



**Giving young people the opportunity to discover and follow Jesus
Through: serving, building relationships and learning to rely on God.**

ONE YEAR THAT COULD CHANGE YOUR LIFE

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"I prayed and asked God to reach
out to young people outside my church,
His response.....I will if you will"

information guide and application pack 2008

Youth for Christ taking good news relevantly to every young person in the royal borough of Kingston



A gap year with Oxygen is a journey of discovery, it is one when people enter into a period in their lives when they are given a chance to discover Jesus for themselves whilst also seeking to reveal Jesus to others.

Each year, Oxygen takes on up to 10 people, usually aged 18 – 25, to come together in this MIND THE GAP adventure. They come together in times of sharing, teaching and exploration, learning to rely on God before heading out into streets, clubs and churches seeking to serve and relate to young people they meet.

We believe in Jesus' own instruction when he called for people to go out and be involved in mission and discipleship. As he showed us, it is as we respond to this call so we are transformed by the people we meet, just as we hope and pray that they are transformed by meeting us.

This is why Oxygen's MIND THE GAP is not a GAP year but rather a chance to respond to Jesus instruction to be involved in the work of the Kingdom. MIND THE GAP is not about people coming to serve us, but more about us going on a journey together to discover what God's will is for ourselves and the young people that we meet. Our hope is that Oxygen is a place where both young people and workers draw closer to God and closer to each other.

If you are wanting to find out God's plan and pattern for your life, if you love God and love young people and are willing to be challenged, trained and supported through something that will affect you not only for a year but for the rest of your life, then read on and maybe we will see you at Oxygen in the near future!

Shalom

Debbie Garden, Senior Youthworker

Richard James, Director

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What is Oxygen?

Oxygen was established in 2001 when 20 churches across Kingston Borough, South West London came together with the support of the local youth service and Youth for Christ to establish a work whose vision was to give young people in that area the opportunity to discover and follow Jesus. Since that time Oxygen and its workers have been hard at work establishing relationships with some of the most difficult young people in the Borough. This has resulted in Oxygen being well established amongst the local young people as being a credible and reliable organisation.

"The first time I turned up at an Oxygen event I was taking the p**s. I was 15, drunk and worried I was pregnant. I wanted to mess with these Christian's heads, show them what the real world was like. That was 5 years ago and now I am a helper at Oxygen, trying to help young people who were like me, maybe these Christian's messed with my head"

Harriet, aged 19

"Many projects are well organised and marketed professionally but what makes Oxygen stand apart is their staff. It has been, and will continue to be, a pleasure to work with them"

Mr C Fiddler, Deputy Head Teacher Coombe Boys School

Through a wide range of projects from street work and after school clubs to band nights and small groups, Oxygen workers, often in partnership with other charities or statutory bodies, make a difference to hundreds of lives, inspiring many young people to begin their very own faith journey.

What is MIND THE GAP scheme?

It is our desire that the MIND THE GAP scheme is not considered a year out scheme, but rather a testing and training ground for people who both love God and love young people. Through the opportunities that we offer ourselves and in partnership with other London agencies we hope to be able to put together a team of people who can work full time at being a mission community of faith in and around non Christian and non Church young people. As they do so we know that they will also grow individually exploring and understanding Gods calling and gifting for themselves as individuals, and thus start to understand some more of where God is directing and calling them in the future.

To achieve this, each year we invite and request applications for anyone who both loves God and loves young people. Your youthwork experience and ability is not important. What we look for is people are willing and wanting to be involved. We believe that God will equip us with what we need as we move through the year. For those wishing to draw in an international experience there is also the option to be involved in the Encounter option (see below) at the end of the year. Anyone can take a year to work with Oxygen, we are simply looking for people that both love God and love young people.

WHAT ARE THE COSTS FOR TAKING PART?

