



year of young people
bliadhna na h-òigridh
2018



The Church of Scotland

Message from the Moderators

To all Churches in the Church of Scotland

It is my pleasure to introduce you to the Year of Young People, which is a special focus for both the Church of Scotland and the Scottish Government in 2018. I invite your Church to plan to participate in ways that are possible for you, and relevant to your context. The particular focus during the year will be on **involving, including and celebrating children and young people**.

Amongst the opportunities and challenges that this year will offer will be time to reflect with children and young people on what faith means today and how we make it authentic and relevant. This is not something exclusive to children and young people but has wonderful and questioning implications for all who are children of God.

We seek to inspire Scotland and our Church through our young people, celebrating their achievements, valuing their contribution to communities and creating new opportunities for them to shine locally, nationally and globally. The Church of Scotland has a considerable 'reach'. As we continue the process of looking at who we are, what we do, how we do it, and how this relates to our witness to God and our world, we will discover ways in which we must use imagination and provide links and introductions that will benefit our Churches, including our younger people.

This Church Toolkit gives a number of ideas of things to do and ways to involve young people however they connect to your Church. Toolkits are only of use if they are put into use, and this will involve imagination in using some of the ideas on offer. We hope that that the suggestions and ideas will spark off ideas that you can use in your context. But please, be encouraged to DO something. There will also be Presbytery and national events and initiatives across the country for churches and young people to be involved in throughout the year.

The theme of '**Encounter**' will shape the next General Assembly. Who are the people we meet, what do we share with them, what do they share with us, and how does that encounter shape our faith? In the engagement we have and could have, with our children and young people, now is a time for encounter, dreams and visions, and then for thought, planning and action.

I hope you enjoy working with the Toolkit, engaging and celebrating with young people during 2018 and may this enrich the lives of your Churches and communities.

Rt Revd Dr Derek Browning
Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland



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I have a dream for a Church that makes the most of its young people, empowering its youth to have more of a say and influence on the church; a church that challenges and inspires their youth; a church that recognises the value of young people within the body of Christ; a church which works towards more opportunities for intergenerational work and conversations; a church which listens, respects and acts on the views of young people; a church which seeks to develop God-given gifts and callings within young people.

On behalf of the many young people within the Kirk, I would like to add my voice to that of the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, to encourage churches to make the most of the opportunities of the Year of Young People; to get involved with talking with young people within and beyond the church walls, engaging them in the life of the church and planning some special activities with them during this year.



I have a dream for our church which I believe, hope and pray can become a reality. Can we work towards that dream together?

Robin Downie

Robin Downie
Youth Moderator of the 2017 National Youth Assembly

Get Involved!

Scotland's first ever Year of Young People is happening in 2018. The Church of Scotland plans to be actively involved, through events and activities, celebrating church engagement with children and young people at local, presbytery and national levels. We want young people to be at the heart of designing, developing and deciding what shape the Year takes and how churches get involved.

'This is an amazing opportunity and we would like to encourage the participation of all local churches in **Year of Young People 2018** services and activities during 2018. Seize the moment God has given for our generation'. Rt Rev Dr Derek Browning **Moderator General Assembly of the Church of Scotland**



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Year of Young People 2018 – a National Initiative

The Scottish Government is working with a number of delivery partners, for a national programme of celebratory events, organised by other national bodies, which all ages can enjoy. A number of national organisations are encouraging youth engagement and ensuring young people's views are heard and acted upon. YoYP 2018 Ambassadors have been recruited to represent every local authority in Scotland and promote the year-long engagement. We encourage churches to get involved in some of these events too.

There are 6 core themes, identified by young people, that the Scottish Government encourage us to explore, during the Year of Young People 2018:

- **Participation** – looking at how young people can influence public services and decisions which affect their lives.
- **Education** – creating a stronger role for young people in shaping their learning.
- **Health and Wellbeing** – supporting young people to lead healthier, active lives and have opportunities to learn about and improve their mental health and resilience.
- **Equality and Discrimination** – broadcasting the value of young Scots, challenging negative perceptions of young people, and supporting young people to take leading roles in challenging discrimination in all its forms.
- **Enterprise and Regeneration** – celebrating young people's role in innovation, entrepreneurship and the Scottish economy as well as making Scotland a greener and more pleasant place to live
- **Culture** – celebrating young people's talent and contribution to Scottish culture and arts.

Year of Young People 2018 – Church of Scotland Engagement

Throughout the Year of Young People 2018, we would like to encourage all churches to be involved and explore new ways to involve and recognise children and young people within the life of the church. We hope to foster a renewed focus on, and celebration of, children and young people in our churches and communities. Churches both large and small, those with children and young people and those with none can all pray, hold a celebratory service and plan something new. We would encourage all churches to think about how to enable participation and involvement of children and young people and to celebrate who they are and what they are involved in.

