

## Half-Term Friday? It must be Singing Day!

The third *Half-Term Singing Day* of 2019 got off to a great start with Penny Hastings warming up bodies and voices with the “Banana Song” - replacing all the vowels in the song with ah, eh, ee, oh, oo. Yes, it sounded bananas, but it was great fun!

Penny goes to All Saints Church and is a music teacher and experienced choir leader, so we were grateful she took some time out in her half-term to come and lead the children’s singing day at St Michael’s. The church is still searching for its next Director of Music, since Colin Davey moved to Wimborne Minster, and leading the children’s singing day is just a small part of that job spec! (Don’t forget to mention this to any potential DoM’s you happen to meet!)



*Children enjoying the singing and games before performing the songs at the end of the day. Great fun was had by all.*

This term we are preparing for the Christmas Crib Service, so many of the songs had a Christmas theme, including some of the children’s favourites, “I throw my hands up in the air sometimes saying Ayo!” and a drumming song called “Patapan”. But the singing day doesn’t just involve singing. A team of willing adults from St Michael’s senior choir were on hand to lead the games, serve the drinks and snacks, and help out with the challenging “Treasure Hunt” round the church. Probably even regular member of the congregation might not know how many musical instruments there are in the church. Or where to find a bishop’s mitre? How many pictures and statues of St Michael there are? Or when the rood screen was built? Anyone know who was appointed rector of the parish in 1266 for example? Just ask one of our treasure hunters if you’re stuck!

At the end of Singing Days, the children perform some of the day’s songs for parents and friends. This time the songs included a Gospel Medley with a sporting theme (the England Rugby team didn’t benefit the next day, sadly, from the children’s rendition of “Swing Low”, any more than “O When the Saints” helped Southampton FC’s nine goal defeat by Leicester City the previous week!). There was also a beautiful ballad by Michael Head called “The Little Road to Bethlehem” which was a particular highlight. This song will feature at the Crib Service, when we hope many of the children will be returning – with our junior choir regulars – to sing it again on Christmas Eve.

Although our Singing Days are stand-alone musical education events each half-term, it does give us an opportunity to introduce children to the church building and to our choir. In due course we hope more children will consider joining the junior choir. This is a bigger commitment than a one-off day, but, as so many of us have discovered (not to mention all the famous musicians, sportsmen, and celebrities who started in church choirs!), singing in a choir teaches you so much, and often leads on to a lifetime of enjoying and making music.

The next opportunity for children to get involved is the half-term singing day is on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> February. Find out more on the website at [nsab.org.uk/music-at-st-michaels/singing-days/](https://nsab.org.uk/music-at-st-michaels/singing-days/), or contact the parish office. If your children, or children you know, are in the age range, encourage them to join us for a great day's music making!