

SATURDAY 1 MARCH 2025

JOINED UP  
BIRTHDAY  
CONFERENCE

OUR 10TH

# joined up

CONFERENCE 2025

Workshop One

Workshops

Resources

Networking

Worship

Vision

Planning for the future

creating a vision and strategy for children's and youth ministry

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This resource pack accompanies the first workshop at the Joined Up Conference called:

# Planning for the future

**Creating a vision and strategy for children's and youth ministry.**

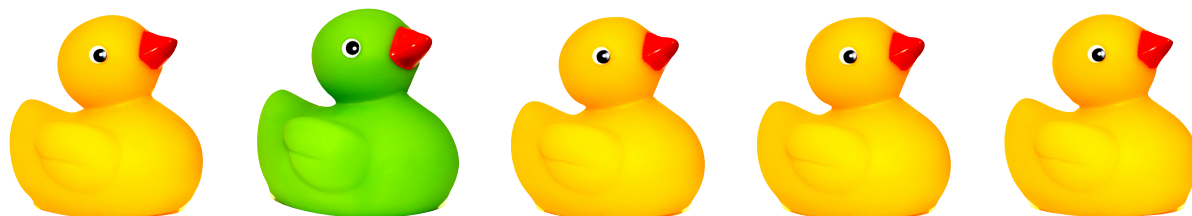
There are three different variations of this workshop to choose from.

**1** The first variation will lead you through the process of reviewing your ministry, assessing the challenges and opportunities you face and creating a plan of action for the future. Our team will walk you through each step with the help of some handy templates and resources in this booklet so you can feel confident about the way forward. You could work on your own or with others.

**2** The second variation provides you with the space to work through parts of the process on your own or with others using creative approaches to reviewing, assessing and planning. Our team will set you off to use the time however you wish, and be on hand if you want some guidance. You could choose to use the creative tools on the tables (Lego, playdoh, worksheets etc) to help you think and plan, or you can engage in conversations with others or your team.

**3** The third variation is perfect if you just want a prayerful space to listen to God and work quietly on your own. The Prayer Space in the chapel is set up to give your thinking and praying some direction, and there will be a couple of our team available should you wish to chat or pray with someone. Or you may choose to find a quiet space somewhere else in the building, or even take a prayer walk around Sheffield. If you choose this option, do be back in the main hall by 11:55am so you can get to the next workshop on time.

You can use this booklet regardless of which workshop variation you choose. The hope is that all our workshops will lead you to a clearer vision and achievable action plans.





# step 1



## **Question:** How do you measure success?

What does 'great' look like in your children's or youth ministry? What does God's kingdom look like in your setting? How will you know if your group is 'growing'?

What could you measure?

- ★ Numbers attending?
- ★ Discipleship? (How many read their bibles, pray, serve, worship, give...)
- ★ Missional activity? (Telling/inviting friends, serving community...)
- ★ Numbers of children / young people in leadership roles in the church or community?
- ★ Numbers of children / young people being baptised, confirmed or making a commitment of faith?
- ★ Quality of friendships forming and growing?
- ★ Energy of a group?
- ★ Numbers of new people joining?
- ★ Ways lives are being changed or transformed?

The bible talks about the fruit of the Spirit – how can we measure these things in our groups?

*Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. (Galatians 5: 22-23)*

*What is your vision? What is God's vision?*

## **How will you measure success?**

**Are you looking for numbers, activity, fruit, discipleship...?**





# step 2



## **Question:** Where are you now?

Spend some time thanking God for the children and young people you work with. Thank him for the good things you've seen over the last year in the ministry..

How are things going in your children's, youth or school ministry? Evaluate the ministry. Things might be going really well - are there ways to make it even better? Are you stuck, bored or tired? Are you ticking over, but need new energy? Do you need to renew your motivation? Do you need guidance?

Where do you sense God leading you and guiding you? Are you seeing fruit in the lives of the children and young people you work with?



