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1. **Introduction**

The National Youth Assembly (NYA) took place on the 16th-19th August 2013 in the West Park Centre, Dundee. There were 111 delegates aged between 17-25 years old, all with some connection to the Church. The NYA is a residential weekend which exists primarily to give young people in the Church of Scotland a voice in decision making at a national level. Alongside this, the weekend allows delegates to gather with other young Christians, build community with each other, learn and worship. The theme for the weekend was “Identity – Who do you say that I am?”. The Assembly considered this theme in different contexts; in relation to the Church of Scotland, in relation to Scotland’s national identity, and in relation to ourselves as individuals. The Assembly used this theme as the basis for our daily discussions, in worship, in workshops and for reflection.

The NYA is an event which has evolved throughout the years and is continuing to evolve, striving to best serve the young people who attend and explores ways (including supporting existing ways) in which young people have a voice in the Church of Scotland at a national level. Following a consultation and planning weekend with young people in 2012, it was decided that the NYA would move away from its traditional debate format and move toward a more consensual, open forum discussion model. With this in mind, there was a desire to record and present as much of the feedback from as many different delegates as possible, highlighting the breadth of opinion which exists amongst delegates, valuing diversity and conversation and not presenting simply the majority.

To ensure that this feedback can be used in the future, this supplementary report has been prepared, being the full record of feedback from the Assembly. It was simply not possible to include all of the information gathered in the final blue book report so here you will find diagrams, further summaries, quotes and reflections from delegates of the Assembly. This hopefully allows the reader to see the breadth of opinion which exists within the Assembly and gives a flavour of what was discussed, highlighting issues which are important for young people in the Church of Scotland.

This report is designed to be read alongside the summarised blue book report, expanding on the feedback presented. As mentioned in the blue book report, the Youth Assembly discussed various themes across the weekend. This report will lead through all of those themes in the same order as presented in the blue book.
2. **Identity in the Church of Scotland**

The output of the discussion in regard to the **Identity of the Church of Scotland** has been condensed and collated into a visual form through mind maps. We have grouped ideas to fit into a number of main themes: “the body of Christ”, “adaptability, flexibility and individuality”, “diversity”, “inclusivity and care for all in Scotland” and “organisation system”. Throughout this section of the supplementary report, there will be quotes from delegates of the Assembly which relate to the specific section.

2.1 **Main themes**

[Image of a mind map with the following themes: Adaptability, Flexibility & Individuality, Diversity, Within the Body of Christ, Inclusivity and Care for all in Scotland, Organisational System, What identifies us as the Church of Scotland]
2.2 Adaptability, Flexibility and Individuality

“We talked about the flexibility of the church – rather than having rules like: “this is what you do for this service”, it’s more a set of suggestions, and each congregation has flexibility over how they worship, and the minister gets to know what they’re comfortable with and can occasionally push them out of their comfort zone. The Church of Scotland is extremely diverse and is quite accepting of other denominations and others’ views – even if we don’t agree with them, we’re willing to take them into account.”

2.3 Diversity

“Ministers often have the right of conscience, for example, the Church of Scotland made a huge decision that if you were divorced you could remarry in a Church of Scotland but ministers can use the conscience clause. Diversity is not about saying what we all must do.”
There’s a lot of emphasis on the minister’s choice. Also, the parish has the right to call a minister. We’re very good at recognising individuality.”

“A really important thing about the Church of Scotland is women in ministry – we were among the first to ordain women. There are some problems around gender, but I think it will move more towards equality.”

“It’s not just about women in ministry. We heard earlier about deacons originally being women. For every role - elder, minister, deacon - it’s not just a case of women or men, but that they can do every role equally.”

2.4 Inclusivity

“CrossReach, the Social Care Council of the Church of Scotland provides care for the elderly, substance abusers, children and lots of other groups. I believe they are the second biggest Social Care provider in Scotland, after the NHS.”
“In our group, we were talking about the sense of responsibility in the Church of Scotland, to care for all of the people in Scotland. There is a sense of responsibility for the whole country; a greater sense of responsibility, that other churches don’t necessarily have.”

2.5 Organisational Structure

“...We discussed that people who weren’t elders might not have as big a voice. Some churches have Committees, so people who are not elders can feed in. There are also New Charge Developments, where there’s a slightly different way of doing things.”

2.6 The body of Christ
“When we think about what it is to be identified as the Church of Scotland, things we’d think to be most important, like following Jesus, are not unique to us. A lot of things are organisational things. When you introduce yourself you say what your job is or what you study - I think as a church it’s important to say that we’re God's children. We are the body of Christ.”

3. What do we feel positive about in the Church of Scotland?

After a broad discussion about what identifies the Church of Scotland, the delegates shared personal stories of what they felt positive about in Church. General themes from delegates have been drawn out of the feedback and summarised in the bullet points below. These are not quotations and are designed to give a flavour of the various stories that were shared.

3.1 Diversity

- Many delegates felt that the Church is accepting and mostly non-judgemental.
- Delegates generally appreciated the openness and care shown to individuals.
- Delegates discussed the idea of being one church throughout Scotland – diversity was noted, and people appreciated the practice of ministering to/caring for every part of Scotland.
- Delegates felt that there is generally a good approach to keeping a balance of old and new traditions.
- Many delegates appreciated the long standing traditions of the Church.
- There was discussion surrounding the breadth of worship, theology and humans that exist within the Church. People liked that there could be church individuality and flexibility.
- It was noted that there were various styles of music and there was mixed feedback in relation to what delegates preferred in this regard.

3.2 Ministry and training

- Some delegates felt that the rigorous training involved and calling keeps quality over quantity. The training is long but dedicated.
- Delegates felt that ministry was biblically focused and this was appreciated by many.
- There was some positive discussion surrounding the sacraments and the importance of this.
- There was some positive discussion around the Westminster confession, 3rd article.
- Delegates appreciated the different forms of ministry – elders, deacons, ministers of Word and Sacrament etc.- and the richness that these forms bring.
- Delegates valued and encouraged the role of women in leadership.
- Delegates felt it was important that Jesus is the figurehead.
- There was some discussion about the positive aspects of a minister’s discretion and there was particular discussion on the presence of a conscience clause.
3.3 NYA/Youth involvement

- Delegates appreciated the opportunities given through the National Youth Assembly and more broadly, COSY.
- Delegates appreciated youth work in their local churches and many shared positive stories of good experiences.
- Many delegates were involved in outreach work and enjoyed participating in this.

3.4 Interdenominational and Interfaith relationships

- There was positive discussion about the role of chaplains in various contexts.
- Delegates shared stories of community work and how this helps bring people together; e.g. outreach, fellowship, mutual encouragement, justice.
- Delegates were keen to develop interdenominational and interfaith relationships – e.g. ecumenically, CofS in other countries, World Mission

3.5 Transparency

- Many delegates feel that the Church doesn’t shy away from issues.
- Some delegates discussed that it was good that the General Assembly was streamed live to people globally and locally.
- Some delegates felt informed of what is going on the Church on a national level and appreciated the use of social media.

