Sunday 28 March 2021 is the International Day of Prayer for Children and Youth, and this year’s theme is ‘Seen and Heard’. There is a saying, originating in 15th-century England, that ‘children should be seen and not heard.’ However, we believe that young people should be seen and heard in our churches; we believe the voices of children and youth are vital to the life of the church and that God can and does speak and work through young people to build his Kingdom in amazing ways.

We encourage you to use at least some of the following suggestions to actively include children and youth in your service for that Sunday, as well as in the life of your church going forward. Work with your young people and their leaders to plan this and make sure their voices are heard as part of this process. If helpful, use the ‘Service Survey’ document as a guide for gathering thoughts and suggestions from your children and youth.

**PRAYER**

As it is the International Day of Prayer for Children and Youth, it is obviously important to make prayer a component of the service. Here are some different ways you could include this:

- Have the older people in your corps gather around your children and youth to pray for them.
- Prior to the service, speak with the children and youth in your corps to discuss their needs and concerns. Ask them what they see as the major issues facing young people in your community. These could then be displayed during the service and prayed about. You could also have the congregation break into small groups to pray for these.
- Have some children and youth write prayers about issues affecting young people that they could pray from the platform during the service.
- If you do not have any children or young people at your corps, spend some time praying for the children and youth in your local community, your country and the rest of the world. Do some research into specific issues facing young people in each of these areas that people could pray about.

**TESTIMONY**

- Have some young people share during the service about what God has done and is doing in their lives. This could be live or pre-recorded if you have the means to do so.

**MUSIC**

- Have your young people choose the songs you include in the service. If they are able to and comfortable doing so, they could also provide the music and lead times of worship.
- Include some fun, upbeat songs that the children will engage with and provide basic instruments (drums, shakers, timbrels, maracas, etc.) for them to play.

**ARTISTIC EXPRESSION**

- Have young people perform a poem, dance, drama, song, etc., expressing what it means for them to have their voices heard and valued.

**THE MESSAGE**

- Use the Scripture, themes and questions contained in the provided study material to prepare a message that is relevant to your congregation.
- If there is a young person willing to, they could deliver the message. Work with them to prepare this if necessary, and make sure they feel supported and encouraged.
- As part of the message, encourage the older people in your congregation to reflect on how they make space for young people to be seen and heard in their lives and in your church. You could encourage them to come up with one way they are going to commit to doing this better going forward.