



TEP Children's Ministries News

April 2017

The newsletter you see before you today is from the Hungarian Union. I was blown away by the many ways in which the churches in this Union are sharing the gospel to their own children but also children in their communities. I hope you will read this issue with open minds and open hearts as you may find something that you can use in your own church.

Creativity abounds and we see that God is blessing so many efforts. We sometimes think that things only happen far away in other countries but not in our Division. I have seen time and time again that where we are willing God opens paths and areas for us to enter.

In Galatians 6:4,5 it says:

“Make a careful examination of who you are and the work you have been given, and then sink yourself into it. Don't be impressed with yourself. Don't compare yourself with others. Each of you must take responsibility for doing the creative best you can with your own life”.

That sums it up, doesn't it? Once we sink ourselves into the work we have been given, God will give us ways to express ourselves that are unique to us. So my wish and prayer for each of you is that you find what is unique to you and let God lead you as you reach others for Him.

Blessings to you all,

Clair



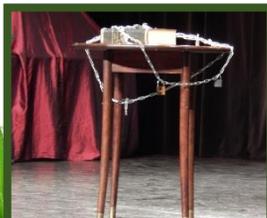
Super Sabbath

During our meeting in England in 2016, while listening to the reports of the different countries, the thought occurred to me that it would be so good to have an annual, national children's day in Hungary.

The idea was followed by actions, and I can gladly say that on 25th of March 2017 we held the first national children's meeting in Hungary, called Super Sabbath. Not only the name, but the whole day was super.

For our main topic of the day we chose the 500th anniversary of the reformation. We wanted to translate and show the meaning of the reformation in a historical perspective and what it means today, in a language that kids would understand, too. We have identified two thoughts: read your Bible and that Jesus is the one who forgives your sins.

Before entering the (knight's) room, the kids had to go through a time machine that "took them back" in the 1500s. We tried to bring back atmosphere of the age through Renaissance music and with clothes that are typical to the era, which were worn by the helpers. In the morning we showed the beginning, the conflicts of Marin Luther, and the road leading him to hang his 95 theses through plays. We have tried to make the events as interesting, colourful and interactive as they could be. We have given opportunities to the groups of children coming from different churches to enrich the day with a short song, poem or drama. They also were involved in the play as troupers who perform their play on the square in front of the Church of Wittenberg. Both the children and the teachers and parents preparing them took the task seriously and the children performed cleverly and snappily. The importance of reading the Bible was emphasised with a puppet show.



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The parents did not disturb the morning because the children could take them to a "parent nursery" or school, where a consultant psychologist gave them a lecture to engage them.

In the afternoon we had to deal with a big problem: Martin Luther was missing! As it turned out well-meaning friends kidnapped him and kept him in the Castle of Wartburg as their "guest". He sent the kids a Bible closed with a chain and 13 padlocks and asked them to help him set it free, so that he could start translating it. The 13 teams had to prove their skills at 13 stations to get the keys of the padlocks. There was a station where they had to "translate" a text written in Greek letters to Hungarian and with the help of letter stamps, print it letter by letter. They could play contemporary games, but also could taste vegetables arriving to Europe at that time, like tomatoes, peppers and potatoes.

We have prepared a craft and play area for the younger children, but the face painting was also popular.

We owe great gratitude to God that he has blessed this day richly so that children and adults have had fun as well.

Enriched with experiences we can say: There is going to be a Super Sabbath in 2018, too!

- Dóra Mihalec



Újbuda Church, Budapest



The children's Sabbath school of our church is frequented by 48 children and often guest children join in, too (for example when grandparents bring their grandchildren.) There are 9 teachers and 2 helpers working with the kids in 3 age groups. Children are actively involved in church services and ceremonies. The motto of our teachers is "Love the child and accept them as Jesus accepts you!"

School year opening ceremony

For ten years our church has been organising school year opening and closing services for the children every year. In September 2016 we have welcomed four children who are starting primary school in the first grade and two young people who are starting their university years with great love. Those starting primary school have been given a Bible, which will accompany them throughout their lives.

Those starting university were given a "scroll" containing the message of encouragement, and the church jointly asked God's blessings and leading for them afterwards. The children's service of music and poems made the occasion even more colourful.



Christmas visit in the hospital

Our teachers happily serve the children outside the church as well. Since 2014 every year, in the rush and crowd at Christmas time we are visiting the children cardiology department of a hospital to see those children and parents who are spending the holiday in the hospital and bring them a little bit of happiness, Christmas "magic" and hope, to put a little smile on their faces.

We are singing, telling stories and bringing gifts to them. The church is taking part in collecting the gifts. One of the mothers has organised a collection of plush animals that almost involved a whole village. The Lord has increased the number of gifts, that even the needy children that visit the church playhouse could be gifted plentifully.