3.6 Adaptability

- There was an overall positive feeling about different churches recognising the importance of balancing old traditions and change, particularly in worship.
- Many delegates appreciated the general theme of adaptability and inclusivity within their churches.

4. What do we feel negative about in the Church of Scotland?

As well as discussing positive experiences of the Church of Scotland, delegates also shared some negative experiences allowing opportunity to reflect on what they could do to be involved in making improvements.

4.1 Age gaps

- There was a general feeling that the ages between those of 25 and 40 were under-represented in the Church and therefore it could be a struggle to establish connections with those in similar circumstances to your own if you were in this age bracket.
• Some delegates found that when they were too old for Sunday School that they felt slightly displaced within their congregations as there was a lack of further teaching and support available for teenagers.
• It was felt that there weren't many other opportunities for young people to get together other than at the National Youth Assembly and other events run by separate organisations that people might not be familiar with or didn't hear about.
• It was thought that young people could be more involved in the rituals of church life such as with serving communion.

4.2 Lack of communication

• Some delegates had experienced ministers delivering or leading services in a monotone and un-dynamic way which resulted in them losing interest.
• There was some discussion about how for churches with only a few or no young people in the congregation it is difficult to hear from them and to take into account perspectives that young people may share.
• Some delegates felt that their congregations feared change and didn't recognise the need to reach out and get involved with what their wider community was doing.
• There was a general feeling amongst some delegates of a lack of communication, unity and support within congregations.

4.3 Lack of clarity

• Some delegates felt that it was important for individual churches to make very clear to potential members how the Church of Scotland works and functions on a national level, and the history behind it. This would also enable them to make the best decision possible when thinking about becoming a member and to fully appreciate this decision and get the most out of it.
• Some delegates acknowledged that it could be quite intimidating for a lone young person to join the church and as much support as possible needed to be available for those wishing to become members.

4.4 Age gaps in ministry

• Some delegates thought that although the training that ministers go through is intensive and thorough, once ministers are ordained there needs to be more support available to prevent them from being overwhelmed. As people become ministers at various stages in life, this is very important as some people will be newly ordained from university and some will be embarking on a second or third career. Therefore support and encouragement needs to be on offer that recognises this.
• Some delegates thought that churches didn't see and/or recognise the positive contributions young ministers could make, and many with callings were being told to ‘come back later’
4.5 Inequality

- Some delegates felt that youth work was just as important in areas with less young people as with areas with many young people and thought that this was sometimes overlooked.
- Delegates commented that they felt that there was a lack of teaching available past Sunday School for teenagers and other folk to continue with and that as a result of this, there was also a lack of support for those in uncertain positions who may have reached the stage where they have a lot of questions or may be considering becoming members, but who found it difficult to access resources and people who could guide them.
- Some delegates had experienced congregations where only a few people were involved in contributing to church life and others found it hard to join in as a result of this. Also some found that meetings were elder-only rather than open for all members, which again made it hard for other people to get involved. There was also a feeling of some churches having quite rigid structures which also made it difficult for new people who weren't familiar with them to take part or who wanted to suggest changes to do so.
- Some delegates recognised that there was a lack of opportunities for young people to get together. The National Youth Assembly often has limited spaces and other events may be run by unfamiliar organisations or not be that well publicised.
- Delegates commented that ingrained habits could be a barrier to new people feeling welcome, as long-standing members of the congregation got into habits and groups that they were reluctant to change.
- Some delegates thought that the voting system over-represented certain areas as a 20 person congregation gets the same vote as an 100 person congregation.
- It was commented on that young people could be more involved in the rituals of church life such as with serving communion.
- Some delegates found that building communication bridges between old and young members of the congregation could be very tricky, and led to increased inequality between older and younger members.

4.6 Patronising attitudes/misunderstanding others

- Some delegates felt that in some cases congregations could come across as unwelcoming and difficult to integrate yourself into. They could also be patronising towards younger people and disrespectful of their choices and therefore not completely accepting of them which in a church environment many would argue is an important factor. Sexism is also a problem particularly in how contributions to church life are made (very often it is only women making tea and coffee after the service for example). Also the male-centric language that is used in many churches has to be taken into consideration in how that can affect people.
- Many delegates felt that ministers could be in some cases a 'one-man-band' and not delegate well which could result in them having too much work and also too much power in terms of how the church operated. Flexibility and teamwork were broadly perceived as very important.
• It was felt amongst some delegates that some congregations and churches were too invested in traditions and didn't respond well to proposed changes. This could re-iterate stereotypes that label the church as an institution that hasn't adapted well to modern times.

4.7 Buildings and structures

• Some delegates felt that too much time and energy is spent preserving certain buildings that might not be worth preserving, and that this focus should be shifted towards constructing completely new buildings for worship.
• In terms of operational structures, it was felt by some delegates that too much time is given to thinking and deliberating over decisions before making them. While it is excellent to be thorough and careful in decision making, it is also important to find a viable balance between speed and deliberation.
• It was felt by many delegates that often in congregations only a small group of people would have a say in how the church operated which made it difficult for new ideas to be heard, as the church would have quite rigid decision-making structures. It was also thought that meetings to which only elders are admitted are not beneficial to the whole congregation as there is not enough transparency.
• Some delegates highlighted that often people have a tendency in congregations to sit in the same place every week and retain certain habits, which can make it harder for new people to feel welcome.

4.8 Miscellaneous

• Some delegates felt that there needed to be a more varied range of hymns in some churches, as some people will be more comfortable with more modern hymns and others will be happier with more traditional hymns but both need to be considered.
• Delegates shared that they felt that sometimes there was a tendency for congregations to become competitive over numbers with other congregations in the same denomination and that this wasn't at all necessary.
• Some delegates felt that some people had their children baptised but didn't take them back to church after this, or did very sporadically. Delegates felt that churches could be doing more for these families.
• Delegates discussed that in some cases Sunday Schools were shrinking as a result of a lack of support available to leaders which made it harder for these kind of services to be facilitated. Also if leaders are not being supported properly, Sunday School can become repetitive and leaders can find it difficult to access new materials and ideas.
5. **How can the church continue to adapt to a changing society?**

Delegates also had the opportunity to discuss what the church is currently doing to adapt to our changing society and what it can/should be doing.

5.1 **Ecumenism**

- Many delegates felt it was important that the Church continued to develop ecumenical relations and events for all ages.
- Many delegates commented that there was benefit in getting to know about other denominations and that a good place to start open dialogue was with “getting to know you” sessions.
- Some delegates had been on trips abroad and had experienced other denominations on this level. Some delegates felt it was important that these people share the experience of meeting and worshipping with those of a different denomination to influence church at home.

