



2018–19



The Bible Reading Fellowship Impact Report



2018–19: Thank you for helping us make a difference

Making a difference



“The quality of the Barnabas in Schools sessions was excellent and our children were clearly inspired to think more deeply about important issues.

A school after a Creating Character Barnabas RE Day

“I have been blown away at the impact the Parenting for Faith course is already having on the parents. I think it really does help us to reflect ourselves on our relationship with God.

Children and families intern, Surrey

“We never cease to be amazed by the families who come to Messy Church. This term alone we have seen 23 new families come and be part of our Saturday morning. Messy discipleship is now the exciting challenge.

Julie, Messy Church leader

“This course has been a total game changer for me. Before I was showing my kids the Bible and praying with them – but doing nothing to support their connection with God or much about sharing my own faith with them. It’s totally changed how I do things with them and I am so grateful for such a flexible online way to do this course!

Parenting for Faith course participant

“I value Messy Church: the approach, the training, the resources, the people we meet and the joy and fellowship, and ways of expressing our faith in Jesus Christ.

Messy Church leader

“It’s helped people to be able to say, ‘I’m part of this group committed to living out the way of Christ today.’

Holy Habits, Church minister

“This course was amazing! Practical, fun and thought-provoking. I was buzzing to go practise what I had learnt and discussed every week. Just what I needed to move my family along in discovering God and building a deeper relationship with him.

Parenting for Faith course participant

At BRF, we’re passionate about enabling people of all ages to grow in faith and understanding of the Bible. We’re working with individuals to resource their spiritual journey and with local churches to resource their mission and ministry. We’re also working with schools, providing a professional education service to equip them to explore Christianity creatively and confidently. Our Impact Report for 2018–19 celebrates some of the highlights and achievements of the last financial year.

It was another encouraging year across BRF as a whole, including Messy Church, The Gift of Years/Anna Chaplaincy, Parenting for Faith and Barnabas in Schools. Collectively, we had a significant impact:

- Over **790,000** visits to our websites
- Almost **200,000** copies of BRF publications sold
- Almost **160,000** views of the free ‘ideas to use’ pages available on our websites
- Over **27,500** people received our BRF and programme e-newsletters
- Over **20,000** followed us on social media
- Over **4,500** attended training events led by our staff

While we have a highly creative, dedicated and talented staff team at BRF, many others play a vital part in making what we do possible. I want to thank you for all that you have done to support BRF during the past year. Thank you for working with us across our ministries and programmes, for your generous financial support and, most importantly, for praying for our work and for all who are involved with this. Together we are making a difference.

Canon Richard Fisher
Chief Executive Officer, BRF



To read our Annual Report in full, visit brf.org.uk/annualreport

Church, but not as you know it!



It was another exciting year for Messy Church, with dozens more Messy Churches registering with us, including the first from Brazil. Messy Churches are now found in at least 30 countries, as well as throughout the UK. BRF's capacity to support the movement was increased by the addition of a team of seven freelance trainers, who joined the 155 volunteer regional and specialist coordinators working with us to encourage and resource Messy Church leaders in their area.



Pip's story

One of the most moving moments of the year was the story of Pip, a young boy with Down's Syndrome whose family became involved in a Messy Church. Pip's parents say the people at their Messy Church just 'blew them away' with their acceptance and love: 'There are people in the group who understand Pip for who he is, not just a list of diagnoses.'

Go to brf.org.uk/pip to watch Pip's story.



Playfully Serious

A major highlight was the launch in February 2019 of significant new research from the Church Army's Research Unit into the effects of Messy Church in the Church of England. Entitled *Playfully Serious: How Messy Churches create new space for faith*, the report confirmed what BRF has long known instinctively: that Messy Church is reaching people who haven't previously attended church, it is growing disciples and it is modelling new patterns of leadership.

What people are saying about Messy Church

“Messy Church helps us be more loving as a family.”

