

Community Stars – Engaging young minds

They came in two by two

Sunbury Methodist Church wanted to make sure that none of the families on its doorstep felt intimidated about bringing children through its doors. So the church members started holding monthly services dedicated to young children up to the age of nine, with each session focused on a 'zoo' of toy animals.



Each animal can spark something interesting. For example, in one service all the youngsters chose fluffy animals to play with, but Iggy the Iguana went unchosen. So the lesson became that God accepts you whatever you look like.

Each service begins with some craft or play, with the children encouraged to do a jigsaw or draw something before activities begin. A group of people then performs a sketch, highlighting a story or issue that they want to focus on.

Just recently, Sunbury has adapted the style of services to become SMC

World of Adventures. There are two famous theme parks nearby, and the monthly services now focus on subjects that are inspired by amusement parks.

“ You’ve got to be careful not to force or rush people. It’s about opening that door and giving them the opportunity to explore things themselves. ”

Michele Coombes
Children’s Leader

Church details

- Sunbury Methodist Church, Middlesex
- Teddington Circuit, London District
- Average congregation: 60 to 70

What you’ll need

- Talented people who can write sketches or services
- A clear structure to engage young minds
- Consistent volunteers, so everyone is familiar with the same faces

The zoo by numbers

- Age range from 18 months to 9 years
- 12 to 14 families involved
- Services held every 4 weeks



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