

GENERAL SYNOD 2018

Liturgical Advisory Committee Report Secunder: The Revd Julie Bell

**Embargoed Against Delivery
Check Against Delivery**

Archbishop/Bishop, in seconding the report of the Liturgical Advisory Committee I would like to bring before Synod some projects which are being undertaken by the children's ministry and music sub-committees.

The LAC children's ministry sub-group is looking at developing resources to support the full engagement of children in Sunday worship. We are delighted to be joined by Lydia Monds, the co-ordinator of the Children's Ministry Network, and to be working together towards the baptismal goal of encouraging children to take their place within the life and worship of Christ's Church. We want to realize the full potential of children as members of the worshipping community, as those who give and receive and both learn and bring their own challenges and insights. It is encouraging to see the tide turning on the idea that children cannot understand or engage in regular corporate worship, and an increasing recognition of the biblical template of coming to know Christ together as a multi-generational worshipping community. This also supports the continued sharing of God's word in everyday family life, as the book of Deuteronomy suggests. The focus on corporate worship does not diminish the importance of child-specific groups and activities, but rather sees these as most effective when they are set alongside the regular experience of Sunday worship, and are connected to it.

We are working towards providing case studies and guidelines on the engagement of children in the forms of service currently in use in the Church of Ireland, including Morning Prayer, Holy Communion, Service of the Word, Holy Baptism, seasonal services, and the new service, *Morning and Evening Prayer for Use on Sundays*. We have put together some research questions which we hope can be explored by Children's Ministry Network representatives across the dioceses in a variety of worship settings. We are looking to find out which portions of the main Sunday morning service children are experiencing. Is there a balance of core texts and actions which they will easily memorise, and variety which helps

them explore the whole biblical story through the seasons? Are the words, symbols and actions of worship capturing their imagination and building a strong pattern of memories around the biblical story? Or is our worship too wordy to allow children, and indeed adults, to engage deeply? We hope in the near future to share resources which will help us to work intentionally and imaginatively in this area.

Following the completion of resources to accompany *Thanks & Praise*, the music sub-committee has returned to the area of helping congregations to re-engage with the singing of Psalms and Canticles. If we are to keep alive the biblical tradition of singing Scripture we will need attractive, compelling musical resources to carry these texts into living memory once again. The music sub-committee has circulated a survey to clergy on the use of canticles in worship, to be returned by 18th May so that the LAC can look at the findings at its May meeting. Peter Thompson is working to make available a user guide to the canticles and also a commentary on the *Singing Psalms* resource. Work in this area will be ongoing for the LAC, and we pray that there will be a renewal of biblical song in our worship, in a way that is true to the vitality and power of these texts, and that enables them to be held in our mouths and hearts.

Please do not hesitate to contact the children's ministry or music sub-committee of the LAC with any comments or queries. With this it is my pleasure to second the report of the Liturgical Advisory Committee.