



Leeds Faith In Schools

✉ info@lfis.org

📍 The Cottage, Raynel Drive, Leeds, LS16 6BS

thank you

Dear Supporter,

A great big happy new year from the whole Leeds Faith In Schools team! As we enter 2023 we are so full of hope and excitement for all that God will do this year through the work of LFIS, the young people of Leeds, and the church in our city. I do hope you find our most recent newsletter an encouragement as we continue to do all that we can to impact our city.

2023 is a significant year, for me personally it marks my 7th year working with LFIS, my first as Team Leader, but more excitingly the 29th year of LFIS serving the church of Leeds in our vision and mission to young people. As we near a new decade LFIS finds itself at a critical moment in our journey and development, one for which we need your continuing support.

Over these past two years post covid we've seen an increasing openness to our work with desire and demand for our team's support in schools growing significantly. We've also seen day in and day out the desperate need for Hope and Good News in the schools here in our city.

That openness is specifically highlighted in the request from two of our partner schools to increase our committed time within their communities. We're also in conversation with a further 3 new schools who'd like to partner with us moving forward, opportunities we find ourselves unable to say 'yes' to due to our current financial position and diminishing budget.

It's with that in mind that we are seeking to raise enough funds for an additional Schoolworker. Growing our capacity in this way would not only enable us to say "YES!" to these opportunities, but also release our existing team in different parts of the city to grow connections into new schools. These are developments we've had to hold back from to due to our limited capacity in this season. We aim to raise an additional £30,000 over the coming months. To enable this to happen we'd like to ask you to prayerfully consider if you could assist us in doing this, not for the sake of LFIS, but so that we as the church in this city can further reach this next generation with the 'Good News' of Jesus.

We so greatly appreciate the immense support and encouragement we receive from our supporters, as well as your vital prayer support. Thank you so much!

As we set out into this next decade of serving young people, please would you keep walking with us as we seek to be 'Good News to the schools of Leeds', and invite others you know to join in and become part of God's provision in the season ahead?

Ben Cordy, Team Leader



Leeds Faith In Schools Newsletter

JANUARY 2023



THE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS

'What does Christmas mean?' - This was the big question that we asked in our Christmas lessons this year. We considered the perspective of Mary, the shepherds, the wise men, and Jesus, to find out what Christmas might have meant to each of them. With these perspectives in mind, we took time with each class to reflect on what Christmas might mean to us, giving each student time to consider how the experiences of characters in the Christmas story could change or affect the way they think about Christmas Day.

We had lots of fun recreating the nativity with each class, getting students dressed up with Mary, an angel, the baby Jesus, a wise man, and a shepherd, wandering the classroom as we played games, watched videos and explored the story together.

As part of this year lesson we had the opportunity to show the Alpha video of scientist Francis Collins talking about his study of the evidence for Christ, a journey from atheist to a man of faith. A powerful message to share with students, especially those who believe that science and faith don't go together.

Please pray for all the students who were provoked by the message of our lesson, that they would be excited to consider who Jesus really is and how He can transform their lives.

By Kim Lawrence





Corpus Christi Retreat Day

By Kim Lawrence

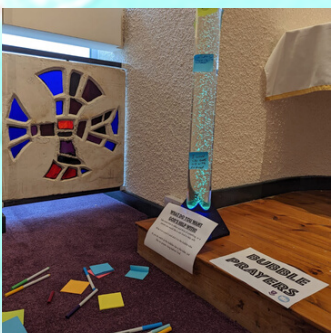
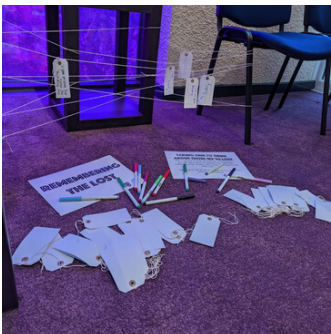
We had the fantastic opportunity to spend a day at Corpus Christi Catholic College, facilitating a retreat day for their whole year seven. The day opened with an extremely loud full year assembly packed with games, introducing the idea of prayer, and giving a call for the students to reflect on their personal faith and the impact it has on their lives.

As the day went on we had the opportunity to lead them through creative prayer stations, both in groups and individually. These stations included reflections on biblical truths, as well as tools for how to pray at home, with their families, and for their neighbourhoods.

In a separate space we led the first session of Youth Alpha, using the video to facilitate conversations, and exploring the questions they would like to ask God. There were some fantastic ideas from the students as they thought deeply about what they would want to know and understand.

The day ended with a visit from the Franciscan Sisters of the Renewal who are a deeply loved part of the Corpus school community. They taught the students some worship songs and shared about the meaning of the mass, something the students would experience for the first time together later in the week.

We had such a positive time with the staff and students of Corpus Christi so please pray that we would be able to continue and deepen the relationship we have with this school.



Silent Disco

It's a disco, but not as you know it! We managed to get our hands on an amazing 'silent disco' kit to bring bit of festive disco to our Rock Solid and Drop fun to our Rock Solid and Drop In clubs, at the end of term. It was a huge hit! (Kim and Mark enjoyed it, too!)



'The time we've spent with LFIS in school has been fun, inspiring, and engaging for everyone!'

Yr 8 student

'LFIS assemblies are really engaging for the students and it's great to have people from other places come to talk about faith in school.'

Abbey Grange staff member

"Mentoring has helped me to be better at talking to people, especially how to give advice and support."

