youth echo

safe spaces

autumn 2024

listening to young people

where they are

to determine what's next

Diocese of Bristol
TRANSFORMING CHURCH.
TOGETHER.

Introduction to youth echo...

Youth Echo (or Echo for short) is inspired by the idea that young voices, when nurtured and amplified, can resonate in all corners of the Diocese.
Echo is designed to allow the young people of our Diocese space to express their faith, ideas and hopes for the church and the wider world and in turn, see their influence ripple through their communities.
Echo listening groups are facilitated spaces where young people can share their thoughts in response to a series of conversation prompts. The feedback programme follows a five-step process:

1

step one

A small group of young people suggest topics and ideas they believe are important. These will be used to shape the agenda and set a theme.

2

step two

A written guide is distributed to facilitators to run with the young people in their different settings to support with collecting data about the theme. Facilitators then send that data back to the Youth Engagement Officer.

3

step three

A small sense making group of young people collaborate with the Youth Engagement Officer to make sense of the insight collected and identify questions.

4

step four

A report is then written about the collected insight and the trends identified.

5

step five

Key leaders are posed questions and asked to respond to the young people through different means.

the numbers

108	Young voices
73	Girls
35	Boys
31%	Global Majority Heritage
19%	Special educational needs
9-18	Age range represented

what is a listening group?

Listening groups come in so many different forms, but are all groups of young people who live within the Diocese. The young people take part in a session facilitated by trusted adults (chaplains, teachers, youth workers etc.).

The session takes the young people through a set of interactive activities that are designed to encourage them to think and be able to voice things that matter to them.

Below is a map with pins of the listening groups represented in this report.

A massive thank you to everyone who has taken part in this process and helped with the delivery of these listening groups.

this report...

This report looks at the findings that have arisen from the listening groups.

It gives insight into the headlines as well some specific quotes that young people have shared throughout the process and during the sense making part of the programme.

At the end of the insight from each activity there is a page that asks ‘so what?’. Each of these pages has a question that has arisen as a result of the findings from the listening groups.

The questions are designed to challenge all of our thinking so that we can work together as the church to listen and respond to the voices of young people.

what makes spaces feel safe for you?