5.2 **Community**

- Many delegates commented that it was important to be active in creating spaces for open and inclusive conversations in a non-judgemental Christ-like manner. There were suggestions of topics for conversation based around current news topics including the upcoming referendum.
- Some delegates felt that it was important to think about money more, especially with how we react to poverty in local communities.
- Some delegates felt the Church should be more active in regard to co-operating with schools to encourage religious observance.
- Some delegates had experience of local mission work and shared stories of these. Some felt that this should be explored in all churches, identifying needs relevant to each local community.
- Some delegates highlighted that churches should judge the success of community work on how well and effectively we serve the people in the community and not on how many are in the pews.
- Many delegates encouraged local churches being actively involved in their communities with the aim of identifying needs. It was highlighted that not all community work should be focussed on young people as this does not suit all communities.
- Some delegates felt that ministers should be more active in communities and should be active in seeking opportunities for mission.
- One delegate suggested selling some of the properties in the church to put into mission work in communities.
- Some delegates felt that it would be positive for churches to promote the work of the Church in local communities in regard to particular topical issues to highlight that the Church is active and relevant to society.
5.3 What is Church? / Mission

- Many delegates felt that churches should focus on reaching people. Positive examples included: Messy Church, Fresh Expressions, emerging church. Initiatives should be focussed on going to where people are and not expecting people to come to you.
- Some delegates commented on positive global initiatives and many felt that this should be explored further.
- Some delegates felt that the Church needed to go back to basics with mission and that Jesus should be the centre of all the work done. Some delegates felt that mission work was sometimes over complicated.
- Some delegates proposed ideas for what the Church should be doing: visit those in prison, clothe the naked, feed the hungry.
- A few delegates felt that society has a lot less faith – they felt that we need to accept and survive with this. Some delegates highlighted the dangers of following society and that the Church needs to keep remembering what we’re here for.
- Some delegates suggested that we take more heed of what hymns are telling us i.e. “I am the Church”, “The Church is where God’s people are praising”.

5.4 Public Image

- Some delegates felt there should be transparency in what the Church is doing and that there should be more clarity. Some delegates felt however, that there was clarity and that individuals should be more active about looking into matters.
- Some delegates felt that we need to be louder, but stop shouting, and start doing – it was felt by some that delegates could work harder as young people to be seen, not just heard.
- Some delegates questioned whether individual churches were open to change? Some felt that there was stigma with names used – e.g Sunday School, Kirk.
- Some delegates felt there could be opportunities to develop resources, on possible social issues which make the church less attractive or perhaps intimidating to young people.
- Some delegates felt the Church could develop the use of technology in the Church and engage more with people through the media and online. Some felt that the national Church was keeping up but individual local churches needed assistance.
- Some delegates felt that they required clarification on the Church’s position on issues, not already in the public eye. They felt that the public need to hear discussions within the church, not one set of opinions.

5.5 Accessibility

- Some delegates felt the Church could do more to provide opportunities for involvement and learning from each other – e.g learn from what older members can teach us.
- A few delegates highlighted that we should be providing a ministry of all believers – e.g youth groups leading services as opposed to traditional service, more wheelchair friendly churches, intergenerational services, niche services.
• Most delegates felt there should be accessible education and resources. Some delegates felt there could be more creative measures put in place for making resources.

5.6 Administration and General Assembly

• Some delegates felt that there should be more focus on Youth Presbyteries and getting these up and running.
• Some delegates felt that the Church should be uniting and communicating within congregations and build up from that. Some delegates felt that there should be more conversation that flows between Kirk and Assembly.
• Some delegates felt that the norm in the Church was to start things nationally and roll out to local congregations gradually. Some delegates felt that this should be turned round and that there may be more strength in developing local projects first and then to roll these out nationally.

5.7 Miscellaneous

• Some delegates felt that members of local congregations didn’t feel like they had a voice in the Church. Some delegates expressed a desire to promote the voice of the local congregation.
• Some delegates discussed the lack of young ministers and how this will present problems in the future.
• Most delegates felt that there should be a focus on the future, that we shouldn’t ignore the present and that we shouldn’t disrespect the past when discussing the future of the Church.

6. Questions put to the Assembly

After the discussions surrounding our identity within the Church of Scotland, a series of questions were put to the group at large to round up the issue of identity within the Church. Here are the questions and the results.

Is membership important for the future of the Church?
Yes – 49%
No – 38%
Don’t know – 13%

Is Sunday morning the best time for worship?
Yes – 6%
No – 12%
Sometimes – 17%
Yes, but not exclusively – 65%
Do you think you have a clear idea of what it means to be of the “Church of Scotland” – do you have a clear sense of the church’s identity?
Yes, very clear – 5%
Yes, clear – 20%
Clear-ish – 63%
No, not really – 9%
Not at all – 3%

Do you enjoy being part of the Church of Scotland?
Yes! Woo! I have a t-shirt/knitted jumper – 27%
Yes *insert serious face* - 43%
Meh! – 20%
No, not really – 4%
No, not at all – 0
I’m not part of it – 6%

Are you hopeful for the future of the Church of Scotland?
Yes! – 37%
Sometimes – 59%
No – 3%
Not thought about it – 1%

7. Imagining Scotland’s Future

The blue book report contains a summary of the themes that were drawn out of the participative discussion process led by the Church and Society Council. These themes are expanded upon further in this section. Here is a diagram which shows all of the values which delegates deemed to be important in Scotland’s future, regardless of the result in the upcoming Referendum. The larger a word is shown in the diagram, the more frequently that word was mentioned by a delegate of the Assembly:
7.1 Discrimination

The National Youth Assembly along with the rest of the Church of Scotland has long been involved in campaigns to end discrimination. Therefore, it is of little surprise that at this year’s Assembly, when discussing the future of Scotland, a common theme among delegates was that they wanted to see a Scotland free from discrimination.

Society lives in a much more connected world today than at any time previous in history; many of the delegates who are studying at university have friends from countries and cultures very different from Scotland, and even within Scotland there is a wide variety of cultures and peoples. It is therefore most poignant that we, both as the Church and within society at large, strive to welcome everyone regardless of their culture or birthplace, or indeed any other method of discrimination.

Many delegates of the Assembly believed that the best way for this to be realised is to “celebrate diversity through community, education, the arts and sports”. The effect of this will be a Scotland that better reflects the way that Jesus lived his life on earth and a Scotland that is truly just and loving. For Jesus did not only talk with the Galileans or engage solely with the Pharisees rather he offered living water to a Samaritan,¹ healed a Canaanite woman’s daughter,² and even dined with a tax collector.³ In doing so he broke down the cultural norms of his time to share the Good News that Jesus is Lord, and as his followers he charges us to do likewise.⁴

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¹ John 4:14  
² Matthew 15:28  
³ Luke 19:1-10  
⁴ Matthew 26:16-20
7.2 Life Long Learning

A resounding message from this year’s NYA was “EQUALITY”. We will witness after the referendum, regardless of its outcome, a changed nation. A fair, ethical, and life-long education system was pinnacle in the discussions as it was understood that this will allow positive attitudes surrounding equality to brew. Many delegates of the Assembly deemed that the best means of supporting diversity, immigration, tolerance and positive attitudes that challenged stigmas was through comprehensive education.

