



Ventures Update

Spring 2012

Share your story

www.ventures.org.uk

VENTURES

Life changing holidays for 8-18s





Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life. Philippians 2:15

I'm not a prolific user of eBay, however I've just been awarded a new star. It's not very shiny but hopefully it signifies my status as a trustworthy user of the website. I describe the items I sell accurately and I pay quickly for my purchases. I'm sure you'd expect nothing less! The feedback system creates trust within the eBay system, enabling financial transactions to occur between people with whom you have no relationship. My 100 per cent positive feedback rating is something I need to maintain to keep my star shining.

Clearly, clouds can easily obscure the visibility of stars. I'm conscious that it's all too easy for me to grumble and moan and for the

brightness of my witness as a Christian to be diminished. And not many sights are as spectacular as when we see the vast vista of a sky full of stars. My witness for Christ will always be more effective when it's joined by the glowing testimony of others.

Ventures rightly have a wonderful reputation for providing fantastic life-changing holidays. Our volunteers faithfully proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ in all they do and say. We give thanks to God for lives that have been transformed because young people have experienced the faithful witness of our leaders.

Unfortunately, many young people have yet to encounter the shining stars of our tremendous leaders on Ventures. There's much we can do to increase our visibility, including some ideas shared in this issue.

We know that most young people who attend a Venture do so because someone they trust has recommended it to them. I'd be delighted if every Venture was full this year, but to make that happen we need you to shine like stars for Ventures, making sure that message of Jesus Christ can be heard by as many young people as possible.

Thanks,

David Hart
Director,
Ventures and
Falcon Camps



Stories of lives changed

A lot can happen in a week, as these quotes from the young people on Ventures show. We were thrilled to see so many children and teenagers come to know Christ or grow in their faith through Ventures last year, and we're praying for many more encounters with our life-changing God in 2012.

Sharing good news is what Ventures is all about. Young people come away from the holidays not only with stories of fun and friendship, but also with a deeper understanding of Jesus' love for them.

Many, like Shannon, say 'yes' to Jesus for the first time, while others experience God working profoundly in their hearts, and come home with a new story of God's goodness to share with those around them.

We're passionate about promotion because the more we spread the word about Ventures, the more children and teenagers will have the opportunity to hear and discover the transforming story of Jesus' life, death and resurrection.

Let the redeemed of the Lord tell their story. Psalm 107:2

'I said "Yes" to Jesus.' Shannon, 13, Romsey 1

'I learnt that God gives us a second chance.' Robert, 10, Bredon 3

'Ventures have been SO helpful in my walk with God, THANK YOU. I was challenged to seek out an active faith and be totally committed to God in ALL areas of my life, not just the parts I find it easy for Him to be in charge of.' Fiona, 16, Colwyn Bay 3

'God forgives anyone and anything.' Michael, 16, Foremarke 3

'I know that God is always there for me and always there to listen to me and help me.' Jimmy, 11, Woolie 1

'I learnt on the Venture that God will forgive us and always love and be there for us.' Bethan, 14, Sibford

'God has a plan for me, no matter what I think is happening.' Fay, 18, Brambletye 2

'He suffers for our sins, even though we do not deserve it.' James, 15, Sedburgh



Share your own story with others – and us!
Email: ventures@cpas.org.uk

Sharing the fun



Here are just a few ideas of ways to tell others about how great you think Ventures are.

Show the Ventures DVD

Our video gives people a real flavour of what thousands of young people get up to on Ventures each year. Ask your church leader if you can spend less than five minutes showing it in church one Sunday.



Visit www.ventures.org.uk to order a free copy.

Invite someone

Nothing means as much as a personal invitation from a trusted friend. Pray about who God is prompting you to ask – and be bold! If your friends aren't up for a whole week, why not suggest one of the shorter 'taster Ventures'.



Tweet tweet!

With more and more people joining the conversation on Twitter, why not use this huge social network to tell other people (in less than 140 characters!) about #ventureholidays.



Tell your story

Testimonies are not only a powerful way of sharing your faith, they also often inspire other people to attend Ventures. Explore ways to share your story with a youth group, home group or church family.



Join us on Facebook

Search for 'CPAS Ventures' on Facebook and connect with us to get ideas, inspiration, prayer points and news in the build-up to this year's holidays.



