

Children & Families Work at APC

April 2023 – April 2024

Sunday morning groups for children:

This year we have continued to run Totzone, for babies from birth to children in Reception class (which meets in the Little Fishes Room) and MegaKidz, for children in years 1-6 (this group meets upstairs in the Beacon Room). Each group explores the Bible at an age-appropriate level, using stories, songs, discussion, drama, videos, crafts, games, puzzles and prayer. TotZone has grown since this time last year and we are seeing more consistency in the numbers attending. MegaKidz is still quite unpredictable in terms of attendance, but we have a great time whoever comes along. We still have standby staff for those weeks when attendance is high, so that we are ready for growth. At our recent planning and prayer meeting we reviewed the ideas we came up with in January 2023 in the hope of helping families to engage with church in a more consistent way. These include:

- A monthly email to parents to let them know what activities have been planned for the children's groups that week, so that they can get their children excited about coming.
- A monthly post on the church's Facebook and Instagram pages, and also some of the local Aldridge community Facebook pages, with details of what is planned for the children's groups that week, and a general invitation to members of the community to come along. We hope this is at least making some of what happens at 10:25 Centre Church more widely known around Aldridge, but it would probably be more effective if more people liked the Instagram posts and liked and shared the Facebook posts. These posts go out on the Thursday or Friday before the 3rd Sunday of the month, so perhaps more members of the congregation who are on social media could look out for them?
- A monthly slot at the end of the 10:25 service for one or other of the children's groups to come back in and explain what part of the Bible they have been looking at, and what sort of fun and excitement they have had while doing so.
- An annual "Picnic Sunday" when everyone is encouraged to invite friends to church and to a picnic in the church centre garden straight afterwards. We tried this for the first time on 16th July 2023, and it was considered to be a success, not least because there are people who came to church for the first time that Sunday who have since become part of our church family.

We decided that all the above initiatives were worth continuing, and we also discussed some new ideas such as better use of the Cooper and Jordan noticesheet and noticeboards, parenting courses, adding more spiritual content to the Summer Drop-in sessions and starting a scheme whereby older people could "adopt" a young family and pledge to pray regularly for them.

TotZone

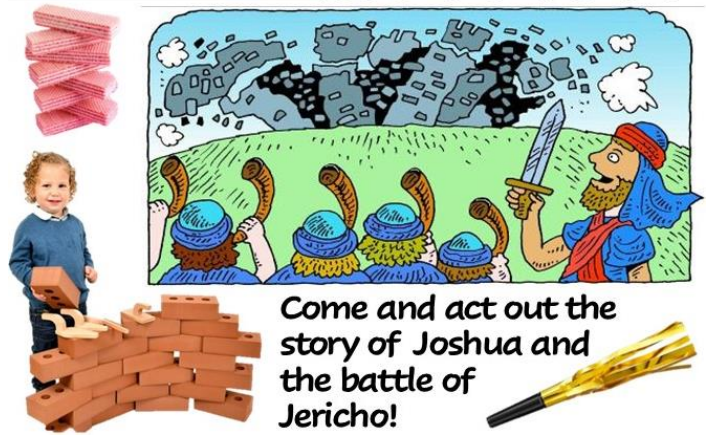
Birth - Reception



MegaKidz



School
Years
1 to 6



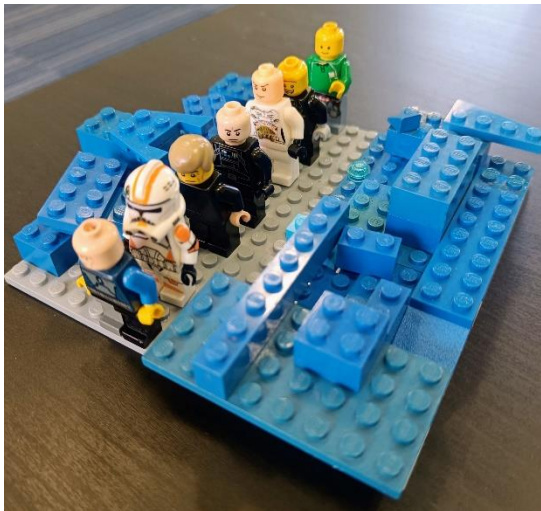
Come and act out the story of Joshua and the battle of Jericho!





MegaKidz
 School Years 1 to 6
 Stories, games, crafts, quizzes and loads of fun!

What might be about to happen to cheer these people up? Come along on Sunday and find out!



What do we know about
JOSHUA?

Carried on with Moses work

the walls collapsed.

people cheered and blew a trumpet

Josh is Big

Josh saw God

He had courage

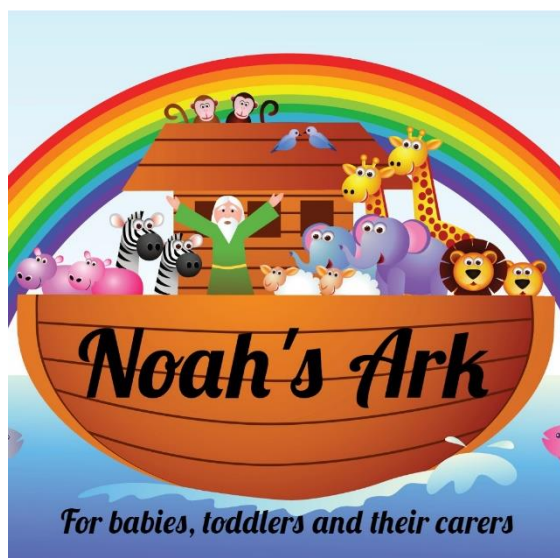


TableTop Church:

This year TableTop church has continued to be planned and led once a month by a team under the leadership of our curate, Jon Morley. In this service the congregation is based around tables to facilitate discussion and interaction, deepen relationships between different families and individuals and engage with the Bible passage in many different, creative and contemplative ways.



