



# Creating Space

for Children and Young People to

*Think, Talk* and *Be* Disciples...

**A resource created by the Children and Youth Team of the Methodist Church, for the use of the *whole* Church.**

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## Setting the Context...

This is not just about children and young people. It is about the whole church and how we create a space for all ages to participate on this journey as equal partners. The Baptismal promise made by the congregation confirms this responsibility... “Will you so maintain the Church’s life of worship and service that they may grow in grace and in the knowledge and love of God...?”<sup>1</sup>

For children and young people to think as disciples, talk as disciples and be disciples, a space must be created that allows them to express their own spirituality and enables them to be fully participating in all aspects of their faith Journey.

This isn’t just about creating a physical space. It is about creating a space in our thinking and our way of being and doing that enables spiritual formation (as defined by John Westerhoff)<sup>2</sup> to happen. Children and young people are not empty vessels to be filled but are seeds to be brought to fruition. A seed already contains within itself everything it needs to become the fully formed plant and, similarly, children and young people simply need us to give them the space to be nurtured and to grow. According to Westerhoff, the goal of spiritual formation is maturing faith and a deepening relationship with God, with spirituality as the underlying roots (Ibid.).

Being able to explore our spirituality and understand it enables us to be confident in expressing our faith. Creating a space for children and young people to think, talk and be with God enables them to not only grow in their faith but also to be whole-life and lifelong disciples. If the roots of spirituality aren’t cared for, the fruits of faith will not develop.

## The Challenge

The Church’s approach to children’s and youth ministry has traditionally been educational and pastoral. That may have worked well when society knew what Christianity was and what the Church was for. In *A New Kind of Christianity*, Brian McLaren argues that, “[W]e are inducting children into a form of Christian faith that no longer works for adults.”<sup>3</sup>

He goes on to discuss churches experimenting with fresh approaches, but says the danger is that this is often about style and not content and depth. The purpose of children’s and youth ministry has shifted from ‘telling and doing to’ children and young people to enabling conversations and exploration. It should now be concerned with opening up opportunities for whole-life spiritual formation and discipleship in a new kind of Christian faith.

Participation of all ages in an intergenerational Church is the key to providing children and young people with opportunities to be involved in and to influence the mission and ministry of the Methodist Church. This has the potential to renew our existing models of church or to instigate completely new expressions of church:

“Allowing children to serve the church with their gifts and talents cements them to the faith community. Adults grow spiritually when they accept gifts from children and allow children to serve them. It is a reminder of what being a person of faith is all about” Ivy Beckwith, *Post Modern Children’s Ministry*.<sup>4</sup>

The decision of Methodist Conference in 2007 to set up the Youth Participation Strategy (the YPS) was brave. It was also pioneering. The Methodist Church is the *first* mainstream church in the UK to be developing participation as an integral part of its mission. This isn't just about children and young people; it is about all those who engage with the Church. The challenge we face is how we change the culture of our churches, allowing everyone to participate in relevant and authentic ways. This is an ever changing journey and one the whole Church is on together.

## Children's and Youth Ministry: It's About Everyone

The Methodist Church Children and Youth Team's Connect Strategy is based upon the following beliefs:

- Children and young people are equal partners with adults in the life of the Church.
- Learning is for the whole Church – adults, children and young people.
- Mission and ministry is for and with children and young people, as well as adults.
- The call to evangelism comes at whatever age.
- The concept of the 'Priesthood of all believers' includes children and young people.
- The Holy Spirit works through children and young people as well as adults.

We deliver our work based on **four core values**, which state that all ministry with children and young people should be:

- **Relevant:** appropriate to needs, culture and situation.
- **Inclusive:** valuing all and empowering everyone to participate.
- **Transforming:** enabling and supporting children and young people on a journey of discipleship to be effective witnesses in the world.
- **Caring:** supporting and protecting children and young people in their physical, emotional and spiritual well-being.

This resource should be worked through intergenerationally, with the whole Church:

- Church Leadership
- Children's, Family and Youth Workers (paid/volunteer).
- Congregations, including mid-week and Saturday church groups
- Children and young people.

## Our Calling

This resource does not take a kite-mark approach, such as the Child Friendly Church material, instead it is designed to help Church Leaders, congregations, children and young people to think about how churches could create space for children and young people to think, talk and be disciples and respond to *Our Calling*:

- **Worship:** The Church exists to increase awareness of God's presence and to celebrate God's love.
- **Learning & Caring:** The Church exists to help people to grow and learn as

Christians, through mutual support and care.

