Respecting Children

A handbook on growing up without violence

Churches’ Network for Non-violence
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Children are among the most vulnerable people in our society. It seems curious, therefore, that adults should resort to smacking them as a means to correct perceived bad behaviour; it is demeaning to both child and adult. Whatever the motive, smacking is an aggressive act, which only serves to model violence as either a tool to resolve dispute or as a punitive measure, and this is hardly a pattern of behaviour that we would wish children to reproduce as they grow into adults.

Children have a right to feel safe and secure in their upbringing; not only physically safe, but emotionally safe too, and adults have the moral responsibility to nurture children without recourse to actions that in any way diminish the child. This moral responsibility surely has to be shaped by the love of God for each one of us.

I am very pleased to lend my support to the Churches Network for Non-violence as they seek to find ways to promote non-violent relationships between children and adults. My prayer is that all children will be able to grow up in an environment in which they can flourish into the people God created them to be.

+Colin Coventry

The Rt. Revd Colin Bennetts
Bishop of Coventry 2006

Caritas-social action, the social justice agency of the Catholic Church in England and Wales are delighted to have been partners in the production of ‘Respecting Children’. Following Caritas involvement in the Children are Unbeatable campaign in 2004, the Catholic Bishops requested that we back up this campaign work with some resources/materials that would outline the basis of children’s rights. ‘Respecting Children’ aims to do this and will be useful in guiding parishes and other groups through the issues and debates in more detail.

Philomena Cullen, Policy Co-ordinator
Caritas – social action
Introduction

Respecting Children has been designed to encourage discussion and reflection on the needs of 21st century children. Children are people in their own right, with contributions to make and ideas to share about family life and community. It is widely acknowledged that violence against children fundamentally breaches their human rights, and this is clearly stated in Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The Convention requires States to protect children from ‘all forms of physical and mental violence’ while in the care of parents and others. Activities in the handbook encourage participants to find ways of putting the Convention articles into practice.

This handbook is concerned with finding ways of promoting non-violent relationships between children and the key adults in their lives. Issues and questions to do with the roles of churches and communities in relation to these topics are considered. The handbook also looks at ways in which people can actively campaign and contribute towards ending legalised violence against children.

The material can be adapted to meet local needs by church leaders, practitioners, facilitators, parents, children’s organisations, family life coordinators, trainers, educators and all those who use it. This is not a ‘parenting pack’, although positive parenting is discussed fully. Some people may wish to attend a positive parenting course after taking part in Respecting Children. It is beyond the scope of this handbook to discuss all forms of societal violence, but facilitators are free to include other relevant topics. An overview of the 8 topics follows the introduction.

The resources section includes a recommended booklist, and a list of useful contacts and web links. Worship notes reflecting the topics in the handbook will be posted regularly on the CNNV website.

Respecting Children has been assembled by the Churches’ Network for Non-violence (CNNV) in direct response to a recommendation by people who took part in the conference Growing up without violence – moving on from smacking (2001). The material was subsequently launched and discussed at the conference Parenting 21st Century Children: Growing up without violence held at the NSPCC, Leicester 2003, and revised in response to the recommendations of participants.
What’s in this Handbook?

Overview of the eight topics

These topics are not exhaustive and facilitators may wish to add additional relevant topics to meet local needs. Facilitators and participants are encouraged to find ways of involving children and young people in some of the activities.

The material is organised under eight topics and there is an optional introductory session. Each topic can be run as a ‘stand alone’ session or as a workshop of one or two hours or more, or the eight sessions can be run as a full eight week course. The material and activities can also be dipped into as background notes for workshops, talks, articles or house-groups etc.

Topic 1 – 21st-century children: needs and rights

This topic aims to raise greater awareness and respect for children as people in their own right. The needs of children and the issues facing them in the 21st century can be explored through discussion, by noticing how children and adults interact, or by talking about newspaper or magazine articles relating to the topic.

