

22. 3Generate 2015 – Methodist Children and Youth Assembly

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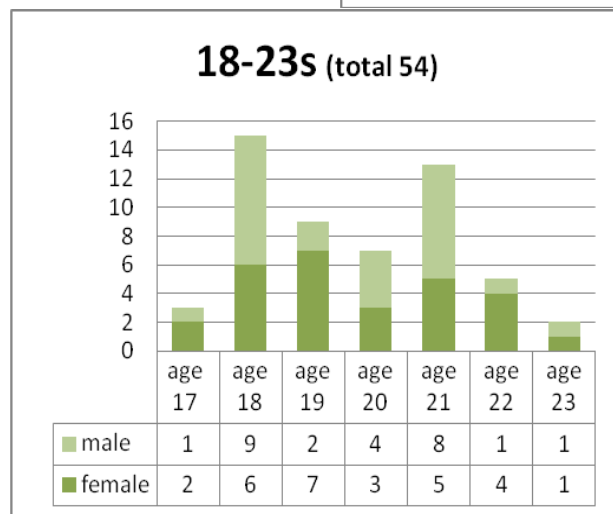
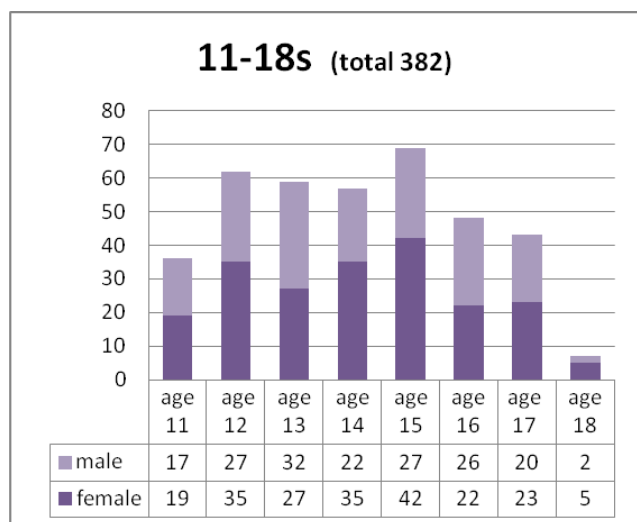
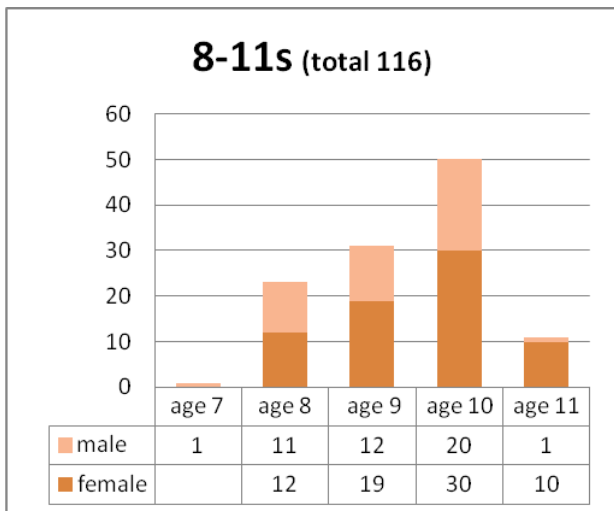
Summary of Content

Subject and aims	A summary of 3Generate 2015, the Methodist Children and Youth Assembly.
Main points	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attendance and representation at 3Generate• Candidates elected for the roles of Youth President and Youth Representatives• Content, themes and suggested outcomes for the Church from the three age streams (8-11, 11-18, 18-23)• Worship and new additions to 3Generate• Highlighted areas for action.