- **Service:** The Church exists to be a good neighbour to people in need and to challenge injustice.
- **Evangelism:** The Church exists to make more followers of Jesus Christ.<sup>5</sup>

## Session One

### Creating Space for Children and Young People to Think as Disciples...

#### How Do We Create This Space?

David Hay and Rebecca Nye offer some valuable insight through their research into children's spirituality, approaching the subject from the child's perspective\*.

Hay and Nye found in their research that children, whether from a religious family or not, had a huge sense of something greater than themselves. They noted five features of spirituality from the child's perspective:

- **Everyday** – evident in very ordinary, everyday aspects of children's lives.
- **Depth, surprise, challenge** – possibly because of low expectations.
- **Integrated and erratic** – not separated out from everyday conversation.
- **Verbal and non-verbal** – tempting to value verbal over non-verbal.
- **Endangered** – children relish the opportunity to talk about their spiritual lives, but regard them as of little importance to others (even those with strong church/fait community links). They saw them as something 'to grow out of' because of the dismissive attitudes of adults.<sup>6</sup>

Rebecca Nye suggests that, "[U]nderstanding spiritual capacity to every child's life is often not reflected in the approach and underlying attitudes of some Christian teaching programmes. Some still seem to treat children as spiritually empty and passive vessels until and unless adults intervene."<sup>7</sup>

Nye offers six criteria for ensuring we provide good spiritual foundations and, by using these as a basis to our ministry, we can develop a space in our churches to enable children and young people to think as disciples.

- **Space** – not just the physical space and what that looks like, but also auditory space, talking less and listening more, allowing space for silence, and emotional space – space to be apart, to have different opinions, to be ourselves, to learn boundaries.
- **Process** – spirituality is more about process than production, no endless outcomes from a session.
- **Imagination** – spirituality depends on being open and willing to go deeper. Imagination and being creative in how we do things can resource this.
- **Relationship** – offering authentic models of relating to each other.
- **Intimacy** – feeling safe, providing a place where it is ok to surrender to something greater, where children can just be. Where they feel at home to question and offer their thoughts.

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\* In *The Original Vision*, Edward Robinson says that children have a natural capacity for insight, imagination, understanding and knowing about God that does not need to be developed into a higher form. Sofia Cavalletti argued that 'all children show a natural attraction to God and what is called the 'spontaneous religiousness of a child'. Robert Coles, from his research recorded in *The Spiritual Life of Children*, noted his belief that children show an innate spiritual dimension to their lives.

- **Trust** – essential to maintaining a spiritual life, trust in ourselves and each other, respecting boundaries. (Ibid).

## How Does This Apply in Our Everyday Context?

### Our Calling, Learning and Caring

Often we tend to read or tell stories and ask children to look for information, rather than helping them to listen and find meaning for themselves in what they read. The stories are important, but children and young people also need to be given the freedom to think for themselves and relate what they hear to their own lives. It is more helpful to discuss the stories with children and young people, rather than simply to ask a range of right or wrong questions. By exploring meaning together we can place emphasis on the fact that we don't have the only answers, and that our relationship with the story is much more important than factual recall.

### Questions for Discussion/Thought

1. How do you feel about using this method of exploring and learning from the Bible?
2. Do you feel comfortable with the idea that children and young people can think things through with you?
3. Do you think that you could learn anything from children and young people about the Bible?
4. Does your church provide opportunities for children and young people to explore questions of faith and belief for themselves?
5. Do you provide safe places for children's and young people's spiritual quests?
6. What might Rebecca Nye's six criteria for ensuring spiritual foundations look like in your setting?

### Activities Exploring Learning and Caring

The following are just a few activities that could be used by your church to help children, young people, leadership and congregations of all ages to explore:

- What Learning and Caring means.
- Where the church is at the moment and where it should be headed.

### Sunday School in a Box

What would your ideal Sunday school look like? This is a creative idea to get people to think about this question and start to build a shoe box or a box template. You will need lots of shoe boxes or boxes and art materials. Ask people of all ages to create their ideal Sunday school in a

box. If people are comfortable with sharing their work then display their creation, along with everyone else's, for others to see. These boxes displayed together will create a collage of images and ideas.

This activity could also be used with the last question, what might Rebecca Nye's six criteria for ensuring good spiritual foundations look like in your setting? Again this should be asked of everyone!

