



**Saturday 13th
November 2010**

All Hallows College,
Drumcondra, Dublin 9

**Saturday 20th
November 2010**

Orangefield Presbyterian Church,
Belfast

www.buildingblocks.ie



**Communicators'
School**

25-27 October 2010

Training the next generation
of youth speakers within PCI



Please pray...

Give thanks for the wonderful work of all our teams over the summer months. A Thanksgiving Service will be held on 11th September.

Pray for the MAD Crew as they come together for training and fellowship on 18th-19th September.

Duffy Robbins will be speaking at the MAD Weekend 22nd-24th October, please ask God to richly bless the 600 young people and leaders who will be at the event.

SPUD Youth Assembly is continuing to make a real difference, ask God to enable young people from across our churches to play an effective role in the life and witness of PCI.

Please pray for all the Sunday School teachers and children's ministry leaders who will be attending Building Blocks in November.

Pray that God would equip and encourage all those who will attend our Road Trip training events this autumn.



This September sees the launch of our new GAP Year programme – VIP (Volunteers and Interns Programme). This is open to anyone from within the Presbyterian Church aged 18-25 years old and there are a number of different ways to serve God throughout the year – whether it is being a YAC Intern, serving on the Monaghan Plus Team or Volunteering in a church in Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland. The year starts with a week of training on Monday 6th September, with placements commencing on 13th September. Please remember in your prayers all those involved in the programme, our young adults, participating churches and organisations.



The Youth Assembly is back for another year of being the voice of our 15-25 year olds and tackling the issues that affect them. The SPUD Working Group will meet in September to continue with their plans for the year. Keep your eyes and ears open for what's happening and don't forget to send delegates from your congregation to The BIG Event in November.

The BIG Event
27th November
Wellington, Ballymena

The Mash Up
25th – 27th February
(Venue TBC)



YAC PROJECT

The 2010/11 Youth and Children's Project 'On the Box' has now been distributed to Presbyteries. Please contact your minister to receive your copy.

Additional copies of 'Generate' can be downloaded from the website or obtained from the YAC Office.

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Department of Youth and Children's Ministry Newsletter

Generate

Issue 1 • Autumn 2010



Rev Christoph Ebbinghaus
Training Convener

Our strongest mandate for a training ministry is found in the life and commands of Jesus. Jesus was a trainer. The gospels show us clearly that the central focus of Jesus' earthly ministry was the training of his twelve apprentices or disciples. He takes them with him everywhere he goes. When Jesus preaches, they listen. The gospel writers often give us an insight into the post sermon debates when Jesus trains his disciples to understand fully his teaching and its implications.

From the desk of Roz...

Welcome to the first edition of GENERATE, the newsletter of the Department of Youth and Children's Ministry.

During the last week of July, the 'two years to go' landmark was reached for the opening ceremony of the London 2012 Olympic Games. This is an exciting time for hundreds of young athletes who are dreaming of the medal they will pick up on their home soil. Among them is nineteen year old Louis Smith, who won a bronze medal in Beijing. "I wasn't bothered that it was bronze," he said, "I was on the podium which makes 14 years of hard work worth it." He is of course training for gold in 2012.

What we all know is that Louis did not make it to Beijing on his own. He had friends and supporters but most important, he had a coach!

One major aspect of the work of our

Board is to coach those of you who coach, mentor, teach and train our children and young people. As you read through this newsletter you will discover some of the many ways we get alongside you and provide that all important opportunity to get equipped and trained. Time given to any of these training opportunities will be time very well spent. Our staff team are themselves highly trained, gifted coaches who have a passion to see children and young people come into a deep and meaningful relationship with Christ.

I commend these opportunities to you and pray God's blessing on your ministry.

Yours in Christ,
Roz Stirling
Director of Youth and Children's Ministry

Make sure your church is using the training on offer. Be a part of it

But Jesus didn't simply talk to his disciples. He trained them. He sent them out on short term mission trips commanding them to preach the message that "the kingdom of heaven is near"... and to heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, and drive out demons. In other words he was sending them out to do the same work that he had been doing, the work that he had been training them for. We get a clear sense of this training priority of Jesus in Peterson's translation of the Great Commission. "Go out and train everyone you meet, far and near, in this way of life... instruct them in the practice of all I have commanded you..." Jesus who trained his disciples now commissions them to bring this same training to the world. Make sure your church is using the training on offer. Be a part of it.

Latest News

THE TRAINING THAT COMES TO YOU!

10 VENUES
6 SEMINARS

ALL WE NEED IS YOU!

Topics include "Fresh ideas for Children's Ministry", "Ministry with under 5s", "Equipping young people for everyday service" and "Planning in youth ministry".

People working in youth and children's ministry can give many reasons for not taking up training opportunities. Some say they have been trained and do not need any more – perhaps they need training more than most! Others say they would love to go but are too busy; let's come back to that one. Some, however, find it understandably hard to get to training if it is not near where they live or work. As our primary training vehicle, PCI YAC Road Trip seeks to make training accessible to all!

Road Trip is for everyone in a leadership role with children and young people in the church, with seminars for those with years of experience to basic training for new leaders. There are at least 10 venues this year and you can find out more details at our new website www.pciyac.org.



[org/roadtrip](http://www.pciyac.org/roadtrip). Price need not be a barrier either because, thanks to the generosity of those who give to United Appeal, Road Trip is FREE! It will cost you the time and effort to give up an evening to go, but we are confident you will find the rewards make it worthwhile!

