

YOUTH GROUP/ BIBLE CLASS SESSION

The Methodist Church needs
YOUR voice!



THE BIG SURVEY

Shape the future of our church.



INTRODUCTION

Leaders information before the session:

In 1993 the Youth and Children's Department of the Methodist Church In Ireland carried out a survey to hear young people's views on the church and how it impacts their life and society. 25 years later we are repeating that survey! Why? The report that was produced in 1993 was called 'Will our faith have children?' That question is even more relevant today, as we navigate what it looks like as church to pass on faith to the next generation.

Over the next few months IMYC will be carrying out some research that includes 'The Big Survey' and this youth group session. We will also be hearing the voice of children, carrying out some interviews with young adults and focus groups with parents.

The Survey

We may have asked slightly different questions if we had been writing it now, but to be able to compare the results we are sticking with the original! If there is anything more, you wish to comment on that you feel the questions don't cover please do so at the end!

This Session

The purpose of this session is to discover some of the 'why's?' behind the survey responses. What we would like you to do is take some pictures of the flip chart pages of responses and the pinterest boards and send them to us so that we can collate the opinions of young people across the country. Send these to: **gemma.barclay@imycd.org**.

What will we do with the information?

We will be reporting to Methodist conference the findings of the research that we are carrying out in the hope that it will inform, inspire and challenge us as a church about how we pass on faith to the next generation!



OPENING ACTIVITY - BEING HEARD

20 minutes

This activity will paint a picture of how difficult it can be to feel as though your voice is being heard and hopefully encourage your young people to speak out and know that their voice is important.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Ensure that your group are all sitting together - in a circle or rectangle.
2. Ask for 2 volunteers - one to speak and one to listen
3. Ensure these volunteers are separated but facing each other.
4. Instruct the 'speaker' volunteer to think of something they could talk about for a couple of minutes - it can be anything - school, home, exams, pets, movies et
5. Instruct the 'listener' volunteer to only listen to what the speaker is saying.
6. Everyone else should have something to talk about - everyone will be speaking to the listener at the same time. Hopefully getting in the way of the speaker sharing.
7. Once everyone is ready, start talking (except the listener)
8. No shouting!
9. After a couple of minutes ask everyone to stop talking and ask the listener to share the things that the speaker was saying.
10. This can be done a couple of times with different volunteers.
11. (Speaker represents you. Listener represents the church. Everyone else represents everyone else e.g. society, negativity, differing opinions etc)

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- How easy was it to speak while everyone else was speaking?
- How easy was it to only listen to that one voice?
- Did you feel uncomfortable getting in the way of the speaker and listener?
- Do you think your voice is important?
- Do you feel heard?
- What stops the church from hearing you?

Biblical Reflection

Individually, read Jeremiah 1:4-19 (make sure this is possible – provide bibles or print outs of the passage)

Ask the following questions:

- What stands out to you?
- What surprises you?
- What challenges you?

Read the passage again, together.

Ask the following questions:

- What does this say about your voice?
- What importance is there in using your voice?
- How is God asking us to use our voice?

Encourage the young people that we have a voice and that God uses our voices. So let's let Him!

SURVEY

20 minutes



This can be done on phones, tablets, laptops or computers.

Follow this link - <http://mycd.org/uncategorised/the-big-survey/>

Just a few things to think

through:

If most of your group have already completed the survey - great! If there are one or two that haven't, maybe get them to complete it at the end.

If only one or two have completed - what else could they do while the rest do the survey?

Discussion - 30 mins

The purpose of this activity is to get to hear some of the 'why's?' behind the survey answers, and explore further young people's thinking of faith and the church.

What you will need:

- Flip chart paper
- Post-its
- Pens/markers
- A4 paper

Instructions

You will need seven flip chart pages each with one of the below statements written on them...

- *To follow Jesus means...*
- *I pray by...*
- *Christians read the Bible because...*
- *Being received into full membership means...*

Survey
Does everyone have a smartphone?
Do they have enough data?
Can you provide tablets/laptops?
Can you provide WiFi?

- *People don't attend church because...*
- *I would/wouldn't bring a friend to my church because...*
- *In my everyday life I would like the church to help me...*

Give each young person some post-its and a pen and ask them to complete each statement - one per post-it. (if they have a lot to

say they can use as many post-its as they want!).

You may want to give a couple of examples of answers for each one. For example for the last statement:

Handle stress

Follow Jesus better

Understand my sexuality

Read my bible

Ask them to stick their post-its to the correct flip chart page.

Ask the young people to find a partner and spend some time reading the flip chart pages, asking themselves - 'What stands out to me and why?' What is said a lot that we need to take notice of?

At the end of the activity thank the young people for their participation and let them know that their voice matters to the church and that you will be feeding what they have said back to the Methodist church in Ireland through IMYC.





DREAM BIG

20 minutes

The following activity will encourage your young people to dream and dream big. Help them to understand that in this there are no impossibilities and that we as God's children are called to dream big and pray boldly.

Take a minute to pray. Pray for God to speak. Pray that everyone would see with God's eyes. Pray for hope for what could be instead of focusing on what isn't.

What you will need:

Newspapers/Magazines

Scissors

Glue

Art supplies

2 cork boards or 2 large pieces of card

Questions:

If you had the power to change anything in the church, what would it be?

If you had the power to change anything in the world, what would it be?

Instructions:

- Have you ever seen a Pinterest board that is focused on one thing? E.g. weddings, craft, recipes or productivity?
- These boards are full of different ideas from lots of different people to help inspire and motivate us.
- Give your young people space to dream big - what are their answers to the above questions?
- Allow them to take any of the supplies provided to create their own part of the board.
- Maybe they want to draw, write or cut and stick - this is space for them to think, pray and dream for the world and the church.
- Encourage your young people to do this individually but welcome discussion in pairs or small groups.
- Come back together and create your pin boards - include everyones idea on the boards - one for the world and one for the church.
- Invite each young person to pin their idea up and to explain their thinking behind it.
- Once the boards are completed have a time of prayer for what has been pinned - split into 2 groups - each group gets one board and prays for what is pinned - use post it notes to allow the young people to write their prayers and stick them on. Bring the group back together again and encourage one person from each group to pray using the post it prayers. Leader to close in prayer.

Keep these boards up in your youth room for the coming weeks to encourage prayer and continued dreaming in your youth group.

Suggestion: Over the following weeks have a specific slot in your evening for praying for your pin boards.

Thank You

Thank you for taking time out of your normal programme to do this session, our hope and prayer is that the voice of young people is heard and acted upon across the church for the Glory of God!

