

Children, Young People and Families



**Joining the dots between
church, home and school**

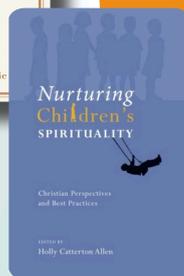
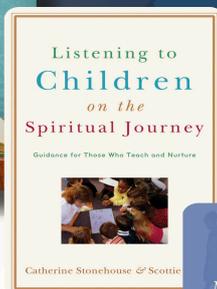
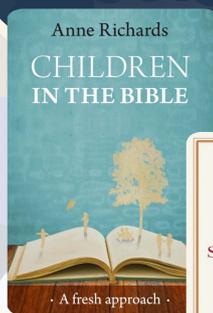
CYF
Toolkit

CYF Toolkit... some questions to help you start and keep you growing

We passionately believe that children's spirituality (as with adults) starts with God – it is not something that has to be initiated by parents, teachers or church leaders. Children are not empty vessels, waiting for stuff and teachings to be poured in there.

Historically, it was believed that things should be done TO children – that chronologically they needed certain things to be done to them to learn faith. Then theorists moved to advocating doing things FOR children according to their developmental stage because they couldn't do it for themselves.

However, if we are to be relevant within the Postmodern era, we need to move towards doing things WITH children. We should think of childhood as a characteristic of life; we should be doing things with children, creating a relational model of equals—a model in which all of us have something to offer each other.



Resources/further reading

Children in the Bible; A Fresh Approach by Anne Richards

Listening to Children on the Spiritual Journey by Catherine Stonehouse & Scottie May

Church's Contemporary Challenge by John H. Westerhoff III in **Nurturing Children's Spirituality**, edited by Holly Catterton Allen

How am I/where is my church at here?

What is going well?

What is not so good?

What things might I/we need to do differently?

Things to do more of/start?

Things to do less of/stop?

Questions to take away and answer later/with others:

What pictures or metaphors would you use to describe the treatment/role of children in your church community? How does it correlate with Jesus' ministry?

Is it appropriate for children, adults and the elderly all to be equal members of a Baptist Church?

Do the adults in your church see themselves as learners and worshippers alongside the children and young people (co-pilgrims)? Or how could this be encouraged?

CYF and Church...

As we look to re-contextualise our theology in our mission to, and ministry with children, young people and their families, there is a chance to deliberately partner with Jesus in:

Culture – establishing a culture that is conducive to discipling children, young people and adults within families and as individuals.

Consideration – proactively planning and thinking through the practical matters of church, considering the experience of CYF attenders, and what messages are being communicated.

Costs – if developing our mission to and ministry with CYF is vital and precious, it'll have to be reflected in our church diary and finances as we look to invest in people, prayer and pounds.

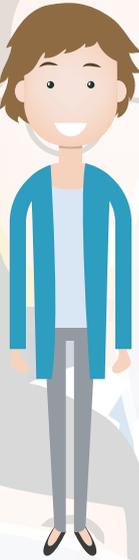
Resources/further reading

Urban Saints – material for Children's and youth groups: <https://www.energize.uk.net/>

Scripture Union – material for Children's, youth groups and intergenerational services: <https://www.scriptureunion.org.uk>

Messy Church - <https://www.messychurch.org.uk/>





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Questions to take away and answer later/with others:

What/How does your church communicate – accidentally or intentionally – to children, young people and families on the periphery of the church?

Where in church life do you or could you engage in discipling whole families at once?

How can children, young people and whole families join in with the most precious bits of church life?

CYF and Families/homes

The greatest place of influence in a child's life is their family life, the place that they call home. And yet, the church rarely invests in supporting families in their home context. Encouraging and enabling families to be more confident in talking about faith, 'doing' faith in the home, worshipping together as part of a norm, living normal life through a spiritual lens is vitally important.

According to Care for the Family only 50% of children growing up in a Christian home will keep their faith as adults. Explore creative ways of supporting families to grow in discipleship together. Create spaces for families to spend quality time together. Find ways of taking pressure off already busy families. Ensure church is prayerfully supporting families of all shapes, sizes and configurations in non-judgemental, real and loving ways.



