



HAVE YOUR SAY

What do your Children and Young People think?

How do you seek and value the thoughts and opinions of children and young people?

During the Year of Young People 2018, we would like to encourage all churches to talk to and ask children and young people for their thoughts about what they enjoy and are concerned about. How would they like the church to get involved in the Year of Young People and how might they get involved?

Children and young people are part of the Church today - but often their voice isn't heard. We will all benefit from the active engagement and participation of children and young people, as they can bring in different perspectives and fresh ideas. This encourages all of us to listen to each other and shape a different future together. It helps young people to feel valued for who they are and what they bring. We want to encourage a greater sense of ownership and belonging in our children and young people.

Jeremiah 1: 4-9 The word of the LORD came to me, saying, 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.' 'Alas, Sovereign LORD,' I said, 'I do not know how to speak; I am too young.' But the LORD said to me, 'Do not say, I am too young. You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you,' declares the LORD. Then the LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, 'I have put my words in your mouth. See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant.'

Every child has the right to say what they think in all matters affecting them, and to have their views taken seriously. Article 12: UN Convention of the Rights of a Child 1989.

Think about WHAT you want to find out from children and young people:

Eg To understand them better; what are their interests and concerns?

What do they want to see change in their church or community?

What gifts and skills they have and want to share?

How would they like your church to be involved in the Year of Young People?

What can they contribute and celebrate?

Think about HOW you might explore these questions with young people.

What you do might vary depending on the ages of the young people you are meeting with. There are lots of creative and fun ways of listening to the voices of children and young people Eg a creative discussion; a graffiti wall; video interviews; photos and captions; games.



How might 'Have Your Say' bring about change?

How might you draw together the thoughts and comments from the children and young people and what will you do with these? How might you share these with the wider church?

The Year of Young People Toolkit has some ideas for listening to the voice of children and young people on pages 16 and 17.

Example questions:

Tell us about yourself – your age; family and what you enjoy.

What worries you or concerns you about your life/ community/ world?

What do you like most about your church?

What would you change about your church?

How would you like to be more involved in the church, locally, regionally and nationally?

What would you like to see your church do during the Year of Young People?

You could watch the **My Church** video of children and young people in Livingston, sharing their thoughts and then have further discussion with your children and young people.

www.churchofscotland.org.uk/yoyp

You could explore some of the areas in the **Children and Young People Healthcheck** and get their thoughts on these areas. (See the Resources section of the Year of Young People web pages)

Encourage participation and hearing the voice of children and young people in your congregation, uniformed groups, local schools etc. If you don't have children or young people in your church,

You could watch the **My Church** video or think about how to get the thoughts and views of other children and young people in your local community, schools and families.

How can you continue to invite the contribution of children and young people and include them in decisions and engagement in your church?

For more information on participation of children and young people and intergenerational church life see www.churchofscotland.org.uk/childrenandyouth especially the Leaders section.

The recently published **Learn: Children and Young People** publication has a section on participation – particularly exploring the priesthood of all believers

<https://standrewpress.hymnsam.co.uk/books/9780715209851/children-and-young-people>

Other useful sites and resources:

- **Listen to a Child Pack** from Liverpool Diocese has lots of ideas www.liverpool.anglican.org/Listen-to-A-Child
- **Listening to the Voice of the Child** – A reflection and ideas from the Children's Society www.childrensociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/tcs/u49/poverty_of_voice_0.pdf
- **Think – Talk – Be** from the Methodist Church has some great ideas on getting the voice and opinions of children and young people, including a Worship Audit and a Welcoming Environment Checklist www.methodist.org.uk/media/3971/think-talk-be.pdf
- **Voice Activated** from the Methodist Church focuses on encouraging local churches and projects to hear the voice of children and young people and to allow this voice to have an impact on decision making and planning. www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/our-work-in-britain/children-and-youth/the-well-for-workers/well-resources/voice-activated/

Share with the wider Church – Do tell us what you do to hear the voice of children and young people in your church and community, as well as what they are saying – we can share that across the Church of Scotland email YOYP@churchofscotland.org.uk