



transforming church
for all ages

Resource Process and Overview

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Introduction

The *Today...not tomorrow* initiative is designed to help you, as a whole church, think through your current ministry amongst children and young people, recognising the part God has for them to play within the church right now and to seek God as to where your church as a whole develops intergenerationally.

Steering group set up

The creation of a steering group is a key element to a church engaging with the *Today...not tomorrow* resource. It is the group who will collate information, follow the different parts of the process and help organise and guide the different activities.

The group is essential for two reasons:

- They will be the ones ensuring the different elements of the initiative are on track and being undertaken. This will hopefully mean the work does not all fall on the minister(s), children and youth workers or volunteers to undertake.
- As a group that represents the church, thus consisting of children, youth and adults, we believe the group will be able to ensure that the initiative does not become an adult-driven activity or merely a tick box exercise.



Initially the vision of *Today...not tomorrow* needs to be shared with the church, and those that make up the steering group likewise need to be made known to the church. One of the key elements is communication - which is often lacking in church life.

Steering group meets

Suggested timeframe, 6-8 weeks prior to the Facilitation Day.

The steering group needs to meet initially to:

- finalise the timetable of the Facilitation Day, plan the teaching series and decide how to communicate everything out to the church
- confirm how the church will be informed and kept up-to-date with all that is happening regarding the resource.
- review and draw together a list of the current ministry taking place amongst children and young people in and through the church.

For more details on the setting up of your steering group and each of these three tasks see the [Steering Group Guide](#).



Facilitation day – Preparation meeting

Suggested timeframe, 1-2 weeks prior to the Facilitation Day.

Hosted by the steering group this is an opportunity to ensure everyone understands what is happening on the facilitation day.

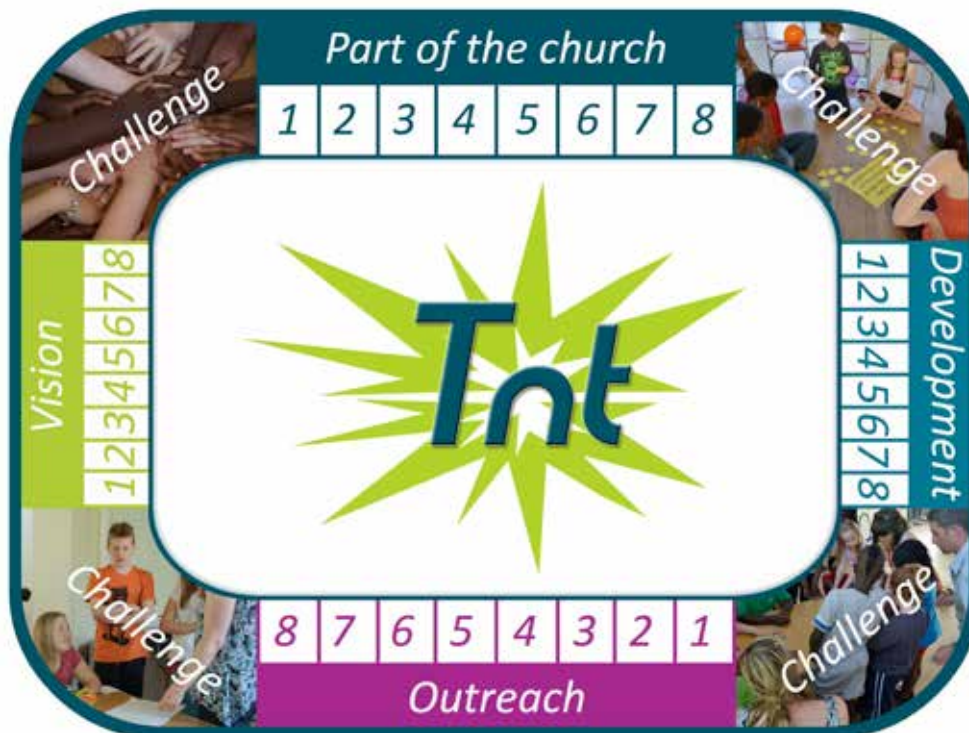
The subgroup leaders should be at this meeting. You might like to use your small group leaders, or your deacons and elders, but whoever it is, ensure that each is paired with a child or young person. Make it clear that they are leading the subgroup together and both are aware of what is to take place.

Facilitation Day

To kick start this process, the Facilitation Day has been devised to enable the whole church to look at questions and think through issues – young through old. We therefore suggest you arrange this Day to start the *Today ... not tomorrow* process, but there is nothing to say you couldn't do it following the age-specific teaching series (see Teaching/discussion series on page 4).

To run the day refer to the following documents:

- Tnt - Facilitation Day Programme including
 - Tnt - What you need
 - Tnt - Facilitation Day Programme Outline
- Tnt - Section answer sheets
- Tnt - 60 Second Challenges



Steering group meets

Suggested timeframe, ideally within 4 weeks of the Facilitation Day.

This is when the steering group meets and begins to pull together the different answers given by the groups, noting the questions on the Post-It notes (or balloons) - see [Facilitation Day Programme](#) for more details about this creative way of noting the comments of the groups. It may be that someone on the group is able to act as an administrator and begin to pull things together, type up answers etc, in preparation for this meeting.

The aim of this meeting (be aware it may take more than one get-together) is to begin to see the key questions the church is asking, or issues being highlighted. These will form the framework for the next steps and help discern how the church develops.

Ensure that the church is kept up-to-date with how the steering group is getting on; people need to stay engaged, and reporting back during Sunday gatherings, for example, is a great way of doing this.

Teaching/discussion series

Suggested timeframe, ideally within a 6 week period, beginning soon after the Facilitation Day.

