

YOUTH & CHILDREN NEWS



From the Diocese of Edinburgh

Spring 2021

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IN THIS ISSUE

Around the Diocese:
celebrating a Covid Christmas

Ideas for a Lockdown Lent
and Easter

Youth and Children's work
grants for churches

Resources from across the
Province

Around the Diocese: how we celebrated a Covid Christmas

It has been a joy and an inspiration to see how churches throughout Edinburgh Diocese rose to the challenge of a Covid Christmas. Pictured here are just some of the many creative ways that different churches found to engage with children and families during this season. I have heard of many other examples of great work done quietly and faithfully, often in churches with few children and hardly any resources. Children and young people received individual Christmas cards from the church, or a personalized book mark, or a new magazine for kids, to encourage faith at home. There were Advent gift bags and Christmas parties on Zoom and a thoughtfully-planned Christmas Day craft session in church. All these things and more deserve celebrating, because they say one very important thing to children and young people: "We've not forgotten you." Take a moment to celebrate what your church and others have managed to achieve.



“This says one very important thing to children and young people: 'We've not forgotten you'”

Several churches performed a Lockdown Nativity, including **St Peter's Musselburgh** and **St Anne's Dunbar** (*pictured, above*) These involved volunteers of all ages and a good helping of humour! Check out St Anne's Crib Service [here](#) to see a lovely celebration of the local community. **St Cuthbert's Colinton** knitted angels for local families to find, with QR codes linked to the church website. A great way to reach out!



Lockdown Nativity in Dunbar and one of 56 knitted angels in Colinton!

Garden Nativity trail at St Mark's Portobello



At **St Mark's** there were 6 stations around the garden: on each tree there was a main character, plus a number of stars, angels, sheep and sometimes a camel! Children were invited to go round, find the character and count the other finds; then they came into the church where they could light a candle and pick up a little Nativity set to take home.

Cathedral Nativity and #Sundayselves at St Mungo's Balerno

The children and young people of St Mary's Cathedral presented a lovely retelling of the Christmas story in verse, interspersed with carols from the choristers.

At St Mungo's Balerno, building on the success of the regular Mighty Mungos videos, the church invited families to send in Sunday selfies!



Has something
worked well for
your church?
Share it here
next time!

Photos by Sophia Marriage (top) and stills from Facebook and YouTube (middle and bottom)



Churches are finding new ways of reaching out and engaging with young people during lockdown. Many have sent out gift parcels: **St Mary's Cathedral** posted these lovely bags of craft activities to children and young people, to accompany online Sunday Club gatherings. Meanwhile, church grounds have come into their own! Local people have been enjoying the gardens at the Cathedral (*above*) and **St Cuthbert's Colinton** (*right*), while **St Peter's Galashiels** has responded imaginatively to the spontaneous prayer graffiti that appeared on the church wall recently (*below left*) by creating a space for hope and prayers on the church railings (*below right*).

