



 Gloucestershire
YOUTH
FOR CHRIST

Update

March 2025

Break Away

If it is February, it must be Break Away. Sarah joined us for the first time this year, so she shared her reflections with us.

It was the afternoon of Valentine's Day and I was making my way up the driveway of The Poplars in Ledbury. I was nervous.



What had I let myself in for? I'm by no means a newbie to youth weekends away, but this was my first time attending Break Away.

Yet there I was, joining with 65 young people, 17 of their youth leaders and 9 other Youth for Christ Gloucestershire team from 14th-16th February.

I can tell you what I was in for:

- A lot of noise. The sounds of voices singing in worship, chatter from young people excitedly spending time with their friends, rumbling tummies

in the queue to get breakfast, and so much laughter.

- A lot of fun. Whether it was football in the sports hall, dodgy dance moves at the silent disco, hands covered in glue putting together a mosaic mirror, or amusing anecdotes shared over meals; the happiness in the place was infectious.
- A lot of space for Jesus. Time for talks exploring Biblical truths, discussions in small groups where questions were shared and trust was built, prayers across the weekend seeking and asking and worshipping, and the Holy Spirit's presence keeping us safe and welcoming us back.

The weekend was arranged around four main sessions. These gave the opportunity for everybody to gather, engage in sung





worship and play some silly games. There was also a talk during each session unpacking the theme for the weekend, Believing is Seeing, with space for the young people to discuss the topic in their youth groups.

To see such a response to the Gospel is amazing, but we also shouldn't downplay what else happened during those three days.

Those 65 young people got a break from their everyday lives to relax, grow their community and be challenged in seminars, designed to unpack certain areas of faith. With titles such as, "Big Questions" and "Seeing Jesus in the Dark", the young people were encouraged to go deeper in their thinking and bring their questions and experiences to the table. Another seminar focused on songwriting, providing space to explore an outpouring of worship through honing a skill.



They also enjoyed activities including laser clay-pigeon shooting (I didn't even know that was a thing!), a mirror-mosaic craft, gaming, sport, and a workshop learning to cook a meal, aimed at those heading off to university soon. These provided space to let off steam, try something new, and relax on Saturday afternoon.

This weekend is not designed to be an annual high point in the young people's lives (although we hope it is that); rather, it's meant to be a chance for young people to grow in their faith and explore what living life with Jesus looks like in reality. I was impressed by the focus placed on grounding everything into our normal, busy, mundane lives through asking the young people, "what does this mean for you?" or "what does it look like to see God in your everyday life?"

I had to leave early due to a pre-existing commitment and as I drove back down The Poplars' driveway, I was sad to leave a buzzing, enjoyable time seeing young people be transformed by



the Gospel and getting to let their hair down in what is an incredibly pressurised stage of life. I played a small part in the organisation of the weekend (by the way, BIG shout out to Matt for his energetic, imaginative planning and Paul for his experienced overseeing) but it made all the effort, not-enough-sleep and more stressful moments worth it.

We are already thinking about next year! And there's another weekend away (with a slightly different focus) in the works for the Autumn term. If you think you could help in some way, please get in touch via office@yfcgloucestershire.co.uk



The Christmas Big Bash

Music plays a big part at Christmas and this year's Christmas Big Bash provided just that. From Christmas classics to worship songs telling the story of the gospel, our latest event was full of music and fun, helping both church and unchurched young people experience the real meaning of Christmas.

Our latest Big Bash event held in December alongside Gloucester youth workers was attended by 105 young people supported by nine churches from across Gloucester.

It might not have been snowing outside, but that didn't stop us greeting everyone with a couple of snow machines and providing a snowball fight that was loads of fun! Other activities included various

games, computer console, music, refreshments including popcorn and candy floss as well as a Christmas-themed photo booth!

Once again, young people were excited to see people from their school who they didn't expect to be there, and the place was a buzz with excitement as the evening unfolded.

The most important aspect of the Big Bash is providing a space for young people to discover and respond to Jesus. Five young people responded to the gospel message at Christmas alongside lots of other positive conversations.

We are looking forward to the next Big Bash event in April.



The message is important

Since September, we have led thirty one collective worship sessions in four different schools. This week, another head teacher asked if they could get us back in to their school. Why are schools so keen for us to come in? There are a number of reasons, we make it fun and engaging, whilst keeping a relevant message at the heart of the session. We also work with the school and adapt to their culture, and over time become part of the school community.

