

Children's Ministries

NEWS FROM THE HUNGARIAN UNION

Dóra Mihalec, Children's Ministries Director

Children's Sabbath at Eger Church

For the first time in our church in Eger we organized a children's Sabbath.

We started to prepare for it with great excitement, because the play, which was presented by the youth of our congregation with the title "Lazarus live", required much preparation. We designed, drew, cut, painted and built the scenery. We gave out roles, learned and rehearsed the play not only on Sabbaths. We tried to use objects that bring the audience closer to Jesus' age. A friendly lady was kind enough to sew dresses for the characters.

The guest children were given something to drink and a bookmark as a gift. After performing the story, the musical services of our children was followed by a short but heartfelt sermon on the resurrection of Lazarus.

The effect and the blessing of God have surely followed: everyone was touched, refreshed and amazed that our youngsters are capable of doing such things. Our guests, who were mostly non-believing, non-congregational family members, also liked it very much.



There were some who stayed for the afternoon programme. After lunch we participated in an interactive photo report on Africa called "Are polar bears white in Africa?" after which we went to a nearby park where team games followed. The three-person teams had to reach six stations with the help of a map and solve different tasks there; such as animal riddles, incomplete biblical verses, bird recognition, animal puzzles, issues related to Lazarus' story, and skill tasks based on an Old Testament story.

We hope that there will be many more children-Sabbaths like this, where our loved ones and friends will get to know Jesus!

- Rita Bodolainé, children Sabbath school teacher, Eger church

The wet Holiday Bible Camp

Not only because of the proximity of Lake Balaton, the theme of the camp, the occasional rain, but also because of a wonderful water-related event, the 2018 Bible Camp will only be remembered as the wet camp.

On the 25th June 2018, 110 smaller and bigger children were waiting eagerly to see the famous "Jack Szpenót" landing on the shores of the camp in Balatonlelle. "Is the treasure here? I will find the greatest treasure of my life today!" - these were the first sentences of the captain (Gábor Mihalec) after he came out to the children while his crew carried the tools needed for treasure hunting: the shovel, the lamp...

Captain Jack Szpenót's desperate desire for the greatest treasure of his life, he gave the opportunity to the Apostle Peter (Gellért Gyetvai), who was present at the scene, to show the captain - and especially the children - the treasures to which the "thief can not find and the moth cannot devour", through the biblical stories. He also told them why it is true that "where your treasure is, your heart is also". Captain Szpenót and the children could get acquainted with different treasures through the stories of "The treasure hidden in the field", "The lost drachma", "The friend asking for bread", "The foolish rich man" and the rich young man: It is a treasure if you unexpectedly find something great; it is a treasure if someone really loves you; it is a treasure if there is always someone to help you. And the greatest treasure is Jesus Christ himself.

While the teachers performed the scenes, the children themselves could jump in the stories in interactive ways, they were the 12 apostles accompanying Jesus, or they were just forming a city gate sitting on each other's necks.



In the afternoon, the children in the teams could "taste" the pirate life, built a ship from Styrofoam boards (so that at least one person could sit in it) and painted the ship's flag. On Wednesday's all-day excursion to Siofok, the Sió Canal they could try out what it is like when the wind does not blow on a pirate ship's sail and they have to paddle.



The teams could also compare their newly acquired or already possessed paddling skills through a dragon boat championship. The loudest, perhaps, were the kids when their teachers compared their skills with the dragon boat staff. The fight was tight, and in the end... the kids will tell who won at the end. Of course, they were also looking for treasure, because treasure moves everybody's imagination, but they could only do it after the treasure map was deciphered! Various motion and logic games have led the kids to the message that treasure they all have enormous treasures: treasure to talk, see, hear, run, walk, etc. We even "shipped out" to the Balaton lake on Thursday night, while the pirate who served on the ship was entertaining us and gave everyone a balloon animal.



And what was the wonderful event related to the water, the Balaton?

One of the highlights of the week was Timi Hajtmann, the 15-year-old girl's baptism. For many years, Timi has been a regular participant in the Bible Camp,

where she has had a wonderful experience with God. In one year Uncle Gábor (Gábor Mihalec) taught preaching to children who wanted to try it out, so that they could preach to others on Sabbath. Timi was also among the candidates. When Sabbath arrived, Timi's sermon was ready, but Timi was not really. She was excited, but she didn't give up, stood up before the others. And then, as she said, she received peace as she has never had before. As a result of this memory, she decided to be baptized at the Bible Camp. It was a great experience for all of us, teachers and children alike, when we led Timi along with music and vocals to Lake Balaton. The lake did not show us its friendly side, the wind was blowing, but it didn't stop the baptism. She was accompanied by some bigger girls in the lake. Timi, we want you never to let go of Jesus, trust in him in your way and realize your dream of becoming a pastor!

I owe gratitude to my teacher staff, most of whom have sacrificed their free time to give children joy, to provide them with community, and to teach them to know and love God.