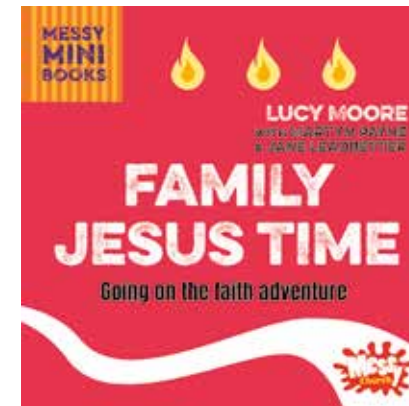
Messy Church mum

“Messy Church is making such an impact. If I had my way, there would be a Messy Church in every parish church that I lead.”

Bishop of Woolwich, Karowei Dorgu



Two more new resources for Messy Church families to use at home



76% of Messy Church leaders are female



61% of Messy Church families wouldn't otherwise belong to any church



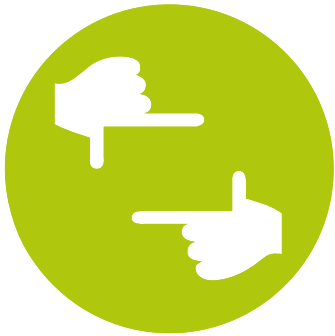
66% of Messy Churches are led by lay people



81% of participants see **evidence of changed lives** through being part of Messy Church



Equipping parents to raise God-connected children and teens



The five Key Tools: Creating Windows; Framing; Unwinding; Chat and Catch; Surfing the Waves

At the heart of the Parenting for Faith approach are five easy tools for parents to use with their children to discuss and explore faith and a relationship with God. These five Key Tools are: Creating Windows; Framing; Unwinding; Chat and Catch; and Surfing the Waves. Much of the work of the team during the year focused on helping parents, and those working with them, to understand the Key Tools and how they can very simply be embraced as part of their daily interactions and conversations with their children.

A core Parenting for Faith resource is the free eight-session online course. Over 6,000 course videos were streamed or downloaded in 2018–19 and used in a variety of contexts, from individuals watching the videos themselves to informal small groups of friends and church-run groups. We also hosted a Facebook watch party for the course, which attracted over 500 people.

The Facebook watch party made the course accessible to those who lack the resources to run a group, those who don't have a course running locally, and those who wanted to experience the course first before running it themselves.

In addition, the book upon which the course is based, *Parenting Children for a Life of Faith*, was reissued together with its two follow-up books, as one single omnibus edition.



‘It’s transformed how I share faith with the kids. Having been raised in a non-Christian home, I felt clueless before, but this has totally been a game-changer! I feel more confident, equipped with skills and more at ease about it all.’

Facebook watch party participant



A weekly 20-minute podcast of inspiration and ideas from Rachel Turner, BRF's Parenting for Faith pioneer, was launched during the year. Social media also provided countless opportunities to reach, engage with and nurture the growing Parenting for Faith community.

‘So great to have Rachel’s wisdom, fun and humour in a podcast. I feel I learned multiple things from each episode and came away with something really practical I could try out with my children.’

Podcast listener

Offering spiritual care in later life



Anna Chaplaincy

Championing the Anna Chaplaincy model of ecumenical, community-based chaplaincy continued to be the main focus for our work with older people.

Our network of Anna Chaplains and others in equivalent roles grew to 80 members. Three new Anna Chaplains and three Anna Friends were commissioned by the Archbishop of Canterbury during a visit to south-east London, and twelve Anna Chaplains were commissioned by the Bishop of Newcastle.

The network now has an estimated 14,000 contacts each month with older people, their families, care workers and other sector professionals.

Supporting the Anna Chaplaincy network

The Anna Chaplaincy Gathering is an annual highlight, providing an opportunity for the network to meet together and to benefit from the input, expertise and insights of others in similar roles. Delegate comments included:

“Another brilliant gathering. It is so good to meet with others from across the country and share ideas, concerns, etc. and to realise that a problem you have is not an isolated problem or frustration, but one that is being experienced with others.



“The input was really professional and stimulating. Aren’t we all lucky to be part of such a gifted network, with such a wealth of experience, passion and expertise?!”



