

How to run a Holiday at Home for Seniors



Elizabeth Stacey



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a
Holiday at Home
for
Seniors**

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Acknowledgements

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in the production of this booklet.*

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Foreword

*The information and ideas in this booklet
are original and have evolved as we
have been actively involved in running
an annual Holiday at Home.*

*Once we had started having the Holiday at Home
lots of other ideas started to form
as we met to plan future events.*

*I hope you will find them helpful
and that they will inspire and encourage
you to have a go.*



What is a Holiday at Home?

A Holiday at Home is a one, two or more day event for seniors giving them the opportunity of a holiday, but with the benefit of still sleeping in their own beds. Some seniors find it difficult to manage a holiday because of physical or financial restrictions, which leaves them feeling alone and isolated, particularly over the holiday period when friends and families are away.

It offers activities such as quizzes, crafts, games, board games, competitions, music, exercises, sing-a-longs, drama and concerts and, of course, delicious food. It should be fun and stimulating, giving those attending the chance to do things they enjoy, and the opportunity to make new friends.

What are the aims of a Holiday at Home?

The main aim of a Holiday at Home is to help seniors who have little or no faith to learn more about the love of God through Jesus, by words and deeds in a loving and non-threatening fun environment. It provides us with a great opportunity to practically show God's love and care for older people, whatever their age.

A Holiday at Home is an inspirational gospel tool, often being the first step to opening up older people's hearts to the love of God.

Wonderful things are happening in our churches as people work with seniors, finding creative themes and ideas for some very resourceful events.

Everyone is blessed and amazed at what God can do through those who are willing to give it a try.



Who is the Holiday at Home for?

Seniors - older people who, in our society, are used to being forgotten and invisible! A Holiday at Home clearly demonstrates that they are not forgotten but valued by God and by us.

3rd Age Seniors are those who are still very active, often fairly newly retired, in their late 50s, 60s and 70s. Some Holidays at Home are run for this age group, and can include a more active programme with some days out to the sea, special gardens or places of interest, but more often than not, they are the ones running the Holidays at Home for the 4th Age!



4th Age Seniors are those in their 80s and 90s who are increasingly inactive, get out less and feel shut in. Some may be living in retirement accommodation or 'residential homes'.

Who do you invite to a Holiday at Home?

- Is it mainly for church people, both in your church or people in your neighbourhood or parish?
- Can you build on seniors events already happening in your church? For example, a ladies fellowship, a lunch club?
- Is it for fringe people at church, friends and neighbours of members?
- Is it for those who do not attend church? Can you invite seniors who attend nearby lunch clubs, day centres, or retirement homes?

And very importantly -

- What age range are you targeting? Take into consideration their abilities and stamina, as well as those of your team.

How long is a Holiday at Home?

A Holiday at Home should be tailored to suit the venue selected and the people who are being invited to attend. It can be a one day event, or can take place over two, three or more days.

For 3rd Agers, the Holiday at Home can last up to a week and include a trip to a garden centre, an outing to the sea, or other areas of interest. Less demanding, and allowing recovery time for the helpers, is Monday, Wednesday, Friday.

In some churches, guests are also invited to the following Sunday morning service which is linked to the Holiday at Home theme.

For 4th Agers, one or two days will be sufficient. If one day, then there is the opportunity to hold a second day exactly the same, but with different guests. Because of the amount of preparation involved, it is always worth running it for more than one day.

It is important to think realistically about how much help is needed and available and how many days you and your team can support this event. Helpers themselves are often getting older and may need recovery days in between.

It is also important not to overcrowd the venue, so set a limit on how many guests you can safely cater for.

Make sure there is enough room for guests to move about freely and safely, and that they can see and hear clearly.

There may be other circumstances that dictate what can be offered, e.g. availability of premises.



Frances enjoys a surprise visit from a Chelsea Pensioner at the 'Almost Chelsea Flower Show'

Selecting a Team

Let your church know what you are planning and find people who are interested in helping, especially those with a heart for seniors - church members, friends from other churches and even some young people love helping out.