## Dot Voting

This is a fun and anonymous way for everyone to vote on what ideas/suggestions they think are the most important. On a whiteboard or flipchart that can be seen by everyone, write a list of all the items to be voted on. Everyone is then given a set number of votes. The number given should depend on the number of items on the list and the resources and time of the group. If you give more than one vote to each person, you are allowing more than one item to be identified as important. For each allowed vote the individual gets to place one 'dot' next to the item they deem the most important on the list. This could be done with either sticky dots or simply using a marker pen. Obviously it is much easier to 'police' sticky dots and make sure no one is cheating! If individuals are allowed more than one vote, they may choose to allocate more than one dot to one particular item on the list to indicate just how important they deem that item to be. Participants should be allowed to make their vote at any time and in any order as this is more anonymous. Once everyone has cast their votes, tally up the number and the list item with the higher number of votes is the group's priority. If it would help to break down the results of the vote even further, different coloured dots can be allocated to different genders, age groups etc.



## Session Two

### Creating Space for Children and Young People to Talk as Disciples...

#### How Do We Create This Space?

Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child guarantees every child aged 17 and under has the right to express their views on all matters that affect them.

Tam Tansey of Youth Clubs UK has indentified seven clear benefits of empowerment for children and young people:

- **A voice and an influence.** Empowerment offers children a level of influence and an element of choice about the kind of provision offered by a service. It helps children and young people be clear about and understand their own wants and needs.
- **Updated service.** The process of empowerment impels services to meet changing needs that arise from the everyday interests and problems defined by young people.
- **Child development.** In being empowered, young people experience many aspects of their own potential, including dilemma of responsibility and the ability to prioritise.
- **Social and political education.** Empowerment provides opportunities to acquire the skills of debate, communication, negotiation and individual and group decision-making. It represents the first steps in learning about how individual, group and even national politics work.
- **Creators not consumers.** Through empowerment children are encouraged to be active in creating the services they use, rather than being passive consumers of services provided for them. It follows that any such service must be an agent of social change and not social control.
- **Participation in the wider society.** Children with experience of participation in a safe environment will understand the process of empowerment and be better prepared to participate in decision-making when they have moved into wider society.
- **Democracy.** The promotion and practice of service, which is open and accountable to its users encourages democratic procedures and respect for the principles of democratic life.<sup>8</sup>

With this in mind how do we enable children and young people to talk about their faith and to have a voice and influence in our church?

When God calls Samuel, thinking Eli is calling him, Samuel runs to Eli to see what he wants. Eli sends Samuel away because he didn't call him. This happens two more times and, on the third time, Eli realises that God is calling Samuel. Eli tells Samuel to go back and lie down and when God calls him again to answer, "Speak, Lord, for Your servant is listening." Eli doesn't intervene or speak on Samuel's behalf, he allows Samuel to speak to and be with God.<sup>9</sup>

## Our Calling, Evangelism

### Questions for Discussion/Thought

1. Are children and young people involved in any/all aspects of evangelism?
2. Do children and young people give their consent to be engaged, not just in the immediate activity, but also in the underlying process? “Voluntary participation is not activated by inviting young people to a free concert, whilst failing to mention that the gig is sponsored by the church and will include a presentation about the Christian faith.”<sup>10</sup>
3. Are children and young people encouraged to ask questions in order to gain a real sense of what is involved?
4. Are children and young people consulted on the issues and services that affect their lives, including church and the activities they attend within the church?
5. Are children and young people involved in responsible, challenging action and provided with opportunities to be involved in planning and decision-making resulting from this consultation?
6. Are children and young people able to freely express their faith?
7. Are these expressions of faith understood and valued, even if they don't come in the form we expect or prefer?

### Activities Exploring Evangelism

The following are just a few activities that could be used by your church to help children, young people, leadership and congregations of all ages to explore how children and young people can participate in evangelism.

#### Arty Mural

Give people a clear topic or question, for example, “What is evangelism?” Encourage them to work individually or in a group to express their views/ideas through pictures, words and images perhaps by drawing or using magazine cut-outs.

#### Opinion Finders

You will need a sheet of paper with a statement at the top and a grid to record people's opinions. Go around the room gathering everyone's opinion and tally the results. For example, you could use the key questions from this section, like so:

Children and young people are consulted on the issues and services which affect their lives, including church and the activities they attend within the church.

Agree Strongly	IIIIII	6
Agree	III	3
No opinion	IIIIIIII	8
Disagree	II	2
Disagree Strongly	I	1

## Paper Carousel

Split people into smaller groups. Give each group a piece of flip chart paper with different key questions on and some pens. Each group then has five minutes to write down their answers/suggestions in response to their question. After five minutes, move the sheets around to the next group so each group has a different question. Give the groups another five minutes to add their own answers, and tick any previous answers they agree with. Keep passing the sheets around until everyone has answered every question.

