



Working together to help the children in YOUR church see themselves and their friends as members of the Christian community in YOUR area

X:site - The vision

X:site is a town, area or city wide children's event run every 2 months for 2 hours on a Saturday evening.

X:site is open to any children in school years 3-6 (aged 7-11). They may have some link to church either in Sunday school, junior church, mid-week club, uniformed groups, holiday club or church school connections, but X:site is also open to their friends and children who have no church background. They meet, learn from God and respond to him, perhaps in a different way than in their own church.

X:site - The reason why

- In 1900 55% of children attended church regularly. By 2000 this figure had dropped to 4%¹
- 1000 under 15s are leaving the church each week².
- Tweenagers (ages 9-12) decide for the church while they are still children, mostly between the ages of 7-10³.
- Children's experience of church at Sunday school or equivalent often 'makes or breaks' their later participation of church although they may not actually leave church until their teenage years.
- As many as ¾ of 12 year olds in church will leave in the next 2 years⁴.
- 85% of Christians make a commitment to God between the ages of 4-14⁵

THERE IS AN URGENT NEED TO SUPPORT CHILDREN WHO ALREADY HAVE CONTACT WITH THE CHURCH AND TO REACH OUT TO THE MAJORITY OF CHILDREN WHO HAVE LITTLE OR NO CONTACT WITH CHURCH.

"Jesus called the children to him and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."

Luke 18:16



¹ UK Christian Handbook of Religious Trends, Christian Research 2001, section 2, page 15

² Brierley P., *The Tide is Running Out What the English Church Attendance Survey reveals* (London, UK: Christian Research, 2000), p.98

³ Brierley P., *REACHING & KEEPING TWEENAGERS Analysis of the 2001 RAKES Survey* (London, UK: Christian Research, 2002), p.192

⁴ Brierley P., *REACHING & KEEPING TWEENAGERS Analysis of the 2001 RAKES Survey* (London, UK: Christian Research, 2002), p.192

⁵ Barna G., *Transforming children in to spiritual champions* (California, USA: Rgeal Books, 2003),

X:site aims to be a place where children can unite together from churches across their area and be excited and encouraged in their faith and feel part of the wider Christian community in a town / city. We also recognise that even where churches have regular contact with only a small number of children, those children are in regular contact with many more children. Therefore, X:site also aims to be a place where children will be confident to invite their non- Christian friends to come and learn more about Jesus.

X:site - The logo








X:site stands for “the place of the cross” and is about bringing children together to learn more about the difference Jesus can make in their lives.

Our logo represents the fact that we feel that as children come together focused on the cross, their impact will radiate out across a community. That is our prayer for each area in which an X:site event is located AND for the nation as a whole.

X:site - The core values

Each X:site seeks to fulfil our Core Values of:

-  **Developing** in children a real and lasting relationship with Jesus
-  **Teaching** children the Bible faithfully in a way that is relevant and exciting
-  **Challenging** children to live out their faith and to share their faith with their friends
-  **Enabling** children to see themselves as members of the Christian community in the town, city or area where they live
-  **Envisioning**, equipping and encouraging children’s ministry leaders

X:site - The partnership between local churches and Scripture Union

United around this common vision, the team members are drawn from a wide diversity of church backgrounds and are working in partnership with Scripture Union – an organisation with a proven track record in reaching out to children and young people.

The event is run, financed and planned by volunteers from local churches and it is very much "owned" by local churches. For example the current core and planning teams in Leeds includes:



- Baptist Church children's worker;
- Part time teacher, mum and member of an Anglican church;
- NHS Trust Finance worker and member of Salvation Army;
- Salvation Army Divisional Children's Officer;
- Deanery Children's Advisor and Part time vicar;
- NHS medical physicist and member of a Baptist church; a
- 2 primary school teachers

Plus 40 volunteers from churches across the city including students, teachers, business men and women and medical professionals. What unites them is a desire to share Jesus and their lives with children.

Scripture Union is a missionary movement working in over 130 countries to make Jesus known and to help people to meet God daily through the Bible and prayer. For more information or visit our web site: www.scriptureunion.org.uk .



Scripture Union provides the "glue" to help local churches to work together. We provide:

- appointment, support and encouragement of overall leaders;
- child protection and health and safety policies and insurance;
- team clearing (including application forms, references and enhanced CRB disclosures);
- bank accounts and charitable status for gift aid purposes;
- web site format, logos and art work designed centrally;
- teaching programme outline linked to Scripture Union's Light syllabus with suggested activities to be adapted to local needs;
- links to other parts of the Scripture Union family, such as the X:site page in "Snapshots" Bible reading notes for 8-11s and residential holidays;

- at least an annual visit from a Scripture Union representative to provide support discuss any issues and provide accountability and most importantly
- **accountability from outside one church grouping and a clear statement of faith which all are asked to adhere to** - in other words we have found that SU involvement stops the argument of one church trying to recruit for its membership - X:site is about supporting local churches and building God's kingdom. However, it is not an SU "take over event" -it is about all involved being in partnership for the sake of the gospel.



