

NEWS FROM SCRIPTURE UNION IRELAND

# Inspire

2014

"YOUR WORD IS A LAMP TO MY FEET"  
PSALM 119:105

MAKING THE  
ONE PERCENT  
DIFFERENCE  
Volunteering  
with SU

**NEW**

E5: 5 DAYS  
OF EXTREME  
ADVENTURE

*"Memories for a lifetime  
and reflection for the future"*

with Adventure Retreats at Ovoca Manor



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# Welcome!

**W**elcome to the 2nd edition of Scripture Union's supporter magazine, *Inspire*. Working with churches, parishes and schools, Scripture Union create opportunities for children, young people and their families to discover and follow Jesus, grow as leaders and influence our world.

As we turn on the news or radio or read the newspaper we are constantly reminded of the tragedies, disasters and financial struggles many people face in our society and throughout the world today. We might ask, 'Where is God in all this?' but we are told in Scripture 'Great is Your Faithfulness' (Lamentations 3:23), and I am constantly reminded of His faithfulness. Only a week before our colleague and sister in the Lord, Margaret Hall, had a serious fall and ended up in intensive care in hospital we were chatting and she really uplifted my spirit by telling me how when she was a little child her uncle taught her to sing this chorus, 'He has never, never failed me yet, and I never will His love forget'.

It is such a privilege to be part of a ministry that by the power of God is transforming the lives of over 4,000 children, young people

and families each year and this SU Inspire Magazine is full of such stories, full of hope and full of God's great faithfulness. And so I encourage you to read on and be inspired by these words and stories of hope and encouragement.

I am also very conscious that without the support, prayers, financial giving and hard work of hundreds of volunteers we just could not undertake this ministry. To each of you I say a heartfelt THANK YOU....you are making a real difference in the life of some child or young person.

This New Year brings with it many challenges for the ministry of Scripture Union but your prayers and partnership are a source of great encouragement and together we can sing, 'He has never, never failed me yet, and I never will His love forget'.

*Every blessing*



**Jim Donnan**

**General Director**

To keep in touch with all our latest news and events, log on to [www.scriptureunion.ie](http://www.scriptureunion.ie) and subscribe to our regular e-newsletters and prayer diary, and 'like' Scripture Union Ireland's Facebook page.



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like to receive future editions of Inspire, please email your name and address to [info@scriptureunion.ie](mailto:info@scriptureunion.ie)

We would also be very grateful if you felt able to distribute copies of this magazine amongst your congregation, friends and family - for additional copies please also email [info@scriptureunion.ie](mailto:info@scriptureunion.ie)



## UPDATE:HOLIDAY CAMPS & CLUBS

**A**t Scripture Union, we run a huge variety of camps for children and young people as well as family holidays, parenting weekends and non-residential kids clubs throughout the year.

Whilst each of our camps is unique in its own way, they all share the same core aims of providing a superb and safe holiday experience with the opportunity of exploring the Bible and learning about God. It is also our aim for our camps to be affordable and accessible to as many as possible. They are not run to make a profit but are led by dedicated teams of volunteers who are motivated by sharing their faith and who, as well as giving their time, contribute to their own costs to keep prices low.

From Weekend Adventures, Easter Camps and Summer Camps to Holiday Clubs and Missions around the country, Scripture

Union has hosted thousands of children, young people and families in 2013. At, CSSM (Children's Special Service Mission) Summer Mission in Greystones, an incredible 500 children were registered over the two week period with an average of 300 children attending the activities each day. Supported by a team of 50 volunteers, the Bible teaching theme this year was, 'Seeing Jesus in the Old Testament'. Each day the team's 'archeologist' found an artefact in the sand which led to a story in the Old Testament that pointed to Jesus, who he is, his teachings and what he has done for each one of us.

Children on our week-long non-residential holiday clubs thoroughly enjoyed the Scripture Union material Space Academy. Designed for children who are not yet part of a church community, it has a space theme and explores the early chapters of Daniel. The children joined the other astronauts at Space Academy to discover how God was faithful to Daniel and his friends as they tried to live for him in a foreign land that was so different it was like being on another planet!



## **NEW** E5: 5 DAYS OF EXTREME ADVENTURE!

Excitement is mounting for the 2014 launch of all-new 'E5' Camp for 16 to 18 year olds. Led by Steve and Lucy McIlhenny, Ovoca Manor's Activities Manager and his wife, the camp has outdoor adventure enthusiasts in mind and includes 5 days packed with instructed activities and opportunities to explore your faith. Activities will include hill-walking, camping out in the wilds of Wicklow, climbing and bouldering on real rock, learning bush craft skills, canoeing down the River Avoca and foraging for a forest banquet. Taking place from June 23rd – 27th at a cost of €240, 'E5' is a small camp with a maximum of 24 places so book early to avoid disappointment!