Participants are invited to reflect and draw on their own childhood experiences and relate these to the subject of the Rights of the Child. Concerns may be translated into action by considering how the findings of the group can be communicated to the rest of the church community.

Topic 2 – What is discipline? What is punishment?

Discipline seems to be one of the most misunderstood words in relation to parenting as it is often confused with punishment. This topic explores the influences on our thinking about discipline and punishment and includes a study of some relevant biblical texts. The key elements of positive non-violent discipline are explored.

Topic 3 – Moving on from smacking

This topic builds on the session about discipline and punishment and looks at how children are treated at home and in society. Smacking is considered from a child’s point of view and one of the activities encourages participants to look at countries where children are afforded the same protection from being hit in the home, as other family members.

Topic 4 – Creating non-violent environments

The impacts on children, of the environments in which they live, learn, socialise and play, are discussed. Participants have the opportunity to examine the effects of different forms of violence on children and are invited to do some research on TV and computer games. Different approaches to creating non-violent environments are also explored including the design of a space where children are encouraged to co-operate and learn positive social skills.
Topic 5 – Positive non-violent parenting
Many parents are unhappy about smacking their children and say they would rather not do so. This topic follows up the theme in Topic 2 with some practical positive parenting activities, looks at some common behaviour problems and discusses how to solve them using a positive approach. Step 2 considers what parents need in order to sustain a positive approach.

Topic 6 – Supporting children and parents in the local context
This topic explores the theme of supporting parents to sustain or change to a positive parenting style and considers the part local church communities can play in encouraging and supporting positive parenting. The importance of being aware of the needs of parents and children at different life stages, and of finding ways to consult with parents and children, is discussed.

Topic 7 – Developing a whole child policy
One of the triggers to looking seriously at children can be the development of good practice material for safeguarding children. Addressing the needs of the whole child can underpin the policy by looking at ways of preventing the abuse of children and promoting greater respect for children as people. Children were of central importance in Christ’s teaching about the new social order and this topic is concerned with the way churches engage with and respond to children at different stages of development.

Topic 8 – Taking action – speaking out
This topic looks at ways in which participants can respond to the challenges posed by the discussions in previous sessions. A summary of the key findings of previous sessions and recommendations made by participants can form the basis for any future action. From the light of their personal learning experiences participants are encouraged to find ways of speaking out and taking action in relation to promoting respect for children and enabling them to grow up without violence. The aims of the Children Are Unbeatable! Alliance, progress towards eliminating physical punishment in the home, and ways of supporting this work, is discussed.
Supporting children and parents in the local context

Aims

- To encourage churches and communities to be aware of the needs of parents and children at different life stages.
- To encourage churches and communities to find ways of supporting parents to sustain or change to a positive parenting style.

Step 1: Introduction

(10 minutes)

Introduce this topic by using:

- Handout 6:1
- Background reading from Handout 6:5
- Information from the National Family and Parenting Institute website: http://www.nfpi.org
- Information from the Parenting Education and Support Forum website: www.parenting-forum.org.uk
- Links from Caritas – social action: http://www.catholic-ew.org
- Links from Churches Together for Families: http://www.churchesandfamilies.org/
- ‘Your Family’, a free magazine produced by the NSPCC and Woolworths. Pick up a copy from Woolworths or download from www.nspcc.org.uk
- Current newspaper articles.

Step 2: Core activity

(35 minutes)

1. In the large group reflect further on the needs of 21st-century children as discussed in Session 1.
2. In small groups, discuss the sorts of support available in your community, church or group to meet some of the needs you have identified.
3. Suggest ways of consulting with children and parents about some of their needs. Report findings to the large group.
**Step 3: Optional activities**
Choose one or more, depending on the time available.

**Activity A**
*(35 minutes)*

**Helping people to feel confident about positive parenting**
- In the large group suggest practical ways of giving support to parents so that they feel confident in using positive parenting methods.
- List some of the barriers you might encounter and plan how to address these.
- Make a leaflet or poster of useful contacts and resources available for parents in the local neighbourhood. Consult with others and invite them to add to the content of the leaflet.

