



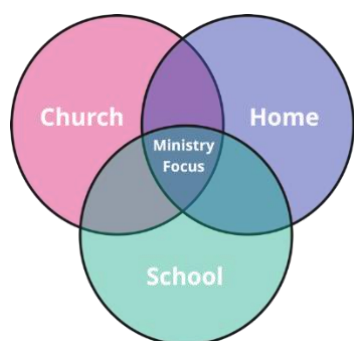
Growing Younger

Young People, Change and Renewal in
the Diocese of Truro

PREPARED FOR
THE DIOCESE OF TRURO
BY
SOUTH WEST YOUTH MINISTRIES

1. Executive Summary

This document sets out the key principles of a missional strategy for children, youth and family ministry within the Diocese of Truro. It concludes with five principles based on evidence from a number of lines of inquiry, including learning from national level research, the approaches of other diocese and experts in children, youth and family ministry.



The missional strategy proposed centres on a commitment to nurturing a culture of intergenerational ministry across the Diocese of Truro. It is widely recognised that faith is formed within the context a diverse of ‘ecology’ of people, groups and contexts. Foremost amongst these are the contexts of home, church and school, which together form the ministry focus of this strategy. Forms of age-specific children and youth ministry are valued in their role of engaging a wide base of people and for enabling steps into personal faith. However, in contrast to other approaches, this missional strategy identifies the formation of worshipping communities, with distinctively Christian practices and discourse, as foundational to faith formation. In effect, this strategy leads with intergenerational Christian communities, rather than seeking to integrate children and young people at a later point. To achieve this aim, forms of collaborative ministry and partnership between churches, home and school will be essential.

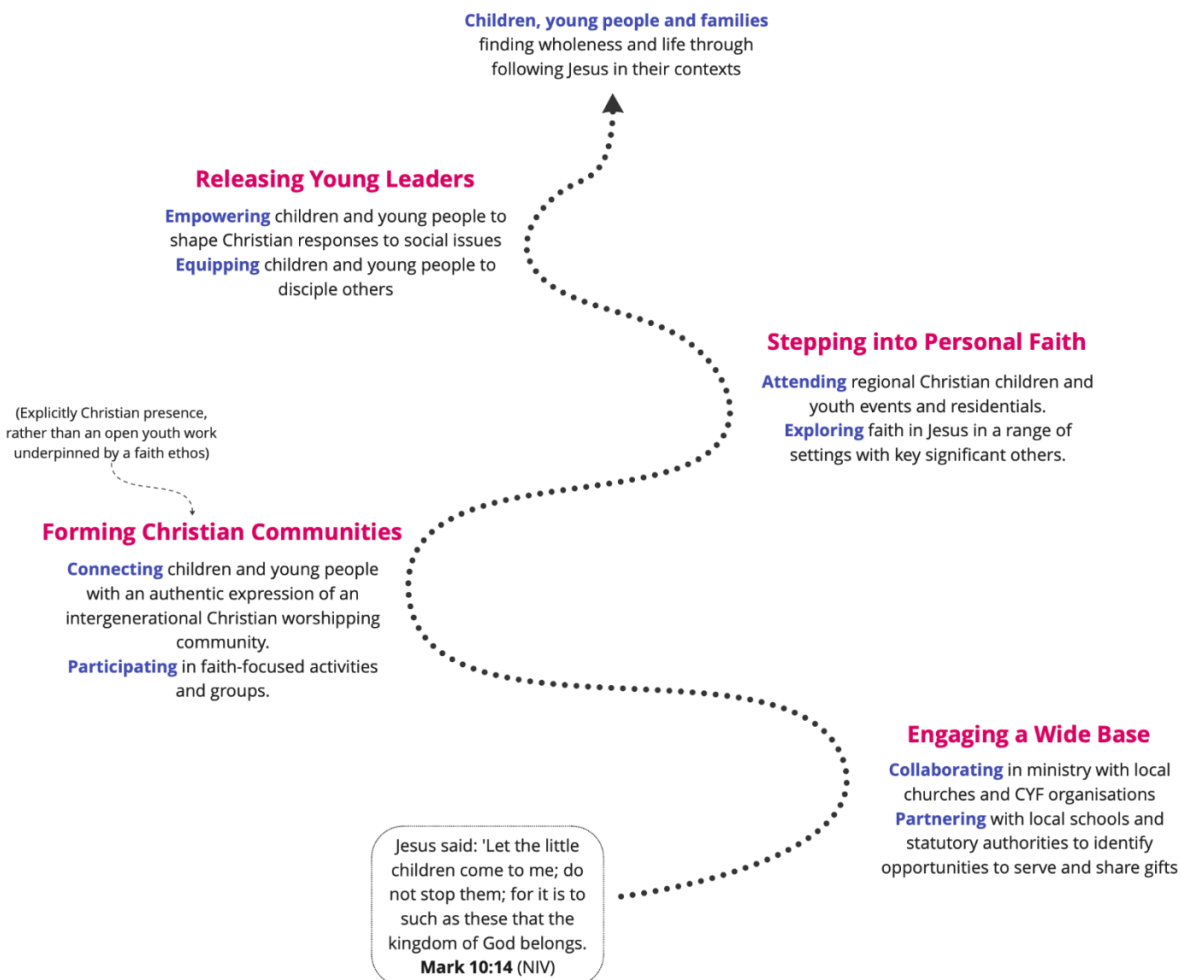
The Growing Younger report offers an evidence based missional strategy for work with children and young people. This missional strategy should only be commended for use in practice if safeguarding is intentionally and explicitly placed at its heart. In all Church activities, we need to take seriously the need to ensure that we promote a Safer Church. This is paramount for any work that involves Children and Young People, from safer recruitment to good governance around mandatory training and DBS. At all levels, we should constantly reinforce:

Safeguarding - Everyone Matters - Everyone’s Responsibility

The Diocese of Truro strives to be trauma informed and is committed to developing safer policies, cultures and practices. Our systems should signpost the need to comply with the basics of Recognise, Respond, Record and Report. Those seeking to implement of any aspect of this strategy should ensure that there is adequate Supervision and support for all of the workers involved and that they understand the systems for Safeguarding.

Owing to its intergenerational focus, this missional strategy offers a discipleship pathway for the whole church, informed by the evidence that children and young people in the Gospels are presented as agents and participants of the in-breaking Kingdom of God. It represents a call to a process of culture change within the church, one in which children and young people are regarded as full participants. This process of change is characterised as a journey of faith. A journey should be willingly undertaken as it requires the costly act of leaving the familiar to discern together new ways of being together and new forms of ministry. This collective process of discernment and change represents a journey of faith, recognising it is a response to the call of God in Christ to follow him together.

Discipleship as a Shared Journey of Faith



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2. Introduction

In November 2023, the Diocese of Truro began a consultation on Children, Young People and Families ministry within the Diocese of Truro. At the time, it was estimated that in 2021 there were approximately 400-500 children and young people regularly worshipping with the 300 Anglican churches in the Diocese of Truro. This would have represented 0.4% of the total 105,000 under-18s living in Cornwall that year. As part of the Diocesan strategy for Change and Renewal, each deanery formed its own deanery plan, with all twelve deanery plans including a commitment to engaging with children, young people, families and schools.

This report was prepared by Isaac McNish working with a team from South West Youth Ministries. The consultation was guided by a steering group from the Diocese of Truro which comprised Children and Youth Ministers, church leaders, external experts, head teachers, and a representative from the national church 'Growing Faith' team. At every stage, we have sought to listen carefully to a wide range of voices and, as a result, the publishing of this report has come later than anticipated.

The long-term ambition is to realise a whole-diocese transformation of ministry with and for children and young people. To this end, this report sets out an evidenced-based approach to nurturing fruitful and sustainable ministry. It is offered with humility, recognising that this report sets the stage for a wider ongoing conversation and collaborative ministry.

Isaac McNish
Head of Ministry

5 March 2025
Ash Wednesday

2.1 Aim of this Proposal

The Growing Younger report is guided an **overarching aim**:



For every child and young person in the Diocese of Truro to have access to a community that meets in Jesus' name, to do Jesus' work in which they can be at home and explore faith.

Within this aim, a **key measurable objective** is to grow the number of children and young people who are active disciples of Christ in the Diocese of Truro by a factor of 10.

The breadth of this task is significant. The diocesan plan for change and renewal has made an ambitious investment in this work. The diocesan vision, *The Saints' Way*, describes becoming 'a church that conspicuously celebrates children and young people at its heart' as one of its top five priorities. People's religious beliefs and practices 'tend to be settled' by the time most people reach their 20s.¹ This missional strategy proposed provides a pathway for children, young people and families (hereafter CYF) to engage in a journey of faith formation. Particular attention is given to the key contexts of church, home and school. The unity of intention and degree of funding makes a clear statement that faith in young people is a priority of the Diocese of Truro. This proposal seeks to provide an evidence-based approach for what practically may be done to put this priority into practice.

¹ Sylvia Collins-Mayo, 'The Meaning and Inheritance of Anglican Identity Amongst Young People,' in Abby Day (ed.), *Contemporary Issues in the Worldwide Anglican Communion* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 21.

3. Methodology

3.1 The Central Research Question

To provide a focus, a central research question was defined at the outset in line with the project aim (2.2 Aim of this Proposal):



How may the diocese of Truro take practical action toward enabling every child and young person in Cornwall to access to a community that meets in Jesus' name, to do Jesus' work in which they can be at home and explore faith?

This central question raises a number of subsequent questions (some of which go beyond the scope of this proposal) relating to **the church's role in God's mission**, including:

- What constitutes a 'community that meets in Jesus' name'?
- What does 'access' look like in practice? What would it mean for a child or young person to 'be at home' in such a community?
- What activities are involved in exploring faith? How would it be determined whether this was taking place effectively?

Alongside these considerations, this prompts questions as to **the agency and needs of young people** themselves. For example:

- What do young people need from a community that meets in Jesus' name?
- What do young people need or value that they do not currently have access to?
- What are the unique set of demographic, cultural and social contexts in which these young people live?

In essence, these two sets of questions highlight the need for this proposal to give attention both to the shape and culture of local Christian community and the needs and context of the children and young people they are seeking to serve. Both of these considerations will impact the form of 'practical action' that this proposal offers.

3.2 Research Procedure

A procedure for identifying and analysing data was followed in this research.² It should be noted that this proposal does not represent a fully-fledged example of case study research. However, where relevant and possible, the methodological principles which guide case study research were implemented to add a greater level of rigour to the process and its findings.

Table 1 – Case Study Research Tactics

<i>Tests of Quality</i>	(Robert K. Yin's) Case Study Tactics	Procedure used in this Project
<i>Construct Validity</i>	Use multiple sources of evidence	Multiple 'lines of inquiry' were followed and findings compared for convergence of evidence.
	Key informants review draft of the report	The project Steering Group, Episcopal College and experts external to the diocese review the proposal.
<i>Internal Validity</i>	Use pattern matching, explanation building, address rival explanations, use logic models	The primary technique used was explanation building (iteratively moving between examples of practice and relevant evidenced approaches and theory). Where possible, rival explanations for outcomes were addressed, particularly with regard to comparing other diocesan approaches with the distinctive context of Cornwall.
<i>External Validity</i>	Use theory in single case studies and replication in multiple case studies	This test concerns the extent to which the findings of a research project may be generalized to other contexts. However, this project is concerned with a specific application to the context of the Diocese of Truro.
<i>Reliability</i>	Follow a case study protocol	A protocol was designed at the outset to set the key research questions and map the relevant lines of inquiry.
	Develop a database of evidence	Evidence was collected and organized using a shared MIRO board with the research team. ³
	Maintain a chain of evidence	Decisions about the form of the proposed missional strategy were made on the basis of evidence from the lines of inquiry.

² Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods*, 6th edition (London: SAGE, 2018), 42-43.

³ <https://miro.com>

3.3 Research Timeline

The allotted timeframe for research and design of the missional strategy was relatively short. This is appropriate as, though academic research may take ‘as long as a topic needs,’ real world research is conditioned by ‘strict time constraints.’⁴ As such, it was deemed essential at the outset that the missional strategy on which this proposal rests (see 3.

The Missional) was the product of ‘evidence-based policy and practice.’⁵ To this end, a variety of lines of enquiry were accessed to construct a broad and rich evidence base. Individuals, organisations, projects and other diocese with relevant experience were approached to gather insights. In particular, the models of practice which effectively engage children and young people in a process of faith formation were prioritized in the research.

Project Duration November 2023 to May 2024

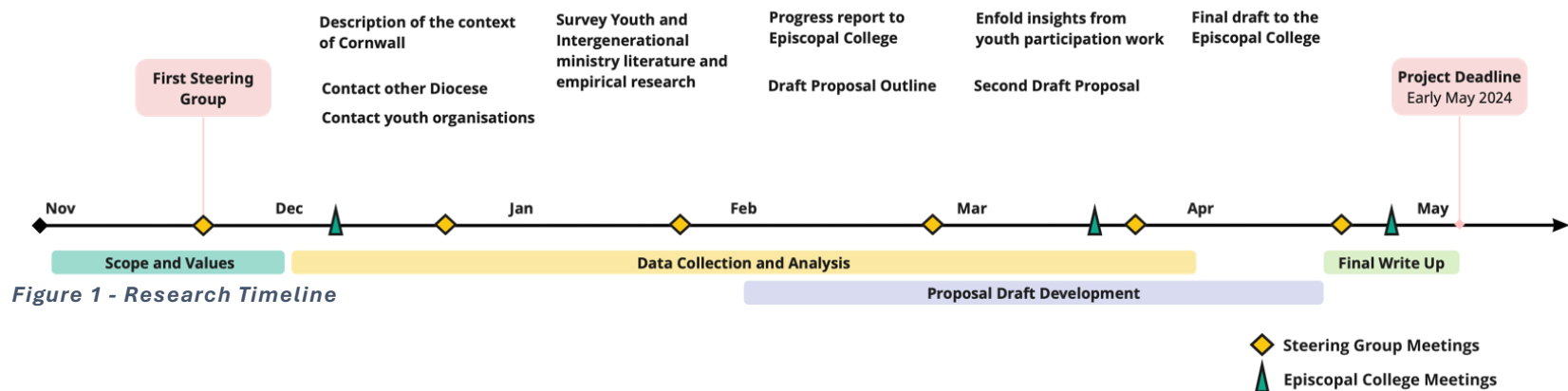


Figure 1 - Research Timeline

⁴ Colin Robson and Keiran McCartan, *Real World Research*, 4th edition (Chichester: John Wiley and Sons, 2016), 11.

⁵ Robson and McCartan, *Real World Research*, 10.

3.4 Scope and Values

A consideration of the values which guide the design and practice of research is vital.⁶ As such, determining the values held collectively by the steering group was the focus of the first phase of this research (Figure 1 - Research Timeline). The breadth of participants in this group meant that a wide range of values and practices were individually held. From engaging in a group reflective process, the two central values which were identified as being collectively held were:

1. **‘Children and young people encountering the Lord’.**
2. **‘Children and young people finding healing and wholeness’.**

There was a shared desire to raise the aspiration level across the diocese, from the smallest to the largest churches, in positively impacting these two areas. Insofar as it is reasonable, financial constraints were not regarded as the primary limitation on the practical actions offered in this proposal. Rather, the starting was to consider what ought to be happening in order to further the primary aim (3.2 Aim of this Proposal).

In addition to the conviction that all have a role to play in the discipling of children and young people, there was a desire for this proposal to: take a long-term view (in order of 10+ rather than 2-3 years), be realistic as to what may practically be achieved within this timeframe, and to not be driven by ‘fear.’ This final point emphasises how a motivation based on fear – for example, to maintain the loss of a particular form of corporate Christian life – was not felt to be helpful (or effective) by the steering group. Despite the breadth of the challenge, a spirituality of timefulness is regarded as essential to every phase of this proposal. This has been expressed well by John Swinton: ‘The beginning point for living out and living within God’s

⁶ Zoë Bennett, Elaine Graham, Stephen Pattison and Heather Walton, *Invitation to Research in Practical Theology* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018), 171.

time is really quite simple. God is love and God calls us to love. *Such love takes time.*⁷ If the practical action proposed by this project is to be an expression of the love of God in Christ, then its implementation cannot be rushed.

3.4.1 A Note on Terminology

There are various terms used to refer to people between aged 0-17 in literature and practice. For the sake of clarity, this proposal uses the terms babies and toddlers (age 0-3), children (age 4-11) and young person (age 12-17). This move is pragmatic and is not intended to establish a hard boundary between age groups. Furthermore, it must be noted that any person who has not reached their 18th birthday is legally considered to be a ‘child’ and thus are to be given all fundamental rights and freedoms afforded to children under UK law.⁸

⁷ John Swinton, *Becoming Friends of Time: Disability, Timefulness and Gentle Discipleship* (London: SCM, 2016), 67.

⁸ <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-protection-system/children-the-law#skip-to-content>. Accessed 14 March 2024.

4. Lines of Inquiry

The following headings in this section explore the different lines of inquiry available. Each section seeks to offer a meaningful response to one or more of the following guiding questions:

- What does the research with children and young people indicate about their perceptions of faith and the church?
- What perspectives are there in the academic literature on youth and children's ministry?
- What is the national Church of England strategy? What approaches have other diocese taken to youth and children's ministry? What has been effective? What has been learned?
- How might these perspectives and approaches be contextualised to the Diocese of Truro?



It is beyond the scope of this proposal to offer a comprehensive response to any one of these questions. However, this approach seeks to demonstrate awareness of the range of values, expectations and contexts in which young people in the Diocese of Truro find themselves.

Practical Implication Example

(1) Each section concludes with practical implications from the discussion of evidence. These insights will be carried forward to the construction of the missional strategy. These implications are summarised in Appendix A – The Five Principles of the Missional Strategy.

4.1 Listening to Children, Young People and Families

4.1.1 Religious Participation Across the Generations in Britain

In 2004, David Voas and Alasdair Crockett used the terminology of radioactive decay, to describe British institutional religion. Drawing from two large-scale quantitative surveys,⁹ they asserted that regular churchgoing (what they call ‘active belonging’) has a ‘half-life of one generation’.¹⁰ Put another way, half of the children of churchgoing parents do not attend as adults.¹¹ In 2019, Voas and Steve Bruce wrote that ‘religious decline in Britain is generational; people tend to be less religious than their parents, and on average their children are even less religious than they are’.¹² Amidst the contested argument over the state of secularisation in Britain, decline in ‘attendance’ is now more widely regarded as a decline in ‘belief, attendance and affiliation.’¹³ Whilst it is important to recognise that ‘belonging’ may take many different forms,¹⁴ the trend is nevertheless problematic for to form a religious identity that is ‘meaningful beyond socially ascribed affiliations, young people need to engage with a worshipping community.’¹⁵ Given that a ‘worshipping community’ is typically understood to be a form of ‘church’ (particularly as an adult), it is important to consider young people’s attitudes toward the church.

⁹ The British Household Panel and British Social Attitudes surveys.

¹⁰ David Voas and Alasdair Crockett, ‘Religion in Britain: Neither Believing nor Belonging,’ *Sociology* 39, no. 1 (February 2005): 11-28 (21).

¹¹ David Voas and Laura Watt, The Church Growth Research Programme Report on Strands 1 and 2: Numerical Change in Church Attendance: National, Local and Individual Factors (2014) [http:// www.churchgrowthresearch.org.uk/UserFiles/File/Reports/Report_Strands_1_2_rev2.pdf](http://www.churchgrowthresearch.org.uk/UserFiles/File/Reports/Report_Strands_1_2_rev2.pdf)

¹² David Voas and Steve Bruce, ‘Religion: Identity, Behaviour and Belief over two decades’, *British Social Attitudes: The 36th Report* (London: The National Centre for Social Research, 2019), 1-29 (21).

¹³ A. Crockett and D. Voas, ‘Generations of Decline: Religious Change in 20th-Century Britain’, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 45, no. 4 (2006): 567-584 (567).

¹⁴ David Walker, *God’s Belongers: How people engage with God today and how the church can help* (Abingdon: Bible Reading Fellowship, 2017).

¹⁵ Sylvia Collins-Mayo, ‘Secularization and Desecularization in Europe and North America’, in D. Patte (ed.), *The Cambridge Dictionary of Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 1139-1142

4.1.2 Young People's Perspectives on Church and Faith

In the early 2000s, Leslie Francis and Charlotte Craig analysed a sample of 10,153 churchgoing young people aged 8-14 on attitudes toward Church.¹⁶ They found that attitudes became less positive significantly between the ages 8-14. Factors having a positive influence included all-age acts of worship and age-specific worship were significantly associated with a more positive attitude toward church. A positive view of the form of music and singing, as well as the church leader also had a positive influence on attitude toward Church. In 2021 Youth For Christ released their research *Z-A of Faith and Spirituality*.¹⁷ Data was gathered from 1001 online surveys in January 2020 and 10-minute interviews with young people aged

There is a clear opportunity for linking 'young people's experience and desire for family, with a vision for church that includes genuine belonging, unconditional love, and active participation.'

11-18 years. Some of the responses are worth considering in light of the focus on faith formation in young people. When asked, 'who influences the way you think about God and spirituality,' the top answer family (55%), then friends (32%). Youth workers (4%) and church (1%) were reported at significantly lower rates. When asked about their view of church, there were few positive responses (8%), more negative (27%), but the majority were more neutral seeing it as a place of religious practice (12%) or answered, 'don't know' (34%). The report notes that the majority of young who had connected with the church (62%) did so through school visits. It comments that 'visits are not seen as particularly engaging resulting in largely negative comments, or simply a place to go as formality for certain events.'¹⁸

¹⁶ Leslie J. Francis and Charlotte L. Craig, 'Tweenagers in the church: An empirical perspective on attitude development,' *Journal of Beliefs and Values* 27, no. 1 (2006)

¹⁷ Youth For Christ, 'Z-A of Faith and Spirituality' 2020. <https://yfc.co.uk/faithandspirituality/>.

¹⁸ Youth For Christ, 'Z-A of Faith and Spirituality' 2020, 34. <https://yfc.co.uk/faithandspirituality/>.

