



GATHERED

An introductory resource on engaging young people and young adults in a post-pandemic society, in line with our new diocesan vision




“YOUTH MINISTRY... IS A PROCESS THAT IS GRADUAL, RESPECTFUL, PATIENT, HOPEFUL, TIRELESS AND COMPASSIONATE”

CV 236



THE ARCHDIOCESE
of BIRMINGHAM



KYT

CONTENTS

Have a read of our new resource, and find tips, ideas, and some new information on engaging young people in today's society. Also, how we can create authentic roles for them to utilise their unique talents to enliven and expand our vibrant and joyful parishes and local communities.

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“GOD SPEAKS TO THE CHURCH AND TO THE WORLD THROUGH THE YOUNG”

(FINAL DOCUMENT OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS ON YOUNG PEOPLE, FAITH AND VOCATIONAL DISCERNMENT, PARA 64)

CHRISTUS VIVIT

The groundbreaking Synodal Exhortation 'Christus Vivit' gives us a great insight into the minds and hearts of young people today. It is a personal, honest and hopeful letter from Pope Francis to young people, in response to the worldwide discussion held on 'young people, faith and vocational discernment' in 2018. It is something that we must hold close to our own hearts, and try to action to the best of our ability.

In the 2018 Synod, young people of all faiths and none were encouraged to enter into a discussion about faith. They were asked how they felt about multiple current issues and elements of society and religion as a whole. The Church then responded with Christus Vivit, a personal and life giving letter from the Pope to all young people. With KYT having been a part of the 2018 exhortation process our experience has taught us a lot about young peoples attitudes to faith and spirituality. On the whole, the young people we spoke to felt more able to call themselves spiritual, but were hesitant to say religious. They also had a real yearning for a sense of belonging, to a God, to a community, to a wider family. It was also interesting that they would often not associate spirituality with religion, but instead see spirituality as its own entity. In response, Pope Francis writes "I hope that you will be serious enough about yourselves to make an effort to grow spiritually" (CV, 159). This exhortation is a huge step for a the Church, as Pope Francis gives all young people the autonomy that some mentioned they sometimes feel is restricted by religion, and he wills them to actively pursue their own spirituality, with the support of the Church, which we see again at 202; "The proliferation and growth of groups and movements predominantly associated with the young can be considered the work of the Holy Spirit who constantly shows us new paths".

THE REALITY STATS:

7 out of 10 young people today have no religious affiliation



In the UK, 10 per cent of 16-29 year-olds identify as Catholic.



BUT THERE IS GOOD NEWS...

(Bullivant, 2018)

"Members of Generation Z in their late teens and early twenties are more likely to believe in God than millennials in their late twenties and thirties, according to polling that suggests the trend for younger people being less religious is changing."

(The Times, 2020)

WE ARE ENCOURAGED TO LEARN ABOUT AND GROW IN FAITH AND RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AT WHATEVER STAGE OF LIFE WE ARE AT; AND IN CHRISTUS VIVIT (2018) POPE FRANCIS SAYS OF WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM JESUS' YOUTH, "THESE ASPECTS OF JESUS' LIFE CAN PROVE INSPIRING FOR [US AS ADULTS AND] ALL THOSE YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE DEVELOPING AND PREPARING TO TAKE UP THEIR MISSION IN LIFE. THIS INVOLVES GROWING IN A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FATHER", AND THIS IS SOMETHING WE AS ADULTS ARE CALLED TO HELP THE YOUNG PEOPLE IN OUR COMMUNITIES TO DO.

DIOCESAN VISION

There is a new two-year synodal process taking place in the Catholic Church from October 2021 to October 2023.

The overall theme is 'For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission'. The Synodal process is asking parishes, and all Catholics young and old important questions that will help to shape the focus of the Catholic Church as we look to the future. It's outcomes will be taken on board by the Archdiocese and the fruits will be discerned and embedded. As a diocese that is faithful to the mission entrusted to us by Jesus Christ, this process will help us to become a community that is full of missionary disciples who work together co-responsibly in vibrant communities of faith, more joyful in our service of God and neighbour. In line with this synod, we have been given a 'Diocesan Vision', help us focus on some key demographics and areas that we can focus on together to better aid the Churches Mission.

