



# Youth and Children's News Update

To: All Ministers, Children's and Youth Workers, Safeguarding Co-ordinators September 2011 Issue 16

## WELCOME

This summer saw the final stage of the France, UK and Zambia youth exchange programme. Each participant had an opportunity to reflect on the experiences we have had over the last three years and our recommendations for future links between our three countries and our four churches. I include my personal reflections here in the hope that you will consider them and ask God how he wants you, your church and/or circuit to respond.

The Apostle Paul writes: "May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God." (Romans 15:5-7)

Participation in an exchange programme requires endurance and encouragement. At times when differences arose it would have been easy to give up, to not step up to the challenges given to us, or to refuse to participate. None of these responses would lead to growth as individuals or as a group. Working together requires patience – we did not always understand each other; our languages varied, our cultures varied and our experiences of church varied. I believe that these differences and our experiences have helped us to rely more fully on the God who gives each of us endurance and encouragement.

Despite our differences we have learnt that we all follow the same Christ Jesus. We have learnt new ways of worship; we have experienced new songs, new dances, new ways to pray,

new ways of meditating on scripture, colour, vitality and silence. In all these things we have learnt that with one heart and mouth we may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have been given a spirit of unity among ourselves each time we have met even though some participants have changed along the way.

As exchange participants we have had to learn to accept one another, just as Christ accepted us. We have experienced, and I hope shown, great generosity of hospitality. People, who were strangers have accepted us into their homes, their churches and their lives. I have been blessed by this and I know others have been too.

This 3 country, 4 church exchange has happened, I believe, in order to bring praise to God. Each one of us has had a unique opportunity to grow in our faith, in our discipleship and in our witness, to bring praise to the God who has given us endurance, encouragement and unity through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.

I believe, as a participant in this final stage of the exchange that all of our churches, locally, regionally and nationally can benefit from our experiences. I encourage all churches locally, regionally and nationally to reflect on whether God is calling them to enter into an exchange relationship with a partner church in another country. I know this may not be a smooth journey but I also know that God will provide fully and that all involved can benefit personally and can bring praise to God in the process.

These are my reflections at the end of a three year experience but as one person commented we are only at the end of the

beginning there is more to come in this relationship that we may or may not see. At a time when many churches and circuits are focusing on reshaping perhaps I can encourage you to consider including an overseas church in your reshaping agenda. Having mentioned reshaping don't forget to include the views of children and young people in this process, if you need help with this just ask :)

*Nicola Briggs*

## Sleepover Event for 9-13s

### *Express Yourself*

The District is holding a 24 hour sleepover event for anyone aged 9-13 in our churches. It starts at 6.30pm on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> September through to 6.30pm on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> October and will be held at St James Road Methodist Church in Southampton.

"Express Yourself" will cost only £12 for 9-13s and £10 for leaders which includes all food throughout the event. We have a great team who are putting the event together and it will include Games, Workshops, Activities, Craft, Worship and hopefully lots of fun and laughter.

For more information or to book places contact Christy-Anna Errington on 01305 826012, [christy-anna@hotmail.com](mailto:christy-anna@hotmail.com) or Nicola Briggs on 01305 826055, 07858 192996 or [briggs@gotadsl.co.uk](mailto:briggs@gotadsl.co.uk).

## **SPECIAL OFFER**

The Southampton District will pay for one young person from each circuit to attend this year's Youth Assembly!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

PTO for more information.

## **Social Media Guidelines**

Do you have questions about whether you should text your young people? Are you unsure whether you should have your youth group as 'friends' on Facebook? The children and youth team of the Methodist Church have put together some guidelines for using social media which will hopefully answer questions you may have.

There are versions for those who work with children and young, for children aged 5-10 years, young people aged 11-18 and for parents. These are all downloadable from:

[http://www.childrenandyouth.org.uk/worker/best-practice/new-social-media-guidelines/?dm\\_i=BVI,HUBS,4004KO,1G9GZ,1](http://www.childrenandyouth.org.uk/worker/best-practice/new-social-media-guidelines/?dm_i=BVI,HUBS,4004KO,1G9GZ,1)

## ***Exciting New Changes to Youth Assembly***

In response to feedback from young people this year's youth assembly is expanding. There will be three events instead of one:

- 1) A 9-13s assembly (school years 5-9)
- 2) A youth assembly (school years 10-13)
- 3) An over-18s event (for those 18-23)

Each of these events will be happening at the Pioneer Centre in Cleobury Mortimer in the Wolverhampton & Shrewsbury district, from 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> of November.

The children's event will bring a "testimony" to the Conference (which might be a film, or an art display, or a drama or something else). We are doing this in collaboration with Action for Children.

The youth assembly will operate similarly to the past, bringing a report to the Conference, and electing representatives to represent young people at the Conference.

The over-18s event will become a place for adults who are under 23 to think about issues and explore options for lobbying/activism/engagement in an adult forum. We are excited at the idea that this event will help to reinvigorate the existing structures. We are doing this in collaboration with Venture FX.

Changes were made at Conference 2011 to Standing Order 250 to make all of this possible. Any young person associated with the Methodist Church aged from 9 – 23 can book to attend Assembly through an on-line booking system at:  
[www.methodistyouthassembly.org.uk](http://www.methodistyouthassembly.org.uk)

## **News from:**



The best training a Messy Church leader or team member can have is the chance to share ideas and inspiration with other Messy Church leaders and team members in a relaxed and happy atmosphere. **Messy Weekend** will provide just that. There'll be a programme of focused activities to help everyone as well as plenty of space for refreshment of body, mind and spirit.

This is part of BRF's commitment to support and sustain Messy Church leaders so that you can do what you do with renewed energy, vision and skill. We hope your church or denomination may find funding to help you and other members of your team to come.

**Where?** The Hayes, Swanwick, Derbyshire

**When?** 9-11 Dec 2011 (Friday evening meal to Sunday lunch inclusive)

**What?** An opportunity to be refreshed and reequipped for Messy Ministry

**How much?** £175 per person cost covers all meals, accommodation and programme

**Who?** Anyone involved in running a Messy Church, including teenagers and children (accompanied)

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Alongside the 9-13s Assembly will be a training event for any youth workers who accompany 9-13s to the event. This is called Generate+ and you can register on the same on-line booking system.

## **SPECIAL OFFER**

Before Standing Order 250 was changed each District Synod elected two representatives to attend Youth Assembly and covered their ticket and travel costs. As we all get used to the new look Assembly our District Treasurer has been very generous. From District funds he will support one person (9-23 years old) per circuit with their ticket and travel costs!!!!!! This means instead of paying for 2 people the District will support up to 23 people to attend Assembly and have their voice heard!!!!!!!

It is your job to find someone aged 9-23 in your circuit to fill the District supported place. If they don't want to attend alone perhaps your circuit or church treasurer will support a second person to attend.

*"Working together to change and challenge the church and the world."*

Visit <http://www.southamptonmethodistdistrict.org.uk/youth/newsletter> to download this newsletter as a PDF document

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