We are not forgetting the nurses, who deal with children, ready to make sacrifices, so we have gifted them with books, too.

- Zsuzsanna Kovács



Nyírtura Church

Holiday Bible Camp at Nyírtura Church

In July 2016 we had prepared with great enthusiasm and were looking forward to the camp. Beautiful weather, meaningful programmes, songs glorifying God, cheer was glittering our days with 43 children. The mayor of our village had provided us with a building for the whole week where we could hold the sessions.

Our Bible study was on the character of Jesus. Every day we studied about a character trait, and on the last day, on Sabbath, the children in small groups, reported on what they had learned to the guests, parents, brothers, sisters and grandparents.

The highlight of the week was when the kids could buy things with the coins they had collected throughout the week, which they got for good behaviour, learned Bible verses, good answers and being thoughtful and helpful towards each other. They could buy nice toys, useful things, (footballs, pens, books, Bibles) and also food (cookies, fruits). The more valuable things were put on auction which the children enjoyed very much. Those who had less coins could collect more through being successful in games.

In the morning and the afternoon we had made the day even more colourful with handicraft and lots of games. The kitchen staff have prepared a delicious and varied brunch, lunch and afternoon snack for the kids.

We were rejuvenated throughout the week and learned a lot from the children, who were infinitely nice, kind, honest, clean, and helpful.

If God helps us, we want to continue holding the camp this year and are inviting the old and the new visitors with love.

- *Hilda Décseiné*



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Isaszeg Church

In July 2016 a holiday Bible camp was held for about 25 children in the lower level of the Isaszeg Church. Serious preparation has preceded the organisation of the camp.

14 of the children taking part in the camp were of Adventist parents, and 11 of them were schoolmates, friends and neighbours. Three pastors, church members, grandmothers, members of the Gödöllő church and children helped to spend a meaningful five days. There were lots of games, a quiz, singing, a picnic and last but not least learning Bible stories. We have processed the story of Joseph through role playing.

We have tried to teach them the rule of 7:12, the lesson in Matthew 7:12. We have created invitation cards with the children. They could invite their parents, friends and the church to the afternoon service, during which they performed a cheerful, musical, interactive role play for which they prepared the whole week.

We are planning on having a similar Bible camp, and hope that even more children are going to be there than they were last year.

Our church thinks that dealing with children is very important. We are trying to involve them in the service, for example they are the ones reading the mission story prior to the Bible study. Our goal is to give a quarterly review about what we have learned during the children Sabbath school in the form of a play with songs, in contemporary clothes.

- Emese Csabai



Lovasberény Church

Children are very important for our church, because we believe that they are the future and that it is important for them to develop a positive picture of God in themselves while they are young. For 17 years every summer we have a Bible and crafts camp where we can show God's love to lots of people. Out of the 60 children who are participating in the camp, only a couple (about 10) are coming from Adventist families. It is a good mission opportunity to reach their parents, because what the children learn at the camp, is heard by the parents, too. On our final day, the Sabbath, the children show the parents and guests what they have learned throughout the week and they do it happily. They are not only listening to stories about God and singing about him, but can choose from many different kinds of crafts every day. During the closing occasion we have an exhibition of their works so that everyone can see how many creative and beautiful artworks have they made during the week. The children always go away the last day saying "I am coming next year, too!" One of the boys said about the camp: "I love good company. And this is one!"

To keep the connection with the children of the village on the first Sunday of every month we have a Bible and crafts morning. This programme is similar to one day of the camp, only shorter. We are telling them a story, sing with them to and about God and after a little brunch, they can make a few small things using all of their creativity.

Finally, I would like to attach a few pictures which, if not fully, reflect the mood and the joy we feel through these occasions.

- *Lotti Hollósi*



Pesterzsébet Church, Budapest

Children arts competitions

Our church is small, mostly made out of middle-aged and the elderly, thus we wanted to organize a mission programme which can reach children and young people. Thus was born the idea of children arts competitions timed at the two main Christian holidays (Christmas and Easter).

With the competition we are inviting the children to read a part from the Bible and draw, paint, write a poem, or use other artistic tools (collage, sculpting, computer graphics) to and really study the lessons of the given section. We are thinking about the parents sitting next to the children, too, who are also becoming readers of the Bible, even if only temporarily. The art teacher is a key player of the event, who is the organizer of the programme in the school, and also helps in judging and organizing the exhibition.

The main prizes for the competition were a week at the national holiday Bible camp, and first four places were prized with books from the Advent Publishing House and small gift packages with toys, sweets, etc.

Last year more, than 1100 took part in the competitions and we have made connections with about 3000-4000 people through them.

The feedback shows that it was worth it and still worth it to continue this beautiful service.

We are also keeping in touch with the children who have gone to the camp the previous years. We are having a meeting for them twice a year and we keep in touch through Facebook, too. During the meetings we are organizing child worship services with lots of singing, a Bible quiz and a small snack.

