



SCHOOL VENTURES: TRANSFORMING LIVES AND LOCAL CHURCHES

The very first School Venture took place in 2016, when 65 primary school children came along for an exciting residential. Three years later School Ventures are now taking place in the dioceses of Blackburn, Chester, Hereford, Leicester, Nottingham and Winchester, sharing the gospel with almost 350 children and growing.

Transforming lives

Kat Taylor, Children and Families' Worker at Christ Church Moreton (Chester diocese), led on a School Venture for the first time last spring. She explains how School Ventures are impacting her job.

'Shortly after I began my role as a Children and Families' Worker, I decided to serve on the Wirral School Venture. Before I knew it, I was in an astronaut suit on a stage in front of 50 children talking about the Trinity!

'School Ventures have helped me to develop the skills I really needed for my role at Christ Church Moreton, as well as drastically improving the relationship with our local school. Before the residential I didn't really feel like I had a place at the school, but now I have an Ethos Group and the children help me with my school assemblies. School Ventures have helped me earn my place.

School Ventures



Kat Taylor (top left) with children on the School Venture

'I've since served on two further School Ventures, and I've seen incredible transformations in some of the children. The highlight for me is always seeing the children switch on to a revelation of who God is and how much he loves them.

'These residential really are something special. It's not like being at school or even at Sunday school for the children. We get to be fully immersed with them from when they wake up until they go to sleep, as they learn about the gospel and process it all. I just love how we get to go through such a long journey with the children in such a short space of time.

'When we become Christians we have a choice – whether we want to be part of God's story, or just our own. When we choose to be part of God's story, it means we're part of what he's doing. And he's doing wondrous things through CPAS, Ventures and Falcons, and School Ventures. It's incredible to be part of it all.'

One pupil, Eliscya, 9, who went on a School Venture last year, says: 'What I enjoyed about the learning on School Ventures was how everyone was sitting together so you could say everything you wanted to and it was really open. I can remember doing team work and playing with people and doing new things that I've never done before. It was really fun and exciting! By the end of the weekend I thought that Jesus had risen from the dead because all the villagers saw him.'

Transforming local churches

Dr Peter Ham, a Reader at St Hildeburgh's Hoylake, is a former head teacher and served on the Wirral School Venture last year with Kat. He describes the significant change his church is experiencing because of School Ventures.

'The youth ministry within our church has been hugely impacted by School Ventures. Initially, there were 10 children that came from our local school, Hoylake Holy Trinity CE Primary, to the Wirral School Venture.

'At the end of the residential there is a consolidation session, where the children are given the opportunity to join a local church programme, should they wish to. It was during that session that all 10 of the children from the local school decided to join the children's programme at St Hildeburgh's which was just incredible.

'Our school-linked ministries, including Messy Church, Youth Club, Communion in the Community and our Voyagers Sunday classes, have all grown alongside the School Venture weekends, thanks to the very good relationships between the church and the school. We are blessed with enthusiastic participation in many of these activities, which is wonderful to see.

'Looking to the future, I'm already excited about serving on the next School Venture, and meeting all the children. The gospel is so clearly articulated on these residential, by a team of brilliant leaders who really do know what they're doing. It's a fantastic opportunity for children to explore faith issues, many for the first time, if they wish to. In a society where the gospel is not easily heard amid all the other distractions of life, School Ventures really is a brilliant programme that I would love to be available to every child.'



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Messy Church in action at St Hildeburgh's Hoylake