Be honest with where you are in your children's, youth or schools ministry. Ask God to help you see clearly and if helpful, use these questions to assess your current status.

**What is God saying about the ministry?**



**What challenges or opportunities do the children / young people you work with face?**

**What are the challenges or opportunities in the wider community?**



**What do the children, young people, parents and church leaders think, and how could you ask them?**

**Is there any history in the church or community that impacts your future?**

**Who is involved in the children's or youth ministry? Do you need new volunteers?**

**What venues or rooms do you use and are they suitable?**

**What resources do you have and what do you need?**

**Are you more focused on entertaining children and young people, or building relationships that support faith development?**

**Do you need a new vision? Or a new programme?**

*The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.  
He makes me lie down in green pastures,  
he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul.  
He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.  
Even though I walk through the darkest valley,  
I will fear no evil, for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.*

*You prepare a table before me in the presence of my  
enemies.  
You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.  
Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days  
of my life,  
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.*

*Psalms 23 (NIV)*





# step 3



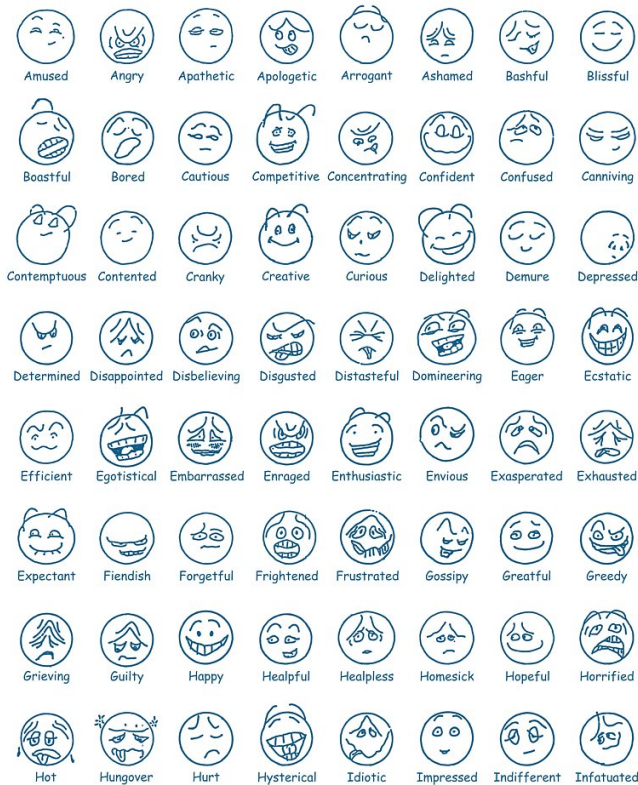
**Question:** How do we feel about how things are?

Explore your feelings and be honest with the reality of the situation... good or bad. How does God feel about your children's, youth or schools ministry?

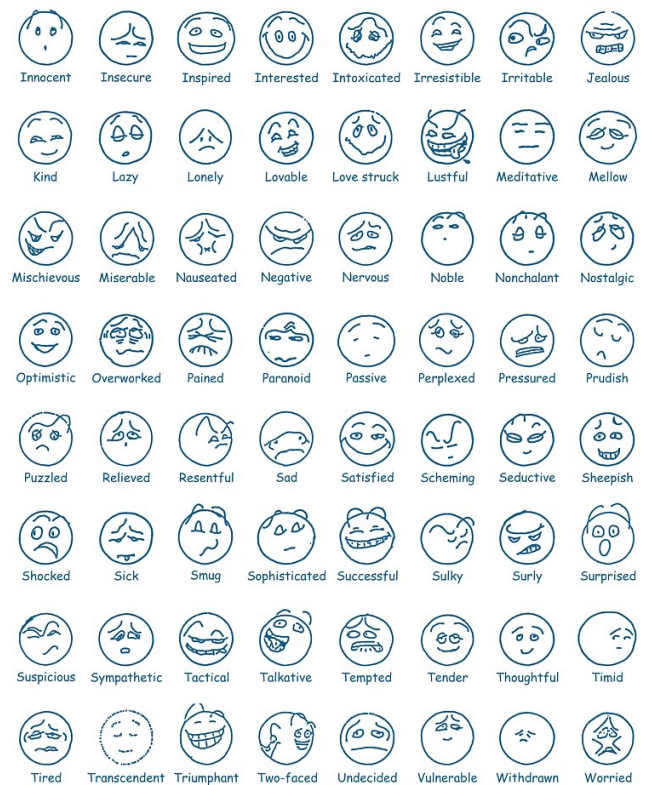
Reconnect with God's heart for the ministry. Pray for God's heart to spur you on, renew your passion and generate new energy for the work going forward.