*Involving Children and Young People: An Introduction* by the National Youth Agency, goes on to list 12 questions, which we might ask ourselves, to ensure that participation is safe and effective:

1. What are we aiming to achieve?
2. Where have we got to so far?
3. What will children and young people get out of it?
4. Are we prepared to resource it properly?
5. Why have we not done it before?
6. Are we prepared to involve children and young people from the start?
7. Are we being honest with children and young people?
8. What are our expectations?
9. Are we prepared to give up some power?
10. Are we prepared to take criticism?
11. Do we recognise this as a long-term commitment?
12. Are we prepared to build in changes long-term and not just have a one-off event?

(The National Youth Agency, *Involving Children and Young People: An Introduction*, 2007)

## Session Three

### Creating Space for Children and Young People to Be Disciples...

#### How do we recognise children and young people as disciples and create this space?

The concept of childhood, for some, might imply 'not grown-up yet' or 'not complete'. But what is a child and what is an adult? "What if childhood, rather than being a temporary phase of human development before what we may think of as maturity or adulthood, is, from God's point of view, a description of the whole of our lives?"<sup>11</sup>

"Human personhood is not divided into childhood or adulthood; it is merely personhood irrespective of age, social status or amount of learning, wisdom and experience. God calls each individual human being into a real relationship and to a real vocation, not a potential vocation somewhere in the future. [...] Yet Christian tradition and the internal life of our churches have often failed to reflect that children are active participants in the people of God, who make independent contributions to the life of the church rather than simply respond to demands, instructions and interpretations of adult Christians. So when we look through the eyes of a child we look through the eyes of one who is regarded as a whole person before God, not an incomplete person or partial person, or adult in the making."<sup>12</sup>

How do we apply this in our ministry with children and young people, what opportunities do we create to enable them to be a disciple?

*Participate*, a new resource produced by the Children and Youth Team, helps young people to explore discipleship and vocation. It is an ideal resource for those aged 9-14 and is available from Methodist publishing.

When God calls Jeremiah, he tells him, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew [and] approved of you [as My chosen instrument], and before you were born I separated and set you apart, consecrating you; [and] I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."<sup>13</sup>

Jeremiah answers, "Ah, Lord God! Behold, I cannot speak, for I am only a youth."<sup>14</sup>

But God tells Jeremiah, "Say not, I am only a youth; for you shall go to all to whom I shall send you, and whatever I command you, you shall speak."<sup>15</sup> Here it could be seen that God called and appointed Jeremiah as a child, not a prophet in waiting or a prophet in training, but a prophet in the here and now.

#### Our Calling, Worship and Service Questions for Discussion/Thought

1. Are children and young people involved in any/all aspects of worship?
2. Are you willing to explore with children and young people what it means to worship?
3. Are you open to new forms of worship, which might just be sung?
4. What space do you create for children and young people to serve?

5. How might opportunities to serve be created, without being tokenistic?

“Community work is not a profession like any other. It is a profession dedicated to increasing the expertise of non-professionals; to increasing the capacity of people in difficult and disadvantaged situations, getting more control over their collective circumstances.

Community workers stimulate and support groups of people working to improve conditions and opportunities in their own neighbourhoods [...T]he underlying aim is an increase in confidence, skill and community self-organising power, which will enable the participants to continue to use and share these abilities long after the community work has gone.”<sup>16</sup>

6. Do you increase the capacity of children and young people, and the communities they live in?
7. Do you increase the confidence, skills and self-organising power of children, young people, and the communities they live in?
8. What opportunities are created for children and young people to be involved in this process?

## Activities Exploring Worship and Service

The following are just a few activities that could be used by your church to help children, young people, leadership and congregations of all ages to explore how children and young people can participate in worship and service.

## Human Worship Bingo

Create a sheet for each person, divided into 12 squares. At the top of the page it should say, “Find two people who...” Then write one of these ‘challenges’ in each square:

- Enjoy looking at art
- Like creating art
- Enjoy watching sport
- Enjoy playing sport
- Enjoy being outdoors
- Enjoy outdoor activities
- Enjoy listening to music
- Like creating music, including singing
- Like watching films
- Like listening to talks
- Like reading
- Like debating

Send everybody around the room to find two people who fit the categories. These two people should then write their name in the box. To make it even more difficult, dependent on numbers, tell them they are not allowed to use same name more than once! First one to fill their boxes

shouts BINGO!