There are 18 sessions that have been produced:

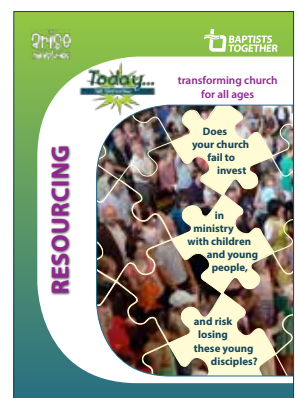
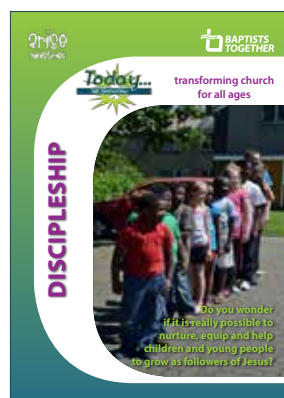
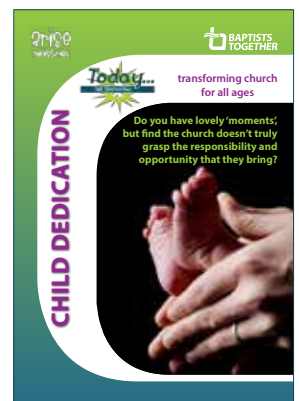
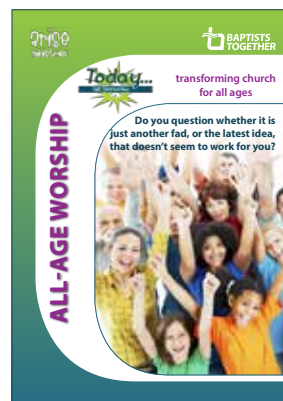
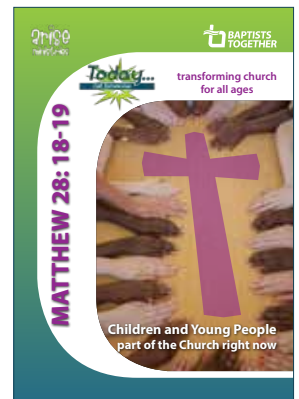
- Six specifically for children
- Six specifically for young people
- Six sermon outlines

The children's sessions and the sermon outlines use the same bible passages. The young people's sessions are designed to complement the sermon outlines that are part of this resource. As youth groups may meet during the week and may also hear the sermons, these sessions use different passages to explore the same themes in a way that is more relevant to young people.

The six themes that the sessions look at are:

- Today...not tomorrow
- All-age worship
- Child dedication
- Discipleship
- Evangelism
- Resourcing

Please note that these are not seen as the exhaustive list, but as a starting point - a number of key areas for churches to grapple with.



Steering group meets

Suggested timeframe, ideally within 4 weeks of the end of the teaching/discussion series.

This is when the steering group meets to continue to review and collate information, particularly coming out of the teaching/discussion series.

It is at this point that the steering group also needs to begin to review and prepare a draft **intergenerational charter** for the church. There is a template within the resource which may fit exactly where your church is at, or there may be things you wish to add or slightly alter. This can be downloaded from the 'templates' section of www.todaynottomorrow.org.uk

Two key elements to the charter are that:

- It is a charter for children, young people and adults.
- It is about the church we are endeavouring to be, 'Imagine a church...'



Steering group present charter to church

Suggested timeframe, ideally within 8 weeks of the end of the teaching/discussion series.

This is when the steering group can share the **intergenerational charter** with the church, not as a fait accompli, but so the church can engage with it and own it for themselves. We would not suggest this being done at a church meeting as many children and young people are not at these gatherings, but rather as part of the gathered Sunday service or at a specially arranged point.

Church formally adopts the charter

Suggested timeframe, ideally within 8 weeks of the presentation of the charter to the church.

This is when the whole church gathered together adopts the charter. Again, this should be at a time when all ages can be present and engage. The way we have envisaged the **intergenerational charter** is that it would be signed by the minister(s) or leadership of the church, and also by the whole church. Thus the two pieces of paper could be put up somewhere in the church for all to see. We would also suggest it is re-visited and re-signed and owned on an annual basis, so it doesn't become forgotten and ultimately worthless.



Review

Suggested timeframe, ideally 6, 12 and 18 months after the adoption of the charter.

Prior to the adoption of the charter it is important that, as a steering group and as a church, a review process is set up. For the steering group, this will involve considering its response to the initiative and any specific questions or issues that need to be dealt with straight away.

For the church, this is about coming back to the [charter](#) and asking how you are doing. The danger with such charters is that they simply become a certificate upon the wall and nothing else. This has to be about an on-going discovery of what it means to be the church of Jesus Christ - children, young people and adults together. This could also be the point that you get in touch through the *Today... not tomorrow* website www.todaynottomorrow.org.uk to let us know how you are getting on and feed back your thoughts as to how we can take the initiative forward.

Next steps...

The *Today...not tomorrow* resource is not intended to be the end of the journey. As each church engages with it uniquely where they find themselves, the next steps will look different for them - as they will for other local churches. Furthermore the opportunity, the responsibility and challenges lay ahead of us if we're serious about transforming the church for all ages. One way to think through what this means in your situation, and the church you are a part of, is to get in touch with Arise Ministries (www.ariseministries.org.uk) whom you could invite to offer specific consultation.

Process Summary Timeline

Week 1	Steering group meets
Week 6-7	Facilitation Day preparation meeting
Week 8	Facilitation Day
Week 9 -15	Teaching/discussion series
By Week 12	Steering group meets
Week 19	Steering group meets
Week 23	Steering group presents Intergenerational Charter to church
By Week 32	Church formally adopts Charter
6 months later	Review of Charter
12 months later	Review of Charter
18 months later	Review of Charter