You could use some Lego or Playdoh to express your feelings. It's good to share your feelings with others, and pray together.

## Page 1 of 2 Feelings and Emotions [www FeelingsAndEmotions.org](http://www FeelingsAndEmotions.org)



## Page 2 of 2 Feelings and Emotions [www FeelingsAndEmotions.org](http://www FeelingsAndEmotions.org)





# step 4



## **Question:** What are the barriers?

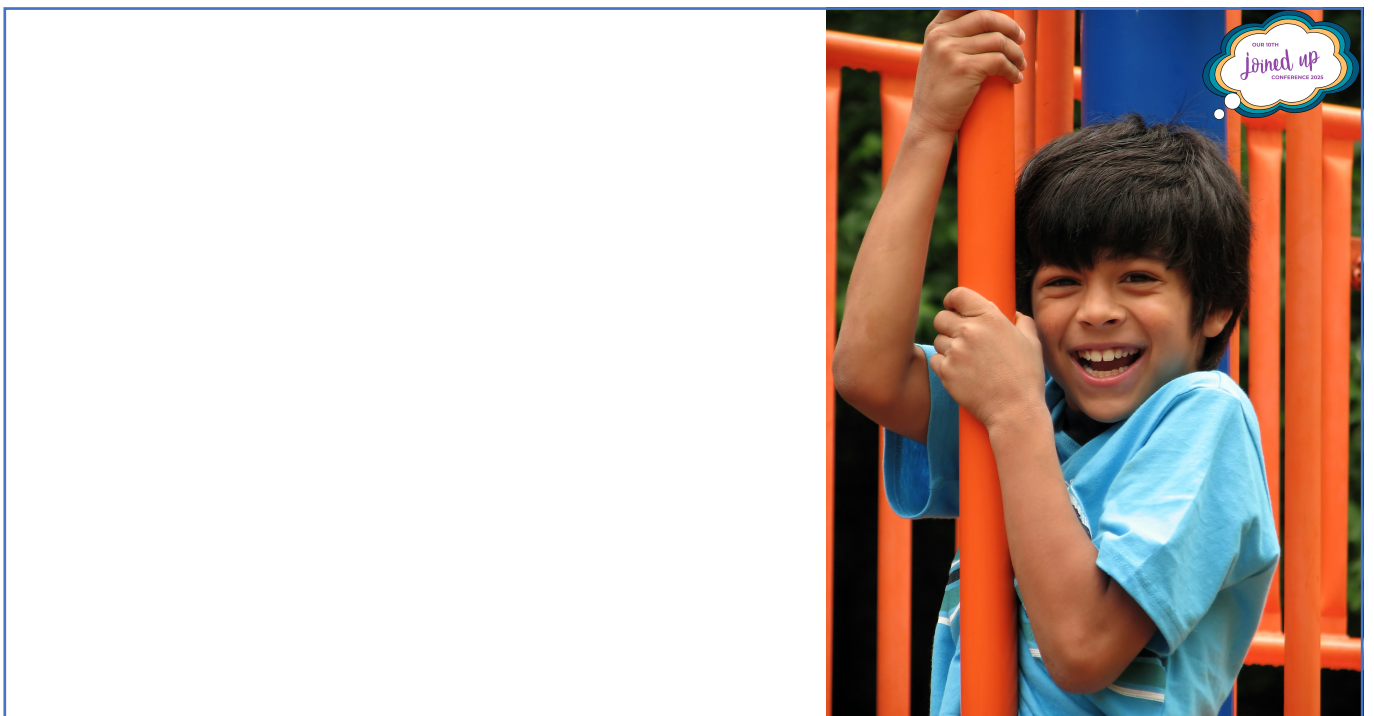
What is stopping us growing towards our vision?