### What is Worship? Graffiti Board

Give people a clear topic or question, for example, “What is worship?” and access to art materials and a large sheet of paper/a bed sheet/a roll of craft paper/the back of an old roll of newspaper. Encourage them to work individually or in groups to express their thoughts, definitions, quotes and questions through pictures, words and images.

### Post-it Ideas Storm

This is a variation on simple ‘brainstorming’. Everybody has a pile of post-it notes. Around the room are pieces of flip-chart paper with questions, for example, “What does participation look like?” or, “What kinds of activities would children and young people be interested in taking a lead on in worship?” or, “What kinds of activities would children and young people be interested in taking a lead on in service?” Ask people to write answers (one per post-it) and stick them on the relevant piece of flip-chart paper. People could work alone or in groups, whichever you deem most appropriate.

## Working on Your Strategy...

The following are just a few activities that could be used by your church to help children, young people, leadership and congregations of all ages to explore strategy and enabling change.

### Swot(t)

Set a topic, for example, creating space for children and young people to think, talk and be disciples. Split a sheet of flip chart into four quarters entitled:

- Strengths (of the idea).
- Weaknesses (of the idea).
- Opportunities (that would arise from the idea).
- Threats (that might prevent the idea from working/continuing).

In large or small groups, ask people to contribute their thoughts, section by section, either by shouting out, or writing on post-its etc. If you would find it useful, you could also add a second 'T' section to gather feedback on: Training (what formal/informal training would people need to make this idea happen?).

### Hot Air Balloon

This works if you have a very specific idea, for example establishing what creating space for children and young people to think, talk and be disciples might look like. In groups, draw a hot air balloon, with a basket, ropes tethering it the ground and a balloon. Ask the group for suggestions of who would need to be on board for the idea to take off. Write these on the basket. Then ask for ideas of what things need to be in place to ensure success – these go on the actual balloon in your picture. On the tethering ropes add factors that might hold it back... and possible solutions. Above the balloon, in the sky, write down as many factors that will help the project grow that the group can think of (e.g. enthusiasm, commitment). Finally, on either side of the balloon, write down things that might 'buffet' the idea once it gets off the ground (e.g. continued funding, key people leaving etc.).

## Conclusion...

Our hope for this resource is to see real, tangible changes happen in our churches and to encourage ongoing reflective learning. In fact, “Children may be the model for adult spiritual development, rather than the reverse [...A] task for adult spiritual development may be to recapture the child’s more inclusive and all-pervading sense of relational to the spiritual, which means that for them it is normally ‘everyday’ rather than the dramatic.”<sup>17</sup>

Keith White in his paper *The Child in the Midst of Biblical Witness* suggests six responses to children and child theology:

- **A richer and fuller understanding of the nature of children and childhood** – a theological framework and a more holistic understanding of child development.
- **New understandings of church and mission** – recognising that children can teach and lead.
- **A prophetic role for those engaged in children’s ministry** – children’s ministry as part of the wider church.
- **Rethinking education and faith formation** – re-evaluating the nature and purpose of education and how children learn.
- **Parenting** – it’s about all of us.
- **Adulthood** – beginning to view adulthood differently.<sup>18</sup>



# Appendix One

## Welcome

“The formation of an authentic (worshipping) assembly requires the presence and acceptance (not merely the toleration) of children, as having a legitimate part to play in making our worship whole and complete.” Richard Giles<sup>19</sup>

In order to create an authentic, worshipping community, all must feel welcome.

How well does your church welcome children, young people and families? The following questions, thoughts and suggestions are designed to help you explore this question as you:

- Audit what your church is already doing.
- Start a discussion on what is working well and what might need to be changed.
- Explore new ideas and ways of engaging.
- Feed into your church Mission Action Plan (or equivalent).

### Worship

Worship is at the core of the Church’s life. We come together, as the family of God, to offer our praise, confess our sins, hear and respond to God’s word, pray for our world and celebrate Holy Communion. Then we are sent out to, “Go in peace to love and serve the Lord”.

As we encounter God in worship we are formed (and transformed) as God’s people. And children and young people need to be included in that – not to be entertained, distracted or sidelined, but encouraged to take a full part.

*Ideas for Worship Leaders* (Appendix Two), *Worship Audit* (Appendix Three) and *Worship Resources* (Appendix Four) will help you to start thinking about how that might happen.

### Environment

The places and spaces in which we meet say something about the value of the activity that is taking place in them. A well-ordered, attractive environment, in which care has been taken over the arrangement of furniture and decoration, offers a welcome that invites people in and speaks silently to them of our love of God and desire to worship.