Yr 9 mentee



AU REVOIR, RIO!

After 6 amazing years as part of the Leeds Faith In Schools team, Rio has felt God leading her onto something new and will be moving on from her role with LFIS at the end of January. She will be greatly missed.

Here are her thoughts on her time serving within our team:

Hello LFIS family! I just wanted to take this great opportunity to thank the many, many wonderful people who have inspired, challenged, blessed, and encouraged me and the team over the past 6 years, and all those I've come to know for supporting me too: staff, volunteers, trustees, and other youth and kids-work organisations. It's been a real privilege to serve alongside you and to have known your wisdom, warmth, and welcome. I hope you are all well!

Finally, I would like to send warm greetings and personal thanks to all our regular supporters who have, sacrificially, given their money and their time and energy in prayer, so faithfully and generously. Many of you I've never met but I know your handwriting well(!). I've been blessed to receive your messages, cards, gifts, emails, and phone calls, over the years and it's a part of the role I will really miss. The young people and schools of Leeds are very blessed to have you all, and I will miss so many people. Please pray for me as I discern what God is leading me into for the next chapter of my working life. May God bless you all richly as you follow our Lord Jesus.

Volunteers needed!

The LFIS team love what they do and, because they do it so well, are in high demand! Some of our schools have requested more time and hours from our schools workers but we are currently unable to fulfil their requests as all of our schools workers' timetables are full to the brim.

Do you have any free time in the week? We have plenty of opportunities to bring volunteers in to support us in our work in schools: from supporting at lunch clubs and drop-ins, to assisting with mentoring in schools. We would love to hear from you if you're interested.

Please feel free to send Ben an email (ben@lfis.org) for a chat about current and future opportunities.



MARK'S BEEN HERE A YEAR

... and what a year it's been! 4 schools, boys groups, assemblies, drop-ins, lunch time clubs, multiple mentees and lots of fun!

If I had to describe my experience at LFIS so far, the word I would use is 'full': full of fun, challenge, learning, laughter, prayer, relationships, and at the heart of everything, full of Jesus.



Mentoring Multiplies

The reality of the state of teens' emotional health in schools

By Louisa Lawrence

Since we returned to schools following the pandemic, we have found that there is a higher demand for one-to-one mentoring to support vulnerable and struggling students. This has been particularly apparent to me in my role at Guiseley School.

Since schools reopened after the 3rd national lockdown in March 2021, I have been working in Guiseley 2 days a week, purely for individual mentoring. This is quite a contrast to the half a day a week of mentoring I had been asked to do before the first lockdown. There has been a definite shift in the kinds of issues that we are seeing young people deal with in our mentoring sessions. You may have heard the phrase 'mental health crisis' used over the last few years and, as LFIS schools workers, we are seeing the reality of that for high school age students. All the schools we work in have a waiting list of students who they would like to have mentoring, but often we end up meeting with the more urgent cases (quite rightly) and students can end up waiting for a long time before they have someone to talk to regularly.

In Matthew 25:40 Jesus says,

'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

Please pray for us as we continue to meet with students who are struggling through life now. Please pray for each member of the team that we would feel supported ourselves as we have tough conversations with students, and pray for the mentees themselves, that they would be able to move forward and see something of Jesus in us spending time with them.



AUTUMN TERM

Lunch clubs

688

64

32

Mentoring sessions

Christmas lessons

Jesus says:
'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

Before Christmas we saw many young people around Leeds in Christmas lessons and assemblies. We asked them to consider, 'What does Christmas mean to you?' We loved giving young people the opportunity to hear about Jesus and the meaning of Christmas from Christians, as well as helping them to think about what it could mean for them. Could you consider donating to us as we begin a new term, so that we can continue sharing the Christian faith from a Christian perspective and supporting struggling students, in schools across Leeds?

GIVING TO THE WORK OF LEEDS FAITH IN SCHOOLS

Scissors icon

Title: Full Name: Previous name (if applicable):

Address: Postcode:

Email: Phone:

I would like to give: ☐ £10 ☐ £20 ☐ £50 or: £ as a one off donation (x) ☐ or every month starting on:

NI number: / /

Providing your NI number will help us verify to HMRC that you are a UK taxpayer.

Please pay: Leeds Faith in Schools, The Co-operative Bank, 08-92-99 for the credit of account number 65801778

Bank & address: Acc. Number: Sort Code:

Signature: Date:

Gift aid? I am a UK taxpayer and I would like Leeds Faith in Schools to treat as Gift Aid donations:

giftaid it ☐ all donations made in the past 4 years and any I make in the future OR
☐ all donations made since / / and any I make in the future.

I confirm that I am a UK taxpayer. I understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Signature: Date:

Please return this form to: Leeds Faith in Schools, The Cottage, Raynel Drive, Leeds, LS16 6BS

THE TEAM AND OUR SCHOOLS



Louisa Lawrence:
Senior Schoolworker
Guiesley



Mark Atkins:
Schoolworker
Prince Henrys, Abbey
Grange, Garforth,
Brigshaw



Kim Lawrence:
Senior Schoolworker
Abbey Grange, Benton
Park, Wetherby

Prayer Points

1. Successful recruitment of a new administrator for our team.
2. Resources & capacity to serve new schools.
3. Growth in our relationships and connections with local churches.
4. Strength for the team as they support schools in this challenging season.



Ben Cordy:
Team Leader
Carr Manor, Brigshaw



Charity Administrator

