



Children's Ministry Report

2024-25



- ▣ **225 children at Summer Club having fun and growing in their faith in Jesus (best Summer Club we have ever done!)**
- ▣ **Growing Sunday morning groups with new families joining St Mike's**
- ▣ **New group Kidz Club Plus started on a Sunday morning**
- ▣ **Our work with Young Leaders has grown, seeing more young people wanting to serve both in Summer Club, Messy Church and Sundays**
- ▣ **Children and Families taking active part in Ten Thirty Celebration**
- ▣ **Strong partnership with St Michael's School and Pre-School & Nursery**
- ▣ **Year 6 children giving their lives to Christ at SPREE South West**
- ▣ **School Assemblies/Open The Book/Reserve RE are really popular**
- ▣ **Year 6 Alpha Course and Year 6 Leavers Day saw record numbers attending, asking questions and connecting with God**



2024/25 saw Children's Ministry at St Michael's go from strength to strength. We have seen growth in all areas, from Sunday morning groups where we are welcoming new families all the time to the depth of engagement in our mid-week and termly groups where parents are asking for resources to do faith at home with their children such as Bibles or Parenting for Faith key tools.

What's more exciting is the messages I get from parents who are saying that their children are now beginning to "connect" with God in prayer - especially in the everyday moments in their lives when things get tough and they are now chatting to God and hearing him speak to them, remind them of his truth and his love..

My prayer for the coming year is that we will see Children continue to hear amazing things from God.

Iain Nash - Children's and Families Minister



God Smart and God Connected

In truth, I was brought up as a "God Smart" child. I knew my books of the bible from Genesis to Revelation, I knew key verses and knew the truths in the songs we sang at Sunday School on a Sunday morning.

However, I was not given an opportunity to know what it was like to be a "God Connected" child; one who could chat to God myself anytime, anywhere and about anything. I also did not know that I could also experience what it was like to catch from God all the things he wanted to say to me.

In the 3 years I have been in post at St Michael's as Children's and Families Minister, I have sought to give opportunity for the children to be both God Smart and God Connected!

We have done this by gradually introducing key tools that the children can use such as:

CHAT AND CATCH: Giving children opportunities to chat to God about whatever is on their mind using their everyday language - in the same way we might talk to a friend. We then give space for them to listen and hear what God might be saying. Sometimes children hear his voice, other times children may use their God given gifts to tune in to what God is saying - whether through drawing, through music and dance, through nature, through dreams and through our feelings and emotions. There are so many ways we can catch from God.

What we model in our groups, we encourage parents to try at home, especially in the mundane everyday bits of life when they are doing bedtime routine, cooking dinner, folding the washing, doing the school run. Parents can create windows into their own faith for their children as they frame their children's connection with God, often by surfing the waves of their Childrens many interests. After all, parents are best placed to do this! Our job is to encourage them and give them the tools.



Stories of God Connection

One of our Year 4 children suffers terribly with anxiety. On the morning of going to Year 4 camp, there was a lot of tears, worry and the child did not want to go on camp. The child's mum suggested they try doing some "Chatting and Catching" with God on the way to school to get the coach. As they chatted to God, the child said to his Mum that they heard God say "do not be worried for i am with you always". Later that day, Mum received a message from the child saying they had chatted to God all the way to camp on the coach and each time they heard God say the same thing they heard earlier. They no longer felt anxious and for the first time, was looking forward to camp. No surprise then that when they got back, they told Mum they had the best time ever and that God was with them the whole time. AMEN!

One of our Kids Club children was so impacted by our recent series on the Fruit of the Spirit, that they used their creativity to begin writing out bible verses and putting them on their bedroom wall to read, surrounding themselves with God's truths. They even went one further and made a whole "fruit of the spirit" prayer activity for adults to do at their parents Lifegroup!

How amazing that our children want to facilitate opportunity for the adults to connect with God as well.

Welcome

Jemimah Obudo



You may remember from my report last year that one of my biggest hopes and dreams was for a Children's ministry assistant/trainee.

Well... God is good and faithful and hears our prayers and we are delighted to welcome 18 year old Jemimah Obudo to St Michael's for the coming year. Jemimah will be with us from September 2025 to August 2026.

Jemimah is part of the SWYM (South West Youth Ministries) "Be Transformed" co-hort. This is a one year course where she will be majoring in children's and families ministry and theology.

Jemimah comes from Kilmington near Axminster in Devon. She has adapted well to life at St Michael's. Jemimah is living with The Clothier family and has already made a friendship group through the students and young adults work. She has already rolled her sleeves up and has started to plan and lead children's ministry sessions. Susie Collins has agreed to be her mentor and Iain Nash will be line manager. Please continue to pray for Jemimah. I have no doubt she will be a huge blessing to all she meets at St Michael's and in the community.