Look for people:

- able to create a relaxed, fun-filled holiday atmosphere;
- with servant hearts, kind, warm-hearted, friendly and out-going, able to communicate in a friendly and non-threatening way;
- ready to join in the fun, games or crafts and give a hand to change rooms around;
- who are intuitive, ready to do whatever is needed even before it is asked of them;
- who can facilitate activities in a sensitive and helpful way, allowing those who are less able to enter fully into the crafts, games and other things they once enjoyed;
- who can look out for guests who are not taking part, gently encouraging them to 'have a go';
- who can help stimulate conversation that is relevant and of interest to the guests, encouraging them to tell their stories;
- who can give clear instructions as to where our guests should go and do, taking them if necessary.

Find out exactly what people are offering and let them take full responsibility, but keep a check on them.

Try to identify, develop and use the gifts God has given each one for the benefit of others, allocating appropriate tasks to them. Also give helpers and guests the opportunity to discover that they can do new things.

Serving, encouraging, fetching and carrying is all part of the job, enabling the smooth running of the day in a careful and safe way.

Be careful:

- Don't let anyone take over and do too much. It is important for everyone to feel they have something to contribute.
- Team leaders or helpers must be careful not to be forceful or offer help where it is not wanted or needed.
- Always be careful not to embarrass guests in any way.
- *Avoid helpers who are meeting a need in themselves.*

Some of the people you will need:

- A First Aid person who will take responsibility for the first aid box and be on hand if and when needed.
- A Health and Safety person who will do a risk assessment prior to the event and check you have everything in order.
- A Cook who will plan a menu and organise a team of helpers to prepare the meal and serve it.
- Someone to shop and bring the food on site.
- Someone to plan the crafts, get all the equipment for them, prepare them beforehand and show the team what to do.
- Make sure the person doing the exercises/armchair exercises is qualified and trained.
- Some reliable, good musicians are great. If that is not possible have someone to take charge of providing the music required and the sound system.
- Use mikes and make sure the sound system is in working order beforehand and can be heard clearly.



Planning a Programme

Identify your aims

It is important to identify your aims for the event, always keeping them in mind as you prepare the programme. Laughter is really important and it is good for us. Encouraging fun and fellowship builds deeper friendships and trust with each other.

Who will plan the programme?

The leader? Or is it a team effort?

If team members have been practically involved in earlier Holidays at Home, encourage them to share their own ideas.

Learn from others who have been actively involved in running them elsewhere - find out what has worked well.

Arrange to help with a Holiday at Home nearby which will give you some practical experience and understanding of what is needed.

A programme needs to refresh the whole person:

- **Body** - armchair exercises and/or musical movement.
- **Mind** - thought provoking and interesting things, such as games, quizzes, puzzles, discussion.
- **Spirit** - something to meet their spiritual needs, a 'thought for the day' relevant to their lives and circumstances.

A programme should include:

- **Something for everyone** - identify the age range of your guests. Have the appropriate programme to suit them and their needs.
- **Provide lots of variety** - it should be creative, active and informative. Make sure the entertainment is fun, but not too long.
- **It should be well done** - showing care and attention to details gives a clear message of valuing those who attend.

Use ice breakers, guessing games, and photographs, etc.

Holidays at Home have a sing-along, exercises/armchair exercises, games, crafts, drama, good food and a cream tea to finish.

A goodie bag is given to everyone to take home with a photo, a programme, some sweets, any craft they have made and an invitation to another event.

We have found a little shop for guests to buy toiletries (for both men and women), cards, light scarves, boxed hankies, small plants, books etc. has added to the enjoyment of the day. We asked church members to donate unwanted gifts to make this possible. To make sure there are plenty to go round, guests are asked initially to limit their purchases to two or three items.

Timetable

Welcome guests on arrival and give them a name badge so they can be called by their name, making them feel welcome.

When the guests are less mobile it is helpful to have set tables, with a designated leader and helpers, and guests making a team. On arrival guests are introduced to their team leader, who will see that they are settled, have some coffee, and help them to make friends, making sure no one is left out.

Some seniors often have lots to say and no one to say it to, so it is essential to make time to listen to them. Others have little or nothing to talk about, so it is necessary to be prepared to facilitate the conversation drawing them in. Encourage them to tell their stories, helping them to feel they are important to us and to God.

