



Young Faith **Matters**
Ffydd Yr Ifanc

Highlights from the YFM Evangelism Fund Presentation

June/July 2022



Esgobaeth Llandaf
Diocese of Llandaff

Lle Mae Ffydd Yn Cyfrif | Where Faith Matters

As the Young Faith Matters (YFM) Team, we have three main objectives from the Evangelism Fund that we are required to focus on in our role:

1. *Focus on the opportunities in education for transforming lives through faith*
2. *Nurture children and young people in faith*
3. *Build and grow a confident and local joyful church*

Statistics for Objective 1 on Education (by YFM Team):



Statistics for Objective 2 on nurturing children and young people:



YFM Highlights

Flourish Project

The Flourish Project is a resource developed by the Proton Foundation (Christian Charity based in the Midlands), exists to help young people develop healthy self-esteem and improve mental and emotional wellbeing. This is an 8-session project run in schools with 8-12 referred pupil, including sessions on wellbeing, self-esteem, social media, beliefs and identity.

Flourish Project is currently being delivered with three cohorts across two schools in the Diocese, one primary and one secondary in Merthyr Tydfil Ministry Area. Initially, two Engagement Workers were trained (Philip Burman and Emilia Stevenson of the YFM team), as well as two volunteers from respective Ministry Areas (MAs).

Developed a formal partnership with Flourish:

- There will be 2 training events in the next 12 months for Chuch in Wales (September and January).
- As a result, 20 people will be trained (included 5 of our team) bringing lay people from across MAs.
- There will be greater accountability and quality checks to ensure that the excellence of the project is maintained, and facilitators are matched well with schools/handling wellbeing with care and discretion.

What comes next? Flourish Pathway – As a YFM Team, we are looking at how Flourish can become a pathway for young people, beginning as a programme run in schools leading to offering further provision such as The Lounge or Youth Alpha, depending on the needs of the school.

YFM Network

We have developed a Young Faith Matters Network across the Diocese for people who are passionate about youth and children. By putting on networking events, our goal is to attract leaders and volunteers from all Ministry Areas, to encourage, enable and empower them through developing a community of like-minded leaders who can support one another. Our goal is to deliver these seasonally, to let it be group led and to meet their needs through networking, training, and support. The first of these events was in June 2022 where 20 non-clergy were present. Our hope is that the network will continually grow and more Ministry Areas from across the diocese will be represented. Whilst this is not an exclusive group, our target audience are those who are not ordained. The next YFM Network event is on Wednesday 14th September 2022 at 7pm - venue to be confirmed.

Experience Easter

Experience Easter was a great way for MAs to make initial contacts with schools and to begin to build strong partnerships. Experience Easter is a programme that goes through the Easter story in stations. Across a month, the team connected with 661 children and developed 126 volunteers. Some of these volunteers have been identified as key leaders in their MAs and have been involved in our YFM Network. With the success of the Experience Easter, it is our hope that the MAs we have already supported can deliver their own seasonal experiences such as Experience Advent, continuing on the great connections they have developed, whilst we focus on developing new experiences in other MAs, hopefully having an exponential effect.

Fresh Expressions of Church

- Youth Prayer Nights (56 youth attended with 17 volunteers across two sites simultaneously in Penarth and Pontypridd)
- Muddy Church - across the Diocese had 65 children and 10 volunteers involved
- Caring for God's Acre - 4 projects in partnership with MAs and local primary schools
- Youth Clubs - 4 youth groups have begun with YFM Team's input

Abercynon School and Rev'd Peter's Club

As a YFM Team we wanted to offer our services to schools and ask how we can meet their needs. Our goal is to help build stronger connections between church and schools where it may be lacking and if needed be the contact between the two. We have been able to meet an educational need for the school in terms of extended curriculum.