There is no cost for taking part. It is our desire to release people to serve God without them having to worry about where the money should come from. To support you during your year we will place you in accommodation (which we cover the cost of) around Kingston (unless you live locally and wanted to stay at home) on top of which you will receive an allowance to cover your expenses such as food, phone and travel to

and from Oxygen, etc. Finally you will also receive training locally and from British Youth for Christ as well as all expenses to cover the cost of your work with young people.

Although there is no cost for taking part, in order that you may be a blessing to others who follow on from you at Oxygen we will ask you during your year to undertake fundraising challenges so that the financial support you have received can be passed on to others in years to come. For example, we will hold a sponsored event in January and ask that you seek financial support from your home contacts and church over the Christmas break.

WHEN DOES THE MIND THE GAP YEAR START AND FINISH?

Should you decide to take part for a year then you would start in the first week of September with a residential training block and then finish in the middle of July. During the year you will have 3 weeks holiday to take in addition to public holidays, as well as extra time over Christmas.

Those who undertake the Encounter option (see below) will however have extra week's holiday to take during the year as their time with Oxygen / CMS will finish in mid August.

MIND THE GAP Year Elements

The MIND THE GAP year is comprised of various elements that combine to ensure that your time working with Oxygen is wide ranging, challenging and fun.

HOW THE WEEK WORKS

Oxygen will take your week and split it into sessions (a session is a morning, afternoon or evening). Some sessions will focus on continuing and deepening discovery about God, yourself and others and some will aim to equip you in following as a disciple. A weekly programme would include approx:

- 7-8 sessions involved in face to face with young people

- 1-2 session of planning meetings, preparation and administration

- 2 sessions a week in training programme

- 1 session a week in reflection and mentoring

Your work would be split between a range of youth work programmes, some of which would help you develop gifts and talents you already have whilst others will be there to challenge you to adapt to new environments.

MENTORING

Every week you will have a 1-2-1 meeting with the senior youth worker. This is your time to talk through how you are and raise any concerns you have. You'll have the opportunity to discuss how things are going with your personal growth, your projects, your relationships with the team and others you work with, your accommodation and your church. We want to help you to get as much as possible out of your year and to be as effective as possible in everything you do. Your mentoring sessions are times especially set aside for you: to grow, to discover, to off-load.

We will also ask you to consider mentoring. There are a number of young people who have come to faith through contact with Oxygen and are keen to grow and develop in that faith. We would ask you to work alongside 1-2 of these young people as someone (training and advice will be provided) who can encourage, challenge and support them in their new found faith. Experience shows us that as you mentor someone else you are forced to think through issues of faith and life that you may never have considered before.

TRAINING

The MIND THE GAP year starts with a basic training period. This training covers a range of issues from child protection to cross cultural mission and serves to provide a basic grounding for the year. Once this basic training is completed you will continue to meet as a team at twice a week. These meetings will be structured so as to build us closer to each other, closer to God and closer to the young people we work.

Discover: On Tuesdays our focus will be on discovering who God is and the truths on which our lives and faith depend, learning who we are and what we are here for, both as a team and as individuals. We will take time to worship, pray, share together what God has been doing in our lives and our projects, and support and encourage each other.

Follow: On Fridays we will explore how to apply the truths we have discovered in our work with young people and our relationships within the team. Sessions will involve practical activities and discussion, so please come awake and prepared to participate! We hope that these sessions will really help you in developing the skills, understanding and approaches you will need to be effective in your projects.

OPTIONAL MODULES

Alongside the regular work with Oxygen we offer some additional modules that are designed to support you more broadly in your “discover and follow” journey. These modules are not compulsory and are left to the discretion of the applicant.