- Dóra Mihalec, Children's Ministries Director in Hungary

Child-friendly church — Baja

The energy invested in the growing generation will be greatly rewarded. In my experience, not only do they enjoy its benefits, but every member of our church. Because the following results and goals can only be achieved through full cooperation. Everyone finds and undertakes the job they like in the plethora of tasks. While we learn from each other "unnoticed", we look out for the other, our community develops and builds up. The Biblical principle realises: "Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ." 1 Corinthians 12:12 (NIV)

A few years ago, during a conversation, my acquaintance noted modestly: - I have only one child. Then quickly added: "But a very good quality one! There are 23 children and young people in our congregation, and we are working to make each of them "high quality". How do we do that?

Children's teachers and parents regularly participate in training and conferences organized by the Division and Church Conference (Women's Ministries, Children Ministries). We have many useful ideas and information on these forums.



--- On this basis, we launched our own programme called Roaming in the Bible. Until now, we have prepared the story of Noah, Moses, David, Joseph in the form of puppet or play. After the lectures we discuss the actual lessons, making it more colourful with playing, singing with the little ones, and filling out crossword puzzles with the bigger ones. Hearty snacks and a crafts session closes the occasions.

--- For our adolescent ladies, the Girls for Christ programme offers a spiritual journey. The theme is now repeating for the fifth time: creative ideas are followed by creative, cheerful tasks. Grammar studies are conducted in groups of 4-6 people with the help of mentors. By having some snacks and fruit we deepen our relationship with each other, while remembering the birthdays makes the programme intimate. The handcrafted treasures become the kind of memories of togetherness.

--- Our children will not stay without loving care through the holidays. They can take part in canoe and bicycle tours supervised by family members and seniors. We also organize a day-time summer camp. While the little ones chatter, draw, play, the older ones learn to buy, cook, sew, and together they paint the yard fence.



--- Yes, because we have a private yard for 4 years now at our church building. It includes a small terrace and a playground with swings, climbing frames and a slide. Our building is child-friendly with halls designed for them on the first floor, which are decorated according to their wishes. A playhouse style for youngsters, study room style for schoolchildren, and a lobby for young people. This allows our events to be open to friends, those, who are interested and classmates.

--- We try to enrich the exteriors with internal content. We provide babysitting during the adult lectures. We encourage our children to serve in worship: vocal, instrumental accompaniment, collecting the offerings. Our young boys are happy with their technical tasks: they set up microphones, manage sound, control the projector, take pictures and record videos. Before the preaching, we must not miss the story of the children, which is coloured with tangible objects and illustrations. During the period of preaching, a connected speaker in a separate room favours mothers taking care of small children.

We are grateful to God for having been able to provide these in our church. We glorify the Lord for the spiritual, and material care. We thank him for the promise that is a great support in our ministry: "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:9 (NIV)

Anita Mátyási, Baja Church

Teaching faith to the digital generation

On 18th of November, 2018 we organized a national training programme for schoolchildren and parents. The day's speaker, Miklya Luzsányi Mónika, introduced us to the thinking of the digital generation. Monika shared the results of 20 years of research with us through examples from her own family life. According to her, she became a writer and became involved in the research of the digital generation because of her children.



The lecture expressed that those who are present in religious education today are members of the Alpha and Z generations. While at the same time some parents come from Generation Y. But what does this division of generations mean?



Today's children are digital natives (Z generation: born after 1995, alpha generation: born after 2000) with the knowledge of how to use the digital devices is already in their blood. However, we are very different from what we were as a child. We are all familiar with the picture: a

group of young people looking at the screen of their phone instead of talking, pressing the buttons on the phone ... Do our children regress? Often even us parents say that our children are smart but are lazy and do not perform well at school. It is also a fact that tolerance for monotony has been greatly reduced for today's children, according to the current standpoint, only 2 minutes (after 2 minutes a new thing has to be provided to maintain their interest) and they have less or no respect for the authority of the adult. Well, one thing is for sure: our kids are not stupider than we were, in fact! They only acquire knowledge differently (not necessarily from printed books) and accordingly use both of their hemispheres, so they learn in an audio-visual way. While we perceive their attachment to digital devices as an object dependency, they feel insecure without them, as they experience their social relationships through them. What can a religious education teacher do?

To reach these children, it is clear that there is a need for methodological changes and a new role for teachers - partner pedagogy. Leave the pulpit and go to the kids. Show the children how to do it, but let us be credible, because that is the only way we



will have authority. Do not consider the digital device as an enemy, but involve it in education. Don't take the map to the classroom, but make them google for them.

These thoughts are just a small slice of the knowledge that Monika shared with about 80 participants. The lecturer tried to lead us to the reasons by placing the lessons learned into practice with us. Our task was to assemble games and tasks corresponding to different types of intelligence on the theme of Christmas, the birth of Jesus.

Child-friendly church?

