

## FAITH IN SCHOOLS: TWYFORD FELLOWSHIP GROUP

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**KATRINA MORRISON**  
reports on an inspiring weekend in Sussex

Twyford Fellowship Group is probably the one thing that maintained and developed my faith while at school – one of the most challenging times that all Christians face.

It provides a starting point for ministry throughout school, and gives Christians at Twyford School a place to get together to make friends, learn more about God and encourage one another.

Every year, TFG holds weekends away for different age groups, organised and run by Geoff Lumley. These times are always really special, challenging and fun.

The best thing is that it's a great chance to get to know God better and strengthen your own faith in a relaxing and hospitable environment.

From my first weekend, in Year 7, I have taken every opportunity I've had to go on a TFG weekend. I have seen God move in a big way over the years.

This year's senior TFG weekend was no exception. Entitled *Knees Worn Through* it focused on prayer – specifically the Lords Prayer. Provisions had been made this year to accommodate as many

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as possible so that TFG regulars could invite friends with no experience of Christianity or with no relationship with God at all.

The excited, friendly atmosphere of the weekend began long before we reached Annan Court. The age range of this group started at year 10 (14-15 year olds) and included all the years of upper school and the sixth form.

Students who have left Twyford return to participate year after year, including a large group in their mid twenties – representing TFG's original members.

The first meeting after supper was a chance to throw ourselves into a weekend with Jesus, listening and learning and basically refreshing ourselves.

TFG has some really gifted worship leaders and musicians, focused and serious about using their talents for God. Worship is a big part of our weekend because it reminds us that it is all about Jesus, about thanking him and receiving his love.

This makes it so much more than Christians gathered round to sing songs – because we are actually speaking to someone real whom we know has wonderful things to give us. After a while we were more than ready to receive.

### Importance

The first talk included some amusing and thought-provoking video footage, helping us to see and get in touch with God in new ways.

Geoff explained the importance of prayer in general – and the Lord's Prayer in particular – so that as we say it, it is no longer merely a recital to be chanted every now and then. It

might seem a little simplistic to base a whole weekend on ten lines of scripture but it just shows... God doesn't make his message difficult does he?

Saturday morning's meeting picked up from this positive point, refreshed and open – ready for a day of focus and opportunity to increase understanding of the Bible.

Geoff gave us some ideas for interpretation and then we formed groups in order to study and look into different lines of the Lord's Prayer according to what we related to most, with a mission to formulate a prayer based on our ideas of that line.

Within my group I was able to speak to people I hadn't really known previously and we discussed the line "Forgive us our sins". After coffee we were instructed to find some way to present what we had learned within our groups to everyone else.

This allows everybody to express themselves in a way best for them. Song, music, poetry, drama, art and photography are mediums that have been used on past weekends, making the feedback times invaluable in entertainment and in learning from

one another.

After a free afternoon we all went back to the meeting hall for worship, followed by group presentations, which were very varied, knowledge developing interpretations of the Lord's Prayer, some funny and others very moving.

Worship continued after dinner and became more serious, encapsulating all we had learned in the last few days.

Geoff's talk for this meeting was on how it all could relate directly to us as individuals, and opened a question for many people to what God wanted for them. This became a powerful time when we prayed for each other.

A few asked God into their lives for the very first time. Almost all of us asked God to show us his direction for our lives, or for the affirmation of our faith.

Come Sunday morning and we were able to engage in enriched worship and follow up talk from events of the previous night. The Eucharist was led by the Bishop of Willesden who we were pleased to have with us for the morning. Prayers from the groups were offered and the Eucharist was the culmination of our

fellowship with one another and with Jesus.

After this, and some music, we were led into a time of sharing of testimonies of people – and what they had felt over the last two days.

This was, as it always is, one of the most powerful parts of the weekend and shows how much God can work in such a small space of time. It was incredibly encouraging and the essence of a real Christian community. This time led then to the singing of praise to God, which lasted a long time, and then lunch, our last

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Inspired and energised: Students at Twyford Fellowship Group

meal together.

A less inspiring event followed: tidy-up time when Annan Court had to be cleaned, packed up and vacuumed etc, before everybody made their various journeys home.

TFG is probably the best thing that could have happened to my Christian life at school, and in relating to the Church in general – and many people share my opinion no matter what stage of school/uni/employment life they are at.

### Brilliant

Sonia, a girl in Year 11 told me: "It's such a strong threshold, something I can really lean on, a great source of unity".

One boy, who had never been on a TFG weekend before, exclaimed unprompted: "I'm amazed, it's been brilliant."

Other responses were equally encouraging. Overall it was a great weekend, and I think everyone brought something back because, although TFG starts at school, the fruits carry on throughout life to do amazing things for God.