



Update

June 2025

GSUS Live

What do you fear? This was one of our opening questions for students who attended one of our sixty-two GSUS live lessons at the end of the Spring term. During the week, 1600 students were involved in a RE lesson based on the themes of fear, rejection and forgiveness and looking at Jesus' teaching and life through these themes.

How did students answer the question around fear? Besides the expected answers of heights, enclosed spaces, spiders and snakes, we also had some more unusual answers such as hippos.

The question opened the RE lesson with students in Years 7, 8 and 9 across three schools. We spent a week in each school, firstly in Bishops Cleeve School, followed by Cheltenham Bournside, before finishing up at All Saints Academy. During the three

weeks, we were supported by volunteers, youth workers and church leaders from St. Matthew's Church, St. Michael's Bishops Cleeve, Bishops Cleeve Methodist, Woodmancote Church, Cheltenham Salvation Army, Gloucester Vineyard and

Abbey Church. The photos throughout this article will highlight the large number of volunteers involved in the project, (and we didn't even get a photo of everyone.) In addition to the lessons, we also used the resource with the Christian Unions at Bishops Cleeve and Bournside.

The resource was well received in each of the schools. One teacher said, "There's been a brilliant sense of buzz as

the students have asked, "Are we going to be doing some of this?" Part of the buzz was created by the transformation of the classroom, with banners all around the room and an iPad and headphones on each table. Everyone knew something



different was happening, even if they weren't sure what it was.

The lesson involved some initial discussion on the themes of the lesson followed by a presentation the students watched on the iPad. Students worked in pairs and engaged with the presentation, which included a story from the life of a fictional character who was struggling with one of the lesson themes. In pairs, the students had to give advice to the fictional character through a text message. The presentation also took students through a related Bible story and a worship video. Following the presentation, we gathered back as a whole class and explored each of the character's stories and then looked at how fear, rejection and forgiveness featured in Jesus' life and teaching. We particularly focused on how these themes can be found in the Easter story. The lesson enabled students to honestly share responses, with one teacher saying "It's been amazing to see some of the responses the kids have given".

"Our students love the music, giving advice to the various characters, and listening to the stories"

During the three weeks, we had some amazing conversations with students. For many students, it helped them see Jesus and the events of Easter from a different perspective. During one lesson, one student sat on their own and appeared completely disengaged and uninterested. Even during the part of the lesson with the iPad, they didn't appear to be interested. Throughout the lesson, we made various attempts to encourage them to engage more but to no avail. Everything about the student's body language was screaming "I am bored!" As the lesson came to an end, the teacher asked the student if they were okay. The student responded, "I didn't realise that someone could love me that much that

they would die for me?" These were



words we were not expecting and a clear demonstration that the student was not disengaged. During the lesson, he had understood the amazing reality of what



Jesus has done for us.

One teacher summed up the weeks brilliantly when they said, "It's been an amazing experience, and the students have absolutely loved it!" So did we!

GSUS Live was a great resource to use with the students, but just as importantly it has opened more opportunities for the future. As a result of the week, the churches in Bishops Cleeve have greater opportunities to work with the school. The week in All Saints gave us the chance to re-engage with a school we had worked in for many years, which will see us developing more work from the Autumn term. We are currently exploring whether we bring GSUS Live back next academic year.

We would like to say a special thank you

"It's been an amazing experience, and the students have absolutely loved it!"

to St. Matthew's and the Minister in Cheltenham who funded the three weeks through their Christmas appeal. We are considering whether we bring back GSUS Live next year.



Do you have what it takes to be the ultimate quiz champion? Then gather your friends and join us for our annual Quiz Night This is your chance to show off your knowledge and support the work of Youth for Christ Gloucestershire.



Saturday 22nd November 7-9pm
The Pavilion, Hatherley Lane, Cheltenham GL51 6NP



The Big Bash

"How will we fit everyone in?" asked one youth worker as young people poured through the doors of Gloucester Elim church for our Easter Big Bash. We kept counting as more young people arrived until 164 had gathered with their youth leaders.

With the room buzzing with excitement and the smell of hotdogs and popcorn we kicked off with some games. The excitement built as Teelow took to the stage. Teelow works for British Youth for Christ, and uses music to share Jesus with young people.

There was a great vibe as the young people listened, jumped, danced and connected with Teelow's songs and personal story of his love for Jesus. As he shared how Jesus had worked in his life, Teelow invited the young people to make

a decision to follow Jesus. Thirty-five young people came forward in response.