New training course

Debbie Thrower, BRF’s Anna Chaplaincy team leader, devised and led a new week-long residential training course on Ministry among Older People, developed in conjunction with Cliff College, Derbyshire. The course was described as ‘inspirational’, ‘excellent’ and ‘affirming’ by those who attended, who came from Canada, Switzerland and all parts of the UK.

Messy Vintage

BRF’s Anna Chaplaincy and Messy Church teams continue to collaborate in the development and promotion of Messy Vintage, a monthly activity run by local churches taking Messy Church into care homes. Messy Vintage is now being adopted by many churches across the UK and has even spread to New Zealand.

“I don’t always get to church now as the service is too long. I am 91 and the Messy Vintage service is just the right length for me.



During 2018–19, we decided to cease using the name The Gift of Years, and from 1 July 2019 this ministry became known as Anna Chaplaincy.

Exploring Christianity creatively and confidently



The Barnabas in Schools team continued to work with primary schools to enable teachers and pupils to explore the Christian faith with creativity and confidence. **Christianity around the World** was the new theme for the 2018–19 academic year, looking at Christianity as a world faith and building on our **Where in the World?** theme, which was launched in 2012 and continues to be a popular Barnabas RE Day. Both themes support the requirements for religious education in primary schools set out by the National Society, which is responsible for one million pupils in Church of England schools.

New website

Summer 2018 saw the launch of a brand-new Barnabas in Schools website with a fresh new look, making it even easier to access and find information and materials, including the ever-popular 'ideas to use' that are free to access from the site.



Nearly **159,000** Barnabas in Schools website visits



139,000 views of the free 'ideas to use' pages on the website



9 INSET training sessions delivered



118 creative arts-based Barnabas RE Days delivered to **24,000** pupils



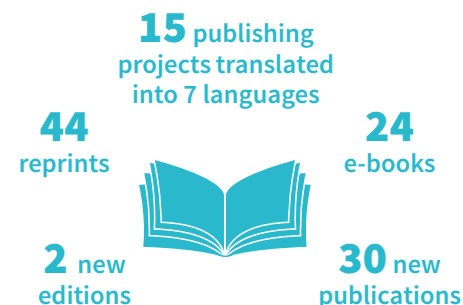
96 schools in 33 counties

New resources

Two new content-rich resource packs, *Crosses from around the World* and *Churches from around the World*, added to the wealth of resources available on the website.

Nurturing Christian growth

We want to help people of all ages to engage with the Bible and explore what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ today. Our published resources in 2018–19 included books to encourage Bible engagement, prayer, discipleship and leadership.



Sustaining Leadership by Paul Swann review:

“An offering of generosity and wide-ranging wisdom. Peter Selby, former bishop of Worcester, *Church Times*, October 2018

Resilience in Life and Ministry by Tony Horsfall and Debbie Hawker review:

“Tony Horsfall and Debbie Hawker have combined their unique talents to produce this new resource. As one would expect from two authors with excellent track records, it does not disappoint.

Tim Herbert, director, SYZGY Missions Support Network

Nurturing Bible engagement

Bible reading notes have been at the heart of BRF since its founding in 1922. Today they continue to sustain and nurture Christians in their daily walk with God in many different formats, including print, apps, daily emails and audio for people with sight loss. Over 115,000 copies were sold of *Bible Reflections for Older People*, *Day by Day with God*, *Guidelines*, *New Daylight* and *The Upper Room*.



30 years of *New Daylight*

January 2019 marked the 30th anniversary of *New Daylight*. Rarely does a week go by without letters of appreciation from its readers. David Winter (right), one of *New Daylight*'s most popular contributors for almost the entire 30 years, commented:



‘I know how much many Christians value them, but a recent survey showed that most churchgoers only hear the Bible when it’s read to them in church, although they admit they would like to know the Bible better. Well, it won’t communicate from the bookshelf or a cupboard! Surely, it’s worth giving daily Bible reading a try, and with *New Daylight* I promise you it’s not a chore but a daily delight.’

