



# Newsletter

Winter 2020

## Director's Message

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair ..., we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way ...". *Tale of two Cities, Charles Dickens*

Written over 160 years ago, these words resonate this year more than any other year I've known. At the time, Dickens was highlighting the conflict between family and love, hatred and oppression, good and evil, light and darkness, and wisdom and folly. However, I'm sure many of you, like me, will see the echoes resounding this year in and around many of the same conflicts.

We've seen the greatest examples of selflessness, dedication to others, generosity of hand and of spirit, loss, sadness, and, yes, selfishness, greed and sheer irresponsibility. These events have created division, and yet also much harmony; aggression and anger, but also co-operation and patience. In short, humanity has had all its foibles, both good and bad, seriously exposed.

Throughout this year, the church has sought to find ways to communicate the Gospel of Light to ALL. This has proved to be problematic, in that we've not been able to meet together, we've all struggled to master new technologies, and we've wondered how we can support each other let alone anyone outside our fellowships.

We've seen those same difficulties here at Sutton Schoolswork. We completely lost our core work; the opportunity to speak to children and young people face to face about the love of Jesus, and the truth of the Gospel. Between the end of March and the start of September, we'd not engaged in a 'live' setting with anyone.

But, needless to say, God has not been restricted. At the start of September we began to see the fruits of our patience blossom, as we received our first invitations back into schools. Not all were comfortable to welcome visitors back yet, and many still are reluctant, but I can joyfully report that, as the end of the term approached, more and more were contacting us to ask us to come back. 9 primary schools have booked Discover Christmas workshops, which are running even as I type, and it has been wonderful to walk back into a classroom

once more and see the joy on their faces as we open up the meaning of the story. Abby has been able to provide in-classroom 'assemblies' throughout the term, to 5 schools, and, in the meantime, the team have consistently produced very high quality assembly videos, every week, to allow all the other schools to still access our material. If you haven't seen one, then please go to our Youtube channel and watch a few. I think you'll be delighted! We've had contact from around the country from Christian teachers telling us they have found them online and are using them in their own schools! We've even reached Northern Ireland...

One senior school, Cheam High, contacted us even before the start of term, as the relationship we have built with them over the past 2 years has become so important to them, and we have been in with Years 8 and 10, delivering workshops around positive choices and healthy relationships.

Obviously, we want to be back in all the schools as soon as possible. The understandable care that schools are displaying is preventing many of them from taking the plunge, but we have been delighted with the positive manner many have allowed us in, taking care to follow the strict guidelines, and we believe we have been able to build a confidence that so many other organisations cannot, mainly because of the presence of the Spirit, and the wonderful work that has gone before, laying the foundation of trust in our organisation.

As we face these last few weeks of a strange term, we are confident that next year, with the prayers of the faithful of Sutton continuing to resound in the heavenly realms, we will see even more of the hand of God. The challenges we have faced have provided opportunities to do things in new ways, and, despite the fact we've had to cancel, Easter Experience, it has meant we are planning on a different project, which could reach even more children than before.

So, as we all look forward to a Christmas that will be very, very different for many of us, I pray that you will know the best of times, the knowledge of His wisdom, the strength and comfort of faith, the presence of His Light, and, most of all, the certainty of Hope found in our Saviour.

Isaiah 7:14

Therefore, the Lord Himself will give you a sign; the virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel

And there you have it; God with us.

May God be with you this Christmas, and may you continue to see His blessings.

With love from all the team at Sutton Schoolswork

# Primary Work

## Discover Christmas



This is our fifth year bringing our Discover Christmas workshop to the year 2's of Sutton, although it has had to change slightly this year.

Due to Covid we can't do our normal drama of the Christmas story as part of this workshop so this year we have put together a video to tell the story instead and it has proved very popular among the schools we have visited!

By the end of this term we will have visited 9 schools with our revamped workshop, which is a lot less than usual but more than we had expected due to lots of schools still not allowing in visitors. In addition to that we have also put all our resources for the workshop online to allow teachers to lead the workshop in school without us having to visit, which we know a few schools are going to be using.

If you'd like to see our new Discover Christmas story video then have a look on our youtube channel or website.