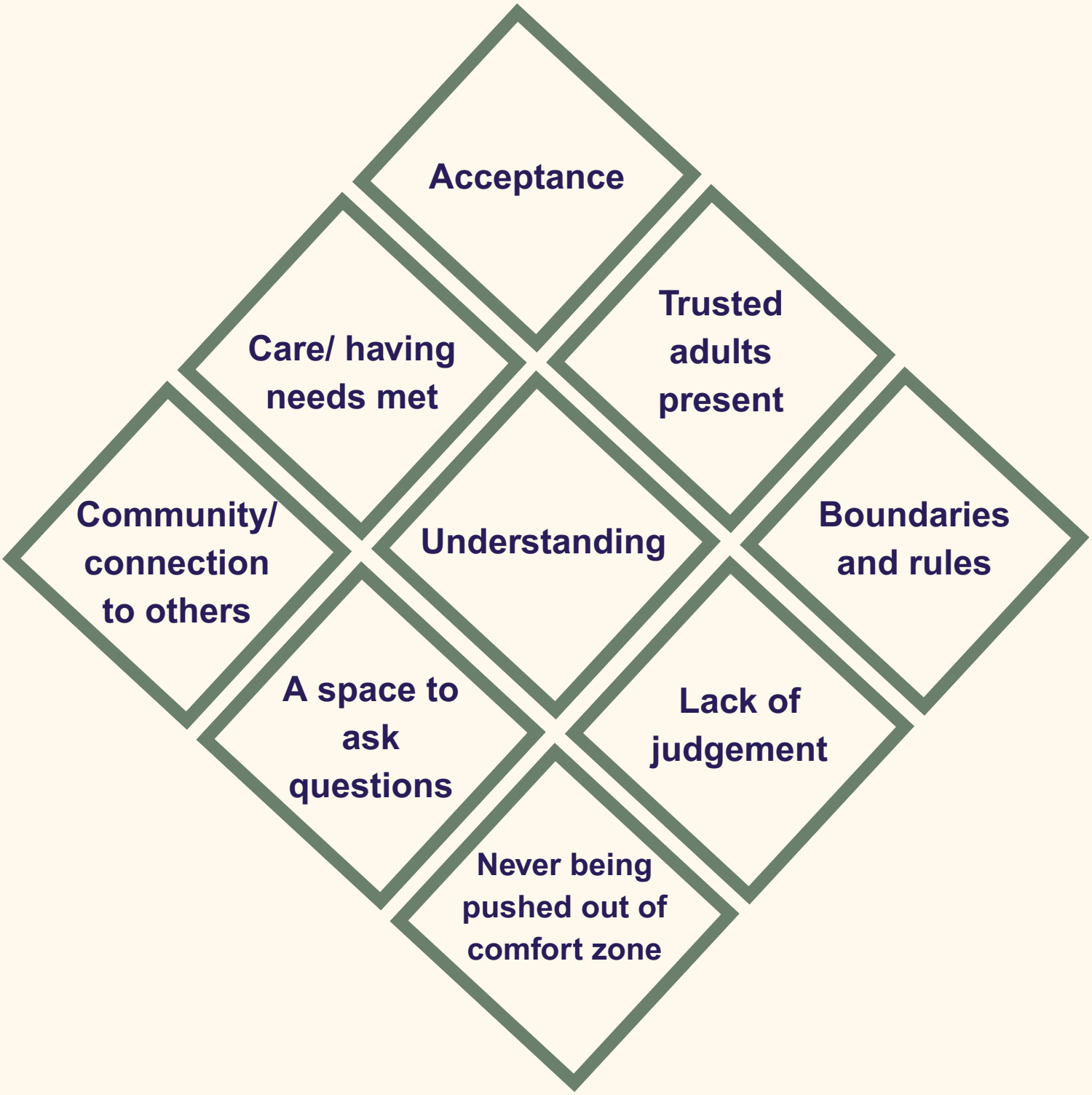
activity one

description

We asked the young people to rank words into a diamond nine, describing what attributes make a space safe for them.
The overall ranking has been collated and is listed below, showing the collective ranking from the combination of each diamond nine. The next page shows what the average Dimond nine would look like if all young people combined their responses.

1. **Acceptance**
2. **Care/ having needs met**
3. **Trusted adults present**
4. **Connection to others/ community**
5. **Understanding**
6. **Boundaries/ rules**
7. **A space to ask questions**
8. **Lack of judgement**
9. **Never being pushed out of comfort zone**
10. **Acceptance of marginalised groups**
11. **Consistency/ regularity**
12. **Location of the space/ ease of getting there**
13. **The building/ What the space is like/ What is in the space**
14. **Ability to fail and learn from it**
15. **A place where only my friends are**

most important



least important

‘Acceptance is simple it means us being allowed to be us and not having to be something for someone to ‘like us’.’

‘Rules are important but only when they are group agreed and they make sense. I think that's why people don’t like school rules. They don’t understand them but people do want rules to keep them safe from violence.’

‘With acceptance being the most important it makes me wonder if my non Christian friends would not come to church because they don’t believe they will be accepted.’

‘I feel safe not based on where I am but who I am with. My youth worker makes spaces safe.’

key observations.

- Young people need acceptance to feel safe.
- Young people value rules. They perceive boundaries to be helpful in creating safe environments.
- Culture and values make spaces safer not simply the physical space itself.

so what?

> What does it pratically look like to make young people feel accepted within the church?

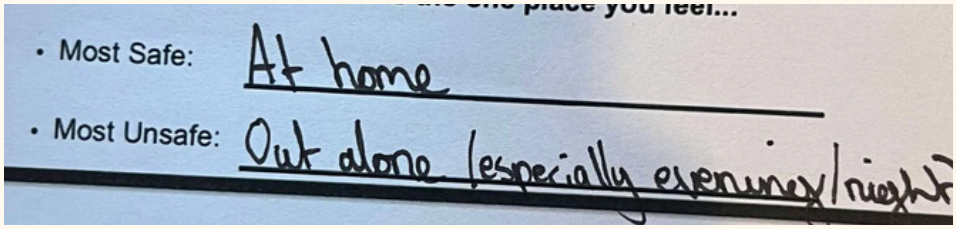
where do you feel most safe?

