

12th April 2019 Staff Retreat Day at St Chad's Sanctuary.

On the 12th April 2019 the staff from St Mark's were blessed to take part in a retreat day alongside the Columbans and St Chad's Sanctuary with the theme of "welcoming the stranger" We worked alongside James, Jane and Steph throughout the day as well as some new friends. We discussed the perspective of crossing borders, Jesus as a refugee and explored asylum.

We visited St Chad's Sanctuary to see the amazing work that goes on behind the scenes to support the people who access support. We were able to see the positive influence the volunteers have on the lives on people who need help, we watched an English lesson and saw how donations from the public are given to allow choices to be made by those who have had their choices removed.



We worked together to decide which was danger, the journey and the safe place. This included flooding, terrorism, natural disasters.

We then spoke with a group of refugees and asylum seekers and explored some of the following questions together

- being made welcome
- the challenges of being a refugee
- Challenges and joys of living in another culture
- What would you like me to share with children and families in our school?



We then had a cooking lesson and worked as a team with the fantastic people from St Chad's Sanctuary and Flavours of Winson Green who work alongside refugees and asylum seekers making and eating food together.



After a reflection in the neighboring St Chad's Cathedral we then began to plan and dream about what they will bring back to school so the children have a greater understanding of asylum seekers and refugees as a team in preparation for Refugee week.

The staff had an inspiring day sharing stories and seeing the good work of charities we support James reminded us of the quote from Pope Francis

"Guardian angels exist, they are not (the fruit of) imaginative doctrine, but companions that God has placed beside us on our life's journey"