Introduction

1. The Methodist Children and Youth Assembly, 3Generate, is an event for children and young people aged 8-23. It is a safe environment for young people to meet other young Methodists and explore ideas of faith and community within the Church and on a wider scale. 3Generate allows the opportunity for young people to engage in various worship formats and fun activities as well as discuss relevant and topical issues as highlighted by young people from a personal, biblical and Christian point of view. 3Generate holds the participation of young people at its core and allows each individual young person to have their voice heard in a variety of ways.
2. 3Generate 2015 took place at Liddington Activity Centre near Swindon, from 20-22 November.
3. The theme for 3Generate 2015 was *Wonderfully Made*, inspired by Psalm 139:13-14. Within this we explored:
 - how we are wonderfully made
 - how the Church is wonderfully made
 - how the world is wonderfully made
4. **Attendance**

3Generate moved to a bigger venue for 2015. It was attended by almost 600 children and young people, compared with 250 in 2014.



5. **Voting and elections**

In accordance with SO 250(8) and (9) the Children and Youth Assembly held elections and the results are as follows:

Role	Elected
Youth President	Tim Annan
British Youth Council Representatives	Joshua Williamson*
Ecumenical Representatives	Mary Sharples
Methodist Conference Representatives	Georgia Harrison Jack Key Sam Lindridge
Methodist Council Representatives	Ruth Hall
World Representatives	Roxanne Bainbridge

*elected but unable to take up position

6. **A taste of the event**

3Generate is shaped by children and young people and the process that follows the event ensures there is a continual dialogue throughout the year. Feedback is received through local youth events, the *BiG SleepOver* resource, Shaper Groups, volunteers and young people who consult in their local context. Evaluations and feedback are collected at the event as young people are invited to express their opinions on all aspects of the event.

You can watch 3Generate highlights and discussions at: www.youtube.com/user/3GenerateTV

7. **The age streams**

3Generate is split into three age streams. These are 8-11 year olds, 11-18 year olds and 18-23 year olds. This helps to ensure that the event is accessible to every child or young person in attendance and that discussion topics are suitable and appropriately tailored to each age group.

8. **8-11s age stream**

The 8-11s programme is diverse and engaging using a variety of participation tools to engage the children in conversation and worship. The programme emerges through a process of engagement with children in their own local context through Shaper Groups that are facilitated by children's workers in the Local Church, evaluations from the previous year's 3Generate and feedback from BiG SleepOvers. Topics for discussion and sessions at the event are created from this engagement.

9. Shaper Groups are local leaders and workers who volunteer to consult with groups of children in their own churches and Circuits. This year we saw an increase in Shaper Group engagement and volunteers facilitating sessions at 3Generate from the Shaper Groups.

10. **Hearing the Voice at 3Generate is facilitated through four main sessions during the event:**

11. **Speak Out**

This session was full of different stations and interactive activities that enabled the members to explore and express their views on the following topics:

- i. Who is God?
- ii. Who do you think we are as Methodists?
- iii. What worries me? And how do I talk about it?
- iv. What worries me about the world?
- v. Get to know the Youth President candidates for 2016/17
- vi. 3Generate Reps hearing your voice – a chance to chat with the 3Generate Reps

12. **Engage Session**

This enables children and young people to engage with the topics and themes that have emerged in the consultations and Shaper Groups at a deeper level. This year these included:

- i. Coping with worries: an interactive session that explored this topic through stories facilitated by the story teller Bob Hartman.
- ii. Build yourself up: self-esteem, bullying: this session was led by Fischy Music using singing and sign language to build resilience.
- iii. The Mystery of God: exploring awe and wonder through experiments and magic tricks in the context of faith and the knowledge of an amazing God.
- iv. Who is our neighbour: exploring discipleship and our responsibilities as Christians.
- v. Caring for our world: the environment and God's creation.
- vi. How do I think, talk and be like Jesus? Evangelism and speaking of God.