Whether we are meeting in a brand new building, a 16<sup>th</sup> century church, a parish hall in the middle of a re-ordering project or the choir vestry, care needs to be taken that the environment is at least safe, clean and welcoming. *Welcoming Environment – A Checklist* (Appendix Five) and *Ideas for Worship Leaders* (Appendix Two) will help you to start looking at your meeting space with fresh eyes and consider whether changes need to be made.

## Appendix Two

### Ideas for Worship Leaders

These ideas are simply suggestions. With the Worship Leaders in your church, identify what might be incorporated into your worship so that children and young people might be more fully engaged and enabled to participate. Do not attempt to include everything – consider what is possible within your context. One change done well and consistently is far better than ten that are not thought through.

Ways in which children/young people (c/yp) might be engaged and participate in worship:	
Before service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there opportunities for c/yp to contribute towards planning worship?</li> <li>• Are the service sheets/projection slides clear enough to be read and understood? Consider careful use of pictures or symbols to help those who are not literate.</li> <li>• Could c/yp help with the sound desk or projection?</li> <li>• Include c/yp in the welcoming team or stewarding team.</li> <li>• Invite children and young people to Pray with the preachers and stewards before the service.</li> <li>• Encourage children and young people to prepare and lead prayers.</li> </ul>
During service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there opportunities for children to move?</li> <li>• Is there someone ready to help if a parent needs to take a child out for a break, or to the toilet?</li> <li>• Do you have facilities for Parents with young children, for example a crèche? Is the service relayed so they can still hear it?</li> <li>• Try to have people to facilitate the crèche and think creatively about engaging children and parents.</li> <li>• How do children and young people go to their sessions? How do you acknowledge that their session is as valid as the adult session? Make it very clear that they are not being sent out or sent away.</li> <li>• Use accessible words.</li> <li>• Include physical objects – stones to be brought to the cross, paper to write on, water for cleansing.</li> <li>• Try and include people with different learning styles (visual/spatial, aural/auditory-musical, verbal/linguistic, physical/kinaesthetic, logical/ mathematical, social/interpersonal and solitary/intrapersonal).</li> </ul>
Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include a balance of music – traditional/modern; responsive; lively/reflective.</li> <li>• Invite c/yp to be part of the music group/worship band/choir.</li> <li>• Teach (and allow!) c/yp to operate the sound or projection system.</li> </ul>

<b>Welcome and preparation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the service starts or finishes with a response or gesture do the c/yp know what to do (for example, sharing the Grace together, sharing the peace).</li> <li>• Acknowledge all ages in the welcome.</li> <li>• Include a brief introduction to the theme/format of the service, or one or two things to look or listen out for.</li> </ul>
<b>Language</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use accessible words.</li> <li>• Include physical objects – stones to be brought to the cross, paper to write on, water for cleansing.</li> <li>• Be creative in your story telling.</li> </ul>
<b>Bible reading</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dramatise the reading/use a version from a good paraphrased Bible.</li> <li>• Use images during the reading.</li> <li>• Include c/yp as readers.</li> <li>• Set the scene/background of the reading.</li> <li>• Use phrases such as, “Listen out for...” or “Imagine you were there...” to engage your audience.</li> </ul>
<b>Sermon/talk</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include a visual element.</li> <li>• Encourage participation through questions/discussion.</li> <li>• Include stories/illustrations that will connect across a range of ages.</li> <li>• Vary the tone of voice/use of body language.</li> <li>• Split the sermon up across the service.</li> </ul>
<b>Spiritual formation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has there been space for awe and wonder?</li> <li>• Have there been times of quiet reflection?</li> </ul>
<b>Intercessions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a visual element (globe, food, medical kit) as a focus.</li> <li>• Create a ‘prayer tree’, with individuals writing prayers and petitions to be attached to its branches.</li> <li>• Use a candle or quiet music to encourage reflection or personal prayer.</li> <li>• Consider creating simple prayer stations for people to move around.</li> </ul>
<b>The Peace</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invite c/yp to come forward to receive the Peace from the Minister and then take it out to share with the congregation.</li> <li>• Encourage the congregation to include babies and toddlers as they share the Peace.</li> </ul>
<b>Preparation for Holy Communion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invite c/yp to gather round the Communion table so that they can see.</li> <li>• Project appropriate images during the prayers.</li> </ul>
<b>The Lord’s Prayer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a musical setting.</li> <li>• Project key words (‘Father’, ‘hallowed’, ‘kingdom’, ‘forgive’ etc.) as the prayer is said.</li> </ul>
<b>Blessing and</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a ‘giveaway’ (seeds, stone, Bible verse) that could act as a</li> </ul>

dismissal	reminder of the service's theme? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Work with the c/yp to write a prayer(s) that could be used before the final blessing.</li><li>• Point out how the words of the final song/hymn relate to the theme or readings in the service.</li></ul>
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*Worship Resources* (Appendix Four) offers more places where you can find suggestions of how to welcome and engage children and young people in worship.

