

Developing a Child Friendly Church



A workshop for churches

Credits

Developed from an original concept from the Anglican Diocese of Liverpool.

Version 1 2010

Developed with the CRANE network in Kampala and piloted with Churches in eastern and central Africa with CRANE in Kampala, ARC in Kenya, MCN in Tanzania. CaRNac in Uganda trained Churches in the use of the Child friendly church pack and partnered with World vision to deliver the programme to Churches nationwide.

Version 2 2017

Enhanced with input from Jane Travis, Viva.

Introduction

Welcome

The **Child Friendly Church** aims to empower local churches to transform their congregations and communities in favour of children. It is designed to be delivered through a network or a group of churches and has been adapted from the Child Friendly Church initiative developed by the Anglican Diocese of Liverpool in the UK.

The Child Friendly Church was originally adapted by Viva with the CRANE network in Kampala as a stand alone programme. Following the success of the programme with networks of projects in East Africa, the Child Friendly Church has been expanded into a **Child Friendly Toolkit for Churches**, which incorporates other training and resources for Churches developed by Viva. These are:

1. **Child Friendly Churches Assessment and workshop**
2. **Understanding God's Heart For children**
3. **Quality Improvement Steps For Churches**
4. **Why Families Matter**

The Aim of the Child Friendly Church

Church leaders may frequently engage in training and capacity building, but seldom have the opportunity to be assisted in making practical change in their churches. The Child Friendly Church strategy 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.

Purpose

- Enabling churches to become child-friendly
- Understanding biblical imperatives about care and provision for children
- Providing a safe and encouraging place for children to attend, learn and belong
- Training in church responsibilities towards children
- Recognising children's roles and potential in church gatherings and the life of the church
- Involving children and young people in the life of the church equally to the adults
- Supporting parents and carers with appropriate child care
- Evaluating church children's work and activities
- Providing nurture groups for children and their carers and leaders
- Providing safe and appropriate facilities and resources for children of all ages
- Developing effective outreach to children and families outside the church

The Child Friendly Church Workshop

To gain the most out of the Child Friendly Church Strategy we suggest that you:

1. **Bring together a group of churches** who would be interested in growing and improving their work with children (this could follow on from a Church Leaders Conference on the importance of children).
2. **Run a one day Child Friendly Church workshop** following the schedule described and including the areas described. Activities, handouts and materials for this workshop are included in this manual.
3. **During the one day workshop** ask Churches to complete the **Child Friendly Church Assessment**. Churches should tick the areas on the checklist that they already do and identify key areas where they would like to improve. This can then lead on to opportunities for **further training** in specific areas where other members of the church might attend and then work with the church to implement change. Further training would include **Understanding God's Heart Children, Quality Improvement Steps for Churches** and **Why Families Matter**.
4. After a certain period and once Churches have engaged with other training, bring the leaders together to assess what improvements and change have been made – or peers can visit each other and see for themselves if the church has become a Child Friendly Church by **repeating** the **Child Friendly Church Assessment**
5. **Award certificates:** The organisers of the programme then need to assess which churches to give certificates to. Remember that those who do get certificates REALLY DO need to BE child friendly! To be awarded a Certificate, a Church must have at least one tick in each section (and be able to prove that this is in place) AND have a Child Protection Policy.

Running a Child Friendly Church Workshop

During a one- day workshop church leaders and those leading children's work discuss and discover together how to create a Child Friendly Church with these aims:

- Know what the Bible says about God's heart for children in order to envision their churches and communities
- Share reflections on why caring for children is the particular responsibility of the church
- Assess their churches against 9 Child Friendly Church aims
- Engage in practical activities around each of those aims and develop some ways to launch the Child Friendly Church initiative in their own church community

Who should attend the Child Friendly Church Workshop?

The Child Friendly Church workshop has been designed to be run through a network. This workshop is intended for Church Pastors/Leaders and Church members who lead work with children or young people and families in the Church or in the community. Ideally, at least 2 people should attend from each Church represented. To be able to run group activities in the workshop, there needs to be a **minimum of 16 participants**. **Ideally** there should be between **24 -32 participants**.

The Child Friendly Church Workshop

Child Friendly Church Workshop Materials

The materials in this Child Friendly Church workshop pack have been developed to enable you to run a one day workshop with Churches. The aim of the workshop is to help Churches to develop a Child Friendly Church and point them towards the other programmes that Viva can offer through the network which will help them to improve their ministry with children and families. The pack contains:

- A suggested workshop schedule
- Suggested workshop exercises to help participants explore the theme of developing a Child Friendly Church
- A Child Friendly Assessment to be given to each participant
- Background information, activities, handouts and suggested next steps around each of the 9 Child Friendly church aims. These can be printed out and used to facilitate group exercises around each of the 9 aims.

Workshop Schedule

The one day workshop is divided into 5 separate sessions

An introduction to Understanding God's Heart for Children	1 hour, 5 minutes
Why are Children the responsibility of the Church ?	50 minutes
The voice of the Church for Children	45 minutes
The Child Friendly Church Assessment	20 minutes
Group work around the Child Friendly Church Aims	3 hours 30 minutes

A suggested timetable is to run the first four sessions in the morning (total 3 hours), finishing with the Child Friendly Church Assessment before lunch and carrying on into lunchtime if more time is needed to complete this. Group work around child friendly aims can be undertaken in the afternoon. For the first three sessions, group work is involved but participants can be mixed. For the Child Friendly Church Assessment and group work around the Child Friendly Church Aims, it works best if groups include people from the same Churches.

Revolving Group Activities.

There are 9 Child Friendly Church Aims, but for the purpose of the workshop, two aims have been grouped together. Eight Group activities lasting for half an hour have been prepared for the Child Friendly Church Aims, which can be set out on 8 stations containing resources, ideas, templates, diagrams as well as an activity centered on the aim. A timetable for how to run these rotating groups is found with the workshop materials for the Child Friendly Church Aims, further on in this manual.

The 9 aims of a Child Friendly Church

1. There is a vision for children's work in the church

Churches are encouraged to empathise with God's heart for children and understand why the nurture of children is the particular responsibility of the church.

2. Children's workers have been trained

Those working with children and those responsible for the welfare of children in the Church have had basic training in how to work with children, know what their roles are and how they should behave with children.

3. Child protection is in place and is being implemented

Churches are trained in child protection issues and taken through the step by step development and implementation of a practical child protection policy.

4. The church building offers a safe environment

Churches are equipped to conduct risk assessments, including health and safety, first aid, accidents and emergencies. They are then taught to develop corresponding policies.

5. Nurture groups are available for children and young people

Churches are taught the value of regular support for children through Bible teaching, peer group nurturing, prayer, and they recognise that different children have different needs.

6. There are opportunities for children to engage in worship in the church

Churches are shown the importance of making main church services child friendly, as well as allowing children to plan and lead sections of services and Sunday schools.

7. Suitable facilities for under 5s are available

Churches understand the importance of allocating specific areas to under 5s with appropriate toys, resources and equipment available, as well as supporting the parents of these children well.

8. Children and young people are involved as equal members of the church community

Churches are encouraged to see all members of the church, young or old, as equally important, and give them opportunities to express their opinions on church matters.

9. There are outreach opportunities for and with children

Churches see the value of community outreach which includes children in planning, implementation and evaluation. Churches sensitise community members and duty bearers to the needs of children in their community.

Workshop Materials

CHILD FRIENDLY CHURCH WORKSHOP MATERIALS AND HANDOUTS

Workshop Materials

The following materials are workshop materials and activities which can be used to introduce participants to the concept of a child friendly church.

As Facilitator, your role is to guide the participants through the activities so they can learn and apply the spiritual insights they gain from scripture and personal experience, and also from each other.

As Facilitator, you will need to prepare, to set the scene for the participants, and to help draw the learning into focus at the close of each session. However, you do not need to be an expert or to have the answers

It is important that everyone participating in the course is comfortable. The venue, seating, break-out spaces, wash-rooms and refreshments all need to be organized. You may wish to ask someone help you with these practical tasks so that you can concentrate on the course content and delivery. The workshop space must be big enough to accommodate 8 separate groups around stations containing materials on the Child Friendly Church Aims.

For each session, make sure you are familiar with the process, and have all you need, including any extra inputs and resources.

Most activities require basic items such as marker pens, paper, bibles etc, but check the list at the beginning of each session about what you will need. This includes checking internet or wifi connection, and making sure you have set up or uploaded the right media clips in advance. For Session 2, you will need to collect in advance local newspaper cuttings about children in your location.

Activities may occasionally require participants to work on their own, sometimes in pairs, and often in small groups and sometimes as one main group. Give instructions as needed. Activities in groups work best with about five people, unless stated otherwise. Some group activities require participants from the same church to be in the same group. This is marked on the workshop plan. You may like to suggest different groups for each session to change the dynamics and encourage all to contribute ideas.

The subjects and timing of each session is listed below

- **Introduction (15 minutes)**
- **What is Gods heart for children (55 minutes)**
- **Why are children the responsibility of the Church (50 minutes)**
- **Child friendly Church Assessment (20 minutes)**
- **Rotating Group Activities around the Child Friendly Church Aims (3 hours and 30 minutes)**

I: What is God's heart for children?



15 minutes

Aim: To welcome participants, give them an overview of the workshop and start the workshop by participants putting children at the centre

You will need: Paper and coloured pens for each participant

Introduction

Opening: Begin the workshop by an act of welcome to participants and an introduction to the day, schedule and aims of the workshop.

As Individuals (10 minutes)

1. As an introduction exercise before introducing themselves, get everyone to draw a picture of a child that they know.
2. As participants introduce themselves they should give their name and church, and the role they play as well as a couple of sentences about the child that they have drawn.

Lead in by Workshop Facilitator

In the Bible, God reveals his heart for children. The most important thing is that a Christian's attitude toward children should reflect God's own attitude and our actions should reflect his character.

Children are precious to God. Psalm 139:13-14 reminds us how God creates each child uniquely and Matthew 18:5 shows Jesus welcoming children. Our work must reflect this value for each individual child.

We also see that God acts on behalf of the vulnerable. Psalm 10 reminds us that God is the protector of the weak: 'The victim commits himself to you; you are the helper of the fatherless' (v. 14). He also calls to account those who harm the powerless. Because of his care for vulnerable children, God calls his people to protect and defend them (Isaiah 1:17, Psalm 82:3-4). Part of this means that we are to do all we can to see children receive justice for wrongs done to them (Deuteronomy 27:19). Jesus shows how seriously he takes the wrongs done to children when in Luke 17:2 he says, 'It would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around his neck than for him to cause one of these little ones to sin'.

As Christians working with children, we must be accountable for our actions with children because 'nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account' (Hebrews 4:13).

There are many things in our world today that threaten the health and wellbeing of children. When we hear stories in the media or see pictures in our newspapers of children who have been harmed in some way, we might feel bad for a while, but soon our minds move on to the next thing on our agenda. If, however, we took time to really feel what God feels for children, maybe Christians all over cities, countries, and even the whole world would join together to unite in action for the protection and salvation of children. This is the vision of Viva. We believe that by working together, projects and organisations can achieve more than they can by working alone. The basis of this belief is because of what the Bible tells us about children.

What is God's heart for children? (cont)



50 minutes

Aim: To help participants to reflect on God's Heart for children through a biblical framework

You will need: Understanding God's heart for children: DVD/ Youtube clip, Handout 1 for each participant, Flip chart paper and pens for each group, bibles in each group.

Understanding God's heart for children

All participants together (15 minutes)

1. Show Understanding Gods Heart for Children DVD or You Tube Clip which shows 7 Statements on what God Intends for Children
2. At the end of the media clip. Ask Participants to call out statements that they can recall
3. Give out Handout 1 of the 7 statements to each participant

Divide participants into **7 groups** ensuring that there are **representatives from different churches in each group**. **Each group** should be allocated **one of the 7 statements**

As a Group (25 minutes)

1. Look at the scriptures associated with your statement and share them as a group. Does anything surprise you or stand out for you?
2. Read the main statement again and the text associated with it. What are your feelings about this statement?
3. Read God Intends associated with your statement. What do you think is the responsibility of the Church in achieving what God intends?
4. As a group, draw a picture to symbolize your statement
5. Add on to your drawing the responsibility of the Church for ensuring this happens.