Networks

I was disappointed to be turned down for funding and grants from both the Growing Faith Foundation and also Mullers this year. Applying for grants is always difficult for a church the size of ours. Nevertheless, we continue to work alongside organisations such as the Diocese, Mullers, Prayer Spaces in School, Parenting for Faith, Encounter Christianity and SWYM. This year, I have been part of the pilot year of the 360 Community, a valuable resource of retreat and training for children's and youth ministers across the South West. Both Naomi (Youth Minister) and myself are part of this for 2025/26.



Some Growth Goals 2025/26

Children's Ministry at St Michael's is one of the biggest areas of ministry in the life of the Church and with that, things also change quickly as the needs of Children and their families also change.

Below are some "Growth Goals" for the coming year where we have identified areas that perhaps need review and minor changes so that we can continue to serve the Children and their families in a relevant way, remaining easily accessible to all, welcoming and inclusive.

Goal One

Improve provision for children in the auditorium during Ten Thirty Celebrations, especially children with Neurodiversity.

Goal Two

Review Messy Church so that we can find new ways to grow and build numbers attending back up

Goal Three

Plan and deliver a Parenting Course in 2026. It has been a few years since we did the last one and sensing time is right to do this again.



Children's Ministry Structure

Sunday's



Babies &
Toddlers
Up to Age 2



Pre-School
Up to Age 3 1/2



Pre-School
Reception
Up to Age 5



Primary School
Year 1 to 4



Primary School
Year 5 & 6

Weekly (Term Time)



Babies &
Toddlers
Up to Age 4
CHESWICK

Weekly (Term Time)



Babies
0 to 1

Weekly (Term Time)



Toddlers
Pre-School
Up to Age 4

Bi-Monthly



Dads & Kids
Breakfast
0 to 11

Termly



Primary School
Age

Monthly



Primary School
Age



Sunday Children's Groups

Creche

Crèche continues to be a peaceful and welcoming space. The 10 key bible stories from The Play Along Bible with it's own Sensory Bag of items has really helped to model to parents a way to introduce the stories of the Bible to their little ones at home. We are using the Parenting for Faith key tools of Creating Windows into our faith by bringing the bible stories alive through everyday props and toys families may have at home.

Stepping Stones and Bubbles

I can't quite believe that Stepping Stones has been going for over a year and a half now and has seamlessly fitted into the canon of groups we offer to families on a Sunday morning. There is really good numbers in each group now and have started to see parents confidence grow in leaving their children in Stepping Stones with children enjoying the mix of play, story, song and craft. When they then move to Bubbles, they are used to being left to enjoy the same structure. One huge success in Bubbles has been the introduction of a "Sensory Bible Tray". This tray has items related to the story that they can pick up, touch, and interact with. Nearly all the items are taste safe as well.

Kidz Club/Kidz Club Plus

A major change we put in place was creating a new "Kidz Club Plus" group for Year 5 and 6. As a team, we were finding it hard to manage the large numbers in the lower hall, combined with trying to pitch curriculum to such a wide age range. Kidz Club Plus is quieter and has a more "youth group" feel to it, with deeper discussion moments, preparing them for when they go up to youth.

The biggest highlight has been the success of our "Fruit of the Spirit" series, with accompanying song which the children loved leading the whole church in the actions. We are seeing the children adopt these fruits in their everyday lives. We have also continued to do sessions on Global Mission with The Brickworks and IN:HOPE.

Changes and New Ideas

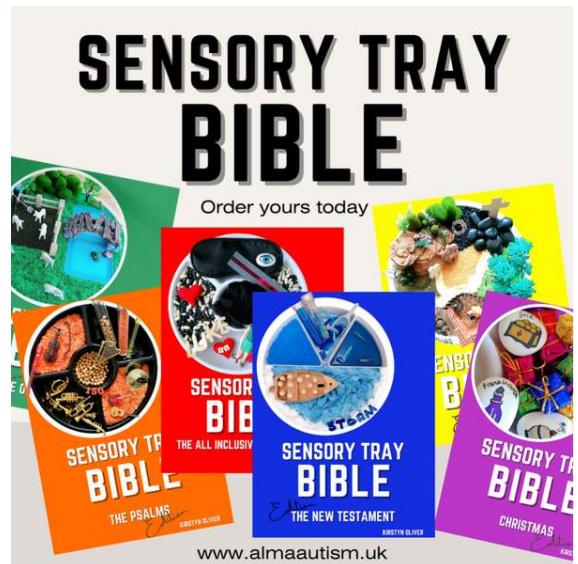
Creche

Updating Story Bags with new stories from Play Along Bible



Bubbles

Introduction of
Sensory Bible Tray



Kidz Club





Weekly Term Time Groups

you



Our weekly parent and toddler groups are hugely important "First Stage" groups for parents and carers from all over the parish. It has been lovely to see church families meeting and extending friendship to families from the local community who perhaps would not normally step foot inside a Church or are still socially isolated after the pandemic.