Organise a Venture-themed service

If your church leader is up for it, you may even be able to have a service themed around a Venture, to give people an idea of what these life-changing holidays are all about. It's worth asking, at least!

Write something for your church website or newsletter

Many churches are looking for new material to keep their websites updated, or to fill the next newsletter. Write a short article about your experience on a Venture – we're sure it will be great!



Fundraise for Ventures

Do an outrageous challenge, sponsored silence or car washing. Anything that inspires family and friends to sponsor you can help us keep the costs of Ventures as low as possible, and raise awareness of the holidays at the same time.



Serving church-based youth work



A commitment to serving youth work in churches is what drives the recruitment of members for Woolhampton 3.

Overall leader John Percival said: 'Our approach aims to benefit leaders, members and local churches. Above all, we want to serve the year-round work with young people in the churches that we're linked to.

'Gospel ministry is relational, so we share truth with members and demonstrate God's love for them. With focus on Bible talks to present the gospel in a coherent way, encourage children in their own Bible reading and model the Christian life with lots of fun and laughter.

'Doing things in the summer which help young people appreciate their youth groups back at home allows the key work to happen during the rest of the year as they learn more about Jesus each week.

'We also have a big emphasis on training young leaders, investing time and energy so they have the chance to give Bible talks and lead activities. On the Venture we nurture

skills that they can re-use in their youth groups back at home. By equipping and encouraging youth leaders we can give them a fresh lease of life before they start a new year at church.'

Since it was planted in 2007, 'Woolie 3' has aimed to recruit about four-fifths of its members from a core of four or five church youth groups. But how do they use this strategy to promote to new members and bring about growth?

'We spot members from the same church and make contact with their youth leaders or parents, to get a better understanding of their church situation and encourage an adult from that church to join our team,' added John. 'After the Venture we try to visit their youth group, meet up with their leaders and maybe even lead a session. The more we understand the members' churches, the more we can make what we do in the summer relevant to what they're doing for the rest of the year and encourage other people from those churches to join them on a Venture.'



Friends telling friends



Personal connection is by far the most common way new people find out about Ventures, and the word of a friend or peer can often be the most powerful. Matthew Arnold, overall leader of

@Oswestry finds that 'friends telling friends' is key to promoting his Venture.

'Each year, we aim to have a good mixture of young people who've been on our Venture before, and those who are new. We've found the best way to do this is to give the young people the time of their lives! If someone has had an amazing holiday, they'll come back the next year, and they'll also tell their friends how great it was – and then they'll want to come too,' Matthew said.

And face-to-face conversations aren't the only way young people can share their Ventures experience with friends.



Encouraging members to tweet about their holiday, talk about it on Facebook, share photos and point others towards the YouTube channel (search for VentureHolidays) can reach whole networks of young people who wouldn't otherwise hear about Ventures.

Matthew and his team found that sharing a DVD with footage from their Venture was an effective way to secure bookings. 'One year, we sent our DVD to last summer's members in December, wishing them a merry Christmas, reminding them what a fantastic time they had, and prompting them to book for the next summer.'

Not every holiday has its own DVD, but the general Ventures DVD is available free of charge through the website. The head office team also help leaders put together Venture-specific brochures which current members can give to others in their youth group, school, church or elsewhere.

'I believe young people's experiences are the best possible advert for a Venture,' said Matthew. 'We love to see members coming back time and time again, having a wonderful holiday, being immersed in Christian teaching, and bringing their friends along so they can get involved in the story too.'

Looking for ideas about how to promote your own Venture?
Contact us in the office on ventures@cpas.org.uk or 01926 458456

'Go and make disciples'

Please do whatever you can to help promote Ventures over the coming weeks.

Together we can help more children and young people have fun, make friends and learn more about Jesus on Ventures in 2012.

News from CPAS

This year marks the 50th anniversary of You and Ministry weekends. Since 1962 these vocations conferences have helped 10,000 men and women explore God's call on their lives, especially ordained or other authorised ministries in the Church of England. Four more events are due to take place in 2012, beginning with a weekend in likely, West Yorkshire in March. Visit www.cpas.org.uk for more details, and please spread the word if anybody you know might be interested.

Also, check out the CPAS website for a wide range of other leadership training events and conferences.