

We'll bring friends to experience Taizé too

HARI Blair knew that he wanted to go back to Taizé the moment he left last year.

He is one of 14 students from Christ the King College who will be returning to the ecumenical Christian community in France this summer. They'll be joined by another 20 from the Isle of Wight school making their first visit.

Bishop Jonathan will join those 34 students, plus another 12 from The Bay CofE School in Sandown, during their eight-day pilgrimage. It will be the second summer that the bishop has led a group from both schools to the Taizé Community.

They'll meet hundreds of young people from across the globe to experience prayer, Bible study and Taizé-style worship songs, take part in community activities, and have a chance to talk about faith.

Hari, 16, said: "I knew I wanted to go back to Taizé the second I left. It was an incredibly special experience that I see as pivotal in my relationship with Jesus. I am looking forward to reuniting with friends I made last year and making many more! I'm excited to see what God will teach me this year in that truly wonderful place."

Rachael Busby, 18, who also went in 2024, said: "It's so removed from the busy lives we have here, and so peaceful. I felt that I couldn't make the most of it last year as I had mocks, but this year my A-levels will be finished before I go."

Amelie Reddecliff, 18, has felt a



Students from Christ the King College preparing to go to Taizé in France

change since attending Taizé last summer. She said: "I definitely feel more confident about my faith. It was great last year to read the Bible in different languages and to study it in small groups."

And newcomer Kato Paul, 18, said: "Amelie's enthusiasm certainly helped to persuade me to go. It will be great to have a break after our exams and learn something new."

Danny Spooner, 17, is looking forward to a 'phone cleanse' – a break from staring at his mobile – and the chance to experience silence. Lilly Valvona, 17, feels the same. She and Sam Willis, 18, are part of the worship band at Christ the King and are looking forward to seeing how others worship.

And Maisie Brenchley, who is 19 and visited last summer, has persuaded her twin sister Hannah and her brother Josh, 16, to come along.

Meanwhile, six students from The Bay CofE School are also going back to Taizé after experiencing it last year. Alfie, aged 16, said: "I loved the simple way of life. There are no distractions and it is really peaceful. I am looking forward to relaxing and talking to friends. I have encouraged others to sign up after having such a positive experience."

And Megan, 15, who went last year, said: "Before I went I was worried about whether I would get time to charge up my phone during the trip. However, once I was there I didn't even use my phone and didn't charge it for three days."

These teenagers will be at Taizé from June 28 until July 6. Some young adults aged 18-30 from our diocese are also heading to Taizé with Bishop Jonathan. It's part of a separate trip from July 19-27, alongside other young people from the Diocese of Norwich.