



Students from the Bay CofE School and Christ the King College at Taizé with Bishop Jonathan

Taizé trips deepen our faith

IT is the third year in a row that teenagers from the Isle of Wight have headed to the Taizé Community in France - and this year it was a record number.

A total of 56 young people, mostly from Christ the King College in Newport and The Bay CofE School in Sandown, spent a week there at the end of June and start of July. Others joined them from Cowes.

Bishop Jonathan and staff from the two schools were among those leading the trip again. For some of the young people, it was the second or third time they have visited.

The students joined hundreds of other young people from across the world at the ecumenical community for prayer, worship and Bible study - as well as helping with cooking, cleaning and other community tasks.

The daily services include the distinctive Taizé chants and times of silence. For many of the students, a break from digital input from phones and TVs helped them to focus on God.

Nia Kurian, from All Saints Church, Gurnard, said: "I found it new and different, compared to church services on the island. I enjoyed the chants that sounded angelic, and the silence allowed

me to pray and reflect without losing my focus to other things."

Lola Squires, also from All Saints, Gurnard, said: "Taizé helped me to grow closer to God and to realise the importance of reading the Bible. I really enjoyed the worship and the silence. I found the silence really powerful."

Alesia Gidley was there for the third time - the first two years had been with The Bay School, before her switch to the Christ the King sixth form. She said: "I had forgotten how much the tranquility of Taizé helped me and gave me the reset that I needed. This year it helped me reconnect with my faith and pull myself closer to God."

And Hari Blair, who has just left Christ the King, was also there for the third time. He said: "It was a profound spiritual reset. I made international friends, had loads of fun and left feeling far better than when I arrived."

Meanwhile Deborah J, 15, from The Bay School, said: "Taizé was really cool, it was spiritual, it was calming and it was peaceful. You can be yourself, not thinking

about school pressures. It was a whole week with God and it was really nice."

And classmate Bella H, 15, said: "It was a homely place and I felt so calm. The overall silence calms you in a way that you can't explain - I slept so much better there. I wasn't very religious when I went, but I'm definitely trying to

look into becoming a Christian."

As well as the annual trip for these students, our diocese has also provided an opportunity for young adults aged 18-24 to join a group from Bath and Wells diocese later each summer for the past three years.

Among those who went this year was Rory Jacobs, from Harbour Church, Portsmouth (pictured above).

He said: "It has been a wonderful week of amazing conversations and time for prayer. You meet people from all sides of the political and spiritual spectrums, but everyone is coming from a place of love."

"The conversations about life and everything are so moving and special."



RE, and is stimulating conversations on spiritual themes within school by speaking in assemblies and creating displays. She has also hosted pizza and chat sessions for young people within St Francis Church and given 'care packages' to students taking GCSEs.

Our diocesan children, youth and families officer Heather Powney said: "There's no one-size-fits-all answer to youth work. Every community is different and every young person comes with their own experiences, questions and gifts. But what we do know is that young people flourish when we invest in real relationships, listen to their voices, and take their faith and their questions seriously."

"Today's young people - especially Gen Alpha - want to contribute, shape ideas and make things happen, not just sit back and watch. That means youth ministry works best when we trust young people with genuine responsibility, invite them to help shape what we do, and give them opportunities to lead and serve."

"Sometimes that means taking a chance on someone whose faith is still developing by inviting them to be part of the worship team or help with children's work. And sometimes it means recognising that the right pace is different for every group of young people, giving them the time and space they need to explore faith in ways that are authentic to them."

The various training courses that our diocese offers help to cement the idea that our churchgoers need to understand and engage with teenagers to discover the best way to introduce them to faith.

Dozens of paid staff and volunteers have already taken part in the **Youthscape Essentials course** that is part of our diocese's Rejuvenate strategy. They've discovered more about how young people respond to the culture they are growing up in, learnt key youthwork skills such as collaboration and managing behaviour, and understood more



Enjoying a water fight at the High Tide summer residential at Fairthorne Manor

Teenagers come closer to God on activity holiday

YOUNG people from churches around our diocese enjoyed their sixth High Tide residential holiday in five years.

They spent five days at the YMCA centre at Fairthorne Manor near Botley, enjoying raft-building, archery, woodland tracking - and the chance to learn more about God.

Those aged 11-18 come from churches of all denominations across the area, and meet regularly for High Tide youth services. This is the fifth summer that High Tide has led a residential holiday too, under the auspices of the charity Scripture Union.

The teenagers enjoyed sung worship, engaged in prayer reflections, discussed Bible passages in groups, and prayed together during the five days.

They enjoyed a water slide, night hike, outdoor games, and team challenges. Diocesan young

vocations champion the Rev Lizzie Davidson also talked to the young people about how God might be calling them.

The overall theme related to the gifts God gives to us, and each day involved studying a different Bible character. The teenagers also showed off some their own gifts in a talent show on the final evening.

One of the leaders, diocesan children, youth and families officer Heather Powney, said: "It's such a privilege to see God at work in the lives of these young people, especially to see how they have developed their faith over a number of years."

"It's exciting to see young musicians leading worship, teenagers praying for each others' needs, and their genuine care for each other."

"We also had some amazing activities as well, and there was a lot of fun and laughter."

about adolescent development. The course consists of 10 two-hour sessions and can be taken in person or online. The next in-person course starts on September 10 in St Peter's, Petersfield.

And some of our clergy have been specifically selected to take part in the **Youthscape Launchpad programme**, which aims to support churches in developing and growing their youth

ministry where there is currently little to no provision for young people. These five sessions, each of which takes two-and-a-half hours, aim to help such clergy think strategically about how to develop youthwork from scratch. The next course begins on September 17.

To discover more, see: www.portsmouth.anglican.org/cyf, or contact Heather on heather.powney@portsmouth.anglican.org