All participants together (5 minutes)

1. At the end of the activity, each group should share their drawings with other groups.

Handout 1: What is God's heart for children

1. God creates every unique person as a child with dignity.

We all begin life as children, created in the image of God. Children are born fully human, with identity and purpose. The journey of childhood is part of God's plan. All people reflect God's image through living in loving community with him and one another. Children most fully express their God-given dignity in glorifying Him.

God intends that no one prevent a child's life from fulfilling His purpose. Respecting the image of God in every child demands a Christ-like response to nurture them throughout childhood.

Some biblical references:

Gen. 1:26-31; 2:18-25 (creation); Ex. 22; Ps. 8; Ps. 139; Ecc. 11:9; Jer. 29; Mt. 18:1-10 ("millstone," welcoming children); Mt. 21:15-16; Jas. 1:27

2. Children need parental love in a broken world.

God's design is for each child to be born, vulnerable and dependent, to loving parents within the covenant of marriage. God's desire is for each child to grow in this secure, caring environment. In a fallen world, people and relationships can be damaged. When parents struggle to fulfil their intended role, others must provide dedicated care for them and their children.

God intends for all children to be raised by at least one loving, committed adult

Some biblical references:

Ps. 68:5 (Father to the fatherless); Ps. 127:4; Prov. 17:6; 22:6; Hos. 11:1-8 (Ephraim); Zeph. 3:14; Mt. 1; Luke 2 (Nativity story); Eph. 6:1-4; Col. 3:20

3. God gives children as a gift to welcome and nurture.

It is a privilege to join with children in celebrating their uniqueness, embracing childhood as formative for the whole person. Family, friends, church and the local community are responsible for creating an environment that promotes children's well-being.

God intends for children to thrive in stable and loving relationships

Some biblical references:

Gen. 21:17-20; 30:17-20; 1 Sam. 2; Ps. 127-128; Prov. 22:6; Hos. 11:1-4; Zech. 6:1-9; Mt. 18:1-14; Luke 1:47-56, 67-79; 2:52; Eph. 4:32; 5:1,2; 1 Thes. 2:7-12; 1 Tim. 4:12;

4. Society has a God-given responsibility for the well-being of children and families.

All children and families live in society and are dependent on institutions for healthcare, shelter, access to social services, safe drinking water, information and safety. The church must collaborate with these institutions for the common good, and if they fail, the church must speak and act with and on behalf of the vulnerable.

God intends children to flourish in a just society

Some biblical references:

Dt. 6; 10:18; 1 Sam. 8:1-22; Ps. 89:14; Prov. 28:5; Is. 10:1-3 (curse for unjust); Is. 28:17; 58; Lam. 2:19; Amos; Mic. 6:8; Mt. 5-7; Mt. 25 (goats and sheep); Rom. 13:1-7; Jas. 1:27

Handout 1: What is God's heart for children

5. Children are a promise of hope for every generation.

Each generation has a unique contribution in God's purposes for human history. Children have been shaped by the history of their community, are living fully in the present moment, and will reshape their community for the future.

God intends that each generation will extend faith and fullness of life to the next. God intends that this generation grasp the centrality of children to his purposes for our time

Some biblical references:

Gen. 15:5; 16:10 (Isaac, Ishmael); Gen. 25:19-24 (Jacob and Esau); Gen. 48:15-49:28 (Jacob's blessings and curses); Dt. 11:18-21 (teaching children); 2 Kgs. 22:1-2 (Josiah); Est. 4:14; Ps. 2:8; Ps. 90:1 ("shelter to every generation"); Ps. 127:3; Mt. 1 (genealogies); Mt. 9:15-17; Luke 5:38 ("new wine"); Heb. 13:7 ("Alpha and Omega")

6. God welcomes children fully into the family of faith.

Children are essential to the life and ministry of the church, bringing spiritual gifts and abilities and fulfilling definite roles. The church needs to be a place where children may dynamically connect with God and engage in meaningful participation; disciplined, equipped and empowered for life and ministry. As members of the family of God, children are to be cared for as sons and daughters and are part of the admonition to love and serve one another.

God intends for churches to provide children with opportunities to know him and fulfil their calling in the body of Christ

Some biblical references:

2 Kgs. 22:1-2 (Josiah); Ps. 8:2; Matt. 5:1-19 ("Bless them that persecute you"; Beatitudes); Matt. 18:1-5; Mark 9:33-37; Luke 9:46-48; Matt. 19:13-15; Mark 10:13-16; Luke 18:15-17; Matt. 21:12-16; Luke 2:41-50 (Jesus in temple); Rom. 12:4-16 (one another, body of Christ); Rom. 15:7 (welcome one another)

7. Children are essential to the mission of God.

God desires every child in every generation across the world to know Him and make Him known. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus calls the whole Church to reconcile relationships: with God, with family, with community and with society.

God intends that His Church be a witness in every community of His transforming power, so that His purpose for every child can be accomplished

Some biblical references:

Gen. 12:2-4 (Abrahamic Covenant); Is. 6:8 ("Whom shall I send?"); Is. 61:1-4; Mt. 22:37-39; Lk. 10:25-37 (Great commandment); Mt. 28:19-20; Mk. 16:15-18, 20; Lk. 4:16-20; Jn. 20:21 (Great Commission passages); Jn. 3:16; Rom. 12:4-5 ("We are one body."); 2 Cor. 5: ("ministry of reconciliation"); Rev. (whole creation waits in anticipation)

2: Why are children the responsibility of the Church?



50 minutes

Aim: To enable participants to reflect on how they can be valuing and empowering children within the church community.

You will need: DVD or You tube clips, flip chart paper and pens for each group,

Empowering children in the Church

All participants together (10 minutes)

1. Show one of the following You Tube Clips or DVD that best fits your audience
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8nA0ORLFjLw> Empowering the next generation
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cKRbC1p_2JM The Great Omission
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=luC32SHbmFo> Children as agents of transformation
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HaIMoWS2UQE> The Church's Hindrances in Equipping Children explained by Rick and Becky Olmstead
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MzxviWtpC0Y> What Place Do Children Have In Your Ministry? explained by David Ramirez

In Pairs discuss (10 minutes)

1. What are some of your memories of church as a child?
2. What made you want to go to Church and what made you want to stay away?
3. If you did not attend Church as a child, what do you think would have attracted you?

In groups discuss (15 minutes)

1. In your experience, how are children Omitted/ Excluded in the Church?
2. Why do you think children are excluded in the Church
3. What can you do to overcome the exclusion of children in the church

As a whole group (15 minutes)

Get groups to present back to whole group and summarise.

1. Draw out what attracts children to church and some practical ways to ensure children are included in the life of the church. Why is caring for children is the particular responsibility of the church? (Luke 2:52; Genesis 21:17)

2: Why are children the responsibility of the Church? (cont)



45 minutes

Aim: To enable participants to reflect on the situation of children in their location and what the response of the church should be.

You will need: Enough cuttings from local newspapers about children for each participant, post it notes or pieces of paper for each participant, flipchart and pens.

The voice of the Church for children

Preparation.

Before the workshop, you need to collect cuttings from local newspapers/magazines with stories about children in your location. There needs to be enough cuttings for each participant to have one. Spread the newspaper cuttings out on a table and give participants a few minutes to choose the one which speaks to them OR hand out one newspaper cutting to each participant.

As individuals (15 minutes)

1. Pick a newspaper story about a child in your community that really speaks to you,
2. Ask God to reveal to you what he wants to say about this. Take time to listen to God and reflect on this.
3. Is there anything that the Church can do?

Share in pairs (10 minutes)

1. What moved you or stood out for you in this story?
2. What did you sense that God was saying about the situation of children in this news story
3. Do you feel that the Church can be involved in some way
4. Each person should write on a piece of paper/post it note the core issue facing children that the news story revealed

All participants together (20 minutes)

1. Invite participants to stick pieces of paper with key issues facing children, on a wall or place on the floor.
2. Get participants to look at the pieces of paper and then begin to group them where the same or similar issue is repeated and then use headings for each group
3. Ask participants, "Do the issues named represent the issues facing children in our communities and are there other issues that we should add to this list?"
4. If there are other issues, write them on a piece of paper and add to the other headings.
5. Get participants to think through the root causes of each of the headings
6. Is there anything that Churches could do to address some of these root causes? (write down ideas)
7. Is there anything that Churches could do together to address some of these root causes? (write up ideas on a flip chart)

Why are children the responsibility of the Church? (cont)

Summary by Workshop Facilitator

The Church needs to recognise the importance of children's presence at the heart of the Christian community, as Jesus did when he placed a child in the midst of his disciples (Matthew 18: 1-5). Speaking out for children almost always it involves prayer, education, research, training, encouraging, networking and other means of highlighting and addressing issues.

Amidst various kinds of child abuse, the following practices tell a story that grieves the Father heart of God:

- Needs, neglect: lack of services, healthcare, education, sanitation
- Mistreatment: bribery, threats, abuse
- Child pornography, child prostitution
- Black market abduction and adoption
- Discrimination and failure of the legal system
- Cultural practices which may be harmful or not supportive of children
- Preference for the boy child

Proverbs 31:8-9 reminds us to "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy."

Lamentations 2:19 says "...Lift up your hands to him for the lives of your children who faint from hunger at the head of every street."

Deuteronomy 10:17-18 says "...He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow..."

There are ways in which the church can get involved in addressing the needs of children and families in local communities. Through the network, Viva runs a number of programmes to equip Churches to respond to these needs.

- **Quality Improvement Steps for Churches** helps Church projects to reach good quality standards in work with children
- **The Celebrating Children Course** is a practical course to equip those working directly with children to know about holistic child development and good practice
- **Why Families Matter** is a study guide which can be run through churches to help them to think how to respond to children and families in their local communities.

As well as adults speaking on behalf of children, children in the Church can become advocates for other children in their communities, showing God's love and concern for their peers. Viva runs a number of programmes through the networks which enable children to do this:

- **Good Treatment Campaign**
- **Child Ambassadors**
- **Child Leadership**
- **Super camp**

You Tube Clips of some of these programmes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uxN--fXbxM> **Child Ambassadors**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cm7Ux6xZS9o> **Super camp**

Child Friendly Church Assessment



20 minutes

Aim: To enable participants to assess how child friendly their church is

You will need: Child Friendly Church Survey to be handed out to groups of indivs from the same church

Child Friendly Church Assessment

All participants together

Lead in

The next activity is to undertake an assessment to enable you to celebrate your existing achievements in making your church 'child friendly' and to identify those areas where further developments can take place. Please don't be put off by the length of the questionnaire – it will not be necessary to answer 'yes' to every one of the questions; you need to work out with your church leaders, children's workers and children which are the most urgent, which can be left as projects for future work, and which are not applicable in your situation. The important thing is to have the enthusiasm for making your children's work as good as it can be

Viva offers a number of training programmes and resources, which can help you in your work with children and families including

1. **Understanding God's Heart For children**
2. **Quality Improvement Steps For Churches**
3. **Why Families Matter**

The Child friendly Church Survey will point you to the programmes which you may benefit from.

As groups of individuals from the same Church (45 minutes)

1. Hand out the Child Friendly Church Assessment to each of the group and ask them to fill it in as honestly as possible

Child Friendly Church Assessment

Your name & role in the church:	
Name and location of the church:	
Church lead pastor/minister:	
Names & roles of other church leadership team:	
Head of children's ministry:	

The fact that you have received this assessment tool shows that your church recognises the importance of children's presence at the heart of the Christian community, as Jesus did when he placed a child in the midst of his disciples (Matthew 18: 1-5).

Self-Assessment

This self-assessment checklist will enable you to celebrate your existing achievements in making your church 'child friendly' and to identify those areas where further developments can take place. Please don't be put off by the length of the questionnaire – it will not be necessary to answer 'yes' to every one of the questions; you need to work out with your church leaders, children's workers and children which are the most urgent, which can be left as projects for future work, and which are not applicable in your situation.

The important thing is to have the enthusiasm for making your children's work as good as it can be as you seek to build up the Body of Christ.

Mentored Assessment

We recommend that you seek the help of **an external mentor to review your responses** to this assessment tool and **to assist you in planning developments**. Your local Viva partner network will be able to help with this.