As is usual at the Big Bash, the responses came from a range of young people. Some attended a church, and some had come with their friends. Those young people had often not been given the opportunity to

hear the testimony of someone who followed Jesus. One in three young people want someone to tell them their story of faith. When they are given the opportunity to hear someone's testimony, half of them will respond

positively. The Big Bash provides young people the opportunity to hear someone's story.

On 4th July, our Summer Big Bash will be at Kendal Road, when we will be joined by Shaun Hornsby. Shaun is part of the leadership team of British Youth for Christ and a regular speaker at summer festivals.





The unhurried life

During July and August, I will be taking a Sabbatical. The constant pressures and challenges of leading a ministry over time can be a significant drain on energy and creativity. In the Bible, the concept of taking a break for rest and renewal is important. Despite knowing its importance, rest is often something I struggle to do. I am frequently on the go, and slowing down is often a challenge. In his book "Living in Christ's Presence" Dallas Willard writes "Ruthlessly eliminate hurry from your life." This is not something I am good at. A sabbatical provides this opportunity. It forces the elimination of hurry and provides the space to rest and connect with God.

Over the last twenty-four years, we have faced many challenges amidst the great opportunities. Whilst we have seen young people choose to follow Jesus, we have also faced many challenges. The team has grown and shrunk, and over two decades, we have seen it have to be completely reformed four times. We have been through a credit crunch, a pandemic and a cost of living crisis. Leading the organisation through this has been a real privilege, but it also comes with challenges. I know I need a moment to pause as we prepare for the next stage of ministry. I am also acutely aware of the need to stop and listen to God.

The challenge for me is not leaving the organisation in the hands of other people, as in Matt, we have a very capable pair of hands who will manage fine without me. The big challenge is the guilt of stopping. Sabbatical is an immense gift, that seems extravagant, yet will bring rewards down the line. I am very aware that many people don't get the opportunity for a sabbatical, which highlights the responsibility to use it well. Over the summer, I will be taking time to consider things we need to put in place for the future of the organisation. With Becca coming on board, it is another change to the team, but we also have more plans for the future. In the usual rush of ministry, finding the space to plan for this and to take time to hear what God is saying is a challenge.

I would love you to pray for me whilst I take some time out. Please pray for refreshing and renewal, and an open heart to hear what God is saying. Most importantly, please pray that I overcome my natural desire to strive, and ruthlessly eliminate hurry.





Year 6 Transition

"Do you get detention if you forget your homework?" asked one pupil during one of our Year 6 Transition lessons. Every year, during the summer term, we visit schools to talk with Year 6 students about their impending move to secondary school. The students all have a mixture of excitement, fear and questions. It is a huge move for them as they leave behind the familiarity of primary school.

Our lessons are built upon the well-loved "It's Your Move" book, and all of the students in the lessons receive a copy. With 180 students being involved in lessons this year, that is a lot of books! During the lesson, we look at how the students are feeling about their upcoming

move. We talk about the excitement and nervousness we get all mixed together when we go on a roller coaster. Giving young people the opportunity to talk about how they are feeling is important. We look at what they will miss about primary school, as well as what they are looking forward to in secondary school. Change is a challenge for many people, and we talk about Jesus calming the storm

and how we can turn to Him when life is challenging and ask Him to give us peace.

During the lessons, we also look at some top tips for starting secondary school, ranging from making wise decisions about friends, wise use of smart phones and social media, making the most of opportunities and knowing where to find the toilets! We also talk about any Christian Unions that are available in the

schools they will be moving to.

We finish off with an opportunity for the students to ask any question. They aren't all about detention! We hear questions about food, after school activities, transport and much more. By the end of the lesson, the



students have had a good opportunity to think things through and they feel a little more confident. This year we have managed to fit four school visits in before the students visit their new schools for a taster day.

Please pray for these students as they prepare for secondary school.



Bingo and Burritos

There is never a dull moment on the Youth for Christ Gloucestershire team; however, one particularly fun recent event was our Bingo and Burritos evening.

On Saturday 10th May, we hosted over 50 people at C3 Cheltenham. After enjoying delicious handmade burritos, we launched into some bingo mayhem! There were several prizes to be won, plenty of opportunities to engage in ridiculous challenges, and the enthusiasm only seemed to grow as the evening went on. It turns out making up Bingo calls on the spot is harder than it seems – from now on



Sarah will be referring to 28 as “a duck and a snowman”.