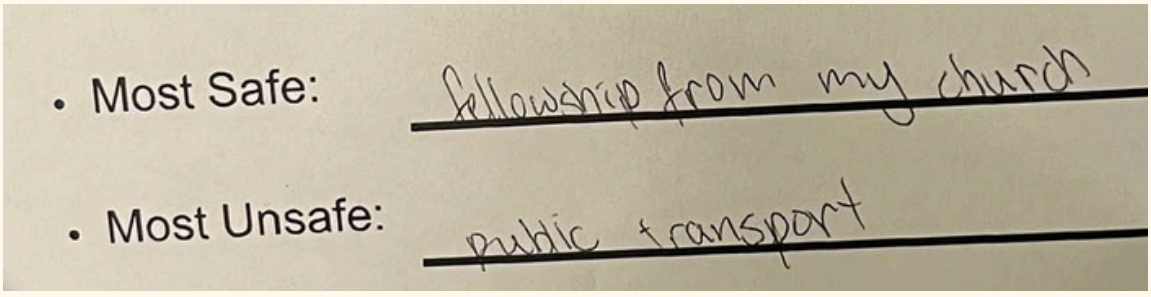
activity two

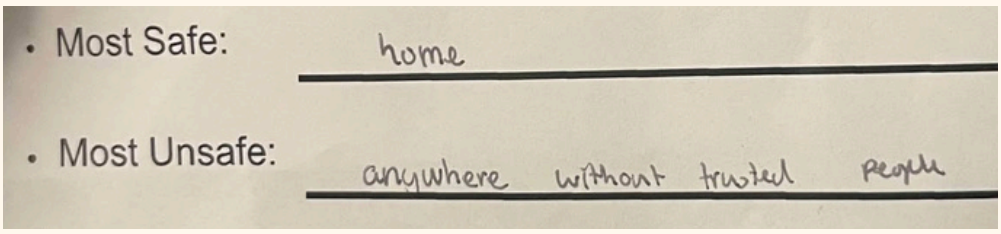
description

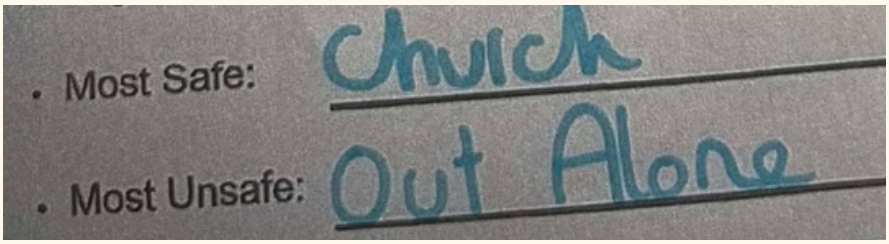
To find out how safe young people feel in commonly frequented places young people were asked to fill out a likert scale on their perceived safety in these places as well as identify the places most young people feel ‘most safe’/ ‘most unsafe’.