**Activity B**
*(40 minutes)*

**Valuing and supporting parents and children**
Read Discussion paper 6:1 Keeping Families Afloat.
How can churches demonstrate that they value children and parents?
Discuss in small groups:
- What are the issues that would cause you to make connections with people you think would be in need of practical and emotional support? How would you go about making those connections?
- What resources and supports are available in your church and community, for people who have been abused as children?
- Plan ways of gathering the resources identified in your discussion, so that they are useful to people who need them.

Bring your ideas to the large group.

**Activity C**
*(35 minutes)*

**Support for people at different life stages**
- In small groups read Handout 6:2.
- Choose one life stage and discuss the kind of support and resources available locally for people in that stage of life. You could link the discussion to your own life experience. For example, what support and resources did you receive when you left school? Or had your first child? And what impact did it have on your life?
Activity D
(30 minutes)
Brainstorm important points to remember when supporting parents and children.

Look at Handout 6:3 and in small groups make your own checklist for working with children and parents.

Activity E
(25 minutes)
Refer to Handout 6:4 and 6:5 and discuss the different ways of listening and their effects on people.
In pairs practise active listening skills. For two minutes listen to your partner talking about a subject of their choice – a favourite holiday, leisure activity or TV programme etc. then reverse.

How did you feel as a listener?
How did you feel as a speaker?

Now choose a topic to talk about and take turns putting yourself in a child’s shoes.

Discuss possible situations when listening skills could be helpful in supporting children and parents.

Step 4: Identify key points from the session and discuss

Step 5: Plan action and next steps – reflect and evaluate

Suggestion:
During the week do your own research on how, and from whom, parents receive the support and encouragement and resources they need for positive parenting without smacking. Ask friends and neighbours what they think. Are there any gaps that you would like your church to address? Bring your ideas to the next session.

Hand out the paper ‘Reflection 6’.
Topic 6 – Supporting children and parents in the local context
Reflection 6

Supporting children and parents in the local context

What new thoughts have I had?

Is there any way I can contribute towards supporting children and parents?

How could this topic be discussed more widely in our church community?

What other action could I take to increase awareness about the needs of children and parents?
Parenting

Parenting has been described as the most important role people perform with the least education and support. Parenting is complex, as it involves the development of healthy, loving relationships between children and parents, and coping with diverse pressures in society. Educational and employment opportunities and the local and national political scene all have an impact on parents. And there is the added challenge for parents of balancing home and work.

However well prepared people are, becoming a parent can evoke new emotions and powerful memories of the parent’s own childhood, and experiences of past family relationships. For many people, the only preparation they have had is their own experience of being parented. Unless parents have been exposed to different ways of parenting, most find themselves adopting models of parenting used by their family of origin. While some experiences may have been positive, others may have involved physical punishment.

Some people insist that physical punishment is effective and say: “It never did me any harm.” Others recall the harmful effects and consider those early experiences to have had a life-long effect on their emotional health, causing low self-esteem and subsequent lack of confidence to parent their own children without violence.

Historically many British families adopted an authoritarian parenting style that relied on physical punishment, fear and power and control over children. Much of the reluctance of some parents to change to a positive style may have arisen from pressure from others, including family and friends, warning that children will “run wild” or “get out of control” if they are not smacked.

There is now greater recognition that parents require encouragement and support for the role of parenting. There are many parenting courses, books and services to help with positive parenting, but parents also need a culture of support and encouragement in their everyday lives from those close to them and from the local community.

Children in the 21st century grow up in families or care settings of all shapes and sizes. These are some of the descriptions of families given during the United Nations International Year of the Family in 1994.

Families in many different forms can be:

- a child’s first window on the world;
- the smallest democracy at the heart of society;
- the basic building block of society;
- shapers of the population;
• shapers of emotional health;
• a place where spiritual values are lived out;
• a cultural unit;
• a place of peace and justice and non-violence;
• a centre for socialisation and forming positive relationships;
• a first place of learning;
• contributors to sustainable development;
• a social microcosm that reflects both the strengths and weaknesses of society.

