

Ministry with Children and Young People,  
@ St Mark's Church, Broomhill & Broomhall

St Mark's vision is to practise a **living, thinking, loving, faith.**

**Living Faith which is inclusive, vibrant & engaged.**

**Thinking faith which engages with scripture, tradition, reason & experience.**

**Loving faith which serves our communities by following Jesus.**

So how does this affect the way in which we deliver provision for/with Children and Young People?

When planning provision for any age range, we keep in mind the key words of the vision for St Mark's: Living, Thinking, Loving Faith.

Therefore, we aim to:

- let the children and young people experience and know that 'You are loved!'
- use storytelling, wondering and open questions as an invitation to explore faith, spirituality and church rituals and practices together. In this way we create a space of open exploration where knowledge and wisdom are shared and developed collectively and individually as we wonder!
- provide a variety of opportunities for children and young people to connect with the community: knowing that no one approach will suit all children and young people.
- offer provision that is age-specific, as well as opportunities to engage with wider provision, designed for children to access the ideas in their own way and development stage. This is to broaden the opportunity for community development across the ages without limiting children because of their age or abilities etc.
- support children and young people to choose how to access provision as they reach natural transition points; demonstrating that they are ready for a different kind of provision. (This is particularly as they reach school age, or are getting towards primary/secondary transition.)

## What does this look like throughout our provision?

Type of Provision	Core Aims	How?
Creche 0-4(+) yrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Self-discovery</li> <li>▪ To know that 'You are loved!' (ongoing throughout ages)</li> <li>▪ Safe, child-centred space to move, play, create, connect &amp; belong.</li> <li>▪ Space for parents to rest, connect, seek mutual support &amp; belong.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Gentle routine, invitation to join group for song /story /idea for the day</li> <li>▪ Toys set up ready for toddlers to choose what they would like to do.</li> <li>▪ Stories/thoughts sourced from wide variety of places – bible stories, children's picture books, charities (e.g. Christian Aid week, Children's Society). Exploring core ideas about how we care for ourselves and the world around us e.g. Kindness, Loving Creation, Friendship, Families and Communities, Church Rituals such as Baptism &amp; Communion</li> <li>▪ Craft often connected to story content.</li> </ul>
Godly Play 4-11(+) yrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More structured approach to storytelling and faith exploration which includes time for self-led wondering as well as time led by the adult leaders.</li> <li>▪ Develop more knowledge and understanding of the bible, its stories and some aspects of church e.g. Church Calendar, Baptism and Communion, Church Symbols etc.</li> <li>▪ Ongoing developing identity and finding place in this community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Structured routine: Story / group wondering / individual child-led play / shared feast &amp; opportunity for prayer.</li> <li>▪ Carefully selected stories from Godly Play and Out of the Box to explore Bible and Aspects of Wisdom</li> <li>▪ Opportunity for further discussion / exploring confirmation etc available to children and families when appropriate.</li> <li>▪ Space for wider play, entirely child-led after service valued and supported as a further opportunity to belong and build community!</li> <li>▪ Starting to build role within community: participating in All-Age Worship, involved in church consultations etc.</li> </ul>
Lions Group 11+ yrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ongoing developing identity and knowing that 'You are loved!'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Monthly sessions on Sunday mornings: choosing bible passage or equivalent to engage with.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Opportunities to develop role within church – member of congregation, helping with different jobs, asking questions about why we do things – suggesting changes etc!</li> <li>▪ Safe space to explore faith, bible, emerging questions about life more generally, with permission to disagree and/or not have to have a definitive answer.</li> <li>▪ Social space to belong and know that they are seen and welcome in this community!</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Afternoon sessions – space to build community, enjoy activities together such as baking/cooking, eating, table tennis, card games etc, discussion around seasonal events and opportunity for prayer ending with the Grace.</li> <li>▪ Young Leader roles: Invitation to support Creche, Godly Play, Gathering on the Green, 'Main' Service Technology, Choir etc, All-Age Worship</li> </ul>
Board Games Group 14+ yrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Opportunities to develop role within church – member of congregation, helping with different jobs, asking questions about why we do things – suggesting changes etc!</li> <li>▪ Social space to belong and know that they are seen and welcome in this community!</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Monthly Board Games Group – space for social time and conversation with members of church congregation</li> <li>▪ Young Leader Roles – supporting Lions</li> <li>▪ Connecting into Diocese Youth Network</li> </ul>
Gathering on the Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open to all ages, opportunity for families to worship together.</li> <li>• Ideas / thoughts offered to all to be explored/accessed by individuals in variety of ways.</li> <li>• Chance to connect with nature/outside environment. Spirituality in Creation</li> <li>• Often chance to explore seasons/ festivals and key moments in church calendar in a different way to Creche or Godly Play thereby extending opportunity for broader understanding or new insights.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Routine of liturgy – opening responses, prayers including signed Lord's Prayer, Sung Peace and Fischy Songs</li> <li>• Open ended toys for toddlers – wooden bricks, teddies etc</li> <li>• Range of activities throughout the year – painting, craft, using natural resources, games, storytelling and wondering</li> <li>• Often little feast of hot chocolate or seasonal snack etc</li> </ul>
Music & Storytelling Sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open to all, but fairly consistently accessed by Creche and Godly Play aged children.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents tend to stay with Creche children while older children attend independently.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chance to experience and understand aspects of Eucharist liturgies and settings. E.g. Gloria and Sanctus; Lord's Prayer,</li> <li>• Engage in preparation for service and take part in leading aspects: e.g. music, readings, prayers and occasional sermon slots</li> <li>• Often chance to explore seasons/ festivals and key moments in church calendar in a different way to Creche or Godly Play thereby extending opportunity for broader understanding or new insights.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Often starts all together, with song or story that all can access, and then creche children peel off as they need to, accessing toys and/or age-appropriate craft etc.</li> <li>• Older children then stay within group to explore the theme/idea in more depth – either through storytelling and discussion, craft or extending the music provision with more challenging song/lyrics or instrumentation.</li> <li>• Often this is a space to prepare for All-Age worship so that children know what to expect and have had the opportunity to rehearse so that they can be actively involved in service.</li> </ul>
All- Age Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open to all ages, opportunity for families to worship together alongside wider community.</li> <li>• Starting to build role within wider church context – readings / music / prayers &amp; sermon slots</li> <li>• Building familiarity with the structure and different elements of Eucharist Service. Often revisiting settings (e.g. Peruvian Gloria, sung Peace) most familiar to the children to support recognition.</li> <li>• Celebration of Key Festivals within whole church family: Christmas / Easter etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take part in full Eucharist Service which has been adapted for accessibility but nevertheless, still containing all its elements and meaningful.</li> <li>• Often includes Out of the Box storytelling, poems in place of Bible or Gospel reading, active prayers -using symbols or actions to support the process, range of traditional and more contemporary, accessible songs etc.</li> <li>• Use of signing where appropriate to consolidate learning the language of the liturgy e.g. Lord's Prayer, Prayer of Thanksgiving</li> </ul>
Social Events / Opportunities outside of Sunday mornings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• build relationships and sense of belonging through play, down time, conversation and shared activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharing food and refreshments</li> <li>• Annual events such as Summer BBQ, Autumn Social / Swim, Epiphany and Pancake Parties</li> <li>• Occasional Walks out in the Peaks</li> <li>• Oaks and Acorns – Monthly Intergenerational Toddler Group at Moor End</li> <li>• Friday Families – occasional meet ups</li> <li>• Children's Choir – Thursday afternoons for 6-11 year olds.</li> <li>• Camping (Summer 2025)</li> </ul>