



Rev Robyn-Ann Russell-Jones is leader of the Stepney London Ministry Experience Hub, as well as serving as a curate at St John of Jerusalem church in Hackney, east London.

The hub is part of the [Ministry Experience Scheme](#) (MES), the year-long ministry placement programme set up by the Church of England allowing adults aged between 18 and 30 years old the chance to test out their vocations.

Rev Russell-Jones was inspired to test out her vocation having seen the work of churches first hand when she took pupils on educational visits as part of her work as an RE teacher in north-west London.

“I was used to taking children on trips to local churches and I thought ‘actually, that is what I want to do,’” she said.

“I saw their role in bringing communities together, being there at times of need, crisis and lament, as well as celebrations. The churches are there at a critical point in people’s lives.”

Rev Russell-Jones completed the Ministry Experience Scheme, where she served as a pastoral assistant in Stepney (Diocese of London) at St Mary, Hornsey Rise.

Her roles included assisting the Vicar with the running of the food bank, preaching and teaching, running Bible studies, leading morning and evening prayer and running the Alpha Course. She went on to Westcott House in Cambridge for theological training.

“The Ministry Experience Scheme helps people to figure out what they want to do and what they are passionate about and it enables God to be at the centre of this,” she said.

“It is an opportunity to take time out to establish what God has in store for you, no matter where this will lead you in the future.”

More than 800 young adults have taken part in the Ministry Experience Scheme over the past decade. Every year, more than 100 placements are available across the Church of England. Around one in three participants go on to be recommended for ordained ministry while nearly all – 97% - report having found the scheme helpful to discern their vocation in life. More information can be found [here](#).

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