



SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

# SUPPORT NETWORK FOR ADVENTIST PARENTS

*"Carry each other's burdens and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ." (Galatians 6:2)*

Issue 24 – January 2012

## Welcome

Welcome to the latest issue of SNAP newsletter. We wish you all a very Happy New Year and trust that you had a very happy Christmas time. We look forward to your participation in SNAP in 2012 and we pray that we may all be encouraged and strengthened as we do so.

Blessings, Mike & Vicky

## SNAP Weekend 2012

We are delighted to announce the confirmation of a SNAP residential weekend away in 2012, and we believe doors have been opened for us both in terms of location and the dates we desired. We have now placed a deposit with the venue, and can give you the following information regarding the weekend:

- Dates – Friday October 26<sup>th</sup> to Sunday October 28<sup>th</sup>
- Location – Hill House Christian Retreat Centre, Otterhampton, Bridgwater, Somerset.
- The format of the weekend will be a combination of short presentations and interactive participation for parents.
- We are in negotiation with a potential co-presenter with ourselves for the weekend. This will be confirmed.
- We will be planning some activities for the children as well as family activities.
- Fellowship time when we can all relax together.
- Meals – these will be on a part catered, part self catered basis. More details to follow later.
- Approximate costs are per person for the whole weekend, and on a sliding scale as follows: Adults and children age 12 upwards £25 each; children age 6-11 £18 each; children age 4-5 £12 each; children age 0-3 FREE. Please note that these costs are subsidised to try and make it as affordable as possible for as many as possible.

Posters and application forms will be available shortly.

## Topic For Discussion

### THIS ISSUE – TOPIC FOR DISCUSSION

***In this issue of the SNAP newsletter we are discussing the subject of Children's Sabbath School:***

#### ***The Importance of Children's Sabbath School***

*I have a dream.*

*I dream that every SDA church has a Sabbath School where all the children from that church attend regularly.*

*I dream that children love their Sabbath School so much that they wake their parents early every Sabbath morning in eagerness to get to church.*

*I dream that all parents make every effort possible to get their children to Sabbath School regularly and on time.*

*I dream that all churches are eager to have weekly Children's Sabbath Schools even when there is only one child who attends.*

*I dream that Sabbath School teachers make Sabbath School so interesting that a child who has a parent who does not attend church does not even think of missing Sabbath School to stay at home with that parent.*

*However, there is something which is a great burden on my heart. It seems, from observations I have made at churches I have visited and from what other people have told me, that a well run and well attended Children's Sabbath School in Britain is no longer as common as it used to be.*

*In the past year there have been churches with children, ranging from as many as a one or a few to somewhere near 30, who do not run a children's Sabbath School. These children are sitting in an adult lesson which means very little to them and must seem very long and boring. One child's comment was something like "They always go on for ages" . When you are an infant and used to being in school during the week where there are lots of other children and interesting activities aimed at your age group, church must be difficult to understand and gain any enthusiasm for if all you get is a children's story in the main worship service. (For some the singing may also be a bonus).*

*Over recent years there have been other churches where the teachers are there with interesting activities they have spent time preparing in order to help the children to enjoy and learn, and very few of the children make it on time, and many don't even come to church until S.S. as finished! This can be demoralising for the teachers who have put in the effort. It's very hard when you have put in a lot of effort and got excited about what you are preparing and few or no children of the number potentially available have turned up. The children are also missing out on a good opportunity to learn about our faith and to make Christian friends. The children who do go can also miss out by not having the company of those who are not there.*

*So, what are the benefits of sending our children regularly to a good Children's Sabbath School?*

- *Faith Reinforcement. Learning about God and the Bible in another place as well as at home helps to cement a child's beliefs.*
- *Enthusiasm for church. The main worship service may not touch many younger children. Sabbath School can be especially aimed at their age group with interesting activities which will encourage them to look forward to Sabbath School. Bear in mind what one little boy recently said to his mum about the main church service: " This is your church. Sabbath School is my church."*
- *Friendship. In S.S. children spend time with others who they will grow up alongside on a weekly basis. They will make friendships which will help them to feel part of a church family, and these friendships could last well into youth and adulthood, giving them one reason to stay in church.*
- *Mentorship. A Sabbath School teacher can be someone to love you, someone you can look up to, someone to share joys and woes with. This helps give the child the feeling that people at church love and care about you.*
- *Support for parents. This is especially so in the early years. I'm sure many of us have gained good ideas from being in S.S. with our little ones and been able to use those ideas in worships at home. The S.S. teacher can also offer support to parents by giving a listening ear and maybe suggestions from the teacher's experience of being a parent or carer, etc.*

*Can I make some suggestions?*

- *If you do not at present make it to S.S. with your children regularly or at all, I encourage you to make every effort to do so as regularly as you can, for everybody's benefit. (Yours, your child's, other children's, and the teacher's). Perhaps if you know in advance when you will not be at church you can let the teacher know so that he/she can plan accordingly.*
- *If you are not happy with your children's S.S. at present you could talk it over with the teacher and offer your help if that is what is needed.*
- *If your church offer's no Children's S.S. at present, request one or offer to do it yourself. (It is often much nicer if someone else can do it, but sometimes you might need to do it. And you will probably enjoy it too.)*
- *And if you are able to offer to do a S.S. for other people's children when you see a need , please do it. There are some people out there who have the ability and the experience who could do it even if only for a short while to guide others who have never done it before. If you can train up another teacher , please do so.*

*Let's all do our best to promote Children's Sabbath School to the important position it is meant to have in the lives of our children and of our church.*

**PLEASE SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON THE QUESTIONS BELOW AND ALSO EXPERIENCES THAT YOU AND/OR YOUR CHILDREN HAVE HAD IN SABBATH SCHOOL THAT YOU FEEL WOULD BENEFIT THE REST OF US.**

*Is it still relevant, and why?*

*Are our children gaining in their spiritual development from the time they spend in Sabbath School?*

*Are the current SDA quarterlies appropriate? Are there other things that need to be done locally/nationally/globally to make Children's Sabbath School more relevant?*

#### **Next Issue's Topic for Discussion**

*For discussion in our next issue, we want to explore the effects (both positive and negative) of the internet and the 'technological age.' How does this impact our parenting? How much freedom do we allow our children – is it possible that as Christian parents, we can become over-protective?*

#### **SNAP Prayer Share**

Let's pray for a revival in Children's Sabbath School and in Adult Sabbath School as well.

We would also like to hear about any other of your specific requests, that we may all help and encourage each other.

#### **Useful Links for Parents**

##### **Cornerstone Counselling Service (South England Conference)**

Phone or email to speak with a counsellor about issues that trouble you, or to make an appointment:

**Telephone 0207 723 8050 or 0845 741 3602**

[ccs@secadventist.org.uk](mailto:ccs@secadventist.org.uk)

##### **Rainbow Counselling Service (North England Conference)**

**Telephone 0161 740 3602**

**PLEASE NOTE THE ABOVE TELEPHONE LINES ARE OPEN PART-TIME ONLY.**

##### **SEC Family Ministries link for Resources and Information**

[www.secadventist.com/dept/familyMinistries.php](http://www.secadventist.com/dept/familyMinistries.php)

Reference can also be made to the BUC website for resources and information.

**Your Contact Details**

*Please be sure to let us know if your contact details or family circumstances change so that we may update our records.*

**Our Contact Details**

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*Please ensure all contributions reach us for the next issue by 8<sup>th</sup> April 2012. Thank you.*