

Intentional Discipleship – 11-18s

Resources

For a fuller selection of resources for all ages, visit **Disciplekit**, a brilliant online resource catalogue - <http://www.disciplekit.org/>

Enquirers / New Christians Resources

1. **Youth Alpha** (Ages 11+): <https://alpha.org/youth>
2. **Christianity Explored Ministries:**
 - a. **CY** (Ages 11-14) - <https://www.ceministries.org/Courses>
 - b. **Soul** (Ages 15+) - <https://www.ceministries.org/Courses>
 - c. **Christianity Explored:** (Ages 16+) <https://www.christianityexplored.org/>
3. **Sycamore** (Ages 16+) - currently under redevelopment for release in early 2019): <https://sycamore.fm/>
4. **Youth for Christ:**
 - a. **Rock Solid** (Ages 11-14) - <https://yfc.co.uk/rocksolid/>
 - b. **Frames** (Ages 15-18) - <https://yfc.co.uk/frames/>
5. **Baptism & Confirmation Courses:** The Mission Department has a list of resources suitable for various age-groups here. The 'Youth' section resources will be suitable for baptism / baptism and confirmation for 11-18s. <https://www.lichfield.anglican.org/documents/confirmation-resources/>
6. **Youth Emmaus** (Ages 11-16): Designed to help your young people explore Christian Basics, Youth Emmaus is published by Church House Publishing, costing £22.50/each. The resource comes with resources on CD-ROM - <https://www.chpublishing.co.uk/>
7. **Interactive Resources**
 - a. **Shuffle** (Age 12-18+): Produced by Youthscape, Shuffle is a resource for new Christians full of bible readings, prayers and practical activities. Purchase for £6/pack (or £50/pack of 10. Need more? Email youthscape direct). <https://youthscape.co.uk/store/product/shuffle>
 - b. **DMC Deck (Deep Meaningful Conversations)** (Ages 18+) – a card deck full of deep, meaningful questions to spark conversation from Fusion UK. <https://www.fusionmovement.org/resources/>
 - c. **Table Talk** (Ages 10-11, 12-14s, 14-15s, and 16-18s, Students): Table Talk is a resource to help groups of people have meaningful conversations – a great ice-breaker for use in conjunction with other resources. It's available as a set of physical cards (£25.95), or as an app in Android and iPhone: <http://www.table-talk.org>.
8. **Websites and Apps:**
 - a. **Now A Christian App & Email Bible Studies** (Ages 16+): an initiative of the Church Army, Now a Christian is a series of 5 weeks of daily reading. <http://app.nowachristian.org/>
 - b. **Christianity.org.uk** (Ages 16+): a website full of basic information about the Christian faith, run by the Christian Enquiry Agency – part of Churches Together in England. This website is suitable for young people aged 14+. <https://christianity.org.uk/>
 - c. **The Bible App** (Ages 13-18+): YouVersion's Bible App is high quality, has multiple versions of the bible on it, it is downloadable for Android, iPhone and on Amazon. Even more, there are downloadable bible-study notes to go with it. View the youth-friendly collection of reading plans here: <https://www.bible.com/reading-plans-collection/1433>, but particularly look at this one from Kleer: <https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/12616-kickstart-a-conversation-with-god>

