

A PLACE FOR YOUTH

WITH A DIFFERENCE!

BY EDD COPE
ST MARY'S CHILDREN'S & YOUTH
MINISTER



'CAN I BE MYSELF OR DO I HAVE TO HIDE WHAT I THINK AND FEEL TO FIT IN? HOW MUCH MORE HAVE I GOT TO DO TO SUCCEED? WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT THE WAR, POVERTY AND RACISM GOING ON IN THE WORLD AROUND ME? WHAT I SEE ON SOCIAL MEDIA KEEPS MAKING ME FEEL BAD ABOUT MYSELF'

These are questions and thoughts that our current generation of teenagers (Gen Z) are living with! It's no wonder that Youthsight's research (www.youthsight.com) says that half of Gen Z are always anxious.

As a parent of two young boys, I look at the culture they are growing up in and can see that it is likely to place more and more pressure on them. What I find encouraging though is that *Youthscape Centre for Research* shows us that 92% of Gen Z see family as a positive influence in their life and 93% of them see their friends as a positive influence as well.

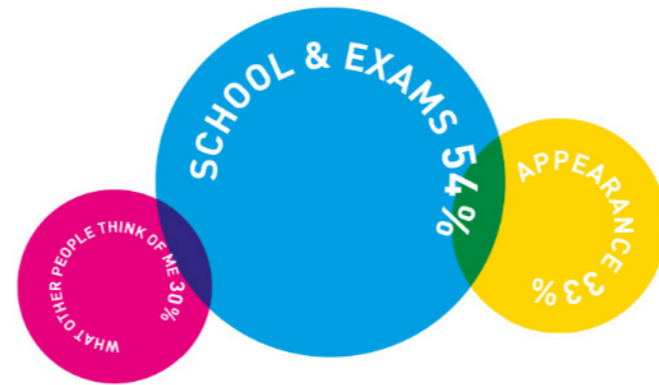
This means that my role as a parent and the influence that I can have to equip my children to navigate this challenging world matters. Finding the right environments where they will be encouraged to be themselves, use their gifts and ask big questions in the face of life's challenges, is important. Finding a place where we know they will be valued for who they truly are, is vital.

Finding this kind of community for our children and teenagers can seem out of reach, but this is what we have on offer for the teenagers in our village and beyond. The community and culture in our St Mary's Youth Group are shaped by different

values; these values create a space that looks and feels different from anything else they may have experienced before.

LIFE CONCERNS

In your own life, what are the top 3 things that you are most worried about?
* percentage of times mentioned in the top 3 answers overall.



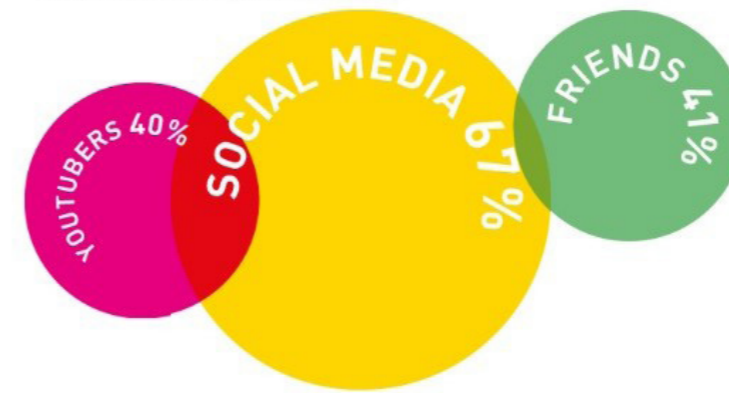
We offer to all young people a safe space to come and think about the bigger things of life. A place to gather, to make life-long friendships, where there's no fear of judgement, and no pressure of trying to 'prove themselves' like they are constantly having to do at school – getting the right grades, or on the sport field etc...



NEGATIVE INFLUENCES

Who/what are the top 3 people/things that make you feel bad about yourself?

* percentage of times mentioned in the top 3 answers overall.



We also seek to support parents and champion them in the best way we can, coming alongside them and journeying through the ups and downs of life together. At St Mary's, we understand that parenting is a real rollercoaster ride, and are constantly trying to figure things out as we go; each day seems to produce new joys and challenges! There is an amazing community of parents at St Mary's who help and support each other in this adventure of parenthood – something I value and appreciate so much.

If this kind of community sounds like the place you want for your teenagers, we would love to walk alongside you and your family and offer support as you navigate this crazy world!

Please do get in touch with me, Edd Cope, the Children's and Youth Minister, and I would be really happy to chat with you.

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YOUTH GROUP
SCHOOL YEARS 6-13
SUNDAYS AT 5PM

The Wheelhouse, 82 East Lane, West Horsley - All youth welcome!

