



A NEW AND IMPROVED LOOK!!

Welcome to the “new and improved” BECT e-newsletter! Thanks to the fabulous James Burke at the BUV, who also took the wonderful photo of me to be found above right (truly, the man has talent!).

QUESTION TIME

To the right of this new, fancy, e-newsletter is a *Question of the Week* section. This is a space for you to ask any questions you have about Playgroup and have it answered by a member of the BECT team. Do you have a question? *Just email me.*

CONFERENCES



Thanks to Matt Glover for letting me print his cartoon above which was originally featured in *The Witness*. *I love it* as I am a self-confessed conference junkie! As you read this I am sitting in a classroom participating in a course on Leadership and Management. It's been a fascinating week learning about human psychology, management practices and the resulting implications for leadership in the church. It has felt much more like a conference than a “course” that I will be assessed on. I think it's having the time set aside to soak up some solid teaching that I love & that's exactly what I have the privilege of doing this week, all week!

A little while ago Beth Barnett and I attended Leaders 2 Go, a national conference for those in Children & Families Ministry*. One of the keynote speakers, Tania Watson, spoke about Advocacy and her talk was so powerful I wanted to share some of the key points with you.

* This is a bi-annual conference that I highly recommend!

QUESTION OF THE WEEK!

Is Playgroup for babies too?

This question has come up a few times recently and I want to answer with a resounding YES! Playgroup is about connecting with the families in your community and sharing the Gospel to them through who you are. The activities that *facilitate* this are craft and games for the children, singing and storytelling, morning tea and coffee. We tend to think that Playgroup is about the program we offer, but it's actually about the people we offer – ourselves and the other Christian women in our midst. That's why it's so important to have Christian women in your Playgroup and why it's a great place for Mum's with babies, hungry for love, support and a bit of encouragement!

DID YOU KNOW?

Babies are built for learning. Every sensation -- touch, taste, smell, sight, and sound -- electrifies the infant brain and helps it establish sensory connections that'll last a lifetime.

Babies build their earliest foundation of God through their experiences at church. You can tap into their five senses and build a positive experience for babies using the following tips.

- **Sound** -- When you sing or talk to babies, use Bible truths such as “God made the birds,” “Jesus loves you,” and “God made you.”
- **Sight** -- Infants are stimulated by contrasting colours because they're easier to distinguish than similar colours so decorate your room with contrasting colours.
- **Smell** -- Keep your nursery smelling fresh and clean, free of bad odours.
- **Taste** -- Taste is a powerful sensation for babies, especially when it curbs hunger and brings comfort.
- **Touch** -- Babies have incredibly strong grips when they grab your fingers. Holding babies or comforting them with a soothing touch also stimulates their brain development.

As babies grow into toddlers, use Bible thoughts, stories, and songs on a regular basis to help little ones learn about God in different ways.

Tania's main challenge to us was, "Who has God called you to be as a community? She encouraged us to consider our response in the following ways...

In order to be an advocate for children and their families you Tania sees that you need to possess five qualities...

First, you must have a **BURDEN** that comes from God and through which you connect with His love for the lost – for children and families in your midst.

VISION that comes from God's Word and through Prayer.

GOALS so that we know where we are going.

PERSERVERENCE, so that we can keep fresh and alive.

and finally, it is **HOPE** that enables us to see possibilities, and keep alive and in it for the long haul.

For some of you this is a real "Ah-ha!" moment as you feel affirmed that the leadership role you are carrying out is truly of great value and significance not just for your church but for the Kingdom of God. Indeed, I do want to affirm you in this!

I suspect that for some of you the response is more of a question; *Why is she telling me this? What has this got to do with Playgroup?* Fair question! I am sharing this with you because I want to encourage you that the ministry you are doing in your Playgroup is of great value to the Kingdom of God! Beth and I see you as exercising leadership in your church and we want to encourage you to think, dream and pray big about where God is calling you in this ministry! I hope that by hearing from someone like Tania, you might be encouraged and helped as you think about your own setting.

Ephesians 3:20-21

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen

Amen, indeed!

COMING UP

*** Toolbox Training at the BUV**

Are you already trained & running courses? Would you, or someone from your church/team, like to get trained?

Let me know! Date to be announced.

*** Starting Points Training**

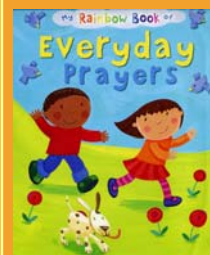
Run by Focus on the Family, Starting Point Training is happening at:

New Hope Baptist Church, Blackburn
Thursday 23rd July
8.30am-5pm
(for more details see email attachment)

*** Mainly Music**

Does your church run a Mainly Music group? If so, I'd love to hear from you or the coordinator.

RESOURCE OF THE WEEK



Everyday Prayers is a great book for Playgroup. With 6 simple two-line prayers that can easily be incorporated into your group time. Available from Koorong and Word Books.

Louisa Raggatt
Early Childhood & Families
Facilitator

Baptist Union of Victoria
M: 0438 068 548
P: 9880 6100
F: 9880 6123
E: louisa.raggatt@buv.com.au

Level 1, 1193 Toorak Rd
Camberwell Vic 3124

PO Box 377
Hawthorn Vic 3122

www.buv.com.au

