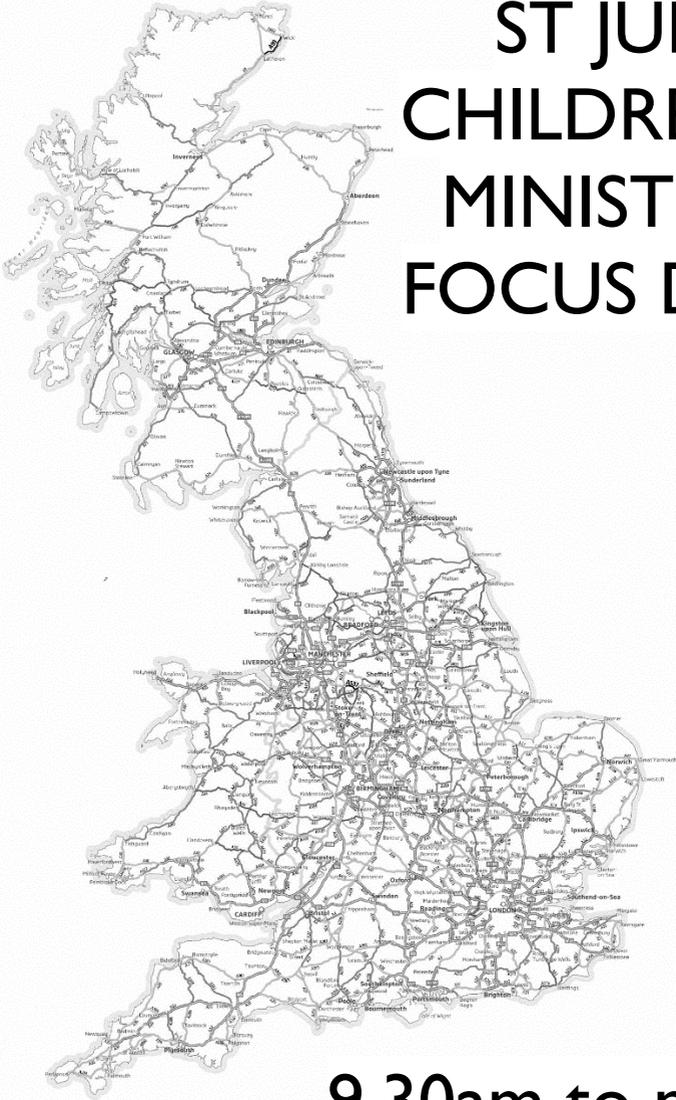


ST JUDE'S CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES FOCUS DAY



9.30am to noon
9 February 2019

**FROM THE CHURCH FOCUS
DAY 13 OCTOBER 2018**

**Laying a Path's
Foundations**

A. Where are we?

B. What is our destination?

C. How might we get from A to B?

D. Start our journey.

(Then keep checking A to D)

Much of today's framework for exploration uses phrase that come from some more detailed conversations both at our Church Focus Day and previously at other Church gatherings of a model of church life called 'Gardens, Dining Rooms and Kitchens'. If this is new to you, please do refer to the blog on our church website at <http://judes.org.uk/gardens-dining-rooms-kitchens/>

St Jude's has to undergo a serious re-evaluation of itself and how it will need to shape itself for the future. As part of that, we had our Church Focus Day where we set out some of the basics of how we will, at some point, need look at where the Church is right now before planning anything for the future. We had conversation, prayer and reflection on scripture that seems to suggest some ambitions that Jesus lay before his Church. These are not limited to, but primarily described by two areas of scripture - the Great Commandments and the Great Commission. Simply put: loving God, our Neighbour and making disciples of Jesus who can then continue in the same way.

Lastly there was the recognition that if we could discover

A) where we are, and if we could generally agree on

B) what our destination aim was,

the challenge would then be the one we need to figure out and resolve - how do we now, from where we stand, get from A to B?

The Church Focus Day was not about resolving any detail on the "Where are we?" or "What is our destination?" questions. We did not try to answer how we might get from one to the other either. Rather it was to give us some theology and tools that at a later point, different groups could then use to get deeper into these questions for varied parts of the Church.

Today is about the Children and Young People we have connection with. Our eventual aim or destination may bring in conversations around those we hope to reach, but we will start with where we are – today. We don't need to complete or resolve everything or anything.

PRAYER

Before we move into thinking about young people, we'll quietly ponder Proverbs 27:23-24 below for a moment, and then pray.

*"Know the state of your flocks,
and put your heart into caring for your herds,
for riches don't last forever,
and the crown might not be passed to the next generation."*

A. WHERE ARE WE?

During the Church Focus Day, we used a simplified whole Church grid for the analogy of 'Gardens, Dining Rooms and Kitchens' for 'Guests, Friends & Family' - to play with it and see it as a potential future tool that might help us find our strengths, weaknesses - and gaps.

If we try to be honest with ourselves, maybe stepping outside anything we're involved in and trying to look back in as if we're a Guest ourselves, can we step by step explore what we do, how we do it - and what we may currently not do - in each area of our connections with Children and Young People?

