

sunz ADVENTURE

ISSN 1176-5143



NURTURING LEADERS

INSIDE

MEET OUR CHILDREN
& FAMILIES TEAM

YOUNG LEADER
STORIES

Kid
TO GROW
Tipu

sunz children's ministry training
MAGAZINE INSIDE

EDITORIAL



Kia ora tātou,

Here in Scripture Union, we love hearing stories about God at work in the lives of children. There is much rejoicing when we hear them. Like the story of Chris¹ whose parents wrote to us and said:

Thanks to your care, Chris was able to enjoy his very first camp in comfort and joy. Even after coming home, he continues to set aside time to read the Bible. I feel that, through this camp, Chris has grown more mature both in body and in spirit. Thank you so much for helping him have such a precious and meaningful experience. With gratitude.

Sitting behind stories like this, are a very special group of people—the leaders of our Children’s Ministry programmes. This includes leaders of Scripture Union camps and holiday programmes as well as church leaders and community programmes too. These people are doing God’s work, and they serve faithfully and, at times, sacrificially to create opportunities for children to hear about Jesus.

This issue of the Adventure looks at some of these leaders, and at the ways Scripture Union works to encourage and equip them.

As you read about what is happening, please pray for them because they are a vital part of God’s ministry. 🏹

Ngā mihi nui,

HILARY HAGUE

National Director
Scripture Union New Zealand

¹ name changed to protect identity

ISSUE 1 | 2026

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PRODUCED BY THE SUNZ TEAM
DESIGNED BY WINDSORCREATIVE
COVER PHOTO: PŌNUI SPRING ADVENTURE

MEET THE SUNZ CHILDREN & FAMILIES TEAM

GRACE MATRAVERS-ROCK



CAMP NICKNAME

The Admin Queen

PACKING STYLE Packs a week early with colour-coded lists, labelled bags, and snacks—yet still manages to be fashionably late because she's rethinking everything right up to the last minute

CAMP REPUTATION She secretly loves reorganising the lost property table

VERSE THAT KEEPS HER GOING
Phil. 4:13 "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

LIZ EICHLER



CAMP NICKNAME

Dizzy Lizzie (Liz the whiz)

PACKING STYLE
Writes a list in advance but packs the day before

CAMP REPUTATION Makes sure the tea towels get washed every day

VERSE THAT KEEPS HER GOING
Phil. 1:6 "He who began a good work in you will be faithful to complete it."

ANDREA LUKIN



CAMP NICKNAME

Mighty Minion

PACKING STYLE

Thinks about packing early, but ends up tossing everything in a bag the morning of a trip!

CAMP REPUTATION Loves waking kids up at camp for morning routine with Minions singing YMCA

VERSE THAT KEEPS YOU GOING

Micah 6:8 "What does God require of me? Act justly, love mercy and walk humbly."

ANNETTE OSBORNE



CAMP NICKNAME

Bible Pathfinder

PACKING STYLE

Minimalist with regret—packs light then ends up envying the over-packer when they emerge on the last day of camp in clean clothes!

CAMP REPUTATION Chief photographer and chief photobomber

VERSE THAT KEEPS HER GOING

Heb. 12:1-3 "let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our

eyes on Jesus, the author and perfector of our faith."

NIGEL WINDER



CAMP NICKNAME

Niggle

PACKING STYLE

Over-packs ready for every possible weather scenario

CAMP REPUTATION Always first to sample the baking to ensure it is safe—someone must take a hit for the team!

VERSE THAT KEEPS HIM GOING

Phil. 4:13 "I can do all this through Him who gives me strength."

MYLES BOAG



CAMP NICKNAME

Helper Hawk

PACKING STYLE

Packs early. Worries all week. Forgets things anyway.

CAMP REPUTATION Your go-to helper for games and random fixes

VERSE THAT KEEPS HIM GOING

Psalms 23 "The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing." 🏹

KNOW MORE AT
SUNZ.ORG.NZ/ABOUT-SUNZ/OUR-STAFF/

RECRUITING & NURTURING VOLUNTEER LEADERS

NIGEL WINDER

| SUNZ Children & Families Consultant
Southland-Otago

As a teenager I was invited (had my arm twisted) to lead on a Scripture Union holiday programme. As a very shy and reserved young lad this was stretching to say the least, especially when I ended up sharing the Bible talk at the last night's concert with all the parents present. One year later, I was co-leading the programme and several years after that, overseeing the holiday programmes in the region and helping to train other leaders.

What I have noticed about children and young people who are growing in their faith is that they have been given opportunities to serve. Creating space for and nurturing these young volunteers is an act of intentionally growing disciples.

