



The Mustard Tree Trust

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A NEW YEAR, A NEW START...

Well, here we are... January again. Christmas seems like ages ago, New Years resolutions have been made, and subsequently broken, and another school term is in full swing.

Here at The Mustard Tree Trust, we had a marvellous run-up to Christmas, delivering assemblies, clubs, and a special Christmas Youth Service. However, the two highlights for us were probably the puppet play, which we toured around a number of First schools, and the wandering nativity, which was held in Carlisle Park, at night, with the support of a number of local churches and the Salvation Army Band. Both had a simple goal—to retell the story of Jesus' birth, and to make it real and accessible to everyone—and both were a success, (even though everyone who turned out to the Wandering Nativity went home drenched by the rain!).

So, now we are in January, and the new term has got off to an excellent start, with the clubs, assemblies and other usual activities back with a bang. However, at the start of this new year, with Don having stepped down as manager, and Ann Attwood handing over her Administration duties to Alice Lane, there are still a number of changes afoot. With this in mind, Nikki, Gordon and myself have all taken the opportunity to attend training conferences at the start of this year, to ensure that we are refreshed, full of new ideas for 2009, and that God is still firmly in the driving seat. Read on to find out what we got up to on our training weeks...

Lisa



To start the year I spent a week in sunny Darlington training to become a Bible Explorer presenter. Bible Explorer is part of *Walk Through the Bible Ministries*, and is a children's version of the adult seminar.

The course taught me how to teach pupils in school years 5 and 6 the entire Old Testament over a series of 5 lessons. These lessons are a really fun and interactive way to teach the Bible, using stories, drama, multimedia and games. The course also has a series of hand signs for the pupils to learn, to help remember each of the key stories. It was a nightmare trying to remember all 77 of them, but it is great for remembering the stories in order.

The week was really intensive and hard work, with lots of time spent studying, doing assignments and acting out stories in front of the group. However, it was also great fun as I met some excellent people who were full of ideas and experience and I learnt

a lot about the history and the geography of the Bible myself.

I am really excited about using Bible Explorer, as it is a purely educational course that comes complete with educational worksheets, and it fulfils a whole unit of the Primary RE syllabus. It can be used to study both Judaism and Christianity.

I am excited about using Bible explorer because it is a complete course that we can offer to schools. It is something schools would have to work through anyway and I'm sure they would love someone with enthusiasm for the Bible to teach it. I think it will provide great opportunities for working with new schools and developing our relationships with the schools that we are already working in.

If you are interested in Bible Explorer being taught at your school or if you would like any more details about the course, then please feel free to get in touch with me on 01670 857766.

Thanks for all your prayers and support

Gordon

Youth For Christ Staff Conference

This year began with Lisa and I taking a long trip down to Wales to join in with the National YFC Staff Conference at Bodelwyddan Castle near Rhyl.

It was a great week, with daily bible studies each morning, led by a fantastic speaker from the states called Leonard Sweet. For me he put a lot of things into perspective, teaching me to take the bible as a whole and not to read little bits and get the wrong end of the stick—what he called “Apple” rather than “Orange” Theology. Some of the things he said were so captivating that, weeks later, I’m still getting inspiration from the notes I took.

It was a great chance to meet other youth workers from all over the country to share ideas and generally make friends. The whole week was packed with different seminars focusing on different areas of youth work, both practical and spiritual. It was a great chance for me to improve the ways I support and encourage personal spiritual growth in young people.

The evenings were packed with great teaching and worship, and I for one really connected with God during the week and I now understand what he is saying about this year.

All in all I feel like I have come back filled with encouragement and enthusiasm for this new term. I have a passion to see The Mustard Tree Trust’s ministry and work continue to grow; and it’s exciting to be the one to help it do so.



Our humble abode for the week!

Since we started our schools and clubs again I have already seen some awesome things begin to happen and new opportunities beginning to open out. I intend to see some incredible things coming into place this year and I look forward to keeping you updated on them.

Blessings,

Nikki



Please pray for...

- The Trustees, as they look to find a general manager who can continue the work that Don has started
- Ann Attwood, as she prepares to leave us, and for Alice Lane, as she takes on the role of administrator
- More volunteers, who can offer their time and energy to help us continue and develop the after-school clubs.
- New sources of funding to help us sustain the level of work we are currently delivering.
- All our exciting new plans for the future of the work, and the new contacts we are making.
- Those who are still being affected by the floods, and for the work of the Churches as they continue to support them in the aftermath.



THE TEAM!

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