

Circuit Children and Youth Worker News

News from Sam Cree about her work around the South West Tyneside Circuit



A map of the world using natural materials. Produced at Ryton Prayer Space.

A word from Sam...

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year!

Thank you for reading my newsletter. It has been a good while since I have produced anything, so this edition contains some highlights on my work.

As I write, I am now in my second year of ministerial training. The first year was good, but hard. The course is demanding and asks a lot from us. I am training with a mix of Anglicans and Methodists and we are the largest group of students that Queen's have had for years! (13 Methodist & 14 Anglican). It is encouraging!



Part-time study involves weekly lessons online line, travel to Birmingham every six weeks or so and some independent learning. I have had to write lots of essays

which I have found tricky after being out of education for so long. In the summer, I was on placement in the Sunderland Circuit. That was a good experience and it was great to see what happens in another Circuit. While in Sunderland, I got to visit a Mosque and a Gurdwara and meet other faith leaders as part of the inter-faith network. Seeing how that group support each other was great.

Your prayers would be appreciated as I continue this training and as I continue the work within this Circuit.

Thank you once again for everyone who helps, supports and encourages me.



A picture from Queen's on Easter Sunday morning 2025. This marked the end of a wonderful week of study and reflections during 'Easter School' which ran throughout Holy Week and finished Easter Sunday afternoon.

Introducing Discover and Discover+

Since the pandemic, we have been running an online church group for children. Sessions include games, crafts, songs, prayers and learning about faith. Over the years we have seen children grow in confidence and in their faith journey. The group has also helped equip volunteers with skills for leading all-age talks in church services.

The group has been rebranded and Junior Church on Zoom has become Discover. It is a space where children can come to discover fun, friendship and faith.

Along with this, Discover has expanded, and Discover+ has launched. This is an older Discover group, open for young people in Year 6 and above. In Discover+, young people will be able to explore faith at a deeper level. This term, sessions have been themed on Pixar, with Pixar Short Films being used.

The team would love to welcome new members to the groups. Please do invite people and share Sam's email for login details.

Please pray for these groups, for growth and all the members.



***Discover runs Wednesdays in term-time, 6:30–7:30pm.**

***Discover+ plus runs on a Wednesday, 7:45–8:45pm, on certain set dates.**

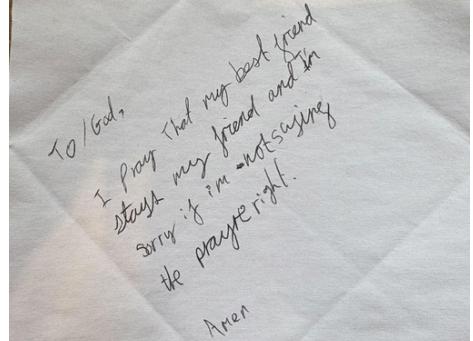
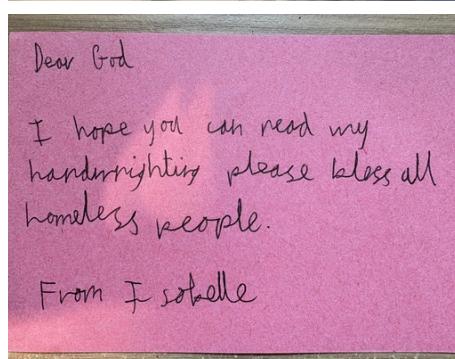
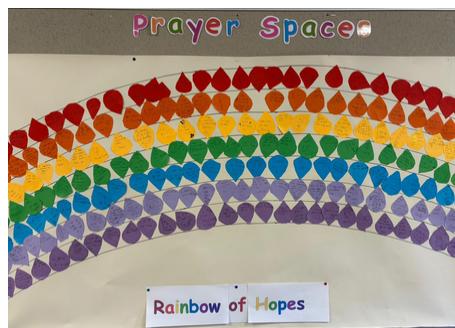
Prayer Spaces in Schools develops and grows

Much time is being spent in schools running Prayer Spaces in Schools sessions with ecumenical teams. Throughout the year, regular slots happened at Ryton Juniors, Emmaville Primary and Greenside Primary.

At Ryton, a highlight in 2025 was running an outdoor session in the Forest School area.

It was great to relaunch the sessions at Greenside school and strengthen connections there. A highlight at Greenside was a child explaining how she felt that she was 'half a Christian'. Then, encouraged by Prayer Spaces, this child asked to connect with church and she attended the holiday club at Strathmore Road.

