



The
**United
Reformed
Church**

Children's and Youth Work

The United Reformed Church
86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT



Welcome to the January 2024 update from your support team in Children's and Youth Work for the United Reformed Church.

Dear Friends,

The new year has started with Wet January (the road outside my house is more like a river). Conflict continues to destroy communities around the world. Poverty robs too many of security and dignity. We have just celebrated the birth of Jesus into our messy world, and now enter the season of Epiphany, the revealing of Christ to the whole world. We pray the training and resources highlighted below will be of help to you in the many ways you do this with children and young people.

The end of this month will be Youth Assembly 2024, a weekend when young people from the URC gather to have their say, make friends and find fellowship, and running alongside the Youth Leaders' Gathering. Both events will focus on the URC Children's and Youth Work theme for the year: Story, Story, Story. Please hold in your prayers all those taking part in whatever way in these two events, especially the Youth Exec, the outgoing moderator, the moderator elect and all those contemplating standing for election or volunteering for roles as youth reps.

Sam Roberts



May you be blessed in 2024,



JOINT PUBLIC ISSUES TEAM YOUTH SURVEY: [Youth Justice \(jpit.uk\)](https://youthjustice.jpit.uk)

Throughout January, JPIT are seeking the views of young people, especially but not exclusively those associated with their member churches, about justice and peace issues.

The Joint Public Issues team (JPIT) is a partnership between the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Methodist Church, and the United Reformed Church, created to help the churches work together for peace and justice through listening, learning, praying, speaking and acting on public policy issues. The survey, hosted on their website [Youth Justice \(jpit.uk\)](https://youthjustice.jpit.uk), will help JPIT and their partner churches create relevant resources and training tailored to young people and for those who aim to serve young people within our denominations. Please do share this link with young people, parents of young people or those who work with young people, so that the voices of our young people can be heard.

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND YOUNG ADULTS MAKING THE HEADLINES IN THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH



12 year old Evie Lawrenson from North Western Synod has been tireless in her out-working of her faith, raising money for several different charities and sharing her faith in both Junior Church and intergenerational worship. She made the decision to be baptised in 2021 and is a regular worshiper at her local URC.

What better person to receive the last Lundie medal of the year? Evie plans to spend the award on arts and crafts materials and special events for her Junior Church.

With fourteen churches now having completed the Children and Youth Friendly Church scheme and received their plaque, a fifteenth church is now well on the way to joining them.



The scheme was introduced as a more reflective and inclusive way of exploring and developing engagement and ministry with children and young people. It is designed to be suitable for all churches, whether or not they currently have children and young people as part of their church family.



Do you know anyone 25 or under who is playing their part in the mission of God and deserves recognition?

Why not nominate them for the Lundie Memorial Award?

Find out more about the Lundie Memorial Award and Children and Youth Friendly Church scheme on

<https://urc.org.uk/your-church/family-friendly-church/>

RESOURCES TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH WORK

WHERE ARE THE YOUNG PEOPLE? If your church is asking this question, there is now a set of resources from the URC and Quakers to help you. This new conversation starter is now available on the E&L Learning Hub as Course: Conversation Starters (urclearninghub.org.uk).



It is accompanied by a set of cards which are being provided free to CYDO+s to use with churches, and could be used as part of the Children and Youth Friendly Church process to aid thinking about engagement with 11 to 18s.

Also on the learning hub you will find a conversation starter on the theme of **Vocation and Call**.

SPARKS AND STORIES is the new holiday club resource from URC Children's and Youth Work and, in response to feedback requesting earlier access to the resource, will be online from mid January on our website. <https://bit.ly/URC-holidayclub>



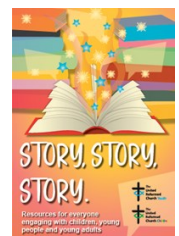
Tying in with the annual CYW theme of Story, Story, Story, the 2024 holiday club invites you to gather round the campfire, marshmallows on sticks and hot chocolate in hand, and share in the greatest story of all. As usual, the resource is supported with appendices helping you adapt the material for younger children, young people, intergenerational groups and vintage holiday club. And once again, grants of £50 or £100 will be available to support you if you choose to run a holiday club in 2024.



