

Dear Children's Ministry Worker

We are thrilled that you have decided to utilise the Baptist Youth Children's Ministry Project into your yearly schedule. Over the past number of years, the Children's Ministry Project has raised thousands of pounds which have gone directly to supporting the advancement of the gospel around the world. It is always humbling to discover how much the children of our churches are willing and able to raise for the work of missionaries each year.

This year, the Children's Ministry Project is a little closer to home. It is entitled, '**Amazing News, Amazing Journey**' and will focus on the work of 'The Amazing Journey' - a Baptist Youth ministry which has been functioning for many years.

What is The Amazing Journey?

As you work through the material of this year's project, you will gain a greater understanding of the work of The Amazing Journey. It is an interactive Bible teaching programme which Baptist Youth takes into local primary schools throughout the year. Our full time co-ordinator, Aaron Riddle, has been working with the Amazing Journey for almost 5 years and travels throughout Ireland, telling children the good news of the Bible through the use of large storytelling boards, real life characters, Bible times food and much more. In any given week, when fully booked, The Amazing Journey could reach up to 1500 children with the message of the Bible. In addition, upon seeing the presentation, children have the option to request Bibles to be delivered to their homes. What a joy it is to see so many households receive the Word of God!

How will the money raised in this project support The Amazing Journey?

As you can imagine, transporting the materials for The Amazing Journey isn't easy. The large boards, costumes and packs are just some of the materials required to be transported to each school in The Amazing Journey van. As a result of the continuous transportation, the story boards have become very worn in recent years, making them more delicate to handle and difficult to present. The money raised in this project will be put towards new Amazing Journey storyboards. This will ensure that the visual aspect of the future bible telling experience remains as effective for children as it has been in past years.

How Should I Use The Children's Ministry Project in 2018/19?

If you have used the Children's Ministry Project in the past, you will be aware that this years project is slightly different. In an attempt to best facilitate churches, we have made the project primarily an online resource. In order to see the full project, visit www.byouth.org, select the resources tab, then click on 'Children's Ministry Project' - Here you will find the full details of the project.

The project includes an introductory video and 6 individual Sessions. Each session includes:

- A Pdf Powerpoint (with accompanied video)
- A Junior and Senior Worksheet

In the past number of years, churches have utilised the Children's Ministry Project in different ways. Some opt to take a Session per week for 6 straight weeks. Others choose to cover each session in 2 weeks, extending the project to 12 weeks in total. Still, others choose to use the project material one Sunday in the month. This extends the project over 6 months whilst allowing churches to continue using any other teaching syllabus they wish to follow.

Using The PDF Powerpoint Slides

In previous years, we have used printed Factsheets by way of communicating the main content of the project. However, taking on board some feedback from churches, we have decided to shift the content into a Powerpoint, which Children's workers can navigate through to teach their class.

With the range of churches using the Children's Ministry Project, we appreciate each teaching context is very different. Some may prefer to teach the content using Powerpoint Slides, yet others, perhaps with a smaller group, would prefer to teach the content using a hard copy (like the factsheets of previous years). If you fall into the later category, we would encourage you to simply print off the Powerpoint pdf slides ahead of the class.

Embedded within the Powerpoint presentations in each Session is a short video. These videos help introduce the key themes that will be looked at in each session and are presented by the Amazing Journey co-ordinator, Aaron Riddle. Please note that these videos are an optional extra. If your children's ministry setting does not easily facilitate the showing of video's to your group, don't worry too much. However, if you fall into this

category, we would encourage teachers of the content to watch the short video in advance and it will help them in their preparation.

Using The Worksheets

As ever, the worksheets are incorporated into the project to reinforce the key teaching points of the session in an activity based way. There are two types of worksheet in the project, a junior and a senior one. Both of the worksheets cover the same content but to varying degrees of depth.

We have designed the worksheets to be as child friendly as possible in their activities. As well as that, we have sought, as best we can, to ensure that as few materials as possible are required for the children to complete them. It is advised that children's ministry volunteers involved in teaching the material take a look at the worksheets at least one week ahead of utilising it in case some materials are necessary which need to be sourced. Generally, we hope this will not be necessary.

THE CHILDREN'S MINISTRY PROJECT SESSIONS

Session 1 - Beginning (Acts 9:1-9)

Throughout the project, we will be looking at the life and amazing journey of Paul. As we work through Paul's life, we will draw parallels between Paul's journey of sharing the gospel and that of 'The Amazing Journey.'

In this first session, we look at 'beginning' and see how Paul's amazing journey began. We read in Acts 9:1-9 about how Paul first came to faith on the Damascus road. It was this transformation in Paul's life that caused him to want to share the gospel with others. When any of us experience something amazing, we want to share it with other people - whether its a new TV programme, a tasty meal, or just some good news. This is true of the apostle Paul. He had experienced something amazing - the grace of God. When he experienced God's grace, he couldn't keep it to himself.

Similarly, this is why churches utilise 'The Amazing Journey.' The church is filled with people who have been transformed by the good news of the gospel. They, just like Paul, have experienced the saving grace of the Lord Jesus. As a result, they want to share it with other people.