Beehive

Numbers have grown significantly as Beehive's reputation in the local community as a wonderful space for parents to bring their toddlers and meet other parents has been firmly established. We are getting lots of enquiries and recommendations on our social media platforms. Some weeks, we have had 90 plus in the auditorium. Singing and Storytime has become a vital moment, with children telling their parents at home they want to come to Beehive to see Tango the Orangutan who helps to tell the bible story each week.

The team has grown too which is encouraging, which also includes parents of children who have graduated from Beehive up to school. We continue to signpost parents to other things going on at St Michael's such as Alpha Courses, Kintsugi Hope and Sunday activities.

Beehive even featured in the video for Church of England's "Vocations Sunday".

Bumps and Babies

Bumps and Babies is a wonderfully supportive group for parents with new born babies or those who are expecting. It can be quite an isolating and lonely place to be expecting or having just given birth and Bumps & Babies gives a ready made little community of people in the same life stage. We have had quite a significant amount of new births at St Michael's this year and Bumps and Babies has been vitally important in providing a network of love and support to those parents.

Saplings

Saplings is our "new housing" area Parent and Toddler group held at "The Vench" in Lockleaze.

It has a very committed group of parents who come from the Cheswick and Lockleaze area.

The team involved consists of Poppy Spens, Zhe Liu, Pauline Sanderson, Liz Grant and from September 2025, Jemimah Obudo.

Saplings follows the same stories and crafts we have at Beehive, beautifully thought about, procured and arranged by Pauline.

Iain, Children's and Families Minister, stops by when his day off allows to play guitar and sing and read the story with a puppet in tow!

We have seen Saplings parents begin to come to groups and activities at St Michael's both on Sunday's and Mid Week.

*Thank
you!*

57

People Serve In
Children's Ministry

17

Young Leaders Serve In
Children's Ministry



Dad's and Kids Breakfast is our popular bi-monthly Saturday morning get together in our Lower Hall. It is a fantastic opportunity for Dad's to get together with other Dad's across St Michael's with young children to chat, encourage one another and broaden friendship circles. as their children play together.

We are wonderfully welcomed and served by our Coffee Shop team who serve us a delicious breakfast.

We have also been out for Breakfast at Poplar's Farm in Winterbourne.



Messy Church

Messy Church continues to be a flagship event for St Michael's Children's Ministry, with 60 children and families coming along each month.

While we have seen a reduction in numbers attending, largely due to the big group of Year 6 children who have graduated on, we are taking the opportunity to have much deeper conversations with families. These families have all said they really feel part of the Messy Church community and is a great way for new families arriving in the area and at church to get to know and make friends with others families.

We have seen new members of the Messy Church team come on board and one of the major highlights has been the growing amount of young leaders coming on board from Summer Club. Each month, our young leaders hop foot it across from school, wear their messy church aprons with pride and roll up their sleeves to serve the children and families who come. They are wonderful role models to the children, and as they graduate from Messy Church they often ask if they can come back as young leaders and give back to Messy Church. We have given them roles and responsibilities such as welcoming and registering children, explaining and leading craft activities and serving up the Messy Church tea.

This year, we looked at the Holy Habits of the early Church in Acts, and how they came together as a community to eat together, worship together, give to one another, pray together and share Jesus with each other.

In 2025/26 - we are going back to our Messy Church Does Science topics as the children explore the Christian faith through awe, wonder and science as they discover what an amazing creator God we have.

Pauline and Charles Sanderson have decided to retire from Messy Church service for health reasons. Charles served as head chef and Pauline led our individual crafts. Pauline will still help with craft ideas and prep. We thank both of them for their hard work and dedicated service to Messy Church.



st michael's church
**summer
club**

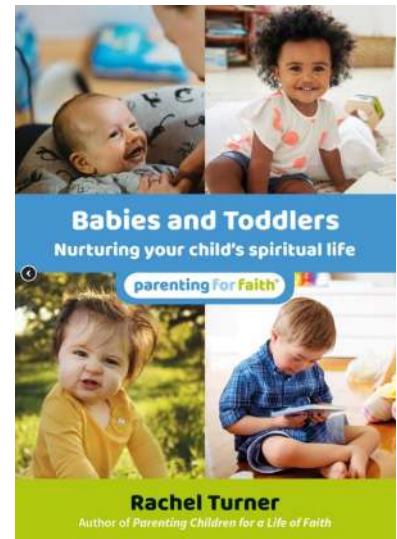
221 children joined us for our biggest Summer Club yet. An "In The Jungle" themed week of games, crafts, activities, sports and fun was had as we looked deeper into Psalm 139: 13-14 highlighting that God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) is a wonderful creator who has created all things, including us. The auditorium was decorated with brilliant jungle themed props. We had a daily visit from a dancing chimpanzee, leaders were gunged in the swamp and children enjoyed a variety of crafts and activities related to the theme, including games at St Michael's School and a prayer space in the historic church building. We also saw huge numbers come for the Sunday celebration as well as the children proudly showed off to their families what they had done.