1. PRAY FIRST

“Ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest field.”

—Matthew 9:38



Pray specifically for God to raise up the right people—those with the heart, gifts, and calling to serve. Remember those first disciples that Jesus called—not all of them were an obvious choice.

2. CAST A COMPELLING VISION

People don't sign up for tasks—they sign up for purpose. When inviting volunteers, don't just say, “We need helpers.” Say things like: “We're shaping lives for eternity.” And share short stories or testimonies from your ministry of how that is happening. It's important to sell your overarching mission rather than just the individual tasks.

3. PERSONALISE THE INVITE

Personal invitations are far more effective than announcements. Approach people

individually and use language like: “I’ve noticed how easily you connect with young people—would you consider joining our team?” Let them know you see potential in them and that you have noticed things in them that your team would truly benefit from.

4. OFFER CLEAR ROLES AND MANAGEABLE COMMITMENTS

Many people hesitate to volunteer because they don’t know what’s expected. Provide clear role descriptions and realistic time expectations. Be flexible and offer “for a limited time only” or “one-off” projects. Assure them that they’ll be part of a supportive team and won’t be carrying the load all by themselves.

5. CELEBRATE AND AFFIRM VOLUNTEERS

Recognition fuels retention. Know their love languages. Provide feedback and share the success stories. We all love to be affirmed and know that we are making a valuable contribution. Create a culture in your team of mutual appreciation and genuine valuing of each other. Make sure your volunteers overhear you telling

others how important they are.

6. INVEST IN THEM

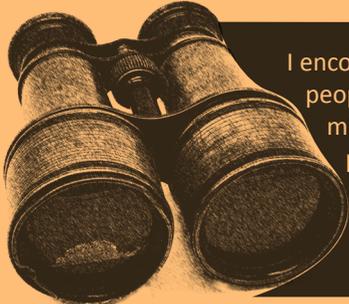
People stay where they grow, so, train, mentor, and provide positive community. Create a growth mindset where the team is always open to learning and improving for the sake of the mission. Look for opportunities to challenge and extend your volunteers with the appropriate support.

7. BRING THE JOY

If your ministry feels like a chore, volunteers won’t stay long. Build fun and laughter into your team culture. Volunteers are happy to do most tasks if they are having fun and really enjoy the team of people with whom they are working. One of the most common reasons volunteers stick around is because of the relational connections they form.

8. MODEL SERVANT LEADERSHIP

When leaders are visibly enthusiastic, others catch the vision. So, serve humbly alongside your team, letting your own joy and faithfulness be contagious. Remember, faith is often more caught than taught.



I encourage you to have a look around at the children and young people in your faith communities and ask yourself how they might be nurtured into leadership? What opportunities or pathways already exist, or need to be created? ▲

Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing. 1 Thessalonians 5:11 ESV

BOD'S WORTH WATCHING



LIZ EICHLER
| SUNZ Children &
Families Ministry

Back in the day, Stuart Salisbury (ISCF National Co-ordinator 1981 - 1991) had a list of 'Bod's Worth Watching'—young people he met along the way who were potential leaders for Scripture Union activities like camps, high school Christian groups, and holiday programmes.

I was never too sure if this list was an urban myth or not, but regardless, I remember it as a good example for leadership development. Spot something in someone, remember it and help them grow.

I like to think that I was one of those 'Bod's Worth Watching.' My SUNZ journey began in the 3rd Form (Year 9) at Palmerston North Girls' High School when a friend invited me to the ISCF (Christian Fellowship) group there. The next year, in the absence of any seniors, four of us were leading the group. We went to a Leadership Training Conference in the May school holidays and met other teenagers who were leading the Christian groups in their high schools.

We had early morning prayer breakfasts at each other's schools and a combined camp in the middle of the year. We all

helped organise everything as much as we could.

From there I went on to be a small group leader on ISCF camps—Manawatu Bike Tour, Titirangi Bay, Raukawa Falls, Lake Okataina, Ruapehu Snow camps—and then led the Bible Studies and directed some of those camps. Somewhere along the way I met Penelope Trought (ISCF Staff worker for the Southern North Island) who probably had a 'Bod's Worth Watching' list as well. When she finished in that role, I took over from her.

Do you have a 'Bod's Worth Watching' list? Of course it does not need to be called that! The question really is, are you noticing the leadership potential in the young people around you, and what are you doing about it? Two questions, I know, here's a couple more. If you do have such a list, who is already on it and who else should be?

I have one such young person I met on Pōnui Spring Adventure camp in 2023. There were a few others there too, both on the leadership team and as campers. Here is a bit of Jesse's story...

