

## A.F.I.A.

During the past 11 years since I was welcomed into the branch at St. Faith's, Lee on the Solent I have always been a keen supporter of the AFIA project. During this time the support has mostly been by raising funds in a variety of enjoyable events and providing food for the Christmas Party that followed on after the annual AFIA holiday. This year I was asked to join the team as a helper when a day out was organised on the Isle of Wight – of course I readily agreed.

August 2<sup>nd</sup> was the chosen day, the weather forecast the day before was somewhat disappointing but ever hopeful we left in the mini-buses to pick up Mums and children from the Women's Refuges in Fareham/Gosport and Havant for our onward journey by Hovercraft to Ryde. The weather was as forecast but we were still fairly optimistic that it would clear up!

The forward party had changed the 'beach' plans and when we arrived at St. John's Church Hall everything was set up to receive the excited (and wet) visitors. A welcome cuppa was gratefully received and various activities kept all amused until lunch time. Sylvia and her team provided assorted sandwiches, crisps, drink and fruit in a goody bag for everyone and we all enjoyed meeting new friends while we ate our meal.

After lunch families were welcome to venture outside but only a few braved the rain, everyone else joined in with assorted games and crafts. Val and her daughter, Margaret and Elizabeth were able to keep everyone entertained with a constant supply of ideas and we enthusiastically joined in.

Soon it was time for everyone to get ready to travel on the bus back to the Long John Silver restaurant where pre-ordered hot meals were served together with a drink. All too soon it was time to leave the dry café and walk across to the Hovercraft terminal for our return trip - and it was still raining!!

We arrived back at our various drop off points about 6.45 with some very tired children – and Mums and helpers, but despite the weather they had all had a good, different day out thanks to the AFIA project and the funds raised by Mothers' Union members in the Portsmouth Diocese.

Liz Emery