Church Partner Learning Forums

An additional source of valuable support arises when two or more churches form a small group to share good ideas on developing child friendly churches. This has to be done in a spirit of openness and willingness to learn! Seek church leaders from different denominations or groups in order to share a breadth of ideas.

Links with Viva training

Viva offers churches three other training resources that complements the Child Friendly Church Assessment

1. **Understanding God's Heart For Children**
2. **Quality Improvement Steps For Churches**
3. **Why Families Matter**

Child Friendly Church Assessment

Aim 1: There is a vision for children's work	No	Unsure	Yes	Possible evidence	My next steps
There a common vision for children's work in the church	0	1	2	Vision Statement for Children's Ministry	
Children's work is regularly on church leadership agendas	0	1	2	Minutes of meetings	
Church pastors & leaders regularly attend children's groups to observe and participate	0	1	2	Weekly diary and church records	
We are aware of the issues confronting children and their needs	0	1	2	Research, newspaper cuttings, reports	
We view children as people, who have spiritual needs, and who have a role to play in our church	0	1	2	Interviews	
We involve children fully in church life and communicate with their parents	0	1	2	Feedback from children & parents	
We promote the importance of children living in safe, loving families	0	1	2	Sermon's home group studies	
We have shared the teaching of Understanding God's Heart For Children (UGHFC) with church members	0	1	2	Viva partner network training on UGHFC	
We recognise the following as a basis of our biblical beliefs: (tick) 1. God creates every unique person as a child with dignity. 2. Children need parental love in a broken world. 3. God gives children as a gift to welcome and nurture. 4. Society has a God-given responsibility for the well-being of children and families. 5. Children are a promise of hope for every generation. 6. God welcomes children fully into the family of faith. 7. Children are essential to the mission of God.	0	1	2	Church vision statement and church practice	
TOTAL (maximum score: 18)					Consider joining an UGHFC course run by a Viva partner network

Child Friendly Church Assessment

Aim 2: Those working with children have been trained	No	Unsure	Yes	Possible evidence	My next steps
We recognise that we have a responsibility towards children that comes both from the Bible and from our common humanity.	0	1	2	Interviews	
Young People and Children's workers have specific roles & responsibilities including Sunday School Teachers, Youth Leaders, group leaders, helpers etc, according to their gifts, experience and passion for children.	0	1	2	Children's ministry structure & strategy documents	
All those who work with children on behalf of the church have been cleared with references and police reports where possible	0	1	2	References and police reports	
Children's workers maintain and submit weekly records of attendance, activities, any reported injury or CP issue, special needs care and use of resources	0	1	2	Church records & data collection	
All staff and people working with children have been issued with the church's good practice guidelines in working with children	0	1	2	Good practice guidelines for working with children.	
All activities in the church with children are properly supervised and approved by the church leadership	0	1	2	Interviews	
All those leading children's work have a basic understanding of holistic child development or working with young people	0	1	2	Training Reports	
We have agreed guidance on behaviour management and motivation of children including the following: (tick) Use of praise & reward 2. Establishment of boundaries 3. Solving difficulties positively 4. Giving tangible reward & recognition 5. Use of 'time-out' & other controls 6. Use of play & drama for learning 7. Age appropriate teaching & learning 8. Development of child worship 9. Development of spiritual awareness 10. Encouragement to pray 11. Child appropriate evangelism Peer evangelism	0	1	2	Written guidelines	
TOTAL (maximum score: 16)					Consider joining a <i>Celebrating Children Course</i> run through a Viva partner network

Child Friendly Church Assessment

Aim 3: Child protection is in place and is being implemented	No	Un-sure	Yes	Possible evidence	My next steps
We have some basic written rules and guidelines to protect children from harm within the church and activities connected with the church (often called a Child Protection Policy)	0	1	2	Written child protection policy approved by church leaders	
We have a person in charge of making sure the Child Protection Policy is working	0	1	2	Church members responsible for child protection	
We display information about keeping children safe in a prominent place in the church	0	1	2	Poster or other information on display	
We make sure that all adults in the church know what sort of behaviour is acceptable towards children	0	1	2	Written code of conduct	
We train all adults who are working with children in good ways to behave with children and how to keep them safe, how to recognise signs of abuse and who to tell if they are concerned	0	1	2	Code of conduct Guidelines on acceptable ways to discipline children Written procedures	
All volunteers and staff have been trained in child protection and have access to the church's child protection policy	0	1	2	Training registration lists and notes.	
We talk with children about their right to be safe from abuse and where to go for help	0	1	2	Training with children, Posters in church	
We record, act on and monitor any incident, allegation or complain about harm to children connected with the church	0	1	2	Forms	
Families of children in the church and other families in the community are strengthened and supported in protecting and raising children.	0	1	2	Child protection training with families	
TOTAL (maximum score: 18)					Consider Viva partner network training <i>Quality Improvement Steps for Churches</i> , and/or network <i>Child Protection Training</i>

Child Friendly Church Assessment

Aim 4: The church building offers a safe environment	No	Unsure	Yes	Possible evidence	My next steps
The church has a health and safety policy and works to it	0	1	2	Health and safety policy	
Risk assessments are submitted by all group leaders and checked by the Health & Safety leader	0	1	2	Risk assessments	
Trained first aiders are available at all meetings and their names and first aid kits are prominently displayed	0	1	2	First aid kits, named (trained) first aiders and first aid records	
Group leaders keep a record of children's special needs and advise their team on best practice to appropriately care for these children	0	1	2	Records of special needs and allergies. Discreet displays of children needing special care	
Group meeting areas are warm, clean & comfortable with adequate space for learning	0	1	2	Tour of facilities	
The church premises are accessible for those with physical difficulties	0	1	2	Accessibility standards & equipment	
The church has a disaster response plan and/or evacuation plan and adults and children know what to do	0	1	2	Record of drills	
The church has a way to put out fire on site that can be easily accessed in case of a fire break out	0	1	2	Location of fire equipment	
People who have been trained in fire safety are available for all events	0	1	2	List of fire officers	
Details of emergency contacts are displayed where all people can see them	0	1	2	Location of notices	
TOTAL (maximum score: 20)					Consider joining <i>Quality Improvement Steps for Churches</i> run through the network

Child Friendly Church Assessment

Aim 5: Nurture groups are available for children and young people	No	Unsure	Yes	Possible evidence	My next steps
The church provides age appropriate Sunday or mid week groups for young people and children	0	1	2	Church programme	
Leaders prepare carefully for their sessions	0	1	2	Interviews	
There are opportunities for children to seek God through the scriptures, the teaching of the church and their personal experiences	0	1	2	Interviews	
There is regular prayer with and for children and young people	0	1	2	Interviews	
The church allocates a realistic amount of resources to children's work	0	1	2	Annual budgets or accounts	
The church support families in discipling their children and raising them in a loving environment	0	1	2	Positive parenting classes/seminars	
The church supports children with special needs and their families	0	1	2	Tour of facilities; report of interventions	
We develop Child Ambassadors/Leaders through a discipleship and training programme of young people	0	1	2	Church programme and evaluations	
Our Child Ambassadors/Leaders are confident and effective advocates for children's needs with peers and adults in church and the community	0	1	2	Records of engagement of young people in advocacy for children and their needs	
TOTAL (maximum score :18)					Consider enrolling children on a <i>Child Leadership or Ambassador programme</i> run through the network

Child Friendly Church Assessment

Aim 6: There are opportunities for children to engage in worship in the church	No	Unsure	Yes	Possible evidence	My next steps
Some services are designed to be for all ages	0	1	2	Service records	
Services are planned in a way that children are appropriately engaged in spiritual development	0	1	2	Interviews	
Children pray meaningfully with peers and adults. Adults pray with children	0	1	2	Observation of weekly practice	
Children's leaders and children are involved in planning and leading child friendly services	0	1	2	Interviews	
Children's contributions in adult meetings are valued by the congregation	0	1	2	Interviews with children & adults	
Language is adapted so that everyone can understand. Use of pictures & signs support communication for those with learning or physical difficulties	0	1	2	Church special needs policy and guidance. Observation of use of language in meetings. Interview children	
The length and balance of meetings maintains engagement and involvement of children	0	1	2	Interviews with parents and child workers	
Church pastors & leaders value children's contributions in adult meetings and make provision for reports & demonstrations from children's groups as well as prayer for the children	0	1	2	Church diary and records. Observation of weekly practice	
TOTAL (maximum score:16)					Consider holding Viva World Wide Weekend of prayer for children in your Church

Child Friendly Church Assessment

Aim 7: Suitable facilities for under 5s are available	No	Unsure	Yes	Possible evidence	My next steps
A special area is allocated for parents/carers to care for babies and very young children	0	1	2	Tour of facilities	
This area is secure, safe and clean	0	1	2	Tour of facilities	
Young children have access to engaging activities or appropriate toys and books	0	1	2	Tour of facilities	
There is a system for welcoming families	0	1	2	Welcome pack	
Positive Parenting support is offered	0	1	2	Church programme	
Trained Under 5s staff lead activities to promote learning, understanding and engagement of young children and provide appropriate leadership in child care	0	1	2	Church training of children's workers for U5s	
A special area is allocated for parents/carers to care for babies and very young children	0	1	2	Tour of facilities	
This area is secure, safe and clean	0	1	2	Tour of facilities	
Young children have access to engaging activities or appropriate toys and books	0	1	2	Tour of facilities	
TOTAL (maximum score 18)					Consider running <i>Why Families Matter</i> in your church

Child Friendly Church Assessment

Aim 8: Children and young people are involved as equal members of the church community	No	Unsure	Yes	Possible evidence	My next steps
Children and young people are involved in the planning of worship and their group activities	0	1	2	Interviews	
Children and young people are listened to and consulted on church matters	0	1	2	Interviews	
We include children in our attendance figures	0	1	2	Attendance lists	
We have a generous budget for children's ministry	0	1	2	Church budget review	
Children are involved in the prayer life and outreach of the church	0	1	2	Church diary and records of activities	
One male and one female child advocate have been appointed by the church to be available to children. Their photos, names and numbers are displayed where children can see	0	1	2	Interviews and observation	
Our Child Ambassadors/Leaders are recognised for their leadership	0	1	2	Child Ambassadors/ Leaders programmes and reports	
Our Child Ambassadors/Leaders are confident and effective advocates for children's needs with peers and adults in church and the community	0	1	2	Records of engagement of young people in advocacy for children and their needs	
TOTAL (max score: 16)					Consider enrolling children on a <i>Child Leadership Ambassador</i> programme run through the network

Child Friendly Church Assessment

Aim 9: There are outreach opportunities	No	Unsure	Yes	Possible evidence	My next steps
The Church is working with children and families in the community, beyond Church congregation members.	0	1	2	Annual Report	
The church's outreach programmes include opportunities for children to participate	0	1	2	Interviews	
The church has links with local churches, community organizations and networks that involve children and young people	0	1	2	Membership certificates	
The church is working with the local community and local duty bearers (Local Counsellors, teachers, police, parents etc) to raise standards of child protection and awareness	0	1	2	Meeting records	
The Church is aware of issues facing the most vulnerable children in the local community and is responding to the needs of those children through outreach programmes	0	1	2	Annual report	
As a part of its child care ministry, the church reaches out to the community to help prevent children being separated from their families e.g. support of widows; health care; parenting courses; education; feeding; income generating opportunities; etc...	0	1	2	Annual report	
The church supports children who have no living parents by supporting families offering kinship care, fostering, domestic adoption; supporting child headed households etc.	0	1	2	Child records	
The church continues to be involved in the child's life by promoting and teaching self sustainability for young people e.g. discipleship; vocational training; education; micro-finance etc...	0	1	2	Child records	
TOTAL (max score: 16)					Consider Viva partner network training <i>Quality Improvement Steps for Churches</i> and running <i>Why Families matter</i> in your Church

Child Friendly Church Assessment

Please record your score for each section in this table and add up your total score. Then see the advice that follows.