# E5

adventure  
challenge  
explore  
experience  
live

**Rock Climbing • Canoeing  
Wild Camping • Bushcraft  
Mountain Day**

For information on Scripture Union's Camps Programme and to book visit  
[www.scriptureunion.ie](http://www.scriptureunion.ie)



## FAMILY WEEK CAMP: “ONE OF IRELAND’S BEST-KEPT SECRETS!”

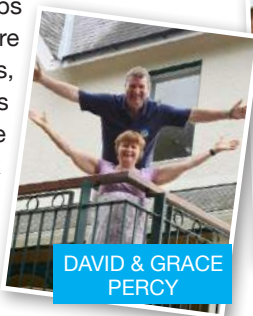
**Family Week Camps have been taking place during the Summer for over 20 years. For families of all ages, Family Week provides a chance to connect with others at a similar stage of life for a week of rest, fun and spiritual renewal.**

Set in the stunning location of Ovoca Manor, there is the option of camping, caravanning or staying in either the Manor House or Densmore Lodge. The mornings begin with family worship followed by teaching, discussion groups and activities for the adults and fun-filled activity clubs for children and teenagers. Afternoons include free time as well as a range of optional activities such as trips to the beach, outdoor adventure activities, walks in the hills, picnics and games. Delicious food is provided throughout the week with a fabulous midweek banquet night for the adults and Family Talent Show evening at the end of the week. Led by

“ We have been to the best of overseas sun holidays but they don’t compare. ”

David and Grace Percy, the 2013 Family Week welcomed new families as well as many seasoned ‘Family Campers’. At the end of the week, some of the families reflected on what the holiday means to them:

“We have been attending Family Week for the past 12 years and it is one of the highlights of the year for us as a family. As our children get older, a lot of family activities start to fall away because of other demands but this is one in the year that remains set and unchangeable. The week has a perfect balance of



DAVID & GRACE PERCY





activities, family time, group fun, rest and relaxation. It really is a winning formula.”

“Family Week is one of Ireland’s best kept secrets! We have attended for two years now and I plan to grow older and greyer there. It’s wonderful to be surrounded by committed Christians who really want to see their children have a real and living Christian faith and lots of fun. It’s a really easy holiday with kids. We have been to the best of overseas sun holidays but they don’t compare. But please don’t tell anyone and let’s keep the secret!”

“The Family Week is a place where the mix is just right; good craic, people who love you and your kids in a way that feels non-judgemental, no need to shop or cook and great teaching for the kids and adults. I feel it gives a shadow of a taste of what heaven will be like!”

“ I feel it gives a shadow of a taste of what heaven will be like! ”



Family Camp will take place between August 3rd-9th 2014.

For more info and to book visit [www.scriptureunion.ie](http://www.scriptureunion.ie)



**O**voca Manor is Scripture Union's Retreat and Adventure Centre located just outside Avoca in Co Wicklow.

It's been another year of change at Ovoca Manor, with further developments around the grounds and a growing programme of mid-week retreats. It has been wonderful to see such a wide range of people come to Ovoca Manor to use the space to refresh, recharge and spend some time learning and listening to God. From Scripture Union camps, churches and parishes, youth groups, women's retreats, ministers' conferences and school groups, 2013 was a year of bustling activity.

## AROUND THE GROUNDS

If you take a walk around the grounds you'll see that several new intriguing footpaths have appeared. Leading off amongst the trees, these paths take you on a journey of discovery to individual areas complete with new team building challenges. These are permanently located for group use and will really add to any programme. Others lead to a re-landscaped area that has been developed down by our newly deepened pond. Dedicated as a bush craft activity zone, this is an area in which to get back to nature, build fires, catch fish, build shelters and learn more about surviving in the wild! The final area to get an Autumn facelift is the campsite. The toilet block has been refitted inside and out, new drainage has been installed on the camping area and a dedicated fire pit area has been landscaped for those all-important bonfires and toasted marshmallows.







## THE EMBER PROGRAMME

2013 saw a significant collaboration between Scripture Union and the Archdiocese of Dublin Secretariat in the development of the Ember Programme. The Ember Programme is a new faith leadership training programme for senior level secondary school students. Inspired by the Christian message of love and service to others, the vision of the programme is to create a group of leaders within schools who will be an example of faith in action, striving to make a difference in the lives of those around them. The students are trained to become mentors for incoming students at Junior Level and to be faith leaders in their schools.

