

# Baby Basics

## What we discovered – Grace Church Salisbury tell their story



### Aim:

To support new mothers who are struggling with the financial burden of a new baby.

### What we offer:

We offer a Moses basket, filled with some essentials for a new baby and mum.

### The Story So Far:

We first saw the idea of Baby Basics shared on the Trussell Trust Facebook page one summer. The idea resonated with us as there was so definitely a need for this – so we approached the church leadership for the go-ahead.

Our biggest challenge was to reach the people most in need. Speaking to the local Foodbank, part of the Trussell Trust, they were very keen to work together with us. Baby Basics became a partnership project between the Trussell Trust and our Church. Referrals came in from midwives and health visitors coming through the existing Foodbank referral network.

When the project was launched at a church family meeting, there was lots of positive feedback, but more importantly, plenty of people signing up to help with various tasks. We started with a core team of around five, but with more than twenty people signing up to help in some way.

There were some setup costs for this project – mainly the storage shelves and boxes in which to keep sorted donations. Funding was forthcoming from the Cinnamon Network and local Area Board here in Wiltshire, as well as our own church funds. Thankfully, we already had a huge storage space that we'd been given to use for free.



A training day in Sheffield initiated us into using the referral software – which is fairly straight forward – with each member of the team having their own login details. Referrals are logged by staff at the Trussell Trust, with a member of the Baby Basics team taking responsibility for washing the clothing, repacking the basket and delivering it to the midwife or health visitor.

One of the most popular things has been our 'Sorting Saturdays', when volunteers come in to help sort clothes and make up filled Moses baskets.

Feedback from new mums and health professional has been very positive – with one saying that it renewed her faith in people.

In our first year we gave out nine baskets, in our second, we've given out eight baskets in the first three months.

## What we discovered:

1. Find something that resonates with a wide group of people and you'll never be short of volunteers who can wash, iron, put together baskets, sort clothes, put together shelving etc.
2. This was our first joint project – which has opened doors to us, as well as helping us to be more professional
3. Always approach organisations for funding – this is one project that people easily get behind and understand
4. We quickly built a sizeable following on Facebook – just by creating a page and sharing pictures of the finished baskets
5. We've been overwhelmed with donations – currently have more being given than we are giving out. People connect with us almost every week, offering bags of donations.
6. We had to be firm about who could refer and who couldn't – ensuring that only professional made referrals – so that they could point clients in the direction of all the support they needed
7. We've also had to be firm about what donations we can accept – having a clear list to work from and graciously refusing donations which are not on the 'list'
8. Storage can be a problem – when our 'free' storage ended abruptly, we had a lot of work to find an alternative free space that was suitable
9. Share what you're doing – not just on social media but in the church. Let the church know what you're doing – if you don't tell them, they won't know!
10. Initially we hoped to be able to offer support for 3 months and over, as this would have meant an opportunity to connect in person with clients. However, due to storage space restrictions, we have so far been unable to take this next step.

## Useful Resources

Baby Basics – <http://baby-basics.org.uk/>

Cinnamon Network micro-grants - <http://www.cinnamonnetwork.co.uk/projects/>

Baby Basics Salisbury - <http://www.facebook.com/babybasicssalisbury/>