Midweek Carers and Toddlers Group:



Attendance at Noah's Ark has fluctuated this year, but the Parents and carers who come continue to be very appreciative of the time and effort which goes into running these sessions. The children have a wonderful time! Our sessions run in the Church Centre from 9:30 – 11:15 on Thursday mornings in term time. Story time - just before we all go home - is a great opportunity to share Bible stories with families who do not all come to church. We also often have a prayer activity, which families are encouraged to engage with. Every term we also hold a "Fun Service" in the Church building. For more details of what goes on at a typical Noah's Ark session take a look at the website: <https://aldridgeparish.org.uk/under18s/noahsark/noahsark.php>



Midweek Group for New and Expectant Parents:



This is aimed at befriending and supporting first time parents of small babies, and those expecting their first child, particularly those who would find a calm and quiet atmosphere beneficial. Not all of our regulars are first time parents – some have older children at school or nursery – but we currently have room to accommodate them too, and recognize that our first time parents benefit from chatting to more experienced parents too. Our sessions run from 1:30 until 3pm in the Beacon Room. We have a small team committed to the running of *Bump & Baby Ark* but we do really need a few more volunteers to ensure that we will be able to keep it open from week to week. If you have time on a Wednesday (around 1pm to 3:30pm allowing for set up and clear up) which you could give, either weekly, fortnightly or monthly, please let me know.



Evening Group for Children in Years 5 & 6:

Energized is a lively, fun evening where we learn from the Bible through games, quizzes, crafts, snacks, videos, puzzles, discussion and prayer. This year we have 6 kids who regularly attend – so plenty of room for new members! If you know any children in Years 5 or 6 who might enjoy this group do recommend us to them. We have a committed team, but are often quite stretched. Please do prayerfully consider whether it might be right for you to join us.



Worship Activity Bags:

This Easter saw the launch of our Worship Activity Bags! These bags, beautifully printed by Rachel Ruane and filled with toys, books and activities carefully selected by Denise Summers, now live in the church building for the benefit of any children who might come to 9:15 Church @ The Green or Wednesday Worship.



Seasonal Events:

- **Summer Drop-ins** – On Thursday mornings in August we welcomed people of all ages into the church centre to enjoy our hospitality. There were toys for babies and toddlers, games and craft activities for older children, a very popular bouncy castle, and board games and a chance to chat for adults. We provided free refreshments (although people were generous with their donations). On each of The sessions between 97 and 125 people attended and over the course of the five mornings we welcomed over 300 different people, many of whom are not regularly involved in the church. A big thank you to everyone who gave their time and energy in order that these drop-in sessions could take place .

Aldridge Parish Church's
Summer Drop-in 
Aldridge Church Centre
Thursday 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th & 31st
August
10:00am – 12:30pm
Games, toys, crafts and refreshments for all ages
Free entry



- **Light Party** – On 31st October a wonderful team put on a Light Party - an alternative to Halloween. This took place in the church building. It was a brilliant evening full of lively fun, singing, crafts, food, discos and celebrated the fact that Jesus is the Light of the World.



- **Christmas Market** – once again we joined forces with the other Anglican churches in Aldridge to run a stall at the village Christmas market in the shopping centre. We provided free crafts, goody bags and a Nativity photobooth, and invited everyone to our Christmas services.

- **Good Friday Faith & Fun** – For the second year running we were able to hold this event in the church centre on the morning of Good Friday. It was an opportunity to invite our friends, our family and our whole community, to come and enjoy some fun as well as taking a moment to reflect upon the significance of the season. Activities available in the church centre included a bouncy castle, table tennis, table football, snooker, Easter crafts, board games, a LEGO area, a large indoor baby area, prayer stations in the Beacon Room and Croft Room and people available to pray with those who wanted this. There was also an Easter Story trail (with a puzzle to solve) leading across the Croft from the shopping centre to the church centre. Answer sheets for the trail were available from the church centre, at WHSmith in the village, and were also given out to shoppers by volunteers in the precinct. It was a busy and popular event with 141 people attending, in addition to our volunteer team of 25 people.





What's Next?

On the Thursday of May half term (30th May) Rachel Ruane and I will be hosting a baby and toddler friendly showing of the popular animated film "Despicable Me" in the Church Centre. There will be no charge to watch the film, but we will be selling reasonably priced snacks. We think this will be popular with families looking for ways to entertain the kids during the school holidays, especially those with noisy or restless children who they might be nervous about taking to the cinema. Please pray that we will have the opportunity for some good conversations about our motivation for serving our community in this way.

Free Family Film

DESPICABLE ME Thursday 30th May 2024 DESPICABLE ME
Aldridge Parish Church Centre

Arrive from **9.30am** the film will start at **10am**
 The film lasts for **1 hour and 30 minutes.**

Family friendly animated film **suitable for all ages.**
 No cost to see the film but there will be reasonably priced snacks and drinks available

Noisy babies and toddlers who can't sit still are very welcome!
 Any questions please contact APC on 01922 455229
 or email events@aldridgeparish.org.uk



Finally I have been particularly grateful for your support this year when I had to take some sick leave. It was such a comfort to me to know that you were praying for me, and a huge encouragement to hear of the way in which people were stepping up to ensure that our children's work continued well in my absence. It was a clear reminder to me that this is a team effort – I can never do this job without your help and support, but this has been all the more so this year. If you are reading this and feeling a calling to one of the aspects of our children's ministry please do get in touch to let me know by emailing me on jennydoel@aldridgeparish.org.uk or via the church office.

Jenny Doel (Children & Families Worker) 29th April 2024