

IN THE SCHEME OF THINGS

Ice Skating

Before our break over Christmas, we took the kids from our 7nUP club (which runs on a Friday afternoon) on an afternoon ice skating trip. We traveled by public bus into the centre of Edinburgh to an outdoor skating rink. We had a blast with them and for the first three quarters of our time they all behaved. However, it all started kicking off by the last leg and some of the boys absolutely lost it. Arguing with each other, arguing with the leaders. We were going to reward them with ice-cream from McDonalds but had to take away that treat. But boy, did we pay for that on the bus. Some of the incidents that followed were extremely funny, but as we didn't want to encourage the kids to continue certain behaviours, we TRIED to keep straight faces. These kids are hilarious and brutally so (although very inappropriate at times). They are extremely intelligent and don't miss a trick. I'm going to find it very difficult moving away from them into a different scheme.

Christmas Family Fun Day

This event happened just before Christmas. We served lunch, baked goods, had pony rides, face painting, and a gospel talk. We had loads of new families coming in and hanging out. Lots of Christian families from our church were there as well so they could speak to the newcomers and have intentional, gospel-centred, relationship-building conversations with them. Halfway through the event, we all gathered in the big hall for the Christmas talk with a clear, gospel focus. Our angel, narrated the story of Jesus' birth and what He had come to earth for: wicked sinners in need of a suffering Saviour.



It was really great to see everyone in November on my last visit. It's quite funny that I had never actually planned to go home at all during these two years but by the end of it I'll have been three times. And let me tell you that the homesickness lately has been rough. I was fine the first year. I was fine after coming home for my sister's wedding. I was fine until Charlie and I booked our flights to come home in November. The run up to that trip home was something close to torture (bit dramatic, I'll admit). The trip was amazing. I got engaged, I got to see most of my family and friends (including my newest nephew), I got to have a huge Thanksgiving meal. But coming back to Scotland was very, very difficult. I think it was just sinking in that I would be here for the rest of my life. I won't be able to see my family any time I want. I can't hold my nephews or watch them grow up. I can't hug my sisters. I'm going to miss out on weddings and birthdays and funerals. BUT, while all of this sounds depressing, its for a purpose and it will be worth it in the end. And don't get me wrong, it is worth it now. To live and serve the Lord in one of Scotland's poorest and most gospel deprived communities is a joyful thing.

I tried to make sure that my motivations for coming to Scotland were centred around glorifying God. Those desires were tainted by my sinfulness. The desire to adventure and go to a new place also had its place in my intentions and I'm coming to realise more and more that my motivations are always going to be corrupted by my sinfulness. Now, my main motivation in staying should be to glorify God in my marriage and

Prayer Points

My prayer points are more or less the same with a few additions.

- Ultimately, that each of these kids will come to know Christ as their Saviour and treat Him as LORD of their lives.
- Pray particularly for a young group of boys that are around quite a bit. They are doing sex-ed in school and as you can imagine, their imaginations are running wild and their vulgarity has increased.
- Their physical protection. These kids are literally surrounded by drugs, alcohol, and sex. Some of their parents are dealers, other are abusers, and still others are just abusive/neglectful. Many are a combination of those things. Living in a small community like a scheme gives no protection from any of it and makes it more likely the kids will fall into the same patterns as their families.
- Wisdom for Natasha, myself, and others who help with all the youth stuff.
- Pray for a male youth worker.
- Pray for love, purity, holiness, patience, and a desire to glorify God for Charlie (my fiancé) and I.
- Pray for me and my family. It's going to suck being away from them for the rest of my life. Fortunately, Scotland is a nice place to vacation.
- Pray that my heart will be focused on Christ and that God will continually remind me of the reason that I am here.

"Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to Him be glory in the church in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen."
Ephesians 3:20-21

daily life living in a scheme without the gospel. It's far too easy to be distracted from my purpose in being here. But that's enough about me. Let's talk about the children.

Natasha and I (and other volunteers) meet up with tons of kids over the week. We have a lot of contact with all different ages and backgrounds. Tasha works in the local primary school on a Tuesday and meets with two siblings every Wednesday afternoon to befriend them and give their parents some respite. I meet with a child every Thursday afternoon to hang out with him and give his mom some respite. We have all of our Sunday activities, Girl's Group, girl's high school football, 1 to 6, 7nUP, and random times during the week when the kids come into the building to hang out.

Girl's group (discipleship group for school age girls) on a Monday night has grown! We've added one more young lady to the group and she has been great to have around. She's the youngest and has a great mind for the bible. All of the girls have been raised in Christian homes so they know the gospel and the bible in their heads but it seems like its not touched their hearts just yet.

The struggle is helping them to actually love God and His Word. The trouble is that they may believe they're Christians when in reality they may not be. Tasha and I can tell them how important it is to love Jesus and learn His Word all day long until the cows come home but it wont do any good if the Holy Spirit isn't working in their hearts.



Martin (one of our club leaders) and a young boy from Niddrie on our ice skating trip to the city centre.



Lunch at our Christmas Family Fun Day.

7nUP on a Friday afternoon is going well. We have a group of 10-15 kids that come every week (mostly boys and one of the reasons we need a male youth worker so badly). We've been taking them through the New City Catechisms (thanks Daniel Geddings for giving us it). Its a simple way of teaching kids the bible in question form and its been really great for the kids so far. They have a hard time sitting and listening for any longer than about ten minutes at this point but there are a few of them who seem to take an interest and actually listen. Others are distracting and ask random and at times inappropriate questions but at least they are still hearing the gospel in the chat.

1 to 6 has also been good! We have just started the Gospel Project with them this month (thanks again, Daniel Geddings). We have had to condense it quite a bit and contextualise it to fit our needs here but its been great so far! This year, as the group has gotten so big, we have had to split the kids into two groups. One group will go into the big hall to play games while the other listens to the teaching and then we switch them. In both 1 to 6 and 7nUP our form of discipline are bans. We go on a warning system so the younger ones (1 to 6) get banned the following week on their third warning and the older ones (7nUP) get banned on their second warning. Unfortunately we have to resort to this quite a bit. But every time their ban is up, encouragingly, they come right back.

And just a quick update on the marriage front, Charlie and I will be getting married on May 19 of this year and I will be moving to Scotland. We have both decided that we will be living in a scheme about 4 miles from Niddrie called Gracemount. This is where Andy and Sarah Prime have planted a church for 20schemes and I got to spend a good bit of time with them there in my summers over here back in 2013 and 2014. Charlie has already been living Gracemount for the past year and a half and we are currently in the process of looking for a house there. Please keep us both in your prayers as there is a lot of preparation involved in all of this (prep for stuff like the spousal visa, the wedding planning for both sides of the pond, the house, what my role will look like with 20schemes after this if they choose to keep me on). PLEASE PRAY. LOADS. ALL DAY. WITHOUT CEASING.

Pray for all of the team as we seek to make Jesus Christ known throughout Niddrie.

If you have any questions, if I haven't been informational enough (more than likely the issue most of you will have), or if you would like to know how else you can contribute to the work going on here (that would be amazing) please email me. It would also just be good to hear from any of you. Its encouraging to know people actually read these on the rare occasion I do send them.

I miss you all!