Keeping Families Afloat

10 things the Catholic Church wants to say to parliamentarians about family life today

Caritas – social action has analysed the causes of why children come to the attention of social services as ‘children in need’, and has prioritised key family support issues which require work at the national level in collaboration with parliamentarians and Government.

1. **FAMILIES ARE UNDER PRESSURE**
The past three decades have seen massive social and institutional changes that have created immense pressures for families to contend with. Trends such as the growth in lone parenthood, long working hours, domestic instability, the fragmentation of local communities and extended families have all contributed to cutting away traditional support networks for families, and so it is little wonder that so many families today are struggling to stay afloat.

2. **IT’S NOT WHAT FAMILIES LOOK LIKE, BUT HOW THEY ARE, THAT MATTERS**
The Catholic Church and the Catholic voluntary sector does not seek policies that disadvantage people whose families are structured in non-traditional ways. We believe that marriage is the ideal setting for family life, however, as the latest teaching document from the Catholic Bishops puts it:

   “THE DIVERSE FORMS OF FAMILY THAT ARE BECOMING MORE WIDESPREAD SHOULD NOT BE IGNORED OR UNFAIRLY DISADVANTAGED. WHEREVER AND HOWEVER PARENTS TAKE RESPONSIBILITY, AS BEST THEY CAN, FOR THEIR CHILDREN’S UPBRINGING THEY SHOULD BE AFFIRMED IN THIS.”  
   
   (CHERISHING LIFE 2004:144)

3. **ALL FAMILIES NEED SUPPORT**
Each and every family is kept afloat by a different package of activities and facilities provided either by statutory agencies or by community groups, or by individuals who provide advice and support to parents and carers to help them bring up their children. Family support is best thought of as a continuum— all families require support of different kinds, whether it comes in the shape of an involved grandparent or a good local playgroup at one end of the continuum, or a committed social worker or family therapist at the other. Family support is for those difficult times, rather than for those, rather than for those families. We need to move away from a stigmatised understanding of family support that sees it as the domain of ‘failing’ parents or ‘dysfunctional’ families. We need to challenge the stigma that many families feel in asking for appropriate help, at whatever point in the continuum.

4. **WE ALL HAVE A STAKE IN EACH OTHER’S FAMILIES**
It is not acceptable that the state intervenes in families only when they have broken down completely and children are suffering abuse or neglect. There is an urgent need for a political commitment to support and strengthen family life. A hands-off approach is actually a betrayal of families especially those families that are most vulnerable. We cannot, for
instance, complain and penalise children who engage in anti-social behaviour if we have not as a society, encouraged parents in their relationships with their children. Families create key social outcomes. We all have a stake in each other’s families and families have a right to expect support from the state and from the Church in meeting their responsibilities. By investing in families earlier we prevent later, often ineffective state intervention to remedy entrenched family problems.

5. **A JUST SOCIETY IS BUILT ON STRONG FAMILIES**

Catholic social teaching asserts that families are the building blocks of society. Contrary to popular misconception, the family is not a private relationship. The reality is that the gap between the private and public worlds of the family is very slim, if indeed it exists at all. If a family is falling apart because of the stress created by trying to make ends meet on an inadequate income and to keep the loan sharks from the door, then the family situation is unjust. If parents are forced to work long hours for sheer economic survival, then principles of social justice must be invoked with the provision of a higher minimum wage or more generous maternity and paternity leave for parents. Social justice concerns, political concerns, family concerns and so-called individual concerns overlap in the domain of the family.

