



Growing Faith

18 - Autumn | 8 September 2023

St Christopher's Youth Church - Staying Relevant

Written by Mr Pountain

At the beginning of a new term for our youth church, with all the potential and excitement that comes with this part of the rhythm of the school year, we do well to remember that staying relevant to our pupils does not come automatically.

It's scary just how close the word relevant: "closely connected or appropriate to the matter in hand" appears to the word relic: "an object of interest surviving from an earlier time" in the dictionary. 'Relic' is almost the very next word after 'relevant'. It seems that, throughout history, these two words have been travelling companions, one following the other – always. Reflecting on this surprising fact, it strikes me how easily our youth church could become a relic, the moment we cease to be relevant to our pupils.

For those of us charged with leading our youth church, we recognise that part of our job is to surf the wave of our culture: if the ocean goes out, we go out. If it comes in, so do we. This absolutely does not mean that we compromise on our Christian core values, but we simply must remain relevant to our pupils and their parents. We must resist creating a tidal pool youth church cut off from the ocean of the prevailing culture. Being a relic has absolutely nothing to do with chronological age. Some of the most relevant church leaders I have come across are close to retirement age. This is because staying relevant is a choice, and being a relic is not inevitable.

Avoiding superstition in our youth church

Rather like footballers who insist on touching the turf before they play, because they once did that and played well, much of our rationale to stay irrelevant can be put down to what can best be described as superstition. We structure the sung worship the way we do or pray within certain predetermined parameters because it once worked that way for us, or we've seen it done successfully somewhere else. But neither of those things mean it will work in our context today.

Not confusing form with essence

When asked why we do something, too many of us will answer from the heart. Not that there's anything wrong with that of itself, but the danger is that we keep things the same way they always have been because of nostalgia. We get too comfortable. We become emotionally attached to stuff that just does not matter. Form doesn't matter; essence does.

At St Christopher's youth church, at the beginning of a new academic year, we have the greatest antidote to irrelevance in the unchanging 2000 year old Gospel message. If we keep our eyes on the Cross of Christ, like the top button of a shirt, everything else will line up behind it and fall into place. We shall avoid becoming modern day relics by simply keeping the main thing the main thing.



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Youth Church Reflection

by Charlie Gerrard, Deputy Worship Coordinator.

“We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention in our prayers.”

1 Thessalonians 1:2

This is part of a letter from Paul reminding us we should be grateful for all the good people in our lives.

This is very important for us to remember as we finish another school year. To remember to give thanks for our school and teachers.

For all the knowledge, skills, and support that they have given us during this time.

“Rejoice always, pray continually, and give thanks in all circumstances for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

A Song for Reflection



A Prayer

by Lucy Tattersall, Worship Coordinator.

Dear Lord,

Thank you for the wonderful community we have here at St Christopher’s. As we remember founder’s day and the beginning of this school, we ask that you watch over it as it continues to grow in years to come.

Over this summer holidays, help us to reflect on this academic year. The challenges faced, the memories made, and the friendships shared. Help this to continue into our new school year.

In Jesus’ name,

Amen

Church Support

Church Services

Please visit these church websites to see when their services are taking place:

Great Harwood Christian Fellowship: [Website](#)

St John’s and St Augustine’s Church, Huncoat: [YouTube channel](#)

St Peter and St Paul’s Church, Rishton: [Facebook Page](#)

St. John’s Church, Baxenden: [Website](#)

Peel Street Baptist Church: [Website](#)

All Saints Church, Clayton-le-Moors: [Facebook Page](#)

St James’ Church, Clitheroe: [Website](#)


Burnley Life Church: [Website](#)

St Mary Magdalen’s Church, Accrington: [Website](#) / [Facebook Page](#)

St Andrew’s Church, Accrington: [Website](#)

St Peter’s Church, Accrington: [Website](#)



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