The pilot programme with 50 students from five schools took place at Ovoca Manor in May 2013. Using the many outdoor activities available at Ovoca Manor and working with both teachers from their own school and Ovoca Manor staff, students received training in areas such as communication and listening, leadership, encouraging and supporting one another, group dynamics and planning activities. Each evening ended with a reflective liturgy and at the



close of the programme on Wednesday May 15th Bishop Eamonn Walsh visited to commission the new Ember teams.

Following their retreat and training at Ovoca Manor, we are thrilled to hear of the impact that the newly formed Ember teams are making in their schools. One teacher reported, "17 senior boys delivered an amazing retreat experience to 69 first year students and the Holy Spirit was there!". We give thanks for what God is doing through this initiative and are delighted to have played a part.



# “MEMORIES FOR A LIFETIME & REFLECTION FOR THE FUTURE”

**O**voca Manor's midweek work with schools is continuing to develop with over 1,200 young people visiting in 2013, more than double the number visiting in 2012.

At the heart of this development is our programme of Adventure Retreats which include exploration of Scripture with faith-based outdoor activities as well as interactive talks and reflective exercises. It has been a delight to see how the connection between the lived experience and the Bible truth really brings the meaning of Scripture alive. One such example was during a bush craft session with students from a school in a disadvantaged inner-city community. The students were intrigued by the presence of the Bible in the box of kit for the session, enquiring what a Bible had to do with building fires, cooking and eating food. Towards the end of the activity there was an opportunity to open the bible and read from John 21 where Jesus shares a meal with

the disciples and the instructor was able to explain how Jesus can meet each of us in the ordinary details of our lives and how we can have a relationship with Him. The school's Family Liaison Officer described the Retreat: "A wonderful opportunity and excellent experience for inner city students – memories for a lifetime and reflection for the future."

The Adventure Retreats programme has

“ the connection between the lived experience and the Bible truth really brings the meaning of Scripture alive ”



also emphasised the need for young people to physically get away from the pressures of their everyday lives and to have the time and space to reflect on where they are at. The relaxed atmosphere and sense of calm along with the freedom to 'reflect through doing' and explore the wonderful natural environment around Ovoca Manor has been a highlight for many of the young people visiting. We pray that many more young people get to experience this through the mid-week Adventure Retreats at Ovoca Manor over the coming months.



### **Reflections of Adventure Retreat participants:**

- *I thought it was spectacular, really relaxing atmosphere. There were so many things to do. It was very clean and friendly place*
- *It exceeded my expectations. It was much more reflective than I was expecting - I didn't think I'd enjoy it but my highlight was when we had an hour of silence*
- *Peace, escape. I was expecting it to be a lot less fun*
- *It helped me reflect and have fun*
- *I felt I improved my relationship with God*
- *It brought friends closer*

“ It was good to work in teams and cook food like cavemen! ”

Want to keep in touch with everything that's going on at Ovoca Manor?

Visit our Facebook page or visit [www.ovocamanor.ie](http://www.ovocamanor.ie)



# VOLUNTEERING

## Making the One % Difference

**Scripture Union's camps programme relies entirely on the 100's of dedicated volunteer leaders. Around the world, 2013 has been a year of recognising the invaluable contribution of volunteers to our societies.**

In July, to honour Nelson Mandela's 95th birthday, South Africans were urged to mark his 67 years of public service with 67 minutes of charitable acts. Closer to home, June 2013 saw the national launch of the One % Difference Campaign, a major public awareness campaign to encourage Irish people to commit 1% of their time or income to a cause they believe in. Launched by Minister Phil Hogan TD, Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government and Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland, the generosity of the Irish nation was recognised. However, reflecting on the different types of giving Mary Robinson commented, "It isn't always about providing money or resources to do things. It's about providing a personal commitment through time and I think that this is a hugely important aspect."

At Scripture Union, as a volunteer movement, we are acutely aware of and immensely

grateful for the invaluable contribution of the 100's of dedicated individuals who make our ministry happen each year. United by a common desire to serve and share their faith,

“ It isn't always about providing money or resources to do things. It's about providing a personal commitment through time and I think that this is a hugely important aspect. ”

Mary Robinson

we welcome volunteers of all ages and with all gifts, abilities and interests. From joining us for a year on our internship programme, helping out on a Camp, volunteering a few hours regularly, through to joining a weekend DIY work party at Ovoca Manor, there are many different ways to get involved.



