

Summer holiday fun for children



Five to seven-year-olds from last year's 'Seaside Rock' holiday club at Freshwater with one of their junior leaders

CHILDREN from across our diocese will learn more about faith at fun-packed holiday clubs this summer.

Hundreds of excited children will flock to churches, halls and schools to find out more about Christianity through Bible stories, games, activities and songs. And this August's Olympic Games in Athens has provided a topical theme for some holiday clubs.

'Go For Gold' is the name of the summer holiday Bible club run by Churches Together in West Wight from August 23-27 at All Saints C of E Primary School in Freshwater.

It's the sixth year that the ecumenical holiday club will be running – and the second time it has taken an Olympic theme.

Up to 80 five to 11-year-olds from Freshwater, Totland, Yarmouth and Shalfleet – and those on holiday there – will watch drama, learn memory verses, hear Bible stories and make items of craft each day between 10am

and 12.30pm.

On the Wednesday afternoon, children will visit the sports centre for an activity afternoon, and there will also be a family barbecue planned. The holiday club is planned and run by churches of all denominations in the area, and leaders keep in touch with children during the rest of the year.

Organiser Sharon Ford said: "This year we'll be splitting up the children into groups representing different countries to keep with the Olympic theme. We have a good number who don't go to church, and some of them will be hearing about the Bible for the first time.

"We do try to follow up the children who come with activities in the rest of the year as well. Leaders visit their families with photos of the children at the holiday club."

The Olympic theme will also be used at Hambledon's holiday club, which will meet daily from August 10-13 in the village hall from 10am-12.30pm. Entitled 'Champions!', it will include stories, music, craft and games for 50 or so five to 11-year-olds from Hambledon and the surrounding area.

On Sunday 15 August, there will be a family service in St Peter and St Paul's Church, where children can show family and friends what they have done. Anyone interested should contact Janet Harrison on 023-9263 2812 or janetstevharrison@hotmail.com

Denmead's ecumenical holiday club, Denmead Activities and Bible School (DABS) will take place in the same week – August 10-13. Around 300 Denmead children already attend each year, and so registration is only open to children from the village. This will be the 24th year that DABS has taken place and involves 11 age groups spread over the community centre and six marquees under the leadership of more than 100 leaders and helpers.

And there will also be a children's summer holiday club from August 23-27 in Swanmore, at the Paterson Centre next to St Barnabas' Church. It will run daily from 9am-12.30pm and include arts, crafts, and visits to interesting places including Winchester Cathedral's education centre.

Anyone interested should contact Anne Pearson on 01489-892822 or editor@swanmore.net.

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Famous last words

THE last word? It may well not be! Many of us begin to read publications on the back page, a recent survey reports, and then work our way forward little by little. The last word then becomes the first.

Check what you do next time you pick up a magazine – although, after reading this, you may want to make a point of proving me wrong by starting from the front. Maybe there is something profound in the Hebrew pattern of beginning to read, in our terms, from the back of the book.

A concern for endings – the 'last words' – is commonplace. Authors of crime novels presumably write, or at least know, the climax of their story before they begin – unless, of course, they are as much in the dark about whodunnit as the rest of us until they come to the last chapter.

Students preparing essays or gathering strength for

the last word

by the diocesan director of education, Canon David Isaac



their exams are coached to plan their work in order to arrive at a mark-winning conclusion.

Marathon runners need to have their minds' eyes firmly on the distant finishing line to keep them going through the tedium and pain of the lonely miles.

Some people's last words have achieved iconic status, for their bathos, their passion or their transcendent lucidity.

George V was content with: "***** Bognor"; Nelson achieved: "Thank God, I have done my duty";

Bishop Latimer comforted his fellow prisoner at the stake with: "We shall this day light such a candle by God's grace...as shall never be put out."

This is a summer edition of the *Pompey Chimes*, and perhaps not the time for pondering deep mysteries that are best left to the dark nights of winter.

But you might find it amusing to consider, around the barbecue or the garden table, what you would put on the 'back page' of your days. For what would you like to be remembered?