Angharad Fitch, the Headteacher of St. Mark's Junior School, recently said "We love having Youth for Christ in our school. The children have great fun, exploring our Christian values that are at the heart of our whole school community. Matt and Paul make it lots of fun, with loads of games but also a real sense of exploring the Bible stories together, where the message is really important and part of how we live out our values. I'd highly recommend the Youth for Christ team to any school, you will love it and so will the children."

It always helps when the teachers are willing to join in the fun, and for the most part, they are very willing to throw themselves into the activities, even when they get messy!

Our involvement in collective worship, also opens other doors within the school. We often deliver Year 6 transition lessons, to help prepare the students for a change of school. We are also involved in lessons, Carol Services, Easter Services and other activities throughout the year. Our regular involvement also means we can provide external support to schools when they face pastoral challenges that requires some additional time.

Our involvement in St. Mark's has also seen us take a regular lesson with Year 6 students looking at the evidence for God based on the life of a Christian. Before Christmas, Matt and Paul spoke with the



Angharad Fitch, Headteacher at St. Mark's Junior School.

students about their personal faith journey and experience and answered questions from the students. The questions covered creation, evolution, miracles, justice and many other topics. The students engaged really well as they considered a lot of things from a different angle.

When the students arrive in secondary school, they often come and find us, sometimes even coming along to Christian Union.

With another term to go before the end of the academic year, we have plenty more opportunities in school. We have lots more collective worship sessions booked, three weeks of GSUS live, our lunch time and after school clubs as well as the transition lessons.

As soon as we can extend the team, we want to extend our works in schools. If you want to join us in our work in schools, please get in touch.



GSUS Live

This term, we are bringing GSUS Live to schools across Gloucestershire for the last three weeks of the Spring Term.

GSUS Live helps secondary school students explore the themes of fear, forgiveness and rejection through the teachings of Jesus. It's an interactive learning experience set up in a school classroom and part of the Key Stage 3 RE syllabus.

The program includes Bible story animations, contemporary songs, short films on historical and famous public

figures and much more. These are all used to help pupils look at real-life issues through a Christian perspective.

We will be taking GSUS Live into the following schools:

- 24-28th March Cleeve School
- 31st March-4th April Bournside
- 7-11th April All Saints Academy

Throughout the three weeks, approximately 1700 students will be involved in the lessons.



As we write this, we are midway through our first week in Cleeve. It has made a real impression on the school. The head of RE and Ethics has said that if he had realized how good a resource it was, he would have booked it for two weeks! The students have engaged really well, and students have approached us to ask how they can get to experience it. Beside the lessons, we also used it with the Christian Union. As the week comes towards an end, we have enjoyed our time t Cleeve and look forward to exploring how else we can support the department.

Bingo and Burritos

If you have come to any of our fundraising evenings, you know we like to have fun. On Saturday 10th May, we have our next event, and it is a first for us! Come and join us for Bingo and Burritos. This is no ordinary bingo night, as well as delicious burritos there will be extra challenges throughout the game. Don't worry if you have never played bingo before, you don't need to know the difference between "Legs eleven" and "Danny La Rue". It most certainly won't be boring. Whether you are "Sweet Sixteen" or "Three score and ten" you will have a good time.

Beside the burritos, there will be drinks available to buy throughout the evening.

We will be raising funds to support young people through our schools based ministry.

Come and join us at the Pavilion on Saturday 10th May for a great night.



BINGO & BURRITOS

SATURDAY 10TH MAY 2025

7:30-9:30PM

THE PAVILION, GL51 6PN

£8 per ticket



Gloucestershire
**YOUTH
FOR CHRIST**

Easter Big Bash

The Big Bash is back for Easter. Aimed at young people in secondary school, the Big Bash is a great event that is easy to bring your friends to. Besides the usual fun, games and food, there will also be a performance from Teelow. He is a member of the British Youth for Christ team but also tours the UK and Europe with his music.

Join us on Friday 4th April at Gloucester Elim Church for a great night.



THE BIG BASH

FT. TEELow



**APRIL
FRIDAY | 4 | 7-9PM**

GLoucester ELIM, GL1 5AN

YOUTH UNITE

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

Gloucestershire
**YOUTH
FOR CHRIST**

Living Beyond

Living Beyond is back. Two years ago we had a great residential with young people who wanted to take their faith deeper. October sees the residential return, this year set in the Forest of Dean at the Viney Hill Christian Adventure Centre

Living Beyond is for young people who want to explore their faith on a deeper level and gain a greater insight into what it means to live as a lifelong follower of Jesus.

