

Christian Playgroup Network



Term 3
2009

PWP Session #5:
Friendship
Evangelism

Chris Barnett
in the
spotlight

Tips and Tricks
for dealing with
Challenging Behaviour
in your Playgroup

Get a workout
that will last
a lifetime in
Sue Nicholls
MARRIAGE GYM

connect
with your
Playgroup
families with
Dorothy Hughes
article

Acknowledge your Playgroup by nominating
them in the Playgroup Victoria awards

FROM THE PRESIDENT

A note from Ruth!

As you are reading this newsletter I trust that you are encouraged in your ministry with preschoolers and their families.

One of the areas that the CPN wants to continue to develop amongst our Playgroups is the linking of leaders that are wanting to be intentional about being missional. Getting together with others and hearing each others stories is part of this.

I would like to encourage you to put in your diaries Saturday 24th October as a morning not to be missed. This is our Annual conference and AGM which this year is being held at Holy Trinity Anglican Church in Doncaster. Further details are in the flyer attached.

Come along and be part of the conversations about unpacking mission through Playgroup...

- what are people doing that is working
- what resources are out there that we can partner with in our mission to the local community
- how are groups building bridges with the community, and much more...

We will be providing a delicious brunch as well as having resources for you to browse at or purchase.

Looking forward to seeing you there!



X Ruth

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FEEDBACK

We would appreciate your feedback on the website, and suggestions for helpful links and material. You are invited to email these suggestions to Judy Harris at: juanha@dcsi.net.au.

CPN WEBSITE

Don't forget to visit us at <http://www.cpn.org.au>.

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term dates 2009

Term 3 - 13th July to 18th September

Term 4 - 5th October to 18th December

training events for playgroup leaders and teams in 2009

TERM 3

Saturday September 12th Warragul
Church of Christ - Rural east regional
event

TERM 4

Saturday October 24th 9.30am – 12.30
at Holy Trinity Anglican Church,
Doncaster – Unpacking Mission through
Playgroups - A Christian Playgroup
Conference and AGM.

See flyer for further details of this event.

For further information about any of these events, contact Ruth Kernick on 03 9870 7730, or your denominational representative.

IF you have a fabulous playgroup, consider if you could nominate someone for a Playgroup Victoria award. It is a way of acknowledging the special contributions that have been made to your playgroup ministry, and also can be a positive way to lift the profile of church-run playgroups.

marriage GYM

Most people want to have marriages and relationships that last and that are rewarding and satisfying

- Sue Nicholls
Christian Playgroup Network Vice-
President

I am always looking out for things I can offer to playgroup families and MarriageGym for Women deserves a mention!

It is a ten week marriage program designed to be done either in a small group with a coach, or individually online, and has been beneficial for hundreds of marriages. The testimonies on the website www.MarriageGym.com speak volumes about the lives and marriages that have been transformed.

Most people, including those in our playgroups, want to have marriages and relationships that last and that are rewarding and satisfying. Unfortunately, most of us do not enter a relationship with the skills and knowledge to make this happen – hence the high divorce rate and large number of people who stay married but are unhappy.

MarriageGym does something

that popular TV shows and women's magazines do not – it actually teaches many of the skills that are essential to a successful relationship. One thing I love about MarriageGym is that it is really suitable to be used in a non-Christian setting – it is chock-full of Christian values and principles, but does not assume that the participants are Christian. The final chapter encourages women to consider their spiritual side and the inner peace that can only be found in a relationship with God, but it does so very gently.

The course itself is very comprehensive, looking at areas such as love languages, differences between men and women, the importance of praise, growing through conflict and embracing your femininity. There are lots of practical exercises, some to be done with your man, throughout the course and this is also one of its strengths.

I would love to see MarriageGym

offered to all women in our playgroups.

The breakdown of relationships and high divorce rate is scary, to say the least.

When we get to know the women in our groups well enough, it is really obvious that there are lots of hurting people and that relationship issues are the cause of a great deal of pain. Being able to suggest something that has proven itself over many years is such a blessing!

The good news is that there are wonderful coaches willing to give their time and energy to run groups and also train new coaches, and the process is really simple. You can start by looking at www.MarriageGym.com and reading more about the course – maybe even doing the self-paced course yourself. You can then get in touch with MarriageGym about groups in your area and how you can promote them in your



playgroup through brochures, posters and email. The course has been run very successfully through playgroups in a number of locations and I feel that it has enormous potential to be used in this way.