Discipleship Resources

1. Courses

- a. **Life Explored** (Ages 16+ as part of an intergenerational group): <https://www.ceministries.org/>
- b. **Discipleship Explored** (Ages 16+ as part of an intergenerational group): <https://www.ceministries.org/>
- c. **Freedom in Christ for Young People** (split content tailored for 11-14s and 15-18s): http://www.ficm.org.uk/fic_for_young_people
- d. **Jesus Shaped People** (Ages 16+): An intergenerational resource for urban churches that could work for a mixed age group with young people aged 16+. <https://www.jesusshapedpeople.net/>
- e. **Holy Habits** (Ages 16+): an intergenerational course that could work for a mixed age group with young people aged 16+. <https://www.brfonline.org.uk/holy-habits>
- f. **Youth Emmaus & Youth Emmaus 2** (Ages 11-16): These courses are designed to help your young people explore Christian Basics (Youth Emmaus), and Big Issues and Holy Spaces (Youth Emmaus 2). Both are published by Church House Publishing, costing £22.50/each. The resource comes with resources on CD-ROM - <https://www.chpublishing.co.uk/>
- g. **The Beautiful Disciplines** (Ages 11+): Martin Saunders' *The Beautiful Disciplines: Helping young people develop their spiritual roots* (Oxford: Monarch, 2011), is based on Richard Foster's classic *Celebration of Discipline*. It has 10 sessions in it on Foster's Inwards, Outwards, and Corporate (Together Disciplines). You can find it at Christian Bookshops, www.wordery.com or www.youthscape.co.uk.

2. Curriculum Resources

- a. **Energize** (Ages 5-18+): resources to explore Christian themes with 5-18s, all organised online in a highly customisable way and sold using a subscription model - <https://www.energize.uk.net/>
- b. **Youth for Christ UK Resources** (Ages 7-18+): A variety of resources for discipleship and evangelism - <https://yfc.co.uk/churchresources/>
- c. **Roots** (Ages 0-18): – Worship and learning resources for the whole church based on the lectionary. <https://www.rootsontheweb.com/>
- d. **Scripture Union** (Ages 3-16): A free collection of resources available online for 11-16s: <https://www.scriptureunion.org.uk/lightlive>. Books of these resources are also available to purchase here: <https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk/light-compendium>

3. Interactive Resources

- a. **The Discipleship Deck** (Ages 18+) – a card deck full of deep, meaningful questions to spark conversation from Fusion UK. <https://www.fusionmovement.org/resources/>

4. **Premier Youth & Children's Work Magazine** (Ages 2-18+): each month this magazine produces resources for a variety of ages and stages, reviews of books and resources to use with your 11-18s and general news from the children's and youth ministry world - <https://www.youthandchildrens.work/>

5. Bible & Prayer

- a. **Soul Survivor's Bible in a Year PDF Download** (Ages 12+): Daily reading plan, downloadable as a printable PDF. <http://bible.soulsurvivor.com/>
- b. **Alpha Bible in One Year App** (Ages 16+): An app for your smartphone with daily bible readings and reflections. Available on iPhone and Android. <https://www.bibleinoneyear.org/>
- c. **Pray as You Go App** (Ages 14+): run by the Jesuits in the UK, PAYG is a daily prayer app and website, available for iPhone and Android.

6. Leadership Training

- a. **Innovate Mission** (Ages 14-18+): 3 days across the year for your young leaders aged 14-18 to help them explore discipleship, their calling, how to listen for mission, how to share their faith well together with other young people across the Diocese. Tickets and details here: <https://www.lichfield.anglican.org/innovate>
- b. **Pathways** (Ages 17+): for young people aged 17+ exploring their vocation, Pathways to Ministry . <https://www.lichfield.anglican.org/pathways/>

Church & Discipleship for 11-18s

The church needs to be deliberate about people of all ages discovering a real, vibrant relationship with Jesus Christ through discipleship to him. How, then, can we do this with our 11-18s?

In this section:

- Pray for your young people and the task ahead
- Understanding Responsibility
- Pay attention to 'the dancefloor'
- Leaders: take your own faith seriously
- Use the Internet Wisely
- Notice the emerging vocations of your young people
- Value one-to-one conversations
- Do it in partnership

Pray for your young people and the task ahead

Jesus provides us a simple formula for prayer (Matt 6:5-14) and a task for our lives as his disciples (Matt 28:16-20). Paul exhorts us to never cease in our prayers (1 Thess 5:16-18). As we become better disciples ourselves, we need to pray for our 11-18s that they might do the same, and that we would be brave enough to learn how to create a supportive *and* challenging environment where this might happen.