EVERY CONGREGATION CAN PRAY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OF OUR NATION

We hope this year will:

- Provide a platform for young people to have their views heard and acted upon
- Encourage church communities to involve and include young people
- Showcase the amazing talents of young people through events and media
- Develop better understanding, co-operation and respect between generations
- Recognise and celebrate the impact the church community has on young people's lives
- Recognise, celebrate and develop the role of those in ministry with young people in the church (paid and voluntary)
- Provide opportunities for young people to participate fully in the life of the church

Through active involvement in the Year of Young People 2018, we hope to see the Church of Scotland change develop and grow so that in the future:



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- Young people have more opportunities to be welcomed, included and accepted as equal members of local churches
- Churches are more intentional about engaging with children and young people
- There are more opportunities for intergenerational work and conversations
- Young people have a greater say in decisions about the church and their lives
- Young people are recognised and valued within the Body of Christ

This Toolkit has lots of ideas of things that every congregation could do during the Year of Young People 2018. We encourage involving children and young people in discussions and planning for what you might do during the year.

Church Involvement:

- Every congregation can hold a **Year of Young People 2018 Service on Sunday January 28th**.
- Every congregation can pray with and for children and young people.
- Every congregation can seek God for new ways to connect with children and young people during the year.
- Services that encourage particular prayer and involvement of young people could be held throughout the year eg Week of Prayer for Christian Unity; Lent and Easter; Harvest; Advent and Christmas, Christian Aid Week; Back to School Sunday; a Sunday to appreciate the work of your volunteers.

Church and Community Events:

- Your church could plan and run a community event for children or young people or for all ages together? You could also get involved in other community events being run by others during the Year of Young People.
- Your church or a group of churches could make a special effort to run something new for children and young people in 2018 eg a Holiday Club; trip or a celebration?
- You could encourage your young people to attend a Christian camp or a festival during the year, perhaps even offering to pay part of the cost.

Monthly Focus:

We would like to encourage churches to have a particular monthly focus throughout the year, giving a focus for prayer and engagement. **Additional suggestions, prayers and activities for each month will be promoted through the website. Do discuss with children and young people in your local situation what you might do around some of these themes.**

Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov/Dec
One Church / One Body	Health and Wellbeing	Community	Equality and Discrimination	Participation and Influence	Volunteers	Culture	Education	Global Justice	Harvest	Celebration



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Your church may wish to explore some of these focus areas and themes further during the year, together with children and young people – in prayer, services, campaigns and action. We would also encourage the sharing of stories and videos of what is being done by young people and churches around these themes.

www.churchofscotland.org.uk/yoyp

Presbytery Events:

- A number of Presbyteries are planning to run events for children and young people.
- Some are planning a training event for those who work with children and young people during the year.
- There could be opportunities for churches across a presbytery to plan to do something together.
- Contact your Presbytery Clerk or Children/ Youth Worker for information or offer to get involved to help run something to benefit all the churches in your area.
- Encourage your Presbytery to fill its Presbytery Youth Rep place at the General Assembly and encourage that person in their role.

National Events:

There will be a number of national initiatives and training opportunities for leaders and young people throughout the year.

The National Youth Assembly is an annual event that draws young adults (17-25) together from across the country, to worship together, learn together, discuss together and celebrate together.

http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/resources/children_and_youth/young_adults

More information on YoYP 2018 events will be on the Church of Scotland Children and Youth Events web pages: www.churchofscotland.org.uk/resources/children_and_youth/cyp_events

Share your Stories: We will be intentionally sharing stories around the theme of the month and we are sure that a lot will happen around many of these key areas that we would love to hear about!
YOYP@churchofscotland.org.uk

No Children and Young People? YOYP 2018 is for you too!

Increasing numbers of congregations now have no or very few children and young people in their Sunday Services. Some communities also have very few families and children. The Year of Young People can still be an opportunity for your congregation to look afresh at ways to engage with children and young people.

Even if there are few or no children and young people in your church or community, your church members will no doubt have young people they know in other areas (eg family members). You could



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pray for these young people. You could consider a gathering for grandparents to share their ideas as to how they can help in the faith formation of their grandchildren.

If there are children and young people in your community, you could explore what you can offer and how to encourage and support needs in your community. You might link in and do something together with another church for local children or young people. You could pray and support local schools. You could try something new as a one-off or a regular activity. If you do have a small number of children, be encouraged to invest relationally into them, in creative ways.

Here are some ideas that other congregations that have found themselves with few or no children have tried, having explored the needs of their community. Further information on these can be found on the website: www.churchofscotland.org.uk/childrenandyouth

Parent and Toddler Groups

Messy Church

Holiday Club

Midweek groups and Uniformed Organisations

Serve your Local School www.syls.org.uk/

Sponsor young people to attend the National Youth Assembly or a camp

We would still encourage you to find some ways to be involved, to pray and maybe do something new.