The education system that was pictured was not only comprehensive but had to be accessible to all – a system that encouraged equality because it was built on equality, with support for all. The vision delegates of the NYA shared for the education system was that it included the provisions to support those with disabilities, those who spoke English as a second language, and those who did not wish to engage with a traditional education system. Several individuals brought forward in the small group discussions examples of where they felt the current system had failed them or those close to them.

The aspect people felt most strongly about was that the education system should be ethical. The current Curriculum for Excellence promotes four central capacities: Successful Learners, Confident Individuals, Responsible Citizens and Effective Contributors. These are all undoubtedly positive but we felt that sometimes these failed to be implemented across all places and people; in our vision for a future Scotland we had a desire that education would be accessible to everyone. “Getting it Right for Every Child” aims to encourage young people’s well-being as a whole through any service they are involved with; it would be exceptionally helpful if the same attempts were made with education. It would appear one of the simplest ways to achieve the effect desired is through life-long, fully equal opportunities supported by all institutions. Any way the Church of Scotland could encourage this would be positive.

EDUCATION

Our Vision

an education system which is ethical in nature, nurturing individual and thus promoting positive attitudes and challenging stigma and discrimination. One which recognises education as a life-long endeavour and empowers each individual, giving them the skills to reach their full potential and encourage others within their community and beyond!
7.3 Sectarianism and Discrimination Free

While looking at the topical and political issues surrounding Scotland’s future, a society free from sectarianism was a frequently raised topic amongst the delegates. This concept of a less discriminatory society was supported by many similar statements made by the small groups. One of these was:

“We believe that Scotland should be free from fear and discrimination and should celebrate diversity through community, education, the arts and sport.”

Currently, culture suggests that after school people should go to college and/or University as the natural progression. This isn’t the right thing for everyone, for example some go to do apprenticeships in joinery, plumbing etc. which are highly skilled trades, but are seen to be doing it because they “didn’t make the cut” to go into Higher Education. The current school system needs to be challenged so that other options are embraced and valued, with the knowledge that University isn’t the only path. Schools need to be better at catering for the needs of each individual pupil so that everyone utilises personal skills and talents in their chosen career, contributing to a respectful and just society.

As such, it was felt by many delegates of the NYA that schools should aim to educate young people in a more rounded fashion; including in citizenship, encouraging tolerance and condemning sectarian behaviour (regardless of the denomination of the school). This is in line with the Curriculum for Excellence’s goals to produce “responsible citizens and effective contributors”. Delegates of the NYA would like to see this supported by the Church of Scotland wherever possible.
7.4 Justice in Scotland’s Future

An important part in the future of any nation is their relationships with other nations and their standing in both national political platforms and international political platforms. This means that if we become stable within our own legal and judiciary system, we may become a moral compass for other nations and inspire them to right their own judiciary system.

Many delegates believed that a fair and just judiciary system is an important foundation in any nation as the people need to be curtailed to ensure they do not run amok and cause chaos that will jeopardize the standing of said country within international organizations such as the United Nations. Some delegates felt that, to ensure that the judiciary system is fair and just, everyone should be treated equally; there should be no discrimination based on sex, race, class or family situations. Some delegates felt that there should be no half measures when it comes to handing out punishment, there should be set punishments for each and every crime and no one should be given “early release” for good behaviour. If anything, good behaviour should be the indication the person should be provided with more help to prepare them for their eventual release and life after their punishment. It was broadly felt that the judiciary system should also show love and compassion to those who have been wrongfully convicted of crimes and they should be given the help to have their voices heard.

Overall, delegates broadly believed that the future of Scotland’s justice system should be fair, equal and free from discrimination. It should put us in a position where we are seen on a wider political spectrum than just local platforms and be a way of strengthening future relationships.

7.5 Democracy in Scotland’s Future

Delegates of the Assembly broadly felt that to encourage equality and fairness throughout Scotland, it is vital to start off with a democratic political system. So far, Scotland has differentiated itself from Westminster with a more proportionate voting system in place, and the youth assembly agreed this should be continued in future, if not extended to become as proportionate as possible.

The delegates broadly felt that fairness should be at the heart of political life, with politicians respecting and treating each other equally regardless of what party they belong to, and extend this to their constituents similarly. If MPs are seen to be co-operating in a pleasant manner there is the hope that it this trickle down through society, acting as role models for ethical behaviour.

Democracy itself advocates everyone in society who is eligible to vote having a political voice, therefore driving forward our vision for Scottish life being free from discrimination. Considering that politicians make important decisions that impact on the entire of Scotland, if equality and fairness is absent we will end up with laws and regulations that do not minister to egalitarianism, counteracting any attempts at abolishing discrimination in other walks of life. It is for this reason that many delegates of the NYA believe that the Church of Scotland should do everything in its power to support a democratic Scotland and endeavour to comply with democratic principles in its own institutions and debates.
8. **Barriers**

During the weekend a number of conversations were had regarding the barriers perceived by young people in relation to different aspects of their relationship with the Church. Specifically we considered the barriers to young people coming into church for the first time, the barriers to staying in the church past the age of 14, the barriers to being given responsibility and the barriers to entering ministry.

The conversations brought up a wealth of personal experiences and many interesting points which prompted further consideration and discussion.

8.1 **Barriers to young people coming to church for the first time**

One of the main barriers to young people coming to church for the first time is the fear of what their peers will think of them. Either their parents do not believe, or there is a fear that their friends will judge them or react negatively and they do not want to deal with that embarrassment.

Today’s culture means that there is more focus on socializing at the weekends and so this means that less young people will want to go to church if it is on a Sunday morning, particularly if they have been out the previous night and are tired/hungover. On the other hand, it may be the case that there are more interesting youth groups and activities to do and they prefer to go to these rather than church.

Another thing that was highlighted as a barrier related to social pressure was that people who evangelise on the streets, talking about God and church, can be quite intimidating and therefore young people can be put off trying to go to church.

Young people themselves may have stereotyped the Church before trying it. There are many preconceived ideas and misconceptions of the church, for example “it’s boring”, “everyone wears their Sunday Best”, “it’s old fashioned”.

“It’s full of old people” is a big barrier as there can be a real sense of isolation if there are not many other people of the same age involved. On the other hand, if there are lots of young people in the church, cliques may have been formed and it can be difficult to join in and make friends.

Past experiences can also deter young people from starting to go to a new church if they had a negative experience previously.
Similar to some of the barriers related to social pressure, young people are still fearful of being judged when they step into a church. This can just be entirely their own attitude, but there is a fear of awkwardness and people in the church stereotyping them. If you do not know anyone at the church, it can be even more intimidating than going with a friend. Church buildings can be intimidating, as can under (or over!) friendly church members. There is a fear of offending people or of confrontation by taking the wrong seat. Some young people have had church members ‘take the huff’ when someone new sits in their seat.