There was fun, excitement and plenty of generosity which meant we raised some funds to support young people. Alongside lots of familiar supporters, there were some new faces which is always encouraging to know that awareness is growing, and we have a fantastic supporter base.

A huge thank you to everybody who came along and supported us. Who knew bingo could be so much fun!

An International Flavour

In September, we hope to be joined by two young people taking a gap year. Both young people are from Brazil and are looking forward to doing a gap year to discover more of God and to serve Him in a different culture. We have had Zoom interviews and are currently placing them with churches. We are also looking for two host families to provide accommodation for the volunteers during their year with us.

The volunteers will be involved in all aspects of our work with young people. It is a fantastic opportunity for them to experience ministry and to see God working in different ways. Over the years, we have had many volunteers from a whole host of nations. Hosting a volunteer can be a great experience that can lead to



a lifelong relationship. The volunteers (one male, one female) both speak English.

If you would be willing to consider hosting a volunteer, please contact Matt who will explain what is involved.

Living Beyond

How can young people make a difference in their generation? How can they tell their friends about Jesus? With an increasing amount of evidence showing that this current generation of young people are open to finding out about Jesus, now is the time for young people to be equipped in evangelism.

Living Beyond is a residential designed to equip young people with the skills they need to go into the mission field around them. On the weekend of the 24th-26th October, we will be providing an opportunity for young people to receive teaching, try new activities and have space for reflection. It will help them gain a greater understand mission and deepen their relationship with God.

We will be staying in the new ECO pods at Viney Hill in the Forest of Dean. Made from natural and recycled materials and heated by a low energy underfloor

system the ECO pods will provide comfortable accommodation in a great location. Spaces are limited so booking in early is essential if you don't want to miss out.

The early bird rate is £85 until the end of term (20th July) but this rises to £100 after this date. You can book on our Ticket Tailor box office www.tickettailor.com/events/youthforchristgloucestershire or by using the QR code below.



JULY
FRIDAY | 4 | 7-9PM
KENDAL ROAD BAPTIST, GL2 0NB



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



Meet Becca



After a year of trying, we have managed to recruit for our new post. We are really pleased that Becca Jackman will be joining us in September to take up the role of youth worker, a shared role with Hillview Church.

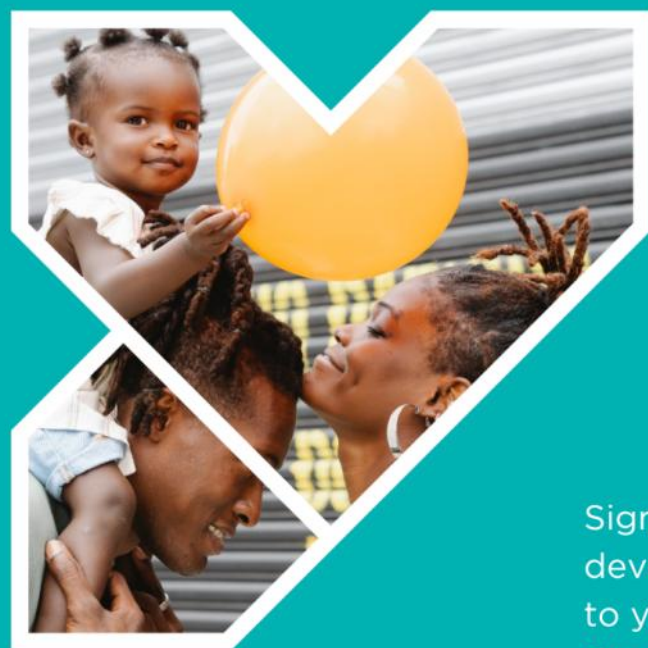
Becca and her husband, Sam, are relocating from Bangor in North Wales,

where Becca has been a youth worker in a local Baptist Church. She has also had connections with Bangor Youth for Christ, one of the most recently launched centres in the United Kingdom. Her role in the church was part-time whilst she studied for a Masters in Youth and Community Work. Following the completion of her Masters, Becca has been looking for a full-time role.

Becca is originally from Swansea, but moved to Bangor to study Geography and Oceanography at university. She is looking forward to the move to Gloucestershire, putting fresh roots down and developing the work with Hillview Church and ourselves.

Over the summer, Becca and Sam will be packing up and moving down to get ready for the start of her new role from September.

Please pray for Becca and Sam as they say goodbye to their existing church, and put everything in place for their move and the start of their next step.



