



Alton Castle Retreat of prayer, reflection and meditation



On **Wednesday 20th September 2017** Year 6 left school for a three day retreat at Alton Castle, Staffordshire.

As well as the excitement of a short break with their friends, they also took part in a number of different activities, trekking, archery and survival.

With the theme of the retreat being **Discipleship**, each activity included reflection, discussion and prayer. Everyone was challenged and encouraged to find hidden strength, learn new skills, and show perseverance in their individual and team challenges. Father Craig, our Parish Priest, joined the children for many of their activities; his support was greatly appreciated.

Their first activity, on Wednesday evening, was Night Line. Here the children were impressive as they demonstrated their teamwork and trust in each other, as they made their way down through the trees whilst being blindfolded. It was remarkable to see each of the children supporting those around them. During Thursday and Friday the children were split into four groups for their activities. One physical challenge was the trek to Ina's Rock. Using their orienteering skills, the children found their way across farmland, the stream and through the trees before finding their way home. A real highlight was the catwalk competition to make their way across the bridge. Those that took part in the archery were taught how to hold and aim their bow to fire. Finally, during survival, the children thought about what was needed to survive, building themselves a shelter and looking for a water source. They all agreed that the highlight of the survival activity was enjoying the toasted marshmallows and hot chocolate.

On the final evening Father Michael, Parish Priest of St Mary's, Uttoxeter co-celebrated Mass with Father Craig; this was a most spiritual and uplifting occasion as the children and adults shared the Liturgy together. The activities were all delivered by a team of young people (aged from 18 years to 22 years old) who are predominantly waiting to go on to University, staying for one year, living and working as part of the Alton Castle Community. This team brought the Castle and the programme to life. They acted as wonderful, enthusiastic role models for the children on retreat, both from a spiritual point of view and through the energy and enthusiasm they have for life.

The retreat offered Year 6 an opportunity to bond and reflect upon their life and faith journey so far. It was also an occasion for the children to look ahead to their final year together at Primary School, which will conclude in July 2018 when they will receive the special Sacrament of Confirmation.

Alton Castle Retreat September 2018 has already been booked....start getting excited Year 5!



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