REGENERATIONAL is an exciting international collaborative project which provides four outlines of intergenerational worship designed to introduce and promote the principles of intergenerational ministry in your church. The free resource can be found online [here](#), and those preferring a printed copy can be ordered on a print-on-demand basis from children.youth@urc.org.uk at £10 per copy including P&P.

COMING SOON: STORY, STORY, STORY resource book

In February, make sure you watch out for the All-Church mailing from Children's and Youth Work which this year will contain our latest all-age all-stage resource book on the theme of Story, Story, Story. Packed with ideas for prayers, activities, crafts, discussion and worship as well as puzzles and colouring pages, there really is something in it for everyone. If you don't get our all-church mailing, a downloadable version will be on our website in February.



FAITH ADVENTURES: YOUTH RESOURCE

Following the success of Faith Adventures: Children Together, the URC Children's and Youth Work team are proud to announce the launch of a new, free, weekly supplement, Faith Adventures: Youth Resource. This supplement is for use alongside the resource to enable the material to be explored in a little more depth by the 11 to 14 age range, whether independently or in a mixed-age group.

Sessions are now available on our website for January and February 2024 and the sessions for March will be there from the beginning of next month. Why not check them out now?

The writing team for **Faith Adventures: Youth Resource** are running an online walk-through of the new materials to show how best to use them and to answer your questions/receive your feedback. The session will be held on 12 January at 7pm. Book now on <https://bit.ly/FAYRwalkthrough> and view the resource on https://bit.ly/FACT_resource

URC CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH WORK ONLINE

Facebook https://bit.ly/URC_CYW_FACEBOOK

Website https://bit.ly/CYW_RESOURCES

YouTube <https://bit.ly/URCCYW-youtube>

Pinterest <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/>

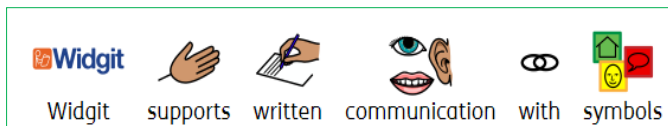
Visit the https://bit.ly/FACT_resource to find our new weekly materials for 11 to 14s.

Faith Adventures: Youth Resource is the free supplement to Faith Adventures: Children Together

Free and subsidised training and opportunities from the URC for the URC

LEARN TO USE WIDGET

Once again our Programme Officer, Lorraine, will be offering an online introduction to Widgeit, a programme designed to support written communication by using visual contextual cues, helping those who may find reading challenging for whatever reason.



Suitable for notices, orders of service, written prayers and Bible readings, letters, visual timetables and much much more, Widgeit licenses are held by every synod CYW representative and many churches are buying their own. Come and find out what it can do.

Join this informal training from 7.00 to 8.00pm on Thursday 1 February by booking on <https://bit.ly/WidgeitFeb>

URC training Nurturing resilience

Following on from the sessions earlier in 2023, Children's and Youth Work and Education and Learning offer another opportunity to come along to four new sessions, looking at resilience.

10 January 2024:
Compassionate Welcome
17 January 2024:
Inclusive and Expansive Language
24 January 2024:
Understanding Wellbeing
31 January 2024:
Spiritual Care

Session leaders:
The Revd Dr Alex Clare-Young
The Revd Dr Adam Scott

For more information
and to sign up:
www.bit.ly/Resilience4churches



TALKING ABOUT

This monthly online gathering, run by our team of children's and youth work professionals around the synods, continues on 25 January 2024 when the theme will be Youth Participation.



Sign up now on Eventbrite:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/talking-about-tickets-53199191127>

The very popular session on Brick Church (using Lego-type bricks) was recorded for those unable to join us and can be seen on our YouTube channel <https://youtu.be/IF2wMmBfBHM>

KEEPING YOUNG PEOPLE SAFE IN PRIVATE DWELLINGS <https://cte.org.uk/app/uploads/2023/11/Youth-work-in-private-dwellings-DIGITAL.pdf> is a major new report on the need for safe practice when undertaking Christian Youth work/ministry in homes and was launched at the recent National Youth Ministry Weekend. The URC's Sam Richards has been a major contributor to this work which recognises the importance and value of the "home" in the "personal, social, spiritual and educational development of young people" while encouraging the practise of safer youth work within these homes. It should be read alongside the safeguarding policy and practice of the church, churches or Christian agency responsible for the activity and national government guidance on youth work in private dwellings.