Lent with *New Daylight*

A special edition of Bible readings notes, *Lent with New Daylight*, provided churches with a resource to encourage the daily reading of scripture during Lent. It received very positive feedback. One church wrote:

‘People are saying it’s the best Lent book they’ve had and are asking for more! It brought them together across seven small, rural churches and faith journeys were shared in a new way. The sense here is that there was something really special about the Lent series, so they wanted me to send you a heartfelt thank you, together with our appreciation.’

Nurturing Christian discipleship and spirituality



Interest from churches in the Holy Habits discipleship resources continued to grow, with author Andrew Roberts (left) speaking at several events during the year.

‘Over the medium term Holy Habits can re-engineer a church’s life, making it fuller, more godly and more missional.’

David Spriggs, Baptist minister

Nearly 300 people attended BRF and *Woman Alive*/CPO’s annual women’s conference on the theme ‘Made in Whose Image?’

And our collaboration with Oxford Diocese delivered the eighth annual Festival of Prayer, attended by over 200 people, with John Bell as keynote speaker.

‘Inspiring thought-provoking speakers. Lovely warm atmosphere.’

‘The quality and content of the speakers and excellent worship.’

Made in Whose Image? attendees, June 2018

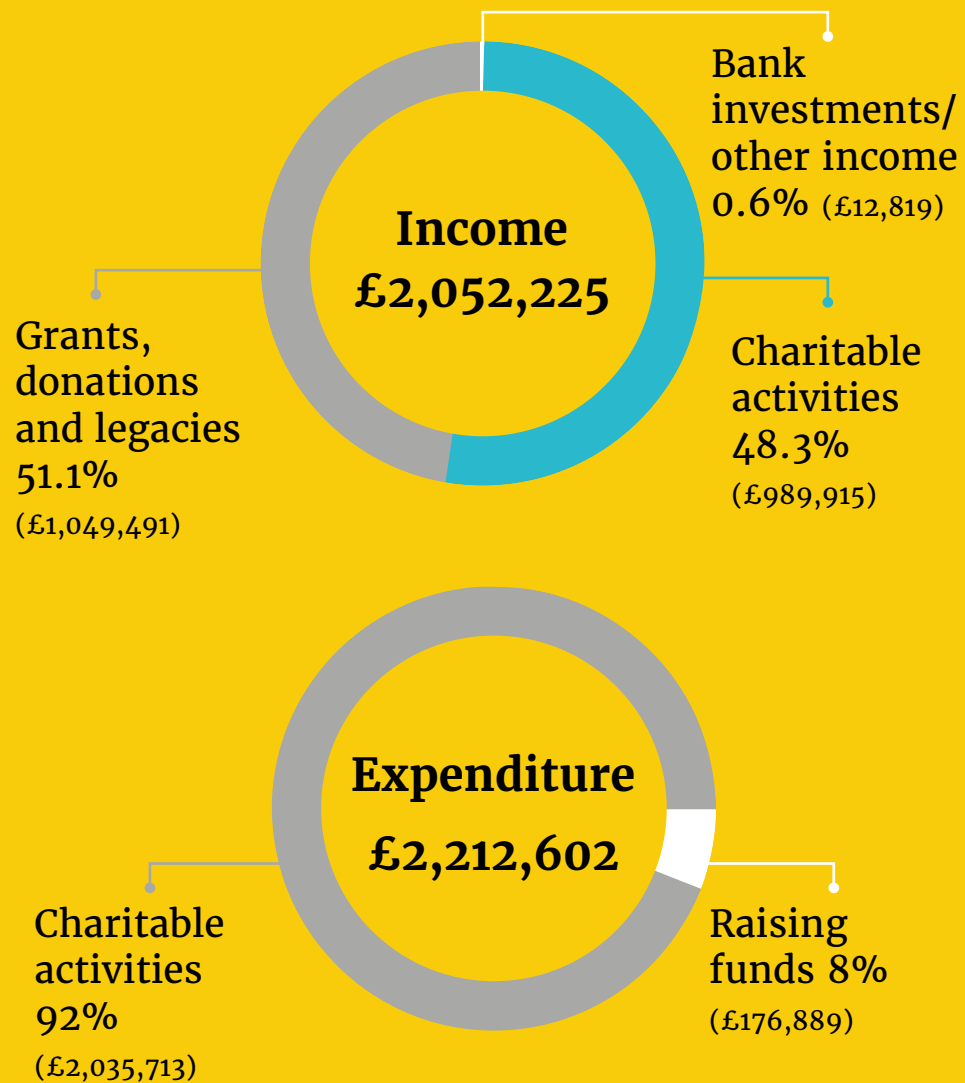
‘This was an exceptional conference.’

