

# MORE LIFE



MISSION SPECIAL 2020

# unbroken



"WHERE THERE'S STILL LIFE,  
THERE'S STILL HOPE."  
-Louis Zamperini

"The grass withers, the flowers  
fade, but the word of  
our God will stand forever."  
-Isiah 40:8 ESV

John 14: 6 (Jesus)  
"I am the way, and the truth  
and the life. No one comes to the  
Father except through me."

Psalm 138: 8  
"The Lord delivers him  
who is righteous. When he calls,  
the Lord answers and saves him."  
-Psalm 138: 8

Olive Park

Charles

"I have  
said to know, I am  
walking the truth, and the  
Father who sent me,  
no one comes to the Father  
except through me."



# MISSION 2020 UNBROKEN

At the beginning of February, the entire school community entered into almost two weeks of Mission. The aim was to bring our school and wider community together around a central theme – that God’s love is ‘Unbroken’ and there is nothing we can do that will ever cause this love to break.

Students enjoyed lessons, workshops, lunchtime clubs and evening events to reflect on this theme and we were joined by the brilliant Youth Ministry Team who delivered sessions based on the ‘Unbroken’ theme to almost 1600 students.

Ann Oshegbu – who is currently on the gap year team at the Youth Village but is also a former St. Thomas More student – said, “I think Mission is very interesting because it has a way of unifying the students and bringing everybody together in a safe place to hear a message and have fun.”

Students were involved in many different activities throughout the week including students in DT lessons who made their own wooden holding crosses. These were then blessed by Mgr Andrew Faley and returned to the students as a keepsake of the Mission. Students also participated in ‘Unbroken’ lessons in Art, RE, Maths, English, Science, MFL, Geography, History, Health & Social Care and Psychology. These lessons all linked to the theme in their own way and in the context of their own subjects.

- Michael the Chaplain



As part of the Mission, the Year 11 Music group were asked to write a song around the theme of ‘Unbroken’. As a group, we sat down first to write the lyrics, with Chloe Fisher, Isha Phiri, Amy Tullock and Martie Inson all writing lyrics that they sang as solos. We then tried to get as many instruments into the song as possible, including guitars played by Lily Hughes and Jacob McCoy, a violin played by Eleanor Adamson, piano played by Thomas Rumney and a Cajón drum played by Thomas Ashton. Backing singers included Olivia Carey, Louise Brophy, Sophie Ritson and Leia Normand. We performed the song on Thursday 6th February at the Family Night and then on the final day of the Mission to Year 7 and Year 8. The opportunity was one we will never forget; thank you to Mr Caffrey and the Music department for all their help. The song is available to listen to on the school website at [www.stmacademy.org.uk](http://www.stmacademy.org.uk).

- Sophie Ritson and Leia Normand, Year 11

# ‘UNBROKEN’

by Year 11 Music students

Sometimes the tears we cry are more than any heart can take

We hurt, just keep it inside

Small wonder why it starts to break

Many moons will lighten the way

And sure this night will follow a day

And everything you once loved remains

Unbroken, unbroken

We are unbroken

You are here to fix each other’s mess

We are not silenced

You are here to make us feel more than less

We can start a fire, keep it burning

The wheel is turning, it is unbroken

Make a difference, make a change

Rearrange the words that are unspoken

Spoken, unbroken

Your heart is in a cage that remains untouched

The bars feel so strong but have not felt much

Your heart needs to escape, it wants to be free

Taste the crashing of the waves and the rolling of the sea

Never been through times so tough

Never known anything could be so rough

Find the strength from deep inside

Tame this rollercoaster ride

We are unbroken

You are here to fix each other’s mess

We are not silenced

You are here to make us feel more than less

We can start a fire, keep it burning

The wheel is turning, it is unbroken

Make a difference, make a change

Rearrange the words that are unspoken

Spoken, unbroken

We can light a candle, keep it burning

The wheel is turning, it is unbroken

Make a difference, make a change

Rearrange the words that are unspoken

Spoken, unbroken



# SHYLER LITTLE FINDS OUT MORE FROM THE YMT TEAM

Shyler: I'm here with Ann, Mark, Hannah and Josie from YMT – they have been part of the team who have been delivering the Mission for the students. So Ann, what's so special about the Mission to you?

