



Life to the Max 2022 report

After a three-year gap, Life to the Max, our outdoor activities holiday returned at a new venue and with many new features. It was so good to be back! From 16-18 September, we took 22 young people aged 11-18 from clergy households and a team of leaders to the brilliant Mendip Outdoor Activity Centre, and we had an amazing time. It was such a privilege to join young people from across the Dioceses of Bath and Wells and Bristol, who didn't know each other, to make new friends, do some great outdoor activities and have fun together.



The Friday evening started with some icebreakers using a massive green dice to get to know each other, and it didn't take long for them to lay aside any preconceived worries about being with strangers and dive straight in. There was much hilarity as they tried to guess two truths and a lie for each leader that included, having served tea to King Charles III (when he was a prince), meeting Mcfly, being related to Mary Berry, being a drummer in a death metal band and turning down the chance to play at the Eurovision song contest. We will leave it to you to decide which ones are true or not!

By the time we were ready for a late star gazing walk on the Mendips, you would have thought this group had been friends for years. They seemed more interested in getting to know each other than looking for stars, so we headed back to the Mendip Lodge for board games and the obligatory hot chocolate.

Saturday morning started bright and early as we headed off to Hewish for raft building and the assault course. Those who chose to do the assault course, did so because they didn't want to get as wet as the raft builders. Little did they know that the assault course had far more water and mud involved! By the time both activities came to an end, most of the young people were completely saturated.



After drying off and some well needed lunch, it was off to active archery, which is basically shooting each other with bows and marshmallow tipped arrows, oh, and with some masks for safety. Some of the young people were a bit unsure at the start but by the end we had several budding Robin Hoods. At the end of this activity the main instructor said to the young people "That in his 17 years of working at the Centre, he had never experienced working with such a special group of young people. He said it took great courage for them to come together for the weekend without knowing each other and they needed to share whatever it was they had with the rest of the world". This was such a moving moment.



After supper on the Saturday evening, we all gathered around the fire pit for s'mores. During this time, we had an amazing conversation about what it is like growing up in a clergy household. The young people realised they were not alone in sharing some unique experience of what it is like growing up in a clergy household. This is possibly when they truly bonded. The rest of the evening was spent playing games, sharing stories, mucking around and drinking more hot chocolate, before eventually going to bed.

Sunday morning was another early rise, but the prize was to go tobogganing. This is normally an activity that is meant for primary aged children. However, 20 teenagers flying down a synthetic ski slope on plastic trays, is truly something to behold. There was much laughter and some skulduggery, but above all, it was a joy to see young people simply being young people.



The rest of the day was spent relaxing, having lunch and packing up, before the obligatory class of 22 Life to the Max photo. Two young people had to leave before the photo, so we may need to Photoshop them in.



The only sad note of LttM 22 was that we missed Dan Jones as a leader after his job was unfortunately made redundant. Thanks Dan for the 12 years you faithfully served at LttM. However, we were joined on the first evening by the Rev Dr Simon Taylor, Director of Ministry Development at Bristol Diocese, who is keen to keep this partnership going. Thanks to Ruth Day from Bristol Diocese who worked with our own Fliss Cobby in providing the admin to make the weekend run smoothly. You are both super stars!

A MASSIVE thank you to Emily Hatton and Eleanor Herbert who joined the LttM team this year. Thanks to Christchurch Clevedon for lending these two inspiring youth leaders to us for the weekend.

Thank you to the brilliant Mendip Outdoor Activity Centre staff for looking after us, feeding us and providing such amazing activities.

A very special thank you to the Clergy Support Trust who made this weekend affordable by awarding us a generous grant and for getting behind what we are trying to do with clergy families.

Comments from some clergy parents

Rev C, who joined us for most of the weekend with her 16-year-old daughter who is ASD and has very high social anxiety:

“We had no expectations that F would be able to attend Life to the Max as she would not be able to attend without either myself or my husband. When it was suggested that this would be possible, we were so thankful but were not sure whether she would be able to.

Amazingly F did feel able to try and attend because there were absolutely no expectations made of her. We moved completely at her pace and only participated in those areas that she felt able to. She communicated with a few of the team and as the two days progressed she felt increasingly more able to be near the other children.

When we left on Saturday evening after the chat about being a clergy kid, immediately we got in the car she said, 'I have answers to everything' and we had a wonderful chat all the way home where she was able to articulate fully how she felt. It was so wonderful that she was able to be part of this. She also said to me 'I love Life to the Max' and 'It's sad that there are only two more years I can go to Life to the Max.' We are so grateful that F was able to attend - thank you!"

Rev A (Tweet)

"@GoTeamAdvisers are 1 of the biggest blessings of @BathWells. 1 reason is their care of the children of clergy who face particular challenges thanks to their parents – the Go Team gave up their weekend to give my 2 and others a wonderful fun filled weekend away".

Rev T

"Thank you for the Life to the Max weekend which my two children attended. They had a fantastic time, as they always do, and enjoyed meeting up with their old friends and making new ones. Thank you for giving clergy children this opportunity to go away together - to share their experiences and also just to have some fun.

My daughter said that the gift of the weekend away makes her feel valued by her diocese as a clergy child – isn't that lovely? It is also helpful for us parents – after the "what's it like to be a clergy kid" session, my two feedback to us that we were actually doing pretty well as clergy parents. Gold star for us!!

Thank you for your hard work, commitment and organisation to make LTTM happen – it is greatly appreciated".

To see more, watch [the LttM 22 video](#),

Here's to LttM 23 – September 15-17, we can't wait

Cheryl, Andy, Fliss and Tony