13. **Respond Sessions**

This was an opportunity to take some time reflecting on the sessions from earlier in the day and responding to them in a creative way. These were some of the options the members could choose from:

- i. Art space
- ii. Craftivism: making a difference in the world and creating something to make a statement to the world
- iii. Fischy Music: singing action and sign language exploring 'I Wonder Why'
- iv. Creating your own story: Bob Hartman
- v. Gospel choir: sing to God

- vi. Oriso: creative prayer space
- vii. Drama session: creating stories and acting out situations explored
- viii. Stop animation workshop: creating cartoons and films based on the morning sessions

14. **Worship sessions**

In response to the Shaper Group sessions, the children requested greater participation in worship. This was facilitated throughout the event. On Friday evening the Praise Jukebox enabled the young people to select their praise songs. Prayers were facilitated with graffiti boards and dice, with each face representing an intercessory prayer topic selected by the young people. The reflective story was based on the story of creation, then how the world was in need of the redemption brought by Christ who calls us all to carry his love out into our broken world and among those we meet.

Saturday was a continuation of our worship, as we reflected together on a Bible story, focussing on how we are all involved in being church and part of the world community and part of the big picture. We then created a bead keyring or bracelet as a reminder of the challenges the stories revealed. We spent time in discussion based around *Table Talk*, where we expressed our views and extended our relationships in our groups sharing more of who we are as God's people in this time and place.

15. **3Generators and 8-11s manifesto for the Church**

This was a selection of stations that enabled the children to engage in discussion and reflect on what they want to say to the Church about their world, their community and their Church. It was a chance to work out how they can make a difference and how the Church can hear what is important to them.

Manifesto: We care about issues at a local, national and international level and seek opportunities to discuss, learn and express our viewpoints, take action and make a difference in the world. Here are the three key areas we want the Church to help us find out more about and explore:

- i. **Our Church:** We are part of our church's life and community, and are keen to play a full part in all its activities: worship, junior church, our groups, decision-making, leading. We would like to understand more about Methodism and why it is called Methodism. We have lots of questions about God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit and being a Christian, and we would like time in worship and in our groups to explore them. Participating in the whole life of the Church is important to us; we want worship that is interesting and relevant to all people in the Church.
- ii. **Our Community:** We care about the communities we live in and want to be a part of them and contribute to making them caring and good places to live in. We want to talk about, learn, and make a difference in the following areas:
 - bullying in all its contexts and street violence, daily pressures of school life
 - coping with change in our lives, break up of families, children in foster care, people moving away or dying, changing schools
 - helping others: we want the Church to teach and support us in how we can help others in our communities, eg the homeless, elderly living on their own and foodbanks.
- iii. **Our World:**
 - **The environment** Climate change, littering, pollution, trees being cut down; what can we do in church and our communities to make a difference?
 - **Where is God?** We want opportunities to talk about and ask this question.
 - **Our concerns** about violence in our world, terrorism and wars, and our fears about a third world war. We want opportunities to talk about this on Sundays and in our groups.

11-18s age stream

This programme was full of different activities including logins, workshops, various worship styles, Bible discussion sessions, a camp fire, a silent disco, inflatable fun, drumming, a magician, outdoor activities and films. In addition to this they had free time in which they were able to spend time in their age stream lounge with board games and music, or they could go to the live lounge and play on video games, play table tennis and pool or just dance.

16. Logins and manifestos

Logins are active discussion sessions in which the young people of this age stream discussed relevant topics. Every young person had the opportunity to attend one of their choice. In the sessions, the young people were encouraged to discuss openly their views on the topic, consider a biblical perspective and think about what the Church's response should be. Each login was facilitated by an expert on the issue and a peer facilitator. A statement was produced from each login summarising the young people's views on the topic. The young people then voted on these statements as to which topics they considered were a priority. The five statements with the most votes are put forward to shape the manifesto. The manifesto will be sent to Districts as a way of showing the issues that young people are passionate about. The logins and the proposed manifesto statements are as follows:

i. Let's talk about sex...and relationships...

This login provided an opportunity to explore what young people thought they should be discussing in sex and relationships education (SRE) at school, when it should happen and what influence and involvement churches should have in developing the ways people learn about sex and relationships in schools, families and the Church.

Suggestion 1: We want the Church to equip, resource and train our youth workers and ministers to create safe spaces to talk about relationships and sex.

Suggestion 2: We want to encourage open discussions about sex within marriage and sex outside of marriage.

ii. War: what is it good for?

