

INCLUDING CHILDREN IN VISIONING

Inviting the participation of children and young people in visioning is good for both the church and the child. It's good for the child because it strengthens their belonging to the faith community. Participation is also empowering, which is a protective factor in their own safety. Including children in visioning is also good for the church because children are some of the most connected people in your local community. Generally they are creative and imaginative, seeing possibilities that may be missed by adults.

The following strategies and ideas are ways that children and adults can participate together in the same activities and process.

LANGUAGE

A simple rephrasing of the question or including the meaning behind the vision statement in accessible language can help children contribute.

SITTING WITH A TRUSTED FACILITATOR

Having a table facilitator with a group of kids who they feel comfortable with and who can do the translation work is one way to assist participation.

ACTIVITIES THAT WORK FOR ALL AGES

Being active

Many people appreciate having something to do with their hands while they listen and participate in discussions. Paper table covers with textas, fidget and sensory toys and including movement opportunities will be helpful.

Buttons

Ask people to think back over the last 2-3 years of some things that have happened at Anywhere Baptist church or in the kids program and choose a button or 2 that remind them of that time. Ask them to stick the buttons to a page and write a sentence or two about the story of that time.

Post It Notes and Sticky Dots

These tools invite individual participation that is in some ways anonymous, but can then be observed by everyone.

Stand on the line

Provides opportunity for movement and a physical representation of where a community is at

Emoji's

Use rocks and sharpies and ask people to create an emoji for how they felt when they come to their church or kids program.

ASK what is the feeling and what happens here that makes you feel that way.



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Sometimes children may be better served by engaging separately eg because of the time of day of the conversation or where conflict is likely. The principle of hearing the voice of children remains, but that will best take place outside of the room where the tension and conflict is likely to be expressed publicly.

You can use customised questionnaires and invite responses in different formats to find out how children experience the church and their ideas for the future. In all cases consider how adults and children will have opportunity to hear back from each other. eg a gallery of ideas, a spokesperson presents to everyone.

Three helpful ways kids can respond to questions are – tell, draw, write. It doesn't have to be the same response option each time. At each question the children could choose; do they want to talk about their response, do they want to draw or do they want to write about it.

CUSTOMISED QUESTIONS

Draw a picture of Anytown Baptist Church.

- Focus on the people and the things we do as a church

Think about the best time you have had as part of this church – who was involved, what happened how did you feel?

What do you hope our church might be like in the future?

If Jesus came to visit your school what is one thing he would do?

What things are you good at that could help make a difference in the world?

What is one new idea our church could try?

What do other people say you are good at?

Is there a way you could do that at our church?

What do you think a leader is?

- How would they make you feel when you were with them? How would they do that?
- What things does a leader do?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Facilitators Toolkit



Multiple facilitation, thinking, creating and decision making tools for groups of all ages.

Handbook from the Office of the Children's Guardian



In-depth guide to hearing the voice of children and young people



C.H.A.T for kids

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
This church is helping me grow my relationship with Jesus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This church encourages me to serve	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can see that people follow Jesus and try to put his love into their lives (love, joy, peace, goodness, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

A modified version of the Church Health Assessment Tool for kids, 6–12 years. Available as online form or as printed PDF