Ann: I think, especially from the point of view of being an ex-student of the school, I think Mission has a way of unifying a year group because every session is done with half a year group or a full year group. It's that experience of not having to sit in lessons, and having to sit in the hall and hear other people, outsiders, come in and talk about faith. It is very interesting and it has a way of unifying the students and bringing everybody together in a safe place and having fun.

Shyler: What does the theme of Unbroken mean to you guys?

Hannah: For me, Unbroken is obviously about the Unbroken love of God. But, one of the big things, is that no matter what we can do, God's love will always just be there... it is a constant. This is a really important message for people of today.



Especially if people are struggling with Mental Health, anything like that, to know there is someone out there that loves you more than you can ever comprehend. It is a really lovely and important message.

Mark: I think the general theme also focusses on love. Love is not just romantic love, but the love of God, and this love of God comes forth from identifying our dignity through the value of the human person. Sometimes we forget about our identity as the child of God, our identity that we are loved, that we are special. And that is the meaning of this Mission: to remind all of us, the students in particular, that they are special, they are gifted, and empowered.

Shyler: What do you hope the students will get from this week? All students have been in; what do you hope they will take from this opportunity?

Josie: It is really easy to think this is a message for anyone but yourself. And so I really hope that people can hear the message and think 'this is for me'. That love is for 'you' as well, as well as everyone around us. The message is for every single one of us. I hope that students and staff can hear a bit of that message and take something just so small and realise that it is for them as well.

Shyler: Thank you very much. On behalf of all the students and to YMT, thank you very much for coming and for giving us this opportunity.

YMT: Thank you for having us!

The full video of this interview is available at [stmacademy.org.uk](http://stmacademy.org.uk)

thought-provoking amazing positive  
exciting forgiveness outstanding  
exceptional fun reflective  
devoted unbroken helpful  
fantastic unique cool new excellent  
perfect different together enjoyable  
interesting love eye-opening  
fascinating entertaining great  
opportunity educational

Words taken from student evaluations





## YEAR 5 SESSION

We began the Mission with 236 Year 5 students from across the Catholic feeder schools. YMT, with help from some of our fantastic Year 9 and Year 12 students, helped teach them some songs that they will take back to their Primary schools.

## BANANAGRAMS

Students in KS3 played Bananagrams using words related to the Mission.

## PSYCHOLOGY

The Psychology department reassured Sixth Form students that they can learn to remain 'unbroken' in times of stress, especially during their A-levels, with a few simple stress-management and self-care techniques. We completed some breathing techniques and stretching exercises, a guided meditation, and an art therapy session. This allowed us to acknowledge feelings that may have been lurking in our subconscious and to feel reinvigorated.

- Dannah Cruz, Year 12

## TIK-TOK FLASH MOB

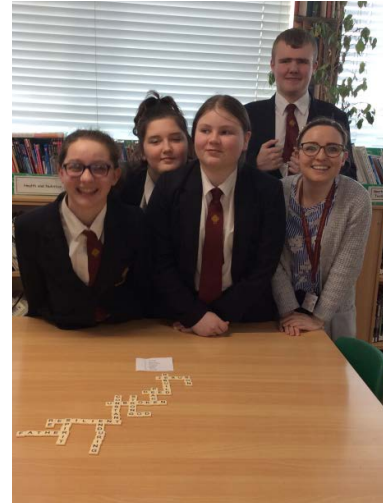
A group of Year 12 students performed a Tik-Tok flash mob in the Dinner Hall on Lower School Lunch. It drew quite a crowd from the confused students, who were busy eating their lunch.

## BUSKING

Outside the Dinner Hall during Lower Lunch some Year 11 students organised for KS3 students to drop in and play an instrument or sing with them!

## CAREERS TALK

Year 12 Health and Social Care students attended a careers talk from an adult







nurse. We made the connection that the way a nurse provides care for their patient, regardless of the choices that person has made in their life, is the same as God's 'unbroken' love for us. - Caitlin Sewell, Kate Barnett & Chloe Johnson, Year 12

### YEAR 7 & 8 GAMES CLUB

Kayne from YMT dropped into Dr Powell's Year 7 and 8 Games Club. Kayne was very disappointed to be beaten by a group of Year 7 students at Connect 4, but the students were impressed when he started showing them card tricks.



### CULTURE CLUB

Ann, Nicole, Mark and Mel from YMT dropped in to the Culture Club and shared a taster of their Nigerian, Mexican and Filipino cultures. The group tried authentic Mexican 'salsa & chips' and black beans and bacon!

