

Pentecost Youth Weekend in Jersey

“Good Teacher, What must I do to inherit eternal life?”

The young people of the Parish of Jersey were invited to come together for a Pentecost weekend based on the WYD theme, ‘Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life’. The weekend was built into this year’s confirmation programme but it was opened to other young people to encourage a real feel for the wider church across our worshipping communities. The start time was planned for 11am but as early as 8.30am the first young people arrived clutching their sleeping bags. The sun was shining and there was an excitement in the air.

The registration team counted in over 70 young people who divided into teams of Fire, Doves, Water and Wind. The first activity was to make team banners highlighting the positive gifts each had to offer to the weekend and in life.

Lynda Mussell from Cafod joined us for the weekend and really inspired the teams by looking at how we can use the Gifts of the Holy Spirit to tackle injustice and also how we **can** be heroes. The young people responded to Lynda’s enthusiasm and you can read about her experiences on the Cafod Portsmouth Blog. <http://cafodportsmouth.wordpress.com/2010/05/25/a-special-spirit-filled-weekend-in-jersey/>

They also had time to reflect on prayer and experience a guided meditation in the Anglican chapel at the community centre. This was led by Marta Pugsley, School chaplain from Beaulieu School, together with Liz Lambotte the Methodist youth worker. We definitely were achieving an ecumenical feel and were heartened when some non Catholic youth appeared and asked to join the weekend too. After meeting their parents and paperwork completed they joined in time for the next two sessions on the Sacraments and the Ten Commandments.

The reflective sacrament stations in the church helped each young person to consider their own experiences and emphasised the ongoing nature of our life journey with God. Dominic Omissi (local teacher and catechist) truly brought the Ten Commandments to life showing how we are set free rather than restricted by them.

After a feast of cakes to provide energy they set off to walk to the Oasis of Peace on a walk of witness. This was also a ‘faith fact’ search. They had quizzes to complete with answers at the check points. The walk was admirably supervised with help from the Knights of St. Columba and volunteers from the churches who had been cleared for safeguarding through their other roles in ministry. It was truly stewardship in action as teams of Mums came in to clean and close up one venue while others rushed ahead to prepare the Oasis.

Arriving at the Oasis, the normally quiet garden had been transformed into a city of tents kindly loaned by a local school. The BBQ's were on the go and thanks to the speakers of a local DJ, a past WYD pilgrim, music was blasting out to the bemused cows in the next field.

The food was enjoyed with great relish and new friends were made by young people from across our small but very diverse island. It was wonderful to see young people of very different backgrounds and cultures enjoying each others company and recognising the special thing they all shared in common, their Faith. The BBQ had a Portuguese style with meat skewered onto branches cooked over the fire and home made Portuguese bread baked on a stone. We also served the essential burgers with ketchup. Jersey royals were served in big dishes so again cultures came together in harmony

As darkness fell the fire was lit and we began our vigil for the Holy Spirit by having an outdoor candlelight procession. Adoration and prayer lasted until well after 10pm. Our God is an Awesome God was sung over and over with real feeling and great meaning.

Before falling into their sleeping bags they had the option to watch a DVD on the Acts of the Apostles, take time with Jesus by the well in the Oasis chapel or just try to get some sleep. A great dedicated group of leaders took it in turn to be the night watch teams but had little sleep before calling everyone for 6am beans on toast.

Yet another team of mums arrived to help cook breakfast. After Morning Prayer the buses arrived to take most of the group to Mass at St. Thomas' church. Both there and at St. Matthew's in the west young candidates had their Rite of Election ready for Confirmation in June.

It was exhausting, it took a lot of planning but the power of the Holy Spirit was evident in the whole event. The whole event was a massive example of STEWARDSHIP working. The young people certainly experienced the strength and joy of their Church community and hopefully they will be inspired to stay involved with communities and activities across the parish.

Many thanks to everyone who took part and we hope Cafod will send Lynda to us again soon.