

## Annual report for 2017

'It's good to be part of a group and not just by yourself', said one of our Totally Tuesday members, and this is true of our work together through CAYP. It is encouraging and life-giving to work ecumenically and seek to do more, and be more, by working alongside children and young people together.

### Our highlights

- It has been good to see the growth in children's work, which is the newest part of our project. As well as making connections with families through Messy Church, we are also building relationships with local primary schools and that's been a very enjoyable and creative experience.
- It was brilliant to connect some young people from Totally Tuesday to WOW and help them make a good transition into a new group. And to see those that were getting involved in leading at TT, to continue to take opportunities for this at WOW.
- And in schools we also had the privilege of helping Year 6s reflect on the transition to high school, then, a few months later, meeting with a group of girls who appreciated some extra support once they'd started Year 7.



### Working alongside children, young people and families together

#### **Messy Church**

Messy Church is a time for families to explore faith through creativity, stories, a time of celebration and sharing a meal together. Over the last year we have had contact with about 40 different families and about 150 different people (not including team members families). This is a mixture of families who regularly attend a Sunday morning church, those who are connected to a church through other activities, and those for whom Messy Church is their only real connection with a church. We have grown a core group of people who return each month, and we are starting to build better relationships with the families who come.

Some thoughts from a family who come regularly include that they love all the activities, but they also just love the opportunity to be together at the end of the weekend, to catch up with friends, and to enjoy a simple meal together, singing and listening to stories about Jesus.

Some thoughts from a team member are that they love the friendships, the stories, the sharing of food together and the different ways to think and learn about God. It is very messy and that's great!



### Totally Tuesday

This is an activity based club for 9-12 year olds that explore issues of life from a faith perspective through games, activities, chats and fun. We look at topics such as friendship, being online, fear, wisdom, the Bible and fruits of the Spirit. We currently have an average of 25 children attending from 3 different schools, half boys and half girls. We have two 16 and 17 year old young leaders and also give the entire group the opportunity to have a go at leading games, which is an important aspect of the project. Seven young people made faith commitments at our last annual residential.

There have been a couple of occasions when some of the children coming have really struggled at school with bullying and disrupted friendship groups and have come to TT in order to build connections with their peers. Parents have told me how much TT helped to give their children confidence and a safe space to build friendships and be themselves, and how it helped them settle in at school too.

Some quotes from the children:

- 'It gives everyone a chance to take part and speak.'
- 'A good place to make new friends.'
- 'It's good to be part of a group and not just by yourself.'
- 'We look out for each other'
- 'It gives us a chance to lead'

## WOW

A youth group with small groups as part of the time together, which explore topics of life from a faith perspective. The first half of the evening is informal and the young people are welcomed, organise games of sport or table top games, hang out and chat, and make themselves cups of tea and toast in the kitchen. We have two young leaders who are 17 and we also encourage the whole group to have a go at leading – currently by leading a game or activity for the whole group and developing into leading in their small groups. Halfway through the evening we gather to share news, play a game and introduce what we're chatting about. Then the young people split into four small groups where they explore a topic together. These groups are shaped around those who are part of the group, so each is a little different. We have looked at series such as justice, Jesus' parables, difficult questions of faith and emotional wellbeing. We aim to get the group to choose the topics that they would like to look at.



This year we have partnered with The Depressed Cakeshop and explored mental health and wellbeing through baking – see the photo above for some of the delicious treats we enjoyed!

We currently have an average of 30 young people attending from four different schools and linked to seven different churches and no church connection. There are half boys and half girls.



We have just got back from our annual residential and had a fantastic weekend away together in Stainforth. We went for an afternoon stroll, and the enthusiasm and leadership of the young people took us a good way up Pen-y-ghent! And it was a wonderful opportunity to get away from phone signal and have some space which we used to explore different ways of opening ourselves up to and connecting with God.