The church’s place in the community can also be a barrier to young people wanting to join. If there is a decreased presence of the church in the community, less people will want to go to it. The welcome at the front door makes a big impact on people’s impression of the church; it is more likely to be positive if they are given a warm and friendly welcome.

Also, many young people are not interested in church because they do not see the GOOD it is doing, especially as a lot of press is focused on the BAD it can do around the world.

In some cases, it may just be the difficulty of finding a church that suits them that prevents them joining one.

You don’t necessarily know what to do.

As young people are coming to church for the first time, they are unfamiliar with their surroundings and are consequently unsure what to do and how to behave. The things they may be unclear about are: when to stand/sit for hymns, what to say during the Lord’s Prayer and what happens during the 3-fold amen. Again, there is also a fear of being judged, and awkward moments. Depending on the style of worship, they may also feel unfamiliar if there is a lack of contemporary style music.

8.2 Barriers to staying in the church past the age of 14

During the discussion which centred around what the barriers might be to staying in church past the age of 14, most of the points raised were connected to a person’s surroundings and stage of life at this point, which is naturally very transient and could lead to questions about the place of faith in their lives. However it was also noted that sometimes there is a lack of engagement and support for teenagers in certain congregations which could definitely be the case if this age group comprises a small part of the overall congregation.

If they (young people) have a role they’re more likely to stick around.

Support came up as quite a significant barrier, as many people felt there was a lack of support for those who were interested, after having been through Sunday School, in wanting to explore youth leadership positions particularly in relation to worship. This was connected to the wider issue of the
limited number of people in general that were in a position to facilitate this. This would also relate to teenagers of this age group often not being given any responsibility which they may well have had in Sunday school, in a wider church context once they have left that stage. Although in some cases teenagers are invited to become elders, they are not necessarily guided through this process enough, or given enough information in how to fulfil their role. A lack of support in other senses was mentioned as well, for example having little or no Christian friends may mean that it is hard to find people to talk to and discuss your faith with, and also means you might lack mentors that you might find more approachable than other members of your congregation. This may also mean that you lack the environment to critically discuss and challenge your beliefs in a safe and constructive way.

"Who am I?"

There may be peer pressure at school to distance yourself from being perceived as religious as quite often this can be misconstrued and lead to negative assumptions being made. Also just in terms of time management, other Sunday activities might start to take priority over church, such as sports or other youth groups. Also at this age many are going through a bit of an identity crisis, suddenly finding themselves in a strange transient situation, having left childhood but still not quite at adulthood. Therefore they might be re-thinking how church fits in to their life and not sure where to go with their faith next.

Suddenly you’re in the big bad wide church.

The transition from Sunday school to full services, if not supported, can be difficult. There are new components to the service that you are unfamiliar with, and sermons often aren’t the most engaging part! Many find it difficult to concentrate and will lose interest in trying to engage if there is no one to discuss it with. The idea of 'Teen Church' was mentioned, a space for worship but in which questions and group discussion would be included in the service, as a way for teenagers to build confidence and share experiences. However many also value the more intergenerational approach that a traditional service provides.

8.3 What are the barriers to being given responsibility?

At the National Youth Assembly 2013 the delegates discussed the barriers they faced to being given responsibilities within the church.

You’re a young person so you do young people things.

Some delegates felt that it was a common occurrence to be assigned a job associated with technology, whether that be the sound system or dealing with visual presentations, just because of the age group they fell into and the stereotype that comes along with this.
Also the young people felt that they are given jobs probably more suitable for someone younger than themselves and their individual talents and callings aren’t being considered when given a role within the church.

Another major issue was the fact that older members of the congregation are already heavily involved in the job already and tend to stand in the same position for long stretches of time without reassessment of individuals skills. They felt that there was a need for an invitation to step up to these roles to avoid causing any friction.

**Age does not dictate wisdom.**

Some felt that the older generation can sometimes hold a preconceived idea of the youth of today and this can present barriers to gaining responsibilities. They felt that the media presentation of the youth makes older people suspicious of them and don’t recognise them as individuals with a voice. Also, they felt that the older people think they can be immature and should be “seen and not heard”.

On the other hand some young people felt that they were under pressure to represent the whole of the youth of the church. It was also expressed that there was a level of tokenism regarding the church’s attitude and interaction with the young people.

**The church needs to give leadership opportunities earlier - small opportunities to prepare them.**

It was expressed that young people sometimes find it hard to fully commit in the way other older people may be able to. This presents a barrier as the young person may not be able to fully commit when they do not know where their life will be heading, especially those with university plans. The scheduling of meetings and training can also be an issue as many young people cannot afford to take time away from work or university to attend daytime events.

Some delegates also felt that perhaps a more long term planning procedure was needed to allow for them to organise themselves accordingly and to gain experience first before being given the responsibility.

**Sometimes when you've grown up in a church you're still looked at as a little child.**

Another issue that was raised was some individual congregations and ministers reluctance to change. This caused issues and barriers to gaining responsibilities within the church. It was suggested that many congregations were stuck in the way they had always done things and that the same people carry out the same jobs and roles. Some felt that the ministers also had a certain level
of reluctance to embrace new ways of worship. This caused barriers to form as the young people's abilities and skills weren’t able to be recognised.

It was also put forward that perhaps there are not many barriers at all and that the young people just hold a great fear of “messing up”. They feel like they have to perform to a standard that might be too high, especially if they have grown up within the church and known by the congregation. This self-perceived fear can be overcome by support and reassurance from the people within the church.

8.4 Barriers to entering ministry

During our discussions around the barriers to young people entering the Ministry there were a number of points for consideration brought up by the small groups.

Some of these barriers are not those which apply exclusively to young people and some are perceptions which young people have, as well as personal experiences of those who have felt a call to ministry, including those who have begun the Enquiry process.

After first feeling a call, the first step for many people is to seek guidance and support in discerning their call. Some young people don’t know who to talk to and there were concerns that if a young person were to talk to the wrong person first, they may be discouraged and not get the information and help that they need.

It was also noted that there was a lack of knowledge about the Vocations Conference, with about half of the delegates never having heard of it. Sometimes this is due to the Conference not being well publicised within individual congregations, but equally that it is perhaps not often advertised to young people. It was suggested that Ministers and Youth Workers could do more to encourage young people to attend, with some groups remarking on the absence of the Church at careers events, which may mean young Christians miss out on the opportunity to discuss Ministry more informally.