SECTION	SCORE
1. Vision for children's work	
2. Existing training	
3. Child Protection	
4. Safe environment	
5. Nurture groups	
6. Children engaged in worship	
7. Sustainable facilities for Under-5s	
8. Equal involvement in church community	
9. Outreach opportunities	
TOTAL SCORE (out of 156):	

Interpretation of Total Score

<p>Your score is over 120</p> <p>Well done! You have a lot of Child Friendly Church measures in place. Continue to review regularly and make sure that you meet any gaps that you have noticed during this assessment.</p>
<p>Your score is between 60 and 120</p> <p>Not bad! You have some good Child Friendly Church measures in place but there is still room for improvement. Look at the sections where you have scored lowest and put a plan in place to begin to address the gaps.</p>
<p>Your score is less than 60</p> <p>You have work that needs to be done! The fact that you have taken this assessment shows that you are willing to improve in keeping children safe in your organisation. You should start work immediately to put some measures in place to make your church child friendly.</p>
<p>Identify the next steps (at least 5) that will be prioritised and implemented to improve and make your church child friendly:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9.

Workshop Materials

CHILD FRIENDLY CHURCH AIMS WORKSHOP MATERIALS AND HANDOUTS FOR GROUP ACTIVITIES

Workshop Materials

The materials in the next section include practical activities and handouts to help Churches explore each of the 9 Child friendly Church aims

There are 9 Child Friendly Aims, but for the purpose of the workshop, two aims have been grouped together. Eight Group activities lasting for half an hour have been prepared for the Child Friendly Church Aims, which can be set out on 8 stations containing resources, ideas, templates, diagrams as well as an activity centered on the aim. Materials and handouts have been developed for the Child Friendly Aims, but please feel free to add to these resources.

Revolving Group Activities.

The timetable below shows how 8 groups could circle around all 8 stations in the afternoon.

Time	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5	Group 6	Group 7	Group 8
13:30	Aim 1	Aim 2+3	Aim 4	Aim 5	Aim 6	Aim 7	Aim 8	Aim 9
14:00	Aim 9	Aim 1	Aim 2+3	Aim 4	Aim 5	Aim 6	Aim 7	Aim 8
14:30	Aim 8	Aim 9	Aim 1	Aim 2+3	Aim 4	Aim 5	Aim 6	Aim 7
15:00	Aim 7	Aim 8	Aim 9	Aim 1	Aim 2+3	Aim 4	Aim 5	Aim 6
15:30	Aim 6	Aim 7	Aim 8	Aim 9	Aim 1	Aim 2+3	Aim 4	Aim 5
16:00	Aim 5	Aim 6	Aim 7	Aim 8	Aim 9	Aim 1	Aim 2+3	Aim 4
16:30	Aim 4	Aim 5	Aim 6	Aim 7	Aim 8	Aim 9	Aim 1	Aim 2+3
17:00	Aim 2+3	Aim 4	Aim 5	Aim 6	Aim 7	Aim 8	Aim 9	Aim 1

Group Composition

Groups should be formed of individuals from the same Church, so that they can work together on tasks and take next steps for implementing the aim back to their Churches

Groups should be self motivated to read background information and undertake the required activity, while the Facilitator needs circulate the room and be on hand to ensure that groups are engaged and learning from the tasks at hand.

Concluding the workshop

1. At the end of the workshop, all participants should be brought back together and the Facilitator can ask each participants to say **one thing that they have learnt during the day**.
2. **Summarise** what you have looked at during the day
3. Outline the **next steps** including **follow up** of how you will assess that **Churches are meeting Child Friendly Church Aims, including the certification process** and any **programmes that the network will run will be run**.
4. Ensure participants fill out **an Evaluation Form**

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



30 minutes

Aim: To create a church vision statement for work with children

You will need: Flip chart and markers

Background

A vision is a dream for the future. A vision statement is an expression of the transformation you want to see to help you achieve your vision. A vision statement for a Church should express where your church fits into the mission of God's plan and direction for His church. A vision statement should be easy to read and understand. It needs to be written in relevant terms that clearly communicate the end results that you hope for.

A vision statement for children's work can include your vision for children in the Church and children beyond the Church walls in your local community. When thinking about your vision statement, you need to dream big. Your vision statement needs to be bold enough that you never finish fulfilling it, while also being realistic enough to let you see progress and not become discouraged.

Activity

Create a Vision Statement for children's work

As Individuals (10 minutes)

Think of the children in your Church. How many children are there?

1. Imagine yourself walking 100 metres away from your Church. Draw an imaginary circle from where you are around your church. Look at the children inside the circle

- How many children are there?
- What are they busy doing?
- What kind of needs do you think they have?
- What potential do you think they have?
- How many of them are part of a loving faith community?

2. Draw the circle bigger in your mind—make it 1km then 10km. Try to answer the same questions.

3. Reflect: Ask God to show you His heart for those children.

In Groups with others in your Church (20 minutes)

1. Discuss: What is your dream for children in your Church and Church locality?

2. Create a Vision Statement

Imagine that your Church has been involved in children's ministry and children's work in the church and the community for the last 10. If someone returned to the Church after being away for ten years, what changes would they see in the lives of children in the church. Turn your ideas into a short memorable statement.

To help you to write your vision statement, you could try and complete the sentence; 'As a result of Children's ministry in this church, children

Below are some examples of Children Ministry Vision Statements from other Churches.

Vision Statements for children's work

- We will lead children into a growing relationship with Christ by creating environments in which children are encouraged to pursue friendship with God, make friends with good people, understand their God-given gifts and begin to use them, and positively affect their friends who do not know Jesus.
- Equipping children to know, grow, and show God's love
- Our Vision for Children:
 - ... that they will know Christ
 - ... understand His Word
 - ... grow in their own spiritual walk
 - ... be able to share the love of Christ with others

A strategy for fulfilling these vision statements could include:

- Children are given opportunity to experience God's love and forgiveness.
- Children are taught how to make good friends.
- Children are taught about spiritual gifts and how they can use theirs.
- Children are instructed in how to relate Christ to their friends in everyday situations.

Next Steps to implement Aim 1 in your church

1. When you return back to your Church, you could formally draw up your Children's Ministry vision statement and involve Senior Church members or staff and a church board (if you have one) as well as Children's workers. Once your vision statement has been finalised, make sure that it is displayed prominently in the church for children and adults to see.
2. For more information about training on planning and working effectively in Children's Ministry consider implementing **Viva's Quality Improvement Steps for Churches** in your church.

Aim 2 & 3: Child Protection and trained workers



30 minutes

Aim: To clarify what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate behaviour towards children

You will need: Flipchart paper and markers, sample of Keeping Children Safe in our Church (Code of Conduct), Handouts Positive Discipline Strategies, Definitions of Abuse.

Background

What is child protection and why is it important?

Child Protection is about keeping children safe from all kinds of harm both within the activities of the church and beyond, in their families and the wider community. It is also about protecting the church from false accusations. Everyone concerned in any activity that involves children (irrespective of whether their parents or carers are present) should adhere to an up-to-date child protection policy. This is for the safety and protection of the children and for the protection of the team.

As Christians, we model our commitment to children's safety and wellbeing on God's own attitudes:

- Children are precious to God (look at Psalm 139:13-14 and Matthew 18:5). Our work must reflect this value for each individual child.
- God acts on behalf of the vulnerable (Psalm 10:14 reminds us that God is the protector of the weak).
- He also calls to account those who harm the powerless: 'Break the arm of the wicked and evil man; call him to account for his wickedness that would not be found out' (v. Psalm 10:15).
- Because of his care for vulnerable children, God calls his people to protect and defend them (Isaiah 1:17, Psalm 82:3-4). Part of this means that we are to do all we can to see children receive justice for wrongs done to them (Deuteronomy 27:19).

For these reasons, the church should be at the forefront of good practice in keeping children safe from harm inside and outside the church. These guidelines also allow the church to be transparent and above accusation. This is vitally important, especially in the light of many scandals that have damaged the reputation of churches.

Implementing child protection

Your church should have a child protection policy that is in line with current legislation. The policy should be reviewed annually. All team members must receive safeguarding training, have a copy of the policy, and agree to implement it.

Key areas that must be covered in a child protection policy include:

- Guidelines about the selection process of anyone who will come into unsupervised contact with children, ideally including police checks, references and application forms
- Practical procedures for keeping children safe, including a code of conduct
- Definitions of the different types of abuse
- Information about the signs and symptoms of abuse
- Instructions about what to do if abuse is suspected or reported, including who to contact if specialist advice is needed
- Provision for children with special needs

It is also important to communicate with children about their right to be safe from all kinds of abuse and let them know who they can tell if they have any concerns about their safety within the church or in the wider community.

Activity

Developing a Code of Conduct

Having a Code of Conduct in place is a step towards making sure that children are safe in your Church. A Code of Conduct contains simple do's and don'ts on acceptable behaviour towards children. These would include:

- Good practice when working with children
- Physical conduct and touching
- Transporting children
- Environment
- Language and equality
- Two adult rule: Where possible and practical, two or more adults should supervise all activities where children are involved and are present at all times
- Sleeping arrangements if the church is responsible for residential care
- Discipline

The Code of Conduct needs to be known and understood by children and adults that the Church comes into contact with, so that they know what to expect and are equipped and informed to be able to report cases where the Code of Conduct is broken.

As a group

1. Divide your flipchart paper into two halves labelled DO and DON'T. Using the categories above, write down ideas of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours towards children that you might include under DO and DON'T. You can use the example of a code of conduct overleaf to help you.

You could use this exercise with Church leaders and children's workers in your church to draw up a Code of Conduct in your own Church

2. Discuss together how you will inform the following groups about your Code of Conduct

- Staff and volunteers in your church
- Children in the Church
- Children and adults in the community where you work

Next Steps to implement Aim 2 and 3 in your church

1. When you get back to your Church, you could formally draw up your Code of Conduct Children's and involve Senior Church members or staff and a church board (if you have one) as well as Children's workers. Once your Code of conduct has been finalised, make sure that it is displayed prominently in the church for children and adults to see.
2. It is also possible to draw up a code of conduct with children in the church, using the same process but getting children to define the Do's and Don'ts for their own behaviour.
3. For training on how to develop a Child Protection policy in your Church, enrol on Viva's **Quality Improvement Steps for Churches** or training on child protection that the network offers
4. Children in your Church can also be trained how to protect themselves through the network.
5. Send those working with children in your Church on a **Celebrating Children Course** run by the network

Keeping Children Safe in our Church

We are committed to providing children with a safe positive and caring environment so that they can reach their full potential.

We commit ourselves to listen, to believe and act for children and to find ways to protect them

WE BELIEVE THAT:

1. The welfare of children and young people is paramount and all of us have a duty of care to children with whom we work.
2. Everyone must take precautions and responsibility to help create a safe place for children and support their care and protection. This begins with everyone being well informed and aware of how to keep children safe.
3. Each of us will work to meet international good practice standards of protection for children in our care.
4. It is never acceptable for a child to experience abuse of any kind.
5. All children and young people have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation and inequalities should be challenged.
6. Openness must be encouraged about concerns relating to child protection matters.

AT OUR CHURCH, WE:

- All know what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour when working with / interacting with children.
- Use positive, respectful and encouraging language when working with children
- Make sure we are always visible when working with children
- Behave physically in a way that will never harm children.
- Listen to children and take them seriously and act if they voice any safety concerns
- Keep one another accountable for the safety of children

WE DO NOT:

- Discriminate against, show differential treatment towards, or favour particular children to the exclusion of others.
- Spend periods of time alone with individual children
- Have children with whom we are working stay overnight with us unsupervised or do things of a personal nature for children, which they can do themselves
- Use physical discipline but use responses that are considered, controlled and non-abusive

WE ENCOURAGE CHILDREN

- To be polite, kind, trustworthy and respectful to all
- To be aware of how they can protect themselves from harm, to keep themselves safe and not engage in risky activities
- To report inappropriate behaviour or unsafe situations
- To positive and encouraging language
- To never bully other children

IN OUR CHURCH:

We have a written policy or written guidelines on how to protect children from harm. These can be found:

We have a named member of staff with special responsibility for keeping children safe. This person is:

Positive Discipline Strategies

1) Creating a Caring Environment

Some ways to create this environment are:

- Showing an interest in each child and their interests
- Greeting children by name
- Noticing when they seem disturbed, upset, worried or concerned
- Giving encouragement for trying
- Finding something positive to say about each child every day
- Expecting that children will behave well
- Trusting them with responsibilities

2) Reinforcing Positive Behaviour

- Provide regular positive attention, sometimes called special time (opportunities to communicate positively are important for children of all ages)
- Listen carefully to children and help them learn to use words to express their feelings
- Provide children with opportunities to make choices whenever appropriate options exist and then helping them learn to evaluate the potential consequences of their choice
- Reinforce emerging desirable behaviours with frequent praise and ignore trivial misdeeds
- Model orderly, predictable behaviour, respectful communication, and collaborative conflict resolution strategies

3) Decreasing or eliminating undesired Behaviours

- Punishments must be consistent, and followed through. Don't say things you don't mean.
- Punishments should be immediate. Children have short memories when linking task to a result. A warning is the first step.
- Punishments have to be explained; the rule which has been broken has to be explained
- Punishments have to be fair: don't punish a group for one person's misdeed

Strategies for positive discipline:

- Make consequences natural and non-punitive. Punishments should fit the crime, e.g. cleaning up the playground if the child was being messy or littering
- Help the child to understand the feelings of others in the situation, and ask the child for ideas of what the consequences should be—help the child to think of a positive solution
- Use 'time-outs' - taking the child away from what he was doing for up to 5 minutes to get him to calm down and think about what he has done. Limit the number of behaviours for which time-out is used and use it consistently for the chosen behaviours. Do not threaten time-out unless you are prepared to follow through. Ignore the child while in time-out. Combine time-out with other techniques.
- Take away privileges, such as being allowed to watch television or play with friends
- Address some less destructive negative behaviours by ignoring—return your attention when misbehaviour stops
- When setting limits, use one command at a time, frame them as 'do' rather than 'don't' or 'stop', do not threaten, and give children options where possible. Praise children when they comply or provide consequences for non-compliance.