Against this backdrop, it must also be acknowledged that the number of young people who identify as Christian has fallen considerably between the two most recent Census' in England and Wales (from 53.7% in 2011 to 36.9% in 2021). This drop in self-identification needs to be distinguished from those who have an active or concrete faith which represents a smaller section of young people in the UK.¹⁹ Youthscape have recently published the findings of their research involving a representative sample of 1000 young people aged 12-17 from across the UK. The section relating to young people's responses to Christian ideas about community and church is relevant here. The report found nuances regarding young people's perception of God and the big 'story' of the Bible in relation to Christian community. The report suggests exploring approaches to ministry which affirm and build on young people's positive perception of family, which the majority of respondents understood in relation to their 'literal or biological family.'²⁰ Recognising the challenging and complicated nature of this term, there is a clear opportunity for linking 'young people's experience and desire for family, with a vision for church that includes genuine belonging, unconditional love, and active participation.'²¹

Practical Implication

(1) The missional strategy should be constructed with the assumption that the vast majority of children and young people encountered will have little to no experience of Christian community. It should also consider how contextually sensitive forms of Christian communities might demonstrate the positive dimensions which familial relationships may confer.

¹⁹ Barna, 'Open Generation: A Global Teens Study,' <https://www.barna.com/the-open-generation/explore-the-data/>.

²⁰ Youthscape, 'Translating God: Part 2 - "Feel-Good" News: What young people really think about Christian beliefs,' 81. Accessed 18 March 2024.

²¹ Youthscape, 'Translating God,' 82.

4.1.3 Young People, Religion and Well-Being

In their study of long-term trends with young people in the UK, Youthscape have found that ‘Young people today report being less satisfied with life overall.’²² This is coupled with an increase in the rates of ‘probable mental health disorders’ and referrals to CAMHS.²³ It is widely acknowledged that the level of demand for services has exceeded the provision available.²⁴ NHS research found that, in 2022, ‘18.0% of children aged 7 to 16 years and 22.0% of young people aged 17 to 24 years had a probable mental disorder.’²⁵ This is particularly relevant to Cornwall which has had to prioritise services for those presenting as seriously ill.²⁶ In previous assessments, it was noted there was less or ‘no capacity for earlier intervention.’²⁷ However, from January 2024, Cornwall Council will begin a £5m research project into improving mental health and wellbeing in Cornwall.²⁸ In 2017/18 ‘Trailblazers’ (NHS Mental Health Support Teams) were embedded in six Schools in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly with the aim of delivering ‘evidence-based interventions for mild-to-moderate mental health issues’ and give ‘timely advice to school and college staff’.²⁹ This brief sketch presents the wider context of mental health provision and support in Cornwall.

²² Youthscape, Translating God, <https://www.youthscape.co.uk/research/translating-god/mental-health-and-wellbeing>. Accessed 22 January 2024.

²³ ‘CAMHS’ refers to the ‘Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.’

²⁴ See data from the British Medical Association, ‘Mental Health Pressure in England.’ <https://www.bma.org.uk/advice-and-support/nhs-delivery-and-workforce/pressures/mental-health-pressure-data-analysis>. Accessed January 2024.

²⁵ Newlove-Delgado T, Marcheselli F, Williams T, Mandalia D, Davis J, McManus S, Savic M, Treloar W, Ford T. (2022) Mental Health of Children and Young People in England, 2022. NHS Digital, Leeds.

²⁶ HealthWatch Cornwall, ‘Accessing Mental Health Support in Cornwall: July 2021,’ pp. 26-28.

https://www.healthwatchcornwall.co.uk/sites/healthwatchcornwall.co.uk/files/Accessing%20Mental%20Health%20Support%20in%20Cornwall%20report_0.pdf. Accessed January 2024. See also, Care Quality Commission, ‘Cornwall Partnership NHS Foundation Trust: Specialist Community Mental Health Services for Children and Young People: Quality Report,’ 2 February 2018. <https://api.cqc.org.uk/public/v1/reports/90684763-bded-436f-b0e5-58a9fa0ef17a?20210117194415>. Accessed January 2024.

²⁷ ‘Outpatient Specialist Services (Tier 3).’ <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmhealth/342/34208.htm>.

²⁸ BBC News, ‘Cornwall: Nearly £5 awarded to tackle health inequalities,’ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cornwall-67625480>. Accessed January 2024.

²⁹ NHS England, ‘Mental Health Support in Schools and Colleges,’ <https://www.england.nhs.uk/mental-health/cyp/trailblazers/>. Accessed January 2024.

Amidst this wider context, a core value of the Growing Younger steering group was expressed as young people finding ‘healing and wholeness’ (3.4 Scope and Values). Along with ‘well-being,’ these represent contested terms, particularly in the context of religion and faith. For example, well-being may refer to both mental health and physical health. Likewise, religion may denote a combination of belief, group participation and affiliation. During adolescence, a higher religiosity (typically defined using measures such as frequency of attendance of religious gatherings) or spirituality is associated positively with better self-reported mental health.³⁰ In 2016, a Theos meta-study on religion and well-being drew together over 140 academic studies to conclude that ‘there is powerful evidence to suggest that the relationship between religion and spirituality and well-being is strong and positive, both for adolescents and for adults.’³¹ In particular, the report found that social religious participation evidences a strong ‘positive correlation across all measures of well-being.’³² Social religious participation pertains to the active (and regular) participation in group religious worship services, although some studies include other forms of religious social participation, such as volunteering.

‘There is powerful evidence to suggest that the relationship between religion and spirituality and well-being is strong and positive, both for adolescents and for adults.’

³⁰ Y. J. Wong, L. Rew, and K. D. Slaikeu, “A Systematic Review of Recent Research on Adolescent Religiosity/Spirituality and Mental Health, *Issues in Mental Health Nursing* 27 (2006): 161-183.

³¹ Mark, ‘Passing on Faith,’ *Theos*, 11.

³² Nick Spencer, Gillain Madden, Clare Purtill and Joseph Ewing, ‘Religion and Wellbeing,’ *Theos*, 3.

Practical Implication

(2) The missional strategy will seek to meaningfully respond to the challenges which children and young people navigate in society today. This will involve the Christian community offering practical and spiritual care as well as being effective signposts to further specialist support.

4.1.4 Faith at Home

A separate Theos report in 2016, *Passing on Faith*, surveyed 1,013 parents with children aged 18 and under in Great Britain. The report examined the role of parents in the transmission of faith to their children. The report found that only 31% said that they want their children ‘to hold the same beliefs about whether or not there is a God or Higher Power as me when they are older.’³³ This attitude might not be entirely surprising amongst the wider population. However, it was found that even self-defined Christian parents ‘were only slightly keener than average (36% vs. 31%) that their children shared their beliefs.’³⁴ The report comments: ‘no child enters adolescence and adulthood unaffected by the overarching story that they learn in the home.’³⁵ This points to a serious challenge to faith formation in young people. Where the foundations have been laid in childhood, families are shown consistently to be an integral part of

Where the foundations have been laid in childhood, families are shown consistently to be an integral part of faith formation.

³³ Mark, ‘Passing on Faith,’ Theos, 11.

³⁴ Mark, ‘Passing on Faith,’ Theos, 11.

³⁵ Mark, ‘Passing on Faith,’ Theos, 11.

faith formation.³⁶ Enduring faith is largely the product of caring, supportive, stable homes, where faith is seen, heard and experienced. In this, modelling faith is key. Parents need to ‘be’ and ‘do’ what they want their child to become. However, other research has identified an understandable reluctance, especially amongst parents unsure of their own religion and world view, not to be ‘too forceful around belief and how this might push children away.’³⁷ Positively, Francis et al. have shown that young Anglicans (from a sample of 2,019 children aged 9-11 in Wales and 2,323 young people aged 13-15 in England) who practise their Anglican identity by attending church did so primarily because their parents were Anglican churchgoers.³⁸ In a separate study of Christian ethos schools, Francis and Village concluded that ‘parents seem to play a crucial role in promoting and in maintaining a positive attitude toward Christianity among their children’³⁹ among secondary age students.

Practical Implication

(3) The missional strategy will regard parents and caregivers as key figures in the faith formation of children and young people.

³⁶ Here ‘family’ is broadly defined with the understanding that this can take a number of forms.

³⁷ Faith in the Nexus, 90.

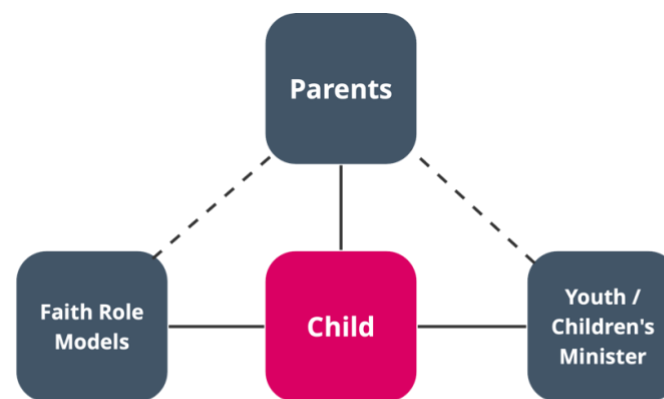
³⁸ Leslie J. Francis, David W. Lankshear, Emma L. Eccles and Ursula McKenna, ‘Sustaining churchgoing young Anglicans in England and Wales : assessing influence of the home,’ *Journal of Beliefs and Values* 41, no. 1 (2020): 34-50.

³⁹ Leslie J. Francis and Andrew Village, ‘Christian ethos secondary schools, parental church attendance and student attitude toward Christianity. Exploring connections in England and Wales.’ *British Journal of Religious Education* 42, no. 3 (2020): 298-312.

4.1.5 The Relationship Between Church and Home

In February 2022, Sarah Holmes and Ann Casson carried out research into the following question: What is the place of families in church post-Covid?⁴⁰ They conducted an online survey of 175 church leaders and 209 parents of children aged 0-16. Further in-depth interviews were carried out with 36 children (age 7-11) and 18 Christian parents. The participants were drawn from 12 Christian denominations within the UK. The report identifies as a key insight the statement: ‘Church and parents want to work in partnership to nurture a child’s faith. But there is a need for both sides to fully understand the nature of that partnership.’⁴¹ In particular, it was found that Christian parents want ‘more personal, targeted and relational support from their local church for faith at home.’⁴² Neither the home nor church were regarded as the sole deciding factor. Rather, attending and talking about faith within church gatherings were held in common as important factors.

Sarah Holmes has carried out research on how the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the faith formation of young children.⁴³ From



- Meaningful connection and interaction which model faith practically
- - - - - Mutual listening and collaborative advocacy for the child

Figure 2 – Holmes’ Key Faith Forming Relationships

⁴⁰ <https://www.nurturingyoungfaith.org/post/research-report-what-is-the-place-of-families-in-church-post-covid>

⁴¹ Ann Casson, Sarah Holmes and Richard Powney, ‘What is the Place of Families in Church Post-Covid? Perspectives of children, parents and church leaders in the UK,’ November 2022.

⁴² Ann Casson, Sarah Holmes and Richard Powney, ‘What is the Place of Families in Church Post-Covid? Perspectives of children, parents and church leaders in the UK,’ November 2022.

⁴³ Sarah E. Holmes, ‘The Changing Nature of Ministry amongst Children and Families in the UK during the Covid-19 Pandemic,’ *Christian Education Journal* 19, no. 1 (2022): 134-151.

the interview data,⁴⁴ Holmes identified three key influences on children's faith: (1) faith conversation and activities within the family, (2) participation in church-based discipleship groups aimed at young people, (3) interaction with 'faith role models' (in addition to those in the family and church context). This finding on the pivotal role of the parent(s) is corroborated by a study conducted by Leslie Francis on parental and peer influence on church attendance. From a much larger sample of 7,059 students aged 13-15 in England and Wales, Francis found that compared to having parents who regularly attend an Anglican church, the influence of peer support 'seemed insignificant.'⁴⁵ Moreover, young people continuing the practice of church attendance is more likely if their churchgoing parents (interestingly, especially mother) regularly talk with them about their faith. Holmes concludes that regardless of the distinctive approach taken, a clear strategy for faith formation with children and young people is essential. This strategy must include: 'attentiveness to individual faith journeys, working closely with individuals or small groups to facilitate good quality and meaningful interactions, relational connections to model faith practically, intentional relational connection rather than taking it for granted, collaboration between parents and church, and listening to children and their parents.'⁴⁶ Therefore, a key part of this proposal is the consideration of how existing ministry structures may be oriented and adapted to effectively serve children through collaborative partnership with parents and other faith role models. As Sylvia Collins-Mayo has argued, 'for

'For religious identity to develop into something meaningful beyond socially ascribed affiliations, young people need to engage with a worshipping community.'

⁴⁴ From a total of fifty-five interviewees, including: eight parents, thirteen grandparents, twenty-two voluntary and salaried children's workers, four Diocesan advisors, and eight representatives from children's ministry resource or training providers. They comprised nine male and forty-six female participants.

⁴⁵ Leslie J. Francis, 'Parental and Peer Influence on Church Attendance among Adolescent Anglicans in England and Wales,' *Journal of Anglican Studies* 18, no. 1 (2020): 61.

⁴⁶ Sarah E. Holmes, 'The Changing Nature of Ministry amongst Children and Families in the UK during the Covid-19 Pandemic,' *Christian Education Journal* 19, no. 1 (2022): 134-151.

religious identity to develop into something meaningful beyond socially ascribed affiliations, young people need to engage with a worshipping community.⁴⁷

Practical Implication

(4) The missional strategy will have clear allocation of funding to focus on the training and resourcing parents and caregivers to nurture faith in the home.

(5) The missional strategy will regard integrating children and young people into worshipping communities as an essential aspect of their personal faith formation.

4.1.6 The Nexus of Church, School and Home

The Faith in the Nexus research project involved 20 church primary schools from the Church of England and Catholic sector in England.⁴⁸ This research sought to explore how church primary schools may facilitate opportunities for children's exploration of faith and spiritual life in the home. Data was gathered from focus groups involving 187 pupils and 267 adults.⁴⁹ In addition, 1002 people participated in an online survey.⁵⁰ From the survey data, parents who identified as Christian but did not attend church, tended to express their belonging to church through school (in particular celebrations such as Christmas and Easter), rather than directly through church attendance measures. If church, home and school exist within a nexus (a

⁴⁷ Collins-Mayo, 'Meaning and Inheritance,' 31.

⁴⁸ A. Casson, S. Hulbert, M. Woolley, and R. A. Bowie, 'Faith in the Nexus: Church Schools and Children's Exploration of Faith in the Home: A NICER Research Study of Twenty Church Primary Schools in England,' 2020. <https://nicer.org.uk/faith-in-the-nexus>.

⁴⁹ Parents (100), staff (112), governors (21) clergy (18) and others (16).

⁵⁰ 730 pupils, 164 parents and 106 stakeholders.

series of mutual connections or links), then, for these parents, their encounters and interactions with church are mediated through their interaction with the school. This interaction is then dependent on a positive and strong school-church relationship.

The report found that pupils see the church and school connected through the following factors:

1. The presence of the minister in school: presence in the playground, prioritising time for school by being involved in school's everyday life, interacting well with children.
2. Participation in worship at the church.
3. School work displayed within the church.
4. Close physical proximity to the church (building).

The report summarises the findings on positive school-church relationships as being characterised by 'invitational worship, the celebration of festivals, the minister's presence, and a sense of belonging and connection to the church community and building.'⁵¹ Importantly, a clear finding of this research was a strong correlation between the 'perception of a strong active relationship between church and school' and 'evidence of faith-related activities at home.'⁵²

A clear finding of this research was a strong correlation between the 'perception of a strong active relationship between church and school' and 'evidence of faith-related activities at home.'

⁵¹ Faith in the Nexus, 35.

⁵² Faith in the Nexus, 48.

The research identifies seven approaches to facilitating opportunities for children to explore faith and the spiritual dimension of life:⁵³

1. Focusing on children's (and families') spiritual wellbeing.
2. Providing space and time for the child to reflect, think and pray.
3. Embedding **frequent opportunities for children to talk about and explore** existential questions, and religious concepts and encouraged acceptance of children's talk about faith and spiritual matters.
4. Enabling and prioritising **encounters with experiences of lived religion** in the form of a variety of faith-related activities, places, people, Scriptures and events.
5. Acknowledging **the child as the dynamic initiator and co-constructor of faith** and spirituality in school, as well as home, and helping adults to identify this engagement at home.
6. Sustaining **a strong connection between local church and church school** (clergy, building and community), and understanding the diversity of ways in which people connect to church.
7. Identifying and removing barriers to **collaborative working** within the Nexus.⁵⁴

This research generated a set of resources, the 'Faith in the Nexus Toolkit'⁵⁵ for practical actions in the context of family, church and school. A final note from the Faith in the Nexus research concerns the use of the Bible. The report argues for a reframing of the use of the Bible as a key (1) 'cultural resource' for the school curriculum, (2) theological resource for religious education and belief, and (3) spiritual source for prayer. They state this recognises the role of the Bible as 'a principle elder text for civilisations, rather than an exclusive text only belonging to a certain group of believers. The Bible is

⁵³ Cf. Withers, *Mission-Shaped Children*, chapter 8. Kindle version.

⁵⁴ Faith in the Nexus, 85.

⁵⁵ <https://nicer.org.uk/faith-in-the-nexus/the-nexus-toolkit>.

an ancient treasure of many different peoples' stories of faith throughout history. It has permeated history, culture and the arts, and continues to speak to people of many different backgrounds.'⁵⁶

Practical Implication

- (6) The missional strategy will regard building strong collaborative relationships with local primary and secondary schools as a priority.
- (7) The linking of church, school and home as key contexts for faith formation is to be regarded as an essential aspect of this missional strategy.
- (8) The Bible should be regarded as a vital resource for faith formation within church, school and home.

4.1.7 The Strategic Role of Church Leaders

In a questionnaire survey in 2022 involving 207 responses (38% from within the UK), Sarah Holmes et al. found that 'only 16% of the churches described an ethos of viewing children as disciples, active agents within the church and a sense of modelling and mentoring to support them in interacting more.'⁵⁷ This highlights an issue that has been touched upon already, that the local leadership of a church has a significant effect on the ethos,⁵⁸ ministry strategy and resourcing

⁵⁶ Faith in the Nexus, 91.

⁵⁷ Sarah Holmes, Lawson Murray, Mimi Larson, Sue Price, Phil Whitehead and Valeria de Abreu, 'Do Church Structures Enable Children's and Family Ministry to Grow? A Multi-National Research Project,' October 2022.

⁵⁸ Holly Chatterton Allen and Christine Lawton Ross, *Intergenerational Christian Formation: Bringing the whole church together in ministry, community and worship* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2012), 177-184.

Church leaders are key partners when it comes to developing collaborative partnerships between church and school.

directed toward faith formation in children.⁵⁹ The Faith in the Nexus research found that Church leaders are key partners when it comes to developing collaborative partnerships between church and school. These partnerships are a key influence on faith formation of children. They found that the church leader being unwilling to engage or lacking confidence in communicating with families and children has a ‘significant negative impact’⁶⁰ on partnership between church and school. Further, the increased workload on clergy and long interregnum period presents a serious challenge to maintaining these links. On this issue, the report makes a key strategic recommendation: ‘The formal identification, recognition and nurture of these animators, who have formed links with school in the provision of spiritual support, is a clear priority. Dioceses, coordinating between their youth structures and the Boards of Education, should seek to map animators (lay or ordained) and their schools to support and sustain them. We recommend structured support for these specific ministries at Diocesan level with special focus where there is an interregnum.’⁶¹ These insights all point to the reality that the relationships between church and school (and home) cannot be ‘left to happenstance; they need to be strategically prioritised.’⁶² In particular, church leaders need to prioritise, and ‘be persistent in seeking to build links into schools.’⁶³ Leaders within the local church, both lay and ordained, should be recognised as playing a decisive role in shaping ministry culture, as bearer of the wider tradition, and public representatives in their community.⁶⁴

⁵⁹ Barna, ‘Who is Responsible for Children’s Faith Formation?’ March 2019. <https://www.barna.com/research/children-faith-formation/>.

⁶⁰ Faith in the Nexus, 48.

⁶¹ Faith in the Nexus, 89.

⁶² Faith in the Nexus, 88.

⁶³ Faith in the Nexus, 88.

⁶⁴ Cf. Margaret Withers, *Mission-Shaped Children: Moving towards a child-centred church* (London: Church House Publishing, 2014), chapter 2. Kindle version.

Practical Implication

(9) The missional strategy should specify a clearly defined process to enable project workers to collaboratively discern with local church and ministry leaders the willingness and commitment to children and youth ministry required by this proposal.

4.2 Perspectives from Youth, Children and Family Ministry

4.2.1 Models of Ministry with Children and Young People

The previous section identified key factors in faith formation from the perspective of youth, children and families. This section seeks to glean insights from how youth, children and families ministers approach faith formation. Scottie May et al. argue that the metaphors we use to describe ministry will shape what the ministry actually looks like in practice.⁶⁵ May suggests that in children's ministry, the 'dominant metaphor tends to become the ministry model.'⁶⁶ Tim Gough has argued that there are four *de facto* models that describe the majority of youth ministries, at least in British context (see Table 2 - Gough's Models of Youth Ministry). He labels these as 'incarnational', 'funnel', 'worship', 'intergenerational'.⁶⁷ Though Gough's focus is youth ministry, this typology is instructive on the broad strategies churches take in youth, children and families ministry more generally. Gough briefly mentions other approaches based on social enterprise and cell groups but regards these as subsets of the four types. Gough's own argument is that youth ministry ought to recover the beneficial aspects of all four in a single unified model.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Scottie May, Beth Posterski, Catherine Stonehouse, and Linda Cannell, *Children Matter: Celebrating their place in the Church, Family, and Community* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2005), 3-5.

⁶⁶ May et al., *Children Matter*, 10.

⁶⁷ Tim Gough, *Rebooted: Reclaiming youth ministry for the longhaul. A biblical framework* (London: IVP, 2018), 16-20.