This is evident in Cynon Valley South Ministry Area where there has been a powerful story which identifies an effective method of reaching young people:

- Initial contact with primary and asked what they needed. The Head said afterschool football and one-to-one reading were needed as support.
- Rev'd Peter Lewis and St Donat's ran an easter event with Godly Play that Year 5 and 6 were invited to, where they recognised Simon from the afterschool football clubs, making positive link between church and school.
- Alongside this, the MA had planned to start a youth club on a Thursday evening, so decided to invite the Message Bus to come at exactly the same time as the subsequent Youth Club, and then advertised this on the bus each week, inviting young people aged 10-14 to attend. There were about 40/50 young people each week on the Message Bus, and now, for the last 2 months before summer, there have been approximately 25/30 young people weekly, with a team of 5/6 on a rota.
- The vision with Fr Peter, the MA Lead, is then to potentially offer a Youth Alpha to run before/after the youth club. This is because we have made the initial relationship with no specific Jesus aspect yet but designing the programme so it is then an option for the young people.

This has shown how the YFM team can bring a practical, fun and logical flow for churches from strengthening connections with schools to regular youth provision.

It's Not Easy Podcast

As a YFM Team, we felt that unity was key to building a confident and joyful church. As we observed the context of the children and youth provision in the diocese, we felt that it was important to share testimonies and experiences of youth provision from different contexts within the diocese and from wider denominations. The purpose of the podcast is to have open and real conversations about the challenges of youth discipleship while also sharing the passion behind why we do it, as well as empowering others to lead themselves.

We spent time interviewing leaders, experts, ministers, and friends in youth ministry to discuss the different challenges they encountered, what provision has worked in different contexts and sharing advice for those working or volunteering in children's and youth ministry. Launched on the 1st of July, the podcast has, as of 8th August, had 158 listens across the six episodes which have been released so far.

Lessons Learnt and Looking Forward

Strengthen Partnerships

Over the last seven months, we learnt that partnerships are, and will be key, to nurturing young faith. We believe partnerships will be essential to fostering unity and enthusiasm across the work we do as YFM team and building our collaborative capacity. Presently, we have developed partnerships with the following groups:

- Pontypridd Christian Youth
- Club 707
- Message Wales
- Flourish
- Youth Alpha
- Church Army
- Tearfund

To nurture young faith on a greater scale across the diocese and to see young people passionately pursuing Jesus, collaborative ministry is key and something we are looking to further invest in. Looking ahead to try and build greater relationships with Growth Enablers and Outreach team to make our work as efficient and effective as possible and building YFM profile so more are aware of our work and how we can support.

Justice Conference in the Cathedral

The youth justice conference is something Meg Borges, Diocesan Church Army Officer, is working on in conjunction with Tearfund and held at Llandaff Cathedral hopefully at the beginning of 2023. It will be an opportunity for young people to come together and look at practical ways they can tackle social justice in their contexts. We believe this will also be an important step in beginning to equip and empower young leaders throughout the diocese, as well as strengthening partnerships between CinW and Tearfund, as well as across the diocese itself.

Training Opportunities

Social Media

We saw social media as an increasingly important resource to sharing faith with young people and building a joyful church. We developed a social media strategy, logo, and colour palette so that we could be identifiable and relational as a Young Faith Matters Team.

We had to acknowledge the realities of where young people are at, where they spend their time and how they interact with their communities. We felt that it was essential to have a balance of informational support – upcoming events, sharing churches work – and having some spiritual input with devotional style posts for young people to engage with faith on a surface level in a comfortable and safe environment.

However, upon analysis we found that our demographic was predominantly youth leaders, church leaders. To increase our impact on social media we want to adapt our strategy to serve leaders to equip and encourage them as they serve their young people in their contexts.

Therefore, as a YFM Team (hopefully alongside input from Diocesan Communications Officer, Mary Mann), we want to create a youth social media training session to be able to serve, equip and resource the MAs, as well as meeting the needs of their MA with a tailored youth social media strategy.

Youth Discipleship Training

A barrier that we have found among those involved in children and youth ministry is feeling underqualified. So, to address that, Meg Borges, developed training on youth discipleship – what it means, why it is important, and how to develop a youth ministry with discipleship at its core. It has been delivered for the YFM team as a pilot and then offered across the Diocese. It has now been delivered for the Cowbridge, East Vale and De Morganwg Ministry Areas and it has been great to see it resource and equip them more in their role, facilitate open conversation around the topic, and encourage a culture of collaborative ministry.

The hope is to see this training offered across the Diocese, as well as on Zoom if that would be more practical for the Clergy and lay people interested in receiving this training.