**The One Percent Difference**

# FUN, FAITH & FELLOWSHIP

Whether it's through working directly with young people on our Camps and Missions, catering, taking photographs, leading worship, running activities, leading small groups, helping with planning and administration or site maintenance, it is our hope and prayer that all our volunteers will find it an immensely enriching experience and be abundantly blessed through their service.



### ***Here are just some reflections of our Camps & Missions volunteers over the past year:***

*"I learned how to interact with people from different walks of life and how to fully depend on God"*

*"Being able to work on Camps really gave the opportunity to build relationships and grow in our faith"*

*"I absolutely loved learning what it meant to live in community"*

*"I personally loved learning how to have fun and just enjoy being in ministry. It isn't and shouldn't be boring :)"*

*"I loved meeting friends that I will have for a lifetime. Being able to make those connections with people was only made possible through this opportunity with Scripture Union"*

*"I thoroughly enjoyed volunteering at the Border County Kids' Clubs, I really noticed God working in my life as well as the kids' lives"*

*"For me it's a wonderful way of experiencing Gods hand at work... seeing the way seemingly random things come together and special things happen"*

*"It's wonderful to see children learn and engage with Jesus and realise how important he is"*

For information on volunteering visit [www.scriptureunion.ie](http://www.scriptureunion.ie) or email your contact details and areas of interest to [info@scriptureunion.ie](mailto:info@scriptureunion.ie)

# INTERVIEW: VOLUNTEERING AT OVOCA MANOR



JEAN HENDRY

**J**ean Hendry has been volunteering at Ovoca Manor Retreat and Adventure Centre for a morning

each week since March. Here, she talks about her experience as a volunteer:

**Q: Tell us a bit about yourself Jean?**

Well, I am 67 years old and have been living in Ireland with my husband and daughter and her family since 2007. I moved to Meeting of the Waters at the end of 2012. I'm retired but I look after my grandchildren in the afternoons, and do their homework with them.

**Q: How did you get involved with Scripture Union?**

I first got involved with Scripture Union in South Africa. I went on a number of

“ whenever I move somewhere new I always want to find a way for God to use me. ”

CSSM camps and that's how I found out about Scripture Union and what a fantastic organisation it is. Their mission is amazing, it's been going for years and it's international and worldwide. I helped on three CSSM camps when I was training to be a teacher and had such an unbelievable, wonderful time. Then we arrived at Meeting of the Waters at the end of last year and whenever I move somewhere new I always want to find a way for God to use me. So when I heard about Ovoca Manor and met Nathan and Fiona at church I felt, "What a wonderful opportunity, here's something I can do".



***Q: What have you been doing?***

Since March I have been coming to Ovoca Manor one morning a week and I organise the kitchens, making sure everything is in its right place, clean and tidy. I come on a Wednesday morning, it's the day that works best for me. It takes me about 2 to 3 hours to do the kitchen in the Manor. Densmore kitchen is a bit quicker as it's smaller, but it still gets very disorganised!

***Q: How have you found the experience?***

When the idea of helping at Ovoca Manor became a reality it was an absolute joy, coming up here and being a part of something that's an outreach to other people. Some people need to be in the background to do this type of thing and I'm not a forefront person in that sense at the moment. It's been so rewarding to do it, to meet people here, to get involved and make friendships. I might be the oldest person here but it's just been so nice. I was a bit nervous at the beginning and my husband Rob came in

and helped me organise things initially but it's been an honour and a privilege. God's been so good to me, I've been blessed all my life so I don't want thanks for doing it, it's something you do because you want to.

**“ It's been so rewarding to do it, to meet people here, to get involved and make friendships. ”**

# authentic youth

**E**stablished in 2005, Authentic Youth is the name of Scripture Union's secondary school retreat team. Each year they travel all round the country from Galway and Mayo to Monaghan and Wicklow speaking in schools to around 2,500 students on around 40 days of retreats. Many schools invite the Authentic Youth team back year after year with new schools also joining each year.

The Authentic Youth team is led by Jude Barry and supported by Scripture Union's interns. Each year, Jude trains the new interns in running retreat days including public speaking, sharing their testimonies and leading small groups. As Rob Lee, intern from 2012 – 2013 commented, there is no-one better to learn from, "I've never seen anyone so suited to a job – Jude can go into a room full of moody teenagers and just have them in fits of laughter in seconds. It's amazing to watch and it's been a privilege to work with someone so gifted."

## A DAY IN THE LIFE OF THE AUTHENTIC YOUTH TEAM

In November we met with Jude to hear about her life on the road and a typical retreat day.