Definitions of Abuse

Child Abuse

Child abuse is a general term used to describe where a child may experience harm, either by deliberate harmful acts, but more usually as a result of failure on the part of a parent / carer or organisation / community to ensure a reasonable standard of care and protection for that child, and where that care and protection is reasonably within the control of a parent or person in a position of responsibility, power or trust.

The following sub-categories of child maltreatment and their definitions were devised following an extensive review of different countries' definitions of child maltreatment and a 1999 World Health Organisation consultation on child abuse prevention:

Physical abuse

Physical abuse of a child is the actual or potential physical harm from an interaction or lack of interaction, which is reasonably within the control of a parent or person in a position of responsibility, power, or trust. There may be single or repeated incidents.

Child sexual abuse

Child sexual abuse is the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared and cannot give consent, or that violate the laws or social taboos of society. Child sexual abuse is evidenced by an activity between a child and an adult or another child who by age or development is in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power, the activity being intended to gratify or satisfy the needs of the other person.

This may include but is not limited to the inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity; the exploitative use of a child in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices; the exploitative use of children in pornographic performances, internet pictures and materials (WHO, 1999).

The recent use of technology such as the internet by adults to entice children to meet or participate in virtual sex is also an abuse.

Neglect and negligent treatment

Neglect or negligent treatment is the inattention or omission on the part of the caregiver to provide for the development of the child in: health, education, emotional development, nutrition, shelter and safe living conditions, in the context of resources reasonably available to the family or caretakers and which causes, or has a high probability of causing, harm to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. This includes the failure to properly supervise and protect children from harm as much as is feasible.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse includes the failure to provide a developmentally appropriate, supportive environment, including the availability of a primary attachment figure, so that the child can reach their full potential in the context of the society in which the child lives. There may also be acts toward the child that cause or have a high probability of causing harm to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. These acts must be reasonably within the control of the parent or person in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.

Acts include restriction of movement, degrading, humiliating, scape-goating, threatening, scaring, discriminating, ridiculing, or other non-physical forms of hostile or rejecting treatment.

Definitions of Abuse

Sexual exploitation

Sexual exploitation is the abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes; this includes profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the exploitation of another. Child prostitution and trafficking of children for sexual abuse and exploitation is one example of this.

Commercial or other exploitation of a child

This refers to the use of the child in work or other activities for the benefit of others. This includes, but is not limited to, child labour. These activities are to the detriment of the child's physical or mental health, education, moral or social-emotional development. Children being recruited in to the army would also come under this category.

Internet abuse and abusive images of children

Abusive images of children (commonly known as child pornography) is defined as any representation, by whatever means, of a child engaged in real or simulated explicit sexual activities or any representation of the sexual parts of a child for sexual purposes. Technology has also meant that children are now subject to additional abuse through the Internet. There is a trade in the transmittal of abusive images of children. Digital and phone cameras have made it possible for some children's images to be distributed across the Internet without their knowledge. Children may also be at risk of coming into contact with people who want to harm them through their use of the Internet.

Witchcraft / Ritualistic abuse

Some communities believe strongly that adults and children may be in possession of evil spirits, which can bring bad luck on a family. This is sometimes known as *kindoki* or another term. Sometimes the tradition comes from a mixture of evangelical Christianity and traditional African spiritual beliefs. These beliefs can lead to practices that may be harmful to children e.g. fasting, beating, immersion in water, etc. These practices can lead to extreme cruelty and even death of children. Disabled children are rarely seen as a blessing and their behaviours are often interpreted as a sign of possession by evil spirits. Other communities or individuals may use and abuse children through ritualistic practices and ceremonies.

Spiritual abuse

Spiritual abuse occurs when a spiritual leader or someone in a position of spiritual power or authority (whether organisation, institution, church or family) misuses their power or authority, and the trust placed in them, with the intention of controlling, coercing, manipulating or dominating a child. Spiritual abuse is always about the misuse of power within a framework of spiritual belief or practice, in order to meet the needs of the abuser (or enhance his or her position) at the expense of the needs of the child. Spiritual abuse results in spiritual harm to a child and can be linked to other abuse such as physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

Abuse of trust

A relationship of trust can be described as one in which one party is in a position of power or influence over the other by virtue of their work or the nature of their activity. An abuse of trust could be committed by, for example, a teacher, humanitarian or development worker, sports coach, scout leader, faith leader. It is important those in a position of trust have a clear understanding of the responsibilities this carries and clear guidance to ensure they do not abuse their position or put themselves in a position where allegations of abuse, whether justified or unfounded, could be made. The relationship may be distorted by fear or favour. It is vital for all those in such positions of trust to understand the power this gives them over those they care for and the responsibility they must exercise as a consequence. This is particularly important in the context of humanitarian aid, when those in positions of power also control aid and resources.

Bullying

Bullying is now recognised as increasingly harmful to children and young people. This could take the form of physical intimidation, verbal intimidation – including racist and sexist remarks – or emotional intimidation – for example isolating or excluding someone. It is difficult to define but always involves a less powerful person experiencing deliberate hostility.

Aim 4: The Church building offers a safe environment



30 minutes

Aim: To help you think about how you can make your church premises safe

You will need: Flip chart paper and markers

Background

Health and Safety Guidelines

If you have a responsibility for caring for children then you must make sure that the premises that you operate from are providing them with a safe environment and that you have taken precautions to minimize risk. In thinking through the safety of your premises, you can use the following health and safety guidelines:

Who is responsible? The ultimate responsibility for the safety of premises rests with the would be the minister/pastor and the group that he reports to. It is also helpful to appoint a Health and Safety Officer who has oversight of health and safety issues on a day to day basis .

Risk Assessment: You have a duty to assess the risks which exist on your premises and to reduce them as far as reasonably practicable. Any risk which cannot be entirely removed should be reduced until it can be described as a small risk. You can do the health and safety risk assessment yourself. *Please see activity overleaf*

Disaster preparedness: In case your premises is in a disaster prone area (earth quake, flooding, typhoons etc), you should take this into account during your risk assessment and think through what you would do to keep children in your care safe if such an event occurred.

Fire Safety. Your responsibilities for health and safety include a duty to assess the fire risk. This risk assessment should cover:

- possible causes of fire
- ways in which the risk of fire occurring and spreading can be minimized
- means of fighting fire
- fire detection and warning
- emergency routes and exits
- information on fire precautions
- maintenance and testing of fire precautions

You must consider all people who may be affected by a fire and you are required to make adequate provision for any disabled people with special needs who use or may be present at your premises

Recording and reporting accidents: It is good practice to have an accident report book and to put procedures in place which ensure that personal information is protected.

First Aid: The minimum first aid provision is a suitably stocked first aid box and an appointed person to take charge of first aid arrangements. An appointed person is someone who takes charge when someone is injured or falls ill, and who looks after the first aid equipment. They should not attempt to give first aid for which they have not been trained. You should put up a notice to say who the appointed person is and where the first aid box is kept.

Food Safety: If you are preparing food on the premises, you will need to develop your own food safety rules for those handling food. As a basic minimum, always wash your hands before preparing food, after handling raw food, before handling ready to eat food, after handling animals and visiting the toilet. An antibacterial soap is recommended. Prepare raw and ready to eat foods separately Never dry your hands on tea towels - use separate hand towels. Cuts and burns should be covered with waterproof dressings.

Activity

Undertaking a Risk Assessment

Health and Safety Policy: It is good to have a health and safety policy which is a set of written guidelines about how you will keep your Church premises safe. The first part of developing a health and safety policy is outlining the Churches commitment to make health and safety a priority, identifying risks and writing down how you will mitigate risks.

In Church groups

You will need to assess the risks on your Church premises and reduce them as far as is reasonably practical. Any risk which cannot be removed should be reduced until it can be described as a small risk. Think about everybody who uses your building, paying special attention to vulnerable groups such as children or people with disabilities. Remember that children are attracted by balconies, stairwells, fences, cleaning materials etc.

Draw 4 columns of a piece of flip chart paper and label them as follows

1. Hazards Identified
2. Who might be harmed and how?
3. Severity of hazard (low, medium, high)
4. Existing precautions in place

Next Steps for implementing Aim 4 in your church

1. Go back to your Church and based on your risk assessment action list and Health and Safety Assessment Checklist look around your premises and decide which actions are needed immediately to make the premises safe and which actions are needed in the future. Some things like making sure exits routes are accessible are easy to correct immediately. Others actions like writing a health and safety policy can be planned in for the future.
2. Consider enrolling on the [Quality Improvement Steps for Churches](#) to help you think about how to write safety policies for your Church.

Maintaining a safe Church environment

Health and Safety Assessment Check list	
The church/organisation has a healthy and safety policy and works to it	
Premises, paths, steps, staircases floors and toilets in a safe clean and tidy condition	
Exit routes from the building can be accessed easily and safely	
If premises provide accommodation, girls and boys have separate dormitories and separate washroom facilities	
Group meeting areas are warm and clean	
Electrical wiring is safe and has been checked and gas cylinders are stored safely	
Food preparation areas are kept clean and hand washing is a pre requisite before preparing food	
Harmful substances used on the premises (eg cleaning fluid, paints, medicines etc) are locked up or kept out of the reach of children	
Risk assessments are conducted where children will be engaged	
There is an evacuation plan and adults and children know what to do in case of fire, earthquake etc	
People who can administer first aid are available for all events	
A first aid box is kept on the premises and can be accessed by all leaders	
The church/organisation has a way to put out fire on site that can be easily accessed in case of a fire break out	
People who have been trained in fire safety are available for all events	
Details of emergency contacts are displayed where all people can see them	

Maintaining a safe Church environment

Health and Safety Policy Example

1 The church recognises and accepts its responsibilities for providing, so far as is reasonably practicable, a safe and healthy environment with a view to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of all those who use the church premises.

2 The church will, therefore, take all necessary steps within its power to meet its responsibilities so far as is reasonably practicable by, among other arrangements:

- maintaining the church premises in a condition that is safe and without risk to health and providing and maintaining means of access to and egress from it that are safe and without such risks;
- providing and maintaining furnishings and equipment which are safe and without risks to health;
- assessing the risk to the health and safety of those who use the church premises;
- ensuring the safety and absence of risks to health in connection with the use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances;
- the provision of such information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary to ensure the health and safety of those who use the church premises;
- the provision and maintenance of a proper environment for the church's employees, leaders, helpers and volunteers that is safe, without risks to health, and adequate as regards facilities and arrangements for their welfare; consulting, where necessary, with all employees, leaders, helpers and volunteers on the implementation of any changes to this policy

The Health and Safety Officer will:

- carry out appropriate risk assessments
- co-ordinate the implementation of the church's Health and Safety Policy (including Fire Safety);
- carry out Investigations of any accidents and recommend measures for preventing their recurrence;
- ensure that accident and other appropriate records are maintained and returned to the appropriate bodies;
- ensure that all appropriate arrangements are made to provide for first aid;
- ensure that all food safety legislation is complied with;
- arrange safety training courses, as may be necessary or desirable, so that specific legal requirements are adhered to and that any changes in such requirements are complied with and communicated to employees, leaders, helpers and volunteers as necessary;
- ensure that, where necessary, all relevant safety regulations are prominently displayed, that all emergency procedure notices are properly exhibited and clearly visible at all times;
- ensure that access to and from emergency exits and fire equipment are not impaired and that corridors and stairs are kept free from obstructions other than of a temporary and partial nature.