Even if a call to Ministry is recognised sometimes young people feel they don’t get relevant opportunities within their congregation to explore their abilities in relation to their call. Some people felt that young people are “pigeon-holed” and given limited responsibilities. They feel that without the opportunity to experience things like the leading of people in worship it results in young people not knowing whether or not they are really suited to Ministry. In some cases people don’t necessarily understand what the role of a Minister entails and without these opportunities compare themselves to a perception of Ministry rather than the reality.
A concern raised by delegates at the assembly was that there seems to be a great many considerations when deciding to enter ministry. For some people, the idea of going to university to study theology is a daunting one and university can seem inaccessible and intimidating. Some of the groups discussed the length and inflexibility of training for ministry. While there is concern overall within the Church about declining numbers within ministry, many young people felt that the training CoS ministers undertake does ensure that we have a high quality of ministry. In regard to the length of training it was noted that for many candidates, a significant financial commitment which can be a major barrier to those wishing to enter ministry.

During our feedback session on this topic, it was mentioned that in schools, colleges and universities young people are being encouraged to do a lot of group and discussion work, and with this in mind, young people may be discouraged by the prospect of being asked to serve a parish on their own, with some finding it unappealing. We recognise that there are elders in each parish who are called to serve alongside the minister, though some groups were unsure how easy it would be for some young ministers to engage with older congregations. This is very much dependant on the individual minister and congregation to which they are called.

The largest concern amongst young people was the issue of being turned away from ministry due to a lack of life experience. The discussion was not as clear-cut as many thought it might be with points being raised on both sides. Some describe the notion of not having enough life experience as "ridiculous" due to the often ambiguous nature of the phrase. Others, talking from personal experience of feeling a call after already having embarked on other paths, felt that by having continued on their initial path they feel better prepared and can look back and recognise that they would not have been ready had they begun ministry training when they first felt their call. As a result there was the feeling that there is a legitimate concern about life experience, though it was discussed that this is not necessarily linked to the age of the candidate, as you may have someone applying for ministry as a mature student alongside someone fresh out of school or university and find that neither are quite as ready as they may have thought to take on such an important leadership role within the Church.

9. **General questions put to the Assembly**

Some general questions were put to the assembly to try and ascertain what the delegates are involved with in their local congregations and what they think about other topics that we didn’t have time to discuss in detail.

Do you believe that the Church of today is doing enough to actively engage with the changing society in Scotland?
Do you think the church measures the success of mission by numbers in congregations?
Yes – 36%
No – 18%
Unsure – 46%

Has the discussion around ecumenism increased your desire to work with people from other denominations?
Yes – 83%
No – 2%
Unsure – 15%

Within your church, are you involved in children’s work?
Yes – 58%
No – 11%
Occasionally – 31%

Within your church, are you involved in youth work?
Yes – 51%
No – 26%
Occasionally – 23%

Within your church, are you involved in worship music?
Yes – 25%
No – 51%
Occasionally – 24%

Within your local church, are you involved in other aspects of worship, such as prayers, preaching, readings etc?
Yes – 35%
No – 28%
Occasionally – 37%

Are you involved with the uniformed organisations, such as Boys’ Brigade, Girls’ Brigade, Guides and Scouts?
Yes – 33%
No – 67%

Within your local church, have you ever been involved in a Holiday Club?
Yes – 72%
No – 28%
Are you involved with your church as it engages with your local community, for example visiting homes for the elderly?
Yes – 16%
No – 51%
Occasionally – 33%

In your local church, how many people are there aged 0-10?
0 - 0
1-5 – 13%
6-10 – 29%
11-15 – 16%
15-20 – 13%
20+ - 29%

In your local church, how many people are there aged 11-17?
0 – 4%
1-5 – 45%
6-10 – 25%
11-15 – 11%
15-20 – 6%
20+ - 9%

In your local church, how many people are there aged 18-25?
0 – 1%
1-5 – 61%
6-10 – 15%
11-15 – 5%
15-20 – 4%
20+ - 4%

Do you feel supported as a person of the congregation?
Yes – 75%
No – 25%

As a young person, do you feel that you are taken seriously by your congregation?
Yes – 61%
No – 17%
Unsure – 22%

What is your experience of eldership within your local Church of Scotland?
I am an elder – 4%
I have been approached about being an elder – 8%
I have enquired but nothing has come of it – 17%
I have not considered it – 71%
What do young people have to offer to the changing role of an elder?
Nothing – 16%
Something – 1%
Lots – 45%
Unsure – 38%

Have you ever been to a Vocations or Enquirers’ Conference?
Yes, and it was helpful – 5%
Yes, but they told me I’m too young – 1%
Yes – 4%
No, but I’m thinking about it – 10%
No, I’ve never heard of it – 45%
No – 35%

Have you been abroad before, other than for a holiday?
No – 52%
Yes, on a COSY trip – 6%
Yes, with the Church of Scotland – 10%
Yes, with SU – 11%
Yes, on a Gap Year – 5%
Yes, with COSY and others – 16%

Do you think young people are involved at Presbytery level?
Yes – 1%
Progress is needed – 22%
No – 58%
Unsure – 19%

Do you think young people are involved enough in decision making?
Yes – 9%
Progress is needed – 53%
No – 30%
Unsure – 8%

What is the most important issue for the national Church to address?
Scottish referendum – 7%
Poverty – 29%
Disease – 2%
Same-sex relationships – 11%
Political – 4%
Human rights – 6%
Mental health – 6%
End of life – 2%
Outreach – 26%
Ecumenism – 7%
What is the most important issue for local Church of Scotland congregations to address?
Outreach – 45%
Ecumenism – 6%
Poverty – 7%
Disease – 1%
Mental health – 2%
Intergenerational – 11%
Youth – 13%
Social – 5%
Worship – 2%
Using talents – 8%

Do you think NYA is important to young people?
Yes – 85%
No – 9%
Unsure – 6%

Do you think NYA should be prioritised further by the national Church?
Yes – 66%
No – 17%
Unsure – 17%

Should NYA be given funding by the national Church?
Yes – 66%
No – 10%
Unsure – 24%

10. Worship

As well as participating in discussions, an important part of the weekend, and for many delegates the highlight of the weekend, is the worship. This year, we participated in a variety of worship, experiencing many different styles. We focussed on the story of when Jesus asks Peter “Who do you say that I am?” throughout the weekend. Here are some reflections from delegates talking of their experience:

10.1 A reflection by John Haston

A reflection on worship is a bit difficult to write about really as worship is supposed to be a reflection in itself. NYA worship is always a different experience altogether from what you would usually experience on a Sunday morning in your home or university church. Worship for me is something special, I look for traditionalism and modernisation. NYA has both in its form of worship. We have hymns (old and new), prayers and bible readings. NYA gives us the chance to meet God in a different
way to that which we are used to. The Communion services on both occasions were memorable. During the first communion, the sprinkling of water from the leaves helped me to remember the baptism of Jesus (I couldn't remember my own as I was a baby) but it reminded me that I was baptised for a reason, to proclaim the love that Jesus showed for us and to share that love with others. During the second Communion, we shared the common cup with our small group of which we had all grown close to over the weekend.