⁶⁸ Gough, *Reclaiming*, 18.

Table 2 - Gough's Models of Youth Ministry

<i>Model</i>	<i>Gough's Definition</i>	<i>Brief Evaluation</i>
<i>Incarnational</i>	Youth ministers seek to contextualise themselves to 'youth culture' in order to build discipling relationships.	<p>Strengths - Accessibility and relevance enables connections young people who would otherwise not have the opportunity to consider faith.</p> <p>Weaknesses - Too much emphasis on the youth minister's role; careful safeguarding procedures required to distinguish boundaries; loss of critical challenge and faith formation over prioritisation of 'being with' young people</p>
<i>Funnel</i>	Youth ministers run 'multiple projects with different levels of emphasis on Christian content' with the aim of moving young people from 'easy-to-attend' to more 'committed' groups.	<p>Strengths – provides an accessible starting point for young people and allows 'progression' at their own pace; presents a clear structure and pathway for young people to engage in faith forming activities; opportunities for young leaders to be developed in leading groups.</p> <p>Weaknesses – requires a significant financial and volunteer investment to establish and run effectively; this model risks being deceitful in first offering 'easy-to-attend' groups before directing young people toward the 'real purpose' of discipleship-oriented groups.</p>
<i>Worship</i>	A corporate worship gathering acts as a central attractional hub around which other ministries flow to and from.	<p>Strengths – provides young people with a setting in which to learn a Christian discourse; can gather a wide range of young people from a diverse backgrounds.</p> <p>Weaknesses – can create a two-track mentality whereby young people 'age out' of the youth worship into 'adult church' where the people and style are unfamiliar; this form may be challenging for certain personality types</p>
<i>Intergenerational</i>	This approach focuses on family gatherings, all-age worship and shared experiences for faith formation	<p>Strengths – emphasises the role of the whole church in discipling one another; it avoids the 'aging out' problem inherent in the other models.</p> <p>Weaknesses – this model can neglect the role of age-specific groups altogether; there may be challenges for young people who do not fit neatly into 'traditional' family groupings.</p>

4.2.2 Youth and Children's Ministry and the Wider Church

With some of the models Gough outlines (particularly, Incarnational and Funnel),⁶⁹ it may be argued that there is little interaction between young people and the wider church. They are held at arm's length (either in the community or in a church hall) from adults. Here, it is worth noting that the sociological understanding of the transition from childhood to adulthood have changed significantly in recent decades. Robert Wuthnow (*After the Baby Boomers*), Jeffrey Arnett (*Emerging Adulthood*) and Christian Smith (*Souls in Transition*) all describe a distinct phase termed emerging adulthood.⁷⁰ This stage is broadly defined as occurring between the age of 18 and 29.⁷¹ These authors resist describing this as extended 'adolescence', it is itself a new and different stage of life. In our society, entering adulthood is a process, not a moment. However, in the local church, the move from participation in youth ministry to the wider congregation can, in practice, be a sudden and disjointed moment. This disjuncture is frequently so disorienting as to disrupt the practice of regular participation, upon which a faith identity is sustained and nurtured.

Some young people maintain their participation and belonging as adults, often through serving in a specific role within the wider church. In taking on a role, one becomes visible and is known by others. It provides contexts for contribution and conversation, which are foundations to social belonging. But what about the many others who don't take on an explicit role,

⁶⁹ See, Tim Gough, 'Has "the incarnational model" been a theologically helpful influence on modern youth ministry?' *Journal of Youth and Theology* 17, no. 2 (2019): 135–163.

⁷⁰ See also Richard R. Sundene and Jana L. Sundene, *Shaping the Journey of Emerging Adults: Life-giving rhythms of spiritual transformation* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2012).

⁷¹ <https://www.unh.edu/pacs/emerging-adulthood>.

those for whom their belonging was primarily conceived of in terms of their youth group? This problem is not new and is illustrated graphically by the 'One Eared Mickey' (named for its minimal likeness to the outline of Mickey Mouse, see: Figure 3 - The 'One-Eared Mickey' Diagram).⁷²

The diagram depicts the youth as off to one side (perhaps meeting in a separate venue or time), and only tangentially connected to the wider congregation (typified by practices such as 'sending the youth out' partway through a Sunday worship service). On this issue, Holmes asks a searching question: 'If we continue to send the children out to the "back room" so that they can learn what is required, will this help them to feel a true and valued part of their Christian community?'⁷³

When considering influential models based primarily on worship (events),⁷⁴ it is important to observe that these have their own limitations. Pete Ward reflects on his own experience of working with young people in relation to models of the church. He argues that the 'logic' of Church-based Youth Groups is that there will be 'a steady flow of young people coming primarily from Christian parents.'⁷⁵ This means that youth and children's ministry centred around worship as an event is organising itself around a very small section of Christian young people who can

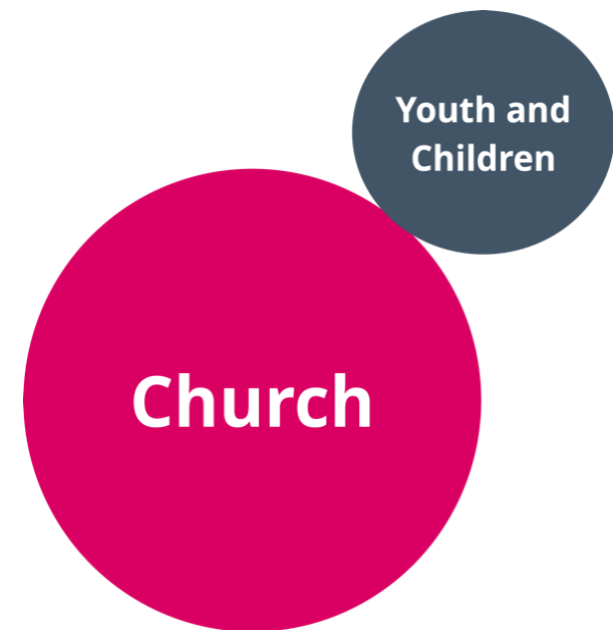


Figure 3 - The 'One-Eared Mickey' Diagram

⁷² For example, see: Kenda Creasy Dean, *Practicing Passion: Youth and the Quest for a Passionate Church* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2004), 186-188; Ron Hunter, 'Responses to the Ecclesial View,' in Chap Clark (ed.), *Youth Ministry in the 21st Century: Five Views* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015), 134-137.

⁷³ <https://www.nurturingyoungfaith.org/post/is-the-church-able-to-reflect>

⁷⁴ Pete Ward, *Selling Worship: How what we Sing has Changed the Church* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2005).

⁷⁵ Pete Ward, 'The Magic Money Tree for Work with Children and Young People: Good News?' ViaMedia. News, 9 January 2024.

access, both geographically and culturally, this form of gathering. What this can result in is simply updating the style of church-based worship gathering in the hopes of attracting young people. Instead, Ward writes:

‘Many young people are open to experiencing faith and exploring spirituality but what they are less willing to do is join a Church. Where this problem has been overcome, reaching out to young people involves a significant reorientation of congregational life. In other words, contextualisation becomes a key factor in reshaping not simply faith among young people but also the wider life of the congregation.’⁷⁴

The term ‘contextualisation’ broadly refers to ‘the dynamic process whereby the constant message of the gospel interacts with specific, relative human situations... [it] attempts to communicate the gospel in word and deed and to establish churches in ways that make sense to people within their local context.’⁷⁷ Gough’s fourth model, intergenerational ministry, has the potential to avoid the weaknesses of the other models. However, it is by far the most challenging to implement as it asks fundamental questions about the culture and form of a local church. Joyce Ann Mercer describes ‘the church’s ambivalence to children when it actually comes to the practice of meeting together: ‘most church members speak of the desirability of having plenty of children in the church. At the same time, however, many congregations demonstrate that they in fact do not want children to be present in worship, the central gathering of the church’s life.’⁷⁸ The challenge comes when the presence of the child or young person necessitates reflection and reframing of core practices of the community to enable them to participate meaningfully.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Pete Ward, ‘The Magic Money Tree for Work with Children and Young People: Good News?’ ViaMedia.News, 9 January 2024.

⁷⁷ Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and mission in the 21st century* 2nd edition (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013), 109.

⁷⁸ Joyce Ann Mercer, *Welcoming Children: A Practical Theology of Childhood* (St Louis: Chalice Press, 2005), 2.

⁷⁹ Chris Curtis, ‘View 5: Reflections From This Side of the Pond: Our Reality and Your Future?’ in Mark Oestreicher (ed.), *5 Views of the Future of Youth Ministry: Perspectives on what could or should be* (San Diego: The Youth Cartel, 2021), 119.

In this way, Anita Cloete argues that youth ministry is as much about adults as it is about young people. Cloete's argument is worth an extended quotation:

'Youth ministry is an ecclesiological matter and therefore intertwined with the identity and mission of the church in the world. As such youth ministry is not primarily about winning the youth for the church, but rather about preparing the youth to go out from the church to witness in the world as the church. New generations should therefore be welcomed and empowered to shape tradition and not be mere observers and receivers of traditions that do not make sense to them. If that is neglected the church becomes a playground for power struggles between different generations that dishonours the good news of freedom that the church proclaims and should be an expression of. Therefore, youth ministry as embedded in congregational ministry is not merely a strategy, but essential for being a community of faith.'⁷⁶

There is evidently a role for age-specific youth ministry.⁸¹ Nick Shepherd argues that it is a vital dimension of faith formation. He writes that 'young people who are participants in such [age-specific] groups are more likely to become young adults who participate in establishing Christian presence in their churches.'⁸² However, when regarded as the total solution, the separation of youth ministry can also become a significant *barrier* to integrating young people as adults into congregations (or 'communities that meet in Jesus' name' as this proposal describes, see: 2.2 Aim of this Proposal). Over time, there can emerge the perception that interaction with young people is the preserve only of specialists, such as the children's or youth worker, and perhaps the veteran volunteer. Rather, integration of children and young people within the wider Christian community is the role of the whole body.⁸³ Missiologist, Lesslie Newbigin, made the strong claim that 'the only hermeneutic

⁸⁰ Anita L. Cloete, 'Creative tensions in youth ministry in a congregational context', *HTS Teologiese Studies/ Theological Studies* 71, no. 2 (2015), 1-7.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v71i2.2107>.

⁸¹ Collins-Mayo, 'Meaning and Inheritance,' 35.

⁸² Nick Shepherd, *Faith Generation: Retaining Young People and Growing the Church* (London: SPCK, 2016), 127.

⁸³ Andy du Feu, *Looking Good Naked: Youth Work and the Body of Christ* (Eugene: Resource Publications, 2020), 91-93.

of the gospel is a congregation of men and women who believe it and live by it.’⁸⁴ In other words, personal faith in the good news about Jesus is understood and made sense of in relation to interaction with people who believe and model that faith.⁸⁵

Practical Implication

(10) The missional strategy proposed will take an explicitly intergenerational stance, seeking opportunities for appropriate and positive interaction across generations. Within this overall approach, age-specific forms of children and youth ministry will serve a valued role as part of the process of forming intergenerational Christian communities.

4.2.3 Intentional Faith Formation

In a society that is variously described as post-Christian, secular, consumerist, and individualistic, the formation of Christian faith does not happen passively. Against this cultural backdrop, choosing faith may be regarded as highly implausible. In his book *Faith Generation*, Nick Shepherd critiques faith development theory. He writes that these theories carry the ‘assumption that we are essentially “enabling” a natural growth towards maturity,’⁸⁶ in which our role is to include faith as a dimension. Instead, Shepherd argues faith is not nurtured but must be generated through the intentional formation of a Christian faith identity. He states that ‘some form of clear social dimension to a life of faith is vital for faith generation’.⁸⁷ Borrowing a term from John Westerhoff, Shepherd writes that there needs to be an ‘**ecology**’ of social

⁸⁴ Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (London: SPCK, 1989), 227. For an account of how this shapes youth ministry, see: Brian Hull and Patrick Mays, *Youth Ministry as Mission: A Conversation about theology and culture* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2022), 48-50.

⁸⁵ See also, Lesslie Newbigin, *Faith in a Changing World*, edited by Paul Weston (London: Alpha International, 2012), 131-145.

⁸⁶ Shepherd, *Faith Generation*, 119.

⁸⁷ Shepherd, *Faith Generation*, 69.

Faith is not nurtured but must be generated through the intentional formation of a Christian faith identity.

institutions that enable faith to be plausible (cf. 4.1.6 The Nexus of Church, School and Home).⁸⁸ He writes ‘faith generation requires a set of connected practices that contribute to making the implausible choice to believe, making sense of Christian identity, and making reliable use of faith... these *practices* lie at the heart of the intentional communities in which young people participate to indwell and construct Christian identity.’⁸⁹ The focus on intentional faith formation during childhood and adolescence is vital. Ingrid Storm and David Voas have demonstrated that one’s identities, beliefs and practices remain ‘remarkably stable (on average) over the adult life course.’⁹⁰ They argue that religious belief and involvement is ‘substantially determined in childhood’⁹¹ through the influence of parents, peer groups and cultural environment.⁹²

It is important to note that Shepherd’s use of the term ‘intentional’ has a specific meaning. An intentional Christian community is not, in Shepherd’s use, ‘a social gathering for young people in the church or an open youth work underpinned by a faith ethos. An ‘open youth work’⁹³ is a phrase used for ‘work with any young person who cares to drop-in, whether or not they are part of the local church or Christian agency.’⁹⁴ In contrast, Shepherd’s notion of intentional communities of

⁸⁸ See also Steven Emery-Wright and Ed MacKenzie, *Networks for Faith Formation: Relational bonds and the spiritual growth of youth* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2017).

⁸⁹ Shepherd, *Faith Generation*, 128.

⁹⁰ Ingrid Storm and David Voas, ‘The Intergenerational Transmission of Religious Service Attendance,’ *Nordic Journal of Religion Society* 25, no. 2 (2012), 131-150 (147).

⁹¹ Storm and Voas, ‘Intergenerational Transmission,’ 131-150.

⁹² Storm and Voas, ‘Intergenerational Transmission,’ 147.

⁹³ This type of work was strongly associated with local authorities in England until the financial crash prompted a refocused to targeted youth work based around specific identifiable needs.

⁹⁴ <https://www.premiarnexgen.com/nexgenpro/underpaid-undervalued-overstretched-and-fewer-the-state-of-the-nation-with-respect-to-youth-and-childrens-workers-in-2023/15944.article>

practice is one that seeks to wrestle together with what being Christian means.⁹⁵ Examples of these practices include establishing places to be Christian, what Shepherd refers to as ‘plausibility shelters’; the practice of sharing testimony, enabling young people to own and reflect on their experience of God; and attendance, the regular participation in a youth group as a means of giving agency in forming personal faith.

Practical Implication

(11) The missional strategy requires the local church to hold openly and confidently the value of forming faith in Christ amongst children and young people. This should shape all levels of ministry practice. Attitudes toward faith as something which is passively generated are to be reframed within an intentional ecology of faith formation.

4.2.4 Participation in a Christian Community of Practice and Conversation

Shepherd’s model posits there is a deeply social dimension to faith formation. Regular and **meaningful participation with a Christian community of practice** requires, as a foundational minimum, knowing each other by name and entering into a dynamic ongoing conversation. When recognition and interaction are absent, the corporate dimension of these practices is lost, which in turn undermines the formation of a Christian faith identity.⁹⁶ This social dynamic is illustrated by Gerrit Immink who writes: the transmission of faith is ‘a process of socialisation. For it is in this process of social *interaction* that we learn about the different dimensions of life and faith... the social dimension of everyday life constitutes an explicit theme in the

⁹⁵ Shepherd, *Faith Generation*, 126.

⁹⁶ Leslie J. Francis and Gemma Penny, ‘Belonging without Practising: Exploring the Religious, Social and Personal Significance of Anglican Identities among Adolescent Males’, in A Day (ed.), *Contemporary Issues in the Worldwide Anglican Communion* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2016), 55-71.

praxis of faith... *Interaction* within the faith community is thus both a social and a theological event.’⁹⁷ However, it is important to note, emphasising the social dimension of faith formation ‘does not undermine the belief that faith is inspired by God through his Spirit; it simply affirms that having faith is not an individual pursuit. Being Christian, being the Church, has a distinct social dimension which is an expression partly of our faith and partly of the community within which faith is formed.’⁹⁸ This is important, for otherwise, theories of faith formation can all too easily lose the transcendent dimension of experience and the possibility of divine action in our account.⁹⁹

In his book, *The End of Youth Ministry?* Andrew Root states that ‘identity is not as internally bound as we often assume. Rather, there is a dialogical necessity to identity.’¹⁰⁰ Here, Root is drawing on the work of a philosopher, Charles Taylor, who writes: ‘This is the sense in which one cannot be a self on one’s own. I am a self only in relation to certain interlocutors’, that is, a person involved in a conversation. A self exists only within what Taylor calls “webs of interlocution”.’¹⁰¹ That is to say that identity is formed through interaction with others, through dynamic ongoing conversation. If identity is formed through conversation, then youth ministry needs to provide a **distinctive and accessible Christian discourse**, or conversation, **a shared language** rooted in the Christian tradition and Scripture, within which young people can participate.

For Root, this can be found particularly in an *intergenerational* community. He writes ‘this is more fundamental to identity than any other *thing*. Youth ministry, then, can be for identity when its focus is on the communion of persons sharing in the

⁹⁷ F. Gerrit Immink, *Faith: A practical theological reconstruction* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2005), 63-65; on religious socialisation in intergenerational context, see: Holly Chatterton Allen and Catherine Lawton Ross, *Intergenerational Christian Formation* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2012), 121-132.

⁹⁸ Shepherd, *Faith Generation*, 69.

⁹⁹ Root, *Christopraxis: A practical theology of the cross* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014), 65.

¹⁰⁰ Andrew Root, *The End of Youth Ministry? Why parents don’t really care about youth groups and what youth workers should do about it* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020), 81-82.

¹⁰¹ Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 36.

lives of one another through discourse... young people more than ever need affirming communities of discourse to which they belong.’¹⁰² In agreement, Jason Brian Santos writes that ‘when children and youth are raised in a truly intergenerational environment defined by a pattern of intentional Christian practices, they learn to understand themselves in relationship to the larger body of faith.’¹⁰³ Belief is not centred solely on theological understandings of God, but is grounded in and reinforced by supportive and trusted relationships.¹⁰⁴ However, relational belonging, by itself, is not sufficient to maintain lifelong faith formation. There must also be a personally held objective content to belief. Thus, through recognition and interaction, within Christian communities of practice and conversation, young people may find a sense of belonging and form a Christian faith identity. These communities will be centred explicitly around the ‘stories, symbols and practices of Christian faith.’¹⁰⁵

Practical Implication

(12) The missional strategy will emphasise the formation of Christian communities, characterised by distinctively Christian discourse and practices, as an essential part of the children and young people’s discipleship pathway. These Christian communities may or may not ‘look’ like traditional forms of church. Nevertheless, they will be publicly and distinctively Christian whilst also contextually sensitive to the culture of the wider community they exist within.

¹⁰² Root, *The End of Youth Ministry?*, 184.

¹⁰³ Jason Brian Santos, ‘Why Now?’ in *InterGenerate: Transforming Churches through Intergenerational Ministry* (ed. Holly Catterton Allen; Abilene: Abilene Christian University Press, 2018), 46.

¹⁰⁴ Abby Day, “‘Believing in Belonging’: An Exploration of Young People’s Social Contexts and Constructions of Belief”, in S. Collins-Mayo and P. Dandelion (eds.), *Religion and Youth*, (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 97-103.

¹⁰⁵ Joyce Ann Mercer, *Welcoming Children: A Practical Theology of Childhood* (St Louis: Chalice Press, 2005), 3.

4.2.5 Intergenerational Religious Socialisation

Abby Day has conducted sociological research into the why the so-called 'Baby Boomer' generation (variously defined as being born between broadly 1945 and 1964)¹⁰⁶ turned from religion. Day describes this group as the last generation in the United Kingdom to be routinely baptised and taken regularly to Anglican churches. Day describes the sudden transition from religious parents to non-religious children and grandchildren. She argues that by and large, these people did not reclaim the faith of their parents, nor have they raised religiously observant children.¹⁰⁷ Day attributes this shift to the (absence of) faith formation practices in the home. She argues that, broadly, 'religion was not practised within the Baby Boomers' homes. Its practice outside the home seemed mainly related to the social. The Baby Boomer choice of the word 'social' brought with it, at least three different meanings, namely: (1) social contact; (2) social place; and (3) social respectability/expectations.¹⁰⁸ Thus, for this generation, the home and private context of the family were not integral to a wider ecology of faith formation (Table 2 - Models of Ministry with Children and Young People).

From a longitudinal study of intergenerational faith transmission, Vern Bengtson et al. have demonstrated that grandparents pay an important role as 'active contributors to the religiosity of young adults.'¹⁰⁹ This effect was seen *independently* of the role of parents meaning that parents and grandparents simultaneously serve as 'independent and joint agents of religious socialization.'¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ <https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095439163>.

¹⁰⁷ Abby Day, *Why Baby Boomers Turned From Religion: Shaping Belief and Belonging, 1945-2021* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), 2.

¹⁰⁸ Day, *Baby Boomers*, 23.

¹⁰⁹ Vern L. Bengtson, C. E. Copen, N. M. Putney and M. Silverstein, 'A Longitudinal Study of the Intergenerational Transmission of Religion,' *International Sociology* 24, no. 3 (2009): 325-345 (325).

¹¹⁰ Bengtson et al., 'Intergenerational Transmission, 325; see also, Bengtson, Vern L., Norella M. Putney, and Susan C. Harris, 'The Unexpected Importance of Grandparents (and Great-Grandparents)', *Families and Faith: How Religion is Passed Down across Generations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

Mirroring the findings from (4.1.4

Faith at Home), Bengtson et al's research into community faith transmission identified three key factors:

1. strong and intentional bonds between family and church, in which religious activities are built around family activities.
2. an emphasis on parental role modelling, stipulating parents' (and grandparent's) engagement in the tradition and articulation of beliefs
3. the importance given to family solidarity, as well as to strong and exclusive bonds within the community.¹¹¹

The emphasis on role models is affirmed by Gunnoe and Moore. In their longitudinal study, they found that 'religiosity during young adulthood is best predicted by the presence of religious role models during childhood and adolescence.'¹¹²

Practical Implication

(13) The missional strategy will value the role of (great) grandparents and other faith role models as key to faith formation in children and young people.