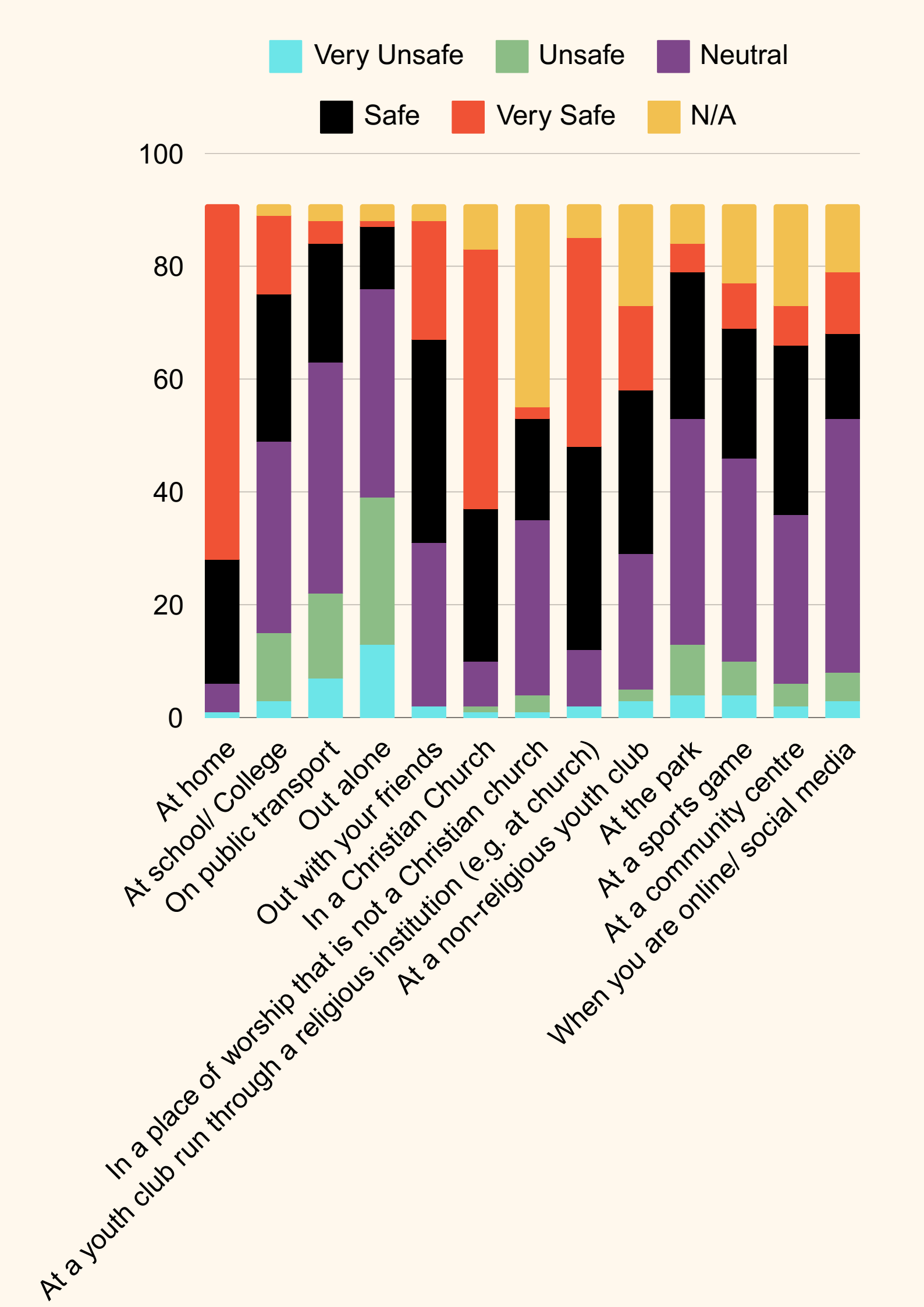
A stacked bar chart shows the results from this on the next page.










Very Unsafe
Unsafe
Neutral
Safe
Very Safe
N/A
100
80
60
40
20
0
At home
At school/ College
On public transport
Out alone
Out with your friends
In a Christian Church
In a place of worship that is not a Christian church
At a youth club run through a religious institution (e.g. at church)
At a non-religious youth club
At the park
At a sports game
At a community centre
When you are online/ social media

‘Home is safe because it is my space.’

‘I feel most safe when I am at church. The community and the care I get from youth club and the leaders is so good.’

‘Adults are missing an opportunity by not embracing media because clearly young people are less worried about it than adults assume they would be.’

‘Everyone needs a safe place.’

key observations

- Young people generally feel safe at home. This aligns with the fact that the diamond nine valued having needs met as well as trusted adults.
- Young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN) generally noted school felt more unsafe than their peers.
- Youth groups and churches are perceived to be safe places.

So what?

> How can we as the church extend access to safe spaces for young people?