This policy statement was adopted by a resolution of a Church Members' Meeting dated.....

Aim 5: Nurture groups available for children & young people



30 minutes

Aim: To understand the value of regular support for children and young people

You will need: Aim 4 Handout on stages in the growth of children's faith and examples of activities for different age ranges., pens and paper.

Background

"Children are essential to the life and ministry of the church, bringing spiritual gifts and abilities and fulfilling definite roles. The church needs to be a place where children may dynamically connect with God and engage in meaningful participation; disciplined, equipped and empowered for life and ministry. As members of the family of God, children are to be cared for as sons and daughters and are part of the admonition to love and serve one another. God intends for churches to provide children with opportunities to know him and fulfill their calling in the body of Christ." McConnell et al (2007),

All children have some faith from the earliest months of life. The infant in her mother's arms shows faith by simply trusting and children seem to have a particular sense or sensitivity to the Divine, to "mystery". We want to see each child become all God has intended them to be. This includes the spiritual dimension of their life and their need to be right with God.

Providing nurture groups for children and young people to help them grow and develop in their faith is a key part of a well functioning church. The key to nurturing children and young people in the faith is not to do ministry 'to' them, but 'with' them, recognizing that we are all on a journey of transformation to become more like Jesus. We should always be in a position to be able to see Jesus at work in children, to encourage this to develop and to be prepared to learn what children can teach us about faith in God.

Rather than viewing Sunday school as a place for looking after children while adults are in the Church main service, if run well and thoughtfully, Sunday school can offer a tremendous opportunity to children to deepen their faith. This is often around children's understanding of the bible, but can also incorporate development of children in prayer, worship, social action etc.

It is important that Sunday School sessions cater appropriately for different aged children, splitting into age groups and making sure that there are at least 2 adults with each age group. If there are enough children, they could be split into 5 and under, 5-8 years, 8-11 years and 11-14 years, 14+ group. Activities should be different for each age group, according to how children learn at each age. Scripture Union has produced a number of free downloadable Sunday School resources for children in these age groups.

As well as ensuring that Sunday schools are run well, safe and catering for the needs of a range of children in an age appropriate way, there are additional ways to help children and young people to deepen their faith. This can include peer to peer faith development groups, children's prayer, youth groups, summer camps, mentoring young people, developing child leaders, family fun days to name a few. Importantly, discipling children and young people in the Church is an important responsibility and has to involve an element of sharing and modelling the faith.

Activity

As a Group

1. Read the handout on the stages of growth in children's faith. Discuss how these might apply to your culture and faith tradition
2. Given the different stages listed discuss about how you nurture faith development of children and young people in your Church.

In Pairs

1. Prepare a Sunday School session for children in your church using the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) as your bible passage. To help you, refer to the information on types of activities suitable for different age ranges. Take into account the different age ranges of children in your church, dividing children into groups with appropriate activities.
2. Below is a format of a typical Sunday School session using a biblical passage to help children to discover more about God and respond to him
 - **Get ready**, help children to structure a time when we prepare to come close to God
 - **Tell a bible passage story** through an activity involving children or through objects and props
 - **Explore the bible passage** through an activity or by asking open questions
 - **Respond/ Learn** through activity, art, play, silence

Next Steps for implementing Aim 5 in your church

1. When you return to your church, think about how your work with children is structured. Are children divided into different age groups and are activities age appropriate? If not, consider how you might do this and how you might involve and train others to work with children.
2. Visit the scripture union website <http://www.scriptureunion.org.uk> to look at materials and ideas for Sunday school activities.
3. Enquire whether your local network runs **Sunday School Teacher training, Celebrating Children Courses** for those working with children or **Super Camps** for children.
4. Consider whether you are engaging and discipling older children in the church.
5. Consider enrolling children and young people in your church on a **Child Leadership** or **Child Ambassador programme** run through the network
7. Make sure that children in your church are involved in **World Weekend of Prayer** and search the Viva World weekend of Prayer website <http://www.viva.org/pray/world-weekend-of-prayer> for resources on teaching children how to pray.

Aim 5 Handout: Stages in the Growth of Children's Faith

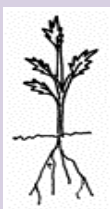
All children have some faith from the earliest months of life. The infant in her mother's arms shows faith by simply trusting. It is, therefore, very important for us to ensure that faith grows in children from their earliest years.

Children seem to have a particular sense or sensitivity to the Divine, to "mystery", and to the touch of God in their lives. A child's faith may be characterized by:

- A special openness to nature, to feelings, and to others, and a simple yet profound sense of awe and wonder.
- A sense of the present – the ability to live in the "here and now"; a tendency to be direct and in touch with their feelings, and a natural openness and welcoming spirit.
- An uncomplicated view of life, finding it easy to trust and accept the things of God.

The analogy of a tree is one way to show the stages of the growth of children's faith. The stages may differ in various contexts.

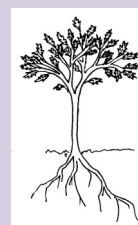
Experiencing Faith



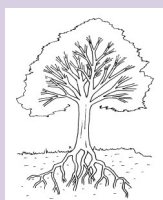
This is the earliest style of faith and is found in the preschool and early childhood years of children. Faith here is more experienced than understood. A child at this stage "explores and tests, imagines and creates, observes and copies, experiences and reacts." Therefore, as James 2:18 instructs, we need to ensure that our actions support our words. We need to give children positive experiences of trust, love and acceptance as a foundation for their faith experience.

Belonging Faith

This is the stage where children begin to see themselves as belonging to the faith community. It is essential at this stage that children be given opportunities to serve the community both within and beyond the church walls. Involving children in drama, music, dance, sculpture, painting, and storytelling are important to their spiritual growth.



Searching Faith



In this next stage, the young person may begin to ask hard questions about the faith and may even "experiment" with other beliefs and traditions. This is the process wherein Christianity becomes both a "religion of the head" and "a religion of the heart." Intellectual understanding and faith experiences are equally important to children at this stage. When both of these elements are present, children can then make a definite commitment to follow Christ.

Owning Faith

When a child moves from experienced to belonging faith through searching faith to owned faith, conversion takes place. This is the ultimate purpose of God for every child. Children possessing owned faith will strive to be a witness both in words and deeds (1 John 2:6). The Church, therefore, plays a crucial role in providing an environment that encourages the expansion of faith in children.



Aim 5 Handout: Examples of activities for different age ranges

5
years &
under

Children under 5 are full of life, everything is new and exciting and ready to be discovered. A number of different activities should range between 5 and 10 minutes to hold attention

Get ready: Little children may be able to lie quietly while a worship song is played or dance and sing to prepare to come close to God

Tell a bible passage story: Use activities to help explore the bible passage and take the first steps in reading, telling the story through puppets or props, helping children to remember key phrases through song or rhyme. Children can be encouraged to listen to the story if it is accompanied with actions with actions eg Stand up straight when the soldier in the story is mentioned, or touch your ear when you hear the word listen.

Explore the bible passage: Play is the way which young children learn. This can be by pretending to be characters in the story, drawing or making something to contribute to the role play (eg making a shield, a crown etc), singing or marching.

Respond/ Learn: Ask very simple questions: eg What did you like about this story? Help children to remember the bible passage through rhymes, songs, clapping eg 'Who can help us every day? Jesus Can'.

5-8
years

Children aged 5 to 8, love to be creative and use their energy. They enjoy exploring new ideas and playing together. A number of different activities should range between 5 to 20 minutes to hold attention

Get ready: Children may be able to lie quietly while a worship song is played or play a game in pairs or as group to explore coming into God's presence. Or hold a God slot, where children tell others how God has been there for them during their week.

Tell a bible passage story: Use props and activities to tell the story. Key phrases can be read by the whole group, (don't single out individual children to read unless they volunteer). Movement can be incorporated into the reading of the story. Sitting in a circle, children can be asked to share their thoughts about the story

Explore the bible passage: Children can respond by creating a piece of art around the story, or through role play in pairs or through games related to the story

Respond/ Learn: Children this age can be encouraged to pray in response to the story to say to Jesus what ever they want

8-11
years

Children aged 8-11 enjoying having fun and being with their friends. They are growing increasingly independent,

Get ready: Get children to work collaboratively through games, which help them to think about the theme of the story, or give them a word search, spot the difference, crossword connected with them theme

Tell a bible passage story: Get children to explore the theme of the story through discussion. Children this age can think about emotions. How do you think this character felt? How do you feel when this happens? How do you feel when you are afraid? etc

Explore the bible passage: Drawing or writing in response to the story, praying or talking in pairs.

Respond/ Learn: Thinking about a situation where they want to trust God more, writing prayer requests Thankful praise, making up a praise song, singing worship songs, playing percussion etc.

Aim 6: Children are engaged in worship in the church



30 minutes

Aim: To learn about the importance of making the main church services child friendly as well as allowing children to plan and lead sections of services and Sunday schools

You will need: Handout Aim 6: Planning all age worship, paper and pens.

Background

Jesus' attitude to children is a big challenge to the role children should play within the church community. Jesus did not think that children should be 'seen and not heard', or that they should be 'entertained' until they are old enough to understand the real things of God. Jesus said, "Let the children come to me – do not hinder them." Why? "For the Kingdom of Heaven *belongs* to such as these." (Matthew 19:14). Jesus also reminds the chief priests and teachers of the law that "From the lips of children and infants, the Lord has called forth praise" (Matthew 21:15-17). Elsewhere in the New Testament, Paul expects children to be so well-nurtured and cared for that, according to 1 Timothy 4:12, no one will look down on them because they are young, but they must be examples to the believers in speech, life, love, faith and purity. This goes to say that children must be seen as active members of the church community. We should never underestimate the fact that God uses children to teach us and that the prayers and utterances of children in relation to God can often be very insightful.

Traditionally Church services are structured around adults leading worship and sitting and listening to a sermon. Children are required either to sit quietly with their parents or leave the service to go out to children's groups or Sunday school led by adults. However, if given the opportunity, children have much that they can contribute to the building of the body of Christ and this includes being actively involved and in leading aspects of Church services.

Children and young people can be involved in All Age worship in many ways. They can lead sung worship, read, present some drama, contribute to conversations, collect the offering, welcome people, lead prayers and even lead the whole service. Some churches have children leading services with an adult as a way of training them and other churches have occasional services run by the children. In these cases, children in every area of church can be included in planning All Age worship services.

Activity

1. Choose one of the following passages or themes to plan a child friendly service at your church.

- Genesis 1
- Luke 15:11-31 The parable of the lost son
- Generosity
- Easter Sunday

2. Plan the service ensuring that children are fully participating and engaged throughout. Think about how you plan songs, prayer time, and the message that will involve children in a meaningful way. Include ways in which children might be able to take a lead in some of the activities.

Look at suggested activities on planning all age worship (taken from the Diocese of Sheffield) on the separate handout to give you some ideas.

Next Steps for implementing Aim 6 in your church

Involving and engaging children in worship should become part of the life of your church and services should be planned in a way that children are appropriately engaged in spiritual development. While at times, children will be involved in their own groups for parts of the service. At other times some services can be designed for all ages. Putting together an all age service does take a certain amount of planning.

