

niscu



Hope & Home



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This workbook is given freely to churches, but has a cost. If you would like to contribute to this cost, then please visit our 'giving page' at www.niscu.org.uk/giving, or contact our Financial administrator on 01524 732 764, or admin@niscu.org.uk.





What is 'Your 4-18 Community'?

'Your 4 - 18 community' is simply a 'tool' for us as individual Christians, and collectively as churches, to look at how we interact and support the 4-18 year olds in our community.

The old adage 'It takes a village to raise a child' is still true, and requires us as adults in our time to really consider how we can

interact and support the children and young people in our communities in meaningful, safe and enjoyable spaces.

*'It Takes a Village
to Raise a Child'*

What it does not mean is that we all have to start running a youth group, or messy church every week until we feel that we have run out of energy. Whilst a youth group or a messy church might be good for some people in some communities, it is not the only way that we can support our children and young people.

This document has been written to try and look at other things we can do to build bridges into our communities in ways that we enjoy together, and hopefully then will help children and young people feel that they are in a safe space to ask difficult questions (and some of them might be about God!)

So if you are still interested...read on!!





About 'Your 4-18 Community'- Questions

The first step is to ask yourselves a handful of questions (as an individual and as a church):

1. What do you know about 'Your 4-18 community'?

- a) What ages do you see in your community?
- b) Are there lots of kids?
- c) Do you have a school in your community?
- d) What does their Ofsted report say about the demographics of your community?

2. Who do you know in 'Your 4-18 community'?

- a) Do any children or young people attend your church on Sunday?
- b) Do any children or young people attend events/meetings other than on a Sunday?
- c) Do you have any parents/grandparents in your church?





About 'Your 4-18 Community'- Questions

3. Does your church pray for 'Your 4-18 community'?

- a) Do you pray for your children or young people on Education Sunday and bless them for the year?
- b) Do you pray for children or young people in your Sunday services or regular prayer meetings?
- d) Do you pray for your children or young people during exam periods in May/June or what about when they have OfSTED?
- e) Who else prays for 'Your 4-18 community'?

4. Are there any other Christian organisations who work with 'Your 4-18 community'?

- a) Are there any church clubs in your area?**
- b) Do niscu work in your school?**
- c) Do other Christian organisations work with 'Your 4-18 Community'?**





About 'Your 4-18 Community'- Questions

**5. Who from your church connects with 'Your 4-18 community'?
How?**

- a) Do any of your congregation interact with children or young people as part of their jobs?
- b) Do any of your congregation interact with children or young people in other spaces, like sports clubs, etc...?

About 'Your 4-18 Community'- Answers

5 sets (a handful!) of questions answered, but what do they tell us? And how do we move forwards?



The age range 4-18 is actually quite a large range. And so it might be that from your answers to Questions 1 and 2 you can already identify or know a group of kids or youth who are already in your community, and maybe you might already have some kind of connection with.

This is a good place to start!

Notes:

The age group we would like to work with is:





About 'Your 4-18 Community'- Answers

Even if you have a group that you connect with, you are probably feeling a bit out of your depth... so this step is always a GREAT place to go next...



PRAY!!

Add praying for your 4-18 community to your church prayer meetings and to your own prayers... and continue to pray, it really is the best place to be for a successful programme with God.

Where can you add prayer to your church(es) programme(s)?

Notes:

We are going to focus on praying by...

What is God saying in your prayer meetings?





About 'Your 4-18 Community'- Answers



Next, try and get other people in your church, or Christian community in your area involved. This could be other church groups, charities, or even individuals who have a heart for kids and youth. The best way to do this is to ask them!

You could invite them to come and talk to you (and your church if appropriate), and tell you what they see, or another great way to move forwards is to ask them to join you in praying for your 4-18 community. Now that you know a bit about your community you can use this to inform your prayer.

Who could we ask?

Notes:

We are going to invite the above people to ...

After they have been and spoken... What did they say?





About 'Your 4-18 Community'- Answers



You can also maybe ask people connected to your community to come and talk to you. People like:

Your NISCU schools' worker

Children and youth workers for your church and other churches in your community.

Your Head teacher(s) from your local school(s)...but don't scare them off if they don't go to church!!

What are the names of people you could connect with, and what is their connection to your 4-18 community?

We are going to invite the above people to ...

After they have been and spoken... What did they say?





About 'Your 4-18 Community'- Answers

The final part of this bit..!!!



Now is also a great time to find out what skills and hobbies you have in your congregation(s). This can help you to do something that people enjoy! This will really help you communicate fun and passion in what you do.

What skills and hobbies do you have?

Could you use these skills and hobbies to interact with and support your 4-18 community?

Notes:

We have skills and hobbies in the following areas...

About 'Your 4-18 Community'- Overview

At this point, we thought we could give you a checklist to try and help you get an overview of where you are, before you move. You might not be able to tick all of the boxes yet, but it should help you start to formulate how you could interact with and support 'Your 4-18 community'... so here we go:

- You know what age group you are thinking of working with.
- You are praying for 'Your 4-18 community'.
- You have connected with other Christians to talk and pray about your 4-18 community.
- You have asked others who work in the community to tell you what their thoughts are.
- You have thought about what skills and hobbies you already have in your church community.





