

**My experience on Blackpool Ministry Experience Scheme:  
Article by Lizzie Haydon**

*Lizzie, 22, is from St Paul's, Marton in Blackpool, has a degree in geography and prior to the Blackpool Ministry Experience Scheme she completed a year working with CAFOD. She is wondering if God is calling her to youth work, or school chaplaincy but is open to hear what God is saying to her.*



I won't use a cliché and say that the Blackpool Ministry Experience Scheme (BME) has changed my life, but it has 100% helped me to see what God has planned for me!

I applied for the year unsure of God's plan for my life. I'd spent some time working in Youth Ministry and wasn't sure if that was what God wanted for me, or if I was just comfortable doing the only type of ministry I'd known.

BME was a way of experiencing all aspects of ministry and finding my place within it.

Fast forward a few months to the end of September 2017 and we moved into the house. We were commissioned by Bishop Philip and started at our respective placements. I joined the leadership team at Freedom Church, Mereside and immediately felt at home in church; so much so that my first Sunday didn't feel like it, rather it was like I'd been there years!

It was quite quickly established that Youth Ministry was my thing and I took over the running of the Toddler Church.

This was a terrifying thing to begin with – I was suddenly responsible for something! But it has been incredible to see the way the children want a relationship with Jesus and to have seen such growth in our Toddler Church!

I'm also really involved in our youth group, MYPlace, for our high school-aged church members. Seeing the understanding of the young people develop is incredible; and watching them become confident enough to answer questions in church make me glow with pride!

I've been involved in baptisms, weddings and funerals. I've sat in meetings with really important people, including someone who is chaplain to the Queen! I've been to chapter meetings; met clergy from across Blackpool and had tea with Bishops.

Earlier this year, I co-led an enquirer's course, something that really pushed me out of my comfort zone but helped me to grow in confidence - enough that I delivered a sermon at church without too much of a meltdown!

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More recently I've been going into the local Church of England high school one afternoon a week; spending time with the chaplain, helping to run the Christian Union meetings and getting involved in the pastoral support network of the school.

As I look to the future, I'm not totally sure on the details, but I know that Youth Ministry is where I belong. This year has confirmed it and enabled me to hear God's call on my life more clearly.

I love all the other ministries I'm currently involved in, but my heart is so on fire for helping young people discover the love God has for them. I'm passionate about walking alongside young people as they navigate through life and figure out how God fits into it for them!

If you're thinking about applying – do it. BME has helped me not only communicate with God more clearly, but has given me the chance to experience so much including things that will stay with me forever!

Every day I grow into the person God has made me to be more and more, surrounded by the love and support of everyone involved in BME.