The following tips from the Diocese of Sheffield provide next steps for how you might plan an all age service when you return to your Church:

- **Pray** – Ask God for direction and help. Listen.
- **Share the vision** – be clear what it is you hope to achieve with your all age worship. Write a mission statement and allow others to be part of it.
- **Recruit a planning team** – include all ages. You need people who are committed to it every time for continuity. Include young people, children, families. Families who contribute feel more ownership. Ask people to help – don't just have people sign up on a sheet as this is not personal enough.
- **Teach your team about all age theology** – mission focused, reaching out, joined up with church... journey, not patronizing but inclusive. You may need to preach to the adults about the theology of all age worship before you start doing it.
- **Inspiration for planning** – Who is your audience? What are your shared areas of engagement? What is your inspiration? What helps you plan?
- **Resources** – financial (for materials), personnel, venue etc – how often? Be realistic with what you have. Budget from church funds. Good books.
- **Time to prepare** – don't underestimate the time it takes to plan. Start early. Creativity needs time to grow / develop.
- **Set up and rehearsal time** – People might need to practice before the service – allow enough time to set up before the service.

Aim 6 Handout: Planning all age worship

The following ideas are from the Diocese of Sheffield

Worship Music Encourage musical children and young people in the church to be involved in your church worship group

Prayer Allow children and young people to lead the prayer time or to pray in the service.

Theme ideas Your time of worship doesn't have to be shaped around a single Bible passage. Consider choosing a Christian *theme* such as forgiveness, generosity, sacrifice, service or guidance. Think about how you can involve children in exploring these themes. You could consider what God has to say about these themes and choose Bible passages to illustrate.

Drama (improvisation and scripted.) Drama is a good way of involving young people and drama can bring a story to life. Use a mix of rehearsed performance and improvised volunteers.

Songs / instruments Children's songs are not necessarily all age friendly, just as some adults' songs are not. Choose songs carefully. Consider having some percussion instruments available for use during songs.

Actions can help us remember words to songs. However, they can make others feel self conscious, so treat with care. Invite people to join in if they want to. Sometimes, by engaging in actions as adults, we give permission to the children to join in. Actions don't have to be confined to songs, use them in prayer times and consider using sign language.

Flags / ribbons Encourage activity in worship. Dancing is a way to help children of all ages to worship God with their whole body. Flags and ribbons hold no special spiritual qualities, but children usually enjoy waving them. Encourage enjoyable worship

Conversation During the service people can be encouraged to talk to each other. We are the body of Christ, allow people to get to know each other by asking questions and discussing in small groups during the service. This is a great way for adults to learn from children and vice versa. Make sure that the children get included in conversations.

Craft activities during a service can reinforce a story or truth and is something to take home and be a further reminder of the worship time. It can also enable people to talk to one another.

Good talks It's OK to have a talk in a child friendly worship service, but not essential. If you do have a talk, make it interactive, engaging, inspiring, and use stories to illustrate your points. Stay away from a lecture-style approach which studies a passage full of theological fundamentals. Instead, engage people's imagination, use humour and ask questions. Consider using a number of learning styles to keep everyone interested. A good talk can cover many levels of faith / educational development. Be animated and lively where appropriate.

Getting people moving In All Age worship, consider moving people around. Encouraging people to come to the front for something, move into groups, move around the church for prayer stations or dance in the aisles... we are not a static church – demonstrate active faith by being active in the church.

Space to reflect and wonder / imagination When telling a story, or getting across an important point, consider allowing space for people to think, reflect and wonder. This can be done while some quiet instrumental music is played, or in silence. Then, encourage a time of sharing so we can learn from each other listen to what children have to say.

Games Playing games together can build a sense of unity and provide a break for people to digest other parts of the service. It can get people up and moving after a longer time of sitting, and can also help emphasise a point

PLANNING ALL AGE WORSHIP

Reading the Bible Keep readings short. If necessary, summarize through a story or drama. Invite others to read. Consider stopping at regular intervals through the reading to ask questions and interact with the text. Ask people what they would have done or thought if they were there. Story-based readings work better for all age service, rather than theological passages. Consider Bible memory verse songs and other creative ways of telling the story.

Communion can be a wonderful celebration in an All Age setting. Eating together builds community. Explore creative ways of including all ages in the communion service. Some churches invite everyone to the front to receive either the bread and wine, or a chocolate button and a prayer of blessing. Others include the children by asking them to take the bread and wine out to people in their chairs. The liturgy can help children to understand what is happening in communion, and they like repetition, so don't miss it out.

Visual aids / props Remember that people learn in different ways, and some people are visual learners. Hearing something may not communicate as effectively to some as seeing something. Take time to come up with creative visuals and props to communicate more deeply. (A picture is worth a thousand words...) There are many who use PowerPoint to tick this box, but beware of poorly presented slides that detract rather than improve your communication. Props can also be an excuse to involve people – "I need someone to hold this..." Dressing up props work well for children of all ages

Puppets Another visual way to communicate a story is by using puppets. Puppets can be characters in the Bible who tell a story, or can provide an excuse to ask loads of questions that others are too shy to ask. Puppets can be an expensive investment, but they can be hand made. Allowing children to use puppets can be a great therapy technique as children can express feelings through the puppet more easily than personally. You may have some young people who could operate the puppets as a way of engaging them in all age worship

Using outdoors If you have outdoor space you could use (and not everyone does), consider how you might use that space in worship. Could you give time for people to walk around the church to pray? Could you hold your whole service outside on a sunny day? This could serve as a good witness to those who pass by and show that the church exists despite the building.

Responding / application Do you provide opportunities for people to respond to the teaching? Do you illustrate ways of living out the challenges posed? Consider giving time for responding – it could be inviting people to bring something to the front (eg a Post-It, a prayer, a stone) to represent an inner decision made. What activities in the church could be highlighted for people to respond to? Help people find ways to serve.

Offerings / collections Historically, many churches have included the children when it comes to collecting the offering. This is a simple way of including children in the life of the church. However, money isn't the only thing we can 'offer' to God and the church. Consider how you can encourage people to give their time, prayers, resources, strength to serving the church and community.

Poetry can be lovely to listen to, but you might consider writing a poem or psalm together or in small groups.

World focus Encourage people to look outside the church building, to the world around them. Church should never be a place that just looks inwardly and leaves the world and its problems outside. You could invite families to present global issues using pictures and videos, to then invite people to pray and give. Children can be invited to inform the church about a global issue and help plan fund-raising events.

Community focus Encourage people to look about and talk about what is happening in the community around. Have a project that all can get involved with. Pray for your community.

Creative prayer. Prayer stations can be really good in All-Age and if you give choice and variety it gives people the opportunity to engage with God in a way that they find the most helpful. It is an opportunity to move around and helps the kinesthetic learners.

Aim 7: Suitable facilities for under 5s are available



30 minutes

Aim: To think through whether your church is providing suitable facilities for under 5's

You will need: Handout Aim 7: Top tips for parenting under 5's

Background

Children under 5 are full of energy, curiosity and creativity. They are learning more than at any other time in their life and seem to be particularly open and sensitive to God. Young children tend to be busy, noisy and impatient. At the same time, even young children are open to God and able to participate in worship and learning from the Bible. If a church is to be a welcoming place for everyone, then it needs to think through how it will support and nurture babies and children under 5 and those who care for them.

Welcoming young families

Church services can be challenging for parents and carers of young children and the children themselves, especially if they feel that they must sit still and be quiet. An allocated area of the church where there are books, toys and resources for parents to use and where some noise is acceptable can be helpful as a minimum. Parents will also appreciate a proper space to feed and change babies. Depending on your circumstances, it is great to provide special childcare and activities for under-5's to allow parents/carers to take part in services and children to meet with God through age-appropriate activities.

Caring for under-5's is a big responsibility for parents and carers and it can be a stressful time for many. The church has a responsibility and an opportunity to offer support and encouragement for bringing children up in the ways of the Lord. This can include training parents in positive parenting skills.

Providing child care for under 5s

Make sure you create an environment that is pleasant, safe and well managed. This includes making sure it is clean and warm. It is useful to split up the space a bit, so that not everyone has to do the same thing at the same time. For example, have a cosy corner with blankets and cushions for quiet play and reading, and a specific area for noisy or messy play. Provide toys and books and other materials that are attractive and stimulating to play with.

Think about possible hazards, and how to reduce the risk of accidents. Some things that could be hazardous are: power points, steps and stairs, unsteady furniture, loose carpets, uneven floors, electric or gas fires, swinging doors, hazardous substances such as cleaning products, water in ponds. Make sure children are supervised when eating to avoid danger of choking.

You need to make sure there are enough adults in your crèche to look after all the children properly. This will depend on the age of the children, and also the environment you are in. A good guideline is: 1 adult for every 8 children aged over 3, 1 adult for every 4 children aged 2, and every 3 children aged 1 or under. Babies and young toddlers need constant care and supervision, so it is best to aim for a one-to-one ratio for children who are under 3.

Have at least one person who is responsible for planning and organising the crèche. You might choose to have a rota of volunteers helping out, but it is important to have someone who knows what's going on and is taking responsibility for making sure that the childcare happens properly.

Nurturing Young Children's Faith

Under-5s deserve the chance to worship God and he revels in their worship. "From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise." Psalm 8:2. Worship is what we do that is God-focussed. There are many ways to help under 5s focus on God and respond to him.

- **Music:** Young children love to move, and dancing to music can be used to express feelings about God. Playing music can help create a calm, reflective atmosphere or a sense of celebration. Young children enjoy simple action songs, and even children who do not speak can join in. Choose songs that are focussed on God. When you choose a song, consider: Does it show God how much we love him? Does it talk to God? Does it state truths about God? Does it praise God's character? Does it act as response to God or the Bible?
- **Prayer:** Encourage children to communicate with God. Use simple prayers, like "Thank you God for...". Older under-5's might want to draw their prayers. Pictures and objects connected with your theme can be helpful. Teach children they can use the Thank you, Sorry, Please framework.
- **Teaching:** Young children love stories, craft activities and games. Be creative in the ways you tell them Bible stories and give them opportunities to create simple crafts connected with the lessons you are teaching them. Even under-5's can begin to learn Scripture through simple memory verses.

Activity

In Groups

1. Thinking about your church building, list potential dangers for children under 5 and suggest how to create a safe space in the church that is suitable for under-5s
2. Write a plan for a crèche to provide child care for under 5s during church services. Consider: Leader, Helpers, When, Where, Toys, Books, Activities, Soft furnishings (cushions, blankets, rugs, etc.) and anything else you would need.
3. Plan a 15-minute time of worship for under-5s. Include a Bible story or memory verse, action song, prayer time and simple craft on one of these topics (or another topic of your choice): God made me, God loves me, Thank you God for my family, God is with me everywhere.

Next Steps for implementing Aim 7 in your church

1. If you do not already have facilities for under 5's put your plans in place to create them
2. Consider running a positive parenting course in your Church.

Aim 7 Handout: Top Tips for parenting under 5's

TOP TIPS FOR PARENTING UNDER 5's

When we become parents, we want to be the very best mum or dad that we can be, but may feel unsure of our ability. Here are some tips that will help you give your young children the strong foundations they need to thrive and develop.

Let your children know you love them

Don't assume that because you love your child they automatically know it. Tell them that you love them and show it by doing things together. Imagine that they have an 'emotional store cupboard'. All the positive things you do for them over the years are like supplies being put into their store cupboard. These are things like kind words, encouragement, listening to them, having fun together, taking an interest in them and giving them support. As long as there is enough in the reserves, a child can cope with a certain amount of difficulty. Our aim as parents is to fill their store cupboard as full as we can.

Make time to play with them

Play is a vital part of a child's early life as it helps to develop self-esteem, social skills, language and creativity. It is also a valuable opportunity to strengthen the relationship with your child. Discover what they most enjoy doing and set time aside to do that together.

Appreciate their unique personality

All children are unique and have their own individual personalities and abilities. Your child may be strong-willed or easy-going, shy or adventurous, outgoing or quiet. Getting to know your child's temperament can help you understand their behaviour and respond to them in a positive way. Remember that your personality may not be the same as your child's and that what works for you or another child may not work for them.

Let them know you're listening

Listen to your child when they are young, and they are more likely to keep talking when they are older. Stop what you are doing and give them your full attention by getting down to their eye level. Acknowledge their feelings, ask questions, and remember to be patient; young children can take a long time to tell you their story. Encourage your child to say how they feel and be prepared to prompt them. They may want to 'act out' their feelings because they can't put them into words.

Create routines

Routines bring stability and security to family life especially to young children. Build routines into their day, for example, choose what time they get dressed and eat their meals, and develop a consistent bedtime routine.

