

# Rooted in Jesus Junior: Diocese of St Mark the Evangelist, South Africa

Team: Jonathan Rendall (Team Leader); Juliet Mogashoa, Shaena Mailula, Sbusisiwe (Busi) Sifelani and Themba Hlongwane (St Mark the Evangelist); Nicole Corlew (Growing the Church).

Conference dates: 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> May 2014

The Diocese of St Mark the Evangelist under the leadership of +Martin Breytenbach was the first to hold a Rooted in Jesus Conference in South Africa in 2009, and again in 2011 and 2013. Rooted in Jesus is foundational in the training and preparation for ministry across the Diocese. Following the invitation from Bishop Martin to launch Rooted in Jesus Junior at a training conference in South Africa a local team was recruited. Jonathan Rendall (team leader) and Nicole Corlew (from GtC) were joined by Juliet Mogashoa, Shaena Mailula, Sbusisiwe (Busi) Sifelani and Themba Hlongwane. These four people came forward following conversations in the diocese as being ready and willing to be trained as trainers for this the first Junior conference in South Africa.



A day's training and preparation was held in the diocesan offices in Polokwane prior to the three day conference for the diocese. The Team Manual was scrutinised, the training programme carefully studied, the Demonstration Lesson well prepared together with the Workshops. The various responsibilities were shared out with time for detailed preparation. Bishop Martin commissioned the Team.

The next three days of learning, giving, receiving and equipping were much enjoyed, fruitful and appreciated by the four new Junior trainees and the twenty four attendees. 28 people were commissioned; three of the trainee leaders will continue to serve in the diocese supporting the RinJ Junior coordinator in his work with children while Juliet will serve as Prayer Coordinator for Junior. Busi and Shaena will be available through +Martin to serve in other dioceses when Junior conferences are held in the Province.

The conference was a great success. This three day conference was held at a RC retreat centre in the hills to the north of this vast diocese; some of the attendees had travelled a long way to attend. The training was very well received and the new trainees proved their worth.

The three days were marked by a genuine enthusiasm and full commitment across all the training events. The final day's Practice Sessions were of high quality, demonstrating the conference's clear understanding of the principles and practice of Junior. There was an encouraging attendance from young people, 9 of the 28 participants being youth, who evidently much enjoyed the training.

A joy in worship with traditional dance and Sepele songs characterised each day at every opportunity – there was always a song in someone's heart! Revd Lutz Ackermann led the ministry times and there was a genuine and positive response in the prayer ministry opportunities. One evening, a first for a Junior conference, we held a Bible quiz, hosted by Revd Pat Lennox.

The diocese is diverse, vast and many of the congregations are small. There was a concern among the delegates about support and help once they had returned to their parishes and churches. +Martin encouraged them at the commissioning ; a support network is being put in place led Revd Pat Lennox the Rooted in Jesus Junior coordinator. He authorised them to 'go and make disciples of all children' on their return home.

The conference was characterised by a joy in learning, by purpose and intention to receive and give the best for the children – some asked if they could stay on for more! God's grace, kindness and presence brought the best out of both Team and attendees. Nicole and I returned to Johannesburg encouraged, enriched and blessed by all we had received and were able to offer to the diocese. It had been a joy and a privilege to serve the Diocese of St Mark the Evangelist together; we look forward to seeing many children disciplined through Junior and to quote +Martin, "to see Junior develop here and on into South Africa".

My thanks and admiration to all four new trainers who took on this enormous challenge and achieved very well.

Jonathan Rendall, May 2014

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