OPTION MODULE 1: CERTIFICATE IN YOUTH WORK

Emerge is a global online training academy for people who are actively involved in Christian Youth Work. Emerge is designed to be a course that will stretch your thinking and challenge you but without being too intensive or time consuming. No prior qualifications are necessary. The Certificate in Christian Youth Ministry can be taken at 3 levels - Basic, Intermediate or Advanced - and is validated by the National Open College Network. For more on this you check out:

www.emergeacademy.net

OPTION MODULE 2: PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

In addition to the weekly team programme of training and experience we would encourage you to consider which areas of skill or knowledge you would like to grow in during your time with us. We have access to training in many areas such as drug abuse, music, mentoring, theology, etc. We are committed to supporting people as they grow into their calling.

OPTION MODULE 3: ENCOUNTER INTERNATIONAL TRIP

We recognise that it is through experiencing and working in a number of contexts people are able to grow and change and become the people that God created them to be. Part of this growth and development comes through being able to both

recognise and appraise your own culture, whilst also encountering other cultures around the world. With this in mind we have been working with Youth for Christ National and the Church Mission Society (CMS) to put together a scheme whereby those who are undertaking our MIND THE GAP scheme have the option to finish their time with an international trip.

Those wishing to take part in ENCOUNTER will be able to join the Youth for Christ or CMS trips around the world (Eastern Europe, Asia, India, etc). For more information visit the ENCOUNTER programme website at:

www.cms-uk.org/encounter.htm

Please note that the Encounter trip is the one cost that is not covered by Oxygen, We will help and support you run a number of fundraising events and activities through which you can seek to raise the £1,000 (approx) that you would need to cover the cost of your 3-4 week trip.

WHO ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

People who love young people:

Oxygen impacts lives throughout the whole population of Kingston Borough, but our focus is on work with young people aged 11-18. We seek to bring hope in an anti-social age when young people are increasingly alienated from church, wider society and each other through committing time, energy and resources to create opportunities to really get to know and love them.

Servant-hearted people:

As we put the needs of other before our own, we learn what it really means to love. Oxygen seeks to bring the Kingdom of God to young people in Kingston by going to them as servants, demonstrating to them that they are significant, loved and valued where and as they are.

Relational people:

We hope to be able to put together a team of people who can work full time at being a mission community of faith. We believe that the team community is crucial – our relationships with each other are as important in our witness as our programme.

People who are willing to rely on God:

Oxygen isn't just about youth work, but is about each of our workers growing themselves. The "discover and follow" journey is life-long and the Mind the Gap programme is an experience that will and should change you. For this to happen, we need to be willing to take risks, enter situations that may feel uncomfortable and rely on God rather than ourselves.

How to apply?

As you look to next year we would encourage you to spend time thinking about what you are looking to achieve during the forthcoming year as well as praying and asking God to guide and inspire you with his plans and purposes for you.

Then, if having prayed and read through this short booklet you are interested in joining Oxygen and its the MIND THE GAP scheme then we would encourage you to complete a MIND THE GAP Application form, which can be obtained from tel 020 8547 0566, email info@oxygen-online.org or via the Oxygen website www.oxygen-online.org/downloads

Once we have received your application we will then arrange a time for you to come along, spend some time with us and meet the rest of the team. We feel that it's really important for you to experience first-hand what we do and how we work. During this period we will get together have a chat where you can ask us questions and we can also get a chance to get to know you better.

WHAT OTHERS HAVE SAID ABOUT WORKING WITH OXYGEN

“If you are sitting there reading this and thinking about working with Oxygen I would say go for it. You have to be prepared to do things you will not be comfortable with, or feel scared about, but with a supportive team around you, and an almighty God there is no better opportunity. You will find new skills you didn't know you had, deepen your relationship with God, and be committed to sharing God's love and the message of Jesus with the young people around you.”

“This year has changed my plan about future. I want to do similar thing like Oxygen in all my life from now on - If you haven't decided yet, just do it! You can help the kids and even yourself as well!!”

“Oxygen has changed my life I have developed, grown, tested and found myself working in ways I never thought possible before. I have grown in my relationship with God and found that youth work is bold, exciting and the thing I want to do for the rest of my life”