

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES



NEWSLETTER

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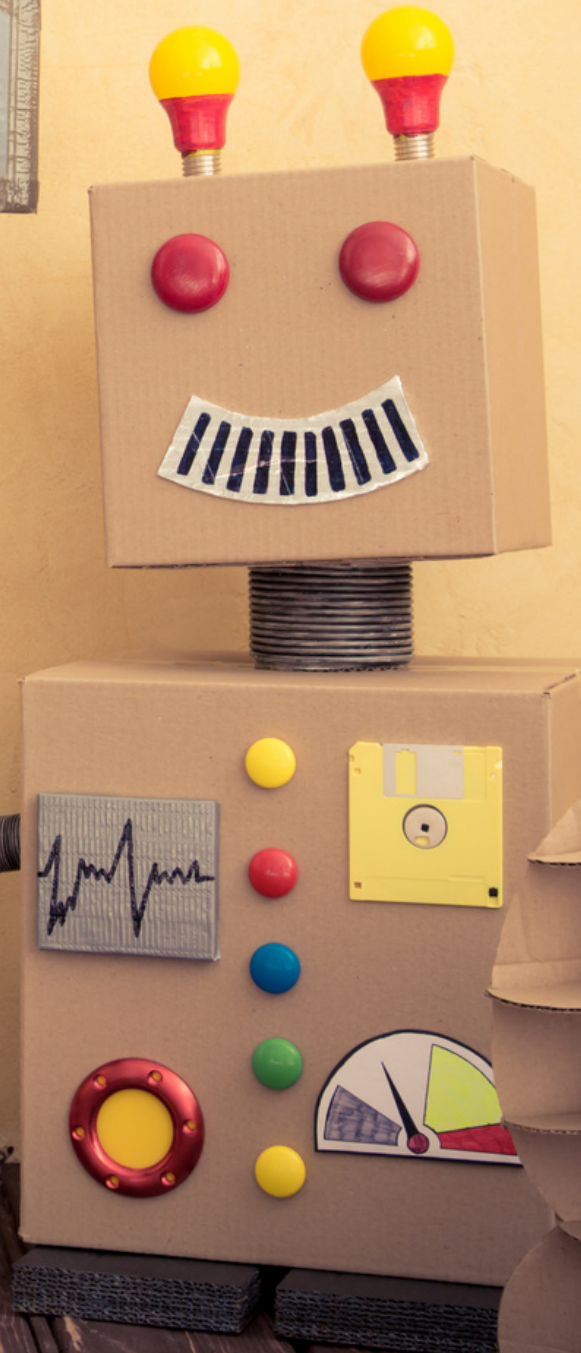
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**Children are committed to their parents as a precious trust, which God will one day require at their hands. We should give to their training more time, more care and more prayer. They need more of the right kind of instruction.
The Adventist Home, p. 16**



A Treasure Box of God's Promises Latvia



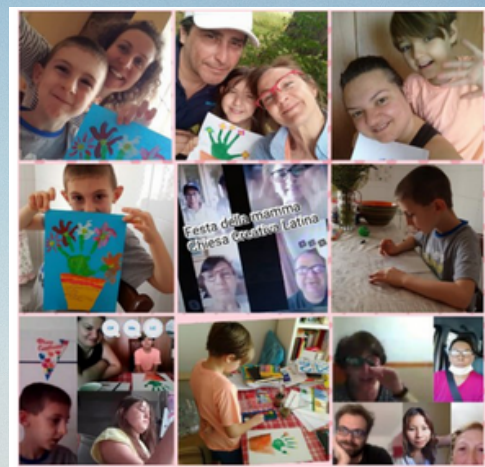
The Children's Ministry Department in Latvia organise a competition for children called "Treasures of God's Promises". Throughout the year the children learn about God's promises divided into the following topics:

God is faithful, God forgives sins, God protects, God answers prayers, God gives wisdom and God gives strength.

Each month the children choose a promise and depict it in a drawing to showcase on special days. As part of our outreach we invite our local libraries to take part in the competition and has been a great way to involve the community. We reward children with designed magnets that they can collect and eventually go on to win bigger prizes.



