

Children and Young People at St Thomas', Trowbridge.

Our values, strategies and aims.

'Jesus focused, Holy Spirit led and 'joined up': to glorify Father God'.

Aim:

To be partners with God in assisting children and young people to come to experience the Risen Lord Jesus and come to faith in Him. And to live out their faith in home, school, work, street...everywhere.

To Keep, To Deepen, To Advance!

Within Junior Church & Young Peoples' Church:

- **Worshipping.** Giving children and young people opportunities to experience the wonderful nature of God and to praise, thank and worship him (including participation in the Youth Worship Band as appropriate). Within groups to introduce children and young people to the majesty and wonder of God. Within regular All Age Services to create inter-generational learning, celebrating and worshipping experiences (these also to create outreach opportunities).
- **Teaching** Bible truth and its application.
- **Enabling.** Encouraging personal response to God including personal prayer. Encouraging children and young people's own personal outreach to family and friends.
- **Discovering,** celebrating and sharing God's gifting in children and young people for the building up of the whole Church.
- **Building Friendship.** For young people to feel part of a community which values them and in which they value themselves and others. To assist in the growth of supportive networks of Christian friends.
- In all of these to provide a safe place for learning and responding to God. To be flexible, innovative and creative. To be open to however God wants 'Church' to be expressed and experienced (from Church groups to the skateboard park).
- To provide frequent and varied interface with adult Church.
- To encourage inter-generational unity within St Thomas' (and the whole Church!) and common purpose in aims and objectives. To truly be an All Age Family with *shared* values and goals, but celebrating the *diversity* of the Holy Spirit's gifting and of personalities and forms of expression of Bible-based Christian faith.

Taking personal faith forward.

- To support and resource family-centred Christian teaching. To encourage Christian parent(s) & guardian(s) to talk about the Christian faith with their children, to spend time praying with their children, to use Christian educational material in '121 times' with their children.
- To provide a network of dedicated adult prayer-supporters for each child and young person at St Thomas'.

- To encouraging young people to explore faith and gifting in peer-led teenage cells.
- To provide and support structured outreach groups and events such as 'Impax' ('Urban Saints'), youth worship and outreach (eg The Pulse), faith sharing and exploration (eg Youth Alpha) and one-off outreach events.
- To encourage and (as a church) to financially support children and young people's attendance at appropriate Christian training events (eg Youth Alpha Conferences, Youth Cell conferences, etc) and holiday residentials (eg New Wine, Soul Survivor, Tockington & other Christian camps, etc).
- To encourage and provide social events within the activities calendar of Church groups. These aim to extend fellowship networks, build relationships, integrate those less confident, outreach to friends.
- To follow up young people as they leave for university and work-places away from home. To provide information about their 'new' local churches, to make contact with new local churches on their behalf, to keep regular contact with young people, to provide fellowship events on their return from university, etc, to St Thomas' area in holidays (eg Mind the Gap).
- To cooperate with, pool resources with, encourage and network with other local churches in support of the above as appropriate.
- To offer support and assistance to other churches who are seeking it. To be a resource for others, for God.

Beyond 'Church' groups and activities.

- To encourage young people to join, or form, Christian groups within their schools for mutual support in their Christian faith, witness and outreach. To encourage these to meet weekly, take opportunities to have input into assemblies, to support high profile Christian events. To build bridges between school-friends and appropriate church events and groups through invitation to these events/groups.
- To identify and contact Christian teachers in local schools (identified via local church membership & young people's knowledge of school staff), to encourage setting up of staff-supported young people's groups in schools. To support such teachers in prayerful partnerships.
- To cooperate with other local churches in encouraging formation of groups within schools. Church Youth Workers – having gained agreement of schools – to visit and support these groups.
- For clergy and appropriate lay members to take up available opportunities to visit local schools, as part of bridge-building with schools.

Linked activities/groups.

- Support for families, friendship evangelism and mutual support is also provided by other church groups such as Parents & Toddlers, Messy Church, that meet mid-week.