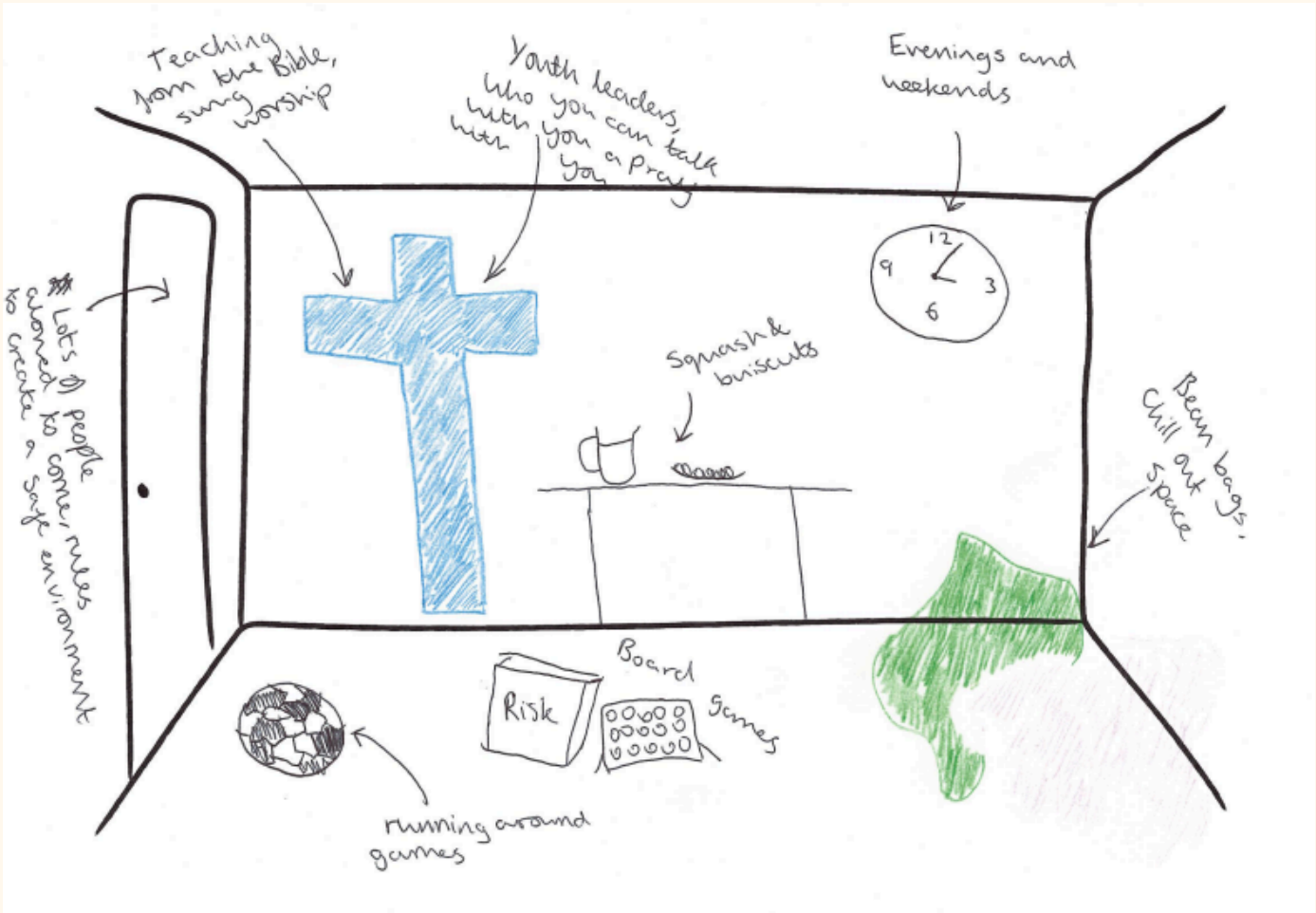
design your own safe space

activity three

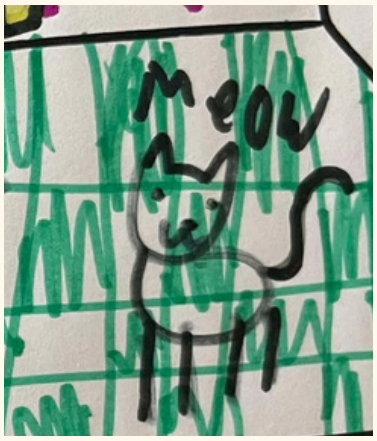
description

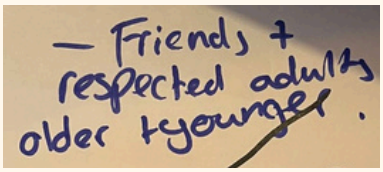
Young people were asked to design their own safe spaces with complete freedom and no parameters. Young people were encouraged to fill the space with things that help them feel safe.

