

# North East Scotland Youth for Christ Update June 2020

## COVID-19 . . . WHAT HAVE WE BEEN DOING

### CIRCUMSTANCES HAVE CHANGED – OUR MISSION REMAINS THE SAME

#### • LOCKDOWN ANNOUNCED

As a result of COVID-19 and lockdown restrictions effectively closing down all face to face youth work in its normal form in Tillydrone, we sent our youth worker Matthew back to his home in Northern Ireland on a 'working from home' basis. Meanwhile, we decided what was the best way forward in maintaining contact with and support of the young people we had been working with.

Our Board of Trustees had to consider whether or not Matthew would be placed on furlough under the Government's job retention scheme. This was not an action we felt was right to take. It would effectively mean that contact with the young people and their ongoing support would be broken, resulting in a negative impact on them at a time of great uncertainty. Matthew is now working with and supporting the young people remotely through the utilisation of online capabilities such as social media, video conferencing etc.

#### • ENTER THE ONLINE MINISTRY

The development of our online ministry and support, where necessary in conjunction with The Lighthouse, has proved challenging at times in terms of compliance with Safeguarding regulations and the time taken to prepare online materials. The following is what has been achieved so far.

##### ❖ Illuminate Online

An extension of the Illuminate Bible study for S1 – S6 young people via video conferencing. Attendance has been variable and after the initial strangeness of meeting on line it has been very successful and has led to some frank discussions.

##### ❖ Illuminate Mini Groups Online

Due to Safeguarding compliance, we cannot meet one-to-one online with the Illuminate young people. Mini groups have been set up at which two leaders have been allocated two or three young people with whom they will keep contact and support.

Mini groups have proved very successful in providing a situation where young people who struggle to talk and be heard in a larger group to open up and discuss things they need to talk through.

With the effects on the young people of being locked down and away from friends etc, the contacts made with the leaders in mini groups has proved a very valuable way for them to download and be supported.

##### ❖ Radiate Online

An extension of the regular Radiate club for primary age children. The club includes the posting of short kids talks on parents group chat, colouring competitions using the Youth for Christ 'go colour on line' resource, short quizzes etc. This has proved very successful with a high level of engagement and great feedback being received from the children and their parents.

##### ❖ Online Devotional Videos

Weekly devotional videos geared toward young people are prepared and uploaded weekly to Facebook and Instagram. A series on the 'I Am' sayings of Jesus has just finished.

The 'I AM' series had a great response on social media. Over the 7 weeks we had between 150 and 550 views on the videos and we have received messages from both young people and adults alike saying that they have been greatly encouraged.

Over the next couple of weeks we hope to start online interviews/testimonies. This would take real life people with real life stories of how they're lives have been transformed and squeeze their stories into 20-minute episodes. Hopefully the young people will find this encouraging and challenging.

- **THE FUTURE AS COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS BEGIN TO EASE**

The online ministry is a work in progress and we are regularly assessing the need among young people in Tillydrone and working with The Lighthouse to address and put in place resources to meet the needs which become evident.

The exit from lockdown restrictions will we suspect be a slow process and the landscape of our work among the young people will have changed considerably. However we remain committed to adapt and innovate where necessary to ensure that we meet our ministry calling to support the young people of Tillydrone and show them the reality and love of Jesus.

- **PRAYER POINTS**

The Young People

- Pray for young people who are starting to get fed up and not engaging just as well as they had been.
- Pray for young people who are stuck at home with little to do apart from school work and thus are starting to get bored.
- Pray for young people who are very lonely at this time as they are stuck at home.
- Pray for the wellbeing of young people who are new Christians as they are alone at home with their new faith.

The Work

- Pray for the ministry that our Father God would guide, lead and bless what we do to reach out to young people in these times when we cannot meet them physically face to face.
- Pray for our Youth Worker for energy, endurance, patience and vision in these difficult times.
- Pray for our Board of Trustees, as they seek to support the work of reaching out to young people for Jesus.
- Pray that all we do will be in the Lords will and for his glory.