Synod
2021
2023

FOUR FOCUS POINTS OF OUR VISION:

- **Evangelisation** - Encouraging others to know God's love for them by inviting them to church, to pray and to encounter Christ, and to groups where they can learn about Him. Forming missionary disciples and missionary parishes.
- **Formation** - Growing leaders in our churches, schools and parish communities, by providing both spiritual and pastoral formation and support, to help prepare us for new roles. Helping you to understand more about your faith in order to deepen your personal relationship with God.
- **Liturgy and Worship** - Invigorating and deepening our worship and sacramental celebrations so that we share in, and radiate, the divine life of God. Encouraging others to join us in prayer to our Heavenly Father.
- **Social Outreach** - Building up the common good through our charitable outreach in the giving of our time, our resources and our love to those who need it most. Inviting others to join us in charitable work.



DIOCESAN VISION STATEMENT:

We are called to be a Catholic diocese which is: faithful to the mission entrusted to us by Jesus Christ full of missionary disciples who work together co-responsibly in vibrant communities of faith, joyful in their service of God and neighbour.

Pope Francis tells us:

"Let us ask the Lord to free the Church from those who would make her grow old, encase her in the past, hold her back or keep her at a standstill. But let us also ask him to free her from another temptation: that of thinking she is young because she accepts everything the world offers her, thinking that she is renewed because she sets her message aside and acts like everybody else. No!...The Church is young when she shows herself capable of constantly returning to her source" (CV,35).

We are being given the opportunity to speak about our experiences of the Church. We are being supported to use our voices for positive change, and we are encouraged to get involved in our communities to evangelise and be joyful in our service; through social action, evangelisation and the encouragement and growth of Catholic Youth.

We must be willing to play our part as best we can to ensure the longevity and life of the Church. We are learning to deepen our trust in God's loving care and to respond in ways that show we care for each other. We have the opportunity to reflect on our faith and on the role our churches play in society.

We know that together we can overcome any challenges and continue to support the Church's mission in the months ahead, working with God as our guide. We must take this opportunity to do all we can to make sure the Gospel is seen and heard daily through the example of our faith-filled lives.



ENGAGEMENT AND ACCOMPANIMENT

"What can we elderly persons give to the young? "We can remind today's young people, who have their own blend of heroic ambitions and insecurities, that a life without love is an arid life". What can we tell them? "We can tell fearful young people that anxiety about the future can be overcome". What can we teach them? "We can teach those young people, sometimes so focused on themselves, that there is more joy in giving than in receiving, and that love is not only shown in words, but also in actions" (CV, 197)

We have seen the witness and heard the voices of younger generations in many different ways over the past 5 years. Through Synods, World Youth Days, and them having the ability to share their experiences and lived realities on media and worldwide platforms.

Two of the main points to come out of the 2018 Synod on 'young people, faith and vocational discernment', were the ideas of the need to better engage young people, and also then the need to accompany them on their journey within the Church and in God's word, so that they may feel useful, involved, and listened to. The Archdiocese of Birmingham, along with many others all over the world, has taken the call to better engage and accompany very seriously, dedicating time, energy and resources into projects and initiatives that might better encourage young people to come back to the Church, and then, to stay and be active members of it.

Young people, as we know, are indeed the future of the Church, but we are also reminded that young people are the "NOW" of God (Pope Francis, Panama WYD, 2019) too. We must be ready and willing to open the doors and welcome in young people back in post-pandemic, and to have authentic and meaningful roles for them, whether that be in social action projects, ministering, reading, welcoming, leading prayer/catechesis groups or helping to lead the youth and liturgy groups.

Young people have such busy lives. They are constantly connected to everyone. They can be reached at all times, and success is expected from them in every aspect. The Church wishes to be a place that can be turned to at any time in their life, and can offer a steady and constant retreat from hectic everyday life.