10.2 A reflection by Sarah MacDonald

Worship at NYA has always been varied; with a range of different types of activities which reflect well the diversity in the Church of Scotland Youth (COSY). Worship occurs every morning and evening, and there are also opportunities to choose workshops for worship over lunch and at night. Worship songs and hymns are woven together and I have always really enjoyed this blending of new and old. I have always found reflective worship to be personally very useful to me: the opportunity for quietness and downtime but with a focus on God through a bible verse, story or line from a song has always been moving. I have also enjoyed more creative ways of worshipping. A few years ago one of the workshops involved making a bracelet with different beads relevant to different parts of the Lord's Prayer. I still wear it at times and the workshop allowed me to reconsider the many different ways in which worship can be done. You can worship God through all things, whether it's through praising, creativity, or reflection.

Another great benefit of NYA is being able to praise with other people. It is moving to know that there are other young people out there who are as invested in God and the Church of Scotland. Often in our local churches, young people are becoming more and more sparse but when we join together it is truly uplifting. The diversity of worship at NYA not only allows for everyone to find something they are comfortable with but it also allows us to take new worship techniques back to our home churches; which in turn may lead to an increase in young people who find the alternative worship styles more accessible.

11. MSYPs

After co-operation with the Scottish Youth Parliament, the National Youth Assembly 2013 had the opportunity to elect two members from within the Youth Assembly to be our representatives. As full Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament they are able to be involved in the discussion in the Scottish Youth Parliament and then report back to the Youth Assembly ensuring our voice is heard.

11.1 A reflection from Hannah Mary Goodlad

This year I had the opportunity of representing the Church Of Scotland Youth (COSY) and more specifically the NYA at the Scottish Youth Parliament, (SYP). The various sittings presented themselves as a perfect opportunity to increase the awareness of COSY to the young folk and to showcase the Kirk and the good works we do in a very positive light. The SYP sittings are not too dissimilar to that of a NYA weekend with debate and discussion being the main focus. The debates
were engaging, thought provoking and above all encouraging. Encouraging, in the sense that it was wonderful to see so many young folk from across Scotland passionate about politics and their country.

Some of the key topical issues facing young people today in Scotland were debated. To name a few: "Female genital mutilation", "Mental health care within Scotland for the youth", "Youth representation on councils across Scotland" and "Discrimination on appearance within the workplace".

I felt it was important as a MSYP representing COSY to let people know about the Kirk/COSY and where we stand on some of these issues and what we DO to help. I thought it was especially important the Kirks commitment to outreach within our communities covering mental health pastoral support was made known.

The interest in the Kirk and COSY was fantastic and people were really keen to learn what we had to say and what we are doing to serve Scotland.

12. **Intergenerational Work**

Throughout the year the elected youth reps have, amongst other things, been working on a theme chosen by the NYA moderator which this year has been intergenerational work. The intention is to work with the Guild in this area in the future with the view to creating a joint report. The youth reps have done some initial preparatory work in relation to this. Some of this has been presented below as a primer for a fuller report in due course:

12.1 **Reflection by Laura Jane Sinclair**

When I hear ‘intergenerational’ I think of the inclusion of all ages; from the cradle to the grave. However, this does not mean that everyone has to be involved every time. This means that intergenerational work is work that reaches all different age ranges, but does not lose the fundamental message that whoever is delivering the message is trying to put across. The most common example of this is the children’s address or all age message during a church service on a Sunday morning. In my own experience, this is the part of the service most people in the congregation remember the most of, or pay attention to the most. This is partly because it is the funniest part of the service and partly because it is short, sharp and straight to the point; no deep theology is needed because most of the children would not be able to grasp it.

Intergenerational work is necessary within a church setting because that was how Jesus taught. He would ask for the children to come to him, but would remember that the group of people he was addressing were not all from the same social standings, or age. To continue the work of Jesus in spreading the Word of God, we need to continue to teach in the same way that Jesus taught us. After all, we still pray the same prayer that Jesus taught us, so why not continue to teach in the way that Jesus taught.
In my church, we have had several intergenerational events. It does not mean that there have been attendees from all the ages that attend our church, but there has been a wide range of ages in attendance. For example, around seven years ago, our minister ran a course based on The Storykeepers cartoon series and each week we had some of our Sunday school (ages 3-11), Breakfast Club (ages 11-17), elders and other members of our congregation in attendance. We may not have had any of the younger end of Sunday school but there were a few around the ages of 5 or 6 and the oldest elder/congregation member who attended was in their 70s.

Our young people are always eager to help out within the church and when we first began our Breakfast Club (for P7-S4) they would host a breakfast in the large church hall where they would serve the congregation breakfast before the church service twice a year to fundraise for different charities.

We also have a selection of puppets that the young people use during the church services and they are enjoyed by all ages within our church and we find many of the older members of the congregation ask when we will bring them back out.

However, not all intergenerational events are led by our young people and the youth leaders; we also have a social committee who organise events such as our recent Curry Night and previous such events like Italian Night and our annual Pancake Night. We have all different ages of people in attendance and fun times are had by all. The Word of God may be absent from some of these nights, but we are still enjoying fellowship with other Christians.

Now that our church is a vacant charge once more, we are lucky that we have a team of people who are still willing to help facilitate these intergenerational events. Not all are youth leaders and not all are elders. Some are just those who our minister saw promise in and invited to a Discipleship course she ran.

So, from my experience of intergenerational work, it does not have to be led by a minister or a youth worker. It doesn’t have to be led at all. All that is needed is someone who is willing enough to facilitate it and get it running, after that it just runs by itself.

12.2 Reflection by Catriona Muckart

*Being intergenerationally minded*

There is nowhere in Scotland where our reality of living in an ageing population is more visible than in the Church. In some congregations a only a handful of members fall between the 14-40 age bracket. In these communities intergenerational work can be difficult because of a couple of generation gaps! However it is still really important to encourage and promote intergenerational activity whenever possible. It is through meeting together with people of all ages and backgrounds that we can share our experiences, talents and faith, further each other’s understanding and expand our perspectives.
Difficulties that can arise when interacting with people of other generations from a young-un's perspective are often to do with people forgetting that you have grown-up, especially if you have lived most of your life in attending one particular church, and therefore continuing to interact with you as if you were still much younger than you are. However similarly younger people can assume that older generations won't understand them or be able to relate to them. While sometimes this can be true, that is why intergenerational work is so important, as it is through this that these assumptions can be broken down and we can cultivate better relationships, and become a better family.

Some examples of intergenerational work are activities such as Messy Church, Natter 'N' Nosh type events where people come together for food and fellowship, and puppet ministry which has had positive responses from folk of all ages. Evening services are also great for attracting a wide range of people, as often they have a slightly different feel to the main morning service and are more relaxed and reflective. The Guild have made the best of the learning opportunities that come about through intergenerational work through computer classes and other technologically minded ventures. Church discussion groups are also often of interest to both the young and the still young at heart, and are therefore a good way of getting everyone talking, learning and sharing.