This session explored what the Bible teaches us about war and what our responsibility is, considering the impact of co-operation and intervention in conflicts around the world.

Suggestion: We think the Church should discuss war and conflict with its young people to develop their knowledge, stress the importance of prayer as a response and explore the possibilities of a united religions day.

iii. Freaks, weirdos, disabled or just like you?

This session looked at issues around disability and the welcome and access that disabled people have in church and society.

Suggestion: We would like the Church to redefine the word 'disabilities' to 'different abilities' and improve accessibility to worship.

iv. Same-sex marriage: I'm getting married in the morning?

This session explored this issue through looking at scripture, tradition, reason and experience to help the young people to develop a thought-through Christian response.

Suggestion: We think the Church's interpretation of the Bible on same-sex marriage is outdated and should be reviewed.

v. *Feeling good* (mainly for girls)

This login explored self-esteem, including how young people feel about themselves and how they see others. It looked at what is going on in the world, especially in the media, and explored some of the pressures that can be put on young people to be and to look a certain way.

Suggestion: We feel the Church should provide resources and workshops regarding self-esteem for youth workers and young people. Also, we believe the Church should begin a positive body image campaign.

vi. *Bullying: sticks and stones*

This session looked at the impact of bullying and explored whether the Church does enough to address issues of bullying and what more could be done.

Suggestion: We believe that the Church should provide training for its members around the subject of bullying and guidance on dealing with its associated issues quickly.

vii. *When I needed a neighbour*

This login looked at the questions of 'who are refugees and asylum seekers?' and what the Bible says about welcoming those in need, as well as exploring what our response should be to the people dying every day in the hope for a better life.

Suggestion: We think that every life matters and that refugees and asylum seekers should be welcomed, loved and protected.

viii. *What a wonderful world*

This session explored the issues of climate change and what our responsibility is. It tackled questions of how we respond and what we can do. Are we too small to make a difference? And how can we help to save the things we love?

Suggestion: We want the Church to reduce its carbon footprint and to help the most vulnerable people around the world whose lives are being destroyed by climate change.

ix. *Just me?*

This login explored whether social media is actually making us more lonely, and whether connecting online is disconnecting us from reality.

Suggestion: We want to raise awareness of social media and the possible negative impacts and to make sure people are aware of what support is available if they are feeling lonely.

x. *Spooky stuff*

This login explored some Christian responses to issues concerning the myths, perceptions, 'facts' and fictions of the Occult and the Paranormal.

Suggestion: We feel the Church needs to change the general mindset that death is a bad thing and something to fear.

xi. *Israel/Palestine: the issues and challenges*

This login provided an opportunity to explore and engage with the issues and challenges that arise from the ongoing conflict in this part of the Middle East.

Suggestion: We want to support Palestinian children, to pray for peace in Israel and Palestine and to educate on the topic.

xii. *Feeling good* (mainly for boys)

This login explored self-esteem, including how young people feel about themselves and how they see others. It looked at what is going on in the world, especially in the media, and explored some of the pressures that can be put on young people to be and to look a certain way.

Suggestion: We believe that young people need to be listened to by the Church on issues facing the Church and that there should be regular pastoral support or mentoring. The Church should also look into appointing youth representatives in each Circuit.

Manifesto

17. The manifesto is shaped by the five suggestions that received the most votes from the 11-18s age stream, which have been turned into action points. This will be sent out to Local Churches highlighting the key views of 3Generate's 11-18 year olds. Those statements are as follows (in order of votes, highest first):

In 2016 the young people of the Methodist Church would like to focus on:

- 1) Discussions about same-sex marriage: in particular reflecting on biblical perspectives and exploring the Church's understanding.
- 2) Discussions around the issue of war and conflict and in particular the use of prayer as a response.
- 3) Training and guidance on dealing with bullying.
- 4) Refugees and asylum seekers: in particular showing them welcome, love and protection.
- 5) Accessibility for those with disability: change the focus from 'disability' to 'different abilities' and improve access in worship.