### Young leaders at WOW

Ben and Isaac have come along to CAYP groups since primary school and are now involved in running WOW alongside adult leaders. They coordinate the group to lead games each week and take part in running some of the small group activities and discussions. It is great to have them around and to see how well they connect with those that are younger – they are approachable and are role models for the young people. As the culture of CAYP is that young people get to have a go at things, this has been a natural progression into leadership for them.

**What the young people think:**

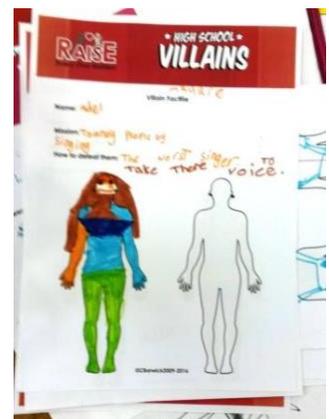
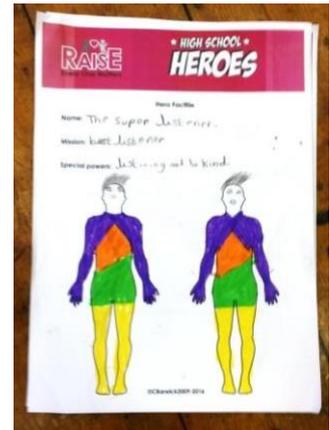
- 'I feel confident sharing questions and opinions that I won't be judged'
- 'We have the chance to choose the topic of our discussion.'
- 'I feel able to discuss my fears with others!'
- 'I can be honest without being judged'
- 'It's great!'
- 'The leaders are very good'
- 'A great bunch of people having fun with games and discussions, leaders'

**Primary School work**

This year we have led assemblies in two local primary schools – Mill Field and Chapel Allerton Primary – and are building up our resources so that we have a range of assemblies to offer other schools.

We support schools in exploring faith festivals, such as advent, as well as communicating about other topics that fit in with the themes of the schools.

For the fourth year, we met all Year 6 pupils at Mill Field primary to support them as they transition into Year 7, through a programme called High School Heroes. We explore with the children what they have to offer the high school that they are joining – what kind of hero can they be? And we talk about their fears by looking at what kind of villains they might encounter at high school and work together to explore how they can be defeated. This has been a brilliant partnership as we work alongside Leeds Faith in Schools (who are present in High Schools across the city) and RAISE, who are passionate about raising self esteem and confidence.



**What the children thought of High School Heroes**

96% of the children involved said they enjoyed the session and they gave feedback about how their perception of high school had changed. We were encouraged by the many responses we got from children who had felt nervous, shy or frightened before the session, who then said that they were excited and more confident after our session.

Some quotes from the children about what they got from the session:

- 'I will help more and be a hero to help others'
- 'Just be a hero, no one can stop you!'

## Secondary School work

We continue to work in Carr Manor High with a particular focus on supporting vulnerable young people. At the start of this academic year, we worked alongside RAISE to support a small group of girls who have just started in Year 7, by running a six week course. We develop our sessions as we go, to meet the needs of the group, which can include looking at topics such as listening, self esteem, encouragement, identity and community. It is always important that we spend time listening to the girls and shape the time together around what would most help them.

Some highlights from the group's evaluations

- That they've been encouraged to talk more and find their voice
- 'Getting to show what I can do'
- Self esteem and confidence was mentioned by three people
- Being able to recognise the range of emotions that they have
- Developing friendships

*Thank you so much for your work with the girls. The girls always look forward to your lessons and I agree I have definitely seen a change in R.*

Nicola Spacer, Year 7 Year manager

We have also worked alongside LFIS to run a lunchtime club for young people where we explore something around Christian faith and what this means to them. This group includes young people of faith and none. We are led by the group as to what and how much we do in these times, and provide some breathing space for them in the middle of a busy school day.



It is wonderful to work alongside children and young people locally and to do this in partnership with others, which brings encouragement, sustainability and a network of care for those who are part of CAYP.

Hannah Dey, January 2017