

# YOUTH WORK

## Report for St Giles' APCM - 25<sup>th</sup> April 2018

### IGNITE am

This is our regular Sunday morning group which looks at how our Christian faith and a relationship with Jesus affects our whole lives – whether at school, with our families, with our friends or just on our own – and how it might affect our view of the world. There are currently about 12 or so young people in the group although not everyone comes every week. Apart from the benefit to the young people of having age appropriate and relevant Christian fellowship, discussion and teaching, I feel that IGNITE am is an important part of our offer to families considering coming to St Giles' – we have regular activities for both their children and their teenagers.

### IGNITE plus

This new group has been running since May last year. It has a different format to Sunday mornings with more games, snacks and activities, and with discussion which leads into Christian elements in the second half of the session, which makes it more accessible for young people who do not have a faith. It's intended that young people can bring their friends. They can also choose the subjects we cover. Topics so far have included *Why are we here?*, *BFF (Friendship)*, *Mental Health* and *What Shapes You?*

### NEON

NEON is our youth club on Friday nights, which is open to young people in the community. We now have a group of regulars who come every week (including some who also come to IGNITE, but most don't have any other church contact) plus some others who come from time to time. There are currently 16 on the register. With this new group we have been able to start up trips again as well as activities like karaoke, cooking and crafts. Because this group is younger than the previous group, we also get to meet their parents when they are dropped off and collected.

### SCHOOLS

This time last year I was helping Emma with the *Key To Life* interactive mobile at Glebe and Breakspear – these sessions were very successful and gave an interactive presentation of the life of Jesus within the context of the school's R.E. Curriculum. Emma and I were also invited into Pentland Field School (which covers both the primary and secondary age range) for their Harvest assemblies – we led a prayer and a blessing at each assembly. Unfortunately their visit to church for their Christmas service had to be cancelled due to snow. Looking ahead, in Spring 2019 the *GSUS Live* mobile classroom has been booked to come to Hillingdon again and we are very much hoping that Vyners will want to participate following its last visit there in 2016, which was well received by staff and pupils. Having said that, Vyners is not an easy school for churches to engage with, despite numerous attempts to follow up the last *GSUS Live* visit.

### HELPING WITH CHILDREN'S WORK

Although younger than the age range I specifically deal with, I have been involved in some areas of children's work to get to know the children (and their parents) before they get to youth work age, such as most sessions of Messy Church (where I am involved in the singing, have told the story a couple of times, and have conducted experiments in the guise of Dr Science!), Jack & Jill (usually playing guitar at their services in church) and Holiday Club.

### OTHER ACTIVITIES

A group of young people washed cars in aid of CLICK Rukiga in June, and some of the young people from

both IGNITE and NEON helped with Emma's *Big Pancake Party* on Shrove Tuesday this year. Coming up in July we are planning a tea party in aid of Shooting Star children's hospice. We also contribute to the sponsorship of Sonia, a teenage girl from Rukiga. I also led the Advent All Age Service with the themes of waiting and light, which involved candles, tea lights, torches and a disco ball!

## **ONE HILLINGDON**

I meet with *ONE Hillingdon*, a group of youth and children's workers from a variety of church denominations in the Borough, to share ideas and resources and to encourage each other. We have planned and run two large events for young people in the Borough – *ONE Christmas* and *ONE Easter*. I have organised the prayer space at each of these events with help from Emma. We have a vision for a regular event to bring together church youth groups from across the Borough for fun, games, fellowship, worship and teaching. I have been encouraging young people from IGNITE and NEON to attend to (hopefully) see the Christian faith and church in a different way, which is something I am very keen to do, especially as most of the young people here will have only experienced the St Giles' way of doing things.

## **TRAINING**

In July Emma and I completed a year-long course called *Going Deeper* run by the Diocese and held monthly at Diocesan House. In January we attended a course at Church House and in February we also attended an encouraging morning called *Growing Children and Youth Work in the Willesden Area* at St Peter's Harrow. We have also met with other Anglican youth and children's workers in the Willesden area to share information and ideas and to have input into the Willesden Area training.

## **THANKS**

The youth work would not run without Tessa Pike (IGNITE am leader), Chris Turner, Ramona Odell and Rebecca Bennett (IGNITE helpers), Juli Harris Powell, Rebecca Bennett, Ashley Nichols and Kevin O'Donnell (NEON leaders), Anne James and Chris Turner (prayer support) and anyone else who has helped, prayed or given encouragement during the year, including the members of the Staff Team who visit us at IGNITE am once a month. I would also like to thank Emma – we often talk over ideas and I think we work well together. This year I would particularly like to thank Tessa on behalf of the church – she has been a leader for Pathfinders and then IGNITE for over 20 years and I will very much miss her monthly input to IGNITE am now she has moved to Devon. If anyone else is interested in working with the young people in any capacity please let me know. Thanks are also due to David Millen and the Hall Committee for their help and understanding. And finally, and above all else, thanks to God for answering prayers and keeping me going over the past year.

## **FINAL THOUGHTS**

I would like to encourage you all - the whole church - to take an interest in the young people and help them to feel part of, not just IGNITE or NEON, but the St Giles' family as a whole. For young people belonging has been shown to be an important part of their faith development and we all have a role to play in that. Recent surveys (e.g *Gen Z: Rethinking Culture - Youth For Christ, 2017*) have shown what a great influence parents have on their children's thinking about faith and religion (even if the parents don't believe that is the case!) so the discussion of faith at home and parents encouraging their sons and daughters to participate in activities are important parts of the jigsaw. I see youthwork as a partnership between those of us who are directly involved in IGNITE and NEON, parents (and other family members), and the church as a whole. There are many influences today pulling young people away from faith but if we all work together, and with the help of the Holy Spirit, we can help young people come to find their own faith, one that they can own for themselves, and one that will sustain them throughout their lives.