Workshops

18. The young people also had the opportunity to attend a workshop each of their choice. This was a session that allowed them to worship in a creative way, learn a new skill, discuss a topic, have fun or reflect. The workshop sessions available were as follows:

- Living with disability
- Relaxation and stress
- Mental health first aid
- Safeguarding/sexting
- Methodism
- Politics
- Inter faith
- Finding your path
- Prayer
- Bible study
- Failure
- Sign language
- First aid
- Money management
- Craftivism
- Football
- Dance
- Choir

19. **Worship**

A variety of worship styles was used within the 11-18s stream. These included a band, acoustic sung worship, gospel choir sessions, listening to and writing poetry, interactive prayer, storytelling and club music worship.

18-23s age stream

20. The 18-23s age stream was located in a separate building to the other streams, In this area they had a live lounge set up complete with board games, computer games, a 'wonderfully made' box

including a pamper kit, a beard oil kit, colouring and writing equipment as well as a coffee station and music. Activities included a games show night and a silent disco.

21. Workshops

The workshop sessions available in the 18-23s stream were decided by the Shaper Groups before the event to ensure discussion topics were relevant, wanted and useful.

- i. Climate change: Ahead of the global summit in December, what role does the Church have in ensuring good stewardship of God's creation? What personal responsibilities or actions do we need to take seriously as Christians?
- ii. Keeping your faith at university: How do you navigate the pitfalls of peer pressure, exam stress, new-found independence and freedom not only to keep your faith while a student but grow in your discipleship?
- iii. Keeping your faith in the job market: When dealing with uncertainty regarding your role in the world, rejection at interview after interview and the small question of your life's purpose, how do you keep God at the centre?
- iv. Mental health first aid: How you can help if you suspect someone is struggling with their mental health.
- v. Us vs the world: We are faced with a constant and daunting stream of bad news on TV, on the internet and in the press. How can we 'read' the news so that we better understand the root causes of the problems – without being overwhelmed by them? How, as individuals, can we make a difference when faced with so much work to be done?
- vi. The poverty gap: What are the facts about poverty in the UK? Is the gap between rich and poor getting wider and, if so, who is to blame? What should our response be?
- vii. Immigration: With the 'migrant crisis' dominating the world's press this year, what is the Church – particularly the Methodist Church – doing in response? What responsibilities do we have as individual Christians?
- viii. The role of emerging adults in the Church: A session exploring the question 'What happens when you are too old for the church youth group?' Is there a role for you outside of graduating from 'youth group member' to 'youth group leader'? What is the Church doing to equip young leaders or help young adults explore their calling?
- ix. Respect and relationships: Relationships start with individuals – what does it mean to be a 'good Christian' man or woman? What role does self-respect and respecting one another play in a healthy relationship?

22. Bite size worship

In addition to the workshops there were a series of Bitesize Worship sessions allowing the 18-23 stream to try different ways of engaging with God. In addition to these there were extra sessions:

- i. Craftivism Workshop
- ii. Bible Study with Elaine Heath: How do we reach our God-given potential and live the life God wants for us? What stops us from becoming the Christian God wants us to be? How do we forgive ourselves when we make mistakes?
- iii. Marketplace
- iv. Poet Q&A
- v. Audience with Youth President Candidates
- vi. Big Questions: Vocation: A panel of individuals from all walks of church and secular life were on-hand to answer questions about working out calling and vocational opportunities available.

23. Manifesto

At the end of each workshop session there was the option, if it was felt appropriate, for members and facilitators to agree a statement summarising the young people's views on the topic. This led to six statements, intended to shape the manifesto, that were discussed further in small groups during a session on Sunday morning. The manifesto will be sent to Districts as a way of showing the issues that young people are passionate about. The manifesto for the 18-23s stream is:

- 1) Explore the question 'How do we love thy enemies?' on a local church level in proactive, theological, contextual and, most importantly, practical ways.
- 2) Challenging negative representations of marginalised groups - actively speaking out on behalf of groups, such as migrants or young people.
- 3) Using the language of love to challenge the poverty gap so that no one is shamed or excluded. A person's worth is not assigned by their wealth.
- 4) Taking a lead on practical responses to climate change - revisiting *Hope in God's Future*, updating policies and enabling Local Churches to learn about taking action at a local and global level.
- 5) Improved all-age integration and participation - we believe this is key to healthy Methodist communities.
- 6) A defined and coordinated response to the refugee crisis - outreach to refugees, TEFL workshops to aid integration and opposing laws that deny children housing.

