

APPENDIX 3: HOLIDAY AT HOME

Holiday sessions for older people, and those living with dementia

Getting started

There is a great delight in working with and serving people in their later life, and yet for many churches it is incidental and historical, rather than intentional and dynamic. If you are planning to adapt the holiday club material for your older people and those living with dementia, you, and they, will be richly blessed.

Taking time to consider the adaptations that will be needed is valuable. Considering the practicalities alongside the spiritual needs is essential to ensure smooth running, spiritual nourishment and everyone's wellbeing.

In this appendix, you will find a mixture of practical hints to help in your planning. This list is not exhaustive, merely a starting point for your planning. There are also suggested additions of memory/sensory tables and adaptations of crafts for each day for the theme. At the end is a resources list of where additional information can be found, and resources shared.

In reality, the needs of your people will govern your choices and planning. Have ready ears to hear what they share about personal interests and needs. Have open eyes to see where joy is found, or struggles shared. Have open hearts to God's leading in this vibrant, meaningful and rewarding area of ministry, that blesses participants and planners, hosts and visitors alike.

Practical hints – in no particular order

Space. Ramps, access and facilities all need clear signage and volunteers to ensure safety. Trip hazards need identifying, as well as ensuring passageways are free of mobility aids. A full risk assessment for your access and space for use by older people is required, along with a safeguarding assessment for vulnerable adults. Appropriate signing in and out, security on external doors,

dietary requirements and a next of kin contact in case of emergencies should all be planned for.

Volunteers. Specific people with specific roles ensures the smooth running of a session. Clear roles dividing responsibilities, plus 'listeners' and 'chatters' to mingle, are beneficial. Some older people may wish to be volunteers, too, and recognising that some cross the participant/helper boundary is a blessing, as long as the essential ratios are already covered.

Story snapshot



Bert first attended a Messy Vintage session on the insistence of his daughter. He had rarely left the house since his wife passed away, and was feeling that he had nothing to offer. Already experiencing the effects of declining health and memory loss himself, he was unsure what he would make of the session. Bert can now be found supplying participants with tea to their tables, and then assisting at the buffet table. He occasionally engages in the activities, but feels most comfortable helping as he can.

Time. Older people move at a different pace. Be prepared to slow the pace, have people joining mid activity and retain an attitude of 'no rush, take your time, we're just glad you made it'. Taking time to chat, listen, hear and tease out a story is a blessing and a delight.

Dexterity. Make no assumptions about people's abilities and manual dexterity. Some may require help, and others would be offended by the offer. Visual impairments, cognitive ability, fine motor skills and co-ordination are all affected by age and dementia. Asking, watching, gently offering and listening to responses enable a happy balance and encouragement when needed.



Story snapshot



Alfred was an engineer, and has been living with dementia for a number of years. When presented with the large pinecone, small pompoms and felt decorations needed to make an owl, he immediately responded with precision and care. His owl was beautifully precise, and he enjoyed helping others with their owl features. He was able to contribute, as well as responding to the activities that day, and a photograph of his smile captured the moment beautifully.

Achievement. People are people, and a sense of achievement at a task completed may feature strongly for some. Enabling participation and taking the time, if they wish, to complete a task while the programme moves on is important. Taking things home as well as having things that can be passed on to others can be valuable.

Movement. During the session, consider whether it is best to encourage participants to move, or to bring activities to tables where they remain seated. A combination of the two may be appropriate, depending on your participants' abilities and wishes.

A quiet room. If the event is an intergenerational one rather than just for older people, a quieter space, or room, may enable anyone feeling overwhelmed by sights and sounds to find a moment of calm. A memory box could be placed there, or some gentle music might be playing.

Gender stereotypical activities. Be mindful of the activities offered, and whether they appear typically to appeal to one gender, or cross the boundaries. Providing a balance and variety ensures all will find a point of access and relatability.

Worship. Consider where you will gather for worship. How do you plan to seat people to ensure

they can participate as they wish? Familiar hymns, readings and prayers may be appropriate to share. Some people may enjoy singing in parts, and will do so automatically. Consider loop systems for hearing, font size for any printed words, and how anything projected can be participated in as fully as possible. Inviting people to choose hymns, and share their stories and recollections of specific events such as harvest, Easter and Christmas, can be enlightening and refreshing.

Story snapshot



Many older people will have a historical attachment to an experience of church, even if they have not attended church actively for many years. Singing together, hearing familiar stories and praying evoke emotions and memories long forgotten. Shirley was one such lady who had drifted from the Church many years earlier. As she sang the old harvest hymns and listened to Colin share tales of harvest as a young boy, she was moved to tears, remembering harvest festivals of her youth, her home and friends. 'What lovely memories,' was her comment before tucking into her harvest tea.

Refreshments Many older people will eat alone every day. Fellowship over afternoon tea, light buffet or soup and roll may be a highlight for them. Some may need practical help, others may wish to contribute, giving them a reason to bake. As you consider your participants and volunteers, be aware of dietary requirements, serving practicalities and the time you will need to allow if it is not to be rushed. Treats to take home are often appreciated.

Adapting Heroes and Villains Holiday Club

Many of the story-telling methods and suggestions can be adapted for older people or intergenerational sessions. The suggestions below are specifically focused on engaging those in later life, and those living with dementia.



