

WAYS OF FINDING OUT WHAT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE THINK ABOUT CHURCH

ACTIVE: The supersize slider



You will need: a long sheet of lining paper and an empty washing up bowl to create a sliding scale.

Say: "You go to see a film with your friends and your local cinema has run out of popcorn. How bothered are you?" The bottom end of your slider represents "Meh" (or "not at all") and the top end represents "TOTALLY!" Ask young people to run to whichever bit of the scale represents their feelings about popcorn. Move the washing up bowl to where the majority are gathered.

Ask these questions about the Church, followed by "How bothered are you?" and an invitation to run up or down the sliding scale. Take a photograph (with permission) of each result.

- The Church needs to help people in need and care for our world.
- The Church needs to involve children and young people in everything it does.
- The Church needs to make its leaders, members and buildings strong.
- The Church needs to show people how to follow Jesus in their everyday lives.
- The Church needs to show and tell people what God's love is like.

DRAWING: My dream church



You will need: paper and felt pens.

Invite children and young people to draw their ideal church. What would it look like? Who would be in it? Where would it be? What would it be for?

WRITING: A To Do list for the Church



You will need: a large board decorated to look like a fridge door; lots of post-it notes and pens.

Say: "Many families leave notes on the fridge of jobs that need doing. What jobs do you want to remind the Church to do?"

Encourage young people to think about what the Church is for, what work it has to do in the local community and in the wider world. They write down as many jobs as they can think of and stick them on the fridge door.

WONDERING: Love it or lose it



You will need: lots of photographs of things your church does, both on Sundays and during the week, in church and in the community. Take these from your website, your church magazine, online publicity or posters.

Invite children and young people to sit and think about the pictures. They don't have to say anything if they don't want to. They should sort the pictures into 2 piles: 'Love it' and 'Lose it' (they may also want to have a 'not sure' pile in the middle). Which things that the church does do they love and want to keep? Which things that the church does do they think we could do without?

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DISCUSSING: What makes a church?



You will need: some or all of the following questions on individual cards, with the bold headings on the reverse. Invite young people to pick out questions and discuss them. NB you are looking for their ideas, not the ‘right’ answers!

What makes a church?

1. What makes a church? What can't the church do without?
 - Things like an altar and a cross?
 - A beautiful building?
 - Beautiful music?
 - A prayer habit?
 - A worship habit?
 - People?
 - Something else?

What is the church for?

2. Is the church for praying together?
3. Is the church for meeting each other?
4. Is the church for meeting God?
5. Is the church for welcoming people?
6. Is the church for helping people?
7. Is the church for doing or being?
8. What else is the church for?

Who is the church for?

9. Is the church for Christians?
10. Is the church for other people?
11. Is the church for me and my friends?
12. Is the church for outsiders?
13. Is the church for human beings or God?
14. Who else is the church for?

These questions have been inspired by Lucy Berry's hymn, 'Is the church a building?' in Songs for A Servant Church © Kevin Mayhew 2014.

VISUAL: Rainbow jars



You will need: small glass jars (e.g. for herbs and spices); 5 (or 6) bowls with different colours of dry sand coloured with powder paints *or* salt with coloured chalk (pour a heap of salt on sugar paper and rub it with chalk. The chalk will gradually colour the sand.)

Explain that each colour represents something different that the Church does (you may also want to provide this information on a label next to each colour)

- *Pink:* helping people in need and caring for our world.
- *Blue:* working with children and young people.
- *Green:* making strong leaders, church members and buildings.
- *Yellow:* showing people how to follow Jesus.
- *Red:* showing people what God’s love is like.
- (Optional) *White/natural:* Other – an opportunity for children to identify something they feel the church should be doing, but which hasn’t been mentioned.

Invite each young person to fill their glass jar carefully, in layers, with proportions of coloured sand/salt to show what they think is most important about what the church does. They may end up with lots of blue and only a touch of green, or have equal stripes of each colour, or something else. Photograph the jars with the colour code.

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