Having a detailed programme with the times of arrival and departure, coffee, lunch and tea breaks, as well as some idea of the activities is essential. Remind guests about what is happening through the day so that they can prepare themselves for the things they want to do, opting in and out of the programme as they wish. Stick to the programme as much as possible so that everyone knows what is happening next, helping them to pace themselves.

Leave sufficient time for everyone to enjoy lunch at a leisurely pace and *make sure there are enough comfort breaks in the programme!* Careful planning really does save a lot of confusion later!

Choosing a Theme

Select a theme and discuss with your team:

- How to arrange and decorate the rooms.
- What props are needed.
- Do you need to borrow or make anything? *
- Are there any pictures or photographs you could use?
- What songs will fit in?
- Discuss how the 'Thought for the Day' might fit in with the theme.

Delegate as much of this as possible.

See pages 14 –19 for some of the themes we have used.

**You may have a costume hire shop or theatre nearby which may be able to supply a particular costume. Our Chelsea Pensioner's uniform is available for hire from the Chelsea Pensioners - it was expensive but worth it!*

The main aim of a Holiday at Home is to help seniors who have little or no faith to learn more about the love of God through Jesus our

'Thought for the Day'

Saviour, by words and deeds in a loving and non-threatening fun environment. It can also be used to encourage older Christians in their walk with Jesus and for them to share their faith with others.

This friendship evangelism is a very effective way of communicating God's love. People need to feel they belong before they believe.

Holidays at Home provide a wonderful opportunity to share the gospel of Jesus Christ, offering guests hope and a future, which is something very positive when their world is closing in and shutting down around them. So be bold and confident.

The message should be

- good news
- uncluttered
- relevant to the theme.
- short - no longer than ten minutes
- non-threatening
- bringing words of hope and comfort

This is what the Holiday at Home is all about.

There may be someone already on the team suitable for giving a 'Thought for the Day'. If not, your minister may be the appropriate person, or perhaps someone else in the church.

Also identify those in the team who are able to pray and speak for Jesus as and when the need arises. They must be gentle people who would never be forceful, always giving those they are ministering to, the freedom to choose.

Remember to cover every stage of the Holiday at Home with Prayer - before, during and after the event.

Arrange convenient meeting times for the team of helpers to pray for

Prayer

each other and the event.

Involve the church fellowship in supporting you, and keep them informed with your needs and prayer requests.

Supply prayer cards well beforehand.

Nearer the time it is good practice to have some training (morning, afternoon or evening) and go through the whole programme step by step with everyone who is helping.

Training for the Holiday at Home

Identify and appoint those willing to act as team leaders, helpers, run-a-rounds, cooks and kitchen helpers; those to set up and put away and move furniture during the day. Make sure people know what is expected of them.

Get helpers to do the craft with you so that they are well prepared, and know what is involved and what difficulties may occur on the day.

Some training in 'careful handling' is an important aspect when working with vulnerable adults. Arrange for an occupational therapist or someone similar to go through a few basic techniques, giving helpers more confidence in what they are doing, e.g. how to transfer people from cars to chairs, and vice versa.

I have a 'Careful Handling Booklet' written by a church member who is an occupational therapist. Let me know if you would like a copy.



Some of our guests try their hand at painting with water colours

Publicity

- Who is going to produce some eye-catching publicity?
- Does your publicity make the aims of the event clear?

How will the event be publicised?

- By word of mouth, to church members, to fringe people at the church?
- To your ladies fellowship? Retired men's group? Pensioners' Club?
- Through the church magazine, other churches magazines?
- To a local lunch club, Help the Aged or Age UK, local day centres, in a local free paper?

Transport

How will guests get there? Do they need a lift?

If you are planning a Holiday at Home for 3rd Agers, most of them will be independent and able to arrive on their own, but transport might be needed for some of them.

Transport will certainly be needed for those in the 4th Age.

