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**God’s big for children**

Did you know that the biggest congregation in the wider ABCs is the 70 or so people, parents, children and grandparents, participating in Messy Church on the second Sunday of the month at Askham Bryan College? For the last 5 years this has been run by Emma Peers, a fellow LLM trainee.

I attended this gathering for the first time last Sunday. It was at the home of the Poor Clares in Askham Bryan, so that we could use their big field to set up craft tables on the theme of fish, beaches and boats, explore the story of the Miraculous Catch of Fish in John 21 and enjoy a BBQ together. About 45 people attended, from babies to grannies, coming from Askham Bryan and the surrounding villages, particularly Copmanthorpe. Emma tasked me with “giving the talk”, which I have to say is very different from preaching a sermon! But very fun.

As I asked the children questions about Jesus and his story, I loved that I found faith there. “He burst out of the grave after he died” said one little boy. They could relate the campfire biscuits, woven boats and clay fish they had been making to the story of the risen Jesus encouraging his disciples and making them breakfast on the beach. They could apply the lesson that Jesus provided the disciples with more fish than they needed, and so we can live generously too. A small girl suggested that if her Mum asked her to tidy her room, she could offer to tidy her brother’s room as well!

So why am I writing about this?

How many of us were introduced to the Christian faith as children?

How many children and families do we see in our regular church services?

Let’s pray that God will give us a heart like his, a heart for children and young people, a heart to see families come to faith and grow in faith. In Mark 9:36-37 Jesus says *whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes Me.*

Messy Church needs your help going forwards. You can get “hands on” like Philip and I just did, and like the few beautiful, faithful volunteers who already help out when they can. Shout out to Emma and Simon, Christine, Jo, Joann, Lisa, Daniel and Vicar Geoff. Don’t feel that if you volunteer you have to be there every week, because we are all busy people and every little helps. If you can’t turn up, there are plenty of other ways you can support, like giving, praying, and talking about it.

If you do want to volunteer speak to Vicar Geoff.

Let’s get excited about what God is doing with children and families in our villages and be part of it in whatever way we can!

Rachel (Trainee LLM)

**Pray for:**

* Children and families who attend Messy Church
* Messy Church as it navigates change and plans for the future
* Children living in conflict zones that they might encounter Jesus
* For God’s Kingdom of peace and harmony to come and for His will to be done

**Give thanks for:**

* Messy Church in our locality and its work to bring the Gospel to children and families
* Those who introduced us to Jesus as children
* The gift of each day that God gives us and the opportunities He gives for us to use those days for Him and His Kingdom