



# Bishop's

Children & Youth

# Council

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Facilitator Guidebook  
Summer Term '26  
**Friendship**

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# A word from Bishop Martyn



*"We have tried to revolutionise the way we listen to children and young people in the Diocese. It's been a good learning exercise for me, going beyond just listening out-of-interest, but listening to the point of saying, how is this going to directly affect what I'm doing"*

*"I've started to have repeated conversations with people I work with, where I say to them, "What are you doing to listen to the voices of children and young people as you're making decisions about things in the life of the church or of our schools?"*

# Safeguarding



Listening and responding to the voice of the children and young people is essential for effective safeguarding practice. Listening and responding fosters a culture of trust, promotes wellbeing and honours children and young people's right to be heard and taken seriously in matters which affect them.



## Inclusive

Children and young people communicate in different ways. We have tried to adapt our listening practice to hear their voice of those who may often be excluded due to disability, age, development and language. Listening resources are dual-coded, with facilitator prompts and alternative delivery options.

## Safeguarding

We trust that those facilitating listening (teachers, school staff, children and youth workers) in school and church contexts have been safely recruited and will adhere to safeguarding policy and practice in their context.

We ask facilitators to record anonymous and unfiltered feedback and only send photos of children and young people with consent. Children and young people need to understand they do not have to participate in any or all activities and agree for their insights to be used in reporting.



# Introduction

## What's the purpose?

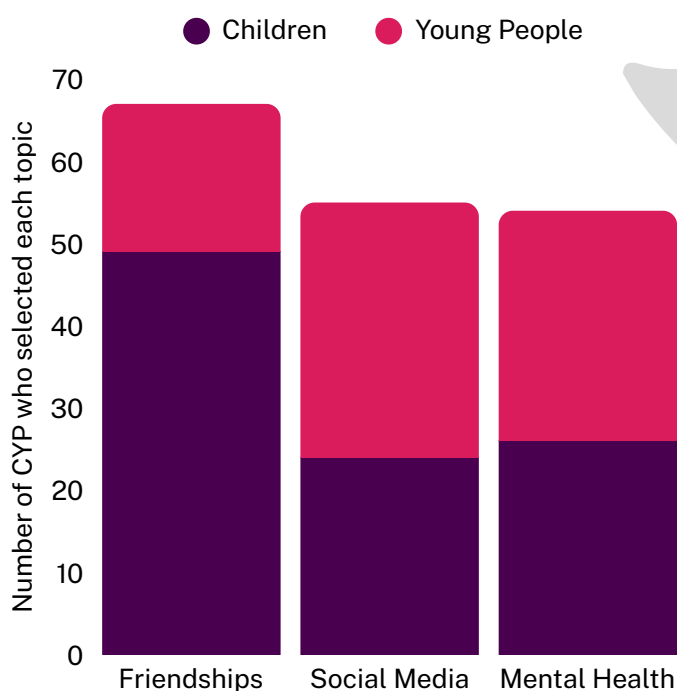
Each term, for the past 3 years, the Diocese of Leicester has facilitated a listening exercise in partnership with schools and church groups. The listening exercise enables children and young people (CYP) to explore an issue of their choice and share key findings with Bishop Martyn, Bishop Saju and the whole Diocese.

Any child or young person (under 18 years) in the Diocese of Leicester can participate. We encourage diversity, inclusion and representation.

## What's the process?



# Listening theme



What do you want to talk about?

In Autumn 2025 we asked children and young people, *what do you want to talk about?* The top three answers: (1) Friendship (2) Social Media (3) Mental Health.

In Summer Term 2026, we will explore the theme of **friendship**.

## Previous Listening Exercises

As of Spring 2026, we have heard from 1450 young voices across 19 primary, 4 secondary schools and 17 church groups via 8 listening exercises.

Find all resources, reports and responses at [leicester.anglican.org/bcyc](https://leicester.anglican.org/bcyc)

# Session plan

Full permission to use this resource creatively in your setting. You know your children, young people and context best. You may like to add snacks, change the timings or use these resources as ice-breakers over several sessions. Please adapt the rounds to suit your group's needs.

