

Which of following has your family direct experience of?

Children's Church, Jumpin', Confirmation Preparation, JAM, Xcess, Toast, Friday Drop In, Youth Fellowship
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Please comment on how you have found these in terms of:

4 individual comments on this page; 2 additional group comments on the next page

Strengths	Weaknesses	Possible improvements
Jumpin' very popular & offers a fun forum for young worshippers to join together	Children's church not geared towards upper primary. Toast seems pretty unfocused.	Focus on 11 - 14 year olds. There's not much that is relevant for them - this is the age that they lose interest
Jumpin' encourages children to mix, have fun & learn about God at the same time		
Children's Church & Jumpin' have been great fun, but also learned about God's message / teaching. My son loves going	Jumpin' sometimes not enough leaders for the group, this might also be a measure of their success	Children's Church / Sunday School is much better this year as it is more structured. Children could possibly learn one hymn / song each month to be sung on the 1st Sunday by them in Church
Children's Church , caring & friendly leaders	Seemed to be long periods last year when there was no Children's Church at all. Larger groups mean that children do not bond as well with smaller ones	Give parents a leaflet describing in more detail the activities in children's church.

Strengths	Weaknesses	Possible improvements
<p>Children's church Improved organisation volume of children attending Better age group structure</p>	<p>Lack of continuity with teacher Lack of people to commit long term More tailoring required to different age groups Structural organization</p>	<p>Activity to carry on at home - allows parent to link with Sunday School & carry out further teaching More competitions / quizzes Book token rewards Memory verses</p>
<p>Jumpin' All activities eg teddy bear picnics & decorating buns Brilliant time - children really enjoy Good structured programme & well staffed Led by youth</p>	<p>no comments</p>	<p>no comments</p>
<p>Confirmation Preparation A few ready for confirmation April 2010</p>	<p>no comments</p>	<p>no comments</p>
<p>Jam no comments</p>	<p>Sunday night not a good evening Lacks structure</p>	<p>no comments</p>

Strengths	Weaknesses	Possible improvements
Xcess no comments	Not as appealing this year Aimed at older age group	no comments
Toast no comments	11 - 15 age is a gap, not enough structured learning programme at 10.00 service This has been addressed this September Would like the children to be discussing 'life issues' Parents would like to know programme to continue discussions at home	no comments
Friday Drop-in no comments	no comments	no comments
Youth Fellowship no comments	no comments	no comments

10.00 o'clock: Church & Children's Church

Many feel that it is critical to make the whole experience of 10 o'clock as family and child friendly as possible - especially for the very youngest children. In what ways do we succeed in this?

3 x individual comments only -

The first ten minutes or so of the 10 o'clock service already seems to cater for young children before they go to children's church

I love it when the young children go to sit in the aisle to watch the puppet explain things.

It is very relaxed and although my children do not participate the colouring was a great idea.

How could we improve?

Group comments -

Have children more involved in service - reading, prayers, collection during sermon, children at front of church on mat,

Musical instruments for children, choir, playing instruments - needs organised & children encouraged

Children's song to start all services, small talk before exit to Sunday School

Puppets

Do children leave church too early?

Individual comments -

I would love to see children sing / perform / read at the family service

My children too shy to walk up to the front of the church and then walk out to the children's church so it might be an idea for someone to come round and encourage them to go.

Sermon often aimed at too high a level, using language and vocabulary which is too advanced for the younger

Crèche

Comments from one group -

Travel cot / play pen could be invested in

More parental details required when leaving children eg mobile phone to contact in church

Could do more meaningful activities eg Veggie Tales

Lack of toys / books

Room too small. Contains piano the children cannot touch

rota needs to be taken seriously, perhaps more seriously

New Ideas

Family Services

The traditional monthly family service is increasingly taken as a Sunday “off” by many families. Why do you think this is?

Individual comments -

I was unaware of this - I like to take my children to the service with me

It is hard for young children to sustain interest so this service has to try to appeal to all ages

Increasingly it is seen as “Baptism” Sunday and there isn’t as much room. Children get very restless

We enjoy it as a family but for some spending the whole time in church & not going out to Children’s Church can be a trial especially if you have young children.

One suggestion has been to have a Children’s Church run every Sunday during the school term with every 10 o’clock service during the Christmas, Easter, summer and half-term holidays being a family service. How do you feel about this?

Individual comments -

Very much in favour. The table at the back of the church during the summer holidays for colouring in was much appreciated.

Good idea - no real thoughts either way.

I would be happy with either arrangement but I do like the family service. It also gives the leaders a chance to attend the service. Sheets to colour in / quiz puzzles could be handed out for children during the family service.