3 years ago we had around 10 children attending Sunday School sporadically and numbers were declining fast. The decision was made to fully look at the way we interact with our young people and their families and develop more of a vision and plan for our church. We developed some new ways of doing things and these are going very well. **Pram and praise for under 5s** on a Sunday. Our **Sunday School** now follow a weekly theme: Building together, games or arts and crafts - all scripture related. Once a fortnight our **Teen Zone** meets for fellowship, discussion and once a month we have a **Sunday Fun Day** - all our young people plus families and volunteers from the church come together for worship, arts and crafts and snacks. Our morning worship still takes place at 11am in conjunction with this. This year we celebrated that we now have 30 children coming along for Pram and Praise, we have around 25 in Sunday School and 8 teenagers now. In our Sunday Fun Day we can have around 60 folk from all stages of faith worshipping together.

Uddingston Old Parish Church



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Developing our Vision for Children and Young People Involving the Kirk Session

The Kirk Session has responsibility for guiding and shaping the direction and vision of the church. This vision needs to be of a church that includes, welcomes and engages children and young people in worship, mission and discipleship, within and beyond the church building.

During the Year of Young People we would encourage all Kirk Sessions to discuss, review and renew a vision for its ministry with children and young people. It is important also to find ways to hear from young people and engage them in these discussions. All this then needs to feed in to concrete plans for the future.

Some things a Kirk Session could do :

- You could ask yourselves questions about your work with children and young people and explore your church vision and strategy for children and young people eg read and discuss the sections of the **Learn: How Will Our Children Have Faith** publication www.churchofscotland.org.uk/learn; or use the **Children and our Church Health Check** at the end of this Toolkit
- You could engage with some thinking about youth and children's ministry eg read and discuss the sections of the **Learn: Children and Young People** publication www.churchofscotland.org.uk/learn
- You could think about how your Kirk Session can hear the ideas of children and young people and involve them in decisions and plans? You could do the **Have Your Say** exercise in this Toolkit and then discuss how you might respond to what the children and young people are saying.
- You could develop and approve ways in which the church can be involved throughout the Year of Young People 2018.
- You could discuss and agree upon a **Charter for Children and Young People** and how this can be implemented in your congregation. (A Church Charter can be found at the back of the Toolkit and a Template that you can develop yourself is on www.churchofscotland.org.uk/YOYP)

Resources to help in developing a church vision and strategy for ministry with children and young people:

How Will Our Children Have Faith – this Learn publication has 4 sections that can help a church to work through their vision for the church.



Where are our children and young people? Is what we are doing working? Should we employ a youth worker? 'How will our children have faith' will help congregations ask 'Why?' they should run a children or youth ministry before they ask 'How?' to do it. The guide will take you through four steps, helping you to reflect on and evaluate ministry with children and young people in your church. We hope that by working through this



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resource, congregations will be able to understand the importance and the purpose of their work with children and young people before starting up activities.

www.churchofscotland.org.uk/resources/learn/resources/how_will_our_children_have_faith

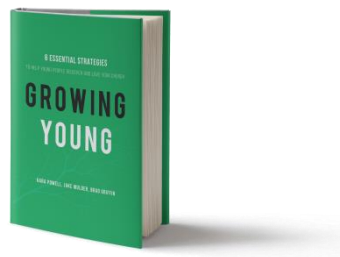
Learn: Children and Young People publication has articles exploring how we can be church together,



work together and be formed together. These all focus on the importance of thinking theologically; including children and young people in the community of faith and the importance of skilled and effective leadership. This is offered as a starting point for further thought, each offering questions to think about or for discussion, ideas for further reading, actions to try and resources to use. Available from

<https://standrewpress.hymnsam.co.uk/features/learn>

Growing Young explores 6 essential strategies for churches to become more effective in their



ministry with young people - involving and retaining young people in the congregational community, as well as helping them develop a vibrant faith in Jesus Christ. What helps in engaging young people effectively? What helps young people develop lasting faith that carries them through the challenges of adulthood? Which faith experiences help them commit to following Jesus beyond their youth ministry and family contexts?

<http://churchesgrowingyoung.com/>

We have been blessed with good numbers of young children and their families in church and take seriously the belief that God has laid on us the responsibility of nurturing these "little ones" in their faith. We spent time as a Kirk Session reviewing the different ways that we connect and engage with children and families. We have a 'Sticky Faith Group' who report at every Session meeting. We recently devoted a full Kirk Session to exploring recent research about children and the church and the development of faith and discussed how this could help us develop a renewed vision and focus on our ministry to children and families. This led to an immediate change in the way we do Communion with our Communion Table re-positioned and children fully involved in welcoming new members to Communion. It was moving to see them lining up with grown-ups to shake hands and hug our new members at the formal welcome. We are keen to develop and grow in this area and know we have a long way to go but we have at least made a start!

Barclay Viewforth Church, Edinburgh



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***Develop your Vision for Children and Youth
Ministry
What will you DO during the Year of Young
People?***

Further resources to use with Kirk Sessions and others in your church are in www.churchofscotland.org.uk/yoyp - in the Resources section

Eg **Now You're Talking** – ways to engage and listen to children and young people

God's Heart for Children and Young People – Bible verses that can be explored, used in sermons and Kirk Sessions

Church Charter

Our Church video – children and young people sharing their thoughts about the church

Year of Young People Prayer