16. 3Generate and the Voices of Children and Young People Report 2025

Name and contact details	Genesis Padgett Youth President youthpresident@methodistchurch.org.uk
Resolutions	16/1. The Conference receives the Report. 16/2. The Conference recognises and celebrates the desire of the children and young people for a deeper understanding of scripture. The Conference notes the resources available connexionally and therefore (i) strongly encourages Circuits and Districts to equip and enable those involved in ministry with children and young people to support them in Biblical exploration and study and including a broad range of texts and perspectives and (ii) directs that connexional resources be promoted in ways that are accessible to children and young people. 16/3. The Conference encourages more frequent and local gatherings for children and young people within Circuits and Districts, which enable the development of faith formation and fellowship in the context of a larger community.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report focuses on the voices of children and young people as well as reporting on 3Generate. It is important to note that the resolutions have arisen from consultation and input from children and young people across the Connexion, including the 3Generate Youth Representatives and children and young people at 3Generate.

2. 3Generate Summary

2.1 The Mission Committee received a report from the Youth President evaluating 3Generate 2025 against the aims it set in the previous year. What follows is a short summary.

2.2 3Generate 2025 was the largest 3Generate so far, with 1714 children and young people attending, along with 648 group leaders and helpers, representing 142 groups from 22 Districts. The smooth running of the event was enabled by 362 staff and volunteers on the delivery team and 11 youth reps.

2.3 Since being at the NEC, 3Generate has seen a continued rise in the number of children and young people attending from approximately 1100 in 2021 to 1714 in 2025.

2.4 This year the space contracted from the NEC was increased, which ensured that more children and young people could be accommodated, especially in the camping village, and provided a larger contained space for the 4-7s. It also meant that there was now a dedicated space for the main stage (the Orb Stage) within its own hall, preventing noise bleed to other venues and an opportunity to include a larger worship element across the weekend.

2.5 This year's venues were the Chapel, the Well, Health & Wellbeing, the Park, Tech Hub, the Theatre, Discovery Centre, the Globe, Great Outdoors, Town Hall, the Bungalow, the 4-7s Venue, Creation Station, the Leisure Centre, Village Green, and Sensory. New Venues include Refresh, Comms Corner, the Portal, In the Beginning, The Lounge, the Foundry, Sound Studio, Animal Magic, the Orb Stage.

2.6 The theme for 3Generate this year was 'A Journey of a Lifetime'. Children and young people took home with them a compass and cards with Bible references on that linked to the theme.

2.7 This year, instead of just being based in the Park, the Youth Representatives walked through the site, meeting and speaking to the children and young people. They facilitated questions and activities which they devised on the Rep residential weekend in the summer before 3Generate.

3. Youth Representation

Youth President 2026/2027	Gracie Silk
Methodist Conference Representative 2026	Hugo Hildred
Methodist Youth Representatives	Hugo Hildred Destiny Ogbonnaya Lewis Tropman Amanda Amarteifio Chibudem Joan Iwu Chinonyerem Marian Iwu Georgina Walton Iona Fielding Joseph Gibson Josh Thornton Marvelous Fasina Niamh Flowerday Olamide (Daniel) Hassan Victor Odametey

3.1 Youth Representatives who have finished their service are Isaac Amankwaah, Dominic Bevan, Kunashe Chidziya, Joseph Cho Ming Cheung, Isaac Nicholson, Jamie Nyirenda-Scott, Genesis Padgett*, Reuben Peterson, and Gracie Silk. *Genesis is currently serving as Youth President 2025/2026.

4. Hearing the Voices of children and Young People at 3Generate

4.1 The responses to the questions asked by the Youth Representatives give an incredibly helpful source of data and are useful to analyse and to better understand what our children and young people think. The questions to be asked were devised by the Youth Reps with participants at 3Generate choosing which question to answer. The Youth Reps used the opportunity that 3Generate provides to talk to children and young people while they are engaged with thinking about Methodism and their faith lives over the weekend. Each year the Youth Reps work hard to improve the method of asking questions.

4.2 There were 16 questions asked, created to look like playing cards to give a more informal feel to them, which were:

1. What are you passionate about? How can you include this in Church?
2. What change do you want to see in the world?
3. What change do you want to see in Methodism?
4. What change do you want to see in your church community? What change can you ask for? How can you make this change happen?

