

PLAYGROUP PROFILE: MONASH CITY CHURCH OF CHRIST

Co-ordinator: Christine Wanstall

Groups: 3 at the moment. 4th starting term 3

Curious fact: Our Thursday group has 5 sets of twins in it!!!!

How long have playgroups been running? For a very long time - I have started as co-ordinator at the beginning of this year.

Why run playgroup?

Playgroups, for me, are a great ministry in reaching out to families. I think that sometimes Playgroups can be seen as a community service that churches provide for the community. I believe, however, that it is a crucial shift that needs to occur to view playgroups as a ministry of the church. When we start seeing playgroups as a ministry, then we start to see ourselves as missionaries reaching out to these people. We can then build bridging programs around our playgroups to try and help people connect with God.

My aim in playgroups is to provide a supportive environment that will care for the families that are attending. Often I have found that when I spend time chatting with the mother, they share their struggles and difficulties, which provides the opportunity to support them. It is a fantastic chance to become involved with people and have fun playing with their children.

What is the biggest challenge?

I have found two challenges. The first is trying to get others in the congregation to support the ministry through coming and cuddling babies. This is a powerful way of connecting with the families and creating opportunities to love them.

The second is finding appropriate way of creating space to talk with them about Jesus. It is often hard to do this in the chaos of playgroup and it is therefore the challenge to find ways of meeting with them outside this time.

What is the greatest joy?

Playing with the children and seeing them grow and change. I love singing time and seeing their animated little faces!!!

I also enjoy the times when we have been speaking with someone and telling them I will pray for them. (ie if the children aren't sleeping or they are sick etc.) Seeing God answer prayer is very exciting.

Christine Wanstall