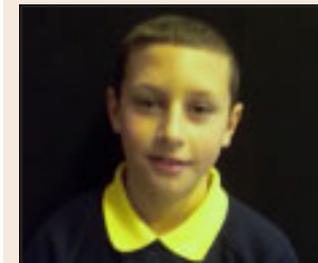


Pupils' view: It was really interesting

WE ASKED four pupils from Quilters Junior School what they thought of the exhibition after they had seen what it had to offer.



■ **Callum Fitzer**, 10, said: "It was really interesting. I knew a bit about Jesus before I came here, but there is a lot of stuff that I only just found out. The best thing was how they showed us different bits, and then brought it all together to make sense at the end. Using the computers is really good as well, it makes it different."



■ **Alfie Jones**, 11, said: "I found it really interesting. The best part for me was the music they used. It really fit everything else we saw. It was cool and funky and really catchy, and the lyrics were very clever. I learnt a lot. I thought Jesus could do

miracles, but we learn that God does miracles through people."



■ **Annabel Carr**, 11, said: "There were new things I found out as well, especially about the things he did. One of the things I learnt was about how Jesus had a link back to King David, and was part of the same family. The films we saw today were really good as well, they explained how everything fit together."



■ **Carly Hoewood**, 10, said: "I learnt today what a parable was, which is really interesting. I've taken part in the Alpha Course at school, so I have learnt a bit there, but this helps to back it up. Using all the different equipment is a really good idea, because it feels special and helps you to remember things better."

LIFE EXPO: Church welcomes popular Hit show helps

Joshua Farrington
joshua.farrington@gazettenews.co.uk

ALTHOUGH we live in what many people would describe as a Christian country, it is easy for people to go about their lives without paying much attention to religion.

But last week, hundreds of children in Billericay had the chance to learn more about the life of Jesus at a hands-on exhibition.

The Life Expo is a multi-sensory experience which has been a hit in churches around the world.

Last week, the Billericay Baptist Church in Perry Street played host to the show, which uses video, sound, and hands-on displays to teach children about the words, works, and life of Christ.

Asset

Gary Bott, the youth work director at the Baptist Church, said having the exhibition was a huge asset for the town.

He said: "We learnt about the Life Expo this year, and this is the first year we've been able to run it.

"It's a big operation, as its gets set up for us by the team, but we learn to run it for the week, so we have members from churches across Billericay helping out.

"Altogether we're expecting to have around 750 children come through across the week, which is a fantastic figure."



HEADSETS: Quilters pupils Millie Yau and Chloe Woodland

Primary schools from across the town and surrounding villages went along to take part, with classes split into groups to see the different sections of exhibition.

First of all children watched a short introductory film, before going to separate learning centres dedicated to a different aspect of Jesus' life.

Around the show, children wear headsets and use a special handheld computer to become immersed in the experience.

Zappers

Children then watched another film before finishing with a question and answer game show using 'zappers' to pick a favourite response.

Mr Bott, who has worked at the church for nine years, said: "We've had a really excellent response to it.

"The displays are really colourful and hands-on, so it makes it exciting to learn.

"I think children really like get-



SCRIPTURE READING: Shirley Cowland shows children at the exhibition a section from the Old Testament predicting the birth of Christ

ting out of the classroom and doing something a bit different.

"We've made it as easy as possible for the schools to take part, so we've laid on the buses for

them to come."

He added: "The schools in Billericay do a great job of teaching about different faiths. Churches Together in Billericay

runs the Schools Ministry in Billericay, which goes into classrooms and helps children to learn about religion. This just adds to that overall experience."

Sue Thompson, religious education coordinator at Quilters Junior School in Billericay, said: "I think the whole thing is amazing.

"The children have really enjoyed it because it is so interactive.

"There are loads of different bits of information for them to

hands-on exhibition that has visited congregations around world children learn about Jesus



WORD OF THE LORD: Pupils listen carefully to their headsets

absorb, and lots of stuff that they've never come across before.

"I think lots want to come back and spend more time here.

"It's had positive feedback from everyone, children and teachers alike."

After going through the exhibition, children face a quiz, testing them on what they have learnt through the day.

Children get to cast a vote on multiple choice answers, adding a competitive element.

But for the last question, "What do you think about Jesus?", there is no right answer.

Mr Bott said: "At the end of the day, we're not here to bash them over the head with religion or force it down their throats.

Conclusions

"This is a learning experience, and people have to come to their own conclusions.

"We explain what we feel about Jesus and say that, because we are Christians, we believe he was the son of God.

"But it is up to everyone who sees the exhibition to make up their own mind."

Children from Years 5 and 6 got to attend Life Expo, and Mr Bott hopes that in two years, the church will be able to run the exhibition again and share it with a new generation of youngsters.

He said: "Everyone has had a really good time.

"It's been exhausting, but very worthwhile."

Test yourself

HOW much do you know about Jesus?

- 1. Jesus' earthly father, Joseph, was descended from King David, and through him, to which Old Testament prophet?
- 2. Who announced to Mary that she would give birth to Jesus?
- 3. Why did Joseph and Mary have to travel to Bethlehem before Jesus was born?
- 4. Where did the family flee to when trying to escape King Herod?
- 5. What trade did Jesus learn alongside Joseph?
- 6. Where was Jesus baptised by John the Baptist?
- 7. Who did Jesus drive out from the Temple?
- 8. What did people lay on the ground when Jesus rode a donkey into Jerusalem?
- 9. Which Roman Prefect ruled Jerusalem at the time and sentenced Jesus to death?
- 10. What are the names of the four canonical gospels?

Answers on page 41