Moving on - Being a '4:18 Community'

So those who know me will know that I love numbers, and I love the Bible, and on odd occasions these come together really nicely.

This is one of those occasions.

You see '4-18' is not only a reference to the age group recognised in our communities as 'children and youth'. But it is also a reference to Luke 4:18.

I remember being told that 'The Gospels' are the books in the Bible where Jesus, filled with the Holy Spirit, did some pretty amazing things in His earthly body. And the rest of the New

Testament was where Jesus, filled with the Spirit, carried on (and is still doing) some pretty amazing things in His new body - the church ie., us.

So, imagine this... A church full of people who understand that the reason why we are given the Holy Spirit is to enable us to go to those around us who need help.

And for those of you who know your Bible, you will appreciate that this is one of the main themes of God's heart for mankind - from the very beginning of time to the very end.

*"The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor,
to bind up the broken hearted.*

*He has sent me
to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to set the oppressed free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's
favour."*

NIV

And, I can, with some certainty suggest that there a number of 4-18 year olds (and older) who live within 5 minutes walk of your church building, and your houses, who are:

*‘poor’
‘broken hearted’
held in some level of ‘captivity’
‘blinded to the hope of God’
and ‘oppressed’*

And as much as I really appreciate the National Health Service, Social services, Schools and Educational establishments. They just don’t have the capacity to deal with all the poor, lost, and lonely in our society.

So if our public bodies aren’t able to be there for the people in your community, the question I have is : ‘Who will be there for them?’.

Again, imagine this: A church full of people who understand that the reason why we are given the Holy Spirit is to enable us to go to those around us who need help.

Maybe add this to our prayer lists!! Because, as it turns out our ‘4-18’ community need ‘US’ to be the Luke 4:18 community for them.

Now, before I go any further, it needs to be done safely and wisely. DBS, Safeguarding, and risk assessments are DEFINITELY required but they are not insurmountable!





Moving on - Connecting

So, this is it. You should now be more aware of:

- Who you have in 'Your 4-18 community'.
- What their needs are.
- What is God saying about how you can interact with and support them.
- Other Christians who are already connecting with them.
- Other people who work with them.
- What skills and hobbies you have to interact with and support them.

The reality of actually doing something to connect with them should now be coming more apparent, and so let's think about that!

To connect with 'your 4-18 community' you will need to know:

- What age group you are thinking of working with.
- Where and what time you will connect.
- What the content will be when you connect.
- Who will be there to connect, interact and support.
- Who will provide prayer support.
- How long will you run the connection for.
- What success could look like.

Most of these points will be very unique to you and your way of connecting with your 4-18 community, but there are a couple of pointers that we might be able to further support you with.

Make sure it is safe for everyone!

Safeguarding is very important! You will need to do your DBS checks on everyone who connects with children and young people. Your church should already have safeguarding and other policies in place for this so chat to that person in your church!

Who do you need to talk to about safeguarding and DBS information?

You will probably already have some form of risk and emergency procedures in place in your church, again talk to that person! But if you are doing anything that doesn't regularly happen in your church then include those points in your conversation!

Who do you need to talk to about risk assessments?

What could/will you do when you connect?

Niscu is building a collection of examples showing what is already going on. People telling their stories of how they are supporting their 4-18 communities. Hopefully these will inspire you, and maybe give you someone to ask further questions if you need to talk!

Visit www.niscu.org.uk/your_4-18_community





Prayer support

I cannot stress how essential continued prayer support is. Think about how you could do that. Also it can be very useful for those who are involved in 'being in the room' when you have sessions up and running, to feedback to the prayer group (non- confidential information) to encourage and direct the prayers, but also to relieve and share potential emotional and/or stressful moments.

Who will be in charge of prayer support?

Success in the project and when will it end.

An honest conversation about what success will look like, and how and when should your project end is VERY useful.

Success might not look like your interaction and support lasting for a year, or forever. It might not be having 100's of kids/young people coming through your doors.

But, it might be open for 6 weeks a year, and help a handful of people in their walk of life... in itself, that is enough!

When did we have the 'success' conversation ?

That's it from us! (Well in this document anyway!!)

Please keep us informed about what you are doing, and how it is going, we would love to continue to celebrate and support you in your journey.

Maybe you could share your story with others and help them set up something too that interacts with and supports their 4-18 community.

God bless.





Notes:





Other ways to connect with us

For more information about niscu:

-  www.niscu.org.uk
-  admin@niscu.org.uk
-  01524 732764
-  57, Lancaster Road, Carnforth, Lancaster LA5 9LE

For more information about 'Your 4-18 community'



www.niscu.org.uk/your_4-18_community



For more information about niscu connect



www.niscu.org.uk/connect

 connect@niscu.org.uk



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