Joint programme

24. **Martin Daws:** Martin is the young people's laureate for Wales. He was commissioned by the previous Youth President (Megan Thomas) to write a poem based on the 3Generate theme, *Wonderfully Made*. Martin wrote the poem *Living one within the broken heart of God*, which can be seen on 3Gentv at www.youtube.com/watch?v=uJcprSnrA48.
25. **Multiplex worship:** The Multiplex worship session was a time when all the age groups were mixed in together and had the opportunity to go to a worship session of their choice. The worship options were:
- | | |
|------------------|------------------------------|
| i. Sport | vi. Acoustic |
| ii. Gospel Choir | vii. Art |
| iii. Prayer Walk | viii. Craftivism |
| iv. Stories | ix. Quaker |
| v. Cafe | x. Bible Study and Communion |
26. **Taking the manifestos forward: a call for action to the Church**
In considering the manifestos from each of the age streams and the things that are of importance to the young people of the Methodist Church, a proposal is brought before the Conference for these areas to be taken forward under the theme of *Wonderfully Made*. There are four specific areas to this. The proposal below has been formed from the 3Generate Manifestos and through discussions between the Youth President, the Youth Presidents advisory group consisting of elected youth representatives and 3Generate age stream facilitators.

Theme 1: Wonderful Me

We would like the Methodist Church to:

- Focus on how it interacts with individuals within its congregations making each attendee feel welcome and accepted.
- Enable Local Churches to invest in one another to enable a growth of biblical discipleship and confident participation in the life of the Church, allowing space for innovative and imaginative discussion.

- Analyse and improve the accessibility to worship, buildings and social events and consider how to support each other in times of specific need whether physical, spiritual or emotional.

Theme 2: Wonderful Church

We would like Local Churches to be facilitated and equipped to host challenging discussion topics in the local context, and to continue open conversations on topics surrounding sex and relationships, death and political issues. Local Churches should consider how they are existing as a community; ensuring congregations are healthy, positive and loving to one another and ensuring swift resolution to issues of misconduct.

Theme 3: Wonderful World

We would like the Methodist Church to look outwardly at the world and to consider its impact on global issues such as war, the homeless, refugees, climate change and supporting the marginalised and the oppressed. We would like the Church to be both prayerful and missional in its response to the issues highlighted by Wonderful World.

Theme 4: Wonderfully Prophetic

We would like the Methodist Church to be seeking a prophetic voice for the future of the Church considering its inward working, its impact on those involved and how it interacts within each community and the world.

27. It is intended that over the next few years the 3Generate programme will have an emphasis on these themes, and the Shaper Groups will consider how to take this forward during the planning process.
28. The themes present a call from 3Generate to the Methodist Church for further action. It is recommended that the Connexional Secretary and the Youth President consider how the Methodist Church can engage with the areas in the manifestos, ensuring that these areas are included on the workplans of the relevant committees or groups. We also recommend that the Connexional Leaders' Forum considers more specifically how the themes can be implemented within and across Districts.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

- 22/1. The Conference received the Report.**
- 22/2. The Conference received the manifestos in paragraphs 15, 17 and 23 and directed Districts, Circuits and Local Churches to engage with children and young people about these issues.**
- 22/3. The Conference directed the Connexional Leaders' Forum to consider how the themes in paragraph 26 can be taken forward within Districts and report on progress to the 2017 Conference.**
- 22/4. The Conference directed the Methodist Council to:**
 - a) ensure the themes in paragraph 26 are included in the work plans of the Connexional Team or other committees or groups as appropriate;**
 - b) make information available on the Methodist Church website of the work in progress under each theme; and**
 - c) receive an update on these matters no later than April 2017.**