"It all begins with a phone call from either a school Chaplain or RE teacher. We set a date and get an idea of the number of students (from 22 up to 116)



and the topics they would like us to cover. Typical topics are bullying, friendship, making choices, image and identity, substance abuse, potential and the future.

On the day, we make sure to arrive at the school at well before we're due to start in order to set up our sound system, screen, projector and to leave time to pray together before the students arrive. This can mean some early starts or even staying locally the night before. From then on, our day follows the school schedule. Once the students arrive, we try to break down the barriers from the very beginning. Keeping it quite light-hearted, we start with introductions and go straight into games and ice-breakers. The objective is to build some trust with the students, to show them that we can actually have a laugh and that we're open to conversation. They are always expecting a priest or a nun who they feel doesn't really understand what they are going through so when they see a lay person coming in it helps them to think, 'if they can have faith in God then maybe I can'.

We follow up the ice-breakers with a personal reflective exercise which encourages the students explore their own situations and any issues that they are going through. This helps the team to understand where they are coming from and tailor the day specifically to them. The rest of the day will include thematic talks by the team, small groups and exploring hypothetical situations. The talks are very



open and testimonial with plenty of space for questions and answers. From each of our testimonies we have different themes we can focus on according to our personal experience, for example, being bullied. God is at the centre of all the talks and we always end with some kind invitation or challenge to explore faith further.

We know we are only able to go in to schools because we're fulfilling a need within the school curriculum. But to us it's such a greater need - we're not just ticking a box, we're there for the students. We believe every student needs to hear a true and real account of what God has done with somebody's life.

“ It's a mustard seed ministry... our prayer is that they might just question what they believe at the end of the day ”

We get a whole range of responses. A lot of young people feel hurt by the church but they sort of inherit that from their family. Their views of God might be very distorted so we try and give them a more healthy or realistic view of who God really is, communicating through our own stories and experiences. Denominational differences also sometimes cloud their view of God but because we're an interdenominational organisation our personal backgrounds are not known. It's great on the days when this question never comes up, when we can take that away and focus on God.

We're very conscious that for some of the students we meet, this will be their only school retreat. It's not always easy communicating with 100 people who are all on different levels but this is our one

“ We've come to their school to tell them, “Jesus loves you no matter what” ”

chance so we cannot have a bad day. It's not our job to make God attractive but the way we interact with people can show them that we that don't care what they've done or are doing, we just want to get past their mask and meet them where they're at. We've come to their school to tell them, “Jesus loves you no matter what”. Some students have just been so overwhelmed that they have run out of the room - that can only be God working. It is a mustard seed ministry, there's no automatic follow-up of discipleship but our prayer is that they might just question what they believe at the end of the day.

At the end of the day we give feedback forms to the RE teacher or Chaplain along with a follow-up pack which includes information about the Manor, Camps, Youth Alpha all the ways in which SU can follow up the retreat. We get all sorts of feedback from those who it hasn't affected at all, to those for whom it's been really helpful; “It's made me think about bullying”, or “It's made me pick up my Bible”. We have a Facebook page and even the students going on and ‘liking’ it is an indication of a positive experience. We pray when we arrive that God will prepare them for the day, that they have open minds and hearts and when we leave we pray that God's words will take root.”

For more information on Authentic Youth school retreats visit [www.scriptureunion.ie](http://www.scriptureunion.ie) or email [jude.barry@scriptureunion.ie](mailto:jude.barry@scriptureunion.ie)

# ALPHA YOUTH



Alpha

**Alpha - Youth is a series of interactive sessions on basic Christianity being used by groups all around the world to help young people explore the character and claims of Jesus.**

20 million people from over 160 countries have experienced Alpha. It is Christ centred, scripturally based and has the backing of all Christian denominations tackling questions such as: Who is Jesus? Why did he die? How does God guide us?

The friendly, relaxed, and non-threatening approach is no better suited than to teenagers and in 2011, Scripture Union joined together with Catholic Youth Care and Alpha Ireland to appoint Jonny Somerville as a full time Alpha - Youth Coordinator. The vision of the role is to work together with local youth workers using Alpha - Youth as a tool to evangelise in local schools and as a means to form youth ministry in churches and parishes where it doesn't exist. One such example is at Wilson's Hospital School. Student Patrick Wilson explains how Alpha - Youth

has provided the vehicle for establishing a Christian Union within the school. 'I really liked the way that Alpha - Youth was going at my church so I contacted my school chaplain and said I was interested in looking at some kind of CU at school ... that was really how it started. We ran Alpha last year and we've run it again this year. There have been some people who attended Alpha last year who are now leading it this time. We've also been able to do things as a CU like the shoebox appeal.'

