

National Younger Leadership Groups

What church would you like to see?

Report 1 - November 2021



THE ARCHBISHOP OF YORK
YOUTH TRUST
Be the change you want to see



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
EDUCATION OFFICE

FOUNDATION FOR
EDUCATIONAL
LEADERSHIP

abyyt.com/NYLG



About the National Younger Leadership Groups

We're excited to launch the second year of the National Younger Leadership Groups (NYLGs), which was formed from a partnership between the Archbishop of York Youth Trust (ABYYT) and the Church of England Foundation for Educational Leadership (CEFEL) in 2020. Both organisations strategic plans have priorities focused on young voices, developing student leadership and growing faith amongst young people.

The Church of England's 2020 vision and strategy, led by Archbishop Stephen Cottrell, has a focus on 'growing younger', which makes regular consultation and engagement with children and young people for the future vision of the church an absolute necessity.



The first year of the NYLGs were a great success, and we thoroughly enjoyed including over 250 young people in these sessions. In 2021-2022, we're pleased to be running these sessions again, with hearing more children and young peoples' voices from Primary and Secondary schools across the country.

The groups will meet five times over 2022-2022, with different focusses for each session.

Session Overviews



November 2021

'What church would you like to see?'

This event will focus on building on the 'growing younger' aspect of the Church of England's vision and strategy. For this session, Primary and Secondary pupils will join together in one call.



January 2022

'Learning to Love...' (LOVE)

These events will explore the teachings of Jesus, in particular the greatest commandment to: "Love the Lord your God and to love your neighbour as yourself". We will explore what some of the barriers are to loving God and loving others, with a focus on diversity and inclusion.



March 2022

'Be the change...' (EXAMPLE)

These events will explore the teaching of the Beatitudes and what it means to live a radical life that is focussed on 'being the change' you want to see and setting an example for others to follow.



April 2022

'Let your light shine...' (ACTION)

These events will explore what it means to be the 'Salt and Light of the earth' (Matt 5:13). The session will encourage the children and young people to explore social justice and identify areas in their own local context where they could put their faith and leadership into action and be 'salt and light' in our world.



June 2022

Celebration 'I can do all things...' (DREAM)

These events will aim to review the journey of the last year with the participants and celebrate their growth in leadership, character, and faith. Alongside this, we will focus on the Great Commission given by Jesus in Matthew 28.

Session 1

What church would you like to see?

All of the contributions from the young leaders last year helped shape the vision for the Church of England to 'grow younger' and this year's contributions will help us build on the established vision and strategy.

Young people were chosen to attend the NYLGs by either the school leadership or the Diocese Education Teams across the country. The pupils were chosen as they are already great examples of leaders within their schools and communities.

In November, young leaders from 85 schools joined our Zoom call for the first session to discuss what church they would like to see. For the first sessions, pupils discussed three topics; the values which they most regard for churches, what concerns them in the world, and what the church could do to meet those concerns.

As you can see from the map, schools represented in this year's NYLGs are from all across the country.



Session 1

What church would you like to see?

AIM

To give the young leaders a voice and opportunity to share what kind of church they want to be a part of.

- Engage in a new learning experience
- Grow in leadership and character
- Gain confidence to articulate vision and values

"Shiloh really enjoyed the session and says she feels very blessed to be a part of this.

She has realised she's getting to meet far more people more often than she would have if it weren't for COVID, so she's thankful that zoom exists (she had never experienced it before today!)"

Teacher

ACTION

We asked the young leaders three questions:

- What do you think churches should value the most?
- What concerns you about the world?
- What do you think that the church can do about these concerns?



Session 1 - Focus 1

What are the values that are most important to you for a church?

We asked pupils to think about the things that they would most value in church and to write them down. We had a whole range of responses, from combatting the climate emergency, to worshipping collectively, to looking after the lonely.



Highlighted Answer

“We would like to be part of of a church that is **helpful** to the world around it. A church that **values kindness**. A **quiet church** where you could **reflect**, a **healing church**. A church that accepts the fact that we are **all different**, but where we can **pray together** at any time.”



Session 1 - Focus 2

What concerns or worries do you have about the world we live in?

After we talked about what the young leaders would have as their church values, we asked them to consider the things in life that concern them. After some time talking to their peers, the pupils submitted their answers.



Themes

The three concerns that were raised the most frequently by both the primary and the secondary young leaders were: **racism**, **poverty** and **climate change**. These are the things that young people are concerned about and are urging the church to engage with.