What can a child-friendly church look like? Ask those involved! I asked the children and teenagers in our church when and how do they feel they are loved in the community? The answers were:

- they are nice to me,
- they are direct with me,
- they give me gifts just because,
- they are interested in what happened to me this week,
- they give me kisses, they hug me,
- they always say hello,
- they are counting on me, ask me to help,
- if I do not want to do something, they don't force me to do it,
- those who can, help each other,
- they are understanding, if I don't want to take part in something,
- they remember my birthday,
- I have a lot of friends,
- everyone smiles,
- they are loving. (This was said by a very small girl - and she was right!)

It was an interesting recognition for me that if there is a good relationship between adults in the church, if they help each other mutually, it also affects the children because they feel safe.



Our church is consciously child-friendly. There are games, there is an enthusiastic children's work on Sabbath morning, children's story before preaching, coupled with a child-friendly - not too long but interesting - worship, and there are programmes during the week. And of course, on Saturday night, there are muddy traces on the floor, fingerprints on the front door glass, and more or less noise during the day and the inevitable hustle and bustle during the break. But we happily cope with them, because they are here with us, live with us and what's most important, they develop with us. Special thanks to the organizers of the children's services, Dóra Mihalec and the teachers of the school for Greta Kónya, Enikő Szabó and Évi Józsefné Széll for their work and preparation; and the openness and the receiving spirit of the church. Even though the lack of space is somewhat interfering with our plans, we are confident that it will be resolved over time.

One of our weekly mission programmes is the Zenebölcsi (music pre-school), which is specifically designed for families with small children.

We are expecting families for the event advertised in the city newspaper and on the Internet, so an older brother, father, grandmother can also come. Our congregation sponsors the occasion, so anyone can participate regardless of financial situation. Polyfoam carpet is placed on the floor, so small babies can move safely.

And all of a sudden the magic begins. When Rebeka Kőszegi Adventist kindergarten teacher starts to play the flute, the bustle stops. All eyes and all ears are on her, and it continues with nursery rhymes, singing and music. Various musical instruments are available, now it is possible to make noise, to play loud, to test instruments. Little talents are born at this time. Children are free, parents are happy.

Recently, on an Adventist website, someone wrote to me, an unknown lady, interested in our programmes for kids. She is now abroad, but she will be coming home soon. When he was at home in Hungary the last time, she heard from a mother on a playground what a good programme she had with us...

There was a parent who came to say he didn't even know that there was such a church.

We do this service for these experiences and children. People get to know us, bravely cross the threshold of the church, get a good reputation for us, and the children want to come and bring the parents back because they feel comfortable and safe. Relationships, friendships born.

Almost 30 families have already come to these events, the number of staff varies, depending on the illnesses and family programmes. Usually there are 5-10 families present at the same time. We have chosen an afternoon time so that the whole family can come, because we do not want to separate them, but we want to join them together through the common experiences.



Many mothers find it harder to get out after their delivery, feeling isolated because of the many daily tasks, they feel alone. Today's modern society places great demands on women, mothers of new-born children. It gives the idea that you have to be a perfect mother, perfect housekeeper, wife, perfect woman, but it is impossible to always fulfil all roles at once. There are a lot of new situations, new challenges in this period, but in this supportive environment, they can find a home and friends together with their baby, where they can forget about the sink and laundry for an hour, where they can laugh together with their baby boy or girl.

"God loves the cheerful giver" 2Cor 9:6-7. Usually we only think about material things regarding this passage, but it is about more! What can you give to God? Your time? Your craftsmanship? Your musical talent? Your creativity? Give it, He accepts it with love and blesses it. It is worthwhile to invest energy and time in programmes for kids and families! God's blessing is on the music pre-school; because to give and to refresh others is good. To bring happiness is joy.

- Katalin Polgárné Papp, Elder of the church in Sándorfalva

Children's Choir Meeting in Terézváros

On the 22nd of September 2018, we held a Children's Choir Meeting at Terézváros Church in Budapest, which was organised for the second time.

Together with the home choir we could listen to eight children's choirs. Our guests came from Érd, Gyömrő, Hévíz, Isaszeg, Kecskemét, Újbuda and Zugló churches.

The choirs usually sang two songs in the morning and one in the afternoon. Before the songs, all choirmasters introduced their small team.

As an accompaniment to the vocals, the sound of the violin, the guitar and the piano repeatedly made the mood even more elevated. The bells with which the Isaszeg Choir had delighted us had a unique effect as well. The lovely little songs were sung as prayers, and everyone was touched by the charm of children's voices, the enthusiasm and talent of children.

As the closing of the day, from the smallest to the oldest choral member, everyone sang in front of the pulpit and returned home with a small badge as a reminder of the wonderful day.

We hope that this day spent together and the teaching of children to sing, and to play music will encourage others to participate in such work, and that more and more people will praise the Lord with vocals and musical instruments! Let's meet next year at the third Children's Choir meeting!

- Ildikó Tokics

