



2020-2021

The last week of the summer term brings with it our end of term socials and a Messy Church BBQ – it feels really good to finish the year well and to have been able to spend some good time together outside. What amazing young people and teams who have shown flexibility, patience and faithfulness as we've navigated this last year together!

We are grateful to the National Youth Agency, who have been guiding the youth sector throughout this year and helped us think through our work and doing that safely and well. We have met in a real range of ways, which has been an opportunity for creativity and trying new things, whether that's online, in person, outside or inside.



At **Messy Church** we have been continuing to keep in touch with our families by delivering 'Messy Church in a Bag' to them. We gratefully borrowed the idea of putting a Messy Church session into a bag – lots of crafts, activities and a story! It has been a great way to stay connected to our families, as we could chat and say 'Hello' as we dropped off the bags and we've received some lovely photographs and comments from families enjoying using the resources. We stuck to events during the year so our themes included Harvest, Advent, Christmas, Love and Easter.

In June and July we met in 'real-life' again as we took advantage of the sunny weather to meet outside. It has been a gentle start back with a few of our regular families returning and it has been so lovely to be back together and think about how God always remembers us and how we are God's big family. The weather has been kind to us as we've enjoyed crafts, homemade cake, and even a BBQ in July. We are hoping for a return to more 'normal' Messy Church in the autumn and seeing some of our other families again.



Totally Tuesday have really enjoyed being outside together, which has helped bring a sense of fun and ease when we have met. The games each week are led by the young people, and they have enjoyed coming up with new ideas which make the most of the space – running around (tag with a pool noodle for social distancing!), hiding things (green chalky chalk is a favourite...) and massive nerf battles! We were

meeting as two smaller groups, which gave the opportunity to run the groups in a different way and get to know those who were new, but it has been good to finish the year as one large group, since restrictions have eased. We've been glad to welcome new young people, even at this changeable time, and are looking forward to the new Year 5s coming along in September.

A real highlight of this year has been the Year 8s getting involved in leading the group more – they are great at encouraging and including everyone. They have so enjoyed the experience, that there

was outcry when we began conversations about moving up to WOW! It is our hope that as well as getting stuck in at WOW, they will return in September to help plan and lead the sessions at TT.



We have changed the structure of **WOW** this past year, which is working so well, that the group want to stick with it. We have a fortnightly rhythm alternating between a small group and a larger gathering, which gives space for a different way of meeting and being together and more choice for the young people. Small group flourished on zoom, as people took the opportunity to be honest and real about how life is – it's been

good to be able to build on that now we can meet face-to-face, as we've explored well-being and what can impact that. The older young people recently ran a welcome session for those who are moving up in September and it great to see how they included those who were new and were so happy to share the group with them.

Our larger gathering has made the most of the great space outside St Matthew's for sport – volleyball, rounders, ultimate frisbee – as well as finished the term with a bonfire in the wooded area. We have been having conversations about our own experiences and some of the young people have led discussion times around harassment and challenges at school, as well as conversations about faith and what we believe. It's great to hear the range of opinions and give time to listen to what people think.



This year has given us the opportunity to have some exciting conversations around **developing youth work in Meanwood** and we are working with local partners InterAct and Carr Manor Community school to explore what this could look like. In September we visited a youth project called CATCH in Harehills, who have a wonderful way of being alongside and empowering young people, which has created an inspiring way of working. We are hoping to see something grow, which is influenced by this and a good fit for our local area. This is beginning with a consultation drop in for young people on 27th July, which will involve conversation, exploring together and eating doughnuts! We are also in conversation about where this new development could be located. We are grateful to work with other organisations who are excited about developing something new, so there's much to look forward to – we will be sharing how things progress over the coming months.

And we are grateful to you! Thank you for caring and supporting children, young people and families through Thrive Leeds with the prayers, compassion, time and money that makes all this possible. We are proud to have found our way in this changeable year and thank you for your support in doing that.

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