



Newsletter May 2019 Paula Smith

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"The other criminal said "Remember me, when you come to your Kingdom" Jesus assured him "today you will be with me in paradise" Luke 23:42&43 Having just celebrated Easter, and in the weeks leading up to it, had the incredible privilege of sharing the story with children in local schools, the simplicity yet profundity and wonder of this conversation, between Jesus and one of the thieves crucified next to Him, recorded in Luke's gospel, remain with me. At church on Easter Sunday we sang the words "my sin was great, Your love was greater".

What good news we have to share! God hears our cries and forgives anyone who truly comes to Jesus, believing in His salvation. Our prayers don't need to be complicated, just honest and from the heart.

SCHOOLS WORK

As part of Spinnaker's work in local schools, I was, once again, involved in "Experience Easter", workshops for Year 5 (10 year olds). It was lovely to serve alongside Christians from other churches, and to see the story impacting both children and staff. There were many special moments. Telling the story of Jesus in Gethsemane, as children sat on "grass" with a stunning painted backdrop behind. We all held a stone, feeling its weight and coldness, reflecting on the courage and obedience of Jesus in facing His death, and thinking about the difficulties in our lives and how we might find strength. Many children seemed to find this meaningful. Talking about the Cross and encouraging children to write down a "sin" or regret and "pin" it to the Cross. One youngster said afterwards "I felt I could leave anything at the Cross and God would sort it!" A teacher I know from one of the schools I regularly visit, took part herself, and said to me "I think this is the most important part of the whole story." I pray children and adults alike (including those of us who ran the event) will long remember what we saw, said and thought during "Experience Easter".

At Nash College Christian Union we have looked at key stories and characters from the Old Testament. An ex-student who visits every week, was looking rather splendid as King Saul. He was not so amused the following week when I had to explain to him that Saul lost his job, when it was passed to a shepherd boy, David! This term we shall be looking at stories of Jesus, having begun last week with the "remember me" story I refer to at the top of my letter.

"Craftzone" will once again take place in Riverview School, and I shall also be involved in some of Spinnaker's RE Days looking at the life of Joseph. Both of these workshops are for 11 year olds moving on to High School. As I write this I am also looking forward to the opportunity to speak to Year 4 (9 year olds) next week on how the Bible has impacted me.

As you know I shall not be going away with "Through the Roof" this summer. I have, however, enjoyed speaking about their work recently and realise again how much I want churches (and all groups where lots of people come together) to be places where everyone can feel accepted and included.