I am happy to hear from anyone with questions.

mandsnicholls@iprimus.com.au
or 9796 1193

CHRIS BARNETT

IN PROFILE

1. How would you describe yourself in a sentence?

Shy, retiring and uncomfortable talking about myself.

2. How long have you been part of the Christian Playgroup Network?

Since May 2008, when I volunteered to attend on behalf of the Uniting Church as an "alternate" whenever Joy Williams was unavailable .

3. What role do you play on the Christian Playgroup Network?

I am usually the token male at the Executive meetings. My role seems to be one of bringing a perspective that is quite different to that usually associated with the "hands-on" aspects of Playgroups.

4. During the week I...

am based at the Centre for Theology and Ministry (Parkville) as the Children & Families Ministry support person for the Uniting Church in Victoria and Tasmania. I also endeavour to be home as much as possible with my family.

5. My family consists of...

The amazing Beth and our two

fantastic boys – Timothy in Gr. 6 and Ben in Gr. 4.

6. I am currently reading...

"Nurturing Child and Adolescent Spirituality: Perspectives from the world's religious traditions", edited by Kare Marie Yust, and have recently finished "Through the eyes of a child: New insights in theology from a child's perspective", edited by Anne Richards and Peter Privett.

7. What do you love doing?

I love playing with my boys (especially whatever sport is in season), spending time with Beth, being at the beach as a family and doing my job well. I really enjoy encouraging and supporting individuals and congregations that are making a difference in the lives of children and their families.

8. What do your friends say about you?

???

9. Finish this sentence "If only I could..."

know how to answer the previous question!



Challenging Behaviour in Young Children

What is Behaviour ?

- Communication
- Response to the environment
- Making sense of the world
- Testing limits
- Choice
- Reaction to own feelings or feelings of others

Some examples of challenging behaviour at Playgroup -

Children between 18 months and 4 years are usually displaying the

most challenging behaviour.

- attention seeking
- not doing what they are asked
- Destroying property
- behaviour that causes injury to self or others
- hitting, kicking, scratching, slapping
- ignoring
- shyness
- non-attentive

Helpful hints in our expectations:

About the child -

Might be dealing with an exceptional event eg new baby, death of a family member, loss of a parents job.

Might be a physical problem eg poor hearing or allergies resulting in frustration or changes in behaviour

Not all children who come to Playgroup are equipped to handle what confronts them.

About your Playgroup environment -

Is it too busy or too big ?

It might not provide enough stimulation, supervision or activities for the group

For the parent/ carer -

Be responsible for your child at all times

Don't ignore your child's bad behaviour

Try not to feel guilty or embarrassed

Communicate with others at Playgroup

Identify and act on the important issues such as safety and well being

Strategies for changing behaviour patterns:

- Child under 2 years -
- Ignore negative behaviour
- Redirect the child away from the challenging situation

- Be positive and encourage positive behaviour

Child 2-3 years

- Explain appropriate ways to use challenging behaviour - "James, apples are for biting"

- Redirect the child away from the challenging behaviour

- Be positive and encourage positive behaviour

Child over 3 years

- Encourage James to look at Georgia. Ask James "How do you think Georgia is feeling?" Begin to make James aware of how his actions affect other children

- Redirect the child away from the challenging behaviour

- Be positive and encourage positive behaviour



DON'T do at Playgroup -

- Scream
- Never use physical punishment on other children
- Get in a power struggle
- Expect perfection
- Embarrass or humiliate a child
- Compare children
- Threaten or make empty promises
- Argue with a child
- Use bribes

Give attention only for undesirable behaviour

DO at Playgroup -

- Give clear rules and limits
- Give children enough space to play
- Set practical limits on the number of children in a group (we recommend 12-15 families)
- Give encouragement
- Provide age appropriate activities
- Be warm, caring and affectionate

Observe behaviour closely

Give choices

Understand children's developmental stage

Change the environment if necessary eg if something is not working pack it up !

Use positive reinforcement and language

Listen to children and encourage them to listen to you

Follow through

Have and follow a routine

Arrange materials so they can be used safely and with minimum help

Talk to parents about their child's behaviour outside playgroup time

SOURCES

Playgroup Victoria Manual (2006) pg 78 -79.