This year, team members have enjoyed training to develop skills. In it, they heard how Prayer Spaces in Schools aim to enable children and young people, of all faiths and none, to explore life's questions, spirituality and faith in a safe, creative and interactive way.



Find out more about Prayer Spaces in Schools : prayerspacesinschools.org

High Sheriff Award for Girls' Brigade

1st Ryton Girls' Brigade were thrilled to have been awarded another High Sheriff of Tyne & Wear Award. Two of the older members went to collect the award which was presented by Jeff Brown (Look North) at a ceremony at South West Tyneside College.

As well as being an encouragement, the award is great promotion for Girls' Brigade. The award also comes with a grant of £1,000 which makes a huge difference to the work of the group. The group plan to use funds this year to have a day trip out or a weekend camp.

1st Ryton Girls' Brigade runs on a Monday at Ryton Methodist Church. The group is open to girls aged 4 to 18 years and there is currently space for new members. Email: 1strytongb@gmail.com



A special recycling themed GB session led by Lydia Cave who works for Groundwork



December carol singing at ASDA Metrocentre raising funds for Tickled Pink & Children in Need



Youth Night

The Circuit Youth Night still runs monthly at Ryton Methodist Church. Regular sessions are informal with games and discussions. Along with this, the run special sessions. Over the past year, special activities have included a trip to an escape room, an interactive quiz night led by Julian Varker, bread making, an outdoor team building session and Christmas cake making. Some of the Christmas cakes were gifted to the Circuit staff and they were gratefully received.

***Youth Night meets monthly on a Sunday evening, 6:30-8pm. Ask Sam for dates or see online.**

Story Telling

For many years, Sam has been a Godly Play story teller. She has found it to be a wonderful resource and she loves to tell the stories. Sam regularly uses Godly Play in schools, running sessions every term in Emmaville.

In November, Sam widened her story telling skills and attended an OutoftheBox training course. OutoftheBox is similar to Godly Play, but it has a broader purpose and not all the stories are faith based. Find out more about OutoftheBox, at: outofthebox.org

School Visits

Sam has had the pleasure of supporting churches with local school visits. At Unity Church, they welcome Riverside Primary Academy to Ravensworth Road regularly. Once or twice a year, the whole school visit the church class by class and engage in the activities arranged. During the last visit, Sam and Brigitta shared the 'Ten Best Ways' Godly Play Story. Before that, there was an Easter experience and a Christmas experience, where children journeyed through the stories. At the latest visit, a member of the school staff shared how much they love to visit the church and how they feel like they are part of the family. At the Easter experience, a highlight for Sam was sharing the resurrection part of the story with reception children. When Sam opened the tomb and explained that Jesus was gone, the children

If you would like to know more about any of Sam's work or if you would like to get alongside her and support some of the work, please get in contact. To email Sam at: sam.cree@swtyneside.org.uk

OutoftheBox



Sam would love to have more opportunities to share stories. If you would like to have a story at your group, please ask Sam.

when wow! They were so amazed! It reminded Sam of how amazing the Easter story is and to hold onto that sense of wow.

Last term, the Christmas Experience was replicated at Fellside Church and Sam helped the team there and three schools engaged with that. Teachers commented on how wonderful it was and hoped there would be more activities in the near future.

Please pray for the ongoing relationships that our churches have with the different schools.



Circuit Tablets

Don't forget that the Circuit have a resource of 10 tablets to be used across the Circuit. The main use has been for running sessions of Guardians of Ancora. But other things, such as quizzes, making videos and table talk discussions.

Please contact Sam if you would like to use the tablets at any time. This can be for children or adults.

Sam is also willing to run Guardian of Ancora workshops in your church or teach you how to work the game.

Dates for the Diary

***Discover** On Zoom

(Wednesdays 6:30–7:30pm)

Weekly in term-time.

***Discover +** On Zoom

(Wednesdays 7:45–8:45pm)

On selected dates, not weekly.

7th Jan

28th Jan

18th Feb

11th March

1st April

29th April

20th May

***Circuit Youth Night**

(Monthly, Sundays 6:30–8pm)

At Ryton Methodist Church.

18th Jan

15th Feb

22nd March

26th April

17th May

12th July

***Godly Play Network Meeting**

(All welcome to join in a story)

Ryton Methodist are hosting:

12th Feb, 7:30pm