

# Sicily Action Team

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## Prayer Letter December 2009

*“Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God”* Ephesians 5: 1-2

### **Hi everybody!**

Greetings from here in Siracusa. We've been here for around six weeks now, and enjoyed every minute! In an effort to blend in with the culture we have all changed our names. So without further ado, can we introduce:

Beniamino Franco Quintino  
Nico Luigi Vaughan Ionesca  
Daniela Bella Maria Estburia  
Rianna Gianna Mannino

During our time in Siracusa we have been keeping ourselves occupied, getting involved in all sorts of exciting activities. These include playing music in both the Italian service and the new English service in the evenings, learning Italian twice a week at school, attending the church Alpha course and the local Bible study (to improve our Italian!).

### **L'Angolo Inglese**

Our main focus currently is trying to bring the youth back to the church. One of the ways we have been doing this is setting up and running the English Corner (L'Angolo Inglese) on Friday nights in the church. During English Corner, we use a



combination of games, songs and crafts to help the young people ('tagazzi') practise the English that they learn in school in a fun and exciting environment. The schools here focus mainly on learning by rote and grammar so we aim to make it a place where they can practise their conversational skills.

### **“Cha Cha Real Smooth”**

Every English Corner has included the legendary dance that is the Cha Cha Slide. The Macerena has also made an appearance. These have delighted the kids as they watch Ben and Nick 'Charlie Brown' and 'take it back now y'all!' 'Cha Cha Real Smooth' has now become the slogan of the youth group. We are finding dance to be a good ice-breaker as well as helping the kids to learn English. We've finally put our immaturity to good use!

### **English delicacies**

A massive part of Italian culture is food so we decided to introduce a bit of English cuisine to the programme. This means that every week we slave over a hot stove and make torta. These have been an immense success and we have even been asked for the recipe! We are hoping to get the kids to make them in the English Corner as they have been very pleased to eat them every week.

### **Multi-culture, multi-faith and multi-vitamins**

We have been really blessed in English Corner because of the ethnic diversities among the kids. The children who come are mainly from the homework club run twice weekly in the church.

We have had kids from Sri Lanka, Nigeria and Italy with an age range of 11-16. It is a great way of promoting unity within the community in an area where we have seen much division between age, ethnicities and social status. The kids that attend do not come to church on Sunday mornings so it has been a great community outreach with Christians, Muslims and Buddhists coming alongside each other. We also provide mineral water.

### Looking to the future

The overall aim of English Corner is to help the younger generation to rediscover the church as well as teaching them useful skills to use in later life. For some of the kids, just being in the church building is a big step. Some of the outreach opportunities we are hoping to start up with the youth include decorating the youth room, chalk graffiti and playing football with the children who hang out on the street. We pray that through these things God will bring more young people to him. Already one of the kids has come to a morning service to see the puppet shows we put on. It was a real answer to prayer.

### The bigger picture

We hope to see the church unified here and be a light in the community. We have many ideas including art exhibitions, open mic nights, food distributions, sports events, culture nights (involving the immigrants we have met), litter picking and quiz nights. Hopefully these activities will really inspire the church to get behind us and gather ideas of their own. Through our youthful exuberance we hope God will bring more people to the church and challenge some of the current perspectives of church and religion.



### Please pray...

- ◆ For increased attendance at English Corner and that we would be a real witness to the kids. Also that God will give us the creativity and resources (hard to come by here) to come up with fresh ideas and activities to do this.
- ◆ For our hosts (quite possibly two of the nicest people we know) and the situation they face in the church. The church has been going through a rough patch but Alex and Huw are always trusting God through it all.
- ◆ For the church activities such as Alpha and the Bible study, that there would be continued interest in them.
- ◆ That we would continue to serve God and be a shining light in this community.

Thanks for your support and encouragement  
Lots of love,

**Nico, Rianna, Beniamino and Daniela**  
*Sicily Action Team*

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