- ★ Identify any problems, hurdles or obstacles you face?
- ★ Are any of the following stopping you moving forward, or slowing you down?
  - ✦ Finance
  - ✦ Rooms / venue
  - ✦ Volunteers / paid staff
  - ✦ Behaviour of children or young people
  - ✦ Poverty / Hunger
  - ✦ Health issues
  - ✦ Lack of training opportunities
  - ✦ Certain people, or people in leadership
  - ✦ Tired, old patterns of ministry
  - ✦ Lack of relationships

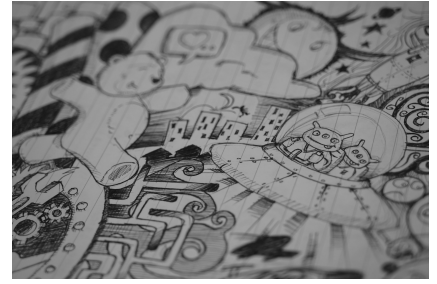
Before you try to move forward, it is important to identify the problems and barriers. There may be more than one thing stopping you moving forward. It will be important to address each issue carefully.

Are we too inward focused? Do we need to look outwards to the community / school?

## **My prayerful reflection on the barriers we face:**



# step 5



**Question:** What are the different options in moving forward?

There may be many good ways forward from here. Before you choose your action points, think through all the possible solutions.

- ★ Can you find ways of working around these barriers? Sometimes there are creative ideas that can help you get around the problem...
- ★ Is there some negotiation to do? Who could you speak to and explain the problem to? Are there some compromises you could find that will help you move forward?
- ★ How could you care for and motivate your volunteers?
- ★ Project 30K have some resources to help you recruit new volunteers ([www.churchofengland.org/30kproject](http://www.churchofengland.org/30kproject))
- ★ Can you identify the key reasons for young people's challenging behaviour in your group or activity? Is it boredom? Unclear expectations? Additional needs? Could you provide a different activity which would engage them positively? How are you seeking to build meaningful relationships?
  - ♦ Some Grove Booklets on youth ministry: [grovebooks.co.uk/series/youth](http://grovebooks.co.uk/series/youth)
- ★ How could you raise money to support the work you'd like to do? Can the young people be involved in raising money? Can the church provide a budget to show their commitment to children's and youth ministry? Could you apply to the Hollowford Trust ([www.sheffdio.org/hollowford](http://www.sheffdio.org/hollowford)), good for events, start up grants and trips for individuals aged between 10-25 in or near to Sheffield Diocese.
- ★ You could apply for a Small Sparks grant from Sheffield Diocese ([www.sheffield.anglican.org/support/for-churches/new-congregations/small-sparks-grant2/](http://www.sheffield.anglican.org/support/for-churches/new-congregations/small-sparks-grant2/)) to help you grow Christian communities that are effective in making disciples (£500-£2,000)
- ★ Methodist Youth Activities <http://myaltd.org.uk> (£1,000-£5,000) for youth projects or activities for age 11-25
- ★ Could it be right to stop the group for a time and allow some space for new ideas and people to emerge?