CHAT WITH JESSE



LIZ EICHLER
| SUNZ Children &
Families Ministry

**HAS A CHAT
WITH**

JESSE ELIAS
| SUNZ Camp Leader
& BE Tuarua

KIA ORA JESSE. TELL ME A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF, WHAT DO YOU GET UP TO DURING THE WEEK?

I am a youth worker in Tawa. I help run our church youth group with my flatmates. I'm also learning Te Reo Māori at Te Wananga o Raukawa in Ōtaki. One thing I really like about this course is that my class is multigenerational. I'm one of the youngest but there are babies who come with their parents and grandparents.

HOW DID YOU COME TO BE INVOLVED IN SCRIPTURE UNION?

I was invited on Pōnui Senior camp by a friend who had previously been on it. Then a couple of years ago I was asked to lead on Pōnui Spring Adventure.

HOW ARE YOU CURRENTLY INVOLVED?

Leading on Pōnui Spring Adventure saw me invited

to be a BE (Beyond Experience) participant. BE introduced me to more SUNZ ministry team members and others who were involved in leading on camps.

HOW HAS SUNZ HELPED SHAPE THE LEADER YOU ARE TODAY?

Through BE and leading on camps I've learnt lots about my own leadership style and strengths. Plus, there's been noticeable progress in my church youth work. Each year I've seen growth and change in my leadership. It's a space where I can see it, and in particular the intentionality for leadership on Pōnui Spring Adventure.

TELL ME A LITTLE MORE ABOUT CO-TEAM LEADING ON PŌNUI SPRING ADVENTURE CAMP.

There was lots of training and support before

camp. The large leadership team was very supportive. It was relaxed as there were so many capable people on the team who helped wherever they were needed. This definitely took the stress off. I missed leading a small group but came to realise that the leadership team was my group. This was a bit of an adjustment but part of my learning.

WHERE TO FROM HERE IN YOUR CHRISTIAN FAITH AND LEADERSHIP JOURNEY?

I'm really keen to lead other SUNZ camps. I'm going to keep being involved in the leadership of my church youth group. Learning from both spaces and feeding into each other. 🏔️

*Jesse Elias leading
a group at Pōnui*



How to Volunteer **AS A SUNZ CAMP LEADER**

ANDREA LUKIN | SUNZ Children & Families Consultant, Wellington

Volunteering at SUNZ is not just about helping others—it's about discovering who God made you to be.

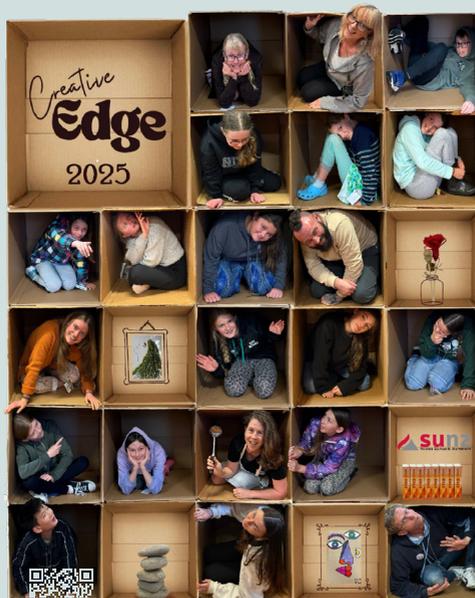
Are you passionate about sharing your faith and making a difference in the lives of others? Volunteering as a leader at a SUNZ camp or local holiday programme might be exactly where God is calling you next.

Serving with SUNZ is more than just helping—it's a chance to grow in your own faith, develop leadership skills, and use the gifts God has given you in meaningful ways. You will be part of a supportive team where you can learn, lead, and have fun, all while helping others encounter Jesus in real and life-changing ways.

You do not need to have it all figured out. SUNZ provides training, encouragement, and mentoring every step of the way so you can lead with confidence. Whether your youth

leader, pastor, or someone from SUNZ has invited you to get involved, all it takes is a simple “yes” to begin your leadership journey.

The training is not overwhelming—it's designed to equip you with the tools you need to thrive. We take safety seriously, both for you and for those attending camp, so part of the preparation includes child safeguarding and other essential administrative steps. Once those are complete, you are ready to dive into a journey that's not only rewarding but one you'll look back on as a pivotal moment in your leadership and volunteer journey.



So, say “Yes!” Sign up. Get trained. And get ready for an unforgettable SUNZ camp experience where God can use you to impact others—and grow you at the same time. 🌟

**CHECK OUT OUR
2026 CAMPS
LINE-UP**

 [sunz.org.nz
/camps](https://sunz.org.nz/camps)

YOUNG CAMP LEADER *Stories*

Hi, my name is Adelle. I'm 16, and I have been going to Scripture Union camps since I was 10 years old.