Each local X:site team agrees to:

- Adhere to the Core Values of X:site
- Operate within Scripture Union's statement of faith
- Abide by Scripture Union's child health and safety and protection policies
- Ensure all team are cleared to work as Scripture Union volunteers
- Operate its finances under guidelines provided by Scripture Union and submit annual accounts for auditing purposes
- Become part of the X:site network of events
- Be represented at annual conference/ training day
- Provide an annual administration fee to Scripture Union to cover X:site development and administration support for X:site (currently 15% of child income)

X:site - The event

The key aims of X:site are that it is multi- media, visual and links into children's culture - doing things together as a church that week by week one church is unlikely to be able to do. So we have a lively "upfront time" with videos, live band, creative prayer and games.

However, a foundational part of X:site is the group structure. The children are allocated into groups with at least 2 leaders. Some of the teaching and creative response is done in these groups. The aim is for relationships to develop amongst children and leaders from across the churches, to develop a Christian community in a real sense. As far as possible the children are allocated with the same leaders each event.



X:site - The benefits

X:site will undoubtedly be most beneficial for churches and groups who are already working with children in their local communities. It is our hope that children and children's leaders all over an area will be encouraged and inspired by being part of something bigger, and enthusiasm, vision and resources will flow back into communities across the city, town or area. X:site provides the kind of gathering event that no one church could achieve on their own but is **not** intended as a substitute for local discipleship and pastoral care which are vital to help children in their everyday walk with God. Our hope and prayer is that by getting involved with X:site, churches will be equipped and inspired to reach out to local children through schools and other community based programmes.

X:site - The story so far

X:site Leeds began in May 2004. When we set it up, we felt God was challenging us to create a model which could serve communities beyond Leeds. So far this has resulted in city based, town based and more rural based events:

- X:site Calderdale: began January 2006
- X:site Sutton (LBC): began October 2006
- X:site Glos (Gloucestershire): began October 2006
- X:site Birmingham: began January 2007
- X:site Keighley; began January 2007
- X:site Spring Harvest: began April 2007
- X:site Swindon began September 2007

Other towns/ cities are also in the process of thinking and praying through whether God wants X:site in their area. So far we have seen:

- children from 100s different churches;
- over 1000 different children
- team from across the churches getting to know and support each other and have fellowship outside the event
- testimony from individual churches on how X:site has impacted the children in their group
- children inviting their non-churched friends to X:site who in turn have invited their friends
- a residential holiday for 75 children from X:site (5 days - part of the SU holidays programme) which was so popular there are 2 holidays in 2008

X:site - The website

www.xsiteuk.org has been designed to create a community feel - with space for new event pages as they get developed. It is aimed at helping children to feel part of the church locally and nationally and to provide important information and resources for parents and leaders.



I invited all my friends to X:site to celebrate my 10th birthday because I thought it was a great idea for a party.

They all begged me to take them next time..... I probably will!



Bethany's friends did come back and remained interested in the Christian faith so much so, that Bethany's father helped launch a monthly club for them to find out more.



Cameron, age 11

I heard about X:site Sutton through my mum who is one of the team.

I thought it would be OK but when I got there it was more than OK; it was really fun! We did lots of quizzes and fun games and made some cross magnets for the art and craft bit. We also did lots of fab songs with actions – the band were fantastic and sounded like a really cool band!

I was asked some questions about my faith in Jesus – why I was a Christian and what I felt about Jesus; I was very nervous but Phil who interviewed me was really nice to me and made me feel OK being up the front. He did some teaching about why Jesus loved us, and about creation. He is a good teacher!

The whole evening was really fun and better than I expected. I can't wait till the next one!



Team have said:

- "It is great to work together with others from different churches"*
- "We have a small Sunday school – our children have really enjoyed being part of something bigger"*
- "I have learnt new songs and have new ideas to use in my mid-week club"*
- "God has been at work"*

X:site - The junior team

An key element to our X:site teams is the junior team. We aim to invest in training emerging leaders, those aged 14-18, providing opportunities to serve alongside adult team and develop their gifts of leadership and working with children. We also aim to support them as they seek to work out, share and develop their own faith. In the future, we hope to be able to provide training opportunities for this age group.



*X:site - The **Big** Vision*

Our vision is to see a network of events across the country supporting one another, yet being sufficiently independent to address the needs of the local community. So often it seems as Christians we try and re-invent the wheel rather than share what we have learnt with one another. X:site is about towns/ cities/ rural areas with a central focus of uniting all to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with children.

Eventually we would hope children and leaders from different X:sites could meet together and feel part of God's **BIG MISSION**.

For more information about X:site, contact Clare Luxton on
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