



LIVING
IN LOVE
& FAITH

with *Young People*

A resource for using the
Living in Love and Faith resources
with young people

CONTENTS

1. Why Living in Love and Faith?	3
2. Youth Work Principles and Living in Love and Faith	4
Voluntary Participation	4
Empowerment.....	4
Equal Opportunity.....	4
Informal Education	5
3. Pastoral Principles	6
4. Practicalities	7
The LLF website and resources	7
After the Course: sharing your reflections and learning.....	7
5. Pastoral Matters	8
Sharing personal stories	8
External support	8
6. Extra Resources	10
A Prayer	10
Pastoral Principles	10
LGBTQ+ History	10

1. Why Living in Love and Faith?

Living in Love and Faith is a Church of England initiative to invite the whole church to learn together about questions of identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage. It hopes to create braver, safer spaces for learning together in a way that deepens our understanding of different perspectives and of our different lived experiences.

Churches are being invited to engage with the LLF resources as part of a process of learning, listening and discerning together a way forward for the Church of England. It is vital that young people are part of this important process so that their voices and lived experiences are heard and included in the feedback to the national church. The bishops have committed themselves to listening deeply to the experience and learning of people right across the church who have engaged together with others in using the LLF resources. This listening will lead to a period of discernment and decision-making in 2022. The LLF resources have been designed to help groups develop braver and safer spaces than in the past, recognising that all are part of God's family – no matter what age – and where mutual respect is rooted in the love of Christ.

When initiating the themes of Living in Love and Faith, it is important to challenge ourselves as companions alongside young people as to “why” we are encouraging this open dialogue with young people. We are being asked to listen, learn and respond to each other with respect, love, compassion and grace. Churchgoers of all ages and traditions are being invited to contribute to the Church's discernment and decision-making process. No one is expected to become an expert and there is no expectation for individuals to reach firm conclusions. The hope is rather to draw people together from a range of perspectives, lived experiences and traditions within the church, to learn together and bring about a culture of unconditional love and welcome within youth settings and the wider church.

2. Youth Work Principles and Living in Love and Faith

Living in Love and Faith is about learning together to better understand each other and questions of identity, sexuality relationships and marriage. In this section we will consider some principles of youth work which may help to inform the way these discussions are facilitated in a youth group. These principles work well alongside the Pastoral Principles of Living Well Together, which we will explore later.

Youth work is often built around four core principles¹, each glued together by the most basic of ingredients – dialogue².

Voluntary Participation

Young people should be given a choice regarding their participation in all youth work settings. Applying this principle to journeying with young people when having LLF conversations is crucial.. Young people should be offered the opportunity to journey alongside their youth worker or other facilitator, be able to participate in the conversations at a level with which they are comfortable, and with clear boundaries from the youth worker or facilitator. The Pastoral Principles of LLF should undergird these conversations.

Empowerment

Empowerment is an extension and broadening of voluntary participation, giving clear and real choice to young people, hearing and listening to their voice, and working alongside them to fulfil their goals. When having LLF conversations with young people, empowerment builds on voluntary participation. Empowerment means actively listening to the stories of young people, discovering where they are in their own lives, and giving them the tools to develop and articulate their points of view. This could include providing reading materials or attending learning opportunities together, and ensuring a balanced and broad range of opinions are explored together. Following the LLF course should ensure that young people are able to consider their point of view in an informed way, balancing their understanding of LGBT+ issues, biblical understanding, and Christian faith.

Equal Opportunity

Equal opportunity challenges oppression and celebrates diversity. Equal opportunity ensures a true and profound welcome for all, speaks out for the oppressed, and amplifies the voice of young people. When facilitating LLF conversations with young people, this simply means giving the same opportunities to each participant so that they can share

¹ Based on K Young, *The Art of Youth Work* (Lyme Regis: Russell House, 2006) p. 18 and D. Brierley, *Joined Up: An introduction to Youthwork and Ministry* (Carlisle: Autentic Lifestyle, 2003)

² <https://infed.org/mobi/developing-youth-work-chapter-7-informal-education/> accessed 21 April 2020

their point of view. The implications of 'equal opportunity' for the Church outside of LLF conversations are much more complicated, and highlight the importance of the conversations we are having.