Resources/further reading

www.careforthefamily.org.uk

<https://kitchentable.org.uk/>

www.brf.org.uk/childrens-and-family-ministry

Stories of God at Home: A Godly Play Approach by Jerome W. Berryman

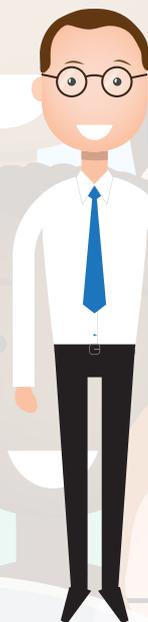
All Together: The Family Devotional by Steve and Bekah Legg



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Questions to take away and answer later/with others:

How does your church view and prioritise family?

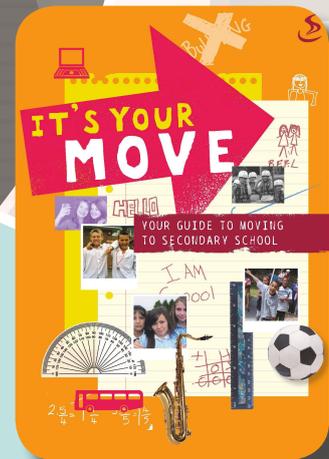
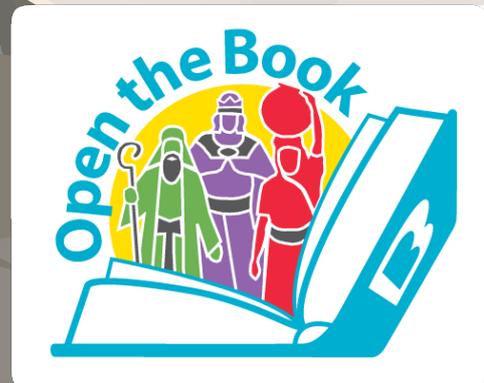
How do you encourage and support the families who are linked to your church?

How are you investing in families investing in their own family?

CYF and Schools

With 95% of young people not engaging with church it's more vital than ever that schools work makes it onto the churches' agenda. If possible use contacts that you may already have eg a teacher in your congregation. Ask the school what the church could do to serve them at this time; what are the needs? If you've got a Christian Schools Work Trust in your area then work with them.

Some of the opportunities in schools are more easily met if the churches worked together. So whether it's serving tea and cake to the staff, doing wonderful Open the Book assemblies, creating Prayer Spaces in schools, helping students with the transition from primary to secondary, opening your church up for pupils to have an Easter Experience or serving as a school governor there really are numerous opportunities for churches to love and serve their local schools.



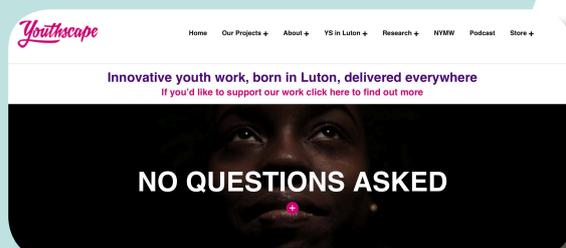
Resources/further reading

www.biblesociety.org.uk/get-involved/open-the-book/

www.prayerspacesinschools.com

<http://www.scriptureunion.org.uk/ItsYourMove/112817.id>

www.youthscape.co.uk





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Questions to take away and answer later/with others:

I wonder what excites you the most out of those opportunities?

I wonder what you think is the most important?

I wonder what might be a good next step for you or for your church

CYF Tool kit and check list

Areas – Does your church...	Yes	No	Thought
Context			
Have an appropriately robust Safeguarding policy?			
Have a designated leader/ rep for CYF?			
Values Children and young people; their contribution and participation?			
Think of children and young people as full, real members of the church?			
Little ones			
Offer a feeding area + suitable baby change facilities?			
Have a buggy parking area?			
Offer space for parents and babies who might need to step out of a service?			
Celebrate dedications/ thanksgivings, or other ways of welcoming children and families in?			
CYF Discipling			
Provide space to explore, discover and learn the meaning of faith stories?			
Give opportunities for CYF to pray, and be prayed for?			
Ensure that all groups are well publicised and accurately advertised?			
Have any opportunities for families to contribute as whole families?			
CYF at home			
Provide material for families to follow-up church activities or themes at home together?			
Resource and support families to pray together?			
Provide a parenting course/ marriage course?			
CYF and School			
Have a school you support / reach out to as a church?			
Pray for your teachers locally or in the congregation?			

