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The first step



Ideas for pre-evangelistic projects from practice. A field report from Langenthaler Jungscharen.

This article is a Forum Heft article and it is attached in full as a pdf below - only excerpts are reproduced here.

Tuesday afternoon, in a neighbourhood of eight grey apartment blocks belonging to a factory. Children play football on the muddy lawn or ride their bikes and inline skates on the street. They speak Croatian, Albanian, Turkish with each other, mixed with fragments of German. Many of them are often left to fend for themselves because both parents work shifts at the factory.

A car pulls up, a bright bell jingles, "Chinderstund!" Once a week, two employees come to the neighbourhood and create a children's hour for all children in the common room of a block. Singing, playing, handicrafts, role-playing, celebrating and each time a Bible story. But again and again we notice that the children's attention is hard to hold. It sometimes feels like they are telling us, "We don't want your story, your program, we want YOU!" We understand more and more that these children hardly have anyone who really has time for them! So a new idea is born:

Sunneträffe - Meeting Time

On another afternoon of the week, besides the children's hour, the children should be allowed to come to the common room once more. This is to be their time, "Sunneträffe!" This time there is no prepared program. The children are allowed to wish, and a staff member is there for them. There are games (the children painted the suitcase with the games themselves), chats, stories about everyday life (at school), sometimes one or the other child brings his or her homework and asks for help. Here and there a question about the story that was told in the children's lesson even comes up. When playing together, there is an opportunity to talk about rules of play and play behaviour and to practise peaceful interaction with each other.
"Sunneträffe" has now been running for more than two years. The trust between children and staff has grown. This has also increased the receptiveness for the contents that we want to pass on in the children's hour.

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Facts about Sunneträffe

The above example is one way to go out to a specific group of children.
Which children do you want to reach? And what are their needs? How can you
pick them up and minister to them so you can tell them about Jesus later?
As a team, ask yourselves these questions and seek answers together, answers that will move you to take bold steps! Pray that God will open new doors to children for you! The following ideas for pre-evangelistic events can also serve as inspiration for you

The Jungschar goes there...

The Jungschar team of the FEG Langenthal had set the goal to do more public relations. They considered various possibilities and then stuck with the idea of holding a Jungschar afternoon in the residential neighbourhood around the community centre, on two consecutive Jungschar afternoons. Beforehand, various Jungschar leaders advertised the afternoons, handing out flyers and putting up posters in the entrances to houses.

The first afternoon, about 15 kids from the neighborhood showed up. It was a stand-up for the team! Various games were played on a lawn nearby with water, ball, etc. The second afternoon there were maybe five kids who joined the Jungschar as guests. This time a simple cross-country game was played in the nearby woods. Devotions were planned with drama and variety.

A pleasing result: to this day, children still come to Jungschar from these afternoons! A difficulty, on the other hand, lay with the previous Jungschärlers: they did not see the necessity of holding such neighborhood afternoons. It is important to involve your own Jungschärlers in such a project at an early stage.

Another Jungschar in Langenthal experienced this in a positive way: before inviting children from a neighbourhood of foreigners to their Jungschar and picking them up each time, they awakened the previous Jungschärler's view for these children. The leaders asked concretely: "Do you agree to invite these children to our group? Are you willing to integrate them as well?"

Parents shopping - children doing handicrafts

For the Advent season 2001, Christmas market was announced in Langenthal. Under the motto "Magic Forest", the shops planned Sunday sales over two weekends. A Jungschar leader knew one of the organizers and asked if the Jungschars could help somehow. They were then delegated the task of organising a crèche in the "Zauberwald". So in a centrally located room of the Kunsthaus, craft afternoons were offered. The special thing about it: For the first time, the youth groups of the different local churches joined forces and appeared together for one goal, so also with a common information board and an information sheet. A leader with main responsibility was the contact person. On the afternoons themselves, teams were then put together from various youth groups.

Positive results of the action: cooperation, common appearance to the outside, new contacts to children and parents, advertisement as Jungschar in the city. One would have liked to have had even more children. Next time we should advertise more and in a more conspicuous way. But the joy outweighed the fact that everyone was able to do something together and set an example in the city. Again and again there are opportunities to go to the children in the city as a youth group, be it through participation in the holiday pass or through children's programs at city events.

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The community invites

The community center of the Free Evangelical Church of Langenthal (FEG) celebrated its 20th anniversary. The desire was there to set a positive sign for the neighbourhood. So we organised a neighbourhood party in summer, to which we personally invited all neighbours. Food, ice cream, drinks, music from the youth band, guided tours of the house... And of course the youth group and Ameisli leaders offered games and activities for children. The neighbours also contributed to the celebration: On the one hand, through foreign specialties of a culinary nature. Two girls from an Indian family presented an Indian dance in their beautiful costumes

The encounters at this festival were so enjoyable that two years later we held another neighbourhood festival in a similar setting. This time the children's program included the "Skybike", which attracted many guests. New relationships were forged, existing ones deepened. We had the opportunity to openly inform about our church and the youth group. Children could just have a look and get to know the youth and the leaders.

Muemetu-Chilbi against boredom

On several occasions, an Ameisli leader had noticed something: at the "Muemetu-Chilbi", which is held every summer in her part of the village in Aarwangen, there are indeed children there.... But they are bored. There is hardly anything on offer for them. A perfect chance! The leader asked the organizers if she could put together a children's program. At the same time she wanted to draw attention to the ant group in Aarwangen. She got the okay, and in addition she was given a tent at the Chilbi. A team of employees provided a colourful offer at the event itself. The children had the choice between a play corner, a handicraft corner, outdoor games and a treasure hunt. At announced times a story was to be heard. A special highlight was the launch of a large hot air balloon that the children had helped to build in the craft corner. The project was well received by children and parents. There were contacts with parents. Unfortunately, not many children took part: the offer was not yet sufficiently well known and the space on the festival grounds was not very convenient. However, the leader has already been asked to take part again next year. With the experiences made, with a little more advertising and consultation, the newly founded Jungschar Aarwangen will have a good appearance at the "Muemetu Chilbi"

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  Following leaders have contributed to this article:
  Simone Pieper, FEG Langenthal (neighborhood work of the Jungschar);
  David Marmet, Jungschar EMK Langenthal (children's program at the Christmas market) ;
  Verena Egger, FEG Langenthal, Jungschar Aarwangen (children's program at the "Muemetu-Chilbi")

Weitere Informationen

Tags
Evangelization

Age
8–12 years

Number of participants
No data available.

Bible
This information is missing.

Duration
No data available.

Material
None

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