# **Report for AS on children’s ministry – Summer Camp and Assemblies**

**Summer Camp**

This will be the 20th year of Littlehampton Churches Summer Camp. We started small at the Climping campsite and, two years later, we moved to Lodge Hill near Pulborough.

Summer Camp is for children in Years 5 and 6 (9-11 year olds) in our local primary schools of which there are 9, covering Littlehampton, Arundel, Rustington, Climping.

The schools have been very supportive of this venture and they send out the original flyers and letters each year. We

Each year we take up to 48 children. Last year was an exception when we ran two camps with 100+ children across the two camps. This year we will have 60 children.

The team consists of young people, many of whom came as campers when they were in primary school. Many of them are at TLA and Paul Sanderson, as Chaplain, has been influential.

The aims of Summer Camp are:

1. to give local children a really good holiday – we learned early on that many of these children haven’t even been to the beach!
2. to give children challenges through a variety of activities to boost their self-confidence and self-belief
3. to give children space to be themselves
4. to give children the opportunity to think about God and about Jesus
5. to help children to understand the importance of a relationship with God

The Littlehampton Churches play a significant role in the Camp by…

* sponsoring children whose families can’t afford the cost – we have never turned a child away because of lack of finance
* prayer – each church has a prayer card for the children (Christian names only)
* helping in practical ways – e.g. catering team

Over the years we have probably had about 700 children (many of whom have come to two camps).
In terms of young people as team members we have probably had about 100.

This gives us two camps in one which enables everyone to hear the good news about Jesus.

What a great opportunity.

God has blessed the camps down through the years and we pray that the seed sown will yet produce fruit in many lives.

**Assemblies**

I had the privilege of going into our local primary schools to take assemblies. Whereas, in the past schools used to start the day with assemblies, now they are spread across the day which has enabled me to take assemblies in the 9 schools in the family group + 2 schools outside that group (1 in Rustington and the other in Eastergate) + Littlehampton Community School which became TLA.

15-20 minutes for each assembly which consists of...

* Bible stories around particular themes, some of which the school give me; others where I will pick a theme.
* Praying at the end of each assembly.

The doors are open to go into our schools and I have been doing this since 1997.
Each term I would normally have told Bible stories to about 2,500 children + staff.
The last two years. during Covid, most of the schools stopped whole school assemblies. Some did class assemblies, so I haven’t been in many of the schools during that period. However, it was great that I could use technology and record assemblies which I sent in via Dropbox to the schools.

This last year one Headteacher of a C of E School asked me to do a series of videos for different classes, some of which he uploaded on to the parent website.

He asked if I would do a series on people in the Bible whose faith was tested but God brought them through. He then asked me to do a series on my life – how my faith has been tested and how God brought me through.
He then asked me to do a series on The Trinity, Communion, The importance of prayer, Spirituality!

There is no doubt that my background in teaching and as an Ofsted inspector has helped to open the doors into our schools and I thank God for the privilege.

Again, I pray that the seed sown will bear fruit in these young lives.

There have been so many encouragements and challenges from the children.

e.g. I was in the viewing gallery in Littlehampton Wave, overseeing from a distance our two grandsons in the pool. Two children came up to me and said *“Hello. We recognised you and thought we would come over and say hello. You come into our school and tell us Bible stories.”*

One Headteacher sent me an email last week in which she asked about a video assembly. She said, *“I wonder about the first one being an Easter video as I always depend on you for that.”*

 I can’t wait to get back into the schools. Thanks be to God for the open doors .