Session 1 - Focus 3

How can the church help meet these concerns or worries?

Once we had spoken about the things that concerned the young leaders about our world, we asked them to think of some actions that they think the church can do about these concerns. These would be practical actions that the church could take to support the concerns. The schools involved shared 199 different ideas and responses to this question, many of which are below and fell into three key themes:



Environmental Impact

“Climate change is something that is affecting everything on this Earth and by harming this world we are harming the world God created for us. The church could teach us how to not take what we have for granted and to teach us that everything has a value and is precious.”

- Any big church roof could have solar panels
- Be more eco-friendly and use more reusable materials
- Electric car charging points in the car park
- Donate stuff you don't need anymore
- Save bees by planting wildflowers or having church hives
- Weekly community clean-ups
- Sell and use only fair-trade produce
- Recycle old clothes by having a clothing bank outside
- Keep lights off when buildings not in use
- Keep the heating off when church is not in use
- Craft homemade items for people who are struggling
- Use a renewable energy company to reduce emissions
- Plant more trees

Community Services

“When people get desperate, they tend to not be able to recover easily. The church can help us recognise when someone arrives at that point and teach us how to get out of that situation.”

- Coffee morning for older people who may be lonely
- Open building as a vaccine centre
- Open the church building to the homeless so they have a room where they can sleep
- Be a place of welcome
- Food bins for leftover food and donations
- Food banks to help those less fortunate
- Online church meetings for those unable to travel
- Give away blankets
- Counselling sessions
- Training to help people complete their CV and prepare for job interviews
- Friendship ambassadors
- Have a section for little kids
- Reach out to groups of teenagers to help keep them off the dangerous streets
- Volunteers check up on vulnerable people weekly to make sure they're ok!
- Well-being cafes
- Church pets



Inclusivity Activities –

“My Church is worried about people hurting each other so we’ve decided to train people who can support others and help them work together and forgive each other.”

- Organise events to raise awareness of racism
- Donating to charities working in other countries, especially those where there is war
- Invite other groups with different backgrounds or other religions to a church-swap day, to break down barriers.
- More advertising of the church and opportunities to know Jesus outside of Sunday
- Mental health clinics
- Support the LGBTQ+ community
- Be a space where young people can feel listened to and can speak freely
- Connecting with other churches to make a MASSIVE difference in our communities
- Violence against women counselling sessions



The
Ilfracombe
Academy

“Churches can give **support to anyone** who needs or asks for it. The church can also show people that **God loves everyone** no matter what and that Jesus died on the cross to take our sins away.”

The Ilfracombe Academy

Session 1 - Focus 4

The kind of church I want to see...

To end the session, pupils gathered their thoughts from the entire first session and wrote a vision statement for the kind of church they want to see. Here is a sample of some of the responses.

- “The kind of church I would like to see... would be kind and eco-friendly and willing to help anyone. My church would try to stop poaching and care for all of the natural world.”
- “The kind of church I would like to see... helps to stop global disasters such as climate change deforestation and racism. This includes caring for both animals and people.”
- “The kind of church I would like to see... encourages and welcomes everyone and anyone. A church that is free of racism, sexism, homophobia, and similar unkindness. A place without judgement, and only love.”

My church is worried about Mental Health so we've decided to let people come and talk about struggles or needs.

The Church I would like to see.

our church is worried about Anti social behaviours, so we have Decided to make positive changes by:
1. Re launching our school behaviour policy.
Create friendship Ambassadors to support our church community in making friends and educating everybody to be kind, tolerant and patient.

The church I want to see is a church that Leads the fight against climate change, that Leads the Fight against racism and accepts all for who they are.

My Church Vision

The church I want to see is welcoming and includes everyone. It isn't judgemental and is a place to meet others who share our hobbies and interests.

My church is worried about climate change and racism and we are going to use renewable sources and include everyone.

Where we're going next

Over the next few months, the National Younger Leadership Groups will meet a further four times, focussing on themes and topics raised by the young leaders throughout the first session.

JANUARY 2022

25th
26th

January

Learning to Love (Love)

MARCH 2022

15th
16th

March

Be the change (Example)

APRIL 2022

27th
28th

April

Let your light shine (Action)

JUNE 2022

30th

June

I can do all things (Dream)

For more information about the National Younger Leadership Groups, contact comms@abyyt.com or andy.wolfe@churchofengland.org.



abyyt.com



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

cefel.org.uk