¹¹¹ Vern L. Bengtson, Norella M. Putney, and Susan C. Harris, 'The Power of Community: Families of Mormons, Jews, and Evangelicals' in *Families and Faith: How Religion is Passed Down across Generations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

¹¹² M. L. Gunnoe and K. A. Moore, 'Predictors of Religiosity Among Youth Aged 17-22: A Longitudinal Study of the National Survey of Children,' *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 41 (2002): 620.

4.2.6 Faith Transmission in Intergenerational Christian Community

John Roberto regards lifelong faith formation as a distinctive mark of an intergenerational community. He contends a church needs to actively commit to nurturing and negotiating a ‘culture of intergenerationality’¹¹³ which permeates its various contexts and activities. Rather than wholly separating youth from the wider church (cf. Figure 3 - The 'One-Eared Mickey' Diagram), Gibson argues that ‘congregations should foster an environment of intergenerational connectedness whereby adolescents feel they are an integral part of the faith community.’¹¹⁴ Bengtson et al. have found that such a community should possess the quality of ‘warmth.’¹¹⁵ This is, there is emotional connection (rather than distance). Likewise, Christian Smith and Amy Adamczyk state that the quality of interaction between generations ‘is more important for

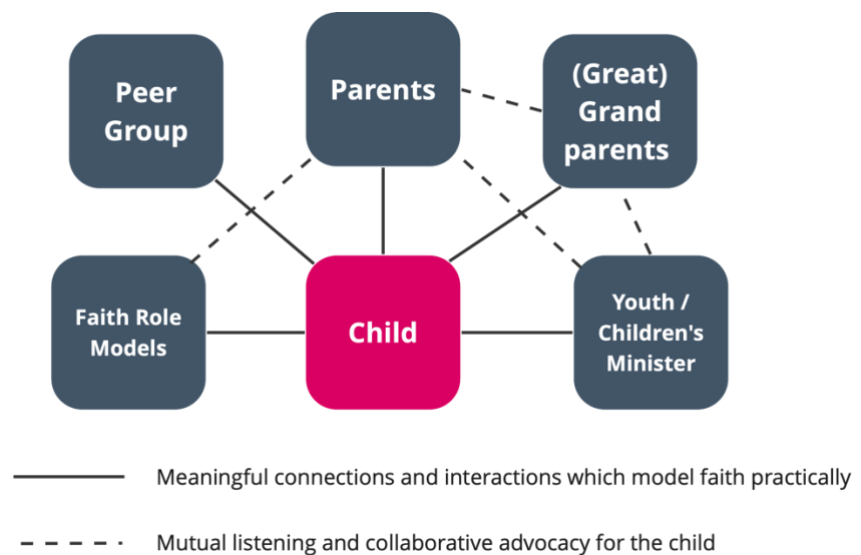


Figure 4 - Adapted Diagram of Key Faith Forming Relationships

¹¹³ John Roberto, *Lifelong Faith: Formation for all ages and generations* (New York: Church Publishing, 2022), 9.

¹¹⁴ T. S. Gibson, “Congregational Connectivity: The Key to Keeping Youth in the Church,” *Journal of Youth Ministry* 31, no. 1 (2004): 9.

¹¹⁵ Bengtson, Vern L., Norella M. Putney, and Susan C. Harris, 'The Importance of Warmth: Parental Piety and the Distant Dad', *Families and Faith: How Religion is Passed Down across Generations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

influencing children than the particular content that parents try to instil or teach.’¹¹⁶

From their review of the literature, they summarise the important parent-child factors as:

- Warm, affirming relations
- Quality of interaction
- Children-centred
- Role of fathers (in particular)
- Shared parental faith
- Two-parent families
- Grandparents
- Parental consistency

As Casson et al. have concluded, an ‘effective partnership between church and home’ is essential. In particular, there must be a recognition of the ‘primary role of parents’ alongside a ‘welcoming community of faith.’¹¹⁷ It is important to state that these are summary findings of factors which are associated with faith transmission. However, no single dimension is determinative of faith being transmitted.

¹¹⁶ Christian Smith and Amy Adamczyk, *Handing Down the Faith: How Parents Pass Their Religion on to the Next Generation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 5.

¹¹⁷ Ann Casson, Sarah Holmes, Shelley Logan & Richard Powney, ‘Rethinking the place of the family in the post-Covid church in the UK: an exploration of families engagement with church during and after Covid,’ *Practical Theology* (July 2023): 1-13.

Practical Implication

(14) The missional strategy will advocate for and work towards generating a culture of ‘intergenerationality’ embedded and owned at the local level. This culture is characterised by warm, affirming and consistent intergenerational relationships.

4.2.7 Training and Development of Youth and Children’s Ministers

The role of a children, youth or family focused minister is to advocate for these groups with and on their behalf.¹¹⁸ This is within the structures and leadership of the church as well as in the publics of school and community. A key recommendation of the recent Multi-National Children’s Ministry Report (2021) is that all church leaders (not only specialist ministers or workers) are given training in children’s ministry.¹¹⁹ This training should include ‘a practical focus on facilitating intergenerational ministry, equipping parents as disciple-makers, and assisting children in their faith formation.’¹²⁰ Churches with employed youth, children's and families workers tend to be one that are growing numerically.¹²¹ For Church of England churches with attendance ranging from 20 to 250 people, Leslie Francis et al.

¹¹⁸ Gary Bentley, ‘In Defence of the Faith-Based Youth Worker’ 10 November 2020. <https://www.youthscape.co.uk/research/news/faith-based-yw>. Accessed 14 March 2024.

¹¹⁹ Withers, *Mission-Shaped Children*, chapter 10. Kindle version.

¹²⁰ Sarah Holmes, Lawson Murray, Sue Price, Mimi Larson, Valeria de Abreu and Phil Whitehead, ‘Do we need a new plan for children’s ministry?’ A report based on research in Brazil, Canada, UK and US in later-pandemic stages,’ (Publishing online 29th October 2021; Liverpool Hope University, Liverpool, UK).

¹²¹ Bob Jackson, *What makes churches grow?* (London: Church House Publishing, 2015), 156-157.

found that the presence of an employed children, youth or family worker make a statistically significant impact on the number of children and young people present.¹²²

The *Mapping the Landscape* (2022) survey conducted by South West Youth Ministries found that many churches in the South West of England do not regard qualifications as essential for employed Youth and Children's ministers. However, qualification is associated with important ministry outcomes. For example, the report found:

50.1% of churches and 47.9% organisations would send or take young people on a camp, festival or residential. It was interesting to note that this figure was 67.9% for churches and organisations combined when they employed someone to work with young people. The *From Anecdote to Evidence*⁹¹ report (2014, p.12) showed that engaging with camps, festivals and residentials can be significantly linked to church growth, and so it was felt that this difference identified between employed and volunteer led ministry should not be ignored by Christian ministry that is battling decline in many areas.

On the topic of 'camps, festivals and residentials,' it should be noted that most people who come to faith, do so in childhood or adolescence.¹²⁴ Significantly, this is associated with attendance at these events.

David Howell has recorded the state of youth and children's ministry training in the UK for a number of years. Writing in a recent longitudinal study,¹²⁵

¹²² Leslie J. Francis, David Howell, Phoebe Hill & Ursula McKenna, 'Assessing the Impact of a Paid Children, Youth, or Family Worker on Anglican Congregations in England, *Journal of Research on Christian Education*, 28, no. 1 (2019): 43-50. On average, such churches had seven or more young people attending when compared with churches of comparable attendance without a worker.

¹²³ 'From Anecdote to Evidence,' (2014), 12. https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-06/from_anecdote_to_evidence_-_the_report.pdf. Accessed 14 March 2024.

¹²⁴ Youthscape, 'Translating God: Part 2 - "Feel-Good" News: What young people really think about Christian beliefs,' 9. Accessed 18 March 2024.

¹²⁵ <https://cte.org.uk/app/uploads/2022/08/Student-Numbers-Report-to-Training-Agencies-Jul22.pdf>

Howell states:

‘From the early years of the austerity measures, and the impact on churches and Christian agencies, we have seen a drop of 60% in the number of students in training to serve the church in youth work, youth ministry, children’s work and children’s ministry.’¹²²

To develop the required workforce, not only now but for the years to come, identifying viable training pathways will be essential.¹²⁷ The employment terms of any posts in this proposal will need to account for the range of competencies and experience required in a suitable candidate. Further, in a region known for high cost of living and a high proportion of rental accommodation,¹²⁸ remuneration would need to make employment both feasible and attractive to a potential candidate. Howell argues that ‘now, more than ever, the churches and Christian agencies need to invest in training people for the long haul.’¹²⁹ The Diocese of Lichfield has conducted a survey of a total of 637 salaried children’s, youth and families workers in the UK (67% were employed by Church of England Parishes). Turnover of employees is generally high with 53% of workers being in post for less than three years. However, Howell notes that those with a qualification tend to stick in the work longer.¹³⁰ There are at least two further contributing factors:

¹²⁶ David Howell, <https://www.premiernexgen.com/nexgenpro/underpaid-undervalued-overstretched-and-fewer-the-state-of-the-nation-with-respect-to-youth-and-childrens-workers-in-2023/15944.article>; Howell, D, (2022) *Longitudinal research into student numbers on higher education programmes in Christian youth work* <https://cte.org.uk/app/uploads/2022/08/Student-Numbers-Report-to-Training-Agencies-Jul22.pdf>

¹²⁷ Canon Pete White, ‘Youth Ministry Needs Long-Term Investment,’ Church Times, 10 June 2022. <https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2022/10-june/comment/opinion/youth-ministry-needs-long-term-investment>. Accessed 15 February 2024.

¹²⁸ <https://barefootcornwall.com/why-is-cornwall-so-expensive/>. Accessed 20 March 2024.

¹²⁹ David Howell, ‘Longitudinal Survey’ 21 July 2022, 10.

¹³⁰ ‘Terms and Conditions of Salaried Workers,’ 2019. <https://theresource.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Terms-and-Cons-Summary-Report.pdf>. Accessed 14 March 2024.

1. It is clear that relatively low pay,¹³¹ with significant regional disparities, disincentivises long-term appointments and ‘dissuades people from wanting to train.’¹³²
2. The survey also highlighted a potential issue around recognition. For example, 71% of respondents (employed by Church of England parishes) report that they did not have formal recognition of their role from their diocese.

In light of this, it is significant that the Church of England has recently launch the 30K Project.¹³³ This project ambitiously aims train 3000 new employed workers and 27,000 new volunteers by 2030.

Practical Implication

- (15) This missional strategy should include a ‘people plan’ to determine how the future youth, children and family ministry expertise is provided for in the long-term.
- (16) The missional strategy will value and resource the ongoing personal and professional development of all those who minister to and with children and young people.
- (17) A diocesan level learning network should be provided to facilitate corporate theological reflection, critical thinking and prayer amongst children, youth and family ministers.

¹³¹ Pete Ward, ‘The Magic Money Tree for Work with Children and Young People: Good News?’ ViaMedia.News, 9 January 2024.

¹³² ‘Terms and Conditions of Salaried Workers,’ 2019. <https://theresource.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Terms-and-Cons-Summary-Report.pdf>. Accessed 14 March 2024.

¹³³ <https://www.churchofengland.org/30kproject>

4.1 Young People and Discipleship in the Gospels

4.1.1 Revisiting a Familiar Story

Throughout the consultation process, the image of Jesus welcoming the children (Mark 10:13-16; Matthew 19:13-15; Luke 18:15-17) has been frequently referenced as a guiding narrative. This encounter represents ‘one of the most well-known stories from the Bible.’¹³⁴ It forms part of the basis of The Saint’s Way strategy in seeking to be “A Church that conspicuously celebrates children and young people at its heart,” because Jesus placed a child in the centre as a model for us all.’¹³⁵ However, this beloved and oft-quoted story contains an implicit challenge to any form Christian community that seeks to welcome children and young people.

Luke 9:46-48 (NIV) ‘An argument arose among them as to which one of them was the greatest. But Jesus, aware of their inner thoughts, took a little child and put it by his side, and said to them, ‘Whoever welcomes this child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me; for the least among all of you is the greatest.’

4.1.2 Radical Welcome of Children and Young People

Samuel Wells has written that the church should ‘be about modelling and making possible forms of social relationship not found elsewhere.’¹³⁶ In Luke’s telling of this encounter, Jesus welcome ‘a little child’ in the context of his disciples’ jockeying for status. Interactions centred on positioning for social status would have been par for the course in Greco-Roman

¹³⁴ Joyce Ann Mercer, *Welcoming Children: A Practical Theology of Childhood* (St Louis: Chalice Press, 2005), 44.

¹³⁵ ‘The Saints’ Way: Towards a narrative, theology and strategy of diocesan mission and ministry,’ June 2020. Accessed <https://trurodiocese.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/The-Saints-Way.pdf>.

¹³⁶ Samuel Wells, *A Future That’s Bigger than the Past: Catalysing kingdom communities* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2019), 8.

antiquity.¹³⁷ New Testament scholar, Joel Green, states that Jesus' message is 'oriented against such manoeuvring and positioning' and reveals the disciples 'marked failure to embody in their relations with one another the central tenets of his message.'¹³⁸ In a marked contrast to the disciples' behaviour, and wider cultural expectation, Jesus commands them to welcome these little children in his name. D. J. Konz writes that 'to welcome and attend to the lowliest, littlest and least (vis-à-vis the grand, wealthy and powerful) is to open oneself to God's own welcome of the lowliest, littlest and least, and thus to live in correspondence with the radical if often hidden way of God's reign as King in the world.'¹³⁹ Many can intuitively identify when someone says 'I am not interested in you' without using words; it is read in one's body language. In *Fuzzy Church*, Nigel Rooms and Elli Wort reflect that despite most churches espousing a theology of welcome, it nevertheless 'is quite difficult to join a church if you don't look like the majority of the existing congregation in age, class, ethnicity or other identity markers.'¹⁴⁰ They state that, though new (young) people might visit, they don't 'fit'¹⁴¹ but drift away, 'frozen out by the existing members who don't do this deliberately, yet unconsciously they offer all sorts of "You're not welcome" signals... [what is needed is] a radical welcome. Thus, beyond the usual rhetoric of welcome they are genuinely open and receptive to the "other" and therefore to being changed by their presence among

**Radical welcome...
genuinely open and
receptive to the "other" and
therefore to being changed
by their presence.**

¹³⁷ David A. DeSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship and Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture*, 2nd edition (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2022), 31-33.

¹³⁸ Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1997), 391.

¹³⁹ D. J. Konz, 'The Many and the One: Theology, Mission and the Child in Historical Perspective,' in Bill Prevette, Keith J. White, C. Rosalee Velloso Ewell and D. J. Knoch (eds.), *Theology, Mission and Child: Global Perspectives*, Regnum Edinburgh Centenary Series 24 (Oxford: Regnum, 2014), 25.

¹⁴⁰ Nigel Rooms and Elli Wort, *Fuzzy Church: Gospel and Culture in the North of England* (Durham: Sacristy press, 2021), 81.

¹⁴¹ On the topic of how 'class' setups barriers to belonging to church in particular, see: Natalie Williams and Paul Brown, *Invisible Divides: Class, culture and barriers to belonging in the church* (London: SPCK, 2022); see also Tim Chester, *Unreached: Growing churches in working-class and deprived neighbourhoods* (Nottingham: IVP, 2012).

them.’¹⁴² Welcoming others, acknowledging and accepting them is not primarily propositional (a sign or voice saying ‘you are welcome’), but rather it is an embodied in life together.

4.1.3 The Presence of (the Kingdom amidst) Children and Young People

In the first-century context, Green writes that ‘to welcome’ people meant extending the honour of hospitality, to regard them as equals or honoured guests. However, in locating himself in relation to welcoming children, Jesus ‘turns the social pyramid upside down,’¹⁴³ by undermining the very expectations upon which the disciples were competing. It is estimated that children made up ‘roughly two-thirds of ancient agrarian societies, such as the 1st-century Mediterranean.’¹⁴⁴ Though children are a significant majority they are often silent, only in the background of the story. However, in Mark’s Gospel,

Children and young people are shown to be central to the unfolding story of the community gathered around Jesus.

children and young people are not only present, but are foregrounded at decisive moments of Jesus’ ministry. It is a child who is the first witness and sign to Jesus’ resurrection power when he speaks to her, ‘Little girl, I say to you, get up!’ (Mark 5:21-43). In contrast, another young girl is used as an instrument of her mother, Herodias, to bring about the death of John the Baptist (Mark 6:14-29). In the next chapter, a different mother ardently intercedes for the healing of her daughter who is ‘possessed by an impure spirit’ (Mark 7:24-30). On behalf of his son similarly possessed by an ‘impure spirit,’ a father musters the exclamation: ‘I

¹⁴² Rooms and Wort, *Fuzzy Church*, 81.

¹⁴³ Green, *Luke*, 391.

¹⁴⁴ Ann Lindeman Allen, ‘Children in the New Testament World,’ Oxford Bibliographies, 28 July 2021. <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/display/document/obo-9780195393361/obo-9780195393361-0281.xml>. Accessed 18 March 2024.

believe; help my unbelief. Mercer notes how Jesus' resurrection is hinted toward as he 'raises up' the child ('*egeiro*', using the language of 'resurrection').¹⁴⁵ Immediately following this, (the same?) 'young child' takes their place directly beside Jesus amidst the squabbling disciples as a sign of the reversed hierarchy of the Kingdom of God (Mark 9:33-42). In passion week, a 'young man' (*neaniskos*) is recorded fleeing the scene at Jesus' night time arrest (Mark 14:51-52). At the close of Mark's Gospel, it is also a 'young man' (*neaniskos*) who announces at Jesus' empty tomb, 'He is risen! He is not here' (Mark 16:1-8). The children in Mark's Gospel often are, in Mercer's words 'difficult to be around, and not much about their situations seems magical or wonderous at first glance. They are sick, possessed, poor, and "in the way" of adults.'¹⁴⁶ Yet far from silently sitting in the background, children and young people are shown to be central to the unfolding story of the community gathered around Jesus.

4.1.4 The Vocation of Children and Young People Today

Mark's Gospel presents children and young people as participants and agents of the Kingdom of God. This perspective does not present children only as those who are to be educated for future participation. Nor does it regard children and young people foremost through the lens of their spiritual and physical challenges. Rather, Mercer states, childhood is 'a time of vocation, a time of being called to purposive participation in the divine action in the world.'¹⁴⁷ This nuances the

Childhood is 'a time of vocation, a time of being called to purposive participation in the divine action in the world.'

¹⁴⁵ Mercer, *Welcoming Children*, 55.

¹⁴⁶ Mercer, *Welcoming Children*, 66.

¹⁴⁷ Mercer, *Welcoming Children*, 67.

second core value of the steering group (that ‘Children and young people finding healing and wholeness’ – 3.4 Scope and Values) by locating it as a component of the first (that ‘Children and young people encounter the Lord’). Whilst not minimising the real challenges that children and young people face growing up in Cornwall today (4.1.3 Young People, Religion and Well-Being), this perspective resists problematising them. Further, it places the Christian community (represented by the disciples in Mark’s Gospel) not as the ‘solution’ to these problems, but in fact at risk of becoming an active barrier to young people accessing Jesus. In this way, Jesus’ rebuke of the disciples offers a critical challenge to the church’s attitude toward children and young people. Holmes expresses this well when she poses the question: ‘If children are viewed as spiritually deficient, and needing to learn from adults, how will they truly comprehend the fact that Jesus welcomes children and commands us to be like a child?’¹⁴⁸

Taking this challenge seriously does not primarily require young people to adopt and conform to the attitudes of the wider church, but instead invites the church to critically reimagine its shared life in relation to the presence of children and young people in its midst. As Andrew Root and Kenda Creasy Dean have stated: ‘youth ministry’s great potential may lie in its ability to re-imagine the church on behalf of the wider Christian community, a church in which God has called young people to play an irrepressible and irreplaceable part.’¹⁴⁹ It is not that young people are incorporated into the life of the Christian community to ensure its existence for the future, it is that the life of the community depends in part on the Spirit-given gifts and contribution of those same children and young people today.

¹⁴⁸ <https://www.nurturingyoungfaith.org/post/is-the-church-able-to-reflect>

¹⁴⁹ Andrew Root and Kenda Creasy Dean, *The Theological Turn in Youth Ministry* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2011), 35.

Practical Implications

(18) The missional strategy will advocate for the presence and participation of children and young people in the structure, culture and values of the Christian community. The values required to minister to and with children and young people may include: a recognition of the presence and importance of welcoming young people as matter of welcoming Christ himself; regarding children and young people as genuine and full participants in the Kingdom; a desire to appropriately enable and support young people to step into leadership roles; having a willingness to change and adapt personal preference and priorities in order not to present a barrier to the full participation of children and young people in the Christian community.

4.2 Learning from Diocesan Initiatives

In developing a diocesan level strategy for children and youth ministry, evidence was drawn from a wide range of diocesan level projects from across England. The following is a summary of all the diocesan initiatives that have been reviewed for this proposal. Each project was reviewed to varying levels depending on availability of project proposals and any mid/end of project reviews.¹⁵⁰ Points of particular significance for formation of this proposal are **highlighted** below.

Diocese	Project	Brief Description and (where available) Learning Points	Additional Comments on Applicability to the Diocese of Truro	Links and Documents
Manchester	Children Changing Places	Deanery level strategy piloted in Bolton deanery, working with 30 CE primary schools, 3 CE secondary schools and 33 parishes.	The pilot deanery is a highly populated urban context where the churches already had a strong relationship with local secondary schools through chaplaincy work.	Children Changing Places Project Proposal and Phase-2 Proposal

¹⁵⁰ Two other diocese, Gloucester and were included in this review but omitted from this table as only brief summary documents were available for analysis.