Informal Education

Informal education is an intentional, dialogical process.³ It requires voluntary participation and can be the means by which empowerment and equal opportunity are realised. Churches and youth groups are ideal settings for informal education to happen, particularly in small settings where conversation can thrive and go in new directions around the theme being explored. LLF conversations are a potential gift to informal educators. As we journey with the group, understanding the process of informal education balancing intentionality with flexibility, space is given for meaningful dialogue. Informal education allows us to go in the directions of learning which are most helpful for young people to explore, whether that is discovering a new theological framework, hearing stories from LGBT+ people, learning about different biblical understandings, or considering views and beliefs of those who think differently to them.

³ <https://infed.org/mobi/developing-youth-work-chapter-7-informal-education/> accessed 21 April 2020

3. Pastoral Principles

The Pastoral Principles were developed in parallel with the Living in Love and Faith resources. Their aim is to help us all to play our part in creating safe spaces for difficult conversations. The Principles invite us to think about the obstacles we put in the way of learning together, trusting each other and living well together as disciples of Jesus Christ. The Principles are embedded within the LLF course. The Pastoral Principles for Living Well Together invite us to:

Address Ignorance

Ignorance is addressed by learning together about identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage in the light of our call to be faithful to both Scripture and the Church's tradition, and by learning and listening together with people who have different perspectives and lived experiences in relation to identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage.

Acknowledge prejudice

We need to welcome people as they are, loving them unconditionally and seeking to see Christ in them. To do this, we need to reflect deeply on our attitudes and behaviour in order to nurture understanding and respect between people who disagree.

Speak into Silence

By remembering that we are the Body of Christ, called to relate deeply and openly with one another, we will be ready to share what is on our hearts as well as in our minds. To do this we will need to practise deep listening without a hidden agenda that encourages conversations about questions of human identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage.

Admit hypocrisy

We must not condemn certain behaviours and attitudes while turning a blind eye to others, remembering that we are all weak, fallible, broken and equally in need of God's grace. We can do this by learning from one another about the challenge to holy living and the wideness of God's mercy as the Spirit moves within, among and between us.

Cast out fear

We need to consciously demonstrate and live out what it means for perfect love to cast out fear, even in situations of disagreement, by modelling openness and vulnerability as each of us wrestles prayerfully with the costliness of Christian discipleship.

Pay attention to power

As we remember that God's Spirit alone can bring transformation into our lives and the lives of others, we will be alert to attempts to control others and how our own positions exert power in hidden ways. We need to follow Christ's example of service and compassion as we accompany one another in following the way of the cross.

4. Practicalities

The LLF website and resources

The LLF course and other resources are on the LLF Learning Hub. To access this, you will need to register from the Church of England website LLF page which is www.churchofengland.org/LLF. This contains a useful 3-minute trailer film about LLF. At the bottom of the page you will be invited to register on the [LLF Hub](#) using your email address.

Do explore the Hub, and especially the [LLF Course](#) which is what you will be using with the young people. Notice also the 16 story films, the book and the podcasts. It would be prudent to familiarize yourself with their content in advance of using any of them.

The course has five sessions, with a video for each session. Each video is self-explanatory and there is an accompanying course [booklet](#). Each session has the following components:

- A reflection on one or more of the Pastoral Principles
- Two 'teaching' sessions and discussion questions
- A Bible study with discussion questions
- Two story films
- Reflection at the beginning and end, using prayers and/or Bible verses

There are Course Leader's notes for the Course as a whole [here](#), as well as Leader's Notes for each session. We also have an adapted version of the Leader's notes to take into account groups which include young people.

Importantly, there is guidance on how to ensure a 'braver and safer space' when facilitating learning and conversations about questions of identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage. This guidance can be found [here](#).

After the Course: sharing your reflections and learning

Everyone who engages with the LLF resources is invited to feedback through an [online survey](#) and by offering a [creative response](#) as an individual or as a group.

Spend some time thinking about how members of the group might like to respond, either as a group or individually. You can always continue this in another session, especially if you want to respond creatively.

Consider giving feedback to the national church in some way – perhaps [completing the survey](#) together or responding more [creatively](#) – a blog, podcast, video, mood board, letter, art, dance, song, poetry. If the Group is in agreement, you might share the response more widely.

The end of the last session in the course booklet has some questions which might be used as a prompt.