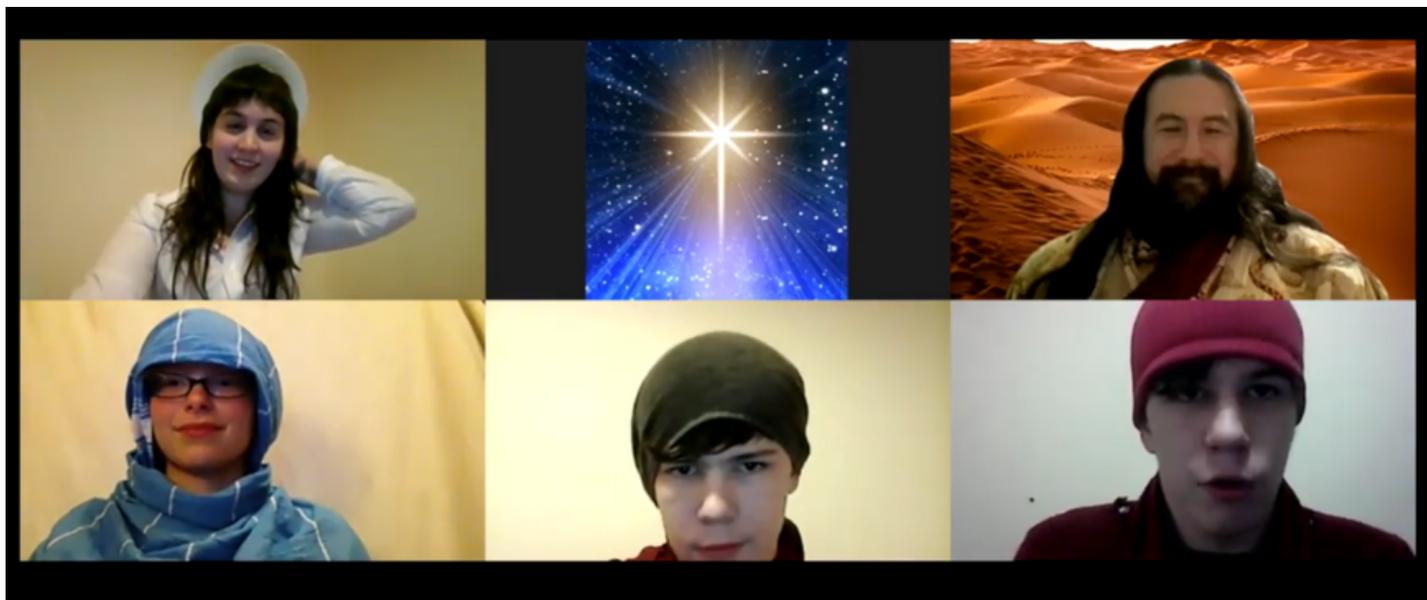


Photos from these churches' Facebook pages.



Provincial Youth Nativity Service

Young people from all over the Province collaborated to lead the SEC in online worship on Christmas Eve. Edinburgh Diocese was well represented: Bishop John introduced the service and closed with a blessing; Annabel showed us how to make our own Christingles, and also confidently played Mary in the Zoom Nativity play (you may recognize another familiar face here!)



If you missed it, you can watch the Provincial Youth Nativity [here](#).



Freya - one of our artistically gifted Diocesan Youth reps - led a creative prayer activity, and the very talented Alexander played an improvised medley of carols on the organ. Thank you to everyone who was involved!

LENT AND EASTER RESOURCES



Easter Online

Zoom ideas, videos, slideshow material and more



The Personal Touch

Ideas for practical outreach and tangible gifts



There is a new Lockdown Lent and Easter Resources page on the Diocesan website, full of ideas that are suitable for all ages, not just children and families: Lent in a Bag or Paschal candles at home (*right*) would be welcomed by many individuals who are observing Lent and Easter in at home. This page will be refreshed frequently over the coming weeks, as I review and cherry-pick the best ideas that are currently available, so do check out the resources [here](#).



LEGO LENT CHALLENGE



Coming soon! Do you know someone who would like a daily Lego build challenge to take them through Lent? Each challenge will connect with a short part of the Easter story, and you can share your build in the comments. This was created by Rev Naomi Elliott and I can't wait to get started! Like our [Facebook page](#) for details.

Photos: Lego Jesus' Baptism from St Mary's Cathedral; candles by Cécile Schnyder. The red felt holding cross was given to me by Rev Prebendary Bob King, who tells me he gives these to young people, explaining that they can hold it as they pray, fiddle with it when they're worried, scrunch it when they're angry, and so on: however they're feeling, the cross - like God - can take it. A lovely idea and a postable holding cross option for Lent gift bags - thank you, Bob!

RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN

from across the Province



CHILDREN'S CHAPEL

This is an exciting new initiative for young children (3-7 years) led by Rev Canon Audrey O'Brien Stewart (*above*) from Glasgow and Galloway Diocese. She is now leading a short online service for young children every Sunday from 8am. It's simple and interactive, featuring a story, prayers, music and an activity. In time, other dioceses will take turns in leading worship, so watch this space!



RME FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Another familiar face... Rev Jim Benton-Evans (*left*) is creating weekly RME content to support his local Primary school and parents supervising learning in lockdown. Each session features an illustrated Bible story (*The Wedding at Cana, above*) and an original singalong song! If you know someone who might find this useful, please encourage them to subscribe to 'RME with Reverend Jim' on YouTube.



Fischy Assemblies are back!



Streaming

Pop on the “Twenty Years of Fischy Music” album on Spotify, Apple Music, Amazon Music or wherever you stream your music.

Fischy Music Online

Many schools are sharing their login details with parents/carers for home learning - just ask.

Fischy Music's Guidelines are [here](#).

GODLY PLAY

Discovery Day Online – Liturgical Lessons. Tuesday 2nd February, 2021 – 10:30am-12:30pm

Liturgical Lessons is the third of three sessions that, along with the Sacred Story and Parable sessions, are the online equivalent of a Discovery Day. For when you just can't wait for the in-person events to start again.

The Liturgical Lessons session includes hearing, wondering about and responding to one of the Godly Play Liturgical stories or lessons, followed by a chance for you to ask us some questions.

The price is £15. This is the total for all three sessions together, as we want to encourage you to have the whole Discovery Day experience. The price includes some Godly Play resources, so you can get some hands-on experience of these, too. Not enough to tell a story, but enough to hold and play with. Booking is essential: book [here](#).

Fischy Music are working hard to support children's mental health as the pandemic continues. Check out these **four great ways** that Fischy Music songs can support children and families at home. To find out more, visit the [Fischy Music website](#) or follow them on Facebook or Twitter: #childrensmentalhealth

Online Assemblies

These start back [on YouTube](#) on Mondays at 11am (or watch any time)

Children's wellbeing website

Direct access to Fischy's songs and support for children [here](#).



PROVINCIAL YOUTH SUPPORT

Over the winter, Provincial Youth leaders have been working hard to stay connected online with our young people. Edinburgh Diocese led the popular Winter Wonderland Sleepover event (featuring a Blessing of the Pets!) This was followed by the Glen Family Zoom Christmas Dinner on 28 December. These offered young people an online space to gather, chat, laugh and pray with Provincial Youth leaders and each other.



Edinburgh leaders and delegates were well represented at recent Provincial Youth Zoom gatherings

There is a new Provincial Youth programme which will run until Easter at least. This will be hosted by Provincial Youth leaders for Glen delegates and (separately) Glen graduates to meet, chat, play and pray together. Young people of High School age who haven't been to Glen are of course welcome too!

- **Week 1: Werewolves (game) and chat** Thursdays 7pm (4 Feb & Mar)
- **Week 2: Glen Graduates' chat** Fridays 8pm (12 Feb & Mar)
- **Week 3: Delegates' chat Thursdays 7pm** (18 Feb & Mar)
- **Week 4: Night Prayer Fridays 8pm** (29 Jan, 26 Feb & Mar)

This programme is for under-18s and Glen 20 graduates only, apart from Week 2 which is for 18+ young people only. We will begin with Night Prayer on 29th January. Below is a link to a very short parental consent e-form - you will receive Zoom links once you have completed [this form](#).

EXTRA FUNDING FOR CHURCHES

Do you have an idea which needs a little extra funding? In 2021 there are no set closing dates for applications. You are welcome to apply at any time during the year: I hope this helps during these uncertain times when restrictions and plans keep changing. You can download the grant application form [here](#).



STAY IN TOUCH

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Please get in touch if you have news to share, or if you would like to be added to my mailing list for this newsletter and other news. For even more regular updates, please 'Like' our Facebook page: [Edinburgh Diocese Youth and Children](#).