

My name is Toby, and I am a Ministry Experience Scheme participant in the Diocese of Lincoln. For me, the MES gives me valuable time and guidance in actively discerning God's call on my life and offers a safe, supportive place to do this in the best way for me. I have not found any faults with the scheme in Lincoln, from the supervision and support from "leaders" and other participants to the welcome received by the parishes and communities we have been living in, and I often reflect on the feeling that I have "come back" to Lincoln, despite never even visiting the city before the scheme.

From the first week we have been thrown into the deep end with youth groups, family groups, weekly church services and more, including serving hot chocolate in the porch of St Giles on Halloween to a pop-up nativity at St John's. But I think what has been most impactful for me has been the support I have received from the clergy and others as I began, and continue to, explore sacramental ministry and what that means for my calling as I prepare for my stage 2 panel. The other thing I have found is very important is the dynamic between myself, the other participant and the people supporting us in our exploration of ministry. If I was asked if I would recommend an MES, I would say "YES" as it is the best way, for me, to explore vocation and learn about yourself along the way.



Hi, my name is Mark, and I am currently part of the Ministry Experience Scheme (MES) and Future Youth (FY) in Lincoln based at All Saints Nettleham.

So, what does all that mean? MES and FY is a year that you can spend discerning what call God has put on your life and no that doesn't just mean ordained ministry. You will have many experiences from Toddler groups to Weddings, Free – tea Friday to Funerals – Eucharists to badminton in the church and everything in between.

Being part of FY allows you to meet a few times a year with fellow participants on this scheme in person (as well as many times online) to explore the theme of children's ministry and the way that both ourselves and the young people we work with can grow in faith.

I think it's safe to say that my journey had been difficult with many family illnesses at home. However, the support that I have received since being here at Lincoln has got me through some of the most difficult times. I believe that being in a communal living allows all the participants to help each other in their journey of faith and to support each other through the difficult times but also through the laughter.

When I first joined the scheme, I thought that my journey would lead me to children's and youth work and that was the direction that I could see my life going in. However, since being here and through some of the experiences that I have been able to have I have since felt the calling to ordained ministry and so (with the support of many from both my placement and beyond) I am now exploring this call.

Wherever you are on your journey to your calling from God, this scheme will help you with the next steps.

Jeremiah 29:11 – For I Know the plans I have for you declares the lord.