On the weekend of the 24th- 26th October, we will be providing an opportunity for young people to receive inspired teaching, try new activities and have space for reflection that helps them deepen their relationship with God.

We will be staying in the centre's brand new ECO pods, made from natural and recycled materials and heated by a low energy underfloor

system. We have had a sneak preview, and they are very nice. 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.

Join us at
Living Beyond
A weekend to go deeper, explore more and have fun
24-26th October 2025
BOOK HERE

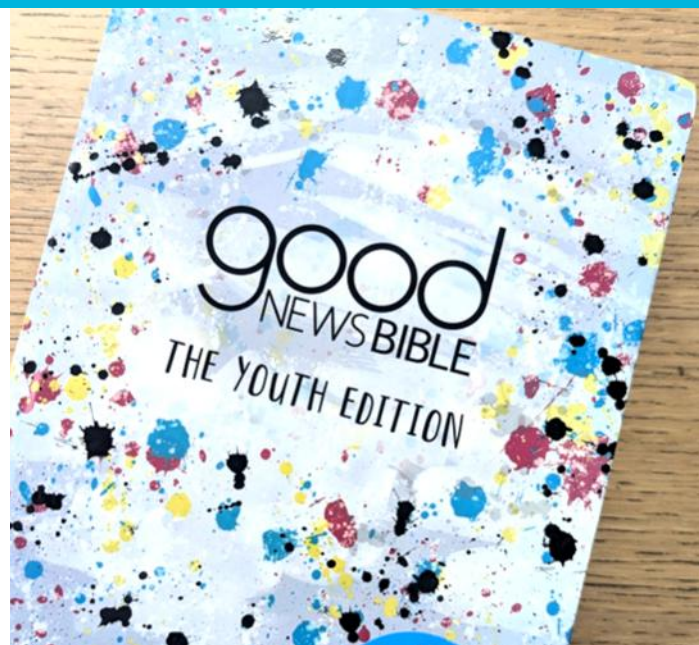
Gloucestershire YOUTH FOR CHRIST

The graphic features a black background with a white dashed line forming a semi-circle. A yellow location pin icon is placed on the line. The text 'Join us at Living Beyond' is written in white and yellow. To the right, the text 'A weekend to go deeper, explore more and have fun' is written in white. Below this, the dates '24-26th October 2025' are displayed in white. A QR code is located in the bottom right corner, with the text 'BOOK HERE' above it. The Gloucestershire Youth for Christ logo is in the bottom left corner.

Bible revival

You may have read in the press in recent weeks, that Bible sales in the UK have risen by 87 percent between 2019 and 2024. Much of this growth in sales has been Gen Z's renewed interest in spirituality, The Good News Bible Youth edition has seen it's sales double. This Bible was a collaboration between the Bible Society and Youth for Christ.

If you are looking for a Bible for a young person, it is a great edition, with lots of additional help pages and notes. We can supply them at prices below most internet shops. Get in touch if you want one or more copies.





How can we help?

We are one of the 58 Youth for Christ centres across Britain. Each centre is an independent charity, with its own funding and governance. We are all part of British Youth for Christ by association, and are committed to support the wider mission and each other.

As part of this, Paul is the Regional Pioneer for the South West of England. This involves him in supporting the other eight Youth for Christ centres in the South West through advice, encouragement, annual visits and by facilitating region wide events for centre staff. The other half of this role is connecting with churches in the region to encourage and support them in developing youth work in their area. This may look like giving advice to a church as the start youth work, or helping groups of churches start a Youth for Christ centre. He also speaks at churches across the region; last year he has visited churches in South Wales, Somerset and Hampshire.

100 years ago, 80% of young people were connected with a church, today, it is less than 3%. Against such a backdrop, it is easy to let our heads drop and feel the task ahead of us is impossible. But the news isn't all bad. 36% of young people want someone to speak to them about Jesus.

At Youth for Christ, we believe it is time for change. We want to support the

church reach out to more young people, and give the 36% of young people who want to hear about Jesus the opportunity to do so. Over the course of the year, over two hundred churches in the South West will be receiving a letter offering them a free youth work consultation to explore how Youth for Christ can support them develop their youth work, and reach out to young people outside of their church. Paul is involved in delivering these consultations.