Some young people today may feel that a sense of accomplishment makes spending time outside of things like homework, exams, responsibilities and stresses. Luckily, The Kenelm Youth Trust along with lots of other charities and projects, have created great programmes and resources to encourage young people to gain experience, have responsibility and get qualifications from their commitment, as well as a community and a home in Jesus.



UK TEENS ARE MORE LIKELY THAN MILLENNIALS TO BELIEVE IN GOD

A survey by YouGov in late November 2020, found that 23% of Britons aged 16 to 24 said they believe in God, with an additional 13% saying they believe in a "higher spiritual power. The number is up from January, suggesting some may have embraced a belief in God during the pandemic.

"JESUS SAID, 'LET THE YOUTH COME TO ME, AND DO NOT HINDER THEM, FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN BELONGS TO SUCH AS THESE."

MT 19:14

Social action is intertwined with the core principles of Catholic Social Teaching. It is the movement of people coming together to tackle an issue, support other people, or improve their local area. It involves people giving their time and other resources for the common good. Social action is something that can create so much good for others, while educating both our communities (youth groups, parishes, dioceses) and the wider world on important issues.

Social action can often take place in schools, colleges or communities i.e. parishes. These are just some of the places where there have been great amounts of success with initiatives that help people other than our immediate circles. Through synodal discussions, and the wealth of experience we have with working with young people within the Church, we know that young people and young adults want to be a part of meaningful change, and if the church is a vessel through which they are able to do this, then it should be encouraged and facilitated.

Social action offers a deeper level of commitment to faith and to our fellow man. By offering ways of being active for the good of society within our norm we are able to elevate our participation and allow God to shine through us to others.

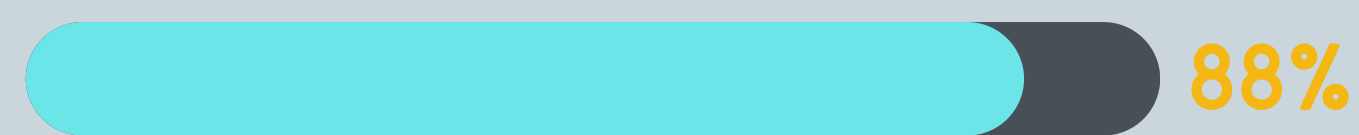
When it comes to participation, we know that personal invitation is key. Asking someone specifically to take part in an initiative or idea because of their personal gifts and talents that can aid in the success of something, not only helps them to feel involved, but it also aids in their seeking of community.

YOUTH MINISTRY SHOULD CLEARLY INCORPORATE VARIOUS MEANS AND RESOURCES THAT CAN HELP YOUNG PEOPLE GROW IN FRATERNITY, TO LIVE AS BROTHERS AND SISTERS, TO HELP ONE ANOTHER, TO BUILD COMMUNITY, TO BE OF SERVICE TO OTHERS, TO BE CLOSE TO THE POOR. (CV, 215)

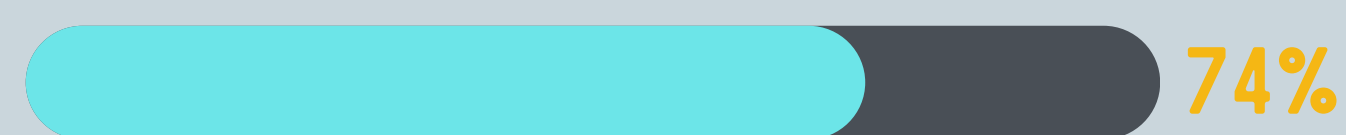
In the last few years, for various reasons, it is true to say that participation in mass has declined, but social action is one of the highest forms of engagement of young people. It is up to us to facilitate that opportunity post pandemic, and reignite the flame of faith within them that good can come of action and meaningful participation.

