

Because of the practical and prayerful support that we receive from all of you, CIS is still able to impact the lives of pupils and staff with the message of Jesus. The message, like Jesus, is the same yesterday, today and forever.

Thank you again for your ongoing support of Christian Initiative to Schools.

Christopher Baker - Schools Worker

Prayer Items

Assemblies

The following schools will be showing an Easter themed recorded assembly the week of the 22nd March:

Etonbury Academy, Fearnhill School, Grange Academy, Norton St. Nicholas, Pix Brook Academy, Roecroft Lower School and St. Francis College (Seniors).

St. Francis College Prep. Assembly - 22nd March and 26th April (live via Zoom) Grange Academy Assembly – 21st April (live via MS Teams)

Other Prayer Requests

Pray for pupils and staff as they transition back to 'Face to Face' learning.

Pray for the opportunity to take "It's Your Move" presentations with Year 6 pupils in Junior Schools next term.

Prayer Meetings (via Zoom)

11th March and 8th April at 10:30am

22nd March and 26th April at 2pm

(Contact Christopher for details at cisschoolsworker@gmail.com)

Safeguarding

You can see our safeguarding policy on our website at <http://www.cisletchworth.org/contact-us/4585639654>

CIS Newsletter

(Spring 2021)



**"The New Normal"
Christopher on Film!**



A Message from Kevin How, CIS Trustee

COVID-19, with the continued levels of restrictions across the UK, is an unprecedented situation that continues to affect the lives of our schoolchildren.

Pupils' experience of the pandemic is very varied – some, despite restrictions, will feel safe and mostly enjoy their less structured lives. But for others it will be challenging – or even traumatic. Even others will have lost loved ones during the past 12 months – perhaps unexpectedly. Teachers and schools are used to supporting pupils, but the current situation amplifies this need many times over.

Isaiah 40:11 reminds us of the following:

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Throughout this 'strange season' CIS has sought to be faithful to our original vision of bringing the truths of Jesus Christ to secondary and primary children in our area. Whilst of necessity this has involved moving to provision of teaching and assembly materials largely on-line, Christopher has adapted very well to the 'new normal' and we have been heartened by many positive feedbacks we've received – please see his report which follows.

Please continue to support CIS in your prayers and financially – we have just started a second monthly prayer meeting for schools and pupils in general – for details see the back page.

Christopher Baker's Report

It's nearly a year since the 'New Normal' began with the UK going into lockdown. At the time none of us really knew what that would mean for us, how long it would go on for, and the impact it would make on our lives and livelihoods.

For Christian Initiative to Schools it meant that our ministry changed drastically. As the Schools Worker I was unable to go into schools to take lunchtime clubs, lessons and assemblies, or to be involved in any form of Pastoral Care or Chaplaincy. However, it gave me the opportunity finally to complete putting our version of the SPACE Mat resource together. It's now ready to roll out to schools, once the doors open for CIS to have a physical presence in schools again.

The lockdown has also enabled me to develop the new skills of filming and editing assemblies. Those of you who have ever watched yourself back after being filmed will know that it takes a while to adjust to the sound of your voice. It sounds very differently in your head from that which you hear on a recording! The assemblies have been well received by the schools they've gone out to and I now have a library of assemblies that could be used by other schools in the future.

Children and young people will be heading back into schools. I'm sure parents and carers who have been homeschooling are breathing a sigh of relief! With it comes the hope that by June 21st we'll see all legal limits on social contact finally lifted, as long as the data is good and the vaccination process continues to progress. So what will it mean for CIS as a Schools Ministry?

Hopefully it will mean that as a ministry we too will get back to normal; that we will have a physical presence in schools once more. "It's Your Move" presentations will take place with the Year 6 pupils in classrooms and assembly halls again, we hope, rather than just delivering the books as we did last year. Assemblies, lessons, Pastoral Care and Chaplaincy will be face to face again, and lunchtime clubs, Hubs and CUs will begin meeting again. Normality restored!

There will be adjustments to be being back, not just for us, but also for staff and pupils. The time being apart from friends and colleagues has been hard. Learning and teaching online on screens has had a detrimental impact on the mental health of many. Adjusting from online learning to face to face learning may be a struggle for some. To be physically present in school once more will enable me to get alongside both pupils and staff and to help in whatever way I can.

In a few days' time we'll be coming up to Easter, remembering the death of Jesus on the cross and His glorious resurrection. An event that happened once, for all people and for all time. An event that has transformed the lives of billions of people across the centuries. An event that still changes people's lives today. As followers of Jesus we are 'Easter People'. Without His death and His resurrection we would not be the people we are today.

I'm reminded of a worship song from the 1970s that has these words;

God forgave my sin in Jesus' name.
I've been born again in Jesus' name
And in Jesus' name I come to you
To share his love as he told me to.

This is the fact of what Jesus has done for us; He has forgiven our sins and given us new life through being 'born again.' But the song doesn't end there. The chorus says this;

He (Jesus) said 'Freely, freely you have received, freely, freely give.
Go in my name, and because you believe others will know that I live.'

That is what the ministry of Christian Initiative to Schools is all about - sharing the Good News of Jesus within the school environment. During 30+ years of ministry I have had the privilege of speaking to thousands of children and young people about the person of Jesus and all that He said and did. This Easter will see that message put across once more, but via the medium of a recorded assembly. The method may change, but the message stays the same.