Understanding Responsibility

Similarly to the adults in our churches, it is the right of 11-18s to make the decision about whether they become disciples or apprentices to Jesus Christ.¹ Leaders in churches are only able to provide the environment necessary for 11-18s to encounter the distinctive teaching, build the relationships and discover the practices that will make faith formation, and therefore discipleship, possible.²

Pay attention to the Dancefloor

A dancer of unparalleled talent, she mesmerized the crowd with her skills, but even more with her passion ... But she would finish much sooner than anyone expected. Coming down from an arching leap, she landed with a jolting crack, her foot driving its way through the rotting wood of the floor, her body twisted in pain, her leg bent in places it was not made to bend. She was pulled from the stage, wondering if she would ever dance again.

The master of ceremonies dismissively apologized, "Inexperience does this to a dancer."

But no one repaired the floor.³

One of the most challenging things to do when it comes to discipleship for 11-18s is to look at 'the dancefloor' of our youth ministries and wonder about their state of repair. If our youth-ministry 'dancefloor' is not in good repair, even the most talented, focussed and energised team are more likely to fail in their task.⁴

When we say 'dancefloor' in relation to youth-ministry we mean basic things like:

- Developing a way of keeping accurate records of attendance
- Being deliberate about volunteer recruitment
- Creating an Annual Events Calendar
- Choosing the right curriculum for your context (see resources section of this document, above. *Be sure to work out how you will **respond to new Christians.***)
- Developing a strategy and culture that reflects the priorities of your church
- Ensuring you pay adequate attention to safeguarding, DBS etc.

All of these factors might seem far from discipleship of 11-18s, but paying attention to these issues is *core* to making it more likely that our youth can discover a living, vibrant relationship with Jesus Christ that makes a difference in every area of their lives.

Essential Resources & Support

¹ See Smith, *Secular*, p140. Some may see this as contestable, but it is impossible to avoid.

² Shepherd, *Formation*, 46.

³ DeVries, M., *Sustainable Youth Ministry: Why most youth ministry doesn't last and what your church can do about it*, Downers Grove: IVP, 2008, p52-53. Bold mine.

⁴ DeVries, *Sustainable*, 52.

The best resource we've found to help you discover how to do this are the following books by Mark DeVries (and Annette Safstrom). **Both cover the same issues, so only buy the one that is most relevant to you.** Alternatively, get in touch with the RNG Team on rng@lichfield.anglican.org for support.

DeVries, M., *Sustainable Youth Ministry: Why most youth ministry doesn't last and what your church can do about it*, Downers Grove: IVP, 2008.

DeVries, M. and A. Safstrom, *Sustainable Children's Ministry: from last minute scrambling to long-term solutions*, Downers Grove: IVP, 2018.

Take your own faith seriously – and talk about the hard times, too!

Leaders of 11-18s need to take their own discipleship seriously – *we must walk the talk*. For example, if we talk about the radical neighbour love of Jesus and are not able to show how we're trying to take steps to live this out in our lives, then we run the risk of being viewed as hypocritical and potentially even worse, inauthentic.⁵

Related to taking our faith seriously is 'not knowing the answers.' This can be a significant perceived barrier to many of us leading youth groups (for instance if we are new Christians, or have yet to learn lots of the bible etc.) we can, however, use this weakness to turn into strength, an opportunity to become a learner *with* your young people. For more information on how to do this see our section in REACH here: <https://www.lichfield.anglican.org/reach-weeknight-youth-provision/>. Scroll down the page to 'Acknowledge young people's context and experiences'.

In the same vein, it is *essential* that we are honest with our young people about how even the adults mess things up and are ourselves messed up by others actions (Rom 3:23), tempered with the knowledge that Jesus knows what it is to be human and therefore has grace and mercy for us (Heb 4:14-16). Remember: *only share what's appropriate, when it's appropriate*.