		<p>The quality of individuals, particularly the project team leader, were pivotal.</p> <p>Clear focus on a Christian discipleship pathway to guide to project from toddler, to primary, to secondary and into adult, discipleship.</p> <p>Focus on early years and phased progression in age groups as project develops.</p>	<p>A rigorous employment process for all roles, most especially the team leader, is essential to the success of the project.</p> <p>Chosen pilot of Bolton deanery was carefully chosen through consideration of multiple contextual factors to ensure greatest likelihood of success.</p> <p>Chaplaincy assistant model working within a team (part time, living wage) fulfils opportunity for training of workers whilst significantly expanding the capacity of the team.</p> <p>A focus on transition points, for example, between primary and secondary school, with roles focused on creating 'safe landings' (in relationships and faith journey) across the transition points.</p>	
Sheffield	Centenary Project workers (10-year plan from 2015)	<p>Targeting CYF workers in most deprived communities within the diocese.</p> <p>A project manager oversees the project and workers. Local line managers are purposefully involved in recruitment and interview.</p> <p>Parishes must meet certain criteria and demonstrate willingness for collaborative ministry with the project.</p> <p>A training pathway is offered to workers to engage with whilst in post for continuing professional development.</p>	<p>Employment of workers is held centrally by the diocese in order to alleviate HR burden at the parish level.</p> <p>Extensive mid-term project review (see Centenary Project Report, January 2022) with clear measures of evidence, illustrative 'case studies' for analysis and focus groups.</p> <p>Clear statement and alignment of project values: mentoring, networking, training, setting objectives, measuring outcomes, line management, fair pay.</p>	Centenary Project Report, January 2022: https://www.sheffield.anglican.org/support/centenary-project/the-centenary-project-report/
Bath and Wells	Go Teams	<p>A designation team with the purpose of providing high quality support and equipping those who work with CYF (in a range of capacities as employed, volunteer, ordained, chaplaincy etc.)</p> <p>Focus on creating conditions for discipleship of young people.</p> <p>This model works on the basis of archdeaconries (rather than deanery, parish level).</p>	<p>Clear measurement framework for outcomes and impacts of the workers divided across low, medium and high priority offers.</p> <p>There is a process of diocese wide monitoring through CYF Audit so that informed decisions can be made about future work.</p>	Go Team: https://www.bathandwells.org.uk/ministry/children-young-people/
Peterborough	Gen2 – Generation to Generation	<p>Strategy uses mission enablers with a focus on developing ministry with children and young people alongside existing forms of church.</p>	<p>Training and development of children and youth ministry specialists, ministry experience scheme</p> <p>Seeking culture change with local churches, linking church and school as key contexts for young people</p>	Gen2 Project 2022 Annual Report: https://www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk/gen-2-

	<p>(6-year project funded from 2018-2024)</p>	<p>Flexible length training scheme from apprenticeship to undergraduate level training and then into employment (7 mission enablers in 2022). They work across seven deaneries and link with schools.</p> <p>Strong emphasis on youth and children's ministry pathway and development. Consideration for how curates are given training in working with CYP.</p>	<p>The project initiated a mid-term evaluation using an external organization (the University of Northampton). One conclusion of this project noted a possible over-reliance on mission enablers (weakening the ministry with they are unavailable) and a withdrawing of volunteer support from local churches where they are present. They also noted the challenges of financial insecurity on the morale of the team.</p>	<p>project-annual-report-published-.php</p> <p>University of Northampton Mid-Term Evaluation Report: http://nectar.northampton.ac.uk/17578/1/Giroletti_Maher_2022_Gen2_Project_Mid_term_Evaluation_Report_for_the_Diocese_of_Peterborough.pdf</p>
Carlisle	<p>God for All Strategy– Network Youth Churches across the diocese</p>	<p>Under 'Growing Younger' there are three main actions: (1) launching Network Youth Church (NYC), (2) investing in training and leadership, especially with 'those adept at leading among younger people,' (3) 'encouraging the culture' of the church to respond to the needs of young people.</p> <p>Five-year consultation period to establish the project proposal.</p> <p>Approximately 600 young people regularly participating with a further 1400 young people connected to the NYCs.</p>	<p>Clear comparability between the diocese in terms of geography (small urban centers in highly rural setting, local economy focused on tourism).</p> <p>Emphasis on ecumenical partnerships and linking up young people in NYCs across the diocese through youth events.</p> <p>NYC focuses on links with CYP with no faith and with schools.</p> <p>Ten NYCs focused predominantly on 'urban' centers (Maryport, Carlisle, Penrith, Whitehaven, Barrow-in-Furness etc.)</p>	<p>God for All Strategy: https://godforall.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/C.Strategy-aims-and-actions-summary.pdf</p> <p>Example - Carlisle Network Youth Church: https://www.carlistenyc.org.uk</p>
Hereford	<p>Intergenerational missionaries</p>	<p>Intergenerational missionaries working across eight deaneries within the diocese.</p> <p>Strategy of a 'mixed economy' of new faith pathways (including forming new worshipping communities) and strengthening existing pathways</p> <p>Emphasis on handover of responsibility over time, missionaries expected to 'stimulate growth' rather than become the focus of the local projects.</p>	<p>Example of 'End of Project Review' as good practice for evidence future strategies and sharing learning. Key learning points included: important of choosing the right location, a clearer preparation phase to build a local network and expectation of the new role within the parish, the central role of prayer at every stage of the project. Relationships between the intergenerational missionary and the clergy, church, fringe, and community were key. This review also noted a significant tension between perceptions of parish and diocese which needed to be managed effectively through good communication. Finally, the report noted the importance of a well-understood discipleship pathway as a unifying and focusing model for the work.</p>	<p>Intergenerational Mission: https://www.hereford.anglican.org/about-us/our-vision/intergenerational-mission/</p> <p>End of Project Review: https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2023-09/herford-im-final-report.pdf</p>

York (and nationally)	<p>Missional Youth Churches (now active across England, Wales and Northern Ireland) – a contextually</p>	<p>Established in 2019 as partnership between Church Army, the Archbishop of York's Youth Trust, and the Office of the Archbishop of York.</p> <p>Focus on training missional leaders to create 'Missional Youth Churches' (MYCs) in partnership with the wider Church.</p> <p>Aims to develop a contextual youth ministry into a 'fully mature worshipping community, working within the theology and framework of 'fresh expressions' of church.</p>	<p>Quantitative and qualitative data gathered for 4-year evaluation process (see 2023 report)</p> <p>MYCs led 'by and for' young people (aged 11-18s) alongside 'mature Christian leaders.'</p> <p>Only one example MYC in the South West; not yet clearly defined measure of what constitutes an 'actual' or 'potential' MYC (linked to the fuzzy nature of reimagining Church).</p> <p>Leadership training is a key focus with its own (self-assessed) competency framework for measuring development.</p> <p>Diocesan Youth Officers (DYO) observe possible concern with linking MYCs to intergenerational forms of church.</p>	<p>2023 Review of MYCs by Church Army: https://www.mycn.org.uk/Publisher/Article.aspx?ID=666669</p>
Southwell and Nottingham	<p>Growing Younger and More Diverse (GYMD) – first five years of (intended) multi-phase project</p>	<p>Two-part project: (1) 3-11 years and (2) 12-18 years</p> <p>Tiered Project: 10 'flagship churches' (existing and new churches 'New Worshipping Communities'); 25 local missional leaders</p> <p>5 Youth and Children's Hubs each looking to setup 3 'mid-sized missional outreach and discipleship groups'.</p> <p>The Apprentice Track places someone in a local church as a context to explore serving and leading local mission and ministry.</p>	<p>Focus on development of young leaders and exploration of vocation in the context of local church ministry.</p> <p>Significant stakeholder consultation process with a wide range of local churches.</p> <p>Emphasis on training and development at multiple levels (from ministry leadership to CYF volunteers). There is also central diocesan support from a project officer and Youth trainer and enabler.</p> <p>Questions about the notion of ordering churches according to a tier system and how this is perceived in practice.</p>	<p>GYMD Summary: https://southwell.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/SDF-Bid-4-High-level-summary-v1.pdf</p> <p>The Apprentice Track: https://www.churchofengland.org/life-events/vocations/ministry-experience-scheme/southwell-and-nottingham-ministry-experience</p>

Table 3 – Review of Diocesan Initiatives

These summary insights into other diocesan wide initiatives across England may be summarised as five distinct, though not mutually exclusive, approaches (Figure 5 - Diocesan Approaches to CYF Ministry). That is, in some cases, one or more of these approaches may be implemented simultaneously.

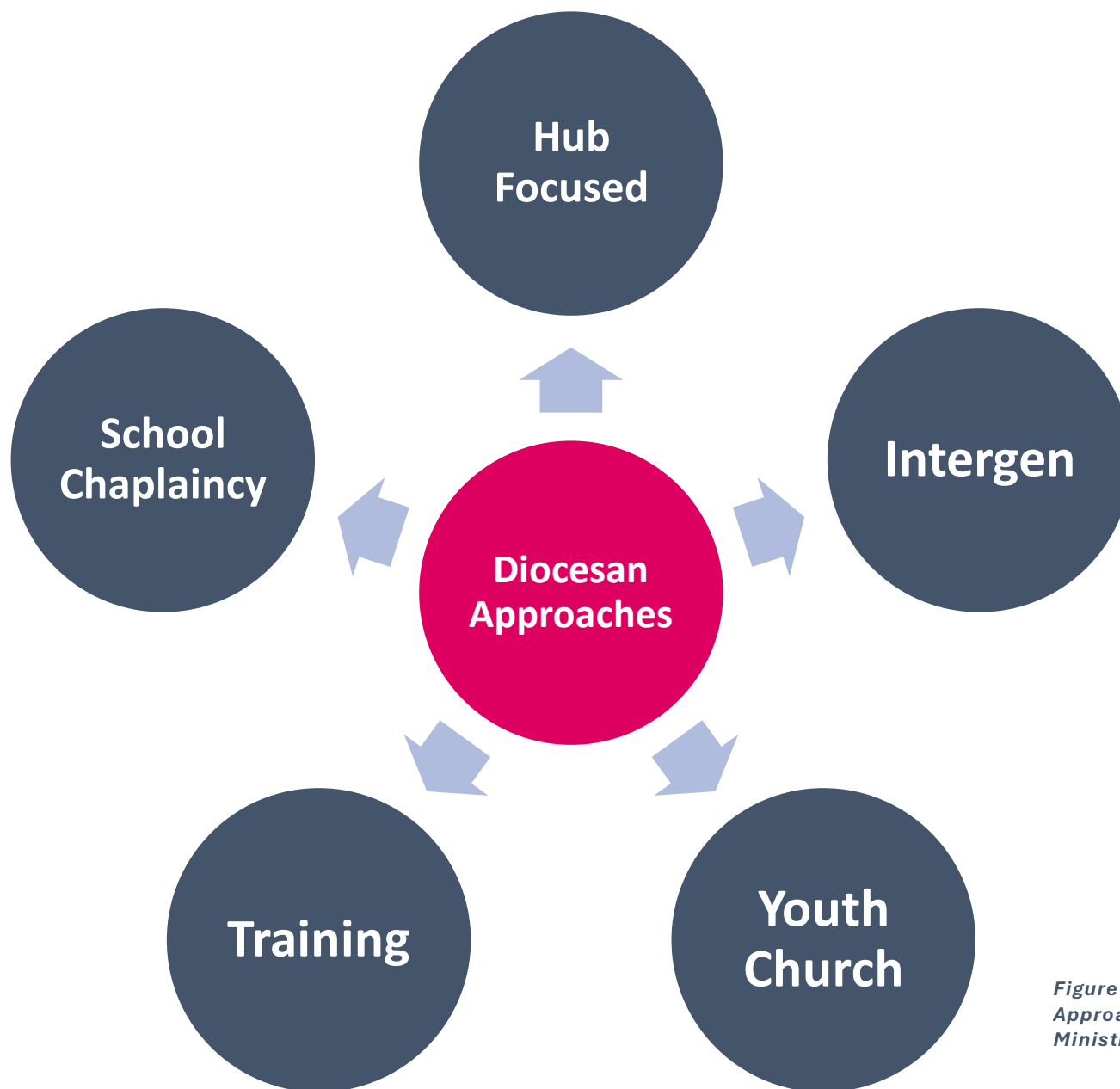


Figure 5 - Diocesan Approaches to CYF Ministry

There are a wide range of approaches that have been undertaken across the Church of England. These may be defined as:

- A. Hub Focused** – identify hubs and expand current models which are effective at generating engagement with young people. Example: Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham.
- B. Intergenerational** – employ workers to facilitate a shift in culture and practice to intergenerational forms of ministry. Example: Diocese of Hereford, Diocese of Peterborough.
- C. Youth Church** – initiate and plan new forms of church aimed at attracting young people, often with the aim of developing into a ‘mature’ form of Christian community. Example: Diocese of Carlisle, Diocese of York.
- D. Training Leaders** – invest into a training pathway for (lay and ordained) ministry leaders with the aim of creating viable employment opportunities for those specifically working with and advocating for children and young people. Example: Diocese of Sheffield, Diocese of Bath and Wells.
- E. School Chaplaincy** – focusing on school and church as key contexts of young people and linking through employment of chaplaincy workers who operate in both settings. Example: Diocese of Manchester.

The representative examples of these approaches are, in large part, reflective of their context. For example, the school chaplaincy model is dependent on a number of contextual factors, such as: a pre-existing positive relationship between church and school; the presence of Church of England secondary schools; a willingness on the part of local churches to adapt their styles of meeting to enable children to participate meaningfully. Importantly, these strategies are underpinned by distinct theological rationales. For example, the ‘Intergenerational’ approach and the ‘Youth Church’ approach are the least compatible as they lead to distinctly different forms of ministry practice. Whilst the ‘Youth Church’ model has its merits and is evidenced as a viable approach, it conflicts with the Diocese of Truro’s commitment to intergenerational ministry.

Practical Implications

- (19)** The missional strategy will take an intergenerational (B) approach whilst recognising the significance of cultivating partnerships with schools (E) and the necessity of training leaders (D) for long-term sustainability.
- (20)** The missional strategy will pay specific attention to transition points that children and young people navigate (particularly as they pertain to primary and secondary education).
- (21)** The missional strategy will consider how young people are appropriately invited and supported into leadership within the Christian community.
- (22)** The missional strategy will incorporate a period of discernment and stakeholder consultation to determine the suitability of a context and willingness of the local church.
- (23)** The missional strategy will, from the beginning, seek to develop sustainable forms of ministry which will extend past the timeframe of this proposal, with an emphasis on the progressive handover of responsibility.
- (24)** The missional strategy will include a mid- and end-term review by an external individual or organisation to assess its effectiveness and share learning.
- (25)** The missional strategy will specify the regular collection of qualitative and quantitative data about the project(s) for the purposes of ongoing reflection and evidence gathering.
- (26)** The missional strategy will operate at multiple levels, providing targeted resources and support to develop youth and children's ministry with local ministry teams across the diocese; and looking to implement change in a clearly demarcated area and communities.

4.1 Contextualising the Approach to Cornwall

This proposal seeks to be sensitive to the range of demographic, geographic and cultural contexts which comprise Cornwall.

‘The task of the Church of God in every time and in every place is to make Jesus Christ known in the context of each particular time and in each particular place. This is an imperative inherent in the incarnation of Jesus who was himself born in first century Palestine. Our task then is to make Christ known in our particular Cornish context in the third decade of the 21st Century. That must be the focus of our life and ministry together.’¹⁴⁸

It was estimated that in 2021 there were fewer than 400 children and young people regularly worshipping in the 300 churches in the Diocese of Truro. This represents 0.4% of the total of 105,000 under 18s living in Cornwall. Between the 2011 and 2021 census the median age in Cornwall increased by two years to 47 years.¹⁵² At the same time, the number of people between the ages of 35 and 49 decreased by 8.0% (8,400 people). This shift is indicative of a wider trend of an aging

All Residents	570,305	Age	
Male	276,620	Aged 4 and under	25,532
Female	293,685	Aged 5-9	30,256
Number of school or full-time students	94,591	Aged 10-14	31,215
		Aged 15-19	29,259
		Aged 20-24	28,610
		Aged 25-64	281,294
		Aged 65 and over	144,139
Tenure		Households	250,535
Owned (outright, with mortgage or shared)	168,907	Detached	93,105
Rented (social or private)	81,410	Semi-detached	66,437
Number of Cars or Vans for all households	250,534	Terraced	54,967
No cars or vans in household	37,623	In a purpose-built block of flats or tenement	20,842
1 car or van in household	105,520	A caravan or other mobile or temporary structure	3,886
2 cars or vans in household	76,073		
3 or more cars or vans in household	31,318		
Highest Level of Qualification (16 years and over)		Household Size	
No qualifications	77,919	1 person in household	76,862
Level 1 / Entry level	47,676	2 persons in household	96,146
Level 2	72,367	3 persons in household	36,219
Apprenticeship	31,455	4 persons in household	28,035
Level 3	89,955	5 persons in household	9,232
Level 4 and above	145,890	6 persons in household	2,753
		7 persons in household	848
Religion		8 or more persons in household	443
Christian	264,037	Household Composition (single family households)	
Buddhist	2,079	Married or civil partnership couple: with dependent children	29,102
Muslim	1,333	Cohabiting couple: with dependent children	11,940
Hindu	547	Lone parent family: with dependent children	14,263
Jewish	507		
Sikh	130		
Other	4,393		
Not answered	38,135		

Table 4 - Summary Demographic Data from 2021 Census

¹⁵¹ ‘The Saints’ Way: Towards a narrative, theology and strategy of diocesan mission and ministry,’ June 2020. Accessed <https://trurodiocese.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/The-Saints-Way.pdf>.

¹⁵² The median age is the age of the person in the middle of the group, meaning that one half of the group is younger than that person and the other half is older.

population in Cornwall.¹⁵³ The population density of Cornwall places it in the lowest 15% of local authorities across England and Wales. The major population centres in which there are more young people than average for the county are Helston (where 20.4% of people are aged 15 years and under) and Camborne (20.9%), Bodmin (18.3%), Penzance (17.3%) and Newquay (15.4%). In addition to the expected major towns in Cornwall, the following top-ten areas with relatively high population density are all coastal.¹⁵⁴

Figure 6 shows the distribution of children and young people in bands of 4-5 years. When considering the Medium Layer Super Output Areas (MSOAs), rather than particular towns, it is interesting to observe that, between the ages

of 0-15, children and young people are more densely located in the stretch across the north coast of Cornwall from the Hayle estuary to area around Wadebridge. This is particularly pronounced in the area between Newquay, Bodmin and Truro.

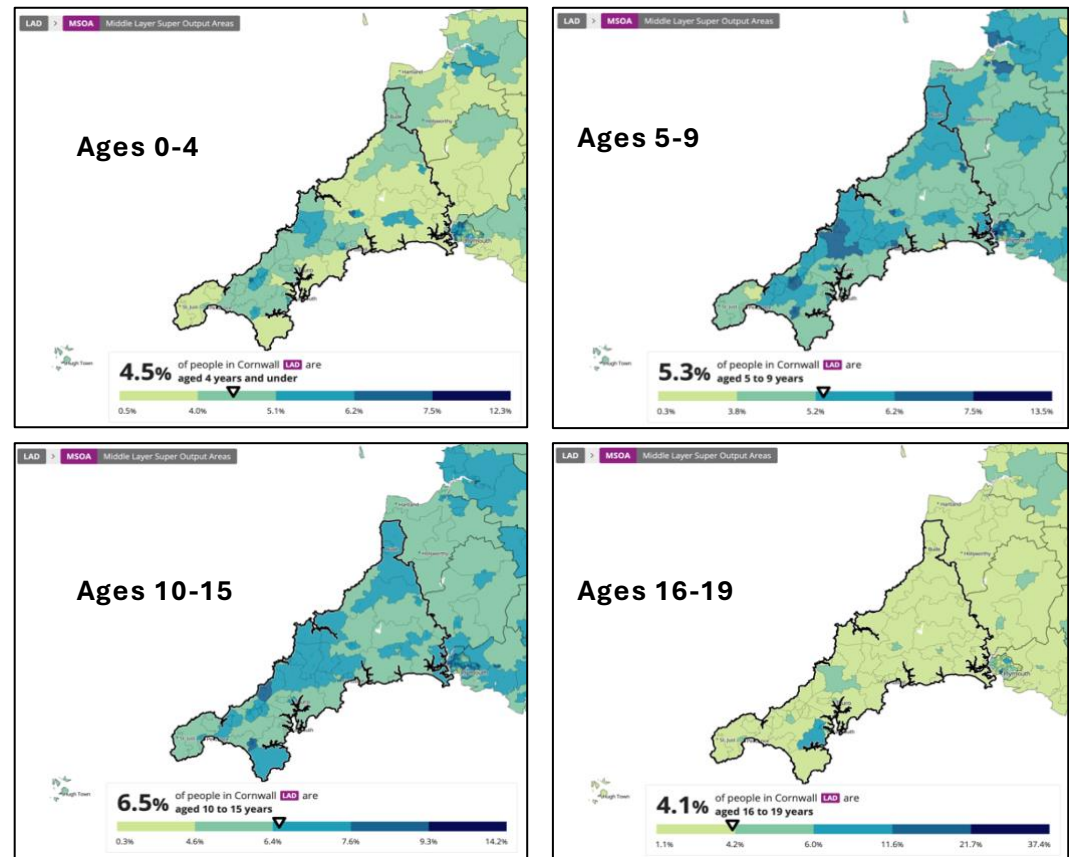


Figure 6 - Maps showing age distribution in Cornwall from 0-19

¹⁵³ https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/media/am4na12l/2011-census_headline_figures.pdf. Accessed 20 March 2024.

¹⁵⁴ <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/c1af40ccc0ab4617a9030f2a9249d5db#>. Accessed 20 March 2024.