NO!!! (sic) We loved the family service before all the lengthy additions - it should be focused on the families

2 x group comments on both suggestions above -

Too many baptisms results in service too long, regular church goers very hard to get a seat if you are not there early

Should be shorter service for the children. Bring back puppets. Appropriate vocabulary & language

Make more use of technology

Preferably finish time 10.45 am

More of children involved in taking service e.g reading, prayers, music

Positive, Baptisms, everyone included, negative makes service too long, not enough seats

Teachers’ addresses sometimes over the children’s heads

Balance required

Family service at holiday times - would it be viable? Many people take holidays & numbers drop

What else would you like to see for our young people?

Several suggestions have recently been made for the provision of new facilities: a Saturday night youth club for teens, an affordable before and after school facility, and a non-licensed, year-round community cafe. How do you feel about these ideas?

Do you have any ideas of your own to add to these?

4 x individual comments

I think that we should certainly focus more on 11 - 14 yrs age group - but why compete with other clubs/churches? Why not offer something else - an after school club mid-week? - the community cafe is a good idea.

I think these are great ideas and would be willing to help out when I can. I would love to see a badminton club and if possible table tennis running alongside.

After school is a difficult one as a lot of mothers work and it might be hard to organise getting your children there. Youth club for year 8 upwards would be great. The Harvest family activity is a great idea - I would love to see more family activities as this would involve the younger children more.

The Saturday night youth club sounds great. Not sure how the other ideas would work out in practice

2 x group comments

What else is available in other churches eg good youth clubs that could be advertised - collaboration needed - 12 - 15 yrs - fewer activities that appeal to this age group.

Before or after school care / club - possibly run by classroom assistants or early years staff. This would keep children involved with the church throughout the week

Develop "Friday drop-in" to find out what it is - community cafe?

Try Saturday night Youth Club to develop socialisation

Band sessions for youth - possibly show-case local bands, share music they like, Wii Rock Star, Guitar Hero etc.

Organise nights for youth - eg Rugby nights, Bowling nights, Cinema nights etc.

Like the idea of non-licensed community cafe

Additional suggestions -

Church magazines should be left at the back of the church for collection not delivered. Those unable to attend could be delivered

Successful programmes / published material could be bought & used

The great unwilling!

If you have a child unwilling to come to Church or any of our youth activities, why do you think this is and at what age did it begin?

4 x comments

N/A

Not reluctant to go to Church but Children's Church - they are shy, well one is and the other just follows!!

Main reason is that there is nothing aimed at their age group - everything is either too young (under 10) or too old (over 15)

2 x Group comments

To make the 10 o'clock service 'joyful'

From P7 to Y10 - something for this age group during church

Needs to be more of a distinction between the 10 am & 11.30 am service

Bring more youth involvement to the 10 am service, needs to be more involvement after Confirmation

No continuity in Children's Church / Crèche leaders

Name badges for leaders for parents to know leaders names

Nothing specific to our Church. Just about being a teenager - school pressure, business, tiredness.

How do you think we could meet their needs?

How about a "Buddy" system to help them settle in to something new?

My son loves going but I know a few who stopped attending last year because the parents felt they were not learning anything

I feel the structure this year has improved & hopefully word of mouth will get some of the others back

Offer relevant, topical, fun worship - rather than something that resembles a classroom or formal setting - run by the Youth in the Church

Our own young people

One 'Have your say' response stated "there is a sense that we don't know our young people anymore". Others said that while plenty of young people are involved with our current programme, mostly they are from non-parish families. How do you react to that perception?

4 x individual comments

Does it matter? The more people called to worship the better - surely!

Surely if they are coming along to take part in the programme they are part of the 'Parish'

Well I couldn't get my son into Squirrels and I know a lot of children who go attend other churches

Would agree that teenagers are rarely seen at the 10 o'clock service

2 x group comments

There may be young people coming who are connected to Parish families - but as they come at different times - we may not make the connection.

Consolidate the young people who are here, rather than trying to focus on people who may never come

Need to build a reputation

Is it possible to introduce "Venture Scouts"?

Opportunity to include our 11 - 14 yrs group with other churches - make a link with local churches - have joint YF or other organisation activities - to encourage / introduce attendance & therefore there is no need for more leaders

Encouraged that they are from non-parish families positive. Serving whole community - for young people church is YF. Any connection is better than none at all. Parents set an example but they lose influence as they get older. Teenagers friends may go to other churches & therefore they attend other church activities rather than ours

If you think this is accurate how can we try to encourage our own?

See above - does it matter?

We have always enjoyed the family events that the church has run eg the African Ceili. It was also a great way to get to know other people not just the young people

I think you are now pro-active and it certainly worked with me!

No group comments

Do you have any other general comments about our youth and children's ministry?

1 response only, from an individual - Keep up the good work!