We also had an army of young leaders this year. They were absolutely brilliant and worked so hard to show the children the love of Jesus through their words,

actions and servant hearts. We had young leader training evenings and moment, creating a real team togetherness.

Parenting For Faith Babies and Toddlers Course

We continued this year off the back of a successful Parenting for Faith course with parents of babies and toddlers joining us for the Babies and Toddlers Parenting for Faith course. Held over a series of evenings, we learned Right from their very earliest days, babies and toddlers can meet and know God. Parents and carers get to be a key part of helping them to do that, and churches, friends and family all make up the supportive community that encourages and equips them on the journey





Schools Work (Bring It To Life)

We have really strong links now with St Michael's CofE VC Primary School. I continue as a governor sitting on the Foundation and Pastoral committee, working closely with Peter Barnard (head teacher), Dawn McCann (Pastoral Care). I am pleased to say we successfully passed our SIAMS inspection this year, with the lovely inspector saying we must be the envy of other schools in area with such a strong church and school partnership. High praise indeed.

Acts of Worship

Every week, either myself, our youth work team or a member of our clergy team goes in to lead an Act of Worship on a Wednesday morning. These times have been such a blessing to the children as we worship and use fun and creative ways in which to think and reflect on Christian themes. Often using songs from I SING POP, these acts of worship major on getting children involved in the delivery of the message.

Year 6 Alpha and Leavers Day/Service

We had over 20 Year 6 students this year doing a lunchtime Alpha course, the highlight of which was a wonderful moment where children spent time with the holy spirit and enjoyed it so much, they asked to keep going when we had finished! Once again we had the honour of hosting a leavers morning with prayer stations, games and reflection as well as inviting parents in for a final leavers service with plenty of lovely memories.

Bring It To Life (Formerly Open The Book)

Bring It To Life continues to be well received and popular among the pupils. Children love diving into the stories using drama and costume and it's a lovely way to Bring The Stories to life. We have seen new actors and stroytellers join the team and are never short of children wanting to give acting a go.

Reserve RE

Reserve RE continues to be a popular extra curricular activity among the children at St Michael's Primary School.

Each 25 minute session is packed full of activity, discussion, object lessons and opportunity to reflect and pray.

We have looked at "The Beatitudes" and learning what Jesus shared from his sermon on the mount about how to live blessed lives.

A highlight was when we watched a film from Open Doors about the persecuted church across the world and we all stood, arm in arm, in support of those who worship in countries where it is dangerous to be a Christian.

Christmas & Easter Services

Our Crib Service this year built on the huge success of last years dramatisation of the Christmas Nativity. We had a stellar cast of children who, with only one afternoon of rehearsals, produced a very poignant and moving 45 minutes with music and visuals with everyone gathered around the crib for the finale!



On Good Friday, we took our prayer stations outside. Thankfully, the weather held off enough for many families to come and get a trail bag full of things to do as families walked around Stoke Gifford together and found clues and puzzles on different station boards. Some of the boards had a QR code you could scan to watch a video of certain characters in the Easter story giving their eye witness accounts of the events that took place. We all came together for the final 30 minutes to worship, think and reflect on what we had learned on the trail.





Year 6 Children Went To SPREE

Spree SW is all about building stronger friendships and creating space for encounters with God through a camping and activity weekend for children and young people aged from 8 to 17 who come as part of an organised group from their church or Christian youth and children's group.

For the second year running, we took Year 6 children from Kidz Club.

There was a wonderful mixture of activities and workshops to do during the day such as a funfair, sports tournaments and creative sessions.

These are book ended at the start and end of the day with venues to go to. We took the Year 6 children to "Rooted" venue which is for children who already have a faith and want to grow as a Christian, or who want to explore faith at a deeper level.

One of our Year 6 children, who had been asking lots of questions about the Christian faith stood up, prayed and asked Jesus to come into their life for the first time. They also said that they did not have a Bible so we were able to go to the market place and buy a Bible for him to read. This young person has gone on to become a young leader and we are checking in with them regularly to see how they are doing with their faith.

In 2026, we are planning to extend the invite not just to Year 6 children but also to Year 5 children as well - namely the Kidz Club Plus group.

Please continue to pray that many more will sign up to come along in 2026.



**For more information please speak to
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