

Inspiration will help mission with families

HERE'S a way of getting inspiration for your work with parents, children and families.

Our cathedral will host a morning full of ideas, resources and advice to re-energise your church's work with this key group. It's happening from 10am-12noon on Saturday 17 October.

And the person behind the event has experience in working with those groups in her own church. Mum-of-two Becca Chamberlain, from St Faith's, Lee-on-Solent, already runs a church toddler group and Sunday School, and helps in schools and with parenting courses.

The morning she's put together with children and youth work adviser Ben Mizen and cathedral Canon Peter Leonard is entitled 'Boost'. You're invited to drop in and explore for as long as you like.

It will include a keynote speech from the C of E's national



Becca Chamberlain, from St Faith's Church, Lee-on-Solent, with her children Daniel, aged 5, and Noah, 8; above right: speaker Mary Hawes

children and youth adviser Mary Hawes, at 10.45am and repeated at 11.30pm.

There'll also be stalls and resources from Messy Church, Prayer Spaces in Schools, the Mothers' Union, Care for the

Family, Who Let The Dads Out?, Open the Book, Family Links, Family Caring and 1227.org.

The catalyst for the day was when Becca asked diocesan staff which would be the best parenting course for her to use in her parish. It led to a discussion about what kind of resources are endorsed for this kind of work throughout the diocese.

"We thought about getting



people together to talk about what parenting courses they would recommend, and it turned into a morning of resourcing our work with children and families generally," she said.

"We wondered what we could do to promote the organisations and resources so that others don't have to keep re-inventing the wheel.

"Not every parish has someone in their congregation who knows what's available out there. The idea of the morning is that people can drop in and spend as much or little time as they want to exploring the possibilities. You don't need to register or buy tickets – just turn up.

"It's all about helping parishes to serve their community, building bridges, creating relationships and helping families to hear the gospel. Offering parenting courses or going into schools shows that churches have something different to offer, more than just inviting people into our buildings.

"As a parent, I know the church has always been a stand-out provider of things like toddler groups, and that other parents are happy to come to that kind of group when they wouldn't come on a Sunday. We'll have resources available to help you set up that kind of group."

Youth and children's work adviser Ben Mizen said: "This should be a fantastic way in which parishes can be inspired in their vital work in this area.

"We hope to gather a list of those who come and keep in touch as a Facebook community or something similar.

"Hopefully this might be the first of a series of 'mission marketplaces' where we can showcase different kinds of resources."

For more details of this event, see: www.portsmouth.anglican.org/boost.

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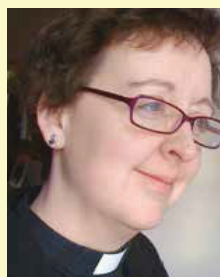
How to be reconciled

ALL of the theological arguments in the world won't on their own convince anyone of the existence of God, the love of Jesus Christ, or the presence of the Holy Spirit, if Christian lives don't look compellingly different from the way that others live.

Being a reconciled and reconciling community is at the heart of this distinctive way of living. So why is it so difficult? Church communities don't always look like reconciling communities and religion generally is more often than not blamed for discord.

Even if we're not arguing about gender, sexuality, and the interpretation of Scripture, we can usually find some dispute about hymns, reading rotas, or car parking to keep us busy at coffee on a Sunday after church.

In Colossians 3:10-16, Paul gave the Colossian community



the last word

by the Ven Joanne Grenfell
Archdeacon of Portsdown

instruction on how to handle complaints, and told to them to clothe themselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.

Paul also told the Colossians that they could enter into a new relationship with God and each other if they were open to being renewed – developing new perspectives, growing and changing, seeing things differently.

Reconciliation is part of being clothed with a new self, and putting on the

virtues which enable whole communities to grow and change.

We are all works in progress when it comes to conflict – it is practice that is required rather than perfection. But God can move each of us from hostility to hospitality, creating a space in us which is neither defensive nor fearful, where we are known and loved as our being is renewed in love and peace. That's the beginning of reconciliation.