5. Why have you come to 3Gen? Are you having fun and tuning into God?
6. What would make 3Gen more impactful on your life at home?
7. What venue has had the most impact on you and why?
8. If you could add a venue, what would it be? What would it do that is not seen at 3Gen already? What does 3Gen need?
9. How can the Church support young people around mental health?
10. What feeds your faith?
11. What do you find unfair or unjust in your life? How can your church help you?
12. (The Lounge venue) How have you coped with the stress of exams? How can the Church help you and others more?
13. What do you think the Church and people in leadership need to hear from young people?
14. Where can you get involved in your church today?
15. How can the church better reach your generation?
16. Do you think the church reaches your generation?
17. Other comments.

4.3 We had positive responses from children and young people at 3Generate. A sizeable number of children and young people spoke with the Youth Reps throughout 3Generate. Many more young people have spoken with the Youth President on their visits around the Connexion. The responses were collated and then arranged under four headings: Faith, Sports and Activities, Social Topics, and 3Generate.

Below is a summary of the responses received.

4.4 There were responses about 3Generate, specifically enjoying or wanting more sport, having more girls only sport sessions at 3Generate and more encouragement from churches for girls to join sport groups. Nearly half of responses to do with Venues were about how great the Orb Stage was and how the children and young people want even more worship during 3Generate.

4.5 A significant number of responses was connected to the topic of worship. Many shared that all age worship is not appropriate for youth, as it is aimed at either children or adults. One response says, “At my church, we sit at the front and listen to stories, but they are too young for us 14-year-olds, who want to lead little sections of worship.” Other responses include, “I enjoy singing and dancing and want to include this in church,” “More worship resources for young people to use in church; I want to attend church where more young people host worship, we want more accessible worship.” The responses highlight that young people want to do more in the church, they want to be seen, heard, and valued. They want to learn more about the Bible and understand Sunday services by having more straight forward language or teaching in a way they can access. Preachers and

ministers should recognise that children and young people are different ages, and all have different maturity levels. A 'one size fits all' model of worship may not work for children and young people.

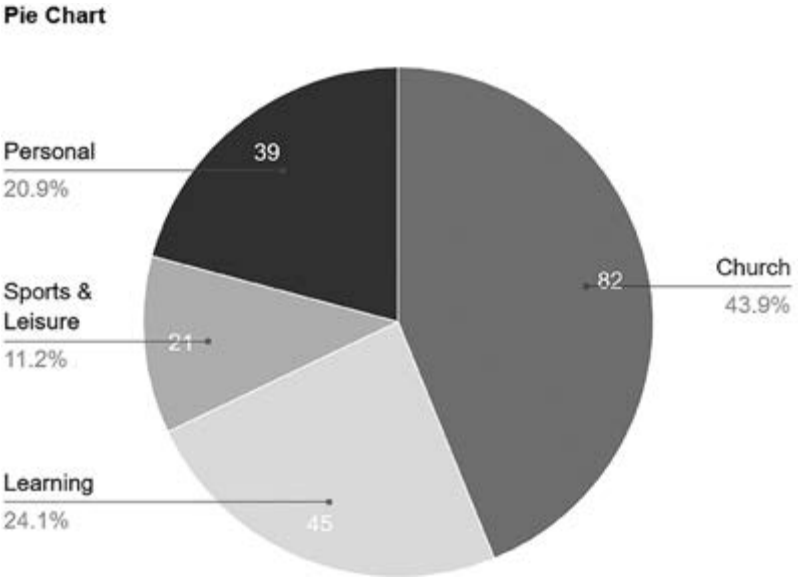
4.6 Young people commented on what they thought was unfair in life. These ranged from homelessness to struggles at school to the news and media. One of the responses was "General lack of respect, compassion and empathy, increased entitlement." They want to be included in the church and respected as people, not just seen as another child or young person. There were other responses such as, "News/media being one sided, if other side is shown people may have a change of heart." "Unable to pick the options for my GCSEs." "Homework, it would be good if we could have study sessions at church." One participant commented positively on the inclusiveness of the Methodist Church, which they hoped could be the case in other contexts, too. Regarding homelessness, young people shared their appreciation of their churches tackling this issue locally, eg with meals for homeless people or fundraisers.

4.7 When the young people spoke about what helped their faith to grow the responses showed the significance of prayer, big events, being part of a community, and worship. There were responses about being together in the church community, making new friends with other young people across the district, and youth groups such as Boys' Brigades help feed their faith.

4.8 Children and young people are eager to learn more and to understand more of the Bible but also of their own faith. They want to be encouraged and share in conversations that challenge them to think and reflect on this.

5. Commitment Cards

5.1 At 3Generate, children and young people were asked by our Youth Representatives to commit to something when they went home from 3Generate.