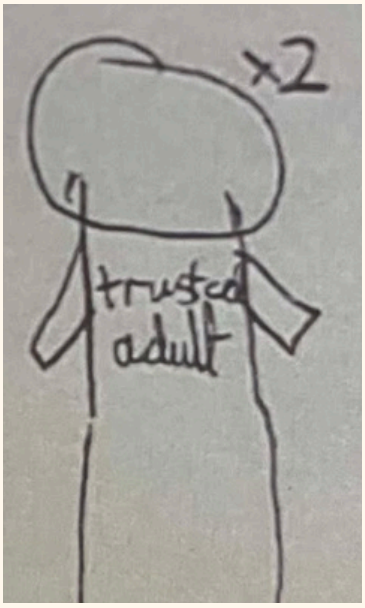
The next few pages show some of the common themes and patterns in these designs. There are specific parts of the young people's work as well as a word cloud that has been created by identifying what is regularly coming up in these safe spaces.

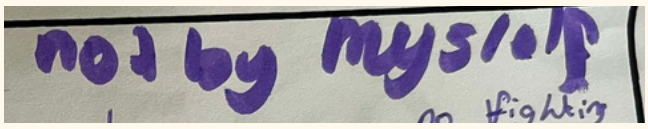


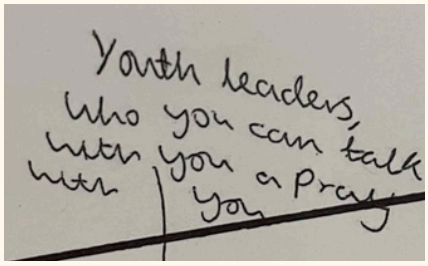
Who is there?

