



Listening to children and young people in vacancy

By the Go Team
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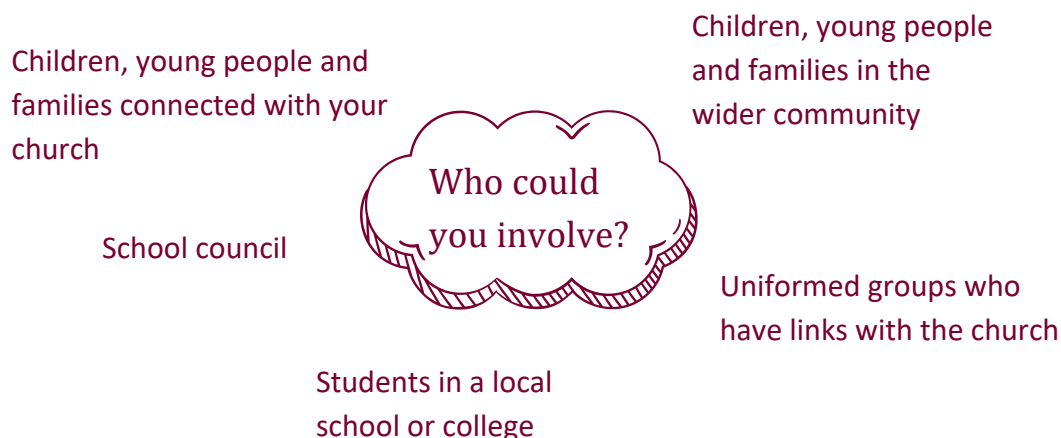
Listening to children and young people in vacancy

A vicar is appointed to serve everyone, not just adults! However, it is often only adults in congregations and communities who are consulted during the appointment process.

This guide is designed to help you include children and young people in the process, so their voices can be heard too.

You could use a similar process when appointing a children's, family or youth worker.

Below is a diagram with some more reasons why it is important to listen to the voices of children and young people in appointment processes:



Why do we need a new vicar?

Explaining the process to children and young people

When a vicar retires, or leaves to take up a new post elsewhere, the church, parish or benefice (referred to as church from here) goes through a period of vacancy- time without a vicar- and a process to appoint someone new. This can take a long time, sometimes more than a year.

The first stage of appointing a new vicar involves discussions with a variety of people to help identify what type of person the church is looking for, and what gifts or skills might be required in the new vicar.

Representatives from the church will then work with an Archdeacon and a Deanery and Parish Development Adviser to:

- draw up a parish/benefice profile based on the local statement of needs
- Write and agree a Role Description and Person Specification
- Hold interviews to appoint a new vicar.

Is this a one off occasion for involving children and young people or could you involve them in other areas of church life and decision making?

If consulting children or young people who will be recorded, photographed or named then you will need permission.

Where would be the best time and place?

How will you consult children and young people in the wider community?

Will you invite any children and young people to be involved in the rest of your recruitment process?



How will you follow up with, and feedback to the children and young people after the consultation?

Who will lead the consultation?

How will you explain the vacancy and recruitment process to the children and young people? (Bear in mind, many may not be familiar with church language and procedures.)



Suggested outline for a consultation session

Some things to think about:

- A consultation session with children/young people should last no longer than an hour
- It would be a good idea to include refreshments as your group arrives
- You will need to remind the children/ young people why they are there and explain what will happen in the session
- You may want to briefly explain the process of appointing a new vicar
- You might want to tell the children/young people how their opinions will be used, and when/if you will feed back to them and give them updates on the appointment process.

Activity One

Display a picture of the vicar who is leaving/has left. Ask the children/young people what they think the vicar does. Ask the group to call out answers, or write their ideas on post-it notes and stick them around the image.

Activity Two

Ask the children/young people questions and invite feedback. Different methods can be used, depending on the age, maturity, capability and understanding within the group. You may also need to consider any additional needs of individuals.

- a simple conversation- everyone chips in if they have something to say
- Pass an item around the group so everyone takes turns having a say
- Using art or creative media to express their feelings or opinion (play dough, clay, pipe cleaners, pens, pencils, pastels, paint, collage, etc)
- Placing items to show their preference between a variety of options)
- Arranging words/concepts in order of importance
- Inviting participants to stand on one side or the other to express their opinions.

Use any of these ideas to encourage children/young people to express their ideas, before coming to a consensus and summarising what you have discussed.



Activity Three

Invite any final comments about their thoughts/opinions on a new vicar, and what the children/young people think the candidates should know about their church and community.

Activity Four

You could also encourage the children/young people to share their thoughts or a summary of the consultation in a video, which could be shared with the Parish Reps, or maybe even the candidates themselves as part of an interview process.



You may not want to use all four of these activities, depending on your group.

At the end, you will want to make sure you thank the group, and explain what will happen next in the process. If children/young people will be involved in the interview process, you may want to get them to choose/vote who will do this from the group.

Suggestions of questions to ask children/young people

- What do you like about your local church?
- What do you like about your local community?
- What issues or problems do you notice in your local community?
- How do you think the church could help your local community?
- What kind of activities would you like the vicar and other people from church to do with your school?
- In what ways could a new vicar help the church to be welcoming more children, young people, and families?
- If you came to church, what would you like to see happen there? How can the vicar be part of this?



Consent form for those under the age of 18 taking part in the consultation.

Your child has been invited to take part in a consultation with other children to help with the appointment of a new vicar in the parish.

This consultation will take place

Venue:

Date:

Time:

Parents/guardians are responsible for transporting their children to/from the consultation.

Please complete and return this consent form to

by

Facilitator contact details:

Consent

Name of child:

Email address:

Address:

Relevant allergies/intolerances or medical conditions the facilitator should be aware of:

Parent/guardian name:

Parent/guardian email address:

Parent/guardian address if different from above:

Emergency Contact name and number:

I give permission for _____ to be involved in the consultation.

I give permission for photographs, videos or comments relating to the consultation to be used in parish and diocese publications: YES/NO

I give permission for my child to be contacted by the consultation facilitator via email in relation to the details and feedback from the consultation: YES/NO

Signed:

(parent/guardian)

Date:

Go Team contact information

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