Anyone can lead intergenerational activities and ideally they would grow organically so that anyone becomes everyone, together creating a safe and encouraging environment for people to share their skills, experiences and faith.

12.3 Reflection by Heather Dickson

I am the Church, you are the Church, we are the Church together.

How can we best realise the greatness of God’s Kingdom when so many intergenerational tensions, stereotypes, and assumptions exist at all levels of the Church? Instead of treating people as individuals, we judge them on what we can see on the surface; often this means on their age. This is of course normal, it’s human to judge people on their ‘otherness’, but this is absolutely something we should be challenging in order to make our Church family inclusive and welcoming. It is often difficult to see how the term ‘family’ and be accurately applied to our local churches. We’ve recognised that we have a ‘missing generation’, and many churches offer several services throughout a Sunday to try and target specific age groups. Let’s be honest, we have an ageing population. It’s no secret, it’s evident on the pews and highlighted by the media, but if anything, this just emphasises the need for intergenerational work within the Church family.

The term ‘intergenerational work’ is pretty vague. In many respects it simply does what it says on the tin, but there is the potential for it to have exciting and revitalising impacts if we take the risk of reaching out to each other. It’s not just about the young learning from the old or vice versa, but about everyone in between too.

In order for any intergeneration work to be worthwhile, there is the need for it to be done in partnership, where all parties benefit from the activity. Too often we make statements that are just clichés – “we need each other”, “we should learn from each other”- and no systems are put in place
to facilitate such intergenerational learning. We also make assumptions on what we can teach each other – the young people can teach the old people to use computers and the old people can teach the young people knitting. It shouldn’t work that way within the Church family. We are all parts of the Body of Christ and are interdependent; we need each other to grow in faith. Jesus took away the barriers between us and God, and He also removed the barriers between ourselves – we didn’t stop being young and old, these just aren’t barriers to fellowship.

12.4 Collated responses from a youth rep meeting

What is intergenerational working?
- Anything where people of all ages are encouraged to participate
- What it says on the tin
- Skill sharing
- Realisation that life is full of learning opportunities
- Partnership between generations
- Mentoring system
- Outreach
- Work that involves a range of ages
- Leadership of youth – usually older people, can be older young people working with much younger
- Support of projects by one age group by another (financial, advertising, fundraising)
- Work with all people but particularly extremes
- Important to note that it is all
- Young people helping at the Guild
- Older people talking to young people

Why is it important?
- Passing on the faith
- Need to know of the previous generation
- Understanding change on both ends of the spectrum
- Allows for inclusion
- Shows the church isn’t focused on one age group
- Allows talents to be shared from young to old
- Allows wisdom and experience to be shared
- We all have something to learn from each other
- Strengthens and improves communication and relationships
- Introduces people to new ways of learning
- Helps the story to be shared and passed on
- Mutual learning – every generation can learn from each other

Who leads it?
- Education group/committee in church
- Everyone should
- Young people
- Schools
- Uniformed organisations
- You, me, or anyone!
- Anyone with a skill to share
• People who know how to open conversations – not write guides
• No-one should – the more it is lead, the more tokenistic it is
• Issue of box ticking – no-one should have to lead everyone
• Should do it automatically
• Church groups such as puppet ministry, breakfast club, messy church, evening services
• Anyone
• Youth leaders/workers
• Sunday school teachers
• Ministers

Why is it important for the church?
• Issue of the ‘missing generation’
• Communication of faith
• Lack of new ministers
• To allow skills to be transferred from old to young and vice versa
• To promote inclusivity
• To show that church isn’t biased towards a particular age group
• To get more young people into church
• We need it for mission – to allow God’s Kingdom to flourish and grow
• To challenge the assumptions and stereotypes and prejudices of people
• Inequality and discrimination based on age is very prevalent in Churches – it’s a bit illegal really...
• We’re a family
• Without it people get put off and we’re not a church
• Forget that young people grow up

Good examples
• The guild has potential – computer classes, iPads, Japanese themed activities
• Night Kirk
• Messy Church
• Discussion opportunities
• Puppet Ministry
13. **Guild**

With a focus on intergenerational work the Youth Rep’s wanted to further the National Youth Assembly’s relationship with The Guild. These groups have enjoyed a special and unique relationship that has spanned over many years. Both have enthusiastically supported each other’s work.

13.1 **NYA becomes an honorary Guild Group**

At NYA 2013 the National Youth Assembly became the first honorary group of The Guild. This cemented the deep relationship between us, and showed how valued that this relationship is.

13.2 **Joint meeting**

Since then, the Youth Rep’s have met with members of The Guild. During the day it was amazing to see the vision both groups have for future involvement. We initially spent some time thinking about how we see each other, what we both have in common and what we can learn from each other. We then spent some time ‘brainstorming’ for ideas on how we can take forward.
What we have in common?

Faith
Charitable
Supportive
Sociable
Committed
Enthusiastic
Inclusive
Prophets to the nation and church
A Community
Diverse
Patronised / Tokenised?
13.3 Reflection by Grant Petrie

I was lucky enough to attend The Guild's National Meeting in Sept 2013. Thousands of Guild members gather once a year in Dundee, to share together in worship, and to hear what the Guild has been doing in the previous year and to look forward to what the next year will bring. It was a fantastic experience hearing everything the Guild does and the enthusiasm behind it. I was overwhelmed by the amount of Guild member's asking about the Youth Assembly and everything that goes with it.
14. Conclusion

The NYA is something that the Church can remain proud of. Young people continue to come to this event, either as a veteran or as a first time delegate. The delegates are quick to form community; a community that loves and cares for its members, a community that constantly evolves according to its needs, a community that is passionate about God, and a community that exists to give young people a voice in the Church.

Next year, the NYA will move to Gartmore House in Stirlingshire and will take place on 15th – 18th August 2014 with the theme ‘My Father’s House’. It is open to all 17-25 year olds with a connection to the Church of Scotland with 135 places available on a first come first served basis. Bookings are available via https://www.resourcingmission.org.uk/events/nya-2014-my-fathers-house and close 30th June.

LYNSEY MARTIN: Moderator
ESTHER NISBET: Clerk
CHLOE BINNIE: Youth rep
HEATHER DICKSON: Youth rep
FRASER ELLIS: Youth rep
JOHN HASTON: Youth rep
JENNIFER HOOD: Youth rep
JAMES HYMAN: Youth rep
JOHN KENNEDY: Youth rep
LYNDSAY KENNEDY: Youth rep
IONA KIMMITT: Youth rep
GEMMA KING: Youth rep
SEONAID KNOX: Youth rep
SARAH MACDONALD: Youth rep
CATRIONA MUCKART: Youth rep
LUCY O’BRIEN: Youth rep
GRANT PETRIE: Youth rep
LAURA-JANE SINCLAIR: Youth rep
JOEL TYLER: Youth rep