It is important to consider this distribution alongside the location of secondary schools across the county. Where deanery boundaries shape missional planning to think in terms of the geography of churches, the geography of young people would render a different picture. As an example, Newquay has two secondary level education providers, Newquay Junior Academy and Treviglas Academy, which sit within the deanery structure. However, there at least six other secondary schools which a family in this area might travel to and, depending on where one lives, would be much closer. As such, the distinction between the locale of a family and the locale of the church is an essential aspect of an effective missional strategy.

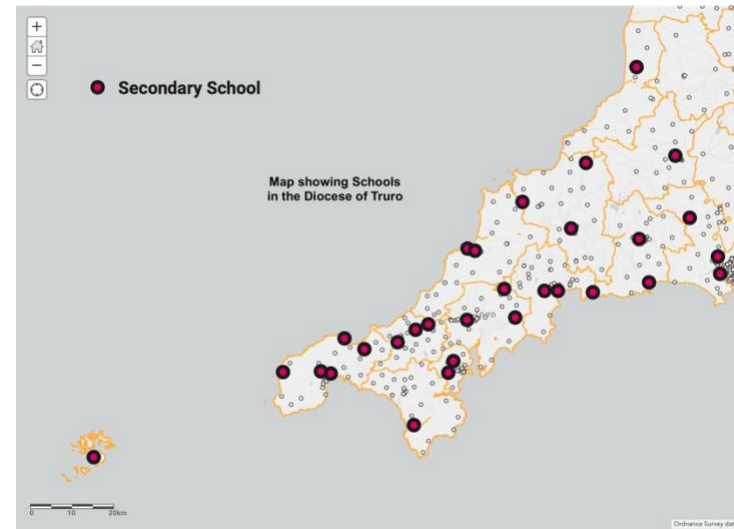


Figure 7 - Map showing secondary schools in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly

Practical Implications

(27) The missional strategy should make use of the deanery boundaries only insofar as this defines an administrative structure. However, in its missional practice, it should determine its area of ministry based on the context of the family and school(s) it seeks to serve.

4.1.1 Mapping Ministry in Secondary Schools in Cornwall

As part of their research mapping school's ministry in Cornwall, CreationFest have found that Christian Unions and faith clubs in secondary schools have been adversely affected by the COVID-19 lockdowns. These groups play an important role in establishing Christian presence in school (4.2.3). As of March 2024, CreationFest research found that there are no Christian Unions or Faith Clubs in: Bodmin, Bude, Callington, Camelford, Hayle, Launceston, Liskeard, Looe, Newquay, Penzance, Redruth, Saltash, St Austell, St Blazey, St Ives and Torpoint. The handful of groups currently running are facilitated by charities which organise support from local church volunteers, often through a link with an employed youthworker. The few examples found include: Wadebridge Community College (linked to an ecumenical collaboration facilitated by Health and Wellbeing provision within the Colleges Christian Fellowship).

The absence of a youth leader (paid or voluntary) to facilitate these groups (securing permission from school leadership, booking a room, bringing refreshments, inputting content etc.) makes them much harder to establish – though there are

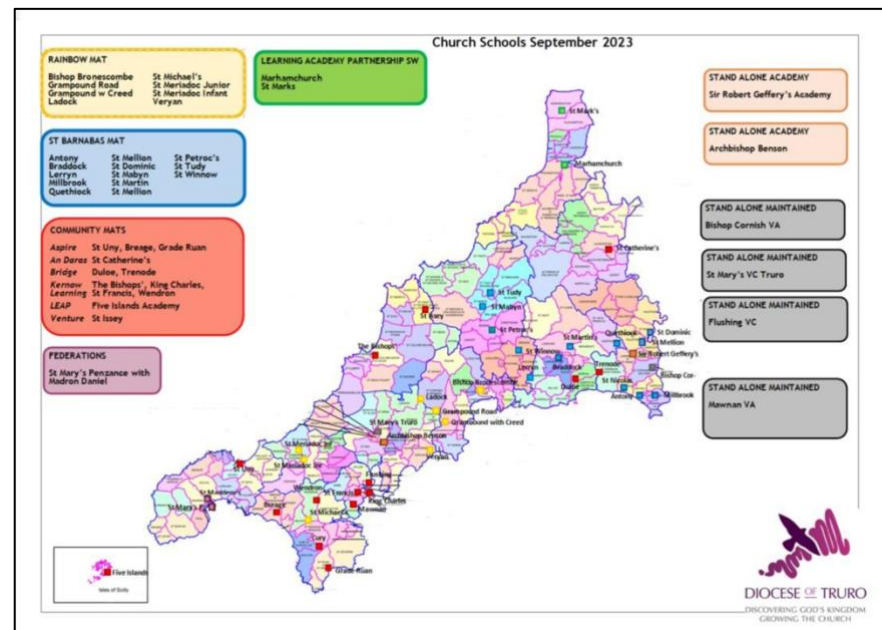


Figure 8 - Map showing Church Schools in Cornwall in September 2023

examples of young people starting their own school Christian Unions.¹⁵⁵ An important factor influencing the presence of these groups is the openness of the school leadership and existing links with local churches.

Practical Implications

(28) The missional strategy should recognise that the presence of an employed ministry worker significantly increases the likelihood of a sustained presence in and positive collaboration with secondary schools.

4.1.2 Youth Attendance at a Countywide Ecumenical Youth Event

This section presents quantitative data demonstrating the attendance of Glow, a countywide ecumenical youth event (aged 11-17) led by CreationFest. Youth ministers and leaders in the Cornwall, in particular within the context of the Church of England, already see regional youth events as a key part of their strategy (4.2.7

Training and Development of Youth and Children's Ministers). Of the seven Church of England Churches which regularly bring young people to Glow, five of these churches have an employed or trainee youth leader.

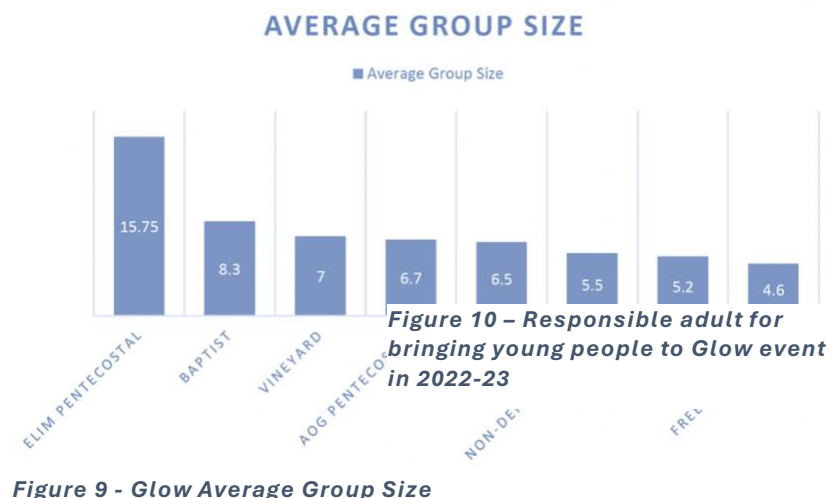
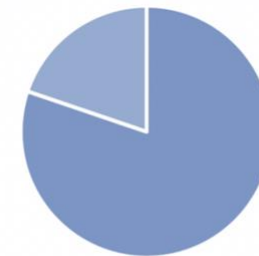


Figure 10 – Responsible adult for bringing young people to Glow event in 2022-23

¹⁵⁵ For example: <https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk/story/young-evangelists-find-their-voices-through-amplify>. Accessed 28 March 2024.

Across all denominations which bring groups, a total of 701 young people attended in 2022-23. The mean average number of young people in attendance from each denomination was 24. The mean average number of young people in each group was 7. Given the relatively low number of children and young people regularly worshipping within the diocese of Truro (3.1



■ Youth Workers 80.21% ■ Parents 19.79%

), this indicates that a significant number of those who do participate in a local Anglican church also participate in regional youth events (Figure 10). These young people attend in groups of (on average) 6-7 young people. It is important to note that groups brought by youth and children's workers are, on average, larger than those brought by parents. These groups are also more likely to attend consistently across the year. In addition to events such as this serving as a unique setting for faith identity formation, they also link young people within and between communities and churches across the county.

Practical Implications

(29) This missional strategy will consider how all children and young people may be enabled to access countywide and regional Christian events and residentials. This would look like identifying access to transportation such as hiring minibuses and covering the cost of hire. Secondly, part of the wider training may involve specific mentoring-style support for youth leaders taking groups to events and residentials for the first time (to help think through planning of transport, safeguarding and parental consent, catering, accommodation etc.).

4.1.3 Deanery Level Children and Youth Ministry in the Diocese of Truro

In 2022, every deanery within the Diocese of Truro completed a deanery plan, each of which have been carefully reviewed as part of this proposal. These plans represent the considered reflection and work of ministry teams on the ground in describing their present context and making strategic plans for the future. The missional strategy proposed should seek to dovetail with and enhance the local ministry with children and young people which these plans describe. The following summary (Table 5 - Review of Deanery Plans) presents the details relating directly to work children and young people.¹⁵⁶



Figure 12 - Archdeacons in the Diocese of Truro



Figure 12 - Deaneries in the Diocese of Truro

¹⁵⁶ This summary was compiled using the most up to date information available at the time. However, it should be noted that these plans have continued to develop and be refined as progress has been made within each deanery. The deanery plans are therefore, living documents, a snapshot in time of an unfolding work and ministry in a local context.

Deanery initiatives or roles which do not explicitly mention children and young people as the focus or in attendance have not been included here. Guided by the findings from the other lines of inquiry, a particular focus is given to the topics of intergenerational ministry, collaborative partnerships (with churches, schools and youth organisations) and the overall ethos toward children and young people.

Table 5 - Review of Deanery Plans in the Diocese of Truro (2023-24)

Deanery	Summary of Children, Youth and Family Ministry Dimension	Employment and training relating to children and young People
Penwith	Expressed desire from every parish for ‘more children and young people in their churches’ (2.1). ‘Presence of Messy Church groups with some tension over traditional (‘proper’ [2.3]) and new forms of church. Open the Book teams in many parishes and engagement with young people in Penlee Cluster. Opportunities exist with ‘holiday clubs’ and working with parents (Appendix 2.2). There is an expressed concern over the lack of engagement with young people (aged 11-17) in the deanery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employ four part-time (0.5 FTE) Children and Family Workers across the deanery to ‘develop engagement’ between CYF, schools and churches (detailed description in Appendix 2.2, p. 38-39), total funding of £60,000 per annum. • There is already a trainee youth worker based at St Ia and St John’s in St Ives.
Kerrier	Established a ‘Mission and Ministry Group’ for Children, Young People and Families. The language of intergenerational church is used to describe this initiative (p. 3). Emphasis on team ministry and interlinking of roles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring part-time (lay or ordained) Children, Young People and Families Lead ‘to encourage local churches to engage in seeking to reach out and minister to those who belong to the missing generations.’
Carnmarth North	‘Schools, children and youth’ identified as one of five deanery priorities. Wide range of activities generating opportunities for discipleship: ‘Tea Time’ afterschool club engaging with a large number of young people; Two toddler groups (Tuckingmill and Treslothan); Secret Church; and Wild Church. Located within the largest conurbation in Cornwall. Evidence of strategic collaboration between churches within the deanery. Emphasis placed on ‘the central place of evangelism’ and forming disciples (4.5 and 5.1).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking to become a placement for two trainee youth workers (8.2.1 – 3) • Employ a children and family worker (8.2.1 – 4) • There is already a trainee youth worker based with Camborne Transforming Mission.
Carnmarth South	Focus on children, families and young people prompted by ‘huge disparity’ between age of local population and age of worshipping communities (2.1). Presence of ‘long standing’	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed employment of two part-time (0.5 FTE) Deanery Children, Families and

	connections with local school governance, Messy Church groups and Open the Book teams visiting schools (2.3). Clear focus on discipleship from children and young families through to secondary education and adulthood (including university level) (4.2.4).	<p>Schools Leads (from June 2023; £14,500 per annum) (4.2.2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint a voluntary deanery representative and team members to work with University Chaplaincy. • Appoint a deanery youth leader to work ecumenically across Falmouth
Powder	Possibility of offering ‘training and upskilling’ in ‘ministering to children and young people’ through a Guild of (approximately 20) ‘focal ministers’ within the Deanery (4.3.2). Children and young people do not represent a distinct ‘strand’ but are implicit.	
Isles of Scilly (Powder)	One of three ‘key priorities’ is to ‘serve families and young people and to be multi-generational in our approach.’ There is a chaplain acting as Chair of Governors (2.4) with the school regarded as a key partner for mission (4.1). Looking to re-launch an Open the Book team.	
Pydar	Overarching vision statement includes ‘a church that is nurtured and sustained by faith to be confident in its calling, fruitful and generous in reaching the young...’ (1). The plan specifically addresses young people, schools and discipleship , setting ambitious goals for increasing the number of young people in church (3.1). There is the presence of the St Gregory’s (Bishop’s Mission Order) church with a specific focus on the ‘unreached and next generations’ including valuing ‘family life around Jesus’ (Appendix A) Emphasis on ‘mutual flourishing across the deanery’ and representation of young people at all levels of the church (6).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently there are: a youth and children’s leader in Lan Pydar deanery chapter; family and children’s minister and Youth Hub worker in Padstow area; and a youth and children’s leader at St Gregory’s.
St Austell	One of four mission priorities is to bring the Kingdom ‘into the lives of children and young people through work with schools, ministry to families and outreach’ (p. 5). The language of ‘ intergenerational ministry ’ is used, seeking to develop relationships with schools and create ‘family-oriented worship.’	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring a Children and Family Worker in St Dennis to ‘engage with families in particular need.’ • There are already two trainee youth workers in this deanery based at St Austell Parish church.
Trigg Minor and Bodmin	Identified a ‘missing generation’ of families that have ‘drifted away from traditional church’ (2.3). A desire for parents and children ‘to grow in faith together.’ All schools in the deanery are being linked with a local parish church (4.1). There are 25 schools (7 of which are Church of England schools), 3 secondary schools and a further education college in the deanery. There are a range of groups involving children including Messy Church, Open the Book, and outdoor church. There is a desire to develop collaborative forms of youth and children’s ministry : (1) Bodmin (relating to Bodmin Youth Project, an ecumenical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They have launched a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) called Bodmin Way: https://www.bodminway.org

	partnership between three churches in Bodmin) into the wider deanery; (2) the Grace Project in Wadebridge; and (3) collaborative work with St Minver youth initiative.	
Trigg Major	Noted only one Church of England School in the deanery (St Catherine's Launceston), however clergy visit all schools in the town, including secondary schools. Two Messy Church groups, a 'Kid's Café' and family service. No youth groups (aged 11-17) currently (2.4). Response includes a focus of ministry to families and young people 'growing out of schools contact' (4.1).	
Stratton	Mission to families and children is a stated priority and has been since 2020. There is a wide range of groups running including Open the Book, Messy church, Posada events. There are activities engaging parents and families, including family services and good links with schools through assemblies (2.3 C). The main areas identified for development are expanding Open the Book and assembly provision, developing engagement with young people (4.1)	
West Wivelshire	Emphasis on building stronger links with primary and secondary schools alongside opportunities for children and families to access and participate in local worship services. Deanery work closely with many schools (incl. assemblies, governors, help with reading and afterschool clubs). There is a chaplain based at St Martin's school and Open the Book teams in seven schools within the deanery. Messy Church Some engagement with young people and Alpha course. A 'Kids Matter' parenting course is run for families with referrals from schools.	
East Wivelshire	One of the four key areas for development identified is 'reaching out to families' (4). Emphasis on developing 'community partnerships' and accessible worship . There 18 Primary Schools (incl. 6 Church of England schools) and 3 secondary schools. There are activities such as Messy Church and Open the Book, as well as links with school assemblies and governors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring recruitment of school chaplains (from September 2023) with the aim of offering regular assemblies, contributing to the curriculum and prayer spaces. • There is already a children's and families worker based at Callington

It is notable that every deanery plan references children and young people in some manner. This is backed up by a recent survey in the Diocese of Truro which indicates that a total of 111 churches have some regular engagement (from weekly to termly) with children (aged 0-10). It is estimated that a significantly smaller proportion (between 20-30 churches) have regular engagement with young people (aged 11-17).¹⁵⁷ Of this group, there are 7 churches which engage with young people aged 11-17 on a weekly basis.

However, there is variation in the extent to which practical actions relating to children and young people are made explicit. A few deaneries are proposing new and contextual approaches to ministry, many are seeking to reinforce or revitalise patterns of ministry already in place, and a minority subsume youth and children's ministry under other categories.¹⁵⁸ Nearly all deaneries engage in a selection of 'off the shelf'¹⁵⁹ approaches including: Messy Church, Open the Book, variations of groups relating to 'tea time' and wild/outdoor/adventure church. These approaches often come with their own guiding ethos and materials. However, as one deanery pointed out, it is unclear to what extent these forms of church are recognised as church 'proper' (see Penwith in Table 5 - Review of Deanery Plans) or rather as

“3 years ago our family worker started tea-time, a free families drop-in with food. Since I started in September, we regularly see 100-120 people attend. This is a space for families to drop in and let their children have fun playing. Our team aims to sit with the parents, hear their stories and invite them into conversations about faith.”

Respondent to CreationFest Mapping
of Church Based CYF Ministry

¹⁵⁷ This survey was carried out between January and March 2024 as part of the youth participation dimension of Growing Younger.

¹⁵⁸ It should be noted that these plans are perhaps more an indication of the values and approach of local ministry teams than an exhaustive account of practice on the ground.

¹⁵⁹ Angela Shier-Jones, *Pioneer Ministry and Fresh Expressions of Church* (SPCK Library of Ministry; London: SPCK, 2009), xi.

feeder groups into a more 'traditional' expressions of Christian community. It is encouraging to see that the majority of deaneries regard local primary and secondary schools as key partners for mission.

An additional consideration to note is how a separate diocesan initiative, Transforming Mission (TM), has shaped ministry in the Diocese of Truro. TM strategy focused funding on urban centres with the aim of developing 'resource churches' to catalyse and support ministry in the surrounding areas.

Focusing on urban centres is a long-established and popular approach to ministry.¹⁶⁰ However, some of the plans noted how this may have led to the perception (or practice) of more overtly rural contexts being forgotten. Furthermore, some have questioned whether a resource church model is contextually appropriate for Cornwall.¹⁶¹ Benjamin Aldous' critique is that this model does not take seriously enough the sense of place and the 'locally lived experiences' of people in the Cornish context. This, it is argued, results in homogenous forms of church being parachuted in with 'little consideration for local circumstances.'¹⁶² In other words, Anglican models of ministry need to be suitably

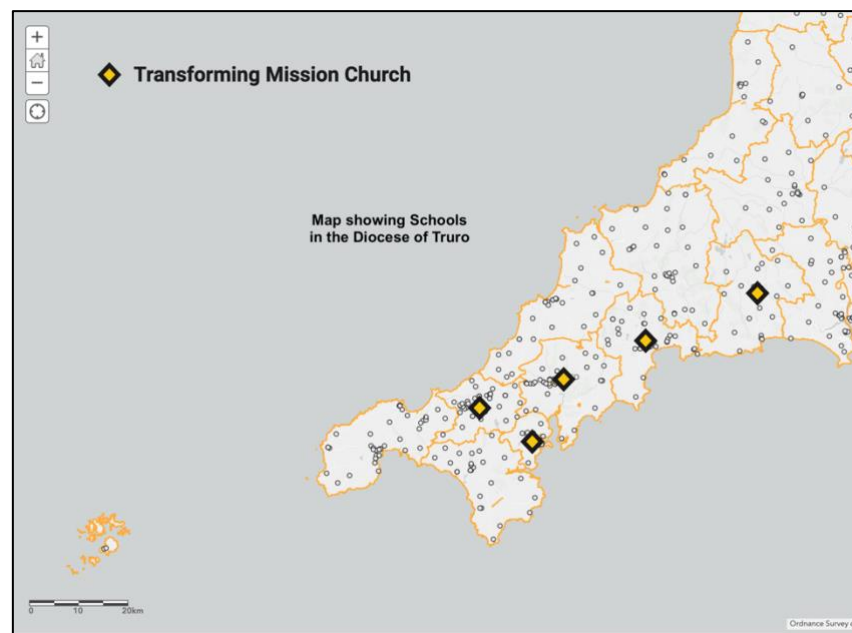


Figure 13 - Map showing Transforming Mission Churches in the Diocese of Truro

¹⁶⁰ For example, *Tim Keller, Center Church: Doing balanced, gospel-centred ministry in your city* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012).

¹⁶¹ Benjamin Aldous, 'Pasties, Pirates and Practical Theology: Taking Cornish context and culture seriously when utilising the resource church model,' *Rural Theology* 18, no. 1 (2020), 2-12.

¹⁶² Bernard Deacon, 'The Anglican Church in Cornwall,' Cornish Studies Resources, <https://bernarddeacon.com/recent-articles-on-cornwall/the-anglican-church-and-cornwall/>. Accessed 20 March 2024.

contextualised with reference to Cornish identity and sense of place in order to be effective. Whilst this question goes beyond the scope of this proposal, it indicates that a degree of flexibility in the form of ministry practice on ground will be essential. Otherwise, this proposal would risk uncritically importing and trying to replicate popular models that have worked elsewhere.

Practical Implications

(30) The missional strategy should retain a degree of on-the-ground flexibility, guided by the strategy's core principles, to allow for contextual forms of ministry to children, young people and families to emerge through listening and collaboration.

4.1.4 Confidence in the Resources of Anglican Tradition

Whilst the quantitative data charting the decreasing church participation (4.1.1 Religious Participation Across the Generations in Britain) is rightly a cause for concern, it is not justification for what has been described as 'decline theology.'¹⁶³ David Goodhew argues that Scripture, doctrine and history 'see congregations as at the heart of living out the Christian life.'¹⁶⁴ At the same time, it is vital to recognise that the vast majority of young people who encounter expressions of Christian community in the Diocese of Truro will have no prior experience of church. In Cornwall, these churches take a variety of forms and represent a breadth of liturgical traditions. Martin Warner writes about how the resources of faith already within the church, in particular 'its liturgy, becomes a fresh expression of something natural-but-transformed when

¹⁶³ David Goodhew, 'Toward a Theology of Church Growth: An introduction,' in David Goodhew (ed.), *Towards a Theology of Church Growth* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), 34.

