



Youth and Children's News Update

To: All Churches, Ministers, Children's and Youth Workers, Safeguarding Co-ordinators Sept 2014 Issue 20

From Nicola:

"The secret message communicated to most young people today by the society around them is that they are not needed, that the society will run itself quite nicely until they - at some distant point in the future - will take over the reins. Yet the fact is that the society is not running itself nicely... because the rest of us need all the energy, brains, imagination and talent that young people can bring to bear down on our difficulties. For society to attempt to solve its desperate problems without the full participation of even very young people is imbecile." So says Alvin Toffler an American writer and futurist reminding his listeners that young people are not the future they should be as much about the present. Their involvement NOW is paramount.

At our last Synod Sir Al Aynsley-Green challenged everyone present to think about how children and young people could more actively be a part of the life of the church and its decision making from local to national level. Each circuit was encouraged to note at the end of the day the things they were taking back to their circuit meeting and church councils – every person at synod was encouraged to participate in this exercise. Why should we encourage participation, especially of younger people?

The Methodist Church's "Voice Activated" resource has been produced to develop participation of younger people contains 10 arguments for youth participation:

1. Declining statistics of church attendance and aging membership profile.

2. Youth participation leads to better decisions and increased efficiency.

3. Youth participation strengthens community capacity.

4. Youth Participation contributes to positive youth development.

5. Participation enhances your organisation's relationship with young people.

6. Youth participation is a right.

7. Young people can bring new insight.

8. Youth participation improves the credibility and reputation of a project.

9. The Bottom Line – Participation is part of the culture today.

10. Participation is God-shaped!

Find the full document enlarging on these headline arguments at: <http://childrenandyouth.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Voice-Activated-Appendix-1.1.pdf> or email me.

The District Policy Executive met in June and one of the actions it took following Sir Al's presentation was to set up a small group to focus on participation. The group met for the first time in August and started to look at what we could offer churches and circuits in terms of support and resources for establishing or increasing youth participation as well as looking at the shape of synod.

Our District Chair, Rev Dr Andrew Wood, has said that younger people are welcome to attend all synods now and participate as they feel able. Yet we know many synod attendees struggle to participate fully in synod at different times. This September we will be presenting the main piece of business about "Larger than Circuit", a national consultation, in two styles so that people are not

forced to participate in ways they do not want to.

One member of the group noted "we are trying to change something that has been the same way for a very long time one millimetre at a time, what it needs is radical change". The same could be said of many church councils and circuit meetings. Change should not happen for change's sake but because it is helpful for the business and the participants. So there will be an opportunity at synod for every person present to complete a short survey about the future shape of synod.

Every person is included, those who are there because they have to be, those who are there because they want to be, experienced synod attendees and first timers, younger and older, all are invited to participate.

In Christ's family there can be no division into Jew and non-Jew, slave and free, male and female. Among us you are all equal. That is, we are all in a common relationship with Jesus Christ. Galatians 3:28 (The Message)

We hope that the District will find ways of modelling our belief that all are equal. Young people are not the church of tomorrow but an active part of the church of today. If you would like to chat through ideas you have for increasing the participation of children and young people in your church and circuit then please do contact me.

I will be praying that the energy, brains, imagination and talent that young people can bring to bear down on our difficulties will soon be making a difference in our Churches, Circuits and the District!

Nicola Briggs



The decision of Methodist Conference in 2007 to set up the Youth Participation Strategy (YPS) was brave and pioneering. Participation is about everyone, not just children and young people, it's the next step towards a true understanding of inclusive Church. It's part of a bigger vision– to see the *whole* Church participating more; making and moulding the Church, *together*. This new resource is an attempt to share that vision and the learning from over five years of rolling out the YPS. Download the resource from <http://childrenandyouth.org.uk/worker/resources-worker/voice-activated/voice-activated/>

Creating Safer Space for All

A One-Day Opportunity for children, youth & family workers, ministers, church/circuit safeguarding reps, parents, pastoral visitors, church members and professionals to listen, learn and discuss

Saturday 18 October 2014

Chandler's Ford Methodist Church,
Winchester Road, Chandlers Ford SO53 2GJ

10.30am – 4.00pm
(refreshments available from 10.00am)

Keynote speaker:

**Natasha Jetha - Policy Assistant
(On-line Safety) NSPCC**

Workshops (we hope to offer some or all of the following - a detailed programme will be sent nearer the date when you will be asked to choose your workshop preferences)

- Protection of Vulnerable/Elderly Adults
- Domestic Violence
- Safeguarding & Pastoral Visiting
- Positively Working Together
- Self harm
- Trafficking/Child Sex Exploitation

Charge: £5 to include a sandwich lunch.

Send your application to Marilyn Pack, 16 Petty Close,
Romsey SO51 5UY by 30 September 2014.

The Methodist Children & Youth resource Voice Activated focused largely 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.

This complementary resource moves us on a step further and explores ways in which the voice of children and young people can be heard beyond the Church in the wider world.

Once opinions have been gathered and the issues discussed, how do you help the groups and individuals you work with to influence change and make a real difference – on both a local, national and international scale, within the Church and in society?

How can we help children and young people channel their passions and interests in a way that will impact positively on their communities and help them to further their discipleship?

Voice Activated: Making Change Happen offers broad-ranging and comprehensive information and advice and will hopefully prove a useful tool for youth leaders and children's workers – as well as for children and young people themselves.

Download it at <http://childrenandyouth.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/VA-Making-Change-Happen-Whole-Document.pdf>

Do you know the next Methodist Youth President?

We are still recruiting for candidates to stand at this year's 3Generate for election to the post of Methodist Youth President 2015/16. If you know anyone who will be aged 18 – 23 on the 1st September 2015 and who would be interested in putting themselves forward, please direct them towards the relevant page on the [Children and Youth website for more information](#).

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

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