## [1 min] Welcome:

Welcome everybody. Explain to participants that by taking part in this listening exercise, they are joining with children and young people from schools and church groups across Leicestershire, to share their collective opinions with our Bishops.

## [3 min] Intro:

Introduce the listening theme (friendship) and set some basic ground rules with your group. For example, be honest, respect others views, use 'I' statements, share only as much as you feel comfortable...

## [1 min] Pray *(if appropriate in your context)*

Use the listening prayer below or do your own thing.

*God, we thank you that you are here with us.  
We thank you for listening to and responding to our prayers.  
God, in this listening group, we ask you to give us -  
Grace to listen deeply,  
Wisdom to speak thoughtfully,  
Courage to share honestly.  
Amen.*

## [15-20 min] Rounds:

Invite each participant to share a response in each round.  
Encourage participants to be BRUTALLY HONEST!

## [3 min] Reflection:

Take a moment to pause and reflect.

# Round One

## *Top Friends*

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**Description:** create a 'top friend card' to show what a good friend is like

**You will need:**

- Printed and cut out 'top friend cards' (see template on next page)
- Pens or pencils
- Phone or camera to record feedback

**How to:** show an example 'top friend card' to your group and explain the task. You might like to make your own card as an example...

Ask the group, what characteristics does a good friend have? what things does a good friend do? what are top qualities of a good friend?

Invite participants to draw a picture of a good friend (*this could be made up, a real friend, an imaginary friend or a character from a TV show or film*).

Invite participants to write friendship characteristics or powers (what makes someone a good friend) in the boxes underneath the picture - like a 'top trump' card. They can even give scores!

**Recording:** photograph completed top friend cards (or post the originals).

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# topfriend



FRIENDSHIP POWER SCORE

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<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>



# topfriend



FRIENDSHIP POWER SCORE

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# topfriend



FRIENDSHIP POWER SCORE

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# topfriend



FRIENDSHIP POWER SCORE

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# facilitator prompts



If any of your group are struggling to complete the activity, try reframing the question...

'...think about your friends. what makes them a good friend to you? what things do friends do or say?'

'...How are you a good friend to other people?'

Remind participants there are no 'right or wrong' answers, simply their honest opinion.

## writing

If writing is a barrier, encourage participants to act or share their response with a friend or facilitator to scribe.

Give permission to participants to work in pairs or with a friend to complete this activity.



# Round Two

## *Online vs. IRL*

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**Description:** decision-making game where participants choose their preference or answer from two options. Played using movement.

**You will need:**

- Four pieces of A4 / A3 paper saying [YES] [NO] [ONLINE] [REAL LIFE]
- Questions & statements scoresheet (below)
- Accessible space, such as clear classroom, corridor, hall or playground
- Phone or camera to record feedback

**How to:** create an imaginary line down the centre of your space. Read a question or statement aloud, offering two choices (*yes or no? online or real life?*) Invite participants to move to the side that represents their preference or answer.

**Optional Discussion:** Ask participants to share why they chose their side.

**Recording:** Complete the scoresheet to record how many participants answered 'yes' or 'no' / 'online' or 'real life'.

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# facilitator prompts



Encourage participants to go with their 'gut instinct' and not 'overthink' their responses.

Give permission to participants to opt out, if they don't want to answer one of the questions.

If mobility or space is an issue, create a tabletop version for participants to move Lego minifigures or small toys along.

## Online

'Online' can be defined as connected to the internet via any device - smart phone, computer or games console.

'Online chat' is a real-time, text, audio, or video-based conversation between users over the internet, often using messaging apps, social media and/or in-game chat features.



Statements	Online	Real Life
1. Do you prefer to chat with your friends online or in real life?		
2. Do you prefer to play games with your friends online or in real life?		
3. Do you spend more time playing games online or in real life?		
4. Do you spend more time chatting with friends online or in real life?		
5. Do you find it easier to make friends online or in real life?		
Questions	Yes	No
1. Do you have a best friend?		
2. Have you fallen out with friends in real life?		
3. Have you fallen out with friends online?		
4. Do you have different friends online and in real life?		
5. Do you see God as a friend?		



# Round Three

## *Making Friends*

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**Description:** ranking game where cards are arranged from most to least important.

