



GETTING MISSIONAL at CROSSWAY

This week I'd like to introduce Anne Smith, the Playgroup and Mainly Music Coordinator at Crossway Baptist in East Burwood.

A couple of weeks ago I gave Anne a call and during the course of our conversation she said to me, "We only run two Playgroups so..." while Anne kept talking I started to do a little internal panicking "Am I talking to the right Anne? Surely there's not more than one Anne Smith in my phone?? It sounds like her but...only 2 Playgroups at Crossway??" I was so surprised by her comment that I interrupted to check that I was talking to the right person!

Anne runs two Playgroups of 30 families each, a surprising model that makes more sense when she tells you her story. I asked Anne if she could share her heartbeat for this ministry and how she's come to run the model she does; this is what she said.....

We used to have 4 playgroups with 15 families in each. For many years I felt we put in so much effort, but what was it all for? Our mission statement being 'A prayerful team, caring for families enabling them to discover Jesus, grow as disciples and be released into their destiny'. **We just didn't see any real signs of this happening.** I believed we had the potential to lead Mums and families into real and loving relationship with Jesus, seeing them get baptised and be part of a local church.

We then started mainly music. Being a new program it grew very quickly and we now have 3 sessions with 120 families and also a waiting list. Mainly music takes a team of at least 6+ Christians to run. I watched the dynamics of this team and saw how a group of women came together and supported each other. They prayed passionately for each other and the families that were attending.

Our playgroups usually only had 1 or 2 leaders and 1 or 2 other church families. This did not provide a great support and with 12-14 families attending, the leaders spent most of their time doing organisational tasks. I asked the Lord to give me something fresh and new. We also had waiting lists for playgroup but had no other time slots to accommodate any more groups.

RESOURCE OF THE WEEK: PLANET PRESCHOOL

Anne Smith and her husband run a fabulous website called



Filled to the brim with amazing resources this is a one-stop shop of FREE resources you can use in your preschool ministries.

UPCOMING TRAINING:

Toolbox Parenting Course training is coming up.

Saturday 7th November
New Hope Baptist, Blackburn
9am – 3.30pm

Cost is \$100 inc GST to train and includes a manual for the age group you train in.

If you would like more information about Toolbox please let me know and I can arrange for a promotional DVD and information pack to be sent to you free of charge.

PARENTING MAGAZINE

The lovely Louise from Bendigo was the first to reply to my last email and as such will be receiving "Saying No" shortly. Did anyone decide to play such a game with their Playgroup?

I began to see that we could run 2 groups in 1 time slot. We now can accommodate 30 families in each group. They start together and all settle their children in the playgroup rooms. We then offer an activity in a room next door for half of the adults. They leave their children in the playgroup rooms. The activity runs for up to 1 hour. Nail painting, sushi making, parenting topic, card making etc. This time allows adults to talk uninterrupted and really get to know each other. We end up all together to clean up.

When we started we decided that there must be 1 Christian adult that was willing to walk with every 2 pre-Christian families. They are responsible for calling them if they are away and touching base with them outside playgroup. We regularly discuss making time each week to spend time with others just 'doing life and building relationships'. If you do not have a free morning or afternoon, maybe there is an activity that is not crucial you could drop.

The team have had the opportunity to invite those they have been building relationships with this year to a journeys and life stories course. We have seen 4 Mums start a relationship with Jesus and many more that have opened their hearts. We are also running a daytime Alpha course in term 4 as many of these ladies continue to search for the truth.

Thing key ingredients I believe are needed for reaching families of preschooler are in the next column. **May His presence be our passion as we follow Jesus and change the world through these dynamic ministries.**

Ephesians 5:1-2

Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

May you be blessed as you serve Him,

Anne Smith
Giggles Playgroup & mainly music Co-ordinator
Crossway Baptist Church

Anne's Checklist for Getting Missional:

- A foundation of prayer
- An understanding that OUR lives are not our own
- An understanding that there is no better time to reach these families, many of whom feel like they are in a pressure cooker, and are searching for truth
- Understand it's about relationships not programs. Be spirit lead not program driven
- Draw together as a team, big or small; support each other and encourage each other to step out of your comfort zone
- Have faith, trust God to use you to do great things

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