(Need Post-it-Notes and large sheets of paper)

The Starting Point – 'Guests' & 'Gardens'

1. The question of 'Where are we?' is best begun with the 'Gardens', but not as ministries, rather first - who are the 'Guests'? Who are the Children and Young people we already know or have contact with?

2. Now having those in mind, what are the Gardens we make available? What do we offer at those first points of contact?

3. As we will now talk about 'Guests', in some detail, how well do we welcome them? What's good? What might be improved?

To do this, we probably need to metaphorically 'step outside' and 'look back in' as a 'Guest'. How well do we connect, at that 'Guest' point of each of our 'Gardens', with the different groups? *(N.B. At this point we are only looking at the ease with which families or children can be welcomed and included as 'Guests', not how we connect more or disciple anyone)*

Next Steps – ‘Friends’ and ‘Dining Rooms’

4. For each of the groups we have already recognised, how do we encourage them into our varied ministries? One measure might be how many are long term or maybe only come for awhile and then stop. How included are our ‘Guests’ that they feel comfortable being ‘Friends’? Do they all ‘enjoy our company’?

5. What do we offer to increase the Church’s engagement with the Children, Young People (and their families).

Later Steps into – ‘Family’ and the ‘Kitchen

In the ‘Gardens, Dining Rooms and Kitchens’ analogy – the ‘Kitchen’ covers the varied environments where we fully include people as ‘Family’. It is when we enable them to (age dependent of course) help do things, ask questions, be helped by other members of the ‘Family’. It’s where they can learn about ‘Family’ values and beliefs.

In the image of the ‘Kitchen’, the ‘Sink’ is about helping those who join the family to learn how to serve others. The ‘Oven’ is where things are completed in the ‘Kitchen’, so with Children it would relate to how we enable them to become a functioning Christian young person/adult – now within a Church family? Patently this is unlikely to be a function within either our Tots Time (or Pre-School), but we might expect ourselves to help it in its early stages in Jude’s Club or the Brigades maybe?

6. With the above in mind, we now can see where we are in each of the strands of our children’s connections. If we begin to place these into a grid in some way, what connects and feeds well into another, or what doesn’t, we’ll probably start to see some gaps. *(This is going to be where our honest appraisal will probably be the hardest and it will help us greatly if we do this fully, before we start to decide on what our aims or destinations might be for each group.)*

B. WHAT IS OUR DESTINATION?

We may not get to this point today or we may want to go and ponder more, or we might have found the prior process more straightforward than expected. So, it's probably helpful to lay out what the next steps might be, if we get to it – great! If not, at least we'll know where we're heading.

Setting a goal, (or a destination or an aim) needs to be achievable. If we set out thinking our aim is for every child to become a missionary by the age of 7, we will fail and get very disillusioned. Equally, if we set a goal that's unlikely to bring a child to a point where they can be an active disciple of Jesus, we will also feel unsettled as we know that's not what God asks of the Body of Christ.

We may feel uncomfortable with an aim – but if we don't have one, we'll never hit it. If we do, we might miss more than we hit, but at least we can then be aware of what does and doesn't help.

7. For each group we currently connect with, what might be a suitable aim in a spectrum from someone who doesn't know Jesus to someone who is following him? Maybe use a simple method first of 0 to 10, where 0 is a child from a family with no Christian connection or input to 10, a child fully connected in with a Church and having the age relevant knowledge and faith in Jesus that might describe them for their age as - a Disciple.

8. Can we manage to now put that score into a written aim for each group?

C. HOW MIGHT WE GET FROM A TO B?

This isn't really for today, but again it is likely to be helpful to know what may need to be considered soon.

For each of our Ministries, possibly subdivided because of ages, we will need to plan how we get from where we are to where we are finding we want to be. Therefore, we will need to generate something that can be expanded on within each ministry that will be a working document for that ministry.

The 'A - Where We Are' section will require careful writing so that it avoids any criticism of the past but is honest about our findings of the present. Our exercise today is to work on where we are and where we want to be, not 'where we were'.

The 'B - Where We Want To Be' section within each ministry will need to reflect the appraisal of a goal that is a challenge, but not an unreasonable or impossible one.

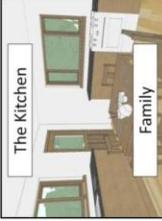
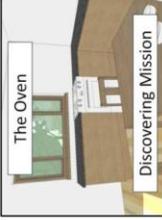
That document, circulated with everyone who helps form that ministry, with time so that it can be carefully considered, will be the basis for the penultimate work – "C - How do we get from A to B?". This will require consideration of things like volunteers, training and budgets and then...

D. START OUR JOURNEY...

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P.S. Please don't feel pressured by today. We want to encourage everyone in open and honest conversation and consideration to be blessed for taking our starting Proverb seriously and prayerfully....

*"Know the state of your flocks,
and put your heart into caring for your herds,
for riches don't last forever,
and the crown might not be passed to the next generation."*

	 <p>The Garden</p> <p>Guests</p>	 <p>The Dining Room</p> <p>Friends</p>	 <p>The Kitchen</p> <p>Family</p>	 <p>The Sink</p> <p>Discovering Ministry</p>	 <p>The Oven</p> <p>Discovering Mission</p>																														
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FOCUS DAY

A 'Gardens, Dining Rooms and Kitchens' Grid