

Holiday at Home

By Robbie Starling at Counterslip Baptist Church, Bristol

At the time the fellowship was being asked to look at ways of making an effect on the Community, our Home group were keen to embark upon setting up a "Holiday at Home" for the over 60's, both in and outside the church fellowship. Our first time proved very successful and has since been repeated together with other events being held at Easter and Christmas. From feedback we received we believe the key to the success of the event has been in the planning, preparation and organisation prior to the event being held.



Planning

The dates were fixed in the church diary and the schedule for each day arranged. We opted to hold the event over 3 days from 10.30am to 3.30pm, and due to catering facilities limited the number of guests. We were fortunate to be able to use the gifts and talents of our church members and we were able to put on a number of craft and art activities in the mornings followed by other activities after lunch. Both guests and helpers were required to complete forms as to which days they would be coming, this was particularly important so that the necessary transport arrangements could be made. Guests were also asked to provide emergency contact details in case it was needed, together with any special dietary needs. We prepared a budget and an estimate of our costs and worked out an appropriate charge for our guests, and a full risk assessment carried out.

Preparation

Guests were invited from those connected with church activities such as the women's meeting, the bereavement support group as well as placing posters in the local elderly people's residences.

Forms submitted by both guests and helpers were collated and various people delegated to be responsible for specific areas. We had a transport co-ordinator, a welcome co-ordinator, Catering team and an overall co-ordinator responsible for ensuring that all activities ran as planned, together with a qualified first -aider. The home group took responsibility for ensuring that the church and hall were properly laid out and that there were the correct facilities for each of the activities. The dinner tables were laid out with serviettes, menus, a small flower arrangement as well as water and condiments.

A snack dinner was arranged for helpers so that they could prepare the church for the afternoon activities.

Operation

As guests were brought to the church they were greeted by helpers and given tea or coffee and taken to a table where they were able to talk before planned activities started. During the mornings craft and art activities were organised in addition to other favourite activities such as Jig-saw puzzles and table games such as scrabble and domino's.

A 2-course lunch was served where a "restaurant style" waitress service was provided to the guests although vegetables were served for the guests to help themselves.

In the afternoon joint activities such as a quiz, a sing-a long and an extremely popular movement by music (with the guest sitting in chairs) were arranged.

The day closed with a Thought for the day lasting about 5 minutes followed by a cup of tea and a piece of cake.



Points to Remember

1. There must be a qualified first-aider present
2. A Risk Assessment as to the suitability of the activities and facilities used
3. For activities such as Movement to music a suitably qualified instructor must be used
4. To delegate responsibilities so no-one is responsible for all arrangements.
5. A reasonable number of helpers in ratio to guests – this may need limits being set.
6. To arrange a get-together for helper before the event so that they are aware of how the days are planned and what their responsibilities are
7. To set time aside before the guests arrive for prayer
8. Allow guests time to talk if needed.
9. Provide evaluation forms so that future events address any issues or points made
10. Some of the guests found that all 3 days were too much, and we allowed for guests to attend for one or more days.

Some suggested activities:

Flower arranging, pastel art, glass painting, encaustic , cake decorating, marzipan fruits, card making, note let pads, book-marks, still life drawings, lavender bags, jewellery boxes , peg chairs and bird boxes.



If you'd like to find out more about Counterslip's Holiday at Home please contact the WEBA office and we'll put you in touch with the organisers.