

Girvan

<i>Journeys in faith</i>		
Story Sacks in Girvan	The Bairns 'n Books Story Sack Library is a story-telling and activity initiative for young children and their carers, based in Girvan's Methodist Church. Story Sacks themselves are colourful pillowcase-sized resources of books and related toys and activities.	38
How did this project come about?	The Story Sacks Library is one initiative of Make It Happen! – a community arts group based in Girvan and founded by local residents – including Methodist member Etta Auld. She is a trained instructor with Bookbug – a scheme developed by the Scottish Book Trust .	43
What are the needs in your community that you set out to meet?	Girvan's library is not in a part of town that is convenient for everyone. This is also a community in which many grandparents and carers, as well as parents, take responsibility for small children during the day. They don't always have access to the range of toys, puppets, games and books that are contained in a Story Sack. The Bairns 'n Books scheme allows them to borrow sacks and use them at home.	73
What difference does the involvement of locals Methodists make to the project?	The congregation provides not only a home for story-telling sessions but also space for custom-built storage for the sacks and toys. But this project is about people too. "Some of our members come and make sacks for us, and I've got one great granny who comes out with me when we go to nursery or school and helps me do the Story Sack sessions."	64
What have been the ups and downs during the development of this project?	The project has been time-consuming to establish ("like setting up a lending library") and creating a database of the resources has been difficult. The assistance of a trained librarian is now helping. For Etta, one big plus of the project has been the response of volunteers making the sacks – 13 to 83-year-olds all working together; another is the way in which the bonds of community are extended as parents and children get to know each other.	76
What effect has the development of this project had on the Methodist community in this area?	The congregation has found itself providing a safe, accessible and central space for children and carers who otherwise would not normally step inside a church. They feel comfortable in this much-loved building and with the church members.	37
What help have you received in developing and running the	In 2007, Ayrshire and Renfrewshire circuit gave start-up funding for the project. Since then, the Scotland District has committed £15,000 over three years, which has funded the resources,	37

project?	storage and 2-4 hours a week of part-time assistance.	
How do you see this project developing?	Etta hopes that more volunteers will come forward to lead Tuesday story telling sessions. In the long term, she also dreams of having access to a community bus or van in order to take Story Sack sessions further afield to schools in outlying villages.	44
What advice would you give another church community thinking of doing something similar?	“Check to see what the potential is in your local area. There’s no point re-inventing the wheel. If somebody is already doing something similar, talk to them first – in fact talk to them anyway because everyone know what the pitfalls are and where the high spots are.”	47
	For more examples of faith being worked out in local contexts, to www.methodistchurchinscotland.org.uk . If you have a story you would like to share, please contact Sally Robertson (Learning and Development Officer, North of Scotland): p.01350 723282 or e. sally.robertson@methodist.org.uk .	38
Word count RT:		497