6. **WE NEED A RENEWED POLITICAL COMMITMENT TO STRENGTHEN FAMILIES**

Standing idly by whilst pressures on families are causing real problems for children and parents alike is not an option. Although we need to be sure that any state intervention is proportionate and effective, it is certain that a partnership between state and families is the key to building a healthy society. As Catholic social teaching puts it:

“A WELL CONSTRUCTED SOCIETY WILL BE ONE THAT GIVES PRIORITY TO THE INTEGRITY STABILITY AND HEALTH OF FAMILY LIFE. IT SHOULD BE A PRINCIPLE OF GOOD GOVERNMENT THAT NO LAW SHOULD BE PASSED WITH POSSIBLE SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES WITHOUT FIRST CONSIDERING WHAT EFFECT IT WOULD HAVE ON FAMILY LIFE AND ESPECIALLY ON CHILDREN”

(COMMON GOOD 1996:21)

7. **POLICY MAKERS MUST ADOPT A FAMILY PERSPECTIVE**

It is unsurprising that with such rapid social change the family has been put into the spotlight as a subject of unparalleled public interest and a battleground for competing ideologies. The word ‘family’ is politically charged, and we don’t have to look far to find a barrage of pronouncements about the ‘recovery of family values’. At Caritas – social action we prefer to speak of the need to espouse a ‘family perspective’. By this we mean the need to take seriously and to truly value the family as the linchpin of a strong society. A family perspective challenges the individualistic approach of policy makers, refuting the thinking that encourages us to pay attention only to the needs of individuals and not of families. The segmentation of a person’s life into distinct and unrelated compartments needs to be a recognition that individuals are first and foremost part of family systems. Families are the most immediate and basic of communities to which we belong. They are, in large measure, where we are made and where we become what other family members enable us to be. A family perspective is a vision for society that is based on love and justice, where persons are defined in relational rather than in individual achievement. A family perspective is stringent critique of both religious and secular myths of the autonomous independent and self-assertive individual. A family perspective is an assertion that ‘I am-a-being-in-community’, where the family is the first and most basic community that I realise my freedom within. Out of this comes the social justice imperative that provides us with a powerful critique of current social policies that cause some families to struggle to keep afloat.
8. **SOME FAMILIES MUST BE A PRIORITY FOR SUPPORT**

Historically, the Catholic Church has been an advocate of strong family life. Although all families need support of different kinds if they are to be able to stay afloat, some families face particular struggles. The practice evidence of Catholic charities working at the grassroots with some of the most marginalized families confirms that five groups of families must be a priority for political support:

- Families which are living in poverty;
- Families with children with disabilities;
- Families with young people who are in trouble with the law;
- Families which are marked by domestic violence;
- Families with fostered or adopted children.

(Policy briefings on each of these specific areas can be downloaded from: www.caritas-socialaction.org.uk)

9. **WE NEED BETTER, AND MORE, FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES**

At present, although huge sums of money are spent by governments on dealing with the consequences of family problems, only tiny sums are spent on preventing them from arising in the first place. The 1989 Children Act allows for wide discretion on the part of local authorities in deciding who receives family support services. It is unacceptable that resource pressures in statutory services mean that it is very difficult for families to gain access to services unless child protection concerns are part of the reason for the referral. What is needed is an approach that so values the family as the linchpin of society that adequate resources are made available to ensure that all families can receive the support they need at earlier preventative stages. Family support should be about positive support, which responds to all levels of need, rather than the current stigmatised, heavily targeted service that families are often pilloried for using. We need to make the case for expanding preventative services – both universal and targeted.

10. **THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR NEEDS IMPROVED GOVERNMENT FUNDING**

The voluntary sector provides much of the family support available at the local level. But this is pitifully under funded. Of the £50 million spent by the Catholic voluntary sector on supporting families, only £1 million of this comes from government or lottery sources. There is latent potential in the Catholic voluntary sector to deliver further quality family support services that can be built upon. 75% of the family support work undertaken by Catholic agencies is with non-Catholic families. Many Catholic organisations run on a limited budget, dependent on donations, with Government funds often proving too time-limited and highly conditional. There is a very real danger that voluntary organisations can find themselves spending more time chasing their next source of funding than actually concentrating on their core activities of supporting families.

