

# Sharing Our Story...

## Aintree Baptist Church, Liverpool



**Geoff Bentley is Minister at Aintree Baptist Church, and here shares the church's story of stepping out in mission to reach local parents through a new group with a sweet name, and how it's developed over the course of the year...**

In February 2019, we started 'Jolly Babies', a weekly club for babies and toddlers with their carers. We started with a couple of families from church who invited friends along, and we advertised with posters around the area and through the local school, but we found that most people heard about us via word of mouth! At our first meeting we had six adults and eight babies. We now have 22 families on our books with new people still joining, so we may soon have to start a waiting list!

The atmosphere is friendly and relaxed. Children and adults can play, have fun and make friends, whilst we endeavour to show them God's love in the way we serve them. One week, we tried a little music and singing time and, to our surprise, both adults and babies alike loved it! So much so, they now ask us to do it every week.

In June, we hosted Messy Church. We invited the families we'd connected with through Jolly Babies and some of them came along to join in with the Messy crafts, sing songs and hear the message. In August, we had a picnic together in the local park. The toddlers enjoyed playing together and we organized some races for them, whilst the adults had a catch up!

On October 31, as an alternative to Halloween, our youth leaders arranged a 'Light Party' and again we invited the families. Some of them turned up and what a fabulous evening we had together! The church was lit up with colourful fairy lights and a disco ball. We had fun games using glow sticks and light up balloons as well as crafts, snacks and drinks for all. We also created a cosy, softly-lit area for the young babies with some books and toys. At the end of the evening, we all gathered together for songs and prayers before the children went home to bed!



**Jolly Babies**

Finally, in December, we had a Christmas party. The hall was decorated and the babies came in festive outfits. We had festive snacks and drinks, sang Christmas songs and carols and heard the story of Jesus' birth. All our babies received a Nativity story book from Santa and the families were all invited to our Christmas services.

We are so thankful to God for the opportunities He has given us so far to reach out to these precious families and we look forward to all He is going to do as we continue to serve Him in this way. Please pray for us and them!

***Do you have an intentional rhythm of regular activities and 'follow up events'? How could your church bless local young parents?***