**You will need:**

- Printed & cut 'making friends' cards (see next page)
- Phone or camera to record feedback

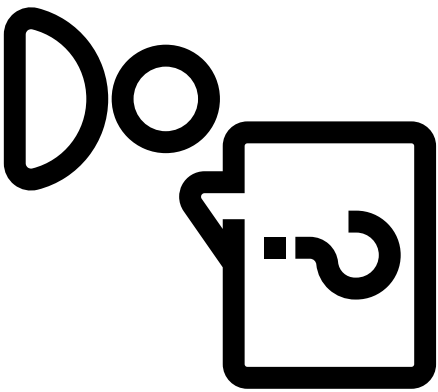
**How to:** Invite participants to work in pairs, small groups or as a whole group.

Give each group a set of 'making friends' cards. Invite them to look through the cards, discuss and sort them from most to least important. The question - what is the most important for making friends?

There is a blank card for participants to write their own ideas.

**Recording:** photograph each ordered set of info cards.

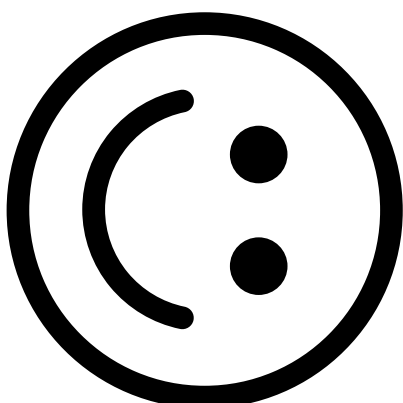
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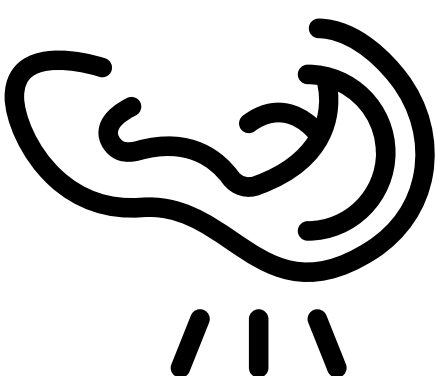
ASK QUESTIONS