Possible areas of help

- Church members not involved with the Holiday at Home may be available to use their cars to transport two or three people.
- The church may have its own mini-bus and driver available to help, or some church members may be qualified and willing to drive if you can hire a bus, so plan and book ahead.
- Other churches have mini-buses and they are often happy to hire them out.
- Age Concern lunch clubs have a qualified driver with their own transport and may be able to offer assistance.

- Dial-a-Ride or a community bus can sometimes be hired, but you would need to have a qualified Midas driver with an up-to-date certificate to drive the bus.
- As a last resort, taxis can be used.

Food, Glorious Food

Coffee and nice biscuits on arrival, a good quality home cooked lunch, and a cream tea in the afternoon are all greatly appreciated.

This takes careful planning, with alternatives for those who are vegetarians or require a special diet.

Lunch is a very important part of the day so leave sufficient time for everyone to enjoy it at a leisurely pace.



A helper enjoying some fun after serving lunch at 'A Right Royal Garden Party'

And finally

Money, money

Will your church feel able to cover the expenses of this event or should you ask for contributions from those attending?

This should take into account both your church's financial situation, and the people you are inviting - what is best for them, what they would be most happy with. It is best to collect the money before the event if you can as it helps them remember the event, and also saves time when there is so much else going on.

Don't forget some follow-up

Plan something to invite people to after the event - a special service for seniors (e.g. Harvest, if your Holiday at Home is in the summer), special concert or Songs of Praise, or a regular service for Seniors.

Make sure you put an invitation in their goodie bag.

Some of the ideas and themes we have used

I hope these pictures may give you some inspiration. I am preparing themed workbooks and resources for these Holiday at Homes so that others may use them. If you are interested in finding out more about these please let me know.

‘All Our Yesterdays’ We used old photographs and memorabilia from days gone by and guests were encouraged to bring photos of themselves of when they were younger or of special times in their lives. We photocopied and enlarged them and got them to make scrapbook pages as they shared their stories.



Guests arriving anticipating a happy day

At mid day a home cooked lunch was provided and served to our guests. There was an opportunity to reminisce further as they checked out an old fashioned kitchen full of memorabilia to remind them of their childhood. The day ended with tea and cakes and a short talk focussed on the day ‘All our yesterdays’, but asked us ‘What about tomorrow?’

‘The Good Old Days’ focussed on looking back at how things used to be and gave lots of opportunity to talk about the changes.



Painting a picture - ‘The Good Old Days’ Holiday at Home

There were songs to sing, jokes to share and the decorations and bunting resembled a post-war street party. The helpers put on their own ‘Good Old Days’ concert which was enjoyed by all. The talk was about how we can do things with confidence when we know we have a heavenly Father who loves us.



'I Do Like To Be Beside The Seaside'

included a photo booth for guests to have their photos taken on arrival,



a
sing-
a-long,



a sand-castle competition, and a magic lantern show were just some of the activities on offer.



The talk encouraged us to build our lives on the Rock who is Jesus.



Gathering for a photo at the 'I do like to be beside the sea-side' Holiday at Home which appeared in the local press giving another church the idea of doing something like this for their older people

'A Right Royal Garden Party'
provided a day of celebrating with royalty.

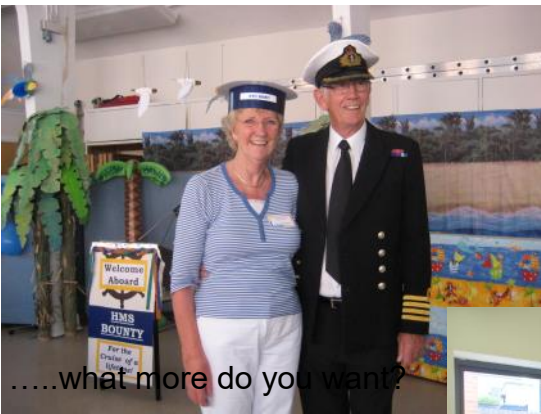


We spent the morning playing games, having a quiz and sing-a-long and getting ready with flags and hats to welcome the King who was joining us for lunch.

We had a special string quartet who gave us a royal performance and the King awarded all the older people with MBEs, for courage in the face of adversity.

The talk was about the party God is preparing in heaven for everyone who wants to be there.





