

# Fact Sheet - Involving children and young people in creating and maintaining a safe faith community

***When everyone is involved in decision-making, everyone benefits.***

## **Benefits to children and young people:**

- Participation allows them to have their say about the issues that affect them
- Participation helps to make them feel empowered and involved in the issues facing them
- It can make them aware of potential risks, their own safety and what to do if they have any concerns
- Having children and young people involved means that they will know in advance what to expect if changes are made, and will be prepared to assist in making those changes happen
- The experience of being involved in the decision-making process will benefit the Faith Community in the long-term, by obtaining knowledge, skills and experience for future use

## **Benefits to the Faith Community:**

- Relationships between those in leadership with children and young people will improve. Higher levels of respect and trust will form, leading to a safe environment
- Input from children and young people will improve the quality of policies and procedures, and will ensure that these documents and processes are informed by their perspectives
- It will become easier to implement and reinforce policies and procedures, because they will already have knowledge of the policies and procedures through assisting in the development of them
- Involving children and young people provides insight that assists in making the Faith Community and the people safer
- It enriches the Faith Community as all people will be more confident and able to contribute new ideas

## **To involve children and young people effectively, Faith Communities need to remember:**

- Children and young people should be involved in decision-making in all areas that affect them, but need resources and empowerment to make it happen
- They need to be supported with their decision-making processes
- It is ok to introduce children and young people's participation gradually, as it requires support and resources to be effective. Start small, and gradually increase participation.