## Appendix Three

### Worship Audit

Use this audit sheet to think through how children and young people are engaged and participate in regular worship in your church. You might want to complete it for both regular worship and all-age worship.

Ask a child or young person to work through the audit. How do their perceptions and ideas differ from yours?

If this audit does not reflect your own pattern of worship, adapt it so that it does! There may be things you wish to include and sections that need to be left out. The aim is to provide something that will aid reflection on your own practice.

	How does your church do this?	How do children and young people engage or participate?	What might be changed or done differently?
<i>The worship space.</i>			
<i>Welcome and preparation: getting ready to worship God.</i>			
<i>The congregation's input into the service and style of worship.</i>			

<p><i>Stating together what we believe as Christians.</i></p>			
<p><i>The Bible reading.</i></p>			
<p><i>Sermon/Talk: Listening/trying to hear what God is saying.</i></p>			
<p><i>Relating the sermon/ talk to life.</i></p>			
<p><i>Intercessions: Thanking God.</i></p>			

<p><i>Intercessions: Praying for people who need God's help.</i></p>			
<p><i>Intercessions: Praying for the world.</i></p>			
<p><i>Sharing together God's Peace.</i></p>			
<p><i>Communion: Bringing the gifts of bread and wine.</i></p>			
<p><i>Prayers and liturgy for communion.</i></p>			
<p><i>Communion: Receiving the bread and wine, or a blessing. Remembering Jesus' sacrifice.</i></p>			

<i>The Lord's Prayer.</i>			
<i>Creating a space to hear and feel the presence of God.</i>			
<i>Allowing space to question and learn during a service.</i>			
<i>Ensuring we are part of a community.</i>			
<i>Exploring what it means to be a disciple.</i>			
<i>Blessing and dismissal: Receiving God's blessing and preparing to serve God in the world.</i>			



## Appendix Four

# Worship Resources

The following books and websites have a host of useful ideas to help you plan worship that is welcoming and engaging for children and young people.

### Books

*All-Age Everything: Worship for an Intergenerational Church*, Nick Harding (Kevin Mayhew Ltd., 2009). A host of ways to engage children and young people in all aspects of the liturgy, from welcomes through to confessions and talks to blessings.

*Top Tips: On All Age Worship*, Nick Harding (Scripture Union, 2005). A short, practical booklet that explores the elements which make up worship, with pointers on how to be creative when using these elements.

*100 Multi-Sensory Ideas for Worship*, Irene Smale (Crossway Books from IVP, 2009). Offers a range of ideas to engage all the senses in worship.

*All-Age Lectionary Services* (Scripture Union, Year A 2010, Year B 2011, Year C 2012). Three volumes from Scripture Union, which offer adaptable and engaging resources, focussed around the Lectionary readings. Each week there is a reflection on the Bible readings for the Service Leader, along with interactive ideas for every part of the liturgy.

### Websites

*Roots* ([www.rootsontheweb.com](http://www.rootsontheweb.com)). Ecumenical, Lectionary-based weekly resources for all ages in two magazines, plus a huge bank of online materials.

*Worshiping with Children* ([www.worshipingwithchildren.blogspot.com](http://www.worshipingwithchildren.blogspot.com)). This site from Carolyn C. Brown offers interactive ways of presenting Scripture and including children in worship. It can be searched either by Lectionary week or Scripture passage.

*Barnabas in Churches* ([www.barnabusinchurches.org.uk](http://www.barnabusinchurches.org.uk)). This site from Bible Reading Fellowship has a range of ideas for worship when children are present.

*Family Worship* ([www.familyworship.org.uk](http://www.familyworship.org.uk)). This site from Family Worship Resources UK offers songs that can be used by a range of ages in worship. It includes downloads, backing tracks and words.

*Creative Prayer* ([www.creativeprayer.com](http://www.creativeprayer.com)). This site has a range of creative ideas for prayer and intercessions.