The good Captain & his Mrs

'A Caribbean Cruise'

complete with pirates, a treasure map and quiz to find the buried treasure, a ship, a Captain, a crew, some palm trees for good measure and a Caribbean island....

.....what more do you want?

We were shown how (not) to use our lifejackets and in the



The catering crew



How 'not to' use a life jacket

afternoon were taken on an island with the help of ship shape artwork and some background palm trees.

A treasure hunt was arranged and we saw something of the

competitive side of our guests as each team tried to find the buried treasure first.

The closing talk was about the treasure we find in Jesus but some pirates appeared and tried to steal our treasure. The crew captured them and tied them up until the end of the talk, when they were forgiven and set free. This all added interest, fund and kept our guests involved.

It was great fun!

'The 'Almost' Chelsea Flower Show'

featured
Bill and Ben
and
Little Weed
getting up to
all sort
of capers.



Each team had to make and enter the miniature garden competition, and a Chelsea Pensioner, who was our special guest for the day, awarded the prizes.



The talk was about how important it is to have our roots in good soil (to be firmly planted in Jesus) and the fruit that comes from that.

A holiday at home provides an opportunity to show the love of Jesus in a practical way. It's hard work but great fun and very rewarding for everyone.

I hope these photos give you some great ideas.



OTHER RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR WORK WITH SENIORS

THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS INTERACTIVE STUDY GUIDE

An illustrated guide with helpful ideas and suggestions on how to run a Pilgrim's Progress Study Group of your own. Easy instructions are given on how to make and use the Travel Guides, Programmes, Name Tags and other props. Illustrated pictures are suitable for photocopying and using as a visual aid for each session. There is also an outline for each session which includes a list of things to prepare and of what you will need. Each drama is ready to print out, as well as prayer cards for the suggested sessions.

This resource is based on John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress and is particularly aimed at older people who have no church background or personal faith, although it is relevant to everyone.

I used this material with a group of 80 and 90 year olds as an interactive study. Over the weeks, as the participants journeyed with Christian, (the main character in the story) so understanding of the Christian faith deepened, resulting in many individuals making a personal commitment to the Lord.

Copyright permission is given for you to print up to 10 copies of anything in the book, but if your group is larger than 10, then permission is given to print the amount you will need for those attending.

Cost £25.00 + £3.50 Postage & Packing

(postage may vary as postal rates increase)

PILGRIM'S PROGRESS INTERACTIVE STUDY GUIDE ON CD

is a complete copy of the book for you to print.

Cost £15.00 + Postage & Packing £1.00

If you buy the book and the CD, you can have the CD for £5.00 + £1.00 P & P

'IN THE BEGINNING'

is a booklet giving information about the process we adopted at Winchester Baptist Church as we started to think about reaching out to un-churched older people. It was given as a PowerPoint presentation at the first Baptist Union Caleb Challenge in 2005 and outlines some helpful facts and figures which were researched beforehand and resulted in our strategy for mission.

Cost £2.50 plus Postage & Packing £1.00

OTHER RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR WORK WITH SENIORS

‘VISION TO REALITY’

A follow up booklet telling stories about how the facts and figures became real people and situations. It too was presented at a further Baptist Union Caleb Challenge in 2007 and is full of inspirational ideas around developing and maintaining a Strategy for Mission to seniors and clearly shows how our initial vision became a reality.

Cost £3.50 plus Postage & Packing £1.00

You can buy both ‘In the Beginning’ & ‘Vision to Reality’ booklets for £5.00 plus Postage & Packing of £1.50

‘SINGING & SHARING THE GOOD NEWS TO THOSE IN RESIDENTIAL CARE’

This booklet explores creative ways of sharing faith in a residential care setting. It is basically a training booklet, but asks you to think about what it is like to be one of the residents. It tries to highlight some of the real life problems that residents may be facing and feeling, and you are encouraged to explore some relevant interactive and fun ways of worshipping the Lord as you share the gospel.

It gives instructions on how to make and use a memory box and includes some posters, name badges, cards and invites for you to photocopy and use.