Caritas – social action is not gloomy about the future of the family. The family is a highly adaptable and more socially encompassing organism than we can imagine. The family is in principle a nurturing environment for the growth of all its members, and families will continue to adapt to the ever-changing requirements of an increasingly complex world. Adequately supported, families will provide the building blocks of a ‘society afloat’.
HOW TO GET FURTHER INFORMATION
The full policy paper, ‘Keeping Families Afloat’ is available at Caritas – social action’s website: www.caritas-socialaction.org.uk
or you can call: 020 7901 4875
or email: cartas@cbcew.org.uk
Life Stages

Throughout life we go through many stages or life changes. Some changes seem easier than others and some seem to place us under greater stress than others. A key to moving confidently from one life event to another is to develop the appropriate life skills for each stage. We all benefit from the support of family, friends and community at different stages of life. Personal growth and the ability to review our lives and make changes continue into late adulthood.

The life skills listed below are not exhaustive and many overlap into all stages of life.

**Birth and the first years of life**
Through the love of family and carers, a baby and young child builds up trust and security, a feeling of belonging and attachment to parents and carers and the confidence that she or he is a worthwhile person.

*Life skills for the first years of life:*
- learning, communicating and having fun through play;
- the ability to explore the environment;
- coping with separation from main care-givers for a short time;
- an appreciation of his or her own abilities;
- age-appropriate independence.

**Childhood**
Through encouragement rather than criticism, the child builds new relationships, gains independence, learns to participate and gains social skills.

*Life skills for childhood*
- learning how to work and acquire skills;
- learning to play and organise;
- discovering the needs of others;
- learning to deal with pressures and stress;
- continuing to develop self-esteem;
- learning assertiveness skills.

**Adolescence**
As the family encourages the young person to become more independent, new relationships are formed outside the family. With support, the young person begins to accept bodily changes and moves towards acquiring a sense of self-identity.

*Life skills for adolescence*
- valuing self;
- expressing feelings and needs;
- building supports – friends, peer groups;
- assertiveness;
• acceptance of self – including gender, race, culture; spiritual life and sexual orientation;
• self awareness;
• beginning the process of individuation.

**Early adulthood**
During this stage the young adult works towards developing a strong enough identity to leave home emotionally and to choose a new way of life. It may be a time of ‘putting down roots’, forming long-lasting relationships or finding a way of life that is meaningful to him or her.

*Life skills for early adulthood:*
• ability to change;
• self-esteem;
• leisure and work skills;
• maintaining relationships and ending relationships;
• coping with loss;
• developing our ability to nurture others.

**Mid life**
During mid life, people often make a reassessment of what life is about, and adjust to bodily changes and changes to lifestyle and family life.

*Life skills for mid-life*
• caring for oneself;
• expressing needs;
• decision making;
• adjusting to a change in lifestyle;
• discovering ways to work through grief and loss;
• self-awareness;
• finding a new direction in life.

**Late adulthood**
Activity during this stage of life often depends on the person’s quality of emotional and physical health. The person in late adulthood continues to reflect on life and attempts to come to terms with unmet goals. In late adulthood people often strive to maintain a sense of personal autonomy.

*Life skills for late adulthood*
• finding interesting and satisfying ‘work’ and using the skills developed throughout life;
• adjusting to a decision to ‘retire’ from an occupation and take on new interests;
• maintaining relationships;
• expressing needs;
• caring for oneself – self-esteem;
• finding new directions and developing new skills;
• coming to terms with life, and the end of life;
• coming to terms with the loss of friends and relatives.
Checklist for supporting Children and parents

The following points are not exhaustive but provide a starting point to thinking about the underpinning values and principles of support for parents and children in the church and local context.

The people involved in the support/activity ensure the approach towards those being supported:

- builds on existing strengths;
- acknowledges existing knowledge, skills, insights and experiences;
- is non-judgmental
- is inclusive
- listens actively to those being supported (see handout 6:4)
- uses the framework of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- works in partnership with the people taking part;
- when appropriate, links to resources in the wider community;
- recognises that training is required for specialist support;
- shares relevant information and knowledge;
- ensures that there is adequate peer support for the work; and
- evaluates the forms of support given by the church and community in order to provide high quality support.
Active listening

Active listening is a way of listening and responding to another person that improves the level of understanding between them. It is an effective tool for people supporting children and parents. It is a structured form of listening and responding that focuses on the person who is speaking.