SAY NICE THINGS



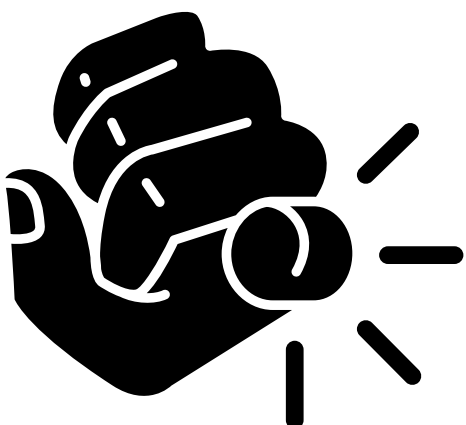
SMILE



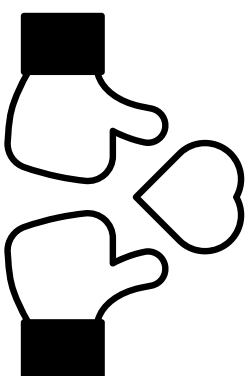
LISTEN WELL



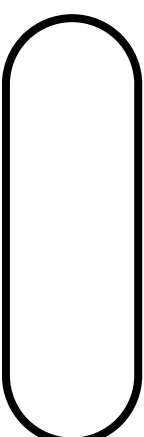
BE KIND / HELPFUL



BE YOURSELF



LIKE THE SAME THINGS



# Reflection

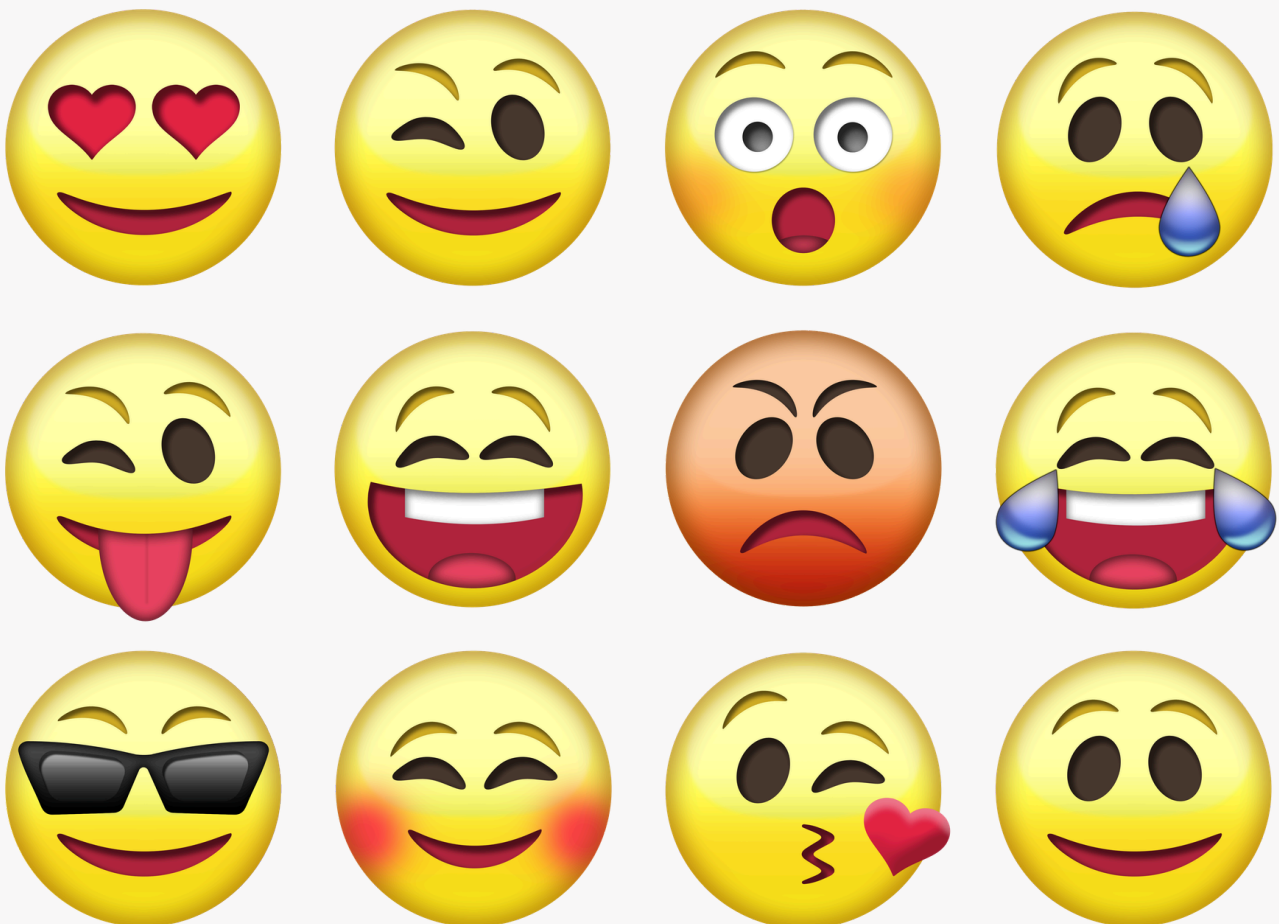
## Pause:

Take a moment to reflect together at the end of your session.

Show your group the picture of the emoji's. Ask participants to think about how they are feeling. Invite participants to choose an emoji (or two) that describes their feelings.

## Options:

You could complete this reflective activity in silence or invite participants to share the emoji they choose and why (if they are willing).



# facilitator feedback

✉ [matt.long@leicestercofe.org](mailto:matt.long@leicestercofe.org)

🌐 [leicester.anglican.org/bcyc](https://leicester.anglican.org/bcyc)

Alongside photos and responses from your listening group, please copy and paste the three questions below into an email and briefly answer.

## Questions:

1. Where did you meet? (Name of church / school / group)
2. How many children / young people in your group?
3. Age range and makeup of group?  
(Gender, Ethnicity, Special Educational Needs & Disability).

Please email feedback to Matt Long (Youth Engagement Officer) by **Friday 10<sup>th</sup> July 2026**.

We would love to hear your reflections on the listening exercise? What worked well? What didn't? What would you change? Ideas?

All (brutally honest) feedback is super useful as we learn together.