He is currently talking to a number of churches in the Cynon Valley in South Wales. There is not currently a pioneer worker for South Wales, but with a number of churches keen to develop youth work, and to also consider starting a centre, he is currently focusing his time in the area. There is also a group of rural churches south of Bristol that Paul has been working with to explore how they could reach out to their local community. Every community is different, requiring a different approach, but the key message is the same. Jesus can make a difference in the lives of young people, and they are hungry to hear. Over the course of the year, Paul has supported churches and centres that have connected with thousands of young people. These may not be young people in our county, but as we support people to reach out to them, we are seeing more young peoples lives changed by Jesus.

Meet Sarah



Just over a year ago, Sarah joined the team. Admin is often something relegated to the background, but it plays an essential part of keeping all the plates spinning. We love having Sarah around the office, and her work makes a huge difference. We asked Sarah to say a little bit about her role and why she enjoys it.

My role in the team is administrator. I'm a freelancer so my work at Youth for Christ Gloucestershire is just one of many jobs I do during the week, but I always look forward to my two afternoons in the office. It's also been amazing to combine my experience in youth work with an administrative role.

What my role at Youth for Christ Gloucestershire actually means is a whole mixture of different things! Over the past month for example, some of the tasks I have done include:

- creating videos about our youth weekend away
- designing publicity and organising upcoming events

- proof-reading Family Devotionals (so any spelling mistakes are my fault...)
- scheduling social media content
- contributing towards a document for the Trustees
- answering emails
- working on an application for a workplace award we hope to receive

I enjoy my role partly due to the variety in what I get to do but also because I am part of a team that values each other and is working towards a goal I really believe in. This is especially a blessing as it's not always the case when working freelance.

My whole motivation for my work is seeing others be released to do what they're passionate about and use the skills God has given them, rather than being bogged down by admin (what I'm good at!). My experience at Youth for Christ Gloucestershire has been one where all the cogs work together and one person isn't more significant than the other. I am also motivated by chasing excellence in all the work I do, because I know it contributes to something much bigger – and we have a God who is gracious with our tiny, often flawed offerings.

I hope that in the next year I can keep developing my skills across a range of creative administrative tasks. I also want to keep stepping out of my comfort zone and making the most of opportunities, such as when Matt and Paul asked me to speak at one of the Break Away sessions. I know that my biggest desire is to follow where Jesus leads me – so far, I'm grateful that one of those places is Youth for Christ Gloucestershire, working with a brilliant team in a lovely office (with really excellent coffee!) and seeing the Gospel taken to young people all over Gloucestershire.

Situations Vacant?

We are currently recruiting for a new Youth Worker who will be based with Hillview Church in Hucclecote for three days a week. The rest of their time will be spent in schools and working on our other projects. Recruiting Youth Workers has become increasingly difficult over the last five years. This is our third round of recruitment for this position, but we are optimistic that we are approaching a positive conclusion of the process. We hope to have more news after Easter.

This post will help us step forward and once more be in a position to extend our schools' work.

Ready to support

The number of young people struggling with their mental health is at an all-time high. We want to be best placed to practically and helpfully be there for young people, however they feel and whatever they're experiencing. As a result, all of our core youth team undertake mental health training



In February, Matt recently completed a Youth Mental Health First Aid course provided by the diocese. Matt said, 'I found the course incredibly helpful. It gave me some useful tools and provided me with some crucial insights into the challenges of mental health for young people today.'

THE TERM IN NUMBERS

31

Collective
Worship sessions
led so far this
school year.



65

Young people at
Break Away



105

Young people at
the Christmas Big
Bash



1700

Young people we
expect to see
during GSUS Live



45

The number of
families
subscribing to the
Family
Devotionals.



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, so, 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.

April	10th Youth Unite Gathering
8th Youth Unite Gathering	23rd Youth Workers Prayer
28th Youth Workers Prayer	29th Matt speaking at Hillingdon Park Baptist
May	July
6th Cheltenham Prayer for Schools	4th The Big Summer Bash
10th Bingo and Burritos	8th Youth Unite Gathering
13th Youth Unite Gathering	13th Matt speaking at Hesters Way Baptist
19th Youth Workers Prayer	14th Youth Workers Prayer
June	
1st Paul preaching at Woodmancote Church	

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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