Titahi Bay Community Church and David Bradley support lots of kids from our church community to go to SUNZ camps, and because of them I have been able to grow and experience camps that have meant so much to me.

Ever since I started going on camps, I had always really wanted to be a leader. I have been so impacted by the joy and the conversations and the feeling of God's love that comes because of leaders who gave so much to me and camps; and I always felt that it was so important to give that back to another group of young campers.

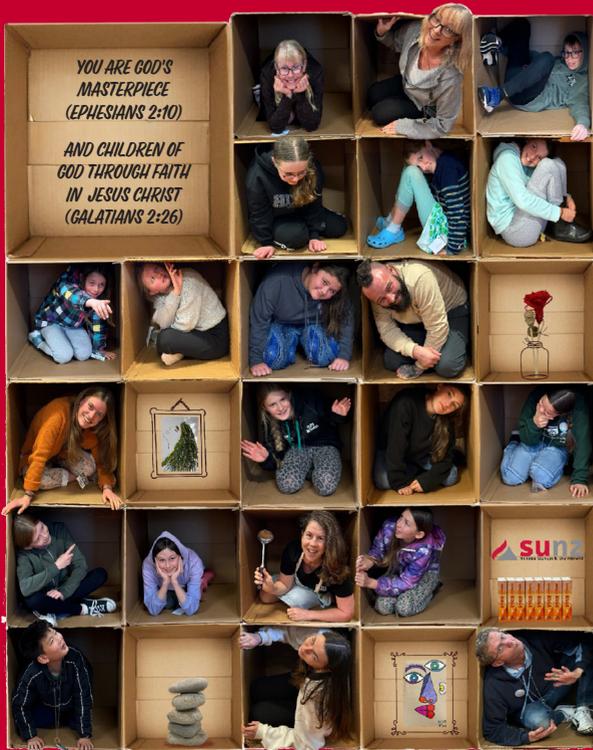
In September, I got the opportunity to lead on Creative Edge camp. This ended up being one of the most fulfilling experiences I have ever done. Being a camp leader is something that needs you to be fully and selflessly committed to the campers, giving all your energy and attention and sorting out all their highs and the lows. I think that by having experienced the effect of being a camper, was what really motivated me through

the week, because I have felt the impact of SUNZ camps, and I wanted the campers to feel and know God's love and joy.

What is so fulfilling about being a camp leader is seeing the campers laugh, feel safe, but especially the quieter moments where you help a camper get through something and come out the other side. Building those connections with the campers about how special and unique each one is.

It's an experience where you give so much, but such a special time to spend the week knowing that you play a small part in making every camper feel seen and loved. Even in the long days and the challenging moments there is always an atmosphere of joy and God's love that makes the camp such a powerful week, whether you are there as a camper or a leader. ▲





PLEASE SUPPORT OUR CHILDREN & FAMILIES MINISTRY

\$50 can fund a year's Bible Reading material for a child

\$150 can support a young leader to attend a full-day's training

\$250 can support a SUPAKidz camp or holiday programme to share Jesus with children and young people

Together, we can transform lives—one young person at a time.

*Creative Edge 2025 by Andrea Lukin
Children & Families Consultant, Wellington*

ways to give



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donation—this enables
us to thank you and
send you a tax receipt.



THRIVE

Kia
TO GROW
Tipu

sunz children's ministry training

MAGAZINE

No, not a plant fertiliser, but rather a desire to see growth! We all want our children to thrive in every aspect of their lives and then launch off into the big wide world successfully. How we do that and how it happens can at times seem a bit of a mystery. There are things we can account for but then there are so many variables that it all seems too hard at times.

Hold fast, we do what we can in partnership with the Holy Spirit. When it comes to faith formation, we all want our children to encounter Jesus in a meaningful way that then shapes their lives throughout.

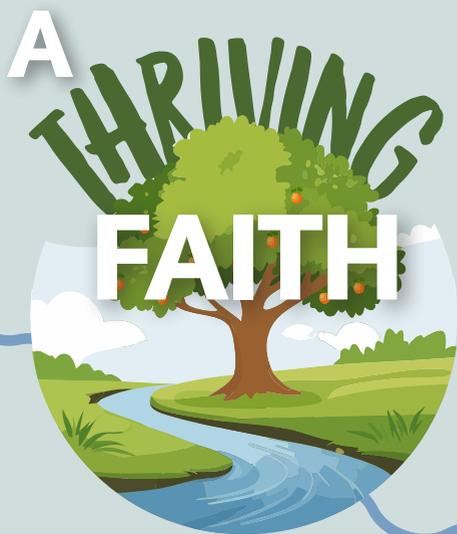
Here at Scripture Union, we too want to see faith thrive! We long to see a renewal of the church's mission to grow lifelong followers of Jesus. That is at the heart of the mission of the church. We long to see people of all ages discover Jesus and to follow him their whole lives through. We call this discipleship, or faith formation.