2,081 interviews with 10 to 20 year olds in their homes between October and November 2019 from the Government:

88% of young people were eager to make a difference in society



74% cared about making the world a better place and believed they could make a difference



This sense of agency in relation to their community and the world is associated with higher levels of young people's participation in meaningful social action. (NYSA Survey, 2019)

FORMS OF SOCIAL ACTION

- JPII AWARD VIA THE KENELM YOUTH TRUST
- FAITH IN ACTION AWARD VIA CYMFED AND BCYS
- COMMUNITY OUTREACH
- FOOD BANK DONATIONS
- LITTER-PICKING
- COFFEE/SOUP MORNINGS
- OUTREACH TO ELDERLY/HOMELESS
- FUNDRAISING EVENTS
- CREATING AWARENESS/WRITING TO MP'S
- TACKLING LONELINESS
- CREATING WELCOME FOR MARGINALISED GROUPS
- ACTING ON THE POPES CALL TO HELP THE EARTH AND THE MARGINALISED WITHIN IT

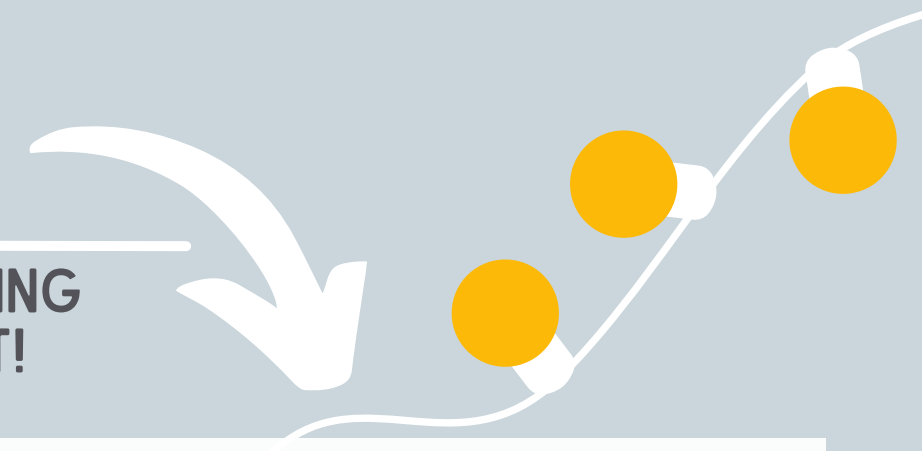
INTENTIONAL DISCIPLESHIP

As a Trust we use the concept of 'intentional discipleship' to inform our offerings of events, training, and opportunities. The book 'Forming Intentional Disciples' comes from the mind of the transformational writer and researcher Sherry Weddel. The book has really helped us to model our events to be accessible for young people and adults, at whatever stage in their faith journey they might be. Below, some of our annual events are put into five thresholds of postmodern conversion or evangelisation. Take a look at how our events span each of them.

Each event, training programme and resource we hold or create help us to open a conversation about faith and belief, teaches us as members of the Church how to ask thought-provoking questions and establish an atmosphere of trust, when to tell the Great Story of Jesus, how to help someone respond to God's call to intentional discipleship.

PROGRESSION THROUGH EVENTS

*EACH EVENT IS NOT RESTRICTED TO ONE SECTION OF THE CYCLE, AND ANYONE WANTING TO BE INVOLVED IS WELCOME AT ANY EVENT, AS LONG AS THEY FIT THE AGE BRACKET!



KYT EVENTS	INITIAL TRUST	CURIOSITY	OPENNESS	SEEKING	INTENTIONAL DISCIPLESHIP
IT'S A KNOCKOUT					
FLAME					
LOURDES					
FEARLESS					
OVERSEAS MISSION TRIPS					
MISSION @ HOME					
BCYS SOLI RETREAT					
PROUD TO PROFESS					
YOUNG ADULT GATHERINGS					
YOUTH ALPHA					
YOUNG ADULT RETREAT					
JPII AWARD					
SUMMER CAMP					
WORLD YOUTH DAY					
BEING ON OUR MISSION TEAM					

“IF WE DO NOT SEE THE PARISH AS A CENTER OF EVANGELIZATION AND APOSTOLIC FORMATION, WE ARE DENYING PRIEST AND THEIR PASTORAL COLLABORATORS ONE OF THE GREAT, ABIDING JOYS OF MINISTRY AND ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL PROTECTIONS AGAINST CYNICISM AND BURNOUT” (S. WEDDELL, 'FORMING INTENTIONAL DISCIPLES' P. 95).

