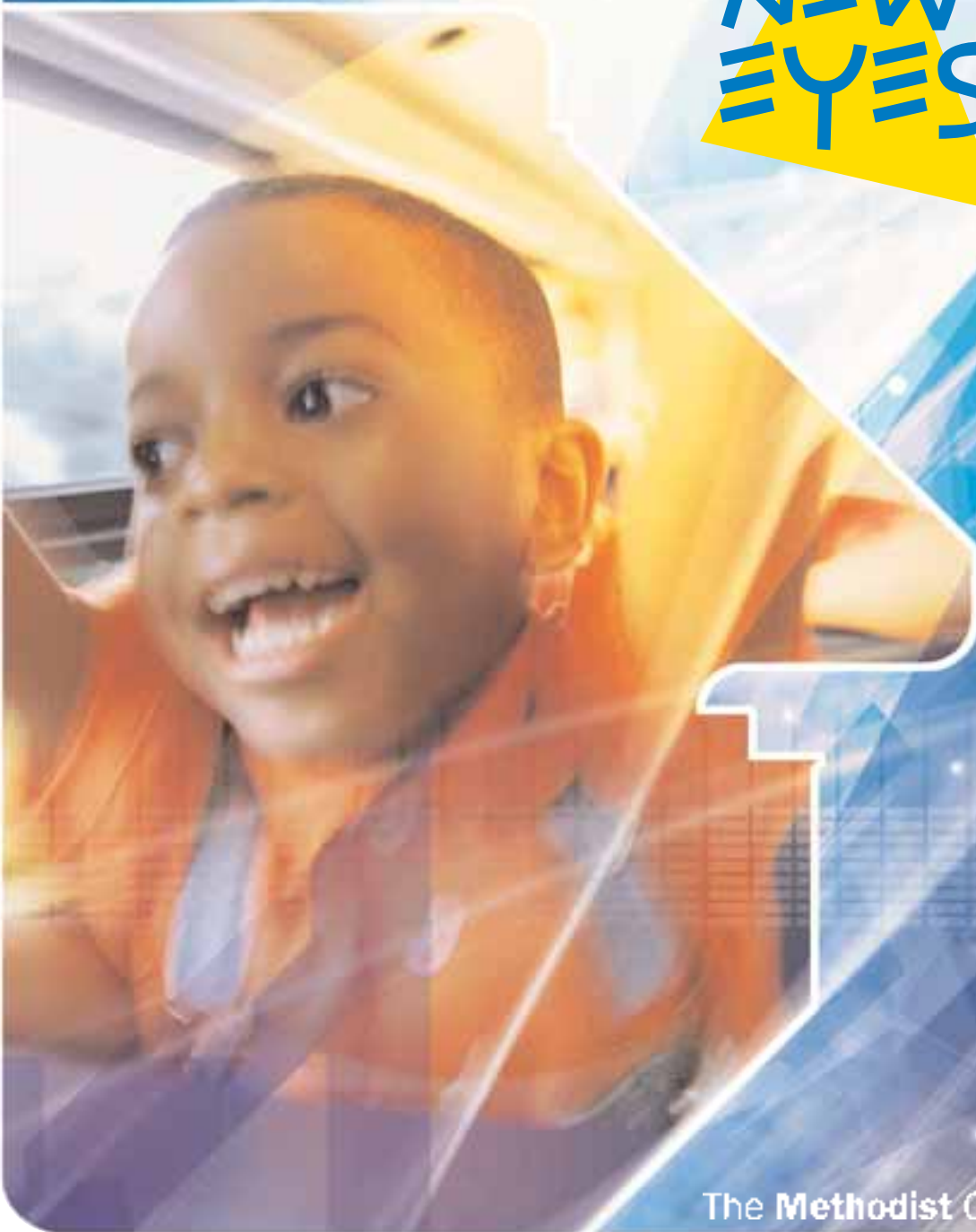




Our Calling



The Methodist Church 

Our Calling is a major priority for The Methodist Church.
We are using it to clarify and renew our work towards the Kingdom of God.