This is our last paper edition of our Kia Tipu magazine. We're going online to make things more accessible to you and for a better reach for us. In this last edition of the Kia Tipu magazine, we think growing a thriving faith in our children and young people is so important that we've dedicated this whole edition to it. 🌱

LIZ EICHLER

SUNZ CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
TEAM LEADER

**CHECK OUT
OUR IDEAS!
PULL IT OUT! AND
PASS IT AROUND**



Thriving faith is like the healthy tree in Psalm 1 with its roots drawing water and its branches dressed in green leaves and fruit. That is our vision for the children, young people and families of Aotearoa New Zealand.

As we look at the church there are flourishing trees. There are also children and young people disengaging from church. These are signs that things are unhealthy, and we need to do something about it. Our desire is to see healthy churches, where people of all ages thrive in their faith!

Children and young people are leaving the church for a range of reasons. We have identified **SIX**, but these are by all means not an exhaustive list.

1 THERE IS NO PLACE FOR ASKING QUESTIONS OR HAVING DOUBTS

Rather than ignoring or shutting down their questions and doubts, we need to provide a safe place for these conversations.

2 YOUNG PEOPLE ARE TREATED AS CONSUMERS NOT PARTICIPANTS

Children and young people want to participate, to be involved and to have their voices heard. They don't simply want to be consumers.

3 THE ACTIONS OF OTHERS DON'T MATCH THEIR WORDS

Young people are looking for genuine relationships and transparency. If we say we are followers of Jesus, then we need to demonstrate this in the way we live.

4 KNOWLEDGE EMPHASISED OVER RELATIONSHIP

Faith isn't just knowledge, it is relationship. We want our children and young people to be followers of Jesus, inspired to live in relationship with God.

5 ENTERTAINMENT EMPHASISED OVER DEPTH

In the midst of the fun we have, there needs to be intentional ways of digging deeper into the things that matter, helping our young people to wrestle with the challenges they face.

6 THEIR POTENTIAL IS UNDERESTIMATED

Jesus called children signs of the Kingdom. Let's not reduce the significance of their contribution or we'll miss out on what God may be saying through them. 🌱

THRIVE

RENEWING THE CHURCH'S MISSION TO GROW LIFELONG DISCIPLES

WHAT DOES THRIVE INVOLVE?

Our desire is to see healthy churches, where people of all ages thrive in their faith! Scripture Union New Zealand (SUNZ) is offering to journey with your church over a year to address this challenge.

If you'd like to know more about THRIVE, get in touch with us, email liz.eichler@sunz.org.nz or visit sunz.org.nz/children-families/church-community/thrive/

✔ CONSULTATION

A SUNZ Consultant will meet with you to talk through THRIVE.

✔ FACILITATION

A whole church facilitation for your church, to discuss together eight strategies that support lifelong discipleship.

✔ PLAN DEVELOPMENT

We will help your church to develop a simple but effective plan for the next 12 months, that the whole church can be excited about!

✔ ONGOING SUPPORT

Over the rest of the year, we will support you as you put your plan into action. We will provide additional workshops, resources and guidance as required.

NEW KID ON THE BLOCK

A REAL ANSWER TO PRAYER



INTERVIEW WITH MYLES BOAG | SUNZ Children & Families Consultant

Welcome to the Children and Families team, Myles!

Tell us a little about yourself.

I love having fun and getting to play games with kids, this drew me to kids' ministry when I was younger, but also to be intentional with them. I am drawn to fun and deep relationships and see the value in forming these relationships.

What were you doing before you came to work for SUNZ?

I was doing a theology course at the Venn Foundation, before that I did a counselling degree

at Laidlaw College, and before that I was a qualified drain layer.

What excites you about this role?

A few things: working for SUNZ and its incredible legacy, the people, they're really great, but most of all the opportunity I have to be involved in something meaningful and what can be grown and developed from what has already been done.

What do you get up to in your spare time?

Reading a good book, enjoying the sun, wherever I can find it. Hopefully, both of those at the same time.

If you had a superpower, what would it be? Why?

To fly probably. To get past all the Auckland traffic!

What's your go-to fast food?

I love burgers, but pies are pretty good, so it's a toss-up between the two.