Playgroup Victoria Training Module - Guiding Children's Behaviour at Playgroup.

Baptist Early Childhood Team Training Module- Challenging Behaviour in Young Children.

Connected with Playgroup families

- Dorothy Hughes
*Christian Playgroup Network
Committee Secretary*

An important aspect of playgroup ministry is the intentional and genuine formation of relationships within the playgroup. We all respond to the people who show real interest in us. We all enjoy being around people who care enough about

us to learn our names, ask after our families, and are willing to listen when they ask, "How are you?" Playgroup is such a natural opportunity to form lasting friendships, not just between mums, but also across generations. If your church has people with time to spare and the ability to be a friend, then there is a place for them in the playgroup ministry.

The playgroup leaders have a

key role in creating a culture of caring relationships. Genuine loving care is not confined to the two hours of playgroup! I have found that making contact with families outside playgroup time – phone calls to ask how things are going if a family is away; visiting families at home, stopping to chat at school, in the supermarket, wherever playgroup families are encountered – is a simple but effective way of communicating the message that the leaders are interested in the playgroup families as real people, not just as names on a list or statistics for a program.

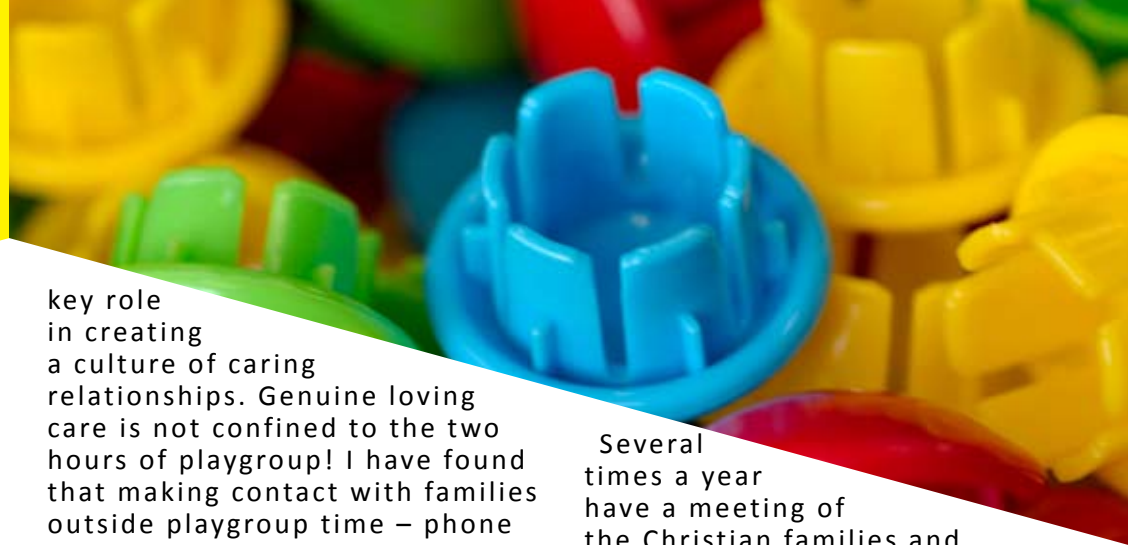
The Christian families within the playgroup should be encouraged and trained to be intentional and genuine in forming friendships with not yet Christian families, and extending those friendships past the playgroup boundaries. Although as Christians we want to glorify and serve God, most of us appreciate support and encouragement as we learn how to be ambassadors for Christ. Playgroup leaders can have a huge impact simply by talking to Christian playgroup members about the role of the Christian families in the playgroup.

Several times a year have a meeting of the Christian families and other members of the playgroup team to encourage them in playgroup ministry. This is a great opportunity to offer some training on topics that will help people turn their involvement in playgroup into an opportunity for ministry. Suggested topics include:

- how to listen effectively (a basic skill for pastoral care),
- basic Christian doctrine (the essentials of Christian faith),
- communicating the gospel through relationship, word and action (friendship evangelism).

Use these meetings as opportunities to pray together for all the playgroup families, and for each other as you encounter the ups and downs of playgroup ministry.