‘I was impressed by the beauty and peace of the venue, and the warmth and involvement of everyone present.’

Festival of Prayer attendees, July 2018



Money matters



For more detailed information about our income and expenditure for 2018-19, please see our complete report and accounts at brf.org.uk/funding.

You matter

BRF employs approximately 40 members of staff – about one-third of whom are part-time. We are a small organisation with a big vision for transformation in individuals and families, in churches and communities. We know we can't do it alone: we need you to be our partners in this mission.

We need you to pray for us. We need your financial help. We need you to share our posts on social media and to forward our e-news updates when something inspires you. We need people to get involved with our programmes, buy our Bible reading notes and books, and come to events, so that together we can continue the work of enabling all ages to grow in faith and understanding of the Bible.

Praying matters

We firmly believe prayer is fundamental in underpinning all that we do at BRF. Please consider praying for and with us. You can sign up for our printed seasonal prayer diary or our regular prayer email brf.org.uk/pray or call 01865 319700.

Giving matters

Regular giving allows us to plan for the future and to find new ways to realise our vision to enable all ages to grow in faith. You can set up a direct debit quickly and easily (or make a one-off donation) at brf.org.uk/donate, or call 01865 319700.

We need people to get involved, too...

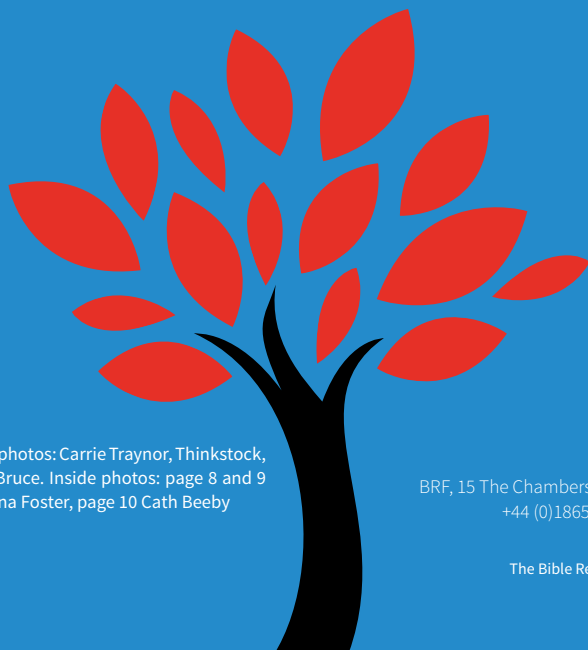
Could you get involved in a local Messy Church? Or train as an Anna Chaplain or volunteer helper? Could you distribute our Bible reading notes at church? Maybe you'd like to write for us? Go to brf.org.uk/get-involved to find out how.

To stay in touch, please sign up for our e-news at brf.org.uk/keep-in-touch and follow us on social media. If you're not online, please call 01865 319700 to be sent our seasonal *BRF News* magazine.

Your support and prayers are so appreciated. Thank you.

Working with individuals, churches, communities and schools to make a difference

BRF is a Christian charity that is passionate about enabling people of all ages to grow in faith and understanding of the Bible. BRF resources the spiritual journey of individuals and the mission and ministry of local churches. BRF also provides a professional education service equipping primary schools to explore Christianity creatively and confidently.



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Katie Bruce. Inside photos: page 8 and 9
Catriona Foster, page 10 Cath Beeby

BRF, 15 The Chambers, Vineyard, Abingdon OX14 3FE
+44 (0)1865 319700 | enquiries@brf.org.uk
brf.org.uk



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