## Primary Christmas Assemblies

Following the success of our online primary assemblies, during lockdown, we decided to produce some with a Christmas theme. Each week focused on one of the characters from the Christmas story, and considered what we could learn from them. The assemblies covered: Mary, the innkeeper, the angels, the shepherds, the wisemen, and finally the birth of Jesus. We were able to invite our volunteers, one at a time, to help film the assemblies while others recorded voiceovers for stories or short clips filmed at home.



Many of our Sutton primary schools have been watching these assemblies, and we have also heard from schools in Suffolk and Belfast who are engaging with our online resources. We have the privilege of sharing God's love and truth across the UK, even in these strange times.

In addition to our weekly online assemblies, six schools have welcomed us back on site. Abby has shared 45 'live' assemblies, to individual classes or year group 'bubbles'.

*"Thank you so much... for coming into school; it is lovely to see visitors!"* Culvers House

Meanwhile, our primary schools are eagerly awaiting our return.

Cheam Park Farm wrote, *'We continue to enjoy your online assemblies on a weekly basis so many thanks for those. We look forward to welcoming you back in, at some point, hopefully sooner rather than later.'*

**Please continue to pray for the Sutton primary school communities  
and for our primary team, as we make plans for the year ahead.**

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## Secondary Work

### Christmas Unwrapped



Throughout this year, we have been doing all kinds of different YouTube Videos, from Grill a Christian Online to Assembly style videos, 'Thought for the Week'.

All of which have been used amongst a large number of our Secondary Schools.

As Christmas was fast approaching, we spent some time thinking about what we could offer to Schools...which then came the idea of Christmas UNWRAPPED!

This was a brand new opportunity that we were really excited to put out to the Schools! We aimed this video for years 7-9, where in a nutshell, we explain the Christmas Story whilst giving them some facts throughout - perhaps about things they did not know originally.

Usually at this time of year, we would be in our Schools delivering Christmas assemblies and running Christian Unions, but unfortunately this has not quite been possible this year because of the circumstances. However, we were passionate about putting together a Christmas video to spread the true meaning of Christmas, which could be used in an assembly, lesson or tutor time context.

We felt it was very appropriate to explain that no matter what the circumstances of the world, the true meaning of Christmas does not change.

We did this by starting off with a quiz, doing some teaching and hearing from some of our SSW friends what Christmas means to them. We made this video as interactive and engaging as possible, whilst offering opportunities for students to discuss for themselves what Christmas means to them, as well as offering some activities on worksheets.

After circulating this video to schools, we started to receive great feedback, and how much they appreciated it. Many teachers reached out and were letting us know they are sending it round the RE department and making use of it wherever they possibly can.

You can find Christmas UNWRAPPED over on our YouTube Channel:

n.[www.youtube.com/suttonschoolswork/c/](https://www.youtube.com/suttonschoolswork/c/)

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## Cheam High - LIVE Project

So we spent every day for two weeks with Year 8 students, the first week being all about Knife Crime, under the topic of 'Positive Choices'. Then the following week was all about County Lines. Each of these lessons went so well and we held some really valuable conversations with the students, they all engaged so well with the topic. We received some wonderful feedback from both staff and students, expressing how much they enjoyed the workshops.



A couple of weeks later, Cheam High reached out to us again, asking for the 'Healthy Relationships' session for Year 10 students. In September, the topic of SRE became statutory on the PSHE Curriculum, which makes this topic even more important and we couldn't wait to be back in the School.

So we spent every day, for a week delivering these sessions. In this workshop, we have a particular focus on the topic of consent, which can sometimes be a sensitive topic for some students. However, we had a great level of engagement in all these workshops and overall, we were really pleased with how the sessions went. By the end of the week we also received some great feedback from staff and students.

Cheam High School is the largest Secondary School we work in, with around 300 students per year group so we felt extremely blessed and were so thankful for the opportunity to spend time with Year 8 and Year 10 students talking about topics that are so important for them to be made aware of, and have the knowledge of as they grow up.

If you would like any further information on the LIVE Project, please see the link:  
[www.suttonschoolswork.co.uk/live-project](http://www.suttonschoolswork.co.uk/live-project)

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