

PROFILE OF GFS/KIDS PLUS+ DIOCESE OF NEWCASTLE:

Newcastle Diocese reaches from the Central Coast of NSW to the mid north coast and out to the west rural areas, covering a vast area.

GFS/Kids Plus+ has branches on the Central Coast which is a terrific growth area. Lakes Anglican is at Gorokan and has a large branch. As well as their meetings each Wednesday, they have "Kids Plus Art n' Stuff" which they do at the local Lakehaven McDonalds. This not only encourages the children but parents who are there also and gives them the opportunity to reach out and invite people to join in parish activities.

Kids Plus at Toukley we call an Outreach Branch. While we supply programmes and keep in touch with them they are not registered with Newcastle GFS. We have just held a Pentecost Day Camp there which was very successful.

In the Newcastle City area we have branches at Merewether and New Lambton. Both these branches have been active for many years. Merewether has great outreach in the community and recently raised over \$4000.00 for the Victorian Bush Fire Appeal. Every year they take part in "Clean Up Australia" and Doorknock for the Salvation Army Red Shield Appeal.

New Lambton Branch are very active in and around their area with Pupil Free Days and free street stalls with Children's Craft, Puzzles, etc. connected with the seasons of the church and recently held a very successful day prior to Easter outside one of the local pharmacies. Pupil Free Days have brought new children to the Branch as do Week Long Holiday Clubs, especially during the long January break.

Singleton Branch is situated in the Upper Hunter Area of the Diocese and is one of our oldest branches. The Hunter River flows through Singleton and down to the sea at Newcastle and during heavy rain is likely to flood and cause much damage. Singleton has a wonderful leadership team and is very involved on a Diocesan level. We have a Diocesan Mission Target each year and Singleton leaders are very involved in this, supplying information to branches and involved in fundraising. Over the years thousands of dollars have been raised with their encouragement for many causes.

Singleton and surrounding areas are growing vastly and coal mining is a huge industry there and the mines are very involved in using solar technology in their operations.

Outreach Branch is operating at Cessnock (Sonia's parish) and they have a wonderful leadership tea and we supply them with programmes. Each year we have a Day Camp there and it is always a great occasion with great kids. His year we used "Creation and the Environment" as a theme.

Another Outreach Branch is at Stroud, a lovely country area where we visit each term with the CEY Ministry (Children's, Education and Youth) Leader and talk through the term's programme and take samples of craft etc. They have some very talented young musicians who are the mothers of children who attend and one actually writes songs for them. CEY are preparing to make a CD with this branch using their musician's material and we are looking forward to this.

Each year we have a Sleepover Camp during the July School Holidays which brings children from all over the Diocese together. It is always a very happy occasion and children make lots of friendships.

Every two years we hold "Kids at the Cathedral" a free day open to all in the community and this is always very successful with many people coming to spend time in our beautiful Cathedral. We have special games, craft, cathedral tours and treasure hunts, as well as, the children performing a special Christmas Play. A sausage sizzle lunch is always very popular and we find this is wonderful outreach into the community.

Townsend Fellowship is a very active group in Newcastle Diocese and help with many activities. We have a Townsend Representative on our Executive which helps keep them in touch and we also send members our Newsletter each term.

While we move around the Diocese with many different activities our purpose remains to bring children and families into the life and fellowship of the church and learn to know and love the Lord Jesus Christ.

NEW LAMBTON BRANCH:

New Lambton Parish GFS/Kids Plus is reaching out to children and families in their area. Prior to Easter a craft stall for children was held on a Saturday morning outside Blackbutt Pharmacy in Orchardtown Road. Easter was the theme and the children enjoyed lots of crafts, colouring in and puzzles. The most popular craft item was an empty tomb made with an Easter Egg on a Chocolate Biscuit.

Pupil Free Day from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Tuesday, 28th April was a great day with stories, puppets, games, singing, craft and lots of food. Neil Clare from Waratah Parish was a great hit with the children with music and puppets. We are very thankful

For Neil's ministry with his puppets and the kids love it. Pupil Free Day was also held on Monday, 27th July in the 2nd term holidays.

The programme material from the Bible Society for the "Jesus All About Life" programme was used in 2nd term and the girls thoroughly enjoyed the programmes.

A Cake Stall was held outside church one Sunday morning to raise money for the Bible Society.

While we continue GFS/Kids Plus every Tuesday during school terms we now look forward to the 2010 with a renewed sense of optimism.

MEREWETHER BRANCH:

This group has around 10 girls who regularly attend. They meet every Friday night 6 - 8.00 pm. As well as their Branch activities of craft, cooking, sewing, fun, Church Parade the girls reach out to the wider community with a vast number of activities.

The Annual Enrolment Service is where the girls receive their badges and awards.

In the past year alone this branch has participated in Clean Up Australia – the girls and parents have a territory each year that they are responsible for & this year it was the Newcastle West area; Red Shield Appeal – where the girls regularly collect in their local area. This year they collected \$800.00; Westpac Helicopter Rescue Appeal – where they paid a cheque for \$700.00 with the money raised from a garage sale; Ronald McDonald House fundraising. In addition this year they raised \$4,600.00 in a Bucket Collection at the Junction Fair Shopping Centre for the Red Cross Victorian Bushfire Appeal.

The girls regularly participate in the Merewether RSL Anzac Day Celebrations. They have distributed the Order of Service; made & presented Floral Tributes; Delivered the readings at the Service. They have also collected names for their Memorial Book of Remembrance (over 290 names) & this is placed on the memorial.

The girls are very environmentally aware & have won an Environmental Award in the last twelve months from Newcastle City Council. They have also held an Environmental stand at our Kids at the Cathedral Celebrations.