




Engaging with children, youth & 18–25s

Together, we will use our resources, gifts, time and prayers in order to engage more fully with children, youth & 18–25s by:

- 1.** Developing pathways for more children and youth to **become lifelong disciples of Jesus**;
- 2. Resourcing children and youth for mission** (and extending the reach and depth of our engagement with them);
- 3. Extending the engagement of 18–25s** in the life and mission of our churches.





*'May our sons in
their youth be like
plants full grown, ..our
daughters like corner
pillars cut for the
building of a palace.'*

Psalm 144:12



Throughout the scriptures, young people feature strongly in God's purposes. The early church was quick to point to the prophet Joel's affirmation that God intends to pour out his Spirit on all people, every age group and every generation, in expectation that we all participate in the task of proclamation, worship and mission (Acts 2:39).

The Psalmist also has a really positive vision for young people – not sidelined or left out but notable for their maturity and fruitfulness ('like plants full grown') and centrally positioned in the life of his church ('like corner pillars..'). When we create this sort of space for young people, they grow, the church is strengthened and the gospel is demonstrated and declared more fully and fruitfully. And whilst we have much to be thankful for in terms of the extension of our work with children over recent years, there remains much to do and much potential to fulfil.

The **Engaging with Children, Youth and 18-25s** priority focusses on the cultivation of lifelong followers of Jesus, inviting them to become active partners in our mission by:

- 1. Developing pathways** from infancy to adulthood so that more children and youth become lifelong **disciples of Jesus**;
- 2. Resourcing youth for mission** (and extending our engagement with them);
- 3. Extending the engagement of 18-25s**

As we target these areas we are praying that this will lead to more children around the region engaging with the message of Jesus and continuing their discipleship journey from Messy Church or Open the Book into their teenage years and beyond, becoming lifelong witnesses and disciple makers themselves, in their churches, schools, homes and communities and seeing a substantial increase in the number of children, youth and 18-25s following Jesus and making Him known.

To do this we will:

- Develop resources to support parents/carers to develop discipleship at home;
- Share resources and best practice to help churches develop more child-friendly approaches;
- Continue to support and engage with **Growing Faith**;
- Continue to collaborate and find ways to support and partner with our schools and the Joint Education Team;
- Work with Training Providers to strengthen training for mission to children, youth & 18-25s;
- Generate opportunities for youth to participate in or contribute to decision making more consistently in every area of our life as a Diocese;
- Find ways to extend Schools Chaplaincy and our involvement with colleges of FE through developing Chaplaincy relationships;
- Develop strategies for engaging with and releasing the missional energy of 18-25s.

We will encourage:

- All our churches (individually, as deaneries and in collaboration with others) to develop pathways to extend a child's discipleship into adulthood;
- Further church planting in school buildings;
- The ministry of young people and their engagement as leaders in our churches and in mission;
- Local ecumenical collaboration to support engagement with and outreach to young people;
- Opportunities for 'encounters with Jesus' within our schools and other contexts;
- All of our deaneries to develop local networking, contact and vision for 18-25s.