Activities for the whole week Familiarity and comfort helps ensure people feel at ease. These activities could remain present through the week for those who wish to visit and enjoy them. Consider leaving the tables/stations physically in the same place to aid this familiarity. Volunteers could encourage those who struggle to participate to engage in a one-to-one card game as a way to gain more interaction and involvement.

- **Props/pictures table** – where things are added and taken away each day to prompt recollections and discussion – representing different detectives and crimes shows through the ages. These could include a pipe for Sherlock Holmes, moustache for Poirot, helmet for Dixon of Dock Green, raincoat for Columbo, lollipop for Kojak, handbag for Miss Marple, typewriter for Murder She Wrote. These could have a quiz element.
- **Jigsaw table** – either a linked picture, or simply a jigsaw space to chat and be.
- **Games table** – vintage games like dominos, snakes and ladders, Cluedo, Scrabble etc.
- **Paper activities** – each day printed pages of word searches, mazes, code cracking, colouring, linked to the characters and theme of the day. These are readily available searching online, and can provide a talking point, if needed.

Daily activities These are specific to each day of the theme, and change each day. Using tables placed in the same place each day ensures familiarity, and can encourage confidence in moving between tables.

Ruth – Loving and supporting

Memory/sensory table Suitcase (new or vintage) with holiday packing items for discussion and debate. Older items as well as new technology and fashions will get people talking.

Craft/activity 3D heart craft, as suggested, but made into a card that could be shared with a neighbour or friend.

Marth and Mary – Praying and serving

Memory/sensory table Aids to prayer: praying hands, holding crosses, prayer shawls, old prayer books and hymn books, stones, electric candles, printed encouragement verses that are familiar such as Psalm 23, Psalm 121, Corinthians 13, the Lord’s prayer, the Beatitudes, and a place to write their own prayer for friends, family or self.

Craft/activity Mindfulness colouring of familiar biblical verses and images.

Timothy – Companionship and encouragement

Memory/sensory table Images of superheroes (and villains) that have stood the test of time. Images of the original Superman, Batman, Spiderman and The Joker can prompt discussion and debate about changing images, storylines and the modern look of recent years.

Craft/activity Painting using fingertips and hands only to recreate a rainbow image within an outline that says ‘God’s promise to love’.

Abraham and Sarah – Faith and believing

Memory/sensory table Find an image of Abraham and Sarah entertaining their visitor from God delivering God’s message, and print this onto large card/paper. Cut it into pieces that can then be re-formed by small groups. The table will need a host who then disassembles the picture to engage the next participants as they tell the story. Alternatively, find different images from around the world, different eras and styles of the same story, and encourage a discussion of which people like/dislike and why.

Craft/activity Decorating star biscuits with icing, hundreds and thousands, etc. Making a few each enables people to take them home at the end.

Esther – Stand up for the oppressed

Memory/sensory table Gather leaflets and stories from local charities and international aid agencies such as Christian Aid, Tearfund and



Cafod that tell good news stories about places where communities are being supported in face of oppression today. Current newspapers could be added and ripped apart looking for oppression and prejudice in society today, and added to a prayer wall. People may share their stories of working in different countries, or for agencies supporting the oppressed.

Craft/activity Using salt dough or clay, form, paint and decorate a small pot that can hold an electric tealight that can be taken home and used to focus thoughts and prayers for those who face challenges today. A prayer card could be created to accompany the tealight takeaway craft.

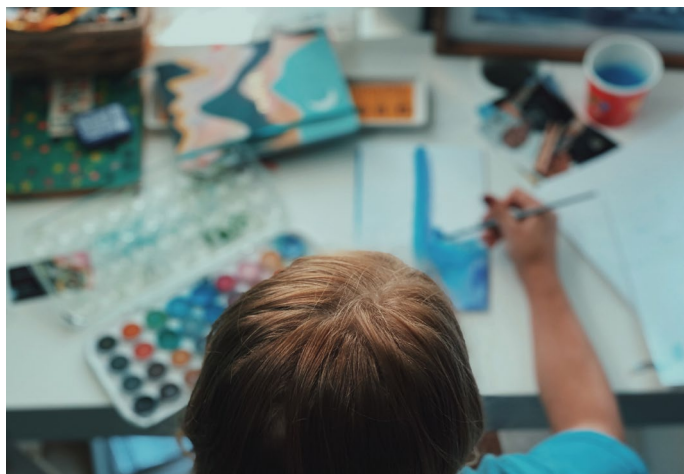
All together activities led from the front, or round tables in smaller groups

Getting to know you Bingo – finding out about each other’s work, families, skills, interests.

Table based quizzes on hero themes, both biblical and fictional. Good-humoured competition works at all ages, and volunteers can be hands on to encourage and support as needed.

Resources

Liveability – Dementia Inclusive church guide: travelling together www.livability.org.uk



Bible Reading Fellowship’s Messy Vintage – 52 sessions to share Christ-centred fun with the older generation by Katie Norman and Jill Phipps www.messychurch.org.uk/messy-vintage

Lichfield Diocese - Diocese of Lichfield, Dementia-Friendly Church (anglican.org)

Anna Chaplaincy Anna Chaplaincy – The Bible Reading Fellowship (brf.org.uk)

Pinterest/Messy Vintage – for specific resources www.pinterest.co.uk/MessyChurchBRF/messy-vintage