As a result of the competitions our church has grown with a children Bible school, and we have started to have Bible studies in primary schools as well.



Health EXPO and children

On all of the EXPOs we have held for adults we have organized activities for children, too, because we want the children accompanying adults to receive information on health that suits their ages. These are playful activities which help them to understand and make the experience permanent.

Here is a little taste of the activities regarding nutrition:

- We have cut up the different raw vegetables (carrots, turnips, celery, broccoli, cucumber, etc.) and fruits, and children had to take 1-2 cubes out of a bowl, eat them and tell what it was.
- We have prepared a variety of creams, and muesli at home and gave them some.
- We have prepared a nutritional pyramid which was cut out for them to put it together like a puzzle.
- What is in the basket? We have put beans, corn, lentils, peas, etc. in a covered basket. They had to find out what is what.

During the activities we have had face painting and crafts linked to the topic of healthy life. They could create postcards, bookmarks, fruits, sun, anything related to healthy living.

- *Ilonka Karancsi*



Kecskemét Church

Beating-beating - Heart and health care programme

Our programme is dedicated to join the distribution of the messages of the European Charter for the Healthy Heart among pre-schoolers and primary school students.

With our children's programme, based on the goals of the Chart, we educate children to develop good habits in the three main fields of lifestyle: smoking, diet, exercise.

The five-day programme is structured as follows:

Day 1: Body knowledge. To get to know our heart and vessels a bit more.

Day 2: No smoking

Day 3: Nutrition

Day 4: Exercise

Day 5: Strengthening what we have learned.

The programme structure is adapted to the different age groups: through the activities full of games and singing we are trying to involve the children as much as we can, we use illustrative tools when teaching and present spectacular experiences. The programme consists of poems, musical pieces, playful TV news, spiritual fortitude competitions, preparing a fruit salad, walks, etc.

According to our experiences the children are not only having fun during the programme, but also bring some of the lessons home, which helps the family make changes in their attitudes, thus we think it is important to have an active dialogue with the parents, and keeping in touch after the programme, too.



The Bag of Santa Claus – Charity Evening

Since December 2010 our church annually organizes its charity evening, to which 15-20 needy families are invited from the families of the students of the two primary schools of the neighbourhood.

We are holding the event usually on a Saturday or Sunday close to December 6 in our church building. We are welcoming our guests with Christian puppet show, free second-hand clothes shop, prepared gift packages and potluck for the families. The host of the evening is the pastor of the church. The Santa Claus packages are handed out to the children by the church children in small Santa Claus hats, who are collecting gifts the whole year for this occasion during the Bible studies. The good condition second-hand clothes and the contents of the aid packages (long-term food and toys) are collected from ADRA and the church families, friends. The neighbourhood nursery school is also helping year after year in collecting toys.

It is our pleasure if all of those who accept our invitation and love can get a little taste of Christ's love and can have a bit of spiritual rest in the midst of the everyday problems while their physical needs are also eased. Just as the Scripture says: "those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed."



Historical pancake party

Throughout 2016 and 2017, three times so far we have organized a novel home Bible study for upper-primary school students, where we have invited the children from our church, their friends and schoolmates, around 10-14 children. After the playful opening our pastor has held a youthful Biblical archaeology lecture with slides, which was followed by games, dinner and singing. The aim of the programme is to bring young people closer to the Bible and each other.

- Andrea Talmácsiné Brachna



Health EXPO and children in Miskolc Church

The works of three painters, János Aknay, István Zámbo and Csaba Tábori have been exhibited in Miskolc, who have captured 21 moments of the life of Jesus in their own personal styles.

The exhibition gave place for organizing other programmes as well. As for the two age groups of primary school students we have organized a competition where they had to draw a part of the life of Jesus that touched them the most. The technique of course was chosen by them which has shown a wonderful variety of creativity.

The beautiful works — 263 pictures — were judged by professionals.

There was an opportunity to show the pictures in the Gallery so our guests and visitors could see these artworks as well.

The finale of the programme was the awarding ceremony. We were so happy to see the exhibition hall was crowded. Every participant got a Bible and the top 3 of both of the age groups received a "Desire of the Ages" and valuable book vouchers.

Seeing the shiny eyes we asked the Gallery for the drawings of the children so that we could exhibit them in the church as well. Encouraged by the interest, on the awards ceremony, with an invitation card we have notified the children, parents and teachers about a Sabbath afternoon. In our programmes we have had crafting, drawing a mega-drawing of the Genesis and a tea party. After the closing the children could take their own pictures home.

It was a pleasant experience to see that the Biblical topics can reach so many children, and they can be stimulated to be creative.

Of course all of this is thanks to God's providence and his love. We are grateful to him because of this.

- Istvánné Fekete