In this, as in many things, listening to children is vital.
Talking with children can give us New Eyes
and save us from missing half of the picture.



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Jesus says that we must 'turn and become like a child' if we are to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. To become like children, we have to listen to children and see what it is that they are like. This is an enjoyable and rewarding process. The reason we don't do very much of it is clearly not because there is no pleasure in it. So why do we avoid listening to children? Do we think perhaps that Jesus was wrong? Do adults have more important things to do? Do we perhaps secretly think children don't have anything important to offer?

New Eyes offers you some comments and questions expressed by children during discussions about God and Church. If you let them, they will enable you to see Our Calling through their eyes. We hope you will then want to have similar conversations of your own with children.

'Which children?' you may be asking. They may be in or around church on a Sunday or they may be visiting grandchildren, in the toddler group that hires the hall or at Brownies. They may come to your coffee mornings or on school visits.



New Eyes may lead you to review the encouragement offered to children in your church and the ongoing pattern of listening to children.

SERVICE

Question: Why is it important for us to learn about people all around the world?

Megan (10): So we understand that God made them, and it doesn't matter what they look like on the outside, they're the same on the inside.

Eleanor (8): So we know how they feel. A good phrase that we learned today in assembly was 'never judge a book by its cover'.

What helps you check that this learning is constantly happening in your church?

WORSHIP

Question: What do you think our church should be like?

Eleanor (8): I think it should be colourful, bright and graceful.

What three adjectives would individuals and groups choose in your church?

LEARNING & CARING

Question: Why do you think we learn stories from the Bible?

Rachel (11): To make us feel special.

A surprising answer? When did a Bible story last do that for you?

Children have lots of questions, one group gave these:

- Why did God make wasps that sting?
- How did God make us?
- How did God make people steal?
- What does Jesus look like?

When and where does your church hear the questions children are asking?

EVANGELISM

Question: What do you like about your church?

Rachel (11): I like the people because even if you don't know them at the start, you get to know them because they're friendly.

Matthew (5): Because I get to sing hymns and I like being in Sunday School and I like my friends and I like God and Jesus and everyone knows that God and Jesus are very good to them.

What encourages friendship between children, young people and adults in your church?

Eleanor said: she enjoys going to church because some of her friends go. 'And my question is why don't so many men go as ladies?'

What is your answer to her question?



In September 2003 a New Eyes Booklet will be available, packed with activities to enable your church to listen to and include children and all ages in the Our Calling process. Use this form to order your copy from Methodist Publishing House.

TO: METHODIST PUBLISHING HOUSE, 4 JOHN WESLEY ROAD, PETERBOROUGH PE4 6ZP
ORDER FORM FOR NEW EYES BOOKLET (REF GE233) AVAILABLE FROM SEPTEMBER 2003

PLEASE SEND MEFREE COPY/IES OF THE NEW EYES BOOKLET IN SEPTEMBER 2003.

Church:

Name:

Address:

.....Postcode:

Additional copies of this New Eyes leaflet are also available from MPH (ref GE232)

- Have conversations about these and similar questions with children you know and really listen to what the children say.
- Arrange an occasion for leaders of children's, youth and adult groups to meet and discuss this experience of listening to children.

- Send off to Methodist Publishing House (using the form overleaf) for the New Eyes booklet (available September 2003).

It outlines learning activities, bible study and worship ideas for all ages within an action framework for the whole church.

- The New Eyes approach begins with a 'church family event' so set aside a date.

If you would like to tell us how you are listening to children in your church or if you have any questions at all, please contact Mrs Leslie Noon, Children's Section, 25 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5JR.
Telephone 020 7486 5502. E-mail noonl@methodistchurch.org.uk

**REMEMBER,
DON'T JUST
LISTEN,
ACT ON IT!**


The Methodist Church

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GE232