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Work experience

It is not unusual for us to be joined by a work experience student during the summer term. This year we have been joined by Emma, who is in Year 12 at Ribston Hall High School. We asked Emma a few questions about her work experience.



What expectations did you have about work experience?

I expected to be less involved; I thought I would just be doing admin tasks, but I am not. So that is good. I didn't expect to be going around so many schools, and getting involved in lessons, collective worship and Christian Unions.

What have you enjoyed about your week?

I don't want to be a primary school teacher, but I have enjoyed talking to the students. I also met a number of students who will be coming to my school in September and I will see them on their induction day.

I have enjoyed seeing what Youth for Christ do in schools. The Bournside Christian Union was really good. I made a good connection with the girls in the group. I was able to share my testimony and some of my experiences of coping with challenges as a teenager.

I think the impact Youth for Christ has on kids is cool. You can form connections that last a long time and that make a big impact.

THE TERM IN NUMBERS

Young
people
choosing to
follow Jesus
at the Big
Bash

35

Young
people who
experienced
GSUS Live

1598

Cups of
coffee drunk
in the office

387

Year 6
students
involved in
transition
lessons

174

Sarah's
favourite
Bingo call

28

I would like to become a Youth for Christ Gloucestershire partner.

Title: Full Name:

Full home address:

Postcode: Email:

Telephone: Church:

Are you involved in youth work?

Communication Preferences

I would like to receive from Youth for Christ Gloucestershire newsletters and information on events and fundraising activities/ appeals. I am happy to receive communication via (please tick all that apply)

☐ Post ☐ SMS/text message ☐ Email

I enclose a cheque made payable to YFC Gloucestershire for £_____

Gift Aid declaration

Boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate. Gift Aid is reclaimed by Youth for Christ Gloucestershire from the tax you pay for the current tax year. Your address is needed to identify you as a current tax payer. In order to Gift Aid your donation you must tick the appropriate box below.

☐ I want to Gift aid my donation of £_____ to Youth for Christ Gloucestershire

☐ I want to Gift aid my donation of £_____ and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to Youth for Christ Gloucestershire

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax in the current tax year than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Signed Date

Please notify us if you: 1. Want to cancel this declaration. 2. Change your name or home address. 3. No longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains. If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

Youth for Christ Gloucestershire Standing Order Authority

Your Bank Name and address

Account No: Bank Sort Code:

Please pay: Youth for Christ Gloucestershire. Account no: 00028687 Sort code: 40-52-40

CAF Bank Ltd, 25 Kings Hill Avenue, West Malling, Kent. ME19 4JQ

The sum of £ on the and thereafter from my account

monthly / quarterly / annually (delete as applicable) until further notice. This instruction cancels all previous instructions for standing order payments to Youth for Christ Gloucestershire.

Signed Date

Please return to: The Treasurer, Youth for Christ Gloucestershire, 115 St. George's Road, Cheltenham, GLOS. GL50 3EG Charity no. 1163587

We only use your data in connection with our work and will only use it in ways you request. To read our privacy policy and find out how we use your data please visit www.yfcgloucestershire.co.uk/_tos.html

Events Diary

Each Monday and Thursday morning at 9.00am we gather for our prayer meetings. All are welcome to come and join the team to pray for our work. The prayer meeting is available on Zoom, if you would like to join us, please email office@yfcgloucestershire.co.uk for the Zoom codes.

The following are a few dates for this term. Please do pray for these events.

July

4th The Big Summer Bash
8th Youth Unite Gathering
13th Matt speaking at Hesters Way Baptist
14th Youth Worker's Prayer
27th Matt speaking at Hillview Church

October

13th Youth worker's prayer
19th Paul preaching at Holy Apostles
24th- Living Beyond
26th

September

1st Becca joins the team
7th Paul preaching at Elim Merthyr Tydfil
14th Paul preaching at Highworth URC
14th Leckhampton Baptist Church Funday
15th Youth worker's prayer

November

17th Youth worker's prayer
22nd Quiz Night
23rd Paul speaking at Bethesda Methodist

Donate by text

Text YOUTH followed by your donation amount to 70490 to give that amount. E.g. YOUTH20 to donate £20
Texts will cost the donation amount plus one standard network rate message.



How to get in touch

Feel free to get in touch with us. We love hearing from our supporters. It is always worth checking we are in the office before popping round as we are frequently out working with young people.

For general enquiries, please email office@yfcgloucestershire.co.uk

We can also be messaged via our social media accounts.

To contact a staff member directly, please use the details to the right.



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