### ART CLUB WINGS PROJECT

The Art Club was presented with the challenge of creating a piece of artwork around the theme 'Unbroken'. We decided to create angel wings, as it allowed students to create their own colourful feather and contribute to the overall piece. We added bible quotes that responded to the theme.

- Abigail Tindle and Tilly Milner, Year 7



### DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY CROSSES

Students in KS3 designed and crafted wooden holding crosses, which were blessed at the Family Night and then returned to the students.











# UNBROKEN CHAIN OF COATS

As part of our Catholic commitment to social justice, we asked for donations of unwanted coats. Our calls were listened to by many students and parents and we collected over 300 coats, which have been distributed to local charities Shelter, The People's Kitchen, Justice & Peace Refugee Project and Changing Lives. Gemma Shaper, 13S, explained that 'it will change many people's lives for the better by having a warm coat in the current winter weather.' Will Lee added 'We gathered all of the coat donations in our form class each morning and put them in boxes of 25.' Jen Bone commented that, 'we were also able to collect socks, scarves and hats for men and women.' Ellie Curry concluded, 'It was lovely to see the generosity and hopefully it makes people happy!'

## EVALUATION

Speaking of the Mission, one student said it was a "once in a lifetime experience" and another remarked, "I now realise that no matter how much you have been through, good or bad, you will always have worth in the world". When asked what message will you take away from this experience, one student said, "the idea that God's love for us is unbroken, no matter the choices we make in our life or in the situations we end up in. God will always love us unconditionally". Another commented, "to be unbroken means that even if any difficulties attack us, they cannot break us, because we have something greater and truer within us".

A huge thank you goes to the Youth Ministry Team whose unwavering and dedicated support with our ministry as a Catholic school is invaluable and hugely appreciated – thank you for all your incredible work!

Our time of Mission was a huge success; students were able to be themselves, relax away from the busyness of school life, and reflect on their individual lives and their choices. We continue to pray for all of our young people, that they can live their lives to the fullest as we are all called to, and we pray that any seeds planted during the Mission will be nurtured and bear fruit.





# EX-PUPILS AT YMT

Over the last 25 years, members of the Youth Ministry Team have served the young people of the Diocese of Hexham & Newcastle through school missions, day and residential retreats and work in parishes and beyond. They are based at a purpose-built youth centre called the Emmaus Youth Village, which tens of thousands of young people have enjoyed since it was officially opened in 2010.

The team welcome members to join their gap year team from all over the world, including the Philippines, the USA, Uganda and Cameroon and over the years we have seen over 10 students from St Thomas More RC Academy join the Youth Ministry Team. Former students who have become YMT team members have included our current school chaplain Michael and current team member Ann who only left St Thomas More in 2019 and joined us for the Mission.

For this special edition of More Life, we have caught up with two of the ten former St Thomas More pupils who went on to join the Youth Ministry Team, to find out what they are up to now.

For more information about the work of YMT, visit [www.ymt.org](http://www.ymt.org)



## REBECCA LEIGHTON

### 2007 - 2014

Throughout my time at STM, I was always involved with the chaplaincy and went to Lourdes twice with HCPT whilst in Sixth Form. I was introduced to the Youth Ministry Team during a school mission in Year 10 and I got more involved with Diocesan events afterwards, going on to join their team in 2014. After completing my year at YMT I read Catholic Theology at Leeds Trinity University. I absolutely loved my time as a student and fostered some life-long relationships. I graduated in the summer of 2018 with a first-class degree and contemplated becoming a primary school teacher, spending a year in a local Catholic Primary School as a teaching assistant. I then applied for a role as a Lay Chaplain in a High School in the Diocese and got the job! I'm now the Lay Chaplain at St Michael's Catholic Academy in Billingham and love every minute of it. It is a great way for me to live out my faith and share it with others every day!



## STEPHEN ROONEY

### 1998 - 2005

After attending World Youth Day in Cologne in 2005 with YMT I decided to defer my place at the University of Glasgow for a year and to join YMT. The year at YMT certainly presented its fair share of challenges but the life-long friendships and happy memories are testament to the fact that the challenges were a small price to pay. I went on to read Politics at the University of Glasgow before successfully applying for the Parliamentary Internship Scheme run by the Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales, where I worked full-time as a Parliamentary Assistant to a Scottish Labour MP. I have since worked in Brussels for two and a half years, and am now back in London working as Policy Manager in External Affairs at a leading Professional body.



## NEXT ISSUE SUMMER 2020

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