

Sunday School Co-ordinator

20th March 2013

Youth Group

A special mention to our Sunday School "graduates" (Molly, Anna, Emily, Laura and Emma) for the special youth service on 10th February which they prepared and presented so wonderfully. Thank you to them, their Sunday School helpers and of course, Janet for music and Christine for her custom made Olympic colour floral creations. A great team effort!!