5.2 Most commitments from our children and young people were to do with church related activities, including, to pray more, to read the Bible more, to commit to spending more time with God, worshipping Jesus more, to be respectful and love God to the fullest. The most common commitment was to read their Bible more often. The responses that are personal are about becoming kinder, more responsible, and more adventurous by helping others, keeping spaces tidy, trying new things, caring for family and pets, and making positive choices for themselves and the world. Children and young people care about helping others for a sense of accomplishment and the opportunity to develop empathy. There is a desire for connection and belonging from our children and young people.

6. Youth Visits around the Connexion

6.1 An important aspect of the role of Youth President continues to be travelling across the Connexion to listen to, support, and learn firsthand from children and young people in their local contexts. These visits have been to district, circuit, and

church events, in addition to 3Generate. The Youth President and the Youth Reps have visited district youth events which are fantastic opportunities to meet many young people, however, visiting smaller youth groups brings other benefits of being able to delve deeper into what the children and young people are speaking about. The Youth President gathers responses in different ways, often having an area where children and young people can write down answers to questions by doing activities, such as post-it notes, drawing, or word clouds. The Youth President also has conversations with groups of children and young people during the events.

6.2 Since March last year, Bea Hulme (Youth President 2024/2025) visited places including Sheffield, Surrey, Cheltenham, Gamelsby, and Newcastle. Since September, the current Youth President has visited the Yorkshire North and East District weekend (Flourish), the Southampton District, with a visit to Salisbury, Manchester, Sheffield Girls' Brigades, Sheffield District Youth Residential, MOCCs youth group, Birmingham District's youth event (Amplify), and Long Hanborough. The Youth President, with a Youth Rep, also participated in the URC Youth Assembly, strengthening ecumenical relationships.

6.3 These visits have provided valuable opportunities to hear directly from young people and those who work alongside them, to celebrate good practice, and to identify shared challenges and priorities. They have also helped to strengthen relationships across Districts, Circuits, and partner organisations. Further visits are planned after the writing of this report and before the current Youth President term ends to RAF Leeming, Wales Big Day Out, Sheffield District Youth Weekend. Chester and Stoke Youth, Cliff Festival, Sunderland FC, Girls' Brigades, and Boys' Brigades and the Isle of Man. The Youth President keeps a record of district visits showing where the past Youth Presidents have been, to enable a fair distribution of visits across the Connexion. This ensures a wider range of young people and children get their voices heard.

Some of the responses from visits are as follows:

6.4 Throughout the conversations, over different visits, a considerable number of responses were about food. They range from how the children and young people love cake after services all the way to asking for lunch after church. "We like biscuits"; "I enjoy cooking during youth"; "More allergy friendly snacks"; "I like snacks"; "Give us ice cream"; "Lunch for everyone after every service". These responses range from just wanting food to activities together, such as "Hotpot Dinner together" or "Cooking and baking at church". These comments would

suggest that hospitality and generosity are important to our young people. This is not just about biscuits, but about feeling valued and welcomed in the church. The Evangelism and Growth Team believe this is important in welcoming newcomers. It is important for the church to share a meal, and these comments really show us that young people care about this. “We can make the church a better place by being more social.”

6.5 There were also responses about inclusion, some of which are, “‘More services for different age groups.”, “We want something that appeals to teenagers.”. “Make quiet rooms for people who feel unwell or don’t like loud noises.”, “Help make churches be neurodivergent friendly.”, “Make churches more interactive, I can’t ask questions about things I don’t understand.”, “I want to be noticed.” “Have more surface level awareness about the young people we have, show that you care about individuals, connect with the young people not just caring about numbers.”. In addition to this, young people are asking to be a part of the service too; they are asking for “Services where young people can play the instruments and control the service”. “We need to be included in the services.”; “Let us young people lead services.”; “We would like more trust for older youth in church.”. When visiting a Girls’ Brigade group it was noted that, for many attending, Girls’ Brigade was their only experience of church, with worship being a highlight, and they expressed an appreciation for the community and friendship that exists.

6.6 All these responses from 3Generate and visits around the Connexion are helpful but can leave a margin of misinterpretation. But they indicate how desperately young people want to join in services and feel like part of the church community. Young people are expressing a desire to be active and welcomed members of the congregation, treated as friends and equals, not just as young persons. Some churches do this and are a clear space where children and young people can be accepted for who they are; one group of young people said that they feel comfortable talking to their leaders and friends at church about mental health. Another young person said, “I know who to talk to about my mental health such as teachers and parents. I am part of my church’s mental health committee.” Some churches are doing a good job sharing and caring about young people and their mental health which is acknowledged by the young people.

6.7 Another theme that came through strongly in conversations was around social justice with key themes of poverty, war, racism, and general unkindness seen in everyday lives. The responses show a desire for a fairer world, sharing responses about oppression, pollution, poverty, and war. They show how we need to respect each other and the planet. This links with the six hopes of JPIT: the environment, refugees and migration, peace, inequality, the economy and democracy.

