

THE JOURNEY SO FAR....

My name is Fiona Lord. I am thirty-nine, a mum of three boys aged fourteen, twelve and ten, a wife to Bruce, and a woman who has a passion to see God's love poured out to carers and children who come to Playgroup. Yes, I love Playgroup even though my children are no longer the age for it. Playgroup is a great way for pre-school children to mix with others, and more importantly, is a place where mums, dads, grandmas etc. feel comfortable to meet others and talk about their lives.

I attended a Playgroup for many years and took over running one of the playgroup mornings in 1994 when my youngest was one. I have been so blessed in this ministry. However, I'd like to point out that it's not always been an easy run. Some days I remember not feeling like setting up, smiling at everyone, being polite - you know what I mean. I found that on those days I was doubly blessed and the day went better than I ever would have imagined. God has shown me that this is where He wants me to be. I have tried other avenues of ministry, but I keep coming back to Playgroup.

Early last year my friend, Yvette and I thought it would be a great idea to start up a network within the Shire where we live (one was already operating on the northern side of Sydney). We were able to make contact with Allison, Heather and Kaye from the Christian Playgroup Network in Victoria, and together we worked out a program for a Christian Playgroup Workshop over a Friday evening and Saturday. Not having done anything like this before, it was exciting but very scary. During this weekend in July 2002 God was so gracious, and it was one of the best things with which I have ever been involved. The feedback was excellent and I knew that this was where God wanted me to be.

After this Workshop we contacted all those who attended (thirty-four in all) and organised a coffee and dessert night. Twenty-three girls came along. Two other girls from Kingsway Community Church (where we attend) have come on board, and together we put together an agenda for this night. We wanted to know if networking was what everyone wanted to do - talking about different issues ranging from sickness policies, craft, grants, music and also encouraging and praying for each other. It was a great evening and we are due to have another one very shortly.

I am moving in "baby steps" at the moment. I know without doubt that God is working in so many Playgroups just by us, as leaders, loving and caring for every single person that comes through that door. Showing love, not just in words, but also in actions. Kingsway Community Church Playgroup has no Christian resource manual that we turn to, no bible story, and no Christian influence in our music. Its ministry is about building relationships,

sharing God's love through our actions, and then sharing the Gospel through effective evangelism.

At the present time we are in the planning stages of another Christian Playgroup Training conference. It will be held in June 2003 at Kingsway Community Church (Sydney). We are very excited about this weekend and know that God will use us and others to help leaders from other Playgroups in all denominations be the best they can be to show God's love.

And so the journey continues.....