Zoom training from URC Safeguarding In addition to the Foundation Level Safeguarding training provided on the URC Learning Hub, <https://www.urclearninghub.org.uk/>, the URC Safeguarding team are offering a range of zoom training sessions on specific subjects over the coming year which can be booked by emailing emma.pearce@urc.org.uk. The planned sessions for the next few months are:

17 January 1.30pm—Domestic Abuse

25 January 1.30pm—Safeguarding for pastoral workers and elders supporting survivors

30 January 6.30pm—Modern Slavery

8 February 1.30pm—DDC Verifiers Training and Safer Recruitment

27 February 6.30pm—Substance Abuse

6 March 1.30pm—Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Each of these will be repeated on another date later in the year, and additional sessions will be run on topics such as spiritual abuse and online safety. <https://urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/National-Safeguarding-Training-2024-2.pdf>

Resources and events offered by other providers

Prayer Gatherings Limitless and 24-7 Prayer are partnering to host eight prayer gatherings for young people across the UK during February and March. Find out the dates and locations of these events on [A call to prayer \(elim.org.uk\)](https://www.elim.org.uk)



ONLINE WEBINARS FROM HOPE UK

Register here for any or all of a series of webinars aimed at youth leaders and parents from Hope UK <https://hopeuk.org/events/>

- 16 January 11.30-12.30 Confidence and Self Esteem
- 25 January 7.30-8.30 pm Vaping, what parents need to know
- 26 February 7.30-8.30pm Nitrous Oxide—an introduction
- 12 March 11.30-12.30 Basic Drug Awareness for Youth Workers

YOUTH CULTURE AND TRENDS <https://boys-brigade.org.uk/youth-culture-and-trends/> is a new report launched by the Boys' Brigade and Youthscape. It explores the changes young people have experienced in their culture and lives over the last ten years and how this affects their lives today.



From 2 to 4 February 2024 the **Hand in Hand** children's ministry conference from Kingsway CLC Trust will be taking place in Eastbourne. Book by the end of December to benefit from an early bird discount. Refresh offers a weekend of keynote sessions, exhibition and seminars with chance to network with other children's and family ministry practitioners. <https://www.handinhandconference.com/>

The Joined Up Conference will take place in Sheffield on **2 March 2024**, for all those involved in children's, families, youth and schools ministry. A day of keynote talks, worship and workshops on a variety of subjects to choose from. <https://joinedupconference.com.wordpress.com/>

LOOKING AHEAD - for your diaries or your prayers

Mid January 2024	Sparks and Stories Holiday Club available online
10 January 2024	URC Training—Nurturing Resilience: Compassionate Welcome
12 January 2024	Walk through of Faith Adventures: Youth Resource
17 January 2024	URC Training—Nurturing Resilience: Inclusive and Expansive Language
24 January 2024	URC Training—Nurturing Resilience: Understanding Wellbeing
25 January 2024	7.00pm Talking About..... Youth Participation
26-28 January 2024	Youth Assembly 2024 and Youth Leaders' Gathering
31 January 2024	URC Training—Nurturing Resilience: Spiritual Care
1 February 2024	7.00pm Introduction to Widgit
February 2024	All Church Mailing including Story Story Story resource book

Next Bi-Monthly Update : early March 2024

Please note: If you no longer wish to subscribe to the bimonthly newsletter from URC Children's and Youth Work, please email children.youth@urc.org.uk to request that your name is removed from our mailing list.

You can **contact us** by email on children.youth@urc.org.uk or phone on 020 7916 8683. Our website is <https://urc.org.uk/your-faith/children-young-people>, Facebook [bit.ly/URC CYW FACEBOOK](https://www.facebook.com/URCCYW) or you can use good old snail mail.

AND FINALLY If you have received this as a paper copy or by a friend forwarding it to you and you would like to be added to our mailing list, please do sign up here: bit.ly/URCCYWbimonthly Our Data privacy note is here: <https://urc.org.uk/privacy-policy/>