¹⁶⁴ Goodhew, 'Toward a Theology of Church Growth,' 34.

experienced by those who have no faith or knowledge of God.’¹⁶⁵ Warner writes that ministry of ‘word and place’ should be ‘carefully attuned’ to these people but also confident in its value and expression for today. However, this confidence in the value of particular liturgical traditions, which is rightly held, must be appropriately contextualised to the circumstances of the people involved. David Lankshear and Leslie Francis have found compelling evidence for this. From their analysis of the *Signs of Growth* survey,¹⁶⁶ regarding the ‘missing generation’ (those in their twenties), they conclude: ‘churches concerned to nurture the faith of young adults may be wise to recognise the barrier that may be created by relying too heavily on services and hymns crafted in older (or traditional) forms of English.’¹⁶⁷ Overcoming the ‘barriers’ to integrating and participating in forms of Christian worship is essential.

Pete Ward writes that in being part of a community, we internalise and absorb ‘particular ways of being Christian... our sense of who we are as Christians comes out of what we have absorbed.’¹⁶⁸ From an analysis of data from seven rural diocese, including Truro, between 1950s and 2000s, Carol Roberts concludes that ‘rural Anglicanism has many faces’.¹⁶⁹ She argues that, when considering these contexts, research at the level of the specific diocese is required as features of other diocese are not always readily comparable. Therefore, further research is needed to clarify the specific role of the varied liturgical traditions represented in Cornwall. A one-size-fits-all approach is likely to be inappropriate when it comes to

¹⁶⁵ Martin Warner, ‘How does a mixed economy Church connect with contemporary spirituality?’ in Steven Croft (ed.), *Mission-Shaped Questions: Defining issues for today’s church* (London: Church House Publishing, 2009), 179.

¹⁶⁶ The congregational survey comprised 348 Anglican churches across three Episcopal Areas with a total of 31,521 respondents. Of this total, 1343 of these churchgoers were in their twenties.

¹⁶⁷ David W. Lankshear and Leslie J. Francis, ‘The Missing Generation: Profiling churchgoers in their twenties,’ in Leslie J. Francis and David W. Lankshear (eds.), *The Science of Congregation Studies: Searching for signs of growth* (Cham: Springer Nature, 2021), 63.

¹⁶⁸ Pete Ward, *Introducing Practical Theology: Mission, ministry and the life of the church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 16.

¹⁶⁹ Carol Roberts, ‘Rural Anglicanism: One face or many?’ in Leslie J. Francis and Mandy Robbins (eds.) *Rural Life and Rural Church: Theological and Empirical Perspectives* (Sheffield: Equinox, 2012), 155.

liturgical practices. However, the ‘canonical heritage’¹⁷⁰ of the church, including the riches of the Anglican tradition(s), should be regarded as a gift of the Holy Spirit.¹⁷¹ These gifts should be held forth confidently, critically, and with contextual sensitivity to children, young people and families.¹⁷²

Practical Implications

(31) The missional strategy should recognise and value the range of liturgical traditions represented within the Diocese of Truro. These traditions should be utilised in contextually appropriate ways in the formation of distinctively Christian worshipping communities.

4.1.5 Deanery-Level Facilitated Conversation on Youth and Children’s Ministry

As part of the consultation process, a member of the consultation team was invited to participate with a deanery within the Diocese of Truro to facilitate the implementation of their deanery youth and children’s strategy. This involved a number of Zoom calls and culminated in hosting two events involving churches from across the four benefices within the deanery. This event was well attended with roughly 35 volunteers and team from across a number of churches. There is one church doing regular youth work (aged 11-17), outreach and some secondary school engagement. It was noted that the youth worker’s prior experience as secondary school teacher was

¹⁷⁰ Jason E. Vickers, ‘Medicine of the Holy Spirit: The Canonical Heritage of the Church,’ in William J. Abraham, Jason E. Vickers and Natalie B. van Kirk (eds.), *Canonical Theism: A proposal for theology and the church* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2008), 26.

¹⁷¹ The Archbishops’ Council, *Mission-Shaped Church: Church planting and fresh expressions of church in a changing context* (London: Church House Publishing, 2004), 34-36.

¹⁷² Withers, *Mission-Shaped Children*, chapter 4. Kindle version.

significant to the success of these groups. All other churches represented offered a mixture of toddler groups, Messy Church and Open the Book teams. The deanery has good youth and children's missional growth potential if they are brave enough to try new things. Some of the reasons for the absence of work with young people included the feeling that 'we don't know how' or 'we're not what young people want.' It was felt that these attitudes could be changed with relevant training, empowerment, and leadership. There is significant potential for the sharing of skills across the deanery. For example, one youth worker asked those present to advise them on how to start Open the Book to develop their work with children. Likewise, there was an offer from them of advising others on youthwork practice. This collaboration within the deanery shows promise, and if it is maintained and trust develops, it could become fruitful for all. Another factor to consider, is the contrast of rural and urban being found within the same deanery. Having a large (for Cornwall) developing town, with new-build estates, alongside very rural areas and small churches, will represent different worshipping communities and different opportunities for mission. A major opportunity to consider is a strategy for how the primary schools across the deanery, often visited by rural parish teams, act as feeder schools to the secondary in the town where the church has a presence. What joined up work could be done here?

Finally, it was observed that there was potential for an unhelpful culture at play in the background, around how resources are distributed across rural parishes, which could be a factor to consider. In my opinion, expecting, assuming, or perhaps even desiring that everyone gets an equal slice of the pie is not strategic. Even if decision makers wouldn't think like this, the voice of this narrative needs to be addressed in a proactive way i.e. not ignoring it but positively dismantling it to rebuild a better Kingdom narrative.

Practical Implications The value of having ‘an ear to the ground’ when it comes to the state of relationships and local culture should not be underestimated. As is demonstrated in the presence of open, supportive and unified teams is decisive for an effective mission strategy.

(31) The missional strategy will consider how external facilitators with expertise in youth, children and/or family ministry may be accessed across the diocese. This may involve allocating funding toward deaneries that are actively discussing and seeking to implement change in their CYF strategy.

(32) The missional strategy will extend the notion of collaboration beyond the confines of the Anglican churches within the diocese to look for strategic partnerships with churches from the wider Christian Tradition.

4.2 Summary

These lines of inquiry present a detailed evidence base for the theological and practical principles upon which a proposed Missional Strategy is constructed. They represent a diverse range of evidence from local ministry contexts within the Diocese of Truro to evidence-based approaches to ministry from the academic and national perspectives. Whilst a suitable depth and breadth of perspectives have been engaged with, it should be noted that this summary represents only one sounding of the available research and literature. As such, the commissioning of further targeted research will be desirable to add greater depth and clarity to the issues surveyed. A summary of the key principles identified may be found in Appendix A – The Five Principles.

5. The Missional Strategy

From the consideration of the evidence presented (4. Lines of Inquiry), this proposal now seeks to consolidate the key principles (Appendix A – The Five Principles) into a clearly defined missional strategy. The various lines of inquiry indicate that faith formation in children and young people takes place as a process over time, involving a range of significant others (both people and God) in a plurality of contexts (foremost being home, school and the gathered church). As such, this proposal envisages the missional strategy as a **shared journey of faith** (Figure 14 – Missional Strategy: A Shared Journey of Faith). The metaphor of a shared journey of faith is purposeful. This shared journey metaphor signals three important dimensions:

- **Departing** – being willing leave the “comfortable” of what may be a long-held understanding or way of being.
- **Together** – acknowledging this is a shared journey and must go at the pace of the community and not the individual.
- **In Faith** – to recognise that this journey is an act of faith, believing that God’s Spirit is active as we form new understandings and approaches to ministry with and for children and young people.

The metaphor of a journey also introduces the subtle but essential dimension of willingness. A journey should not be forced but must be willingly embarked upon. This calls for a process of discernment, to ‘count the cost’ (Luke 14:28), before undertaking the journey.

Discipleship as a Shared Journey of Faith



Figure 14 – Missional Strategy: A Shared Journey of Faith

The journey begins with the shared conviction that children and young people are a locus for the in-breaking of the Kingdom of God. As such, explicitly Christian community and faith formation are relevant and appropriate from the very youngest through to adulthood. Relationship amongst the local community, open youth work and collaborative ecumenical and school-based partnerships are important in ‘engaging a wide base.’ However, the journey does not end there, but rather

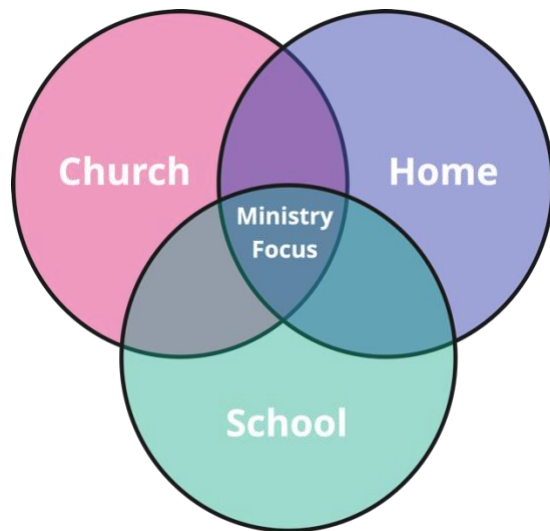


Figure 15 – Ecology of Faith Formation: Three Primary Contexts

actively looks to integrate with and form Christian communities. Rather than being left to the end of the journey, faith exploration in an explicitly Christian worshipping community takes a leading role.

In this way, this pathway is not a discipleship journey for children and young people only. Owing to the distinctively intergenerational approach this proposal takes, this pathway is for the whole Christian community, in its various local expressions, to travel together. This implies a culture change in the church and thus requires a considered and prayerful discernment process before it is embarked upon. It is important to understand that whilst the contexts and activities evolve as children grow up, the journey of faith itself is **cumulative and not sequential**; that is, each step along the way builds upon and incorporates the previous steps. Discipleship is therefore not only the outcome but the process itself.

Like any journey, it is not always a straightforward path from A to B. It will be marked by moments of ‘stepping into personal faith.’ Movement between the stages (and even stepping backwards) cannot be concretely predicted but must go at the pace of the people involved; discipleship cannot be rushed (3.4 Scope and Values). Finally, the journey moves toward,

appropriately and with support, empowering and equipping young people to respond in faith to the people and issues around them in their own lives.

To complement and further specify this description, Figure 16 presents this missional strategy through the lens of the specific age groups and key transition points that children and young people navigate. The top half of the table shows the ministry priority at each stage, the lower half indicates possible practices which serve these ends. In every age group, an intergenerational Christian community takes a leading role. During key transitions, the priority for each age group moves from **establishing** and deepening links to **integrating** and forming new links around the child or young person as they navigate new social contexts. Importantly, though many young people will have consistent key figures in their life (for example, a parent), these relationships nevertheless change over time. In light of this and the evidence for the strategic role of the home, this strategy directs attention and resources toward building links with and supporting parents and caregivers throughout this journey.¹⁷³

The ‘Example Practices’ in Figure 16 reflect the three primary faith formation contexts identified in 4. Lines of Inquiry. As such, the focus of local ministry may be defined explicitly as effectively working with the same children and young people across the three contexts of Church, Home and School. This is what this proposal envisions as **an ecology of faith formation**. The term ecology is suggestive of a network of interrelated living organisms which are dependent on each other

¹⁷³ At this point, it should be reiterated that the terms ‘family’ and ‘home’ are complex and so are used in a broad sense to be inclusive of a wide range of arrangements. For example, the word family may refer to a multitude of arrangements: extended, adoptive, foster, nuclear, single-parent, grandparent, stepfamily, reconstituted, blended, etc.

in different ways. Depending on the starting point, one or other of these contexts may be emphasised earlier in the project but the ministry focus will move toward the centre as the project matures.

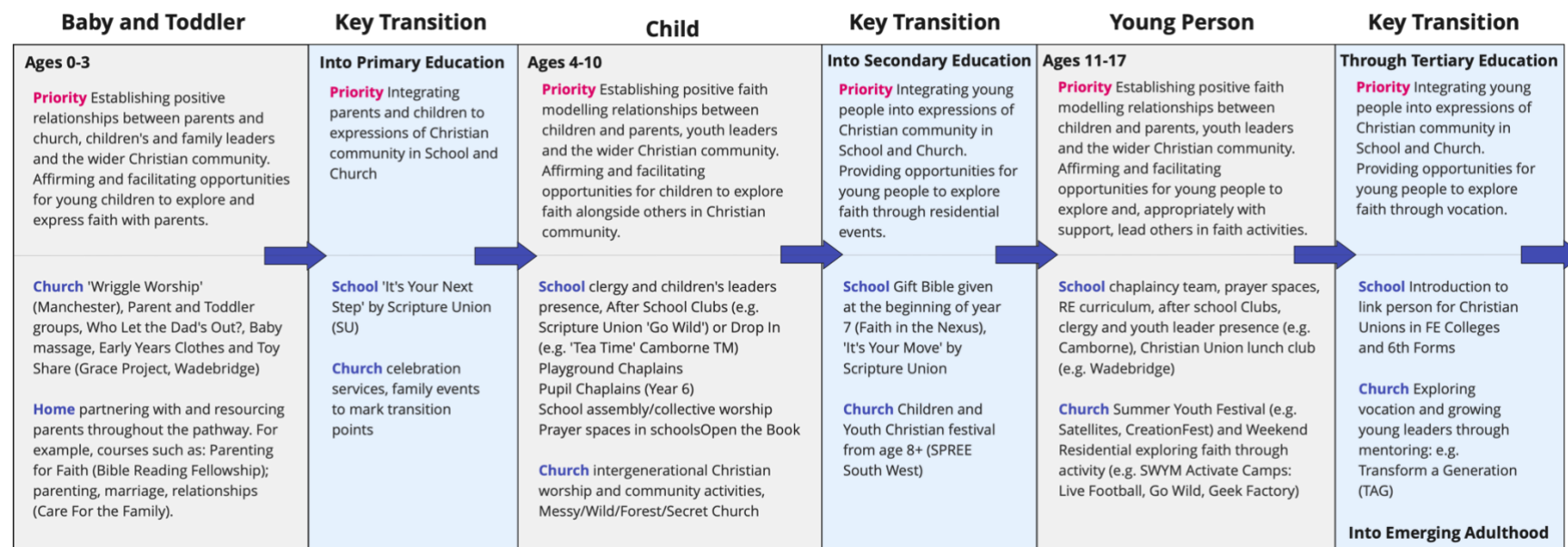


Figure 16 – Missional Strategy Priorities and Transition Points

The allocation of funding is not the primary function of the missional strategy. Rather, its primary function is to define the principles by which children and young people may be engaged in a journey of discipleship (see Appendix A – The Five Principles of the Missional Strategy). However, insights from reviewing other diocesan approaches indicate that funding and roles must be allocated in a targeted manner; it has not been shown that dividing resources evenly according to individuals or geographic areas is an effective approach. As such, this missional strategy proposes a multi-level approach to implementation. These are unpacked under the following headings.

5.1 Focused Initiatives at the Deanery Area Level

This approach of focusing on a number of **deanery areas** is made on the basis that, for the 0-18 discipleship pathway to be effective, ministry with each age group must all be located within the same geographic area. It is not feasible to expect a family engaged with an example of ministry in the 5-10 years group to travel out of area when their child ages out and into the 11+ age group. With this constraint in mind, the geographic area of a deanery was chosen as a realistic unit of mission that encompasses primary, secondary and tertiary education, as well as a manageable set of churches and communities. This would allow the ministry to develop in such a way that a 0-18 discipleship pathway might be implemented within a sufficiently defined area that, in principle, a child born and raised there would be able to progress through the whole of the journey. The term 'deanery area' is chosen purposefully. There is a distinction between (1) 'deanery' as the pastoral and administrative structure and (2) 'deanery area' as to the local network of places and communities in which children, young people and families connect and move between. This is important as whilst a family may attend a parish church within a one deanery, the young person within that family may attend a secondary school outside the formal boundaries of that deanery but still within the same perceived community. As such the missional practice of the ministry team within the deanery (structure) should seek to account for broader area that children, young people and families inhabit on a regular basis.

Forming a Children and Young People's Advisory Group - This would be a small group chosen to provide specific expertise and act as a sounding board for the lead roles implementing this strategy. To safeguard this space for critical reflection, this advisory committee should not be composed of individuals already involved at the deanery or diocesan level of the accountability structure. All members of the advisory committee should have a detailed understanding of the missional strategy set out in this proposal.

5.1.1 Preparation Phase

For each of the proposed deanery areas projects, there must be a ‘Preparation Phase’ in which the viability of the project is critically assessed and a detailed **local missional design** specified. This work is to be carried out by the Children and Young Person’s Lead before proceeding to the Implementation Phase.

This process is laid out in Figure 17 – Preparation Phase: Consultation and Discernment Process and will involve:

- a. **A period of consultation with key stakeholders** This includes but is not limited to: local church leadership (at all levels from clergy to volunteers; parochial church councils to deanery synod), the congregations within each parish, representatives from all primary and secondary education providers, any external organisations that work with children, young people and families in the area. This consultation process should aim to clearly describe the strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats to ministry with children and young people in this area.
- b. **Community Profiling and Mapping**¹⁷⁴ This should be undertaken with local church leadership and relevant stakeholders to clearly map the ‘community’ of children, young people and families in the deanery area including: population and key demographics, deprivation and employment, housing, education, crime, assets and services. See also the questions in Appendix B – Questions for Community Mapping Consultation.
- c. **A discernment process with local church leadership** There is significant evidence that church leaders (in particular clergy) play a pivotal role in driving vision at the local level, releasing ministry and building links with schools. As such, the CYP Lead should facilitate a process of collective discernment with local church leadership around the following:
 - 1) Is there clear understanding of, and agreement with, the core principles of the missional strategy?

¹⁷⁴ For example, see: Murray Hawtin and Janie Percy-Smith, *Community Profiling: A Practical Guide*, 2nd edition (Maidenhead: Open University, 2007).

- 2) Is there passion and energy for mission amongst the church leadership?
- 3) Is there evidence of warmth toward welcoming the presence and participation of children and young people in the life of the church?
- 4) Is there prior evidence of and a willingness to work collaboratively with a range of ministry partners including schools, churches (both Anglican and ecumenically) and organisations within the local community?

From this process, the **local missional design** will specify how the missional principles set out in this proposal (see Appendix A – The Five Principles of the Missional Strategy) are contextualised for the specific deanery area (see Appendix C – Questions for the Local Missional Design). The local missional design will include but is not limited to: the specific communities, churches and contexts within the deanery area that will be the focus of the project (described in detail both quantitatively and qualitatively); the results and findings of the discernment process carried out with local church leadership; clear evidence of opportunities for collaborative ministry and broad engagement from the stakeholder consultation; defining the specific measures of success relative to that deanery area and the overarching aim of this missional strategy (2.1).¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁵ These will include quantitative measures such as attendance and qualitative feedback from participants. However, depending on the local missional design, the specific contexts and groups measured are expected to be different. For example, one deanery areas may identify opportunities to work with primary school students at an early stage, whereas another may begin with developing the ecology of faith formation around a pre-existing youth ministry in the deanery.

5.1.2 Moving from Preparation to Implementation

The role of the CYP Lead is pivotal to the effective implementation of the project. As such, it needs to be within their remit to discern if the project should progress to the Implementation Phase in the proposed deanery area. If there is clearly evidenced willingness and opportunities within the deanery area to engage positively with this missional strategy, the CYP Lead should present the local missional design to the Ministry Team. Subject to approval, including any requested revisions or further detail to the design, the project may then proceed to the Implementation Phase. If the proposal is unsuccessful at any stage of the preparation phase, a statement should be written by the CYP Lead detailing the reasons why with reference to the missional strategy. These reasons must be addressed, if still valid, in any future application relating to this process.

Any missional design will need to account for and be contextualised to the current ministry and roles

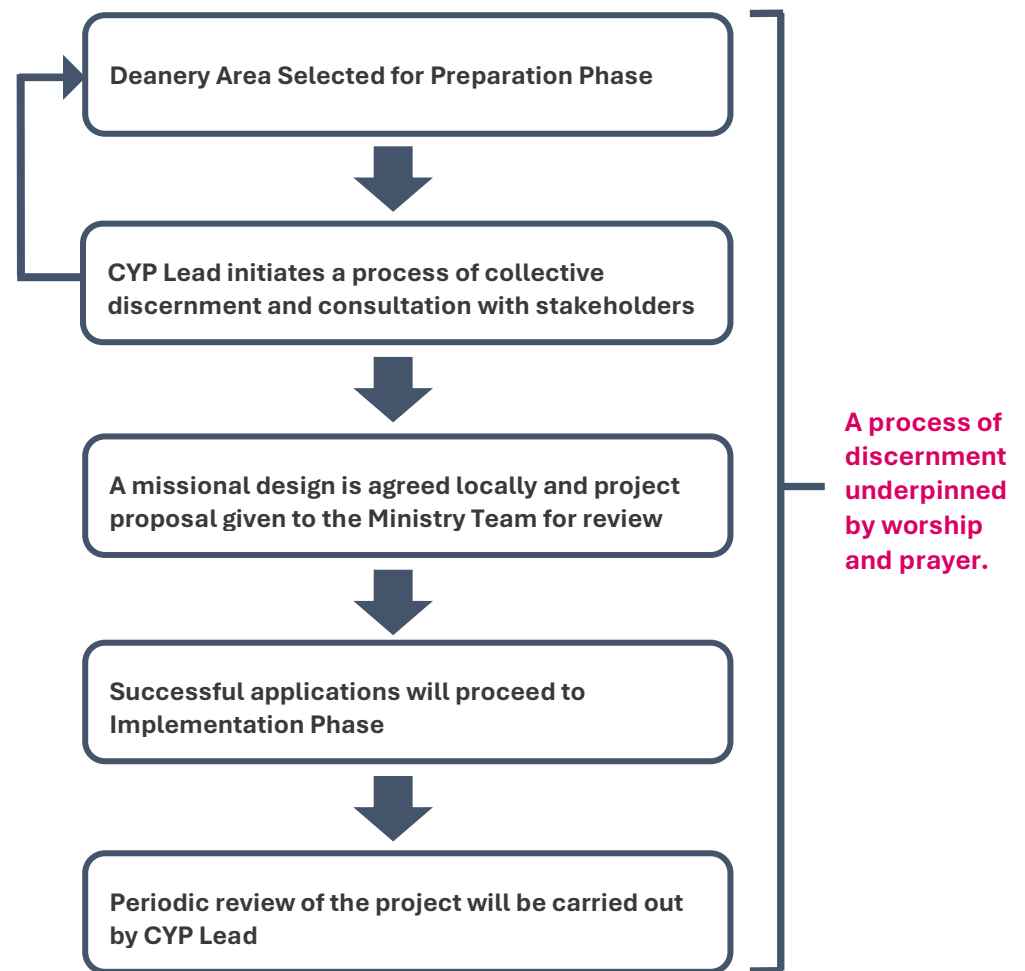


Figure 17 – Preparation Phase: Consultation and Discernment Process

already in place. Depending on the findings of the Preparation Phase, or the development of the project during the Implementation Phase, it may be that the approach is adjusted. For instance, establishing an effective partnership between local churches and schools may warrant the employment of a chaplaincy lead to develop this link further.