Watch what you say

Words can have a huge effect on a child's self-esteem. The effects of our praise or criticism on how our child feels about themselves will last into adulthood. Don't compare them to their brothers or sisters and always assume that they are listening.

Give them boundaries

Boundaries are important. They teach children about self-control, acceptable behaviour and respect for others. When they are consistent, boundaries help children feel safe and secure. Pick your battles, and make sure your expectations are realistic for their age and maturity. Encourage good behaviour by using rewards and praise. Discourage bad behaviour through distraction, time outs and giving choices and consequences.

TOP TIPS FOR PARENTING UNDER 5's

If you can work out the reason for your child's behaviour you can handle it better. Try not to react immediately to their misbehaviour, but rather ask yourself why they might be acting that way, for example, they may be tired and need a nap. When you've had to discipline your child, they need to know you did not like their behaviour, but you still love them.

Be willing to say sorry if you've got it wrong.

Let them be involved

When possible, we can help to avoid battles by giving our children a limited choice, for example, in choosing what to eat or wear. This gives them a sense of being valued and respected and also encourages them to be cooperative and take responsibility for their own actions.

Create traditions

Family traditions are a valuable way to create strong, lasting memories and give children a sense of belonging. Traditions don't have to be expensive. Traditions are a good way for helping teach young children about spiritual things.

Give yourself a break

You will be a better parent when you are relaxed, content and happy. Keep ten minutes aside for yourself each day. Make sure you find time to have a normal adult conversation and chat about your feelings with someone you trust. If you have a partner, it's really important to have some time together.

This advice comes from Christian charity *Care for the Family* and is available as a colour brochure

<https://www.careforthefamily.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Top-Tips-for-Parents-The-Early-Years-Online.pdf>

Supporting parents in the church: Parenting courses

There are many excellent courses that churches can use to encourage parents to think about their parenting and to give support and encouragement. It can really help parents to meet with other parents and share their struggles, challenges and encouragements. A parenting course can also be a good way of reaching parents outside the church community.

Here are some good packages that have been developed by Christian organisations, although they can be used with parents of any background. There may be others that have been developed for your local context.

Organisation	Courses	Availability
Care for the family https://www.careforthefamily.org.uk/courses/parentalk-2	Parent Talk Primary years / Teenage years	Free to download
BRF / Who let the dads out http://www.wholetthedadsout.org.uk/running-group/daddy-cool-parenting-course	Daddy cool! Course aimed at fathers and father figures	Free to download
Parent play http://www.parentplay.co.uk/course.html	Parent play Small group discussions followed by messy play for parents of under 5s	Available for mail order at low cost

Aim 7: Participation of children and young people



30 minutes

Aim: To help you see how children can be valuable active participants of the church community

You will need: Flip chart paper and pens

Background

God creates every child in His image. He endows each one with inherent value and dignity. Whether boys or girls, and whatever abilities or disabilities they may have, every child is born with this dignity because they are created by God. In God's eyes, children and adults are of equal worth and deserve the same respect. It might surprise us, but in the Bible we see that God chooses children as well as adults to carry out particular roles in his mission. Throughout the Bible, we see how God uses people of different ages and with different capacities to fulfil His plans. He calls on old and young people alike to do particular work. At certain times, God gives a unique role to children, even when most people look down on them.

In the Old Testament, Samuel is used to rebuke the spiritual leadership of the nation and to communicate a serious message of judgment (1 Samuel 3). David is chosen as a boy to be the future King of Israel. (1 Samuel 16-17). In the New Testament, Jesus as a child demonstrates the capacity of a child to share the Good News when he speaks at the temple (Luke 2:41-49). In the story of the boy with five small barley loaves and two fish in the feeding of the five thousand, Jesus chooses a child to become his partner in a miracle to feed the huge crowd (John 6:1-13). All of these Scriptural examples challenge us to recognise children as people who have a right to be listened to, to be counted and to be recognised as capable individuals who can play a significant role in our church.

Jesus' attitude to children is a big challenge to the role children should play within the church community. Jesus did not think that children should be 'seen and not heard', or that they should be 'entertained' until they are old enough to understand the real things of God. Jesus said, "Let the children come to me – do not hinder them." Why? "For the Kingdom of Heaven *belongs* to such as these." (Matthew 19:14) Elsewhere in the New Testament, Paul expects children to be so well-nurtured and cared for that, according to 1 Timothy 4:12, no one will look down on them because they are young, but they must be examples to the believers in speech, life, love, faith and purity. This goes to say that children must be seen as active members of the church community.

Child to Child Approach

Children and young people can be very effective in encouraging other children to become active participants in the church community and in discipling others of their age. The child-to-child approach involves a child working with other children and this approach can extend beyond the church community to other areas of life, enabling the Church to have impact on local communities through its children.

The 'child-to-child' approach was originally developed in 1979 as a way to improve health practices among children. The approach is now widely used in many countries not only in health but in other aspects of work with children, such as child protection, helping children to know their rights, encouraging other children to go to school etc. A child can act as facilitator (or 'leader') to help another child to discuss issues of concern and to assist them in dealing with difficulties. It is often easier for children to express their views and to be comfortable in using their own language when they are with other children who share a similar situation. Young people and children can provide peer to peer counselling or education to other children on specific topics who do not have information or confidence to get help from a local centre or organization.

The Wheel of Participation

One helpful way for adults to consider whether children are participating meaningfully in the life of the church is to look at the “**Wheel of Participation**”. The central principle is ‘Give Children Respect’. This is the hub of the wheel. This is connected to three spokes: ‘Support’, ‘Opportunity’ and ‘Responsibility’. When one or more of these elements is missing, children’s participation may be slowed down or imbalanced, just like a wheel that is not functioning well.



Respecting children involves recognising that we are all made in the image of God and that God values children as much as adults. Respect in children involves listening to what children say, asking for their opinions, asking for explanation of decisions and actions and giving them equal treatment regardless of their differences.

Children need **opportunities** to actively participate in the life of the church, through worship, prayer, outreach opportunities. If children are given **responsibility**, they will step into ministry roles and will begin to make decisions. The types and levels of decision-making and accountability should be realistic and appropriate for the children’s age and maturity, increasing over time as the children grow older and gain experience.

Activity

In Groups

1. Look at the information on the wheel of participation
2. Discuss: The ‘Wheel of Participation’ gives 4 essential principles for helping children’s and young peoples participation with respect at the core. In your context and culture are children generally given respect? If yes, can you give examples? If no can you give examples?
3. Draw 3 columns headings on a piece of flip chart paper named Opportunity, Responsibility and Support. On the left hand side, list the different activities and ministries (including outreach) that occur through your church. For each ministry listed, write where children are given opportunity, responsibility and support.
4. In what areas of the Church are the principles of respect, opportunity, responsibility and support for children working well? Which could be improved? What strategies do you suggest to improve them?

Next Steps for implementing Aim 8 in your church

Consider running a **Child leadership development** or **Child Ambassador Programme** through your Church in connection with other Churches in the network.

1. The **Child Leaders programme** is a value-based leadership development course encouraging children to grow in character, gifts and a closer relationship to God and to practically apply learning in communities through peer to peer mentoring.
2. The **Child Ambassadors Programme** empowers children to identify issues which are affecting them and to advocate on behalf of themselves and other children in their communities. Children from network member projects are selected as Child Ambassadors and trained by the network in children’s rights, child protection, life skills and community leadership, and mentored by leaders from their member projects. Children are equipped with skills to enable them to take action to see transformation in their communities.

Aim 8: There are outreach opportunities



30 minutes

Aim: To think about how your Church can get involved with outreach activities for children and families

You will need: Flip chart paper and pens

Background

Why should churches be involved in reaching into communities?

Churches do not exist in isolation from the communities around them. Whether that community accepts, ignores or even opposes our faith, the Bible calls Christians to be salt and light (Matthew 5:13-16). That means that churches must seek to transform their community by modelling God's values and sharing the light of his Kingdom rule. Churches are to display God's values in everything they do. Churches should not only be focussed inwardly on themselves and their members, but also outwardly toward the communities of which they are a part.

When we consider God's commitment to children and to families in particular, we see that churches have an opportunity and a responsibility to reach out into their community and bring God's light into the darkness. The church should engage with its community, embracing those in need, and especially reaching out to children and families in crisis, helping them to recover from trauma, isolation and a lack of love. As Christians model God's love, churches have an opportunity to draw others – including those of differing faith and none at all – into shared action on behalf of children and families. This will involve working with the authorities who have the God-given responsibility for managing the social welfare of the most vulnerable.

At the same time, churches do not exist in isolation from one another. Disunity and isolation among churches hinder the work of transforming communities. Jesus' prayer in John 17 – that Christian believers would be so united that the world would see who Jesus is and believe in him – means that churches should not refuse to work with other churches, or only seek to build up their own church or organisation. Individual churches and Christian organisations must find ways to operate as 'networks of kindness', in order to be at their most effective. Territorialism must be replaced by collaboration and united action.

How can churches make sure their outreach is effective?

We should aim for our church and its projects to be the best they possibly can to bring glory to God (Matthew 5:16). It is important to make sure that the work churches do makes a significant difference to the needs of the children in their communities. This involves making plans and measuring changes in order to ensure that the work is effective. We should aim for our church and its projects to be the best they possibly can to bring glory to God (Matthew 5:16).

The book of Nehemiah gives us a good illustration of what it is to be an excellent project leader overseeing a successful project with God's blessings. The book highlights some important principles for all effective community outreach

- **Calling and vision (Nehemiah 1)** Nehemiah's project begins with God's call. This is the basis of his vision. This means that Nehemiah's project was part of God's wider plan for his people.
- **Response to a need (Nehemiah 1)** By getting information about the situation and listening to God, Nehemiah identified a specific need for his project to address.
- **Planning (Nehemiah 2:1-9, Nehemiah 3)** We see that Nehemiah planned in detail how he would approach the king and how he would go about rebuilding the wall.
- **Participation (Nehemiah 2:17, Nehemiah 3)** Nehemiah gathered others around him to help him fulfil the vision.
- **Adapting to changing circumstances (Nehemiah 4)** When there was opposition to the rebuilding of the wall, he wasn't defeated but learnt from the experience and revised some of his plans.
- **Celebrating success (Nehemiah 6:15-16, Nehemiah 12)** Finally, when the wall was completed, Nehemiah ensured that he celebrated the achievement with all of his fellow workers, giving all the glory to God.

Elsewhere, the Bible also shows us some other good principles for planning and working effectively. We should aim for our church and its projects to be the best they possibly can to bring glory to God (Matthew 5:16).

Activity

In pairs or groups from the same Church:

1. On a large piece of flipchart paper, draw your Church in the centre of the page.
2. Now visualise walking through your neighbourhood to get to the Church. What is on the streets? What do the buildings look like? Where do people live? Where do people work? What are families like? Are there any children around? How are people getting around? Does it feel safe? How can you tell? Do things change when it gets dark? If yes why?
3. Discuss in your group what you saw in your visualisation
4. Draw and write around the church you have drawn, the key things that come out of your discussion
5. Reflect: What do you notice about what you have drawn or written? What are some of the problems you see? What are some of the problems that families and children in particular face.
6. On the map circle the most important issues facing children and families, narrow it down to 3 or 4 issues.
7. Ask yourselves 'Is the Church currently doing anything in terms of outreach to address those issues?' If so write what you are doing on your map.
8. Add to your map any other churches, agencies or community authorities that you are working with.

Next Steps for implementing Aim 9 in your church

1. Run **Why Families Matter** through your Church to help your Church members to consider the needs of children and families in your community and possible responses
2. Enrol on **Quality Improvement Steps for Churches** to make sure outreach response to children is meeting good standards

Child Friendly Church Workshop Evaluation

Thank you for joining us for this Child friendly Church workshop today. Please take time to complete this evaluation form and hand it in to the workshop facilitator before you leave, so that we can assess how useful this workshop has been.

Date _____ Location _____

Please indicate your level agreements with the statements listed below

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The topics covered were relevant to me					
2. The content was organised and easy to follow					
3. I learnt new things					
4. Participation and interaction were encouraged					
5. The Facilitator was well prepared					
6. The meeting room and facilities were adequate and					

7. What did you like most about this workshop?

8. What new things did you learn?

9. What aspects of this workshop could have been improved?

10. What will you change in your Church as a result of this workshop?

Please Any other comments

Thank you for your feedback



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