During the 2013 / 2014 school year, approximately 50 Alpha - Youth's will have been run in schools and parishes around Ireland. Such has been the growth in Alpha - Youth that Scripture Union and Alpha Ireland have recently recruited an additional Alpha - Youth Worker to operate specifically in the Midlands. In November, Annette Evans was appointed to the new position and she is looking forward to starting work in January 2014. Annette is from Tullamore and has been running Alpha



ANNETTE EVANS

- Youth's in schools and with her parish youth group for the last three years. Of her new role she said, "I'm really excited, I'm so happy to have been given this chance because I've been involved for 3 years and I really love the feedback and comments we get from young people, how Alpha - Youth has changed their lives for the better, even if only a small bit. You start off in small groups with them saying they don't believe in God or there is no God, and they come to the end of the course saying, 'Well, maybe there is something'. For other people, it has a profound effect on them and changes their life completely. The satisfaction that you get from it is amazing."

“You start off in small groups with them saying they don't believe in God ... and they come to the end of the course saying, 'Well, maybe there is something.' ”

Earlier on in 2013, Alpha - Youth had its first Adventure Retreat at Ovoca Manor. Called 'Encounter' and organised by all the leaders from the Midlands Alpha - Youths, the camp brought together 50 young people from Tullamore, Mullingar, Ferbane and Athlone and was a huge success. For three days, the teens and volunteers journeyed together exploring both the meaning of life and the wild outdoors. Plans are underway for another Alpha - Youth Camp in February 2014.

Also new in 2013 was the September launch of Alpha - Youth's first ever Youth Film Series. Up until this point, unlike original Alpha, there was no DVD set of talks for Alpha - Youth and the Alpha - Youth leaders were required to give the talks themselves. Filmed in Canada (and on location around the world), the new series contains 12 episodes especially tailored to and for students. Jonny is now working on adding an Irish voice to the series interviewing 50 - 60 young people for Vox Pops to be contained in each episode. These will replace interviews with young Canadians and will help to contextualise the series, giving young people from Ireland the opportunity to share their particular opinions and issues. The Irish version is due for release early 2014.

For more information on Alpha - Youth email Jonny at [jonny@alphaireland.org](mailto:jonny@alphaireland.org)





# PRIMARY SCHOOLS

**H**aving for decades hosted thousands of primary aged children at weekend Adventure Club at Ovoca Manor, in 2010 SU had the opportunity to employ a Primary Schools worker, Grace Deegan, to develop our work amongst Primary aged children.

With the objectives of developing innovative Bible-based RE resources and providing a framework to work in partnership with Primary Schools and Parishes throughout Ireland, Grace developed the Irish version of *'It's Your Move'*, a faith-based transition resource for 6th year primary students. Launched in October 2012, *'It's Your Move'* consists of 4 sixty minute sessions designed specifically for students making the daunting move to secondary school.

It's packed full of discussion ideas, activities and Scripture that's relevant to students making this transition and includes themes such as new beginnings, self-esteem, making good choices and bullying. As Parish worker Leonard comments, "This programme connects life and faith together with the realities of young people. They have to make choices, and we're saying you them that your faith can help you with those

choices." The programme is accessible for anybody to run and Scripture Union provides all the resources and training necessary. In February, Grace hosted an *'It's Your Move'* training day at Ovoca Manor for representatives from around 20 churches and parishes. Since then, around 250 children have attended the course across 9 Parishes.

Parish Pastoral worker Pauline O'Shea describes the impact of running *'It's Your Move'* in 2 schools in the parishes in which she works. "The Principals are delighted to have a programme that helps ease the transition for students to secondary school. It worked really well, they are schools with a lot of issues and I was surprised how well the kids engaged with it. Even being in small groups and getting used to listening to each other was a huge thing. Another thing that stood out for me was using the Bible. They really engaged with having to look up verses in the Bible. Some of them had never held a Bible before and it's a very simple thing but unless somebody shows them, of course they won't know how to do it. So you're planting the seeds and hoping something will come of it."

As well as the running *'It's Your Move'* in schools and Parishes, in April the first *'It's Your Move'* camp took place at Ovoca



“ Some of them had never held a Bible before and it's a very simple thing but unless somebody shows them, of course they won't know how to do it. ”

Manor. Open to 6th class students from all schools, the weekend incorporated the key themes into adventure activities as well as talks and practical workshops on issues such as how to read a timetable. Some of the children described their fears and how the course helped them: “I think personally, the most challenging thing about going to secondary school is probably my time-table, all my books and trying to get to every classroom.” “It's really taught me that, God's in your life and he's always there for you. You might not be able to see him but he's always there in the bad times and the good times.” “I feel more confident going to secondary school now”. Following the success of this camp, another ‘*It's Your Move*’ camp is planned for April 2014. Details can be found online and in the SU Camps Brochure.