RESOURCES

BCYS provides a highly experienced, qualified and ambitious team ready to support your parish as you engage and serve young people. Let us do the hard work! We are here to inspire, recruit, train and resource your volunteer parish youth ministers.

BCYS TRAINING & EVENTS

- **BETHSAIDA** - We are running a parish youth leadership training programme designed to enable volunteers to gain the tools and knowledge to begin parish youth ministry in their community. Bethsaida has successfully supported volunteers and led to the opening of over 60 parish youth groups across the diocese. Each course consists of a series of workshops combined with practical experience of youth work in your parish or deanery. (Certificate from Archdiocese)
- **YOUTH ALPHA** - Get in touch and we can support you in training your team, preparing your sessions and getting your group up and running. This resource is really easy to run and a great way to engage your young people in questions of faith in a fresh and relevant way, in line with the new Diocesan focus of youth and evangelisation for young people aged 13 - 25 years. If there is currently no youth ministry in your parish then this could be a great way to launch and get young people involved and interested in their faith.
- **MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID** - (MHFA) courses are for everyone who works with, lives with or supports young people aged 8-18 years. They will teach you the skills and confidence to spot the signs of mental health issues in a young person, offer first aid and guide them towards the support they need. In doing so, you can speed up a young person's recovery and stop a mental health issue from getting worse. (Certificate from Mental Health First Aid England)
- **YOUTH MINISTRY WORKER** - Get in touch today and we can help you to set up a youth initiative with free and exciting resources, train and recruit volunteers and support you in creating a long term sustainable youth initiative, without trying to do it on your own.

FURTHER READING

BOOKS -

- Mass Exodus: Catholic Disaffiliation in Britain and America since VII - Stephen Bullivant
- Christus Vivit - The Pope's 2019 Synodal Exhortation and letter to young people
- Forming Intentional Disciples - Sherry Weddell

WEBSITES -

- www.synodfruits.org.uk - great informative website helping to share the fruits of the 2018 Synod and soon the 21-23 Synod too though free resources!
- www.alpha.org/youth - Courses exploring life faith and meaning, made especially for young people
- www.caminohouse.com/projects-1 - Camino House brings together the experience and skills of three experienced charity and faith sector leaders. Free and apt resources to download
- www.millionminutes.org - Dedicated to enabling young people to transform their lives and lead change in their community
- www.faithcafe.org - A whole library of easy-to-run, TV-quality resources is available and is categorised into four main areas: Faith Formation, Sacraments, Youth and General Resources

TO MENTION BUT A FEW!

WHO ARE WE?

BCYS

The Birmingham Catholic Youth Service (BCYS) is part of the The Kenelm Youth Trust, a charity that is committed to providing life changing opportunities for young people within the Catholic Church, helping each person to reflect upon their life of faith and how they respond to the call of Jesus Christ in their lives. The Trust has been established by the Archdiocese of Birmingham to oversee and bring together the wide variety of youth work that is undertaken in various settings throughout the Archdiocese. These include: two residential retreat centres; our BCYS team; support for those working within school chaplaincy; the organisation of school missions, **parish outreach** and training for both adult leaders and young people, events all over the diocese and throughout the year and pilgrimages.

WHAT DO WE DO?

BCYS provides a highly experienced, qualified and ambitious team ready to support your parish as you engage and serve young people. Let us do the hard work! We are here to inspire, recruit, train and resource your volunteer parish youth ministers. It is going to be a rewarding journey! we can create authentic roles for them to utilise their unique talents to enliven and expand our vibrant and joyful parishes and local communities. We hope you will contact us, look us up on social media outlets or visit our website for a whole host of useful resources, inspiration, and news of all that is happening locally to you. We support all aspects of parish youth ministry, but our work can be broken down into the following key areas:

Communication Support Resources Events Training

HOW CAN WE HELP?