7. Local Agents of Change

7.1 The Local Agents of Change is a programme that empowers children and young people between the ages of 8 and 17 to be more involved in their church communities to effect change. Participants, with the help of a named adult Local Supporter, engage in consultations with their peers to discuss what matters to them and share their findings with their Local Church or community. This initiative aims to foster a sense of belonging and community spirit among young people. There are 15 groups of young people from around the Connexion already engaged in this pilot year.

7.2 Twice a year the Local Agents receive a consultation pack which they use to hear opinions of their peers and then feed that back to the Local Church. Local Agents also meet with the Youth Reps to feedback their findings from their consultations (or alternatively feedback via an online form).

7.3 The first of the consultation packs was released in January on the theme of welcome. The pack contains four questions:

- How welcome do you feel at your local Methodist church?
- What does or could help you to feel welcome at your local Methodist church?
- What does or could help you to feel an active and valued member of the church community?
- What is the 'important stuff' happening for your age group at the moment and how can your church help?

7.4 The Youth President and Youth Reps met the first cohort in March 2026 to hear their responses and feedback gained from their consultations.

A summary of their responses is as follows:

7.5 The church is very welcoming and friendly, with lots of children and fun, Bible-based activities. They feel welcome because their ideas, like starting a youth club, are taken seriously and acted on. Young people enjoy games, crafts, drama, singing, and choosing songs or playing instruments in services. They spoke of feeling comfortable, making good friends, and loving small touches like biscuits and beanbags. Their engagement in services varies depending on the preacher, and while they can talk to preachers, the age gap and "old-fashioned" conversations sometimes make it less enjoyable. They feel welcomed and involved in activities like communion and helping with the offertory, and they feel comfortable going to leaders for support or prayer. Long-term members appreciate the strong relationships they have built while newer members also

feel valued. They help bring in new members by inviting friends, and having adults accompany newcomers. There are no strict rules about clothing which boosts confidence by helping them feel comfortable. There are fun events and activities that help connect young people to the church, such as Messy Church, 3Generate, and events during summer.

7.6 Mental health can affect how people relate to God. Mobile phones etc can be triggers. People can be very rude about different cultures - but there are lots of cultures in our church and that does not happen. We like that everyone is different.

7.7 Young people see how mental health and diversity are important factors in the church, they see peace and care in their community.

7.8 Young people have expressed a desire for even more young people to join the church. How can leaders and adults in the church encourage the young people that are already coming to invite more of their friends from school or clubs to join in?

7.9 Young people want to be active members of the community. In this question there were eager responses sharing how firstly a simple picnic was enough to spend quality time together in the community. All it takes is a picnic for more fellowship, we need to encourage fellowship more often.

7.10 These responses indicate a key theme that the church is being experienced as welcoming by those who are part of it. However, there is always room for improvement, churches may do well with inclusion once the young people are already in the church and they are “allowed to be who they are”. But there are few responses about how welcoming the church is for those who have never been before. Are churches currently welcoming those not already in the church? Some churches listen to and involve their young people, acting on what they are asking for, and really helping them feel welcomed and involved.

7.11 The Local Agents of Change have only had one meeting to gather feedback so far and already there have been responses that show how much the young people value a welcoming community.

8. Summary

8.1 This report shows key thoughts from children and young people from 3Generate and the Connexion. One key theme is that children and young people want to be actively involved in church life; there are young people asking to lead worship and

to be in a church that engages them as young people, in a relevant and accessible way.

8.2 Worship and faith are other significant priorities. Young people value community and events, but also want relatable language, and opportunities to explore the Bible in more depth. There is a strong theme about community, where young people are asking for a connection with others and to be seen as friends and equals. There is also a concern about social justice issues, including poverty, inequality, mental health, war, and climate change.

8.3 Some young people already feel welcomed and valued in their churches, where they can express themselves and have their ideas acted on.

8.4 Overall, young people are eager to grow in their faith, build relationships, feel valued, and play a meaningful role in the church.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

16/1. The Conference receives the Report.

16/2. The Conference recognises and celebrates the desire of the children and young people for a deeper understanding of scripture. The Conference notes the resources available connexionally and therefore (i) strongly encourages Circuits and Districts to equip and enable those involved in ministry with children and young people to support them in Biblical exploration and study, including a broad range of texts and perspectives, and (ii) directs that connexional resources be promoted in ways that are accessible to children and young people.

16/3. The Conference encourages more frequent and local gatherings for children and young people within Circuits and Districts, which enable the development of faith formation and fellowship in the context of a larger community.