‘*It's Your Move*’ also forms part of the integrated Cairde programme for Primary aged children which has been piloted this

year. The Cairde programme takes children on a journey of spiritual discovery through a pre-confirmation Adventure Retreat in 5th class, the ‘*It's Your Move*’ course in 6th class and finally a post-confirmation adventure overnight. Supporting school and Parish curriculums, the programme combines exploration of Scripture with the adventure of outdoor pursuits helping the young people to grow in their relationship with Jesus in an experiential and interactive way.

In December, 175 Junior and Senior Infants came to Ovoca Manor to the ‘Follow the Star’ Christmas programme. ‘Follow the Star’ is an interactive telling of the Christmas story that begins for the children by following the trail of stars up the drive to the Manor House. There, they are greeted by a harried inn-keeper who ushers the children on a magical adventure back in time to the birth of Jesus. With a chance for further hands-on exploration of Christmas through dressing up, crafts and cookie decorating (and of course eating!), the children leave having discovered the greatest of all Christmas gifts.

For more information on Scripture Union's work with Primary School aged children email Grace Deegan at [grace.deegan@scriptureunion.ie](mailto:grace.deegan@scriptureunion.ie)

# A YEAR WITH SU

**In September 2012 Scripture Union launched the all new Internship Year. Based at Ovoca Manor Retreat and Adventure Centre, the programme includes a broad spectrum of experience across different Scripture Union ministries as well as a tailored leadership programme provided by Innovista, the Christian charity dedicated to coaching, mentoring and developing young Christian leaders.**

## VALERIE, ROB AND SABRINA

The end of May 2013 came all too quickly and it was time to say a very fond farewell to our first interns, Rob Lee, Sabrina Harty and Valerie Julius. At a farewell celebration attended by family, friends and prayer supporters Rob, Brina and Val had guests in tears of laughter with their anecdotes and reflections on the year. Here are some extracts from their speeches:



### Valerie

“A wise friend told me, ‘To get to the greatest heights you have to climb the highest mountains’ and that has just been so true for me over the past 9 months. There have been so many high points in the year and we’ve had so much fun. We’ve had such a great opportunity to speak into people’s lives and I really love that. And I’ve also made some really good friends so it has been a really good year. It has also been really challenging in every way, emotionally and spiritually, with the work around the Manor and even with the activities - I really don’t like heights but I’ve tried everything I’m really thankful for the encouragement to try things. Even if I never do them again, I really did enjoy them! I’ve also been challenged by living with other people who aren’t family. I have really learned this year that I need other people and, as much I’d like to, I cannot do it on my own.”



Rob

“One of my favourite things about this year is that i haven’t been stuck in a classroom like i have been for the last 14 years. It’s just been so nice

to get out into the real world (well, kind of the real world), and do different things whether it’s been doing jobs around the Manor or doing retreats. It was always fun going into a school full of apprehensive teenagers who are obviously thinking, ‘Oh no, here come the stuffy, religious, judgemental people’ and then I get up there and tell them some outrageous things that have happened to me in my life. It’s been a really good year. I’ve thoroughly enjoyed it and learned a lot. It’s all been great fun. But it’s not just the things we’ve done it’s really been the people that have made it. On the way to retreats it’s often felt like we’re some kind of weird family as we get out of the back of the car and Jude buys us ice-cream and sweets!”

Sabrina



“This year’s been loads of fun. Rob and Val, you guys have made my year, you’ve been great. “One measure of friendship consists not in the number

of things friends can discuss but in the number of things they need no longer mention.” Val and I shared a room this room this year so that’s all you need to know there!”

We give grateful thanks for all they have contributed to the work of Scripture Union and ask you to please pray for them as they embark on new phases of their lives. Rob and Val have begun university degrees, Rob studying model-making and digital effects at IADT and Val studying Medicine at Trinity College and Brina has moved to Dublin to work.

# WELCOME TO TIMMY & VITO



**A**fter a busy Summer of Camps at the Manor, at the end of August we were delighted to welcome our two new interns Timmy O'Brien and Vito Munoz to the Scripture Union family and here they share with us a bit about themselves and their experiences so far.

## TIMMY

***Tell us a bit about yourself, your interests, where you're from?***

I'm from Blanch and I'm 21. My interests are playing and listening to music, playing video games and I juggle as well.