Messy Church, Italy



The year 2020 will remain engraved in our minds. As we know, our lives have undergone an unexpected change that we had to get used to, constrained and saddened by all that the Covid-19 pandemic was and is causing all over the world: needing to adjust to the restrictions imposed by the government; total lockdown in March throughout all Italy; gradual and distinct re-openings, depending on the infections rates in different regions of Italy, by May; severe isolation, having to give up hugging relatives and friends and experiencing truly traumatic moments; facing illness and death, even of our church members, friends and relatives. Our church meetings have been changed. After having closed all churches for more than two months, not all of them were able to resume meetings according to current safety regulations.

Many church members were isolated, though pretty soon technology provided some help. Families with children struggled a lot and still could not resume activities as before. The Creative Church (Italian name for Messy Church) is a family project that informally and happily brings the Gospel to those who are not familiar in attending the church. With its joyful gatherings, full of Bible stories, songs, creative meals, hugs and friendly relationships, it had to stop this classic way.

So a new approach was born, though it will never be normal for a Creative Church meeting, but it allowed to continue to see each other from apart. The two pilot churches of the project, Latina and Pesaro, cities from central Italy, did not want to stop their meetings and the possibility to have it virtual turned Activity Report News from the Italian Union, because they could smile, create, sing, listen to the Word of God and praise Jesus together. During Easter time, Creative Church took place at home, and focusing on the last days of Jesus' life on earth, the opportunity to meet virtually was still bringing joy.

The children were involved in activities that were recalling them specific moments of the last days of Jesus on our earth, by reproducing the scene of "The Last Supper" painted by Leonardo da Vinci or representing specific moments of His death and resurrection by using different tools and ideas. They could sing and watch some videos presenting the scenes of Jesus' death and resurrection.

The virtual meeting finished with a prayer of blessing. In that specific festivity, the Children's Ministries department provided to all Italian Adventist families the material to celebrate the Creative Church at home, to live this special celebration in family, explaining the different symbols also through the Easter dinner planned to be a "Creative Meal". After that experience other churches shared their interest.

Of course, it was needed to adapt the meetings to the new situation due to the pandemic, by producing material to use during virtual meetings.

At the end of the lockdown, in May 2020, three categories of people were considered heroes and were celebrated: the doctors, nurses and mothers and Creative Church got involved in the special celebration!

Children were asked to prepare flowers pots and hearts to thank all the mothers whom, during the previous months have had many roles to fill for their children and families. Some church communities, despite of having resume their activities, were not able to offer a proper program to the little ones so, taking advantage of the Creative Church material available, they decided to enjoy special moments and activities with "The Creative Church at home".

For instance, the children of the churches of Catania and Lentini (Sicily), throughout the month of May, crafted flowers, hearts and decorated jars with a small candle light inside.

They learned that this small light represents the love of a mother that shines and warms, a kind of love that is infinitely smaller than the great love God has for all of us. After this one, other creative meetings took place, cheering up the families thus 2020 got to its end with a lovely virtual meeting in December, celebrating the birth of Jesus, the special Gift of Salvation.

The churches that experienced the virtual Creative Church meetings shared the wish to continue doing the Creative Church, despite of the long-lasting pandemic. During Summer 2020, "The Creative Family" project, drawn from two classic Creative Church meetings and developed to be run over ten work days (except Saturdays and Sundays), has been put in place.

This material was designed to meet in presence, with children and their families. Later on, churches were eager to go further with the project once a month, thus Creative Church was fitting perfectly.