Do all you can to ensure all the non-Christian families have at least one Christian family as a friend. If the Christians in the playgroup have caught the vision



of playgroup as a ministry, it will be easier to encourage them to form friendships that might otherwise be out of their comfort zone.

It is a great idea to acknowledge birthdays of the children, and the adults if they are willing to share that information, by sending a card, or delivering a home-made cake or other small gift. There will be other events such as wedding anniversaries or the birth of a baby that you can celebrate. Use any opportunities to make connections and build relationships with families.

A playgroup newsletter once a term helps to build a sense of community. Share news, parenting tips, dates for the diary (including events that the church has organised to connect with families). If most families have internet, this could be sent by email.

Organise some social events where playgroup families can enjoy each other's company. These could range from a picnic in the park to a child-free night out for dinner. Be creative and brainstorm a list of fun events that will appeal to your playgroup families. Be aware that some young families are on a tight budget, so low-cost activities may be appreciated.

Whatever you do to connect with playgroup families, be genuine. Remember that real friendships take time and effort to build and



maintain. One or two leaders can't sustain that kind of commitment to all the playgroup families on their own. It really does take a team (and ideally the support of the church community) to be effective.

SESSION #5: friendship evangelism

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What is it?

- “Evangelism” is simply affirming that God barracks for us each day – He is on our side and Christ is ever present
- But getting this across hinges on genuine friendship, loving acceptance and constant encouragement
- And the friendships continue without being dependent on the response of others – our friendship is offered without any strings attached

How does it work?

- In a playgroup the scene is set for the followers of Jesus to live honestly, authentically and in an attractive way which creates the interest of those who are without an active faith in Jesus
- Good modelling of the faith (and that does not mean being perfect parents!) can then be well supported by a readiness to explain what it means to be follower of Jesus

Why bother?

- An active faith in Jesus provides a marvellous foundation for dealing with life
- Faith in Christ is like any relationship – the building of trust, the discovery of joy, the recognition that this friendship above all others will change and enrich life

Time to talk!

“friendship evangelism”

What is it?

- How do we as leaders best express our faith in our playgroup setting?
- Let's do a reality check – are we really building genuine friendships? In what ways are we showing loving acceptance and giving constant encouragement?
- Are our friendships for real – or are we settling for connections which are too superficial and without a real commitment?

How does it work?

- Is our Christian witness passing the test? In what ways is our playgroup lifestyle really creating an active interest in the minds of those without faith?
- Are we able to describe our faith in Jesus in a way which is easily understood? What help do

we need here? Let's craft up a simple statement now!

Why bother?

- Are we really convinced of God's power to meet the needs of our playgroup community?

What place does prayer for others occupy in our life as a leadership?



Know someone who has tirelessly supported your playgroup? We would like to reward them.

Nominations are sought for Certificates of Merit awards for outstanding services to a playgroup network. Awards will be presented at our AGM on Thursday 29 April 2010. Nominees need to meet the following criteria:

--> Playgroup Victoria Member at time of nomination

--> Long and consistent service

--> Service(s) of a high standard of effectiveness or efficiency

--> An action, gift or service that has a positive and enduring effect for the playgroup or playgroup network

Only nominations from Playgroup Victoria member playgroups will be accepted. Contact Playgroup Victoria for your nomination form and send it in before Friday 18 December 2009 to The Chairperson, Playgroup Victoria, 346 Albert St, Brunswick, 3056 or email carolyn@playgroup.org.au

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Playgroups With Purpose

If you find the Playgroups with Purpose series helpful but have missed a session, can't wait for one which hasn't been put out yet, or just want a copy of them all for a resource for your playgroup ministry, please contact one of the CPN representatives.

Following is a list of the sessions available:

- Session #1 What's your vision - and how will it work?
- Session #2 What makes a playgroup "Christian"?
- Session #3 What does an effective Christian playgroup look like?
- Session #4 Effective leaders and enthusiastic teams
- Session #5 "Friendship evangelism" - what is it, how does it work, why bother?
- Session #6 Playgroups and the congregation - how do they connect?
- Session #7 What are some roadblocks?
- Session #8 Clearing the way for full steam ahead
- Session #9 Learning from others - how do we make the most of what's going on out there?
- Session #10 Stories - How playgroup helped my family

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