

**Growing Younger:  
Priorities for Mission  
with Children and Young People  
2010-13.**



Section One

**Theological underpinning**

1. We welcome the move from 'mission to children and young people' towards 'mission with children and young people'.
2. We welcome the development of 'Theology of Childhood' and 'Child Theology', which place the child at the centre rather than as just a recipient of adult organised activity. This includes,
  - A growing openness to the enriching insights and spirituality of the young.
  - A recognition that theology can be done by and with children and young people, not only to or for them.
3. We recognise that all human beings, regardless of age, are made in God's image. All are called to a relationship with God, and all have the potential to be co-workers with God in the work of the Kingdom. Our participation in God's mission in the world calls to us to Service, Evangelism and Nurture, each of which needs to be undertaken for children and young people, and with children and young people.
4. We value the local church as a central part of the mission of God. We recognise the call of Jesus Christ to make disciples, and his promise to build his Church. In the light of this, we acknowledge and wish to emphasise the close correlation between church growth and effective ministry with children and young people.
5. We joyfully accept the responsibility of adult Christians to pass on the Christian Story. Each child and young person should have the opportunity to encounter this story, to explore it, to weave it into their own lives and to become disciples of Christ, living and sharing the Gospel with others.
6. We celebrate belonging to the wider Church and its networks. We commend especially the strategy document *Going for Growth* prepared by the Education Division and endorsed by the Archbishops' Council.

## Section Two

### **Commitments and their implications**

1. To develop our work in response to the needs and priorities expressed in Mission Action Plans and their continuing implementation.
2. To give space and listen to the voices of children and young people, actively seeking their knowledge and insight at both local and diocesan levels and taking these implications seriously.
3. To offer training and resources of the highest quality, working with local groupings (eg. deaneries) where possible.
4. To develop, sustain, and monitor the effectiveness of resources available to parishes and mission communities including the development networks for those working with children and young people and appropriate electronic support through discussion groups and web based material.
5. To work with deaneries and other local groups to ensure that in every area there is attractive local provision of Christian character for families, children and young people.
6. To provide central events, especially with the encouragement of smaller parishes in mind.
7. To measure all our activities against the five Marks of Mission, making evangelism in its theological diversity a priority. To this end a wide range of suitable resources should be developed.
8. To invest time and energy in further strengthening partnerships eg. parish/school, ecumenical networks, Centre for Youth Ministry, Children's Society, Youth for Christ, Scripture Union etc.
9. To seek opportunities to serve the wider community and to play our part in developing environments in which good childhood can thrive.
10. To plan our work in accordance with the challenges of *Going for Growth*, especially *Section 5*:
  - The Church, at national, diocesan and parochial level, is called to work towards every child and young person having a life-enhancing encounter with the Christian faith and the person of Jesus Christ.
  - The Church, at national, diocesan and parochial level, is called to transformation both in the church and the world, and to recognise and enable the capacity of children and young people to be the agents of change both for themselves and for others.
  - The Church, at national, diocesan and parochial level, is called to provide professional support and development for all those working with children and young people in the name of the Church, so that they might demonstrate the highest qualities in their practice and personal life.

## Section Three

### **Actions / Projects**

#### **Children**

1. Develop networks for paid / unpaid / Accredited Lay Ministers (ALM) / children's leaders.
2. Train children's workers as part of the ALM course.
3. Train and equip children's workers through the Core Skills course across the Diocese.
4. Co-ordinate and deliver appropriate Child Protection Training at deanery level and for the Church's ministers.
5. Support churches as they seek to pursue their Mission Action Planning and Progress.
6. Promote understanding and awareness of the Good Childhood Report and its implications, working with the Children's Society to develop Parish Resources.
7. Advise clergy and church children's workers as to the importance of local child friendly churches.
8. Encourage deanery co-operation and links within children's work.
9. Be an advocate for children and to promote listening to the voice of children in our communities and churches.
10. Support parishes with the admission of children to Holy Communion.

#### **Youth**

1. Offer support and nurture of existing Parish youth groups
2. Pioneering the diocesan youth group 'start-up' initiative (10 free sessions and youth leader training)
3. New Youth Council for 14 to 25 year olds (3 meetings and one weekend residential every year)
4. Annual youth leader lunch (free)
5. Online youth-leader network.
6. Regular meetings with paid youth (full-time) workers
7. Annual 'Rave in the Nave' event.

8. Training and Resources:
  - a. Toolkit – youth leader training workshops (full-day training event)
  - b. Annual theological reflection day for youth leaders.
  - c. Authorised (Youth) Lay Ministers in service and resources support (offering in service training)
  - d. Authorised (Youth) Lay Ministers training programme
  - e. Youth Resources Library (Mobile service offered to all deaneries)

## **Children and Youth**

1. Continuing existing children's/youth activities and projects
2. Ensuring that public diocesan activity has, whenever possible, an all-age dimension (e.g. Diocesan occasions and events, Back to Church Sunday, Child/Youth-friendly Church, Eco-Church etc.)
3. Highlighting important issues relating to the landmark report, 'A Good Childhood'.
4. Effective communication. Priority being given to the use of new technology and the monitoring of existing networks
5. Developing a single Children & Young Peoples Strategy Enabling Group within the Board of Education and developing a number of sub-groups to further aspects of our work(e.g. Godly Play, Children's Work Leaders, Rave in the Nave planning group, the new Youth Council, Youth Leaders etc.)
6. Collaboration with the Schools Team to ensure parishes and deaneries include their schools in their thinking and planning.
7. Offering regular training opportunities for all involved in mission with children and young people, including the Church's ordained ministers.
8. Support and promote the work of the Diocesan Resources Centre.
9. Publishing annual Development Plans setting out specific priorities and actions.

September 2009