



Hey everyone! Hopefully by now you have found me online at the Midst website!

Still a lot of work to do to share ideas and resources on the website but I'm happy to have made a good start.

For the final edition of my team support this year I have used the headings of the five value-words I have gleaned from and developed over 40 years of ministry with children and families as a poster for you to print and display or give away. I hope it can also serve as a reminder to pray for me. Find that over the page.

Early next year marks 40 years since I started as a young Sunday school teacher at Burnbank Street Methodist Church in the kindergarten. I remember the biggest lesson from that earliest experience was not to play favourites with children. Isn't it funny the things you remember; the things you learn that will build into the principles that guide life and ministry with children.

Some great feedback to cap off the year ...

"Hi Phil. I hope this finds you well and motivated and creative for the good stuff you are doing. I want to give you some feedback on how "thinking orange" worked out at our all age church service two Sundays ago. It couldn't have gone better.

You might remember that you helped kick-start the process on a training day at Greensborough in the first half of the year on how families could engage with the Book of Ruth. ...

The short of it is this: Four groups of two families in each group, and each group responsible for a chapter of Ruth ... to plan and rehearse their part of the story. ... The eight families positively engaged with the brief and the presentation was brilliant. ... These families had fun at home - obviously - and gave us a wonderful rendition of their chapter of Ruth. The four chapters basically replaced the sermon. It was the sermon and the chapters were divided by a song, the offering, an item and a prayer time to give time for the next family team to organise themselves. Someone said to me later that this was the "most all age" service she had ever been to. It was not a children's invasion into adult church on a particular Sunday as has happened in the past. This was very family and very orange in the way you define it.

It was scary too, in the sense that I did not know how the families would take it. It was way out of some of their comfort zones. I had to trust that they would respond positively to my approaching them, respond in good faith and friendship. God is good. The same goodness and kindness in the story of Ruth was evident in the family responses. That is a nice picture of community both then and now. So thank you Phil."

This email brought a tear to my eye - obviously. I love it when we find ways to DO ministry WITH children. Find out about 'thinking orange' at www.midst.suvic.org.au/projectorange ... I love what I do in helping us all move heavenward, and can't do it without your support. So again, thank you.

After Christmas I will be off to Mallacoota SUFM as 'Team Dad' ... team studies and talking to parents. Tess and Georgia will come with me. I would appreciate your prayers for us and the team.

Shalom and Happy Christmas, Phil

Phil Day's
Team Support Letter
December 2010

[suvictoria](http://www.midst.suvic.org.au)
www.midst.suvic.org.au



villages raise children,
faith communities make disciples

Phil Day
midst

We need to **CONNECT** with children

As a faith community we celebrate worship, learn, socialise and go about mission together. As we connect with children in our faith community we will model and teach appropriate and loving relationships with one another as well as the skills involved.

As we do this we will be cementing children into the structure of our faith community. Teaching will particularly be needed to enable growth in healthy communication and sometimes where there are issues around broken trust, healing will be needed.

Children need to **PARTICIPATE**

Activities and relationships of the faith community need to involve everybody; calling forth a team effort as we exercise our skills and gifts; learning to deal with unmet expectations and conflict.

These activities will avoid being unnecessarily gimmicky or performance-based. Basic pastoral care of all members of the faith community will mean helping everyone find ways of making valuable contributions to the team. Effectively communicating our thanks and describing what it is we appreciate about a child's or anyone's contribution will help instill a positive and encouraging culture.

We need to **ENGAGE** children

The Gospel message will be communicated through a kaleidoscope of appropriate, creative, colourful, multi-sensory, multi-learning, multi-age approaches that result in thoughtful and/or heart-felt responses to the Word of God.

These activities will find a creative balance between curriculum based program and small group relationships; age-appropriate activities and multi-age experiences; peer group learning and one to one mentoring/ coaching. Our activities will aim to help children think through issues, ask questions and enter the Bible to explore the Gospel message for themselves.

Children need to experience that they **BELONG**

In order to help children feel they belong, ownership and shared vision is fostered; everyone's rights and responsibilities are respected and upheld; inter-dependent relationships are celebrated as they emerge; growing leadership is cultivated.

Belonging is a step beyond participation. It is where opinions of children are sought in appropriate ways; where they are involved in planning and decision making in appropriate ways; where children are taught to listen to God and to share their insights and gifts in safe ways; where children are valued as part of the church now and not merely as the 'church of the future'.

We need to invite children to **RESPOND**

We will create an environment where every response towards God is affirmed and celebrated in appropriate ways.

As a faith community we will need to be trained to see the wide range of faith responses to God. Parents and workers will be trained to invite and help children to follow and be like Jesus. This is at the heart of our mission.