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## Workshop 1 - The importance of listening

This 90 minute workshop will stimulate thinking and discussion about the importance and practicalities of listening.

### What we're trying to do:

- understand the importance of listening to children and young people
- recognise that listening is vital to help children and young people's participation
- better equip adults to listen to children and young people
- provide practical tools and resources for listening
- go beyond just listening to taking action and measuring impact

### Workshop style

- This is a community learning style session. It draws out what the participants already know about active listening, with the facilitator filling in any gaps.
- As well as some input, allow plenty of time for discussion and feedback.
- Try to keep to your timetable so that you don't need to rush towards the end.

### Session outline:

*Allow about 90 minutes for the session*

- Introduction, welcome and prayer
- What is Listening? *Activity 1*
- Why is listening important? *Activity 2*
- How to listen *Activity 3*
- What difference has listening made? *Activity 4*
- Summing up - including final thoughts, reflections, observations, questions and prayer
- Evaluation

## What you'll need:

*Make sure you have enough copies of handouts for all the participants*

- An opening prayer or short act of worship
- Worksheet 1 *Word Association*
- Handout 1 *Definitions of Participation*
- Worksheet 2 *Why is Listening important?*
- Handout 2 *The Benefits of Listening*
- Handout 3 *Examples* + the materials to try out 2 or 3 practical ideas
- Worksheet 4 *Beyond Listening*
- Handout 4 *Monitoring Impact*
- Marker pens
- Flip chart paper

## Introduction, welcome and prayer - 5 minutes

Start with a prayer or a time of silence to offer the session to God

Welcome the group and briefly outline the aims of the session:

- to understand the importance of listening to children and young people
- to better equip leaders to listen to children and young people
- to provide practical tools and resources for listening
- to go beyond just listening to taking action and measuring impact

## Word Association: Activity 1 - 15 minutes

*Allow 15 minutes for this activity*

- Ask participants to form small groups or pairs.
- Give each group a copy of Worksheet 1 and pens.
- Give 5 minutes to think of as many words or phrases as possible that they associate with Participation.
- Either invite each group to feedback OR to swap sheets and comment on the similarities and differences.
- Discuss the common themes - are there any that surprise people? Challenge people? Where does listening fit with this?
- Give participants Handout 1 *Definition of Participation*.
- Briefly take any comments.

## Why is listening important? Activity 2 - 15 minutes

*Allow 15 minutes for this activity*

- Working in the same groups, hand out Worksheet 2 and invite people to consider the three questions. *7 minutes*
- Ask each group to feedback on just one of the questions. *5 minutes*
- Together identify any key points from the discussions. *3 minutes*
- Draw the activity to a close by giving participants a copy of *The Benefits of Listening Handout 2*

'If we fail to listen to the voices of the young afresh in each generation, especially about the church, then we may miss out on some of the ordinary and extraordinary things that God has to reveal through them.'

### Activity 3: Trying out some examples of how to listen- 20 minutes

At this point you can either change the groups or work in the same groups.

Choose two or three practical activities from the examples given below (on Handout 3) and try them out with the group (you will need to prepare all the relevant materials). Encourage the delegates to think as a child/young person might think when trying the activities.

Examples:

- Move to Choose
- Angels Voices
- Tops and Pants
- Rock and Sand
- Pick a Picture
- In Order (children's version)

After doing the activities ask how they might work with their own groups. Point out to them that any activity will need to be age appropriate and adapted to suit the individual group, especially if there are additional needs in the group or very young children for example.

End this activity by giving each delegate a copy of Handout 3 – 'Examples'. Explain that more ideas are available free to download on the Going for Growth website [www.going4growth.org.uk](http://www.going4growth.org.uk) under the Learn to Listen section.

### Activity 4: Worksheet 4: 'Beyond listening?' – 15 minutes

Explain that, when we listen to the voices of children and young people it demands a response or we are in danger of:

- Setting them up to fail
- Creating false expectations
- Patronising them

Working in the same groups, give each a copy of Worksheet 4. Allow time for each group to work through the four questions. Then invite feedback from each group. Some answers may provoke discussion so be aware of time constraints, and try to keep conversation constructive and valuable.

You may like to discuss briefly any key points arising from this activity.

End this activity by giving each delegate a copy of Handout 4 'Monitoring Impact' offering it as a suggested proforma that may be helpful when evaluating the process and impact of listening to children/young people. Explain that can be adapted to take into account their context and ideas.

## Summing up - 10 minutes

Together, list some of the key points about listening which the session revealed.

Gather any final thoughts, reflections, observations and mop up any questions.

Agree one way to put the session's learning into action.

### Reflection (optional)

If you have the technology you could show the clip of young people talking about church from **The Next Generation**.

(YouTube <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=le5AE0gyeYE>)

You may wish to close with a prayer, a time of open prayer or a time of silence to offer to God the things from the session and any future plans.

### Evaluation (optional)

Use the evaluation forms to gauge how helpful people found the session.

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Next:  
Activity 1 Worksheet 1: Word Association

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