## Appendix Five

# Welcoming Environment: A Checklist

Here are some things to consider when creating a space for children and young people in your church:

- Encouraging all members of the congregation to have a positive attitude towards each other, especially across generations and cultures.
- Having an awareness of current child protection policies
- Being aware of the spiritual, emotional, physical and social needs of children and young people in order to create a space for spiritual formation and faith development. Seeking to fill these needs where it is appropriate.
- Providing a dynamic, multi-sensory, inspiring and creative children's and youth ministry.
- Acknowledging that all relationships can benefit from learning and developing relationship skills. Providing opportunities for learning together across generations and cultures, for example workshops for parents, young people and children.
- Having a named person on the Pastoral Care Team responsible for the Chaplaincy or pastoral care of Children and Youth Workers (midweek and Saturday/Sunday). Alternatively you could have class groups/cell groups for all those who work alongside children and young people. Arrange quiet days for workers to recharge their spiritual batteries.
- Encouraging all workers (voluntary and paid) to sign up to The Methodist Church network for children and youth workers: The Well. They can do this by visiting the website: [www.childrenandyouth.org.uk](http://www.childrenandyouth.org.uk).
- Actively involving adults and children of all ages, in the church service on a regular basis. Participation is about everyone.
- Having a building that is safe and accessible to everyone (ramps, toilets, access, protective railings etc.).
- Providing relevant and interactive activities for under 5s.
- Creating a clear strategy for the development of all-age ministry and creating a space to enable spiritual formation and faith development of children and young people.

Many churches are keen for families to feel welcome when they visit. A family has walked through your church doors for the first time. What might they

- See?
- Hear?
- Feel?

First impressions are important. Some of these ideas may help families feel welcomed and encourage them to return:

- Greet the family, including the children, with a smile.
- If there is a crèche/Sunday Group, let the family know but do not insist that they take their children there.
- Let them know where the toilet/space for nappy changing/buggy park (if you have one) is.
- Help the family find somewhere to sit together. Church regulars may need to be prepared to move!
- Encourage a regular church member to sit close by in case help is needed finding the way round service sheets etc.
- If the family need to take a child out of the worship space at any time, help them with door opening etc.
- Offer the family information about church activities and services (a written sheet will help them to remember what is on offer).
- After the service, invite the family to stay for refreshments (make sure they know where to find them!) or at least say goodbye and thank them for coming.

## Appendix Six

### End Notes

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<sup>1</sup> From the Methodist Service Book.

<sup>2</sup> John Westerhoff, *Spiritual Life: The Foundation for Preaching and Teaching* (Louisville, Ky.; John Knox Press, 1994).

<sup>3</sup> Brian D. McLaren, *A New Kind of Christianity: Ten Questions That Are Transforming the Faith* (HarperOne, 2010).

<sup>4</sup> Ivy Beckwith, *Postmodern Children's Ministry: Ministry to Children in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Church* (Zondervan/Youth Specialties, 2004).

<sup>5</sup> *Our Calling* is a statement published by the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes in 2000. More information can be found on the Methodist Church website: [www.methodist.org.uk](http://www.methodist.org.uk).

<sup>6</sup> Key areas as noted in David Hay and Rebecca Nye, *The Spirit of the Child* (London, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2006).

<sup>7</sup> Rebecca Nye, *Children's Spirituality What It Is and Why It Matters*. (London, Church House Publishing, 2009).

<sup>8</sup> Cited in Fajerman, L & Treseder, P, *Empowering Children and Young People* (London, Save the Children, 1997, p. 11).

<sup>9</sup> **1 Samuel, 3:10**

<sup>10</sup> D. Brierley, *Joined Up*. (Carlisle, Spring Harvest Publishing Division and Authentic Lifestyle, 2003 p. 73).

<sup>11</sup> Dr Keith J. White's paper, *The Child in the Midst of Biblical Witness* (2007, p.3).

<sup>12</sup> Richards, A & Privett, P, *Through the Eyes of a Child* (London, Church House Publishing, 2009).

<sup>13</sup> Jeremiah 1:5

<sup>14</sup> Jeremiah 1:6

<sup>15</sup> Jeremiah 1:7

<sup>16</sup> Keith Popple, *Analysing Community Work* (Maidenhead, Open University Press, 1995, p.5).

<sup>17</sup> David Hay and Rebecca Nye, Op Cit.

<sup>18</sup> Dr. Keith J. White, Op Cit.

<sup>19</sup> Richard Giles, *At Heaven's Gate Reflections on Leading Worship* (Canterbury Press, 2010).