5.1.3 Implementation Phase

The deanery area project is subject to a review at defined points throughout implementation. Depending on its length, in addition to an end-term review, there may also be a mid-term review undertaken by someone external to the project (though they may be from within the Diocese of Truro) to provide a fresh perspective on the work. These reviews should be shared with the Ministry Team and used by the CYP Lead to propose changes in approach where appropriate. These reviews will serve at least two critical functions:

- 1) **Focus** - they will contribute to setting short and mid-term goals that keep the deanery area ministry focused, measurable and provide a point of accountability for local decision making.
- 2) **Fruitfulness and Sustainability** – they will celebrate the successes and review the challenges of the project as it unfolds to identify opportunities for how the ministry may be sustainably developed to continue beyond the formal duration of this proposal.

5.1.4 Conclusion Phase

To a significant degree, the end should be in view from the beginning. The goal of this project is faith formation amongst children and young people who are on a journey of discipleship. In terms of any employed roles and development of ministry on the ground, the aim should be establishing a local ecology of faith formation for ages of 0-18 years. This will entail nurturing an intergenerational ministry culture and developing competent leaders such that elements of ministry may be

successively handed on to local ownership at the earliest point in which it is feasible. This should not take place suddenly or all-in-one-go but represent a carefully planned process. In this regard, particular attention should be paid to the development and training of competent local leaders which dovetails with the opportunities for training at the diocese level. Finally, it is envisioned that, upon reaching the full term of this proposal, an external individual would be commissioned to carry out an end term review of the project to clarify learning points to inform future work.

5.2 Diocese Wide Training and Support

Alongside these focused initiatives, we want to develop a number of offers that would work right across the Diocese and one of these is in the area of training around youth, children's and families ministry. There are clear examples of effective children and youth ministry within the diocese as well as the strong desire in many places to develop this ministry (see Table 5 - Review of Deanery Plans in the Diocese of Truro). To capture this missional energy, this strategy should include a **'Training and Resources Menu'** available to all deaneries and parishes within the Diocese of Truro. This menu will enable local ministries to identify and customise this resourcing to suit the particular needs within their contexts.

5.2.1 Children, Youth and Family Ministry Training Offer

These offers are broken-down in accordance with the distinct needs of different children, youth and family ministers. Below is a description of these offers with potential partners or deliverers for this training likely coming from local and region training providers with appropriate ministry expertise.

Training and Resources Menu

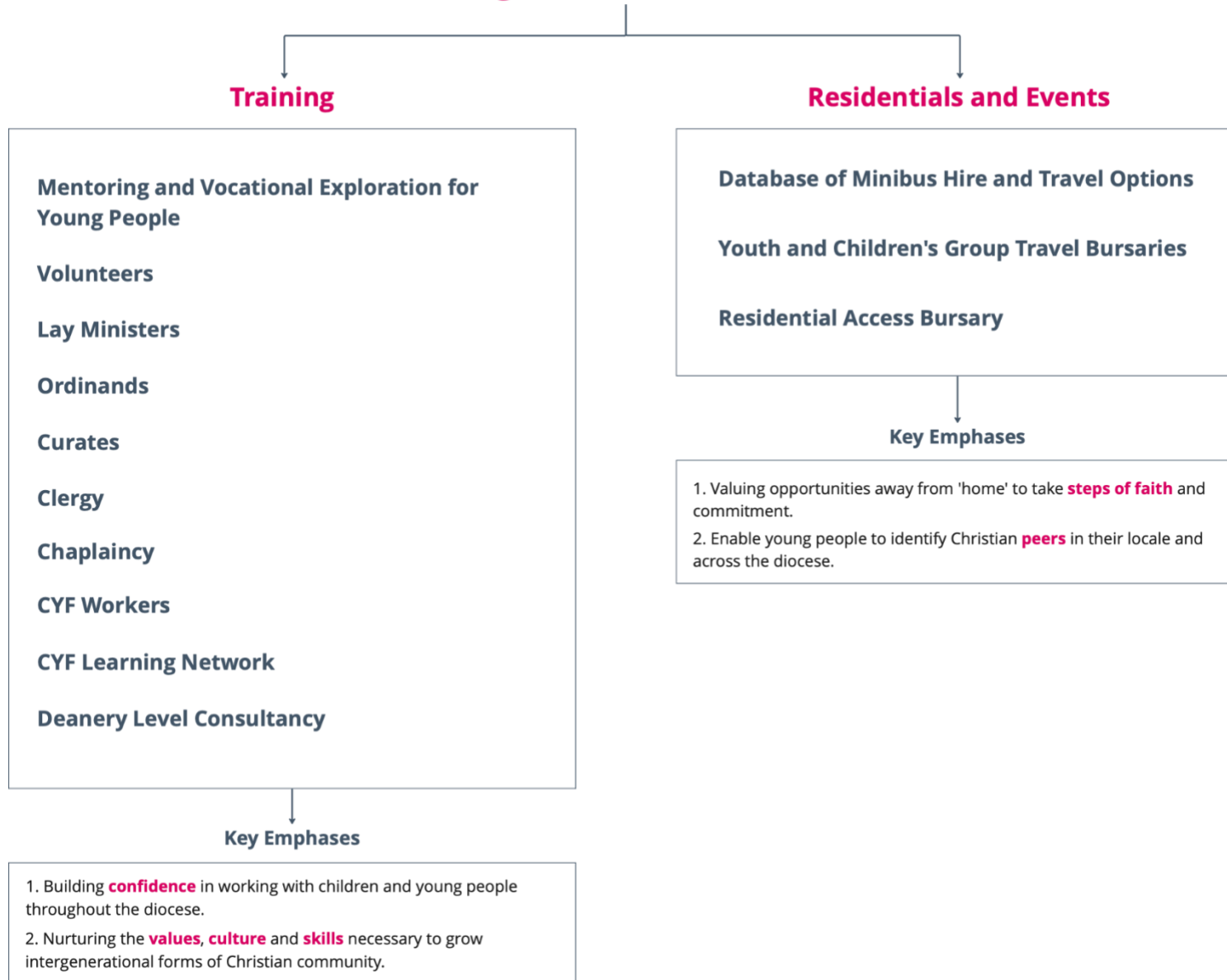


Figure 18 – Potential Menu of Training and Initiatives in the Diocese of Truro

- **Mentoring and Vocational Training for Young People** - A desire to create settings for young leaders to be mentored into leadership and for young people to explore the place of serving children as a part of their vocation.
- **Volunteer Training** - Training volunteers is recognised by the Diocese as a key strategy going forward as well as by the National church as a part of the 30K initiative. We therefore suggest an entry level-based training alongside a more focused provision for those wishing to develop an existing work.
- **Licensed Lay Ministers (LLM)** - It is important that a part of the LLM training includes work with Children, Young People and Families. There could well be a piece of work to look at how this might not just be an optional extra but embedded in all the training new LLM's receive but perhaps having additional input at annual conferences might also be a good step forward.
- **Ordinands** - This proposal suggests that all Ordinands should have specific training on children, youth and family ministry as part of their development.
- **Curates** – We recognise that often curates are encouraged to develop work with children and young people but may well have had little or no training in working with children, young people and families up until this point. Therefore, it is suggested that all curates will need some training in this area.
- **Ministers with Oversight Responsibility** - Ultimately we recognise that unless clergy hold the vision for youth, children and families work then it is very hard to change the culture in our churches. As such, this group should be supported with appropriate training and support to theologically reflect on their parish level ministries.

- **Children, Young People and Family Ministers** - Flowing out of the National Church 30K project, we want to train and release more paid children, youth, families and intergenerational workers in partnership with churches across the Diocese. We recognise that there is currently a crisis around employing workers with a shortage of suitable people so we would want to encourage a close working with an appropriate partner on training up the next generation of workers as a pathway into paid positions.
- **Children, Youth and Family Learning Network** – It would be valuable to develop a network informal training including Continuing Ministerial Development (CMD) training for all ministers (lay and ordained) in the Diocese of Truro. This could serve as a resource for leaders at all levels to develop their thinking and support each other in prayer.

5.2.1 Diocese Wide Residentials and Events Work

Research suggests that the majority of people who decide to follow Christ do so before the age of 18. On top of this many of those under 18's make a decision whilst away at a residential or event. This proposal suggests that in a largely rural and dispersed county it is critical that we invest in events and residentials that enable children, young people and families to gather to realise that they are not alone and are part of something bigger as well as providing them with safe spaces to explore the Christian faith. It is important again to recognise the diverse traditions across the Diocese and so it would be important to make sure whatever is offered gives space for all expressions of faith. Creation Fest takes place in the county and is a great resource for local churches. It would be good to invest and support this work whilst also looking for something for families to engage in from a more Anglo-Catholic background. SPREE SW takes place in Devon and gathers over 2000 children and young people aged 8-17 across the area for a weekend in June. This could be advertised and encouraged as a great resource for

those piloting and running groups in this age bracket and could lead to groups from across deaneries signing up so that smaller churches could bring ones and twos to form a larger group together.

- **Termly Youth Event** - Creation Fest currently run a termly gathering called GLOW for young people across Cornwall. It is an ecumenical project gathering between 100-250 young people each time, many of whom come from groups linked to the Diocese of Truro. Creation Fest partner with Youth With A Mission (YWAM), SWYM and others to make these events happen and we propose investing in this event to see it continue to grow rather than to try and launch a separate event.
- **Children and Families Event** - It would be great to see an equivalent event launched for Children and Families – perhaps a celebration event for the many Messy Churches that happen across the Diocese. This could be held on a local level and be part of the Deanery Plan or as part of a whole Diocese strategy.
- **Travel Bursaries** - Recognising the unique geography and transport infrastructure within Cornwall, two separate diocesan bursaries would be made available to churches to access (1) events within the diocese of Truro, and (2) South West regional residentials and camps. This might include both mileage but also consideration should be given to how groups may access and hire school minibus' for these purposes. This would be done to ensure that children and young people who would otherwise not be able to attend residentials are not excluded by financial and geographical circumstance.

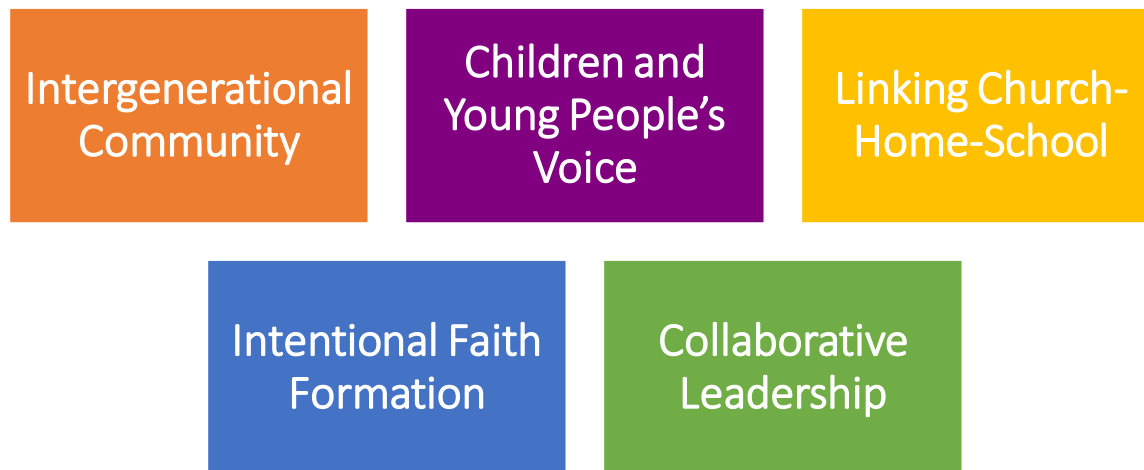
6. Conclusion

This proposal sets out the key principles of a missional strategy for children, youth and family ministry within the Diocese of Truro (Appendix A – The Five Principles of the Missional Strategy). These principles are based on evidence from a number of lines of inquiry, including learning from national level research, other diocesan approaches and experts in children, youth and family ministry. This missional strategy centres on a commitment to nurturing a culture of intergenerational ministry across the Diocese of Truro. Within local ecologies of faith formation, the contexts of church, home and school are found to be most significant. Forms of age-specific children and youth ministry are valued in their role of engaging a wide base of people and for enabling steps into personal faith.

In contrast to other diocesan approaches, this missional strategy identifies the formation of worshipping communities, with distinctively Christian practices and discourse, as foundational to faith formation. In effect, this strategy leads with (intergenerational) Christian communities, rather than seeking to integrate children and young people at a later point. For this missional strategy to be effective, it will require the willingness of the Christian community to embark on a journey of faith. This journey will involve departing from what may be long-held ways of being, to engage in collaborative ministry with and for children and young people. This collective journey begins and ends with faith in Jesus as we seek together to follow him as his disciples in the world today.

7. Appendix A – The Five Principles of the Missional Strategy

The missional strategy allows for contextual forms of ministry for children, young people and families to emerge through listening and collaboration. Whilst there is a degree of flexibility in implementation, it should be guided by the following five principles. These five principles are given as a shorthand summary of the evidence-based approaches detailed in this report. They should be used at all levels of decision-making, planning and implementation:



1. Intergenerational Community

- 1.1 An explicitly intergenerational approach is taken, seeking opportunities for positive and meaningful interaction across generations. Within this overall approach, age-specific forms of children and youth ministry are valued as part of the wider process of forming intergenerational Christian communities.
- 1.2 A culture of 'intergenerationality' is embedded and owned at the local level and is characterised by warm, affirming and consistent intergenerational relationships.
- 1.3 Parents, (great) grandparents and caregivers, alongside other faith role models are valued as key figures in the faith formation of children and young people.
- 1.4 Young people are appropriately invited and supported into leadership within the Christian community.

2. Children and Youth Voice

- 2.1 The presence and participation of children and young people is advocated for in the structure, culture and values of the Christian community. Underpinning this is the belief that children and young people are genuine and full participants in the Kingdom and welcoming these people is a matter of welcoming Christ himself (Luke 9:46-48).

- 2.2 There is a clear commitment to change and adapt personal preferences in order enable the full participation of children and young people in the Christian community. This includes welcoming, listening and responding to children and young people of all backgrounds who have little or no prior experience of Christian community.
- 2.3 Children and young people are meaningfully supporting to navigate life in society today. This will involve the Christian community offering practical and spiritual care as well as being effective signposts to specialist forms of support.
- 2.4 The missional strategy will pay specific attention to transition points that children and young people navigate, particularly as they pertain to primary and secondary education through existing school approaches to ensuring pupil voice is at the centre of decision-making and evaluation.

3. Linking Church-Home-School

- 3.1 The linking of church, school and home as a local 'ecology' of faith formation should be seen as foundational to this missional strategy.
- 3.2 Integrating children and young people into worshipping communities is an essential aspect of personal faith formation.
- 3.3 Designated local leaders should be identified to establish and maintaining consistent relationships with local primary and secondary schools.
- 3.4 Local church mission should be shaped primarily around the context of the families and school(s) it seeks to serve, rather than structural boundaries (such as a parish or deanery).

4. Intentional Faith Formation

- 4.1 The local church should openly and confidently express the aim of forming faith in Christ amongst children and young people, both within the worshipping communities of churches and schools. Faith should be seen as something that is actively received and formed rather than passively develops.
- 4.2 The formation of Christian communities, characterised by distinctively Christian language and practices, are an essential part of the children and young people's faith formation. Whilst these Christian communities may or may not 'look' like traditional forms of church, they will be publicly and distinctively Christian.
- 4.3 The creative, sensitive and faithful use of the Bible is a vital resource for faith formation within church, school and home.
- 4.4 Opportunities for children and young people to access county and regional Christian events and residential should be offered as part of a yearly pattern of exploration and growth in discipleship.
- 4.5 Local leaders recognise and value the range of liturgical traditions represented within the Diocese of Truro. These traditions should be utilised in contextually appropriate ways in the formation of distinctively Christian worshipping communities.

5. Collaborative Leadership

- 5.1 Clergy and Lay Local Leaders should be supported in their strategic role of shaping the culture and expectations around children and youth ministry at the local level.
- 5.2 Significant resource should be put into the training, formation and ongoing professional development of all those who work with children and young people. Where relevant, expertise in the training and development of CYF ministry should be brought in through strategic partnerships.
- 5.3 A diocesan learning network should be provided to facilitate corporate theological reflection, mutual encouragement and prayer amongst children, youth and family ministers.
- 5.4 For focused projects and interventions, a significant period of stakeholder consultation and discernment should be undertaken to determine the suitability of the plan for a particular context and the local church. Similarly, a mid- and end-term review should be conducted listen to participants, assess effectiveness and share learning.

8. Appendix B - Questions for Community Mapping Consultation

The following are indicative of the types of questions that may be asked as part of the initial scoping and consultation for a focused project.

- **Where do you collectively discern God at work in this community?** Throughout this process, it is essential to be taking time to pray and read Scripture together as you discern what the Spirit is saying to the church in this place (Revelation 3:22):
 - How did you discern an opportunity for mission in your local context?
 - How does Scripture shape the way you see your collective ministry this community?
 - How might this project be inviting you together on a journey of faith? What challenges do you see? What opportunities for transformation do you see?
- **What is the makeup of your church community?** It is important to understand what the resources, structure and culture of your church is like when reflecting on how you might connect with your local community. The following questions offer some guidance on building a picture of what the church is currently like (rather than how we might imagine or hope it to be):¹⁷⁶
 - What is the average attendance / membership?
 - What is the approximate age distribution of attenders?
 - What is the approximate socio-economic profile of the membership (i.e. employed, unemployed etc.)?
 - What proportion of membership are actively involved?
 - What proportion of the membership live within a mile of the building?
 - List the main groups that meet within the church and any of their special features.
 - What other important structures are there in the church (e.g. leadership team, pastoral care groups, house groups etc.)?
 - How does leadership operate within the church?

¹⁷⁶ These questions are adapted from Paul Ballard and John Pritchard, *Practical Theology in Action* (2nd edition; London: SPCK, 2006), pp. 195-196.

- What are the church's objectives in its mission?
- What makes this church tick (i.e. what is its real heart, motivation, controlling vision)?

- **What is the history of your community?** Explore how the community and local area has changed over the years:
 - What were the major forces to cause change – depopulation, unemployment, new industry etc.?
 - What signs of the past are visible in the landscape?
 - What are the significant memories of older members of the community?
 - How have these changes affected the community?

- **What is currently available in your community?** Create a map of your local community and annotate it with the community assets (groups, services, activities, communal spaces such as parks, transport links etc.), photographs, and observations to build a clearer picture what the needs of your community are. In this exercise, it can be helpful to mark the boundaries of your community to focus your thinking:
 - What are the officially laid down boundaries (e.g. deanery boundary, electoral ward, borough)?
 - What are the natural boundaries that mark the edge of the community (e.g. railway line, busy main road, types of housing)?
 - Are there boundaries that are less clearly definable that are related to ethnic groupings?

- **What other organisations and churches are working here?** Find out what other community initiatives are already in existence:
 - What is their aim? What issues and needs do they come across? Who are they run by?
 - What are other churches doing in the area?
 - Are there significant needs which no organisation or church is currently addressing?

9. Appendix C – Questions for the Local Missional Design

The SMART framework is a tool to help you shape your project and will be used to clearly detail the practical goals which the Growing Younger Team would seek to implement. These goals will be defined on the basis of the following considerations:

Specific

- Is this project focused? Do all the elements of the project contribute toward the missional strategy?
- Does the project demonstrate a clarity about the nature of the work and the need for fund roles?
- Does it specific what exactly these roles will be doing?

Measurable

- How will the success (or otherwise) of this project be measured and recorded?
- How will growth (spiritually, numerically, training etc.) be measured and recorded?
- Is there an **estimate** of how many people are expected to be involved in this project? What is the number and proportion of each group that this project expects to be working with over each year of the first five years of this project?
- How many participants are expected to be current church members? How many have little or no church experience?

Achievable

- Is it clear how this project will be implemented within the deanery area?
- What preparation and groundwork have already been done amongst local churches, schools and organisations?
- Has the long-term continuity of the project been considered?
- Have appropriate training opportunities been considered and accessed?
- Is this project viable? What other sources of funding have been considered?
- Is there a committed team behind this project?

Relevant

- Does this presentation show evidence of careful consideration of the five Growing Younger principles?
- Is this project integrated within the life of a worshipping community?
- Are people the focus of this project (rather than a property or programme, though expenditure towards these may contribute towards the focus)?
- Are any other local churches or groups running a similar project? If yes, have you connected with other leaders to learn from their approach?

Time-Bound

- Are the applicants working towards concrete deadlines and timeframes with which to implement their project?