Cost £4.00 plus Postage & Packing £1.00

‘HOW TO RUN A HOLIDAY AT HOME’

A very practical booklet giving lots of advice and some inspirational ideas on how to plan and run a Holiday at Home.

Cost £4.00 plus Postage & Packing £1.00

‘SANKEY & MOODY SONGS OF PRAISE’

This resource provides a complete programme for Songs of Praise including some written historical facts to help set the scene. There is a Leaders copy and a CD with an invitation and printed programme for you to personalise and print off for those attending. Can be used in a church or in a care home.

Cost £4.50 plus Postage & Packing £1.00

OTHER RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR WORK WITH SENIORS

‘GOOD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY’ - Booklet & CD

This resource is useful for running an interactive Christmas service in a residential home. It includes a Leader's order of service and a CD with for you to print an order of service for the residents and the helpers. It includes some Christmas Bible Readings, Prayers and Carols. The idea is to sing and speak your way through the Christmas Story with the help of a memory box filled with head dresses for Mary, Joseph, Shepherds, Angels and Kings. Instruction on how to make the memory box and the head dresses are included as well as some suggestions on how to introduce them to the group. Advent Candles are used to light individual candles as a visual aid to help share the love of Jesus the Light of the World.

This particular resource has been used successfully in many homes and day centres and has helped to bring a sense of God's presence, love and blessing to seniors and staff alike through laughter, fun and fellowship.

Cost £5.00 plus Postage & Packing £1.00

Should you wish to purchase any of the resources listed, or if you would like to invite Liz to run a training event or speak at your church please use email address below.

Email address: liz@winbap.org.uk

or write to:

Mrs Elizabeth Stacey

Pilgrim's Progress Ministry to Seniors

36 Plough Way

Winchester

Hampshire

SO22 4PW

Telephone: 01962 808783

About Liz and Mission to Seniors

Liz worked in London with Scripture for seven years before taking on the role of Church Administrator at Winchester Baptist Church in 1995. It was there she first noticed the large amount of sad and lonely older people coming into the church building for various clubs. She felt very challenged that someone should be telling them about God's love for them....and this challenge wouldn't go away.

In 2005 she shared it with her church leadership and members and from this, it was agreed that she should carry out some research on how to reach and interest older people in the Christian faith. This resulted in Liz being given a new role and later being inducted as the Pastoral Coordinator for Mission to Seniors in September 2007.

This is now an established ministry at WBC and brings an annual programme for Seniors which includes a Silver Service, a Silver Seeker's Group, an annual Holiday at Home, a gospel concert and a Songs of Praise. Pastoral Care with offers of help and support are given when needed as well as regular visits and services in Residential Homes.

Liz was invited by Rev Kathryn Morgan (formerly Head of Baptist Union's Missions Department, now retired) to participate and help organise two Caleb Challenge Conferences, and has been part of other BU groups helping to prepare resources for ministry to older people in this country and abroad.

She is a Trustee for Outlook Trust, a country wide Christian organisation offering a prayer network, training and support for those working with Seniors.

Because of the lack of resources for this age group Liz has had to produce her own. Others have asked if she could make these available for others to use, so on retiring in 2010 she has started providing these resources as well as meeting with and encouraging churches to get involved in Mission to Seniors. People are living longer now and there are many Seniors ready and waiting to hear and receive the gospel message.

Liz brings first hand experience, and offers advice and training to anyone who is interested in finding out more.

The success of 'The Pilgrim's Progress Interactive Study Guide' is opening up new opportunities for Liz which she is using to encourage others to get involved in finding new ways of reaching out to Seniors with God's love. This Study Guide includes story-telling, drama and fun and there are now various groups around the country running Pilgrim's Progress Study Groups of their own. The great old story catches their attention and is easier to remember. It is still proving to be a great way to help seniors understand something of the Christian faith.

As they journey with Christ on the straight and narrow way they experience something of God's love. They hear about the plans and provision God has made for them now and for eternity through our Lord Jesus Christ.



To find out more,
please contact Liz Stacey,
36 Plough Way,
Winchester, Hants SO22 4PW
Telephone: 01962 808783
Email: liz@winbap.org.uk

