

What I did last

One might be tempted to count down the days until the long summer holiday. I am certainly looking forward to the coming summer but even now I feel the urge to recall my adventures in August last year, more specifically, my adventures with the aptly named Capital Kids 2009.

What is it?

Capital Kids is a mission organised by London City Mission. It runs over two weeks during the summer with the aim of bringing the gospel of Jesus in a fun and non-threatening way, whilst remaining faithful to the Bible, to London's 5–10 year olds regardless of their faith, background or wealth. This is done by running fun days at various locations. Each day runs from 10.30am until 3.30pm and includes arts and craft, outdoor play, singing, praise, Bible stories, small group discussions reviewing the story and lunch time entertainment.

How did I hear about Capital Kids and why did I sign up?

I discovered Capital Kids whilst browsing on London City Mission's website. I have always loved



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children's work and wanted to do Scripture Union summer camps and missions since university but was generally tied up over the summer. I really wanted to do something this year and I was particularly interested in Capital Kids, because, as a Londoner, I am especially keen on reaching London's children and am a fan of London City Mission's work in general. Furthermore, being part of the Capital Kids team would mean working with and learning from people who have been serving London and London's children for a long time. In the end, my CRB came back the week before Capital Kids' start date, just in time! This was something I asked God for if He wanted me to do it. I also felt encouraged to continue putting God's kingdom first in how I use my time. So with both of these nudges, I confirmed that I wanted to be part of the team!

What happened?

On the first day of the two weeks the team met for team building and training. The team consisted of twelve people with a range of experience, from very little to lots, and from different countries and backgrounds and ages. There were folks from the USA, the Netherlands and Northern Ireland, and whilst some were entering university others were nearing half a century. We all, except two young dads, lived together at the team base in Bermondsey!

The team worked together to run eight fun days with the theme 'Who's in the House?', two in Wimbledon, two in Tottenham, two in Bermondsey and two in Peckham. We also ran two Sunday services at churches which hosted the days, and joined and sang at a community barbeque organised by one of the churches.

A typical day consisted of about an hour of free play, both in the morning and afternoon, followed by the children then coming to the main area to sing, play some games and then watch a 'live link' of Mr Big's journey around the world to find God. The videos cleverly hinted at a need for a story. The stories included Zacchaeus, The Two Builders and Our Heavenly House. After each story there was small group time.



Action shots from Queen's Road

summer...

I got to tell two stories: Zacchaeus and The Gospel with Kevin the Coconut. This was daunting at first as there was a range in age and attention spans, and I was sometimes worried that the story might be too long but if I quickened it up, I might speak too fast. These concerns encouraged me to pray and practise and it was encouraging when God answered! All team members had a small group or shared one, and were responsible for this group for the two days. The small group was a positive challenge. In one group, I had church kids and unchurched kids. In another, I had a very interactive child with a reserved child. In one group, I had a very disruptive child together with a very composed child. I really enjoyed the opportunity this diversity provided to develop general leadership and pastoral skills. I feel that I have grown in love for misbehaving children. My teaching placement was at times taxing due to managing behaviour, and it was encouraging to hear children at fun days say or show that I understood them and that I identified with them. Furthermore, something I distinctly remember is that God helped me to jump out of my comfort zone for the final location and take a small group of five to seven year olds. I initially felt that the questions were complex so I had been sticking to the older kids. It is amazing how one can sense God more in weakness. My co-leader and I were able to explain things and refine the questions to be age appropriate and it was truly enjoyable.

Were there any key memories or praise points?

- The amount of planning and organisation that had gone into each day. Everything flowed! Praise God for his favour and the Capital Kids' chief leaders!
- The team was fun and I learnt a lot from them.
- A ten year old girl in my small group openly said this was the first time she had heard Bible stories and it was something she liked about the day. I was sincerely surprised by this and challenged not to presume things and, moreover, that God is using us to reach a generation.
- A very behaviourally challenged boy was in my small group. He was very playful with me and



Our van



First team dinner

wanted to gain my attention. I really thank God for meeting him and being able to be patient and really love and learn from him. It was an answer to prayers after having some disruptive children in my school teaching class, and thinking I need more experience with them and how to love them. He hugged me on the last day, which pleasantly surprised and touched me. It really encouraged my heart to know that the fun days were open to all types of children. I am so inspired by this! Yes, praise God for the local centres that regularly open their doors to all types of children.

Prayer points

- For all the children who came: that God will bring them to places where the seeds will be watered. Pray for the workers at Christian centres and clubs and for more volunteers to support them.
- For Capital Kids 2010. For the planning of the two weeks and the recruitment of team members.

Why not consider joining the Capital Kids Team for summer 2010? You don't need to be an expert children's worker but you do need a love for God and children! Would your church or area like to host a fun day?

For more information go to the London City Mission website: www.lcm.org.uk