

Rainbow Club is an interdenominational Christian activity that seeks to inform children of the basic facts of the Christian Life in a club atmosphere in Norwood Primary School.

Its roots lie at several points. Rainbow Ministries Inc. was begun by Bill and Rosalie Furner of C.R.C., Adelaide and through their inspiration 200 clubs now exist in Australia with others in New Guinea, Fiji, India and Africa. They organised a Seminar on children's work at Tabor College, Adelaide, in 1983. This was attended by four members of Jireh Community, Norwood, who believed the ministry could be applied at Norwood Primary School. Bill and Rosalie laid the responsibility of each group with local Christians, not requiring any input of Rainbow Ministry materials, persons or other.

Jireh is a non-denominational Christian Community that seeks to promote interchurch activities in Norwood. Examples include Christian segments in the annual Pageant, joining in Lenten Study Groups, joining in special church functions and it encourages all its members to participate in local congregations. It also stresses that effective life of the Christian body is enhanced by living within a few streets of one another, and through this activity has formed a number of house fellowships. As such it is an ideal body to initiate and encourage activity in local schools. At Norwood Primary School there are about 220 students and 18 of these currently come from Jireh.

The scene was set for Jireh to initiate a Bible Club in Norwood School and this was encouraged and led by Peter King, an Elder of Jireh, who believed God was giving this direction to Jireh. The emphasis within Jireh required that other churches be involved and continuously informed of the development of the club. To do this, the Minister's Fraternal for the area was contacted and was asked to oversee, support and to act as a resource body.

From the inception of Rainbow Club it has been conducted by people from Jireh, St Giles Presbyterian Church and St Bartholomew's Anglican Church, with helpers called in from other congregations outside Norwood.

These clubs can clearly be applied in many other Primary Schools in South Australia. The team members at Norwood have the vision and desire to see this occur, particularly in other schools covered by this Fraternal of Ministers. However, for the work to grow, more involvement is needed from all churches of Norwood.

In South Australia, Education Department Policy provides for a Standing Committee on Religious Education covering all Government Schools. Locally at each school the head teacher, teachers, school council members and local clergymen may form religious education committees. These committees may advise and assist the head in religious education.

Furthermore, the Act says "on request of local clergymen and in consultation with the religious education committee, for a maximum of one half day in each term, seminars or gatherings may be held." This regulation provides that children shall attend the function appropriate to their denomination or faith.

TERM 3 1985

The junior club continued to run throughout the term. Cherie Fellowes, Julie Davids and Rajieli Wainigolo joined the team. Another seminar was organised at Christmas; it included an 'Australian Christmas' musical adapted from 'Christmas in the Scrub'. Other Christians apart from the team were invited to assist (Nigel Wittwer, Leigh Newton - composer of 'Christmas in the Scrub', Alan Bailey and Rob George from 'Open Air Campaigners'). Local kindergartens were invited, which drew another 40 children.

1986

In February 1986 the team expressed further interest in expanding the seminars into other schools. We received feedback from people attending the earlier seminars stating that "it was a pity that so much work went into producing them and it was only being presented at one school." It was felt that the administration and the liaison with other churches needed expansion before such a task could be undertaken. A larger, broader based team was required.

TERM 1 1986

Up to 30 children attended the prep. to year 3 club on Monday lunchtimes. An Easter Seminar was again organised in which we gave a slide presentation of 'The death and resurrection of Christ'. This was complemented by song and dramatic segments. Very favourable reports were received from staff and children. A Sunday morning Rainbow Club for years 4-7 began in the school after Easter. To conclude the term, a combined family night was held.

TERM 2 1986

A group of 30 lower primary children participated in a regular Monday lunchtime club which focussed on some 'Bible Heroes'. The upper primary group continued meeting on Sunday mornings. 12 children from the Norwood Primary School attended along with other St Bartholomew's Anglican children. An adventure outing to St. Kilda beach was organised on a Saturday afternoon, followed by a meal and several videos.

Creche workers have been an integral part of the Rainbow Club ministry. Leonie Byerley, Debbie Ryan, Francie Blaney, Jo-Ann Winters and Anne Lathlean have assisted the Club workers immensely.

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