The listener takes care to give the speaker full attention and assures the speaker that he/she has been heard. This can be done through body language, such as a reassuring nod or a smile or serious expression or by interpreting the speaker’s words. For example: “It sounds as though you would like to have some time to relax.”

Active listening with children follows the same pattern: “It seems you are concerned about finding time to do your homework.”

The listener does not have to agree with the speaker, just simply acknowledge what they think the speaker has said.

Active listening has several benefits:

- it encourages people to listen attentively;
- it avoids misunderstandings, as people reflect back to the speaker what they have heard;
- it tends to help people feel comfortable and it increases the understanding between people.

What do good listeners need?

- A desire to enable others, rather than to project one’s own feelings and ideas on to others;
- A desire to imagine the roles, perspectives and experiences of the other person, rather than making assumptions about them; and
- A desire to listen as a receiver not as a critic, and a desire to understand the other person, rather than to agree with them or change them in any way.
## Less effective ways of listening

Adults often miss the opportunity to model good listening skills for children.

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<th>Listening selectively</th>
<th>Waiting for cues</th>
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<td>We show enough interest in certain aspects of what is being said to carry on the conversation. Adults often adopt this mode when they are not actively listening to children.</td>
<td>We give the impression of listening when we are really thinking about our next comment.</td>
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<th>Judging</th>
<th>Relating own experiences</th>
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<tr>
<td>We may tune into the words and emotions of the speaker but because we have pre-judged them as being uninformed, we pay little attention to them.</td>
<td>We listen but bring each conversation topic back to our own experience. We can’t wait for the speaker to pause so we can relate details of our own experiences.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Changing the subject</th>
<th>Placating</th>
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<td>We are not actively listening so we change the subject because we are tired of the topic.</td>
<td>Instead of being supportive to the speaker we listen enough to get the drift of the problem and make non-specific responses such as: “I hear what you are saying” or “I know how you are feeling.”</td>
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<th>Day dreaming</th>
<th>Making automatic responses</th>
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<td>We pretend to listen and drift into a fantasy world while appearing to be attentive.</td>
<td>Adults working with a large group of children sometimes respond to a child’s effort to talk about her work with “Great!” or “Brilliant.”</td>
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<th>Advising</th>
<th>Quizzing</th>
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<tr>
<td>We listen enough to get the drift of the topic but the speaker often does not manage to express what is most important because the ‘listener’ has spent the time searching for the right advice to give.</td>
<td>Asking endless questions can be stressful for the receiver and places the speaker in a dominant position. The questioner often does this to avoid being actively involved in a discussion. This mode of communication is often adopted in adult/child communication.</td>
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Parents Resources & contacts

Topic 6
Supporting children and parents in the local context

Bullying Online
www.bullying.co.uk
Practical help and advice, for parents and children and for older people. Leaflets are available. Telephone support from the Samaritans: 08457 909090

Catholic Blind Services
Tel: 0121 441 5599

Catholic Children’s Society
www.catholicchildrenssociety.org.uk
Provides services for all children and families who need or can benefit from them. Information, materials and resources.

Catholic Deaf Association
www.cda-uk.com
Voice and minicom 0161 834 8828
Textphone: 18002 0161 835 1767
An association of deaf and hearing people who help and support each other to live and share their faith.

Catholic Marriage Centre
www.catholicmarriagecentre.org.uk
Helps married couples find wholeness in their marriage through counselling, teaching and prayer.

The Child Bereavement Trust
www.childbereavement.org.uk
Tel: 01494 446648
Trains and supports professionals and all those working with families in loss and grief. Gains insight for work through listening to families. Provides resources for children and families – books, CD-Roms, leaflets and videos.