5. Pastoral Matters

Sharing personal stories

As you and your group explore the various viewpoints and thinking on identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage, you may find that some young people hold different views from your church's teaching. The LLF course should enable a safe space for young people to express and explore their differing perspectives and feelings.

Ensuring young people have a good knowledge and grasp of the complex theological and personal issues surrounding identity, sexuality relationships and marriage empowers them to form their own opinions and allows them to have a better grasp of your church's perspective. Youth leaders and group facilitators help to create a space in which young people feel able to share their own thoughts, ideas and experiences.

Having been empowered through learning, some young people may feel more able to be open about their sexual experiences and feelings. In the honest sharing of views, be it a coherent understanding of orthodox Biblical teaching, or a personal response to issues of sexuality, the key is to listen well. Active and non-judgemental listening skills will help the leader understand, hear clearly what is being said, ask questions for clarification, and offer any necessary support.

Young people who share their stories and deeply held views are in a vulnerable place. They need to know they are loved and cared for. As you have LLF conversations with your group explain that you will journey alongside the group as they share their thoughts and ideas. Remind them often that you care for them and that they are deeply loved by God.

Unless explicitly stated otherwise, the confidentiality of what the young people say should be observed, especially when a young person may be disclosing their own sexual orientation and/or gender identity. We should never pressure a young person into disclosing details of their sexual orientation or gender identity to anyone else, and the young person should only reveal this to others if and when they feel comfortable, safe, and confident to do so. Whatever our theology or beliefs, and however well we might know a young person's family or friends, we would never want to place them in a situation that could cause them harm by inappropriately sharing what we have heard. However, any safeguarding concern raised should be reported separately following the appropriate process.

External support

There are many charities and organisations that can provide external support for you as a leader, and for young people and their families. Before signposting your group or individuals to any of these organisations, familiarise yourself with what each has to offer.

Counselling and listening for young people

Childline – Free counselling phone line for young people 0800 1111

NSPCC – Free counselling phone line for adults concerned about a young person’s safety
0808 800 5000

Counselling and listening for all people

Samaritans – Free counselling phone line for all ages 116 123

Counselling, listening and support for LGBTQ+ people

Switchboard - LGBTQ+ phone info line 0300 330 0630

Stonewall - LGBTQ+ charity 0800 0502020

Albert Kennedy Trust - Help for homeless LGBTQ+ young people

UK Black Pride - Black LGBTQ+ movement

Regard - LGBTQ+/Disability charity

Counselling, listening and support relating to mental health

Mind - LGBTQ+ friendly mental health charity

Young Minds – Children and young people’s mental health charity

UK Christian charities working to support LGBT+ Christians

OneBodyOneFaith - Christian LGBTQ+ organisation

Inclusive Church - Christian LGBTQ+ friendly organisation with an inclusive church finder

Living Out – for Christians who hold a traditional understanding of sexuality

True Freedom Trust – for same-sex attracted Christians who hold a traditional understanding of sexuality

6. Extra resources

A Prayer

Lord Jesus,
write the story of your grace and truth
into the lives of your people
that, believing in you,
the world may have life in your name. Amen.

Pastoral Principles

The *Pastoral Principles for Living Well Together* have been compiled by the Pastoral Advisory Group within the Church of England. There are two films that introduce these Principles:

[Introduction to the Pastoral Principles](#)

[Pastoral Principles in Conversation](#)

There is also a [Pastoral Principles Course](#) which contains further reflections, Bible Studies and discussion questions.

LGBTQ+ History

Young people may not be familiar with the changes in society and the church in relation to questions of identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage. Here are some pointers to resources for you if you feel that providing some of this background would be helpful.

In society: There have been enormous changes in the way that society has responded to LGBTI+ people over the past half century, and these have been mirrored in numerous changes to law and policy. You may want to explore what young people's perceptions are about the history of sexuality and questions relating to LGBTI+ people.

A good summary of the recent history of sexuality in UK can be found in the LLF Book in Part Two [Chapter 5](#) pages 98-101.

In the Church of England: It may be helpful to ask young people about their understanding of what the Church of England's current positions on questions of sexuality, relationships and marriage are.

A good summary can be found in the LLF Book Part Two [Chapter 6](#) pages 135-147.