For more information, see what we wrote in 'REACH: a Direction of Travel for Ministry with Children, Young People and Families' in the 11-18s Sunday Ministry section: https://www.lichfield.anglican.org/REACH_sundays/

Use the Internet Wisely

Our young people live their lives online as well as in the physical world. Many (if not most) 11-18s have access to smartphones, tablets and other internet-connected devices in their homes. So it is essential for us to offer spaces for more nourishing content than our young people might find elsewhere.

The list below shares a few places online that young people can learn more about following Jesus. We think these sources are pretty useful and safe, but remember that it's wise to vet any content you recommend to your young people very carefully.

Examples of resources online for young people to connect with themselves include:

- YFC Sync Coach – a series of videos to help young people 'put Jesus on display, every day' - <https://yfc.co.uk/sync/>
- Soul Survivor – Check out "Late Night with Mike and Andy" – <https://www.youtube.com/user/soulsurvivoruk/>
- The Christian Aid Collective - <https://christianaidcollective.org/> or <https://www.youtube.com/user/TheCACollective>
- Worship Central – Includes rig run-downs for musicians, performances of songs - <https://www.youtube.com/user/worshipcentral1>

Other resources you find online may not talk about Jesus in every video, instead choosing to talk about their Christian faith alongside their daily routines, hobbies, and life-choices etc. It will also be worth exploring with your young people who they engage with online, Christian or not.

Notice the emerging vocation of your young people

⁵ See Smith, *Secular*, p140, who describes our age as one focussed on 'authenticity' after the work of Charles Taylor in *A Secular Age*.

As young people develop their identity, emerging into adults, they will naturally want to explore who they are (identity) and what it is that God has called them to do (vocation). We have written a resource to help you do this in your context here: <https://www.lichfield.anglican.org/reach-vocations/>. We also offer Innovate Mission for young people aged 14-18 to develop their understanding of vocation, mission, discipleship and evangelism. Details and tickets are available here: <https://www.lichfield.anglican.org/innovate/>

Make Space for 1-1 Meetings

One to one mentoring can be a brilliant way to help a young person to develop a deeper sense of discipleship to Jesus Christ. In this space you can ask deeper questions, provide challenge and support in equal measure, develop a greater sense of relationship and understanding of how to pray for your young mentees. If you were interested in developing mentoring in your church, CPAS have created a kit to help you get started, available to purchase here: <https://www.cpas.org.uk/church-resources/mentoring-matters/>

Do it in Partnership

Where too few young people or too few resources exist, developing discipleship in partnership with other churches may be the best way forward. We have written a resource to help you develop this in your context here: <https://www.lichfield.anglican.org/reach-developing-partnerships/>

For Further Reflection

More and more is being written about ministry to and with 11-18s in what many consider to be a 'secular age.'⁶ This selection of sources will be useful for those of interested in further study. The ones in bold are considered the most useful, but all of these resources have been useful to us.

Dean, K., *Almost Christian: What the Faith of our Teenagers is Telling the American Church*, Oxford: OUP, 2010.

Root, A., *Bonhoeffer as Youth Worker: A Theological Vision for Discipleship & Life Together*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014.

Root., A., *Youth Ministry in a Secular Age: Responding to the Church's Obsession with Youthfulness*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 2017.

RNG Team, 'REACH: A Direction of travel for Ministry with Children, Young People, and Families in Lichfield Diocese', accessible online at <https://www.lichfield.anglican.org/reach>, published 2016. In particular, see:

Sunday Morning Provision:

https://www.lichfield.anglican.org/REACH_sundays/

Weeknight Youth Provision: https://www.lichfield.anglican.org/REACH_Weeknight%20Youth%20Provision/

Shepherd, N., *Faith Generation: Retaining Young People and Growing the Church*, London: SPCK, 2016.

Smith, J. K. A., *How (Not) to be Secular: Reading Charles Taylor*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014.

⁶ For more on this, see Jamie K. A. Smith's book *How (Not) to be Secular*, where he comments on Charles Taylor's work *A Secular Age*.