

Child-Friendly Church



Child Friendly Church is a training programme focussing on the importance of caring for children. It enables the local church to transform practice and understanding of their congregation and communities in favour of children.

Church leaders may frequently engage in training and capacity building, but seldom have the opportunity to be assisted in making practical change. This programme provides church leaders with simple tools to help them make modest but significant changes in the way they plan for and engage children, and provides follow-up support to help these churches to continue to make change.

How does this build capacity?

Many churches the world over have some kind of children's programme, yet these can be tokenistic without truly appreciating the vital role that children play in the church (see Psalm 127-128 for reflection). Helping the church to focus more attention on children, and to involve them as equal members of the congregation will not only encourage the children, but will undoubtedly bless the entire congregation (where this has been done in a conscientious rather than tokenistic way, the results have been significant).

Churches that attend and are able to envision their congregations and communities with the responsibility to care for children, will have far greater support and capacity to implement programmes to change the situation for children in the future.

Methodology

The programme begins with a 1-day workshop for church leaders to discover together how to create a Child Friendly Church. At the end of this day, those attending should:

1. Know what the Bible says about God's heart for children in order to envision their churches and communities
2. Have shared reflections on why caring for children is a key responsibility for the Church
3. Have developed some ways to launch the Child Friendly Church initiative in their own churches

During this workshop, churches complete a self-assessment to identify how they are already supporting children well and where they need improvement according to 8 aims:

Aim 1: There is a vision for children's work

Aim 2: Workers are trained and child protection policies are agreed and implemented

Aim 3: The church building offers a safe environment

Aim 4: Nurture groups are available for children and young people

Aim 5: There are opportunities for children to engage in worship in the church

Aim 6: Suitable facilities for under 5's are available

Aim 7: Children and young people are involved as equal members of the church community

Aim 8: There are outreach opportunities

The results of the assessment inform the direction of practical changes for the churches to make. This can lead to further training in more specific areas such as Child Protection. Members of the church who did not attend the initial day workshop are encouraged to attend these sessions so that they too can catch the vision and help the church to implement change.

After a certain period, the leaders meet again to assess improvements and changes that have been made, with some visiting each other's churches to see the difference.

At the end of the programme, certificates are awarded to those churches who have genuinely become Child Friendly Churches.

Viva has developed resources for use in this programme, and additional training that may

be required. We have also included this programme in a wider package for churches called the [Child Friendly Toolkit for Churches](#) (including Child Friendly Church, Understanding God's Heart for Children, QIS for Churches and Why Families Matter).

Viva is available to provide advise, support and assistance throughout the course of the programme.

Time: 1 day workshop and follow up of approximately 6 months

Find out more?



Download the [Child Friendly Church Workshop](#) resource for churches and the [Child Friendly Church Assessment](#).

We would love to hear from you if you use the resource or have any questions about it. Please contact us on (+44) 1865 811 660 or info@viva.org

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