Session 2 - Going (Acts 16:6-10)

In this session, we begin to see how Paul put his desire to share the gospel with others into action. After his saving experience on the Damascus road, he went around different places sharing it with other people. In Acts 16:6-10, we read of how he went to places like Phrygia and Galatia. Ultimately, God called Paul and his companions to go to Macedonia.

God calls all of us to go and tell others about him. We may never be called to somewhere like Macedonia, however, the challenge of this session is that all of us have a mission field. All of us regularly interact with people who do not know the Lord Jesus. Where could this be for the children in your class? Their school? Their sports team? Maybe even their family or friendship group? We, just like Paul, have a responsibility to speak of the great news of Jesus.

One of the places the local church can target in sharing the good news of Jesus is in our local schools. Regularly, churches contact Aaron to have The Amazing Journey in a school near them, so that the children can hear about the amazing truth of the Bible - the amazing truth which transformed their lives. This is what The Amazing Journey is all about, aiding churches in their gospel outreach into local schools.

Session 3 - Teaching (Acts 16:11-15)

In our previous Session, Paul was directed to Macedonia by God in order to share the gospel. It isn't too long before, when in Macedonia, Paul is introduced to a woman called Lydia who is desperately seeking some good news.

We read in this passage about how Paul was able to share the gospel with her. This is ultimately the message that she needed in order to be transformed. This woman had, no doubt, tried many different avenues to find purpose. One of these avenues was probably money. We can tell that Lydia was extremely wealthy from her trading of purple goods. However, it wasn't until she heard the gospel that she was able to be transformed. We all live in a world which teaches us that we can find our purpose in many different things - money, fame, popularity. This woman tried some of these but what she really needed to be taught was the good news of Jesus.

It is this good news that The Amazing Journey teaches to children in schools. The good news about Jesus is the only news that can save. In The Amazing Journey, pupils learn all about how God worked in the lives of different people throughout history. They hear about people like Noah, Abraham, Moses, and many more.

Session 4 - Responding (Acts 16:25-34)

Paul's amazing journey caused him to meet many different people. Not just people who were upper class and foreign like Lydia, but also people who were middle class and local, like the Philippian jailor. If ever there was someone who you wouldn't expect to respond to the message of the gospel, it is this man. He is tough, rugged, and bound to the demands of the Roman Empire. However, this passage is astonishing as this Philippian jailor, after hearing about the gospel, responds in faith. This session is a reminder that the gospel is powerful, it can transform even the most unlikely of individuals.

One of the most encouraging aspects of The Amazing Journey is seeing children respond to what they have heard. Each child is given the opportunity to request a Bible to be sent to their home. Many children, upon hearing about the Word of God, have sent requests to receive these Bibles. Praise God that his gospel is powerful. So powerful that anyone can be transformed by it.

Session 5 - Growing (2 Timothy 1:3-7)

Paul wasn't someone who lived the Christian life alone. In fact, in each of his missionary trips he was a part of a team. One member of this team, quite frequently mentioned in Scripture, is Timothy - a younger man in the faith. Paul writes to Timothy towards the end of his life, encouraging him to grow in his walk with God.

Paul didn't just care about reaching non-Christians, he also had a deep desire to see other Christians grow in their faith. This is evident in the words he writes to Timothy that we see in this session. We pray that, through some of the means mentioned in this session, children in our churches will continue to grow in their love and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In The Amazing Journey, after hearing the Bible presentation, each child is given a pack home with them containing a worksheet and some Scripture. This is intended to help them grow in knowledge regarding what they have learnt about God. One of the real encouragements we hear from time to time, is of children wanting to grow even more in their knowledge of the Bible that they, as a result of hearing the stories, join their local church's kids ministry programme. We pray that, for many, The Amazing Journey will just be the first step in a life of learning more about God.

Session 6 - Living (Philippians 1:1-17)

In our final session, we will see the importance of living out the Christian faith. Christianity isn't something which is limited to a Sunday or when we are with certain people. Rather, Christianity is something which affects every single aspect of our lives. It affects how we speak, how we think and how we act.

In this passage, Paul writes to a church in Philippi. What were the foundations of the church in Philippi? Well, we have been reading all about them in Acts 16 throughout this project. The book of Philippians is Paul writing to the people who responded to the gospel in Acts 16, some 15 years later, who went on to start their own church. Imagine this woman Lydia and this Philippian jailor, 15 after giving their lives to the Lord Jesus. Life for them, even after trusting Christ, wouldn't have been easy. Similarly, life for us as believers today isn't easy. This session will explore how we can live for Christ even when life is tough.

THANK YOU

Thank you for using the Children's Ministry Project for 2018/19. We greatly appreciate you incorporating it into your teaching schedule. Every penny that is raised for The Amazing Journey will be greatly appreciated. At the end of the year, when your final sum has been raised, any cheques made to be donated to the work should be made payable to 'The Association of Baptist Churches in Ireland' with some reference regarding The Childrens Ministry Project.

We pray that as you worked through these materials, the children of your class will have been encouraged and informed about the work of the Amazing Journey, but primarily the great gospel of the Lord Jesus. May the Lord bless you as you continue to serve Him by investing in the next generation. We pray that you feel encouraged in your work.

Many Thanks,
Baptist Youth Children's Committee