## Notes





Involve the children and young people in discerning the way forward. There are lots of ways to empower them:

- ★ Ask them for their opinions (after you've given them the information they need)
- ★ Have members of the PCC / church council / leadership team / staff team visit the children's or youth groups to better understand their needs and ideas
- ★ Give the children and young people decision making power and responsibility
- ★ Encourage the children and young people to present their thoughts and ideas to the leadership



What responsibility can you give to the children or young people as you move forward? Responsibility often grows a sense of purpose, a feeling of being needed, and a sense of ownership. Peer led leadership can unlock a group that feels stuck.

Explore training opportunities for leaders. Local, regional and online learning.

What new discipleship resources could help you move forward?

- ★ Youth Alpha: [alpha.org.uk/alphayouthseries](http://alpha.org.uk/alphayouthseries)
- ★ The Difference course: [www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/priorities/reconciliation/difference-course](http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/priorities/reconciliation/difference-course)
- ★ Freedom in Christ: [www.ficm.org.uk/youth](http://www.ficm.org.uk/youth)
- ★ Soul: [www.christianityexplored.org/courses/shop/christianity-explored/soul/](http://www.christianityexplored.org/courses/shop/christianity-explored/soul/)
- ★ Unfold: [www.youthscape.co.uk/store/product/unfold](http://www.youthscape.co.uk/store/product/unfold)

What would the children or young people you work with enjoy? Ask them!

Could you introduce: music, singing (band, leading worship, performance), crafts, art, sports, drama (production, performance), making things (mending things), debates, team building, fund raising, trips out, residential trip, Christian festival, social action, event organising...

### What needs to change?



### **Practical suggestions** (what would work in your setting?)

- ★ Start a toddler group and build relationships.
  - ★ Drop in for young people (with hot chocolate, games and conversation).
  - ★ Start a sports group and build relationships.
  - ★ Offer to lead some assemblies in your local school to build relationships.
  - ★ Do a survey to glean children's and young people's thoughts and ideas.
  - ★ It doesn't have to be all or nothing - you can start small and let things grow organically.
- 
- ★ Get your safeguarding sorted. Everyone working with children and young people must do the required training for your church / school / denomination.
    - Sheffield Diocese: [sheffdio.org/safeguarding](https://sheffdio.org/safeguarding)
    - URC: <https://urcyorkshire.org.uk/safeguarding/>
    - Sheffield Circuit, Methodist: <https://www.sheffieldcircuit.org.uk/safeguarding-june.html>
    - Sheffield Methodist District: <https://www.sheffieldmethodist.org/what-we-do/safeguarding.html>

### **Notes**

- ★ Start a homework club in your church / hall one day a week (just after school finishes) Have charging points for phones, with drinks and snacks.
- ★ Invite children and young people who are already part of your church into planning and leading services, church activities and events.
- ★ Start a cooking / baking club (if you have a kitchen available in the hall!) - this is great for building relationships and teaching children / young people some basic skills that are delicious to eat!