Finally, that "too busy to train" argument. Training is not an optional extra – it is essential for all of us, no matter what role or how long we have been leading. Perhaps you could find the best Road Trip venue for you and go together as a team – maybe even (dare we suggest it) cancel your programme that week to allow it? In any case, we hope that Road Trip will help meet your training needs and we hope to see YOU there this year!

Children's Ministry Course

Ever looked at the publicity for the Children's Ministry Course and thought, "that looks good" but then realised it's held in Belfast and that's quite far to travel for 10 weeks or believed that it's only for new and inexperienced leaders?

Well think again!

The course and where it is held

The Certificate in Children's Ministry course is held twice a year – once in Union College (September-November) and then once regionally (January-March). In the last few years these regions have been Bangor, Broughshane, Omagh and Kilfennan. The region is chosen often because we have been requested to come to an area and there is someone there who helps to be the point person for the course. So if you think the course is always somewhere else, get your request in and it may come to you. The decision of where the course will be held in January 2011 has not yet been made!

"But it's only for new and inexperienced leaders!"

The course gives some practical tips on helping you to connect with and teach the children within the ministry in your church, both for experienced and newer leaders. The course will stretch the most experienced of leaders to think in new ways and with new insights from lecturers who are experts in their fields – teachers, ministers, full-time children's workers – who are passionate about learning new ideas themselves on how to best do ministry with children.

The course looks at why children's ministry is so important, the world that children live in today, how their faith develops and introduces some really good programming ideas from full-time workers who run ministries in their churches. There is an assessment in the form of a journal and a short essay which, on completion, gives the opportunity of a Certificate from Union Theological College.

Youth Ministry Course

The YAC Youth Ministry Course, run in partnership with Union Theological College, is already in its second decade and 100's of leaders have successfully completed it. The course will be running again in Belfast on Monday evenings from 20th September and is for anyone who wants to improve their informed practice in youth ministry, whether new to the role or a leader for years.

Topics range from the theology of youth ministry, through understanding youth culture to practical issues such as evangelism, discipleship, and communicating with young people. This is more than a 'how to' course but is a 16 week commitment that is designed to make you think and apply learning to practice. It is designed to help you reflect on why you do what you do and make a difference to your service to the Kingdom.

The full fee is £150, including a residential weekend, and more information plus an application form can be found at the training section of our website www.pciyac.org.

Meet our Development Officers



Carol Johnston
Young Adults' Development Officer

Having worked for 10 years as a secondary school teacher and latterly as head of careers, Carol started working for YAC in March and will be helping local congregations develop ministry amongst young adults in our denomination. She is also responsible for our new volunteer and intern programme.

"This year I am looking forward to what God has in store for all PCI young adults and am really eager to work alongside churches as they seek to develop their young adults' programmes. In addition to working with individual churches, I am particularly excited about planning for, and launching a new young adults' residential event in 2011, working with our VIP's and SPUD Youth Assembly."



Graeme Thompson
Youth Development Officer

Graeme works alongside churches providing consultation, advice on youth ministry issues and helping them develop strategies for their youth and children's ministry. He offers guidance on employing youth workers at a local and denominational level and offers support to youth workers. Graeme delivers training to leaders and is looking forward to YAC Road Trip 2010/11.

"I am excited about a new year of the SPUD Youth Assembly and looking forward to supporting the young people as they continue to develop their voice within the Presbyterian Church."



Ruth Mitchell
Children's Development Officer

Having worked for 10 years as a youth and children's worker, Ruth has been in this role for 2 1/2 years, working with local churches, supporting and advising on children's ministry and training leaders.

"I am looking forward to continuing to develop relationships with local congregations in PCI to help support and develop their children's ministry and identify resources to make our children's ministries the best and most significant part of every child's week."

Soul Space

"Why do the demands of leadership often draw leaders away from intimacy with God? How can I keep from burning out and bailing out? The key to answering these questions is the simple but profound truth that we must be the people of God before we do the work of God!"

This extract from the book by Chuck Millar, 'The Spiritual Formation of Leaders', takes us into a very important conversation about the condition of our soul. As leaders we know the demands that ministry places on us and the capacity to get caught in an endless cycle of doing: a daily agenda that is often overly busy and driven by our own and other people's task lists, all of which leave us physically exhausted and emotionally, mentally and spiritually worn out. Time with the Lord becomes the very last thing that gets our attention. This is not the way we want

things to be but so often the reality we live with. We feel disabled by our failed attempts to correct the priorities of our daily to-do list and so we stick with that which is familiar. The discovery that our soul is dry as dust and we have nothing to draw from for those to whom we have been called to serve, just adds to our fatigue. Worst still, the Lord himself seems like a stranger. We talk of him out of a past experience of intimacy and friendship, knowing that we are not enjoying a vibrant relationship from which we draw our strength and well being.

And yet Jesus said "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" Matthew 11 : 28-30 (NIV). Or as 'The Message' translates

this text, 'Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. ...Walk with me and work with me – watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you will learn to live freely and lightly.'

As leaders of children's ministry, youth ministry and congregational ministry we must begin with 'God in us'. His indwelling Spirit is far more interested in who we are with him rather than what we do for him! As we get in tune with Him and what He is doing then without even trying, we become the vehicle for His grace in every situation, relationship and ministry activity. Let us determine to 'put first things first' and simply refuse to serve with a dry, parched soul. When we 'abide in Him' His work gets done by Him through us and we enjoy that easy yoke and light burden.