***How did you come to be here on the SU internship?***

Ger Carolan (Ovoca Manor Facilities Manager) is a member of my church. He knew that I had been looking for work or a course since I got back from the States last year and so told me about the SU internship. I just felt the Lord's hand really impress it on my heart, I felt he was really pushing me

towards it. So I looked into it and I guess everything just fell into place and here I am.

***What was it that interested you about the year with SU?***

It was the fact that it was a Christian organisation. I'd spent many years living my life the way I wanted to and have only recently decided to live my life for the Lord. I want to grow spiritually, to help young people learn from the mistakes that I've made and to share the word with kids. I want to connect with them on a real level and was really interested in the approach of combining activities with the spiritual side of things, rather than just preaching about something and that's it.

**“ I want to grow spiritually, to help young people learn from the mistakes that I've made and to share the word with kids. ”**





Vito &amp; Timmy

### ***What are your hopes and objectives for the year?***

Growing spiritually, engaging with kids and seeing what God has planned for me. Growing spiritually is the big thing, being surrounded by Christians on a much more regular basis than I had been is really important. And sharing the Word with people is a good way for me to grow in my faith a bit. Also, I'm looking forward to learning some fun stuff like archery and doing all the other activities.

### ***What have you been doing so far?***

What haven't I been doing so far?? We've been doing all sorts of Adventure Retreats here at Ovoca Manor. We've had overnight retreats where we've done all kinds of different sessions with the kids such as bush-craft; we've done training in archery, we've done belaying training, we've been learning to lead team challenges. We've also been doing some upkeep of the Manor.

### ***Is there anything that you are looking forward to?***

We've done so much already but one thing I'm looking forward to is to get to a point where I can comfortably use the team challenges as tools to share the word of

“ I'm looking forward to getting to a point where I can comfortably use the team challenges as tools to share the word of God with kids. ”

God with kids. I feel I'm not that good at it yet so I'm looking forward to feeling more confident.

### ***How can people be praying for you?***

Public speaking is not one of my strong points so praying for me in this would be great. And that whoever I'm speaking to, whether that be kids or teachers, that the Lord speaks through me and that I don't look so much at my own agenda but look at the Lord's agenda. It would definitely be helpful if people are praying for me when we're doing school retreats.

## VITO

***Tell us a bit about yourself, your interests, where you're from?***

I'm from Owasso, Oklahoma. I'm 24. Back home, I lived with a few of my friends so we would play board games, play video games, hang out, go to the movies, cook - cook a lot!

***How did you come to be here on the SU internship?***

It's a long, God-filled story! The short and sweet part is that I was frustrated spiritually with where I was. I had been called into Missionary Work when I was 16 and had been on various trips with my church to the Border Counties in Ireland to do some work with SU. Meanwhile, I had finished my

“It's great because we're getting enough training then immediately we're doing it – we're getting hands on training. It's a great way to learn.”

Associates Degree in International Business and had been working in a deli. I felt it was just time for me to go somewhere - I needed to do something but I couldn't figure out what it was. I was friends with Jude from my trips to Ireland and that's how I found out about the Internship - I saw something about it on her Facebook page. So I applied for it, prayed about it, pushed and pushed. Everything worked out pretty seamlessly and now I'm here! It was really hard with



Vito

my family and friends to say goodbye and to make sure everyone was okay with it, but I finally did and it's been great.

***What have you been doing so far?***

A whole lot of training and getting thrown in at the deep end! It's great because we're getting enough training then immediately we're doing it – we're getting hands on training. It's a great way to learn. I enjoy working with the young people, they're great, I love them - most of them anyway! And I really like living in the middle of nowhere. My town was the size of Arklow so living here on a hill a mile away from a village is crazy!

***How can people be praying for you?***

Mainly that the Holy Spirit keeps my eyes, ears and heart open. That I figure out that passion and purpose and that everything works together for good.

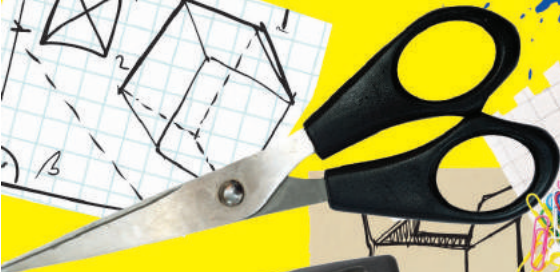
For more information on the Scripture Union Internship Year including application details please visit [www.scriptureunion.ie](http://www.scriptureunion.ie) or email [jude.barry@scriptureunion.ie](mailto:jude.barry@scriptureunion.ie)

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