The Children’s Society
www.the-childrens-society.org.uk
0845 300 1128
Works with most needy children to help them deal with life’s harshest challenges. Current priorities: children at risk on the streets; children in trouble with the law; disabled children and young refugees. Publications and resources.
Churches Together for Families  
www.churchesandfamilies.org  
A ‘family’ of denominational representatives and family organisations. Its member organisations work directly with families. Website has very useful information on supporting families such as: how to create a family friendly church, blended families, marriage enrichment, involving dads, working with prisoner’s families etc.

Compassionate Friends  
www.tcf.org.uk  
Helpline: 08451 2323 04  10am -4pm; 6.30pm - 10.30pm.
National Office: 08451 203785  
Supports bereaved parents and families.  
The Helpline is always answered by a bereaved parent who is there to listen.  
Also offers support to those supporting families.  
Puts people in touch with nearest local contact.  
Leaflets and publications on many aspects of grief are online.

Connexions  
www.connexions-direct.com  
Tel: 080 800 13 2 19  
Text: 07766 4 13 2 19  
Connexions is a free service that offers information and advice and guidance to young people to give them the best possible start in their adult life. All 13-19 year olds can use it. Young people with special needs can use it until they are 24. All young people have access to a personal adviser who can give help and information.

Direct Government Parent Centre  
www.parentcentre.gov.uk  
Practical advice and support online from birth through childhood.  
Information about benefits, special needs support and study support.

Disabled Parents Network (DPN)  
www.disabledparentsnetwork.org.uk  
Helpline: 08702 410 450  
DPN is a national organisation for disabled parents or those who want to become parents. The website contains resources and links to peer and local support.

Gingerbread  
www.gingerbread.org.uk  
Helpline: 0800 018 4318  10-4 Monday-Friday  
Run by lone parents this Gingerbread offers free advice and information on lone parenthood, childcare, contact, divorce, employment, housing, maternity rights.

Marriage Care National Helpline  
Tel: 0845 660 6000

NCH  
www.nch.org.uk  
Tel: 0845 7626579  
Aims to help children achieve their full potential. Supports some of the UKs most vulnerable children. Offers early years and family support.
NSPCC
www.nspcc.org.uk
Helpline: 0808 800 5000
Specialises in child protection and the prevention of cruelty to children and has been campaigning on their behalf since 1884. 180 community based teams and projects in England and Wales. Public education campaigns, training, information, publications and advice.

One Parent Families
www.oneparentfamilies.org.uk
Helpline: 0800 018 5026
Information in community languages. Believes in building a fairer society for all families where lone parents and their children do not suffer from poverty, isolation or social exclusion. Publications and resources.

ParentlinePlus
www.parentlineplus.org.uk
General Enquiries: 020 7284 5500
Offers support to anyone parenting a child. Details about positive parenting courses on the website. Has information on Bereavement, Balancing Work and Home, Managing Family Change, Grandparents and much more. Also has a confidential email helpline.

Quest Linkline – The helpline for lesbian and gay Catholics
www.questgaycatholic.org.uk/helpline.shtml
Helpline: 0808 808 8234
Non-judgemental, confidential service of helpline listening, support and information by specially trained and supervised ‘Linkliners’.

St Vincent de Paul Society – SVP
www.svp.org.uk
Tel: 0207 407 4644
SVP is dedicated to helping anyone in need. SVP offers financial and material assistance such as furniture, holiday schemes, children’s summer camps, drop in centres. Work also includes visiting the sick and lonely, people with addictions and people with disabilities.

Sure Start
www.surestart.gov.uk
Government programme which aims to deliver the best start in life for every child. Brings together early education, childcare, health and family support. For the Sure Start Magazine and information about local Sure Start schemes look on the website.

Young Minds
www.youngminds.org.uk
enquiries@youngminds.org.uk
Tel: 020 7336 8445 9.30 – 5.30pm.
Parent information centre contains information covering a huge range of information relevant to children’s mental health. Bi-monthly magazine, leaflets and publications.