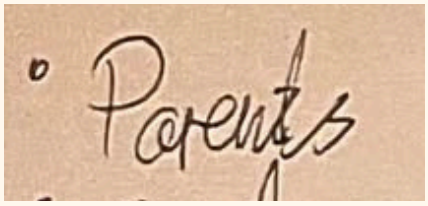


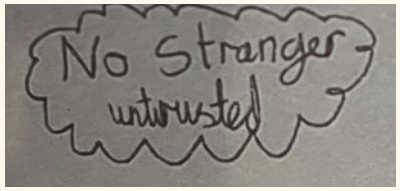


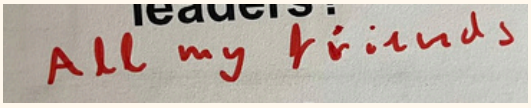


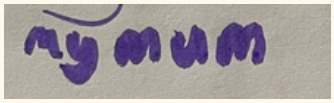


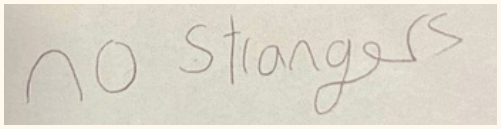






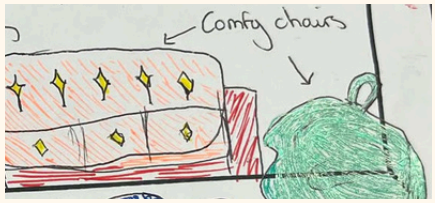


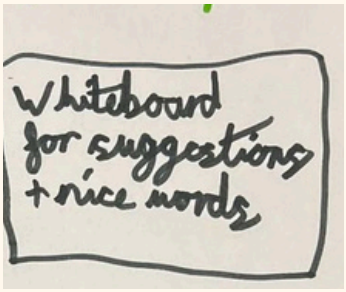


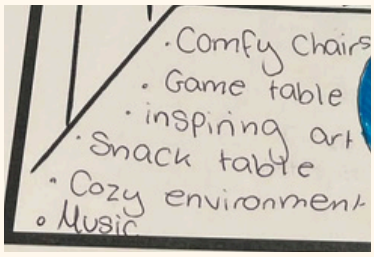


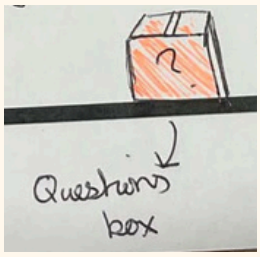
guard dog
trusted adults
no adults
only my friends
no one older than me
pets
no strangers
best friend
anyone kind
parents
no teachers
no bullies
friends
dog
anyone
no one
Youth worker
cats
no one from school
family
rabbit

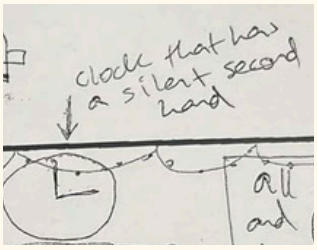
What is there?

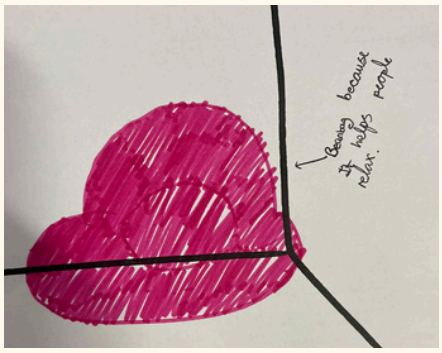


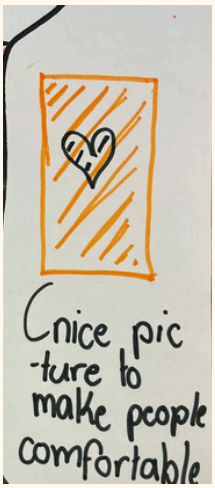


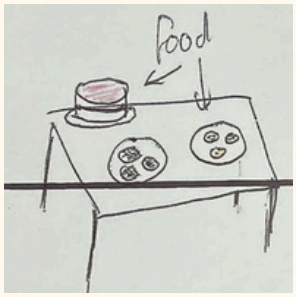












books
Television
things to do
pool
tell a leader box
sofa
arts and crafts
speaker
games
blanket
headphones
snacks
fairy lights
charger
food
bed
mini fridge
music
soft play
lego
teddys
slide
desks for revision
beanbags
fidgets/ sensory toys
football

20% mentioned animals being there.

over 50% stated rules were necessary and included them in the design process.

Of the 67 safe spaces designed ...

A large majority of spaces had activities that were optional.

Almost all of the designs apart from 6 stated that people wanted others there, especially their friends.

Sensory toys were mentioned in 21 of the designs.

Only 3 stated that no adults should be there with the large majority in agreement that trusted adults (often youth leaders were noted) made a space safe.

10 of them said they would want the safe space to be at home.

‘Animals cannot judge you, they love you unconditionally so that's why they are so important.’

‘To make sure young people have youth workers and safe adults we need to make sure that Christian young people are told that they can go into youth work as a job.’

‘So many of these places have sensory toys not because it makes the space safe but the message of acceptance of all needs allows people to feel safe.’

‘Community is so important for our generation.’

key observations

- Young people perceived safety not just to be due to what is in the environment but what value and culture underpins the space.
- It was evident young people value spaces that have both elements of fun as well as elements of relaxation and rest.
- Food is a large part of young people feeling safe, this links to them knowing their needs are being met.
- Adults and clear rules are important to young people feeling safe.

so what?

> How do we continue to listen to young people to ensure that we don’t make assumptions about their needs?