



Dear Parents, Young people & Fitzroy family,

The Coronavirus situation has brought unprecedented disruption and change to our lives. It is a time of great uncertainty, but one thing we can be certain of is that things will be far from normal for the foreseeable future!

We have been working hard to figure out how we can best maintain connections with our young people and provide some level of encouragement and support for them. We have limited resources and technology but we are striving to do the best we can with what we have got. I just want to take a moment to let you know what we are hoping to do as well as some essential information regarding the platforms we will be using.

I've been thinking a lot about how we respond to this situation and these are the key values that I think must drive our decision-making and strategy. At Fitzroy we aim to:

Be pastoral.

Be flexible.

Be creative.

Be responsible.

Be unified.

In the coming weeks we want to provide opportunities for: community, engagement and experiences. This may take several forms:

Online Youth Group – FYM Live (on Zoom)

DiSKYPEleship (online Bible study)

Passion Worship Sessions (livestreamed house worship)

Regular Soul Boost talks (thoughts for the day from Paul and from our teenagers).

We will be making use of various platforms:

Instagram

Zoom

Fitzroy's YouTube Channel

I'll also be making some post on my blog: <https://livingloud.typepad.com/bowmanblog/>

On Instagram we have two pages that feature regular content:

fitzroyym – Here you will find general youth ministry information, daily devotional posts, and soul boost livestream talks etc.

passion_fym – This is where we post everything worship related including our livestream house worship sets.

Please ensure that you and your young people follow these two pages on Instagram so that they do not miss out on anything.

FYM Live - We are also hoping to have online gatherings using Zoom. As the host, I will have full access to mute young peoples' video or audio, allow young people to join the group, and the group will end when I exit the meeting. It is a safe way for our group to meet and allows us to continue to build our community. Group meeting will last approx 30 minutes.

To Join on Phone:

Follow the link sent out via our mass text or that can be found on our **fitzroyym** Instagram page that says, "Join Meeting."

The link will prompt you to download Zoom. You do not need an account to join. There will be a prompt to put your name in once the meeting starts.

Once downloaded, click the "Join Meeting" button and enter in our meeting ID found in the mass text, OR, re-click the link sent out via mass text, then click "Join Meeting."

This will lead you to the meeting and place you in the Waiting Room until the host admits you into the video meeting.

To Join on Computer:

Follow the link sent out via our email or on the **fitzroyym** Instagram page that says, "Join Meeting."

A tab will open up and a download will start for the Zoom program.

Once downloaded, a screen will pop up to prompt you to allow video and audio. Click "allow."

This will lead you to the meeting and place you in the Waiting Room until the host admits you into the video meeting.

Note:

All downloads are free, and you do not need to make an account if you do not want to. All you need is the link for the meeting.

Please make sure you are able to use the audio on your device.

You may need to manually give the app permission in your phone settings.

It would also be really helpful if you could send me an email address and mobile number for your young person. If you are happy to have them contacted directly about youth ministry activities send it to: pbowman.youth@gmail.com

You will also find information here on www.fitzroy.org.uk about the resources and support available for Fitzroy Children's Ministry. So if your kids are in Preload, Download or Frenzy please download the information. There are some terrific resources that will help you disciple your kids in the coming weeks.

I hope this information is helpful, if you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me:

07740587802

pbowman.youth@gmail.com

As Steve has repeatedly stated *"this is a marathon not a sprint"* so please be patient with us as we get to grips with trying new ways to engage our young people in a very unique (and potentially scary) time for many. This is a time for us to be more relational than we ever have been in order to make sure our young people know and feel the love of God through us. We are all in this together!

These are frightening times, we have watched the media reports from Italy and other parts of the world, we have seen the empty shelves in supermarkets. It seems like everyone on social media these days has become an epidemiologist. And the panic and fear seem to be just as contagious as the virus itself.

But there is no denying that fear and anxiety is a real thing, especially in today's world. As believers we have hope and we trust the Lord in all circumstances. However, anxiety is a real emotion that many of us are struggling with. And I'm mindful that many of our young people are watching events unfold and they are anxious about what might happen to themselves or their family and friends. I simply want to share some encouragement with you and your family and give you some questions to help you navigate these unprecedented times with your teenagers.

In the midst of this pandemic, you can leverage the coming days for discipleship. Here are four questions or conversation starters that might be helpful.

1. Who do we trust?

We trust the Lord. He is on his throne and no matter what is going on around us we put our trust of Him. He is faithful and true. He is not surprised by any of this and we trust Him. Ask your kids, "Who do we trust?" Hebrews 13:8 "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever." No matter what happens in the days ahead, Jesus remains the same.

2. Are you afraid of what's going on?

Asking this question may get a simple answer of "No" and that's ok. Let it pass and do not insight fear into your kids but if they say anything else, have the conversation. Talk about what they are afraid of, what they are hearing and what they think is happening. You don't have all the answers, sometimes just verbalising our fears gives us hope that they do not control the situation. John 14:27 says, "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Don't let your heart be troubled or fearful." Jesus is the giver of peace. Help your kids see this peace in the middle of fear.

And also provide reassurance. Assure them that they're safe and that you know what to do if someone in your family becomes ill. Remember that children of all ages may become fearful or overly worried, so be sure to have age appropriate discussions with each of your children. Sometimes, adolescents and teenagers can be more fearful and worried than younger children. (Here is a link to a terrific article that I commend to you about helping your teenagers work through anxiety):

<https://fulleryouthinstitute.org/articles/anxiety>

3. What can we do for those affected?

This is a great opportunity to pray. Pray for those who are sick and for those in the NHS working hard to find a solution to this problem. Pray for a cure, an antidote to COVID-19. Pray for those who are particularly vulnerable in your family and church family. Pray for anyone who might be in a vulnerable group in your neighbourhood. What can you do to assist them at this time? And do check in with the church website and look out for ways that you might be able to help or give in the coming days.

This conversation may also bring up some questions about death and it may be a great time to talk about grief and the hope we have in Jesus. Psalm 62:5 says, "Rest in God alone, my soul, for my hope comes from Him." We can rest in our hope.

4. What should we do?

This one is easy, follow the guidance the government has told us to follow. Wash your hands, don't touch your face and sneeze into your arm. And of course remind your young people that the best thing they can do right now is to *Stay Home* and by doing so help to *Save Lives*.

Situations like the spread of coronavirus can make us feel helpless but one of the most significant things we can do from our homes is pray. Again, this is a great opportunity to teach your kids about prayer and the power of prayer.

Prayer is an invitation to go to the Lord on behalf of others, it is also a way to posture our hearts to relying on the Lord. 1 John 5:14 says, "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us."

We serve a God that not only loves us but he also hears us. Help your kids to know that the Lord hears their voice.

I'll finish with these words from the Psalmist.

Psalm 3:1-4

1 Lord, how my foes increase!
There are many who attack me.
2 Many say about me,
"There is no help for him in God." Selah
3 But you, Lord, are a shield around me,
my glory, and the one who lifts up my head.
4 I cry aloud to the Lord,
and he answers me from his holy mountain. Selah

As you pray:

1. Pray for Protection
2. Pray with Confidence
3. Pray for People

Mind yourself & stay safe
Peace

Paul Bowman (Youth Director)

