

Faith and Society Files: mainly music

Every week, more than 30,000 families throughout the world attend *mainly music* groups. Find out more about this unique opportunity for churches to interact with their community.



mainly music equips churches to run pre-school music groups with an emphasis on fun and a focus on relationships. These are not music classes, although there are many learning opportunities, but rather a place for parents and carers to enjoy music together with their young children. Started by a mum in New Zealand in 1990, **mainly music** has spread to Australia, Canada, the United States, and is established in the UK.

You can spot them amongst the crowd

Yes, those **mainly music** children – there's one, there's another, and he is too. How do you know? They can clap and sing at the same time. They're children who know how to confidently march, sing, use their left and right, and who have developed participation skills.

Every week, around 15000 families who attend 300 **mainly music** groups throughout New Zealand, 600 in Australia and 75 (and growing) in the UK, are coming into contact with educational concepts. Like colours and numbers. They're using their imagination and learning direction, a key concept for recognising alphabet letters.

And every week, they're hearing messages about God. How he made them and loves them; how they're unique. In fact, some weeks, they're even singing about the message of the cross as they sing one of their favourites, L-O-V-E: Love That's Why.

mainly music provides a unique opportunity for churches to interact with their community; unique because teams of mothers and grandmothers, along with grandfathers and pastoral staff don't have to 'do' mission alone. Ideas and resources designed by the **mainly music** organisation are available, ensuring churches maximise their connection with families of young children in the community. That extends far beyond ideas and resources for songs and educational concepts for children!

Education occurs at another level in **mainly music** as well. Each year, training is held which is designed to equip volunteers who energetically make **mainly music** happen in their community each week. The conferences don't feature '56 ways to move a maraca or a scarf'; instead they feature material supporting people through grief, and the essential messages to present at the Easter and Christmas sessions.



Also launched is the '**mainly mums**' initiative. Not designed to be 'another ministry', **mainly mums** is a concept already tried and tested by groups in New Zealand and Australia.

The team invite mothers from the **mainly music** community to join a group looking at, for example, the *Five Love Languages*¹. This course has captured the interest of many families when they realise the benefits of speaking someone else's 'love language' to show how much they are loved. While in the 'just for one hour' small group, their children are looked after.

During the course, the facilitator invites mums to consider a follow on series; for example, *Boundaries*² or the *She Will Run*³ studies on topics for mothers.

Within each of the series offered are Christian concepts so as the group develops and questions are asked, the facilitator discerns when to make available a course like *Journeys*⁴, *Alpha*⁵, *H2O*⁶, *More to Life*⁷ or whatever faith discovery course is used by the church.



Already one church who had used this concept relaunched under the name '**mainly mums**' and instead of picking up Christian mums from other churches, had five mums join not connected with church, other than through **mainly music**.

Jo Hood
mainly music International CEO

1 Author: Gary Chapman; Moody Publishing (reprint 2010); ISBN: 978 0 80247 315 8

2 Authors: Henry Cloud and John Townsend; Zondervan (2002); ISBN: 978 0 31024 745 6

3 Author: Suzie Botross; Devenir (2010); ISBN: 978-0646537696

4 www.willowcreek.org.uk/resource.php?r=7

5 <http://uk-england.alpha.org>

6 Thomas Nelson Publishers (2009); ISBN: 978 1 41853 392 2

7 www.mtlresources.org

Back in April 2007 International Baptist Church, Cults, Aberdeen launched **mainly music** on Thursday mornings. Area Coach, Barbara Last tells us about the way in which it has helped the church to connect with the community.

At that point in time our church had no existing connections with families with preschool children within our local community, even though the church is located beside a nursery/primary school! We put up posters, advertised in our local community newsletter. We also began praying that God would send two local mums along to our **mainly music** group, and these two mums would be the means of telling other mums all about **mainly music**, mums networking in action!

Well two mums with young children from the church did come along, and they brought a few friends and we started our **mainly music** group, with fear and trepidation!! We were absolutely thrilled when community mums started to come along and they told others.

As a team from the church we enjoy doing the weekly programme with **mainly music** providing the schedules of songs to use each week, music tracks, songs on PowerPoint, actions to the songs, props, ideas etc. We soon outgrew meeting in the church lounge and moved into the main church sanctuary.

We also include gentle God songs/rhymes within each music session, and these have become firm favourites by the families that attend. It also gives us the opportunity to celebrate Easter, Christmas, calendar dates that allows us to present the real story behind these 'holiday breaks'. We honour our mums on Mother's Day and Dads for Father's Day. Hospitality is another key factor, where we provide scrummy home bakes, good quality coffee/tea. Our mums/caregivers are so appreciative of being served by the team, this tea time also allows us to enjoy deep conversations, whilst the children have their snack and play with toys we have set out.



Hillview Community Church
'Pirates and Princesses' themed session

We have held theme days, family nights, a bonfire night and last term we had 40 local families registered. **mainly music** produces fantastic and professional resources, giving us so many ideas and help us each step of the way.

mainly music is not just another 'toddler music group'! It's an amazing God-led ministry connecting our church with our community, creating bonds between adults and children, adults and adults, and church and community.

On 4 September 2011, International Baptist Church was re-launched as Hillview Community Church, and we were so very excited to see many **mainly music** families come along to celebrate our special launch event. We aim to show God's kingdom through our **mainly music** team, by the way we love and care and interact with one another and with our **mainly music** families. We hope and pray our families see the love Lord Jesus has for them.

For further information

contact the Area Coach,

Sian Morgan

Tel: 0800 112 0382

Email: engdevelopment@mainlymusic.org

www.mainlymusic.org