What kind of pie would you choose?

Probably a steak & cheese, although I did have a great chicken & leek one the other day.

What's your favourite flavour of ice cream?

It has got to be choc-mint, I love that combination. But also, peanut butter, and goody goody gumdrops—it's hard to choose!

We give thanks to God for the provision of Myles and continue to pray for a Children and Families Consultant for Christchurch. Might this be you? Or someone you know? For a job description and/or more information, please contact Liz Eichler, Children and Families Team Leader, liz.eichler@sunz.org.nz



LOOKING FOR MORE RESOURCES AND INSPIRATION?

sunz.org.nz

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save ²⁰
dthe ²⁶
ate

Christchurch
Saturday 23 May

St Alban's Baptist Church

Auckland
Saturday 6 June

Mt Albert Baptist Church

Wellington
Saturday 20 June

St Ninian's Uniting Church, Karori

Taupō
Saturday 8 August

Taupō Baptist Church

Whanganui
Saturday 12 September

Whanganui Central Baptist Church



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liz.e@sunz.org.nz 



"It was a challenge to know what to do when campers are sick or homesick or get injured. How to comfort them without making them feel like a baby."

CAMP LEADER

"Being a leader to the younger kids and handling the responsibility."

CAMP LEADER



"Being crazy and having fun!"

WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT

"God doesn't care about your failures; He cares about you."



"I loved photography at Creative Edge and meeting lots of different people that I might not normally meet."



"He's been reading the Bible every day [after camp]."

PARENT OF A CAMPER



"It was awesome! I felt so supported by the leadership team and made lifelong friends."

FIRST-TIME CAMP LEADER

"I want to stay with God and Jesus my whole life."

SUNZ CAMPS YOUTH CAMPS

WHAT THEY LOVED ABOUT

Kid TO GROW Tipu

sunz children's ministry training

- I enjoyed the opening session where we were encouraged to engage our five senses while reading scripture. SUNZ do this well and it encourages me to get more creative in the way I interact with scripture personally, and in the way I teach it to the children in our programme."
- Help with reaching the unchurched child."
- Great to connect with others and learn new skills."



“Thanks to the leaders who volunteered their time and were so caring and supportive of the kids.”

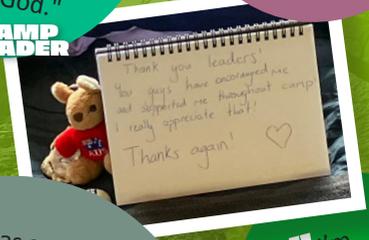
PARENT OF A CAMPER

“Being a leader was very fulfilling; it was very special to create a space where young people could worship God.”

CAMP LEADER

“Most of the leaders were new and they poured themselves out in service of these kids.”

“I really enjoyed making the clay hands and fabric flowers and being able to be with God through this time.”



“It was special to have some great conversations with campers who are really seeking God and asking questions. So exciting to know that kids are serious about their faith and actively sharing it with friends.”

CAMP LEADER

“I’m fearfully and wonderfully made.”



“A real sense of God’s presence, peace, and joy among the campers and leaders.”



- Great options of workshops to pick from.”
- The seminars were engaging, and the speakers really knew what they were talking about.”
- Being inspired by others, learning great techniques to move forward with our ministry.”

- We love the intergenerational service ideas—more of this would be great.”
- Supporting small children’s ministry with a wide variety of ages.”
- I appreciate SUNZ keeping me up to date with things that could help in children’s ministry.”

- The encouragement and practical solutions they offered.”
- Interaction with other children’s ministry leaders.”

Scan the QR code to know more about Kia Tipu or visit sunz.org.nz/children-families/kia-tipu/



EQUIPPING YOUNG LEADERS FOR good faith conversations

ANNETTE OSBORNE

| SUNZ Children & Families Consultant, Auckland

It was a perfect night for a campfire. Overhead was a clear sky filled with stars, and around the fire was a happy group of campers and leaders, marshmallows at the ready. A hush fell, and a young leader began to share a story from her life. She shared how God had been present through moments of struggle and loneliness, how God had not necessarily taken away the problems or answered her questions, but given her peace and the courage to keep going. As she spoke, I could sense that those gathered around that campfire connected with her message and her feelings of

loneliness and uncertainty. Later, the leader told me that a camper approached her to talk more, and she was able to have a conversation with her about faith and to pray with her.

This happened on my recent Pōnui Spring Adventure Intermediate camp. Each leader was given the opportunity to prepare and share a story of faith from their own life. These stories, and the one-on-one conversations they spark, are at the heart of Scripture Union's approach to evangelism and the call to follow Jesus. But they don't just happen.



