



Christadelphian Sunday School Union Spring Newsletter 2024

Editorial: The Value of our Magazines

This edition we thought we would showcase some of the quality content of our magazines and give you some ideas about how they can support our children's spiritual growth.

Do you take a magazine? Why? Why do many of us enjoy flicking through, even engaging with them at times? For me, it's because they often give me a new perspective on something I am interested in or maybe introduce me to new facts which I would never have thought to search out myself. I love getting stuck into a book, Bible-related or otherwise but having a magazine to hand means I can gain something useful, interesting or just relaxing in a short space of time, either between jobs or before I fall asleep!

Do any of you relate to this?

What about our children? Do they look forward to opening the latest issue of, for example, their 'Kick' magazine like one of my grandsons does? Do they open their CSSU magazine with a sense of anticipation? Do we encourage them to read this genre at all, thinking perhaps that it's insubstantial compared with their school recommended books or of course their Bibles?

Well, the suggestion is that we should think again if that is the case: A quick search on the internet* revealed some interesting facts about the value of reading magazines:

- **Stories and articles inform, entertain and inspire.**
- **They help shape the way people think about the world around them.**
- **They enhance vocabulary and improve reading comprehension skills.**



- **They encourage young people to read a variety of styles of writing.**
- **Non-fiction articles can boost our analytical skills and our critical thinking.**
- **They provide a contemplative reading experience, rather than a major fact gathering, as we can do on the internet in bucket-loads if we so choose.**

The question is, do we encourage our children and young people to read, discuss and generally benefit from the magazines produced under the CSSU umbrella, so enthusiastically put together by our three editorial teams?

In this issue of our Newsletter, we examine the value of our magazines, My Sunday School Magazine, Bible Explorers and The Word, and consider ways of raising their profile among our target audience and generally within our community.

We hope you enjoy thinking afresh about this subject. Our hard-working editors especially like to hear what you and your children enjoy about the magazines, so please send in your comments to us and we can pass them on.

Ali Lawrence & Caz Parsons, Editors

*<https://larl.org/your-kids-should-read-magazines>

Do you know we produce three magazines for children and young people?

We asked our editors what makes them special:

My Sunday School Magazine for ages 3-6 is edited by Anne Botten.

"My Sunday School Magazine is a starter magazine for our youngest children. It offers them wonderful facts about God's creation and how it affects their lives. It contains Bible stories, puzzles, colouring and verses to learn. This is a magazine to share with parents and carers as it gives the chance to work together on crafts and talk about what they read and how we all have experiences that help us to do what God wants."



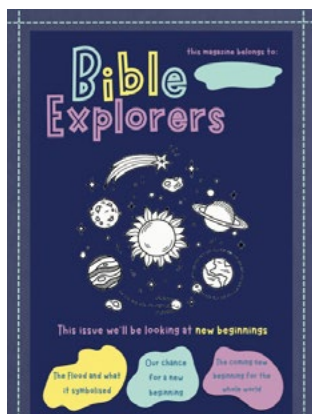
Bible Explorers for ages 7-11 has just been taken on by Phoebe Jefferies, & Joel and Claire Galilee.

'Bible Explorers is aimed at a real range from those new to reading up to a keen 11 year old scholar who wants a challenge. We hope to provide something for both of those kids and everyone in between.'

We wanted to take on the magazine because it's a way to serve the community that is fun, creative, and fits into our often chaotic lives.

Growing up we have been so grateful for the Christadelphian community - after all, it's how we know each other - so we hope to generate that sense of community with littler people. Through an element of interaction in the competition and 'dear diary' sections, the magazine provides that sense of connection beyond your own Sunday School to other children around the country and the world.

Esther Thorpe has done an excellent job of producing the magazine for a number of years, which is a very



tough act to follow - she had to be replaced by 3 of us! We aren't designers but are keen to give the magazine a new colourful look, and in our aim to include everyone in this age group we have also started 2 Farsi pages in each issue.

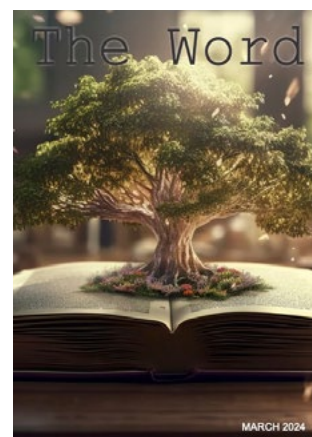
Our aim is to create a fun, relevant and interactive resource, with a variety of activities to generate excitement about the stories and lessons. Our ultimate aim, especially for older children, is for the magazine to prompt them to open and explore their own Bibles outside of a Sunday school lesson.'

The Word for ages 11-14 had a hiatus for a couple of years when we couldn't recruit an editor, so we were grateful when sis Becky Lewis stepped up to revive it!

'The Word magazine is published three times a year (in digital and printed formats). We aim to make the magazine accessible to everyone, whatever their background or level of Bible knowledge.'

We include a variety of activities and layouts in order to appeal to different learning styles and also recommend videos, podcasts and other media for this reason. For our lengthier sections of text, we use a dyslexia-friendly font. When relevant Christadelphian resources are available, we signpost to these, and are always interested to hear of new ones that we can recommend.

Each issue is centred around a Bible theme. We invite a wide range of Christadelphians to contribute, selecting them for their expertise or special interest in an aspect of the main theme. We offer Biblical perspectives on issues which challenge and concern young people who are trying to follow Jesus in the 21st Century. We try to do this in a safe, supportive and relevant way, mindful of the age of our younger readers. If you have any suggestions for future themes, or tricky questions for us to tackle, please let us know!'



Kids Corner

We asked some children what they thought of their magazines:

MSSM

"I read MSSM with my Mummy and like looking at the pictures and doing the dot to dot puzzle"

"I like the stories"

Bible Explorers

"I love the puzzles and colouring in my magazine"

"I enjoy the word searches, the small stories and the dear diaries the most"

"I take my magazine into school and read it during wet playtimes"

"I like the puzzles best, especially the codes"

The Word

"In the latest magazine I enjoyed the article called 'Automatic response' by Paul Tovell but the bit I particularly liked were the questions to ponder as it gave me something to think about."

"My mum likes to read mine!"

News from the CSSU

Hot off the press! Our very own Sis Christine Walker has just published a new book aimed at teens called **A Place To Go**. It's the story of ten teenagers, each struggling with his or her own problem, who find themselves helping each other and realising in the end that God has been working in their lives all the time. There are Bible references included to reinforce God's presence with them even though they may not have known it at the time....



'Harry, you must be joking. They're terrible.'

Izzie couldn't imagine that one of these broken down sheds could be the ideal place to meet her friends.

But that's just what it turned out to be.

Ten teenagers each with his or her own problem find their lives changed over the course of a few months.

'I think someone was watching over you all,' Nathan suggested.

'What, God?'

'Of course God'

Quick Teaching Tips

Ways to use the magazines in Sunday School:

- Get the older ones to help the younger ones to complete a code word or wordsearch as a brain warm up at the start of Sunday School
- Ask the children to bring one new thing they have learned from their magazine to the next class
- Challenge your children to complete a competition but offer prizes for the 'in house' winner(s)
- Write an article from their lesson in the style of the magazine - they could even submit it to the editors for inclusion in a future edition!

We LOVE your contributions!



Please share any good ideas you have up your sleeve on our Facebook page or send to caz@cssu.org.uk for inclusion in our next newsletter so others can benefit!

www.cssu.org.uk www.facebook.com/CSSU.SundaySchool - @christadelphian_ssu