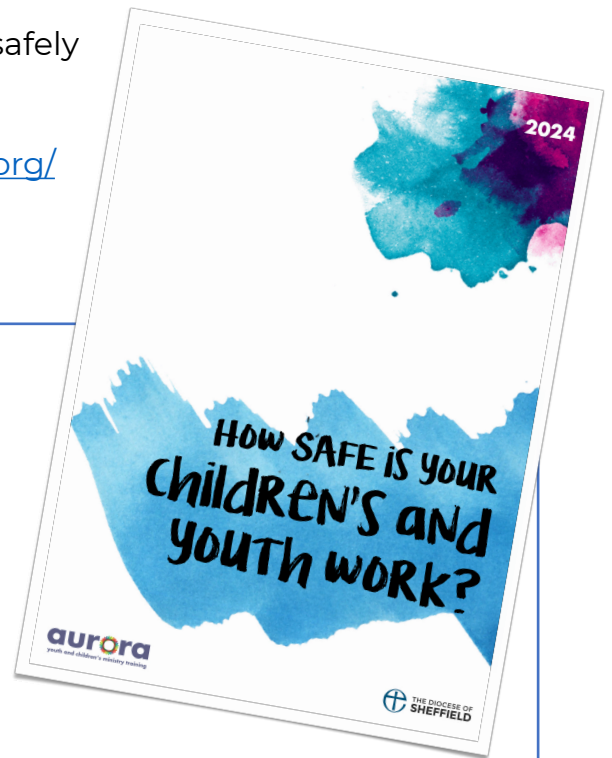




- ★ Start a Messy Church (or something like it) that runs monthly, provides a meal and an excellent after school activity for children and parents/grandparents.
- ★ Gather some people in your church together to pray in order to discern what God is leading you in.
- ★ Throw a party for local children, young people and / or families at Christmas time, Halloween (Alternative Light Party?), Easter, end of school year, the church's birthday... any other opportunities? Be 'Good News' to your community, make excuses to build relationships and see what you learn along the way.

A helpful resource to ensure you doing everything safely is: **How safe is your children's and youth work?**

You can download it here: [www.sheffield.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Booklet-checklist-for-youth-and-childrens-workers-2024-Sheff-Dio.pdf](http://www.sheffield.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Booklet-checklist-for-youth-and-childrens-workers-2024-Sheff-Dio.pdf)



## Notes



# step 6



**Question:** What are the next steps?

Create an action plan, with **SMART** goals.

## **SPECIFIC**

Be very clear in what you want to achieve. Consider breaking the goal down into smaller steps.



## **MEASURABLE**

How will you know when you have achieved your goal? What will you be doing at that time? What will others notice you doing? What will be different? What will you have started or be doing regularly? What will you have stopped or be doing less of?

## **ACHIEVABLE**

Ensure your goals are not too high. Don't set yourself up to fail! Consider setting smaller goals on your way to the big one. Celebrate your successes. If you don't achieve what you set out to, then ask what you could do differently, what would make it more likely to succeed next time?

## **REALISTIC & RESOURCED**

Is this achievable with the resources I have? Are there any other resources you need before you can, or to help you, achieve your goal? How can you access these resources? What problems might you have? What can you do to minimise those problems?

## **TIME LIMITED**

Set a reasonable time limit to achieve your goal. 1 week, 1 month, 6 months, 1 year, 5 years? Consider different (smaller) time limits for smaller steps.



Who are the key players? Do you need to arrange some meetings / conversations with certain key people?

What do parents/carers need to know? Communicate well about what is happening and why it is happening.

What are the risks of doing it, or not doing it?

How can children and young people be part of the plan?

When and how will the plan be reviewed?

Is there anyone who needs to agree to the plan before you get started? (i.e. the children and young people, leaders, PCC/church council, church leader, parents?)

Will you need to do new risk assessments and check your insurance for new activities? Will you need to get new consent forms from parents or carers?

Who can help you promote the new activities?

## Notes



## Other resources

- ★ Worship For Everyone: Unlocking the Transforming Power of All-Age Worship By Nick and Becky Drake (2021)
- ★ Changing Shape by Ruth H Perrin (2020)
- ★ Being an Intergenerational Church: Practices to Bring the Generations Back Together by Suzi Farrant (2023)
- ★ Mission Action Planning from Sheffield Diocese (includes a section on children's and youth ministry) - [www.sheffdio.org/MAP](http://www.sheffdio.org/MAP)
- ★ Children and Family Ministry Handbook by Sarah Flannery (2020)
- ★ Empowering Young People in Church, by Steve Emery-Wright (2008)
- ★ All-age Worship by Lucy Moore (2010)
- ★ Beyond the Children's Corner: Creating a culture of welcome for all ages by Margaret Houston (2020)





**Your notes**

To download this booklet as a PDF, or for more resources, videos and information, visit

**[joinedupconference.com](http://joinedupconference.com)**



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