I have noticed over the years that the young leaders I work with rarely have opportunities to talk about their faith and think through how to begin good conversations with children. They have great stories to share—they just don't know where to start. Scripture Union sees leadership development as significant, and the development of faith is woven into this too. We desire to see young leaders who are trained and equipped to know how to have good conversations about faith with children.

In 2022, Scripture Union began a project focused on evangelism and what that looked like in our ministry. What was working, what was not, and what we needed to be thinking about for the future. We listened to over 100 of our leaders, interviewed staff and volunteers, and created a set of core values to guide our practice. Now we are in the process of creating practical resources to support young leaders like the one I mentioned. How do we equip them to share their faith with others?

here are some of the ways we are going about it

- Training young leaders to feel confident having faith conversations with children—where the conversation is grounded in real life experience and connected to the world of the child.
- Creating safe, open spaces where they can practise listening well and sharing faith naturally.
- Developing resources that guide young leaders in helping a child choose to follow Jesus, explore the Bible and pray.

- Providing a set of good questions to act as a starting point and provide practical support.
- Encouraging churches to support and encourage young people to take up opportunities to talk about their faith with others, with integrity and respect.

Evangelism, we're discovering, isn't a formula. Rather, it is an opportunity, like the one around the campfire, to share what God is doing in our lives and an invitation to others to answer Jesus' call, 'Come and follow me'. When a young leader feels confident to have a faith conversation—that's where transformation begins.

we'd love to partner with you

Over the year we will be rolling out a range of resources, training, and conversation starters to help churches and ministries equip their young leaders. We also provide opportunities through holiday programmes, camps and community programmes for them to put into practice what they are learning and grow in their faith and confidence. Our 'Following Jesus' Children and Families resources are launching in May 2026 and include a brochure designed for children, and a leaders guide that includes great questions to start good conversations. We are excited to see these resources strengthening the churches mission to sharing the good news of Jesus with others. 🏹



SUNZ have *FOLLOW ME* evangelism leaflets available. Scan this code or visit sunz.org.nz/product/jesus-said-follow-me-pack-of-12-leaflets/

LIGHT for the path

RON FOUNTAIN

| SUNZ Supporter & Previous Ministry Staff Member

A CHILD TRAINED AND CALLED TO LEADERSHIP | 1 SAMUEL 1-3

"How would you feel if you only got a new dress or shirt once a year?" Tricia asked a group of children from wealthy families. These affluent children were horrified, but their interest was captured.

One new robe a year was all that Samuel's mother, Hannah, could provide for her son. But she was a woman of prayer. Unable to have children, she prayed for a son and promised to give him back to the Lord. God answered her prayer, and she kept her vow.

It was not easy for her to take her four-year-old son, Samuel, to stay with Eli, the High Priest in the Temple to be trained for leadership. She prayed again and her prayer was full of hope and trust in God. No doubt she kept on praying for her absent son, as we should for children we know.

Eli, the High Priest, did not seem to be the ideal person to train Samuel for leadership. His own sons were causing him grief by their bad behaviour. The word of God and visions were rare. Times were rough, but the lamplight of God's presence in the Temple had not yet gone out. God can use unlikely people in challenging times.

Twice, when the voice of God called "Samuel" at night in the Temple, Eli did not realise who was speaking and sent the obedient boy back to bed. Samuel did not yet know the Lord. The third time, Eli realised and taught Samuel his first, wonderful prayer: "Speak, Lord. For your servant is listening." We too should teach children to pray.

ELI REALISED AND TAUGHT SAMUEL HIS FIRST, WONDERFUL PRAYER

The next time, Samuel answered with Eli's prayer and God called the boy to be his prophet to Israel. There was nothing childish about God's word to Samuel. It was a message of judgement on Eli's sons. It was difficult for Samuel to tell this to Eli next morning. But soon all Israel knew that the word of God was coming through the child Samuel. We too should be open to God's ministry through children. God's word and work will never fail. 



MEET Ron

Seventy years ago, I faced a frightening challenge. I had to hold the attention of 100 children on Waikanae Beach and tell them a Bible story. Out in the open, they were not a captive audience and there was no amplification. The story was God's call to the boy Samuel to be his prophet to Israel (1 Samuel 3). I had to start dynamically, grab their interest, and hold it. I practised aloud on the cabbages in the garden, until I had it word perfect and the children did listen!

Aged 18, I was a team member at a Scripture Union beach mission (Children's Special Service Mission or CSSM, later SU Holiday Programmes). Lawrie Becroft was our team director. He set high standards, trusted and encouraged us. It was wonderful leadership training.

