

in the scheme of things

life in niddrie

February 2017

The Children of Niddrie

an attempt at describing the kids here.

From now on, in these newsletters, I plan on doing my best to give you a brief glimpse of what youth work here looks like. Let me start this one by saying this will not be easy. The kids and the dynamics of working here are like nothing I have ever seen before (either on TV or in reality). They can take your heart and break it with words like "I dinnae (don't) like you! I dinnae respect you!", "You're not getting your Christmas present", or "I absolutely *hate* you" one moment, and then the very next moment they can come in and apologize for something with a picture that they have put

"Oh! I've got a Christian one for you, 'You're so fat you had to get baptised at SeaWorld!'"

together which also breaks your heart and brings you to tears because they have remembered your favourite WWE fighter (it's Roman Reigns if anyone wants to know) and want you to know they care. They can get into locked corridors, run riot through the building screaming, shouting, and calling us names like beasts (it means paedophile), fat mongos, and other less than savoury names having the time of their lives because they are getting a bit of attention in their abuse of us. But these same kids come into our clubs like Thursday's 1 to 6 and Friday's youth drop-in and ask fantastic questions about the Bible and about God. They remember the last lesson taught in 1 to 6 even though you were quite sure you had told them off numerous times because they hadn't been listening. They can sit in a room with us and absolutely rip us to shreds with their banter (they are *extremely* clever and intelligent)

Prayer Points

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Pray for one young boy who seems to be close to becoming a Christian. His behaviour has been so encouraging the past couple of weeks and he has really been engaging in the lessons and asking a whole lot of questions.

Pray that the Lord will give all of the staff wisdom in dealing with special situations that arise especially in the realm of "child protection".

Pray that the Lord will provide money for a new Sunday school curriculum we are hoping to buy soon.

Pray that the youth team (Lewis, Natasha, and I) will grow to love the Lord, each other, and these kids more every day. Pray that our hearts will be more heavily burdened for the salvation of these kids and their families.

and kill us with laughter at jokes like “You’re so poor the ducks throw bread at you” and “Oh! I’ve got a Christian one for you, ‘You’re so fat you had to get baptised at SeaWorld!’” These kids can hop on the bus to find you asleep and aren’t too embarrassed to wake the homeless looking youth worker so you don’t miss your stop. These kids can be so tough to work with and it’s easy to lose sight of why we are here when it feels like a constant fire fight. But these kids have become ours. We fight for them to know the gospel, to know that Jesus saves and He alone can give them lasting purpose and joy. We fight because of the loving God that we serve, because He took us under His wings while we were still enemies. He took us out of the domain of darkness and into His Kingdom and He can and WILL do the same for the kids here in Niddrie. One of the thoughts that keep us going is that one day these kids will be the Christian youth workers in Niddrie. They will be the elders, pastors, and Sunday school teachers at Niddrie Community Church. All we can do until then is teach the Word faithfully and pray for the Holy Spirit to work in the hearts and minds of the kids here. All we can do is press on in the gospel and entrust their souls to the Faithful Shepherd and Overseer.



A brief meeting after a youth drop-in

Fear of Man

And Focusing on Christ

I have always struggled with fear of man and I don’t mean of the opposite sex. I mean that I have always dealt with constantly wondering and being fearful of what people think of me. For most of life, the key motivator in many of my decisions has been “Will it make me look good to the people who see me”. Instead of my focus being honouring Christ, I do the “servant-hearted” looking stuff for my own glory. It’s disgusting, really because I can’t even claim to be doing it to help anyone out. I make it literally

all about me. It points to my own depravity. The fact that I can’t do anything without thinking about the way others perceive me makes me feel a bit lost and hopeless. Motivations are at the very root of our actions. Human beings do things for a reason and a purpose. Even the smallest and most mundane things we do have some sort of reason behind them. The question for me is whether or not my reasoning is to glorify Christ or myself? Is it Christ who I long to worship or am I idolizing myself? The Holy

Spirit is still showing me how sinful I am. But praise God for His mercy and grace. Thanks be to Christ for dying for me. His grace covers me and my self-idolatry.

The Lord is slowly teaching me to focus my eyes on Him. He is the goal that I work towards. He is helping me move past my fear of man and begin to intentionally make decisions to glorify and honour Him. He has been so good to me.

What's Been Happening?

It's just been an almost normal couple of months here. I still stick with the same schedule with just a few minor adjustments.

In the past little while, I have written essays for my finals in IDC, had my mom and aunt come to visit me (it was a great time), visited Milan for a holiday, taught more lessons,



done my second devotional for IDC, and spent a weekend doing childcare for another church. There have been discouragements and encouragements with the latter outweighing the former. Our youth clubs have been better overall in the last couple of weeks. Kids have been asking questions and engaging in the lessons and Bible studies. Soon we will be starting a "Youth Café" which will be geared towards older kids (ages 13-16). The International Conversation Class has been replaced for the time being with an international Bible study.

Currently, we are going through the 20schemes "What is the Gospel?" and it's been great. Unbelievers have been offended by it which is a good sign. One woman in particular has been asking loads of questions and trying to defend her own version of the gospel but she has no basis other than her own beliefs. It would be great if you could be in prayer for the Holy Spirit to work in her heart and convict her of her sin and need of Jesus.

Even though life here can be tough at many times, I love it. It's challenging and difficult and way out of my comfort zone in so many ways. But this is the kind of life that produces the most godly fruit, in my opinion.

Thank you all so much for your continued support. It's so encouraging to know that people from home are praying for me and the ministry of 20schemes. If you all would like some more info, please do not hesitate to email me and ask me questions. I was planning on letting you know that I could call you but that would be rather difficult at the moment as my phone is broken. But please contact me!

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD for ever." Psalm 23:6