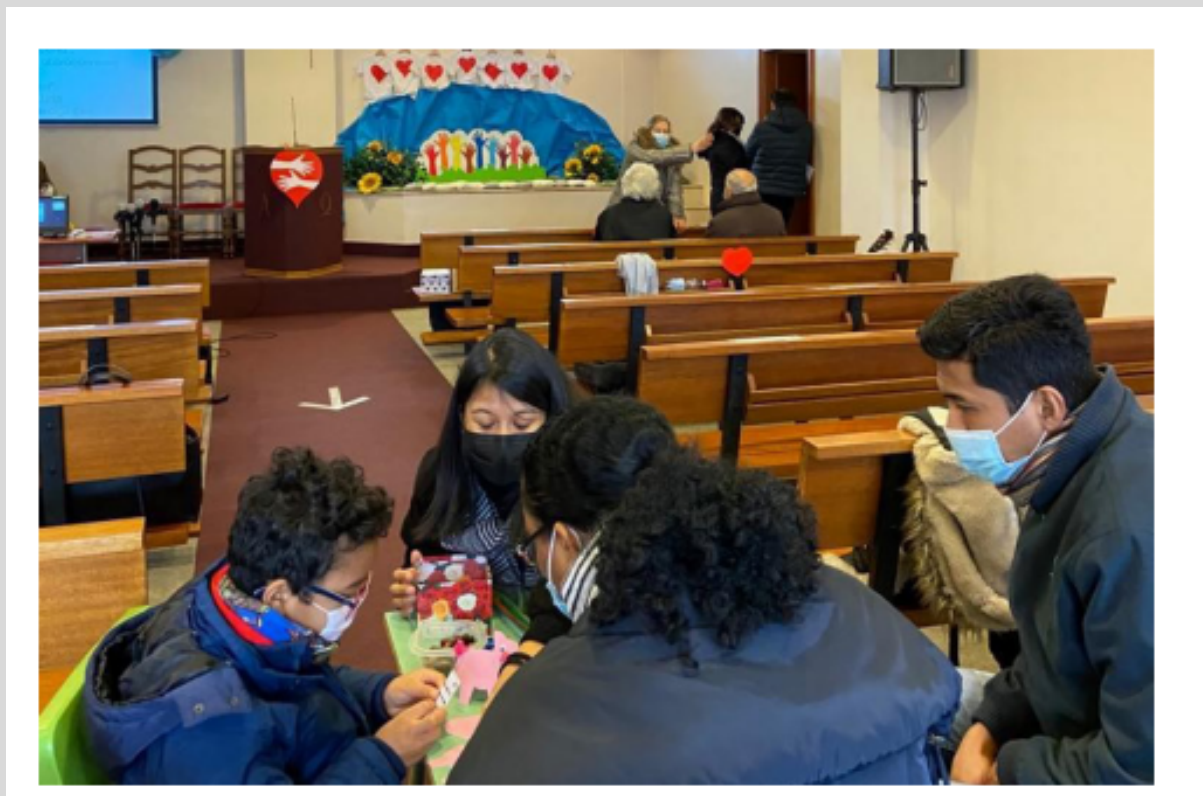
So the existing material has been re-adjusted to be respectful of the safety standards needed, allowing again one hour and thirty minute meetings in attendance: the "Covid-free Creative Church" meetings. The church Rome Appia was the first that experimented it.

Those communities that have experienced the modality and spirituality of the Creative Church asked to be trained and start the "Covid-free Creative Church" meetings as soon as possible. On March 13, 2021 the first webinar to train the working group was held.

Some other churches such as Catania, Lentini, Acate (Sicily), and Roma Appia participated in the course, along with the pilot churches, after receiving the approval of their church boards. The second webinar for churches will take place on April, 10.

The new and unconventional way of worshipping God, the need of friendship and relationships and the joy of sharing Jesus as a best friend with those who don't know Him has overcome the fear and emotional block that Covid has created and continues to create. May the Lord guide and protect families in this new project of the Adventist church.

News from Italian Union



Cheltenham Messy Church, South England Conference



Mike & Vicky Beamish from Cheltenham church running Messy Church online. Mike and his wife send out craft packs to kids in preparation for each meeting and the children follow along on zoom. Have a look at this great initiative being organised during this time. Link to YouTube: <https://youtu.be/oUJ1LFIngBk>

Testimonial:

The idea of sending packages appeals to me. It is such a wonderful way of staying connected during this difficult time.