Lawrie was not my only leadership trainer with SU. As a child of missionary parents in India, John Jacob, a teacher at my boarding school encouraged us to use our annual 3-folded SU cards at the Scripture

Union 'King's Swordmen's' group each week. Later John Jacob became the Scripture Union Director for the whole of India.

At Napier Boy's High School, Martin Yeoman, an architect, cycled, wet or fine each week to lead the Crusader Group (later Inter School Christian Fellowship, ISCF). He also took us on tramps, camps, and cycle tours. Over many years of faithful service, he had a significant impact on many of our lives at a crucial stage.

Later as a volunteer and as an SU staff member, I led and participated in SU Holiday Programmes throughout New Zealand. These gave leadership training to thousands of team members, many of them leaders now, including Hilary Hague, our National Director.

I met my wife, Tricia, on a beach mission at Waitarere. CSSM was often irreverently known as "Come Single Soon Married"! She worked on the Scripture Union staff and helped in leadership training.



OUT & ABOUT

NOVEMBER NOEMA

Thanks to all who attended a **Supporters Event**. We are so blessed by our supporters who pray, donate, volunteer and spread the word about our ministry and how we can support churches and young people across Aotearoa New Zealand.

DECEMBER TĪHEMA

Bruce Crozier started 1 Dec as our new Leadership Development Facilitator, based in our Henderson office. **Myles Boag** started 1 Dec as our new Children & Families consultant for Auckland area.

Gather (camp leadership training) on Pōnui Island and in Wellington 6-7 Dec. E3 (36 expeditioners plus leaders) are packed and away 9-20 Dec, journeying through Bay of Islands, Canterbury, Otago.

JANUARY HĀNUERE

Summer Youth Camps

- 4-8 Jan Aspire
- 5-9 Jan Senior Surfari & Gnarly Groms
- 6-12 Jan Pōnui Junior
- 11-15 Jan Exodus Prime
- 11-16 Jan Te Anau Extend
- 13-20 Jan Pōnui Senior
- 18-23 Jan Te Anau Wind n Water & Canterbury Wind n Water
- 21-25 Jan Summer Supreme

At the time of going to print, SUNZ Youth Camps had 114 leaders signed up—giving

their time, energy, skills and joy to our young campers. Leaders include our wonderful and courageous cooks!

Paul Humphreys ends 8 years as a SUNZ staff member (he started March 2017). Paul's unique talents of leadership development, outdoor knowledge and skills and networking have seen our Beyond Experience programme and E3 partnership grow and bless so many young people.

FEBRUARY PĒPUERE

E3 Young Adults (ages 19-25), 9-15 Feb tramping, kayaking, mountain biking the Lake Ōhau area. Our NLT team (National Leadership Team) meet in Wellington 19-20 Feb.

On 20-21 Feb, our **SUNZ Board** meet: Meredith Mackenzie (new Board chair), Neil Walbran, Mark Nichols, Jason Kelsey, Jo Overall, John Cleary, Hilary Hague and Ruth Early, Treasurer.

MARCH MAĒHE

All SUNZ staff hui at Silverstream, Wellington 9-12 Mar. Camps team planning 12-13 Mar. Youth Team present Anamata 14 Mar. Beyond Experience (BE) The Weekend 27-29 Mar at Woodend.

Wellington Youth Consultant, **Piper Clare and Kallan Reid** are getting married on 21 March. 🍷

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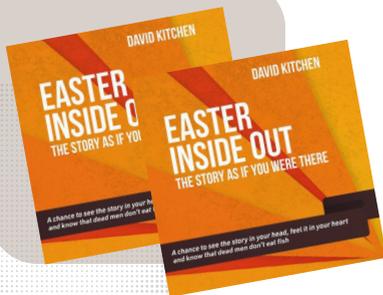
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EASTER INSIDE OUT \$25.00
THE STORY AS IF YOU WERE THERE

Acclaimed storyteller David Kitchen reimagines the Easter narrative from a varied cast of characters. Albus, a soldier at the city gates on Palm Sunday, Mary of Bethany listening to Jesus at the temple, Caiaphas, the High Priest, Simon-Peter, fisherman at Galilee and more. Read these stories aloud in church services, devotion time, small groups.



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STORIES FOR EASTER...AND MORE!

This small book gives 35 days of devotions and activities, following the Easter story from Palm Sunday to Pentecost. Use for devotion time at home or for children's ministry at church.

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**We support churches to help children
and young people discover Jesus
and become lifelong disciples
who serve the world around them**



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He rama tāu kupu ki ōku waewae | Your word is a lamp to my feet. Psalm 119:105

SUNZ is a member of the Scripture Union International Family

