



Above left: worship at the Taizé Community; right: the bishop with staff, clergy and students from our diocese

Teenagers inspired by Taizé community

STUDENTS from two of our church schools enjoyed a pilgrimage to the Taizé Community so much that they'd love to go again.

Bishop Jonathan led a group of teenagers from Christ the King College in Newport and The Bay C of E School in Sandown to the ecumenical Christian community in France. They joined hundreds of other young people for worship, prayer and discussion about the Christian faith. They experienced the daily chores and worship that helps to crystallise the sense of community there.

It's the second year in a row the bishop has led a pilgrimage for young people to Taizé. Fourteen students from the Bay School joined 17 from Christ the King College.

Alesia Gidley, 15, from Holy Trinity Church, Bembridge, and The Bay C of E School, said: "The worship was beautiful, and the sense of community was amazing. I wasn't sure if I was a Christian before I went, but I believed in God already

and knew that someone was protecting me. But I felt at peace immediately."

Classmate Megan Ayling, 15, said: "I had been questioning my faith, but I found RE interesting. I felt like Christianity would suit me, and I was excited to go to Taizé. It has really affected me in a positive way, and I'd like to find a church to go to."

Christ the King student Hari Blair, 16, who goes to St David's RC Church in East Cowes, said: "It was life-changing. The worship was beautiful, and you feel the presence of Jesus around you, and with the people around you. It's something I've never experienced before."

Fellow student Charlie Holt, 16, said: "The choir was heavenly in every form. I also found the silence one of the few opportunities I've had to pray without being disturbed by cars or children playing outside."

Amy Elcome-Wright, 16, said: I got a brand new experience having never left the UK. The silence

was a challenge and it felt very overwhelming but slowly I grew to the peace. Overall it was a really nice experience to reminisce on what to be grateful for and reflect."

Classmate Matteo Marango, also 16, said: "I found it a peaceful environment, especially as the worship includes 10 minutes of silence each time. I felt a lot calmer afterwards."

Harry Cooksey, 16, said: "My favourite part was the songs and chants, because it sounds so beautiful when everyone sings. It's also good because it's not just one form of Christianity that you discover there."

Pepper Bohol, 15, said the worship reminded her of worship back in the Philippines. Kai Doidge, 15, said the inclusive atmosphere was very moving. And Joshua Magura, 16, enjoyed the sense of community.

To read more and to see a video from their Taizé trip, see: www.portsmouth.anglican.org/taize