Maria Bracken
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Yemisi Wisoba
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Libby Cox
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Anna Howard
Part-time Parish Youth Worker for North Staffs
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CONTACT ANY OF US WITH ANY QUERIES OR FOR SOME HELP WITH GROWING OR SETTING UP MINISTRY INITIATIVES IN YOUR PARISH. WE'RE HAPPY TO HELP AND MAKE IT AS EASY AS POSSIBLE FOR YOU

FOLLOW US TO STAY UP TO DATE:
FOR RESOURCES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND COMMUNITY



THE KENELM YOUTH TRUST



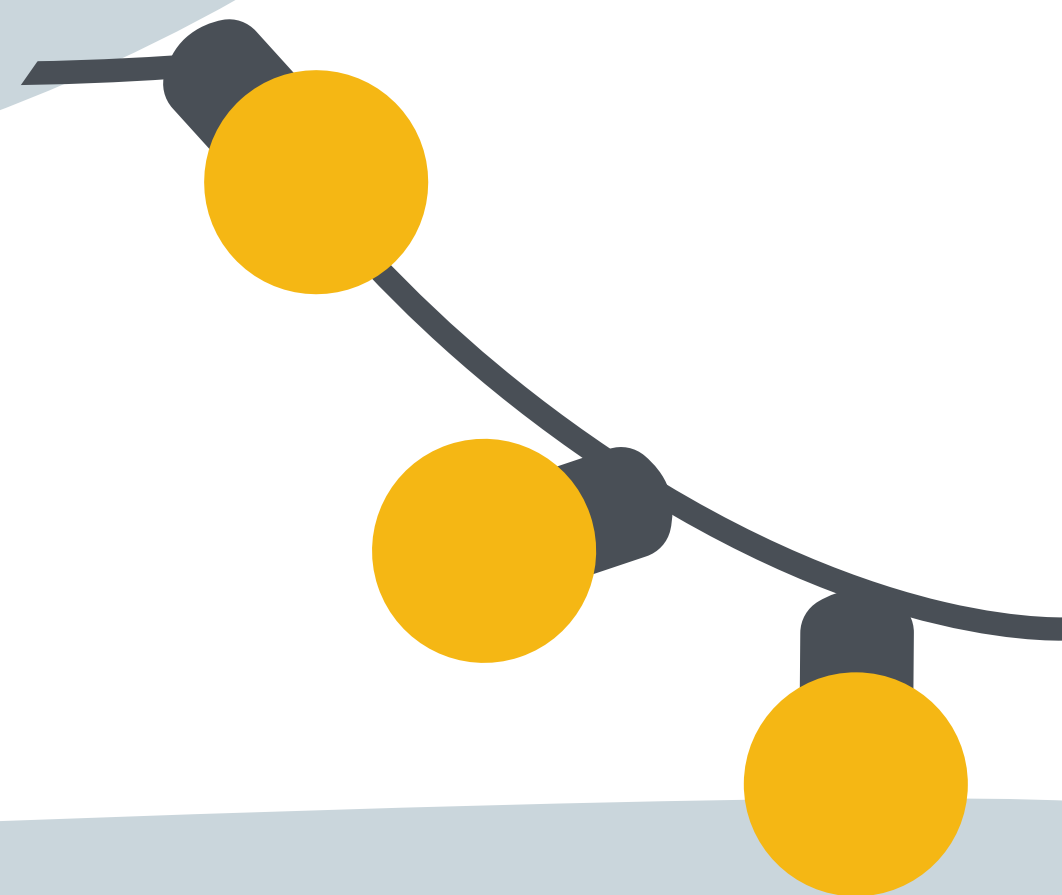
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THE ARCHDIOCESE *of* BIRMINGHAM