

# Scottish regional council spreads the Gospel in schools

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The Highland Council in Scotland has joined forces with an evangelical Christian group to spread their message to primary school children.

The Council authorised a CD-ROM produced in the United States by the creationist group *Answers In Genesis* to be given to all children in its 183 primary schools. It distributed the CD at the request of the JAM (Jesus and Me) Trust, an evangelical Christian organisation based in Scotland which spreads the Christian gospel in East Kilbride and surrounding areas.

The JAM Trust claims 450,000 copies of the CD-ROM were produced for distribution in the UK this year. At first glance, the CD appears to be an advent calendar, but is in fact a Trojan horse for spreading the Christian gospel. Earlier this month, copies of the CD were also given out free with copies of *The Scotsman* newspaper.

Nick Noble, a parent of a six year old who was given the CD in school told the NSS: "I was horrified when my son brought home a CD-ROM containing an "advent calendar" which on a cursory examination is linked to a creationist group in the USA. If schools wish to teach a range of religious views in a balanced context that is one thing, but this is totally unacceptable. It was thoughtless of the school to allow a young child to bring home a gift which I then had to take away or spend many hours teaching my own child about differing religious views which at his age I really don't think would be appropriate."

On 14 December, the Advent Calendar CD, which purports to explain the "true meaning of Christmas" tells children: "*When God first created the world, it was not the same as it was today – everything was good. The first man and woman, Adam and Eve, were told they could eat the fruit of any tree in the Garden of Eden except one. They disobeyed God and ate from that tree. That was the start of things going wrong and death came into the world.*" Children are then informed "*Christ died for the ungodly*".

A message on 18 December encourages children to pray, advising (quoting from Matthew 6:5-14) that when they pray, they should not "*be like hypocrites, for they love to pray in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men*".

On 19 December children are warned "*God is light and we cannot hide anything from him, He knows the secrets in our hearts.*"

Stephen Evans, Campaigns Manager at the National Secular Society, said: "It is wholly inappropriate for local authorities to favour one religion or belief over another. In this instance they appear to have completely ignored their responsibility to be religiously neutral in favour of evangelising to young and impressionable children. Local authorities must think twice before carrying out the work of evangelical groups".

The Highland Council declined to issue a formal comment but have acknowledged that parents should have been given the opportunity to refuse the material, and have apologised for any upset

caused.

See also: [\*Too much religion on Shetland school advisory board\*](#)

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