MAY 2021

Quick & Easy Worship Ideas



Bible Connection Matthew 28:1-10

Even when things look hopeless to us, God can still do miracles. Jesus was dead and the disciples felt hopeless, but God brought Him back to life. Seeds may look dead, but they still contain life that can be "resurrected" with sunlight and water into something green and tasty.

Things you need:

- A rectangular plastic food tray
 - Paper towels and water
 - Cress or alfalfa seeds
 - Pencil, scissors
- (Tan, green, and brown paper)

Worship activities:

1. After reading Matthew 28:1-10, think about the words that describe what the Resurrection means to you as a family. Choose one or two shorter words, such as hope, love, life, or joy.
2. Fold several sheets of paper towels to neatly line your food tray.
3. Draw the outline letters of your chosen word onto the paper towels, so that seeds can be "planted" inside the shapes of the letters. If these letters are hard to draw, use a large computer font to help you, and resize the word so that it fits within the edges of the food tray.
4. Use water to dampen the paper towels and then sprinkle cress or alfalfa seeds within the letter outlines.
5. Place the seeds in a warm, bright place and keep them damp so that they can sprout and grow to spell the word you have chosen.
6. The seeds that looked dead and lifeless will be resurrected to new life!
7. Cut the cress when it has grown and serve it in delicious sandwiches. You could even cut the sandwiches to spell the letters of your word!

Other ideas:

- Work together to plant purple crocuses or seasonal flowers keep your Hope Alive!

Karen Holford - 100 Creative Worship Ideas for Busy Families. Pacific Press Publishing Association, Nampa, Idaho, USA, 2014



Prayer Invite each person to write one of their hopes on a piece of tan paper cut to look like a seed. Stick all of your hope seeds onto a sheet of brown paper and label it "The soil of faith." Cut a green paper shape of a simple watering can and write on it "Water regularly with prayer." Place this poster where it will remind you to pray for your hopes. Add paper flowers to the poster when a hope becomes a reality and your prayers are answered.

Children & Nightmares



Preschooler:

Nightmares often spring from fear and occasionally from spiritual attack. Well before bedtime, talk with your child about what fears may be bothering him/her. Avoid things that contribute to those fears. Then pray with your preschooler before he/she sleeps. Read Bible verses with your child and assure him/her God is with them even while he/she sleeps (See passages below)

Elementary Age:

Ask your child to share what happens in his/her dream and together, explore what fears might be prompting the dream. At this age your child may be able to articulate his/her fears and concerns. Pray with and for your child, especially before they go to bed. Let your child know that dreams are often based on something that happened during the day. Help your child process negative things that happen each day so they won't plague their dreams.

Preteen:

Pray with your preteen, too, but also talk with your child about the "input" into his/her imagination. What sort of television programs, movies and Internet sites are feeding his/her mental images? How might limiting (or eliminating) those influences improve their ability to sleep peacefully? If cutting negative input doesn't help, have your preteen write out what happens in the nightmares, then rewrite it so it's not scary. Before going to bed, your preteen can visualize the rewritten version of the dream to help aid sleep.

Related Scriptures See these passages: Psalm 4:8; 34:4; and Proverbs 3:24. 2Timothy 1:7 speaks to our spirit of fear.

From: Trust Us. They'll Ask. Answers to your kids' toughest and most awkward questions.

10 WAYS PARENTS CAN SUPPORT THEIR CHILDREN TO BUILD POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH HABITS



01
Encourage your child to openly talk about their feelings and thoughts



02
When your child is worrying help them to effectively problem solve



03
Support them to connect and build positive relationships with others



04
Encourage them to look after their physical health (Sleep, food, exercise)



05
Help them to stay focused on the present moment using mindfulness



06
Highlight the importance of looking after both physical and mental health



07
Be a mental health role model. Demonstrate positive behaviours



08
Praise, encourage, motivate and regular support your child to build their self esteem



09
Work together to learn some coping skills such as deep breathing



10
As your child grows up encourage and support autonomy



 @BELIEVEPHQ





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