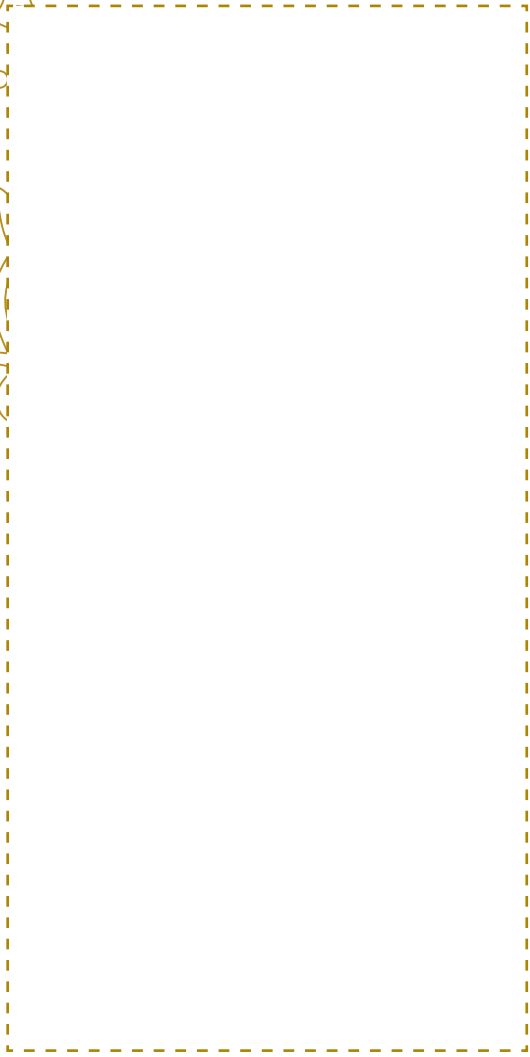


# Plan for Christian Education

## God gives – we share



DEN NORSKE KIRKE  
Kirkerådet



# Contents

FOREWORD	3
AIMS AND STRUCTURE	4
1. LIFELONG LEARNING	5
2. GOD GIVES – WE SHARE	6
3. GREATEST OF ALL – THE CONTENTS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION	13
The heart of the contents of Christian education	13
Elements in the contents of Christian education	14
4. THE STRUCTURE OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION	18
Systematic and comprehensive	18
Breadth, variety and depth	18
The duration of Christian education	19
The recommended structure of Christian education	19
5. CONFIRMATION TIME (14-15 years old)	23
Confirmation and baptism	23
Contents and structure of confirmation time	24
Worship in confirmation time	24
The framework for confirmation time	25
6. IMPORTANT FACTORS IN COMPREHENSIVE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION	27
Cooperation with home and family	27
The influence of children and young people	28
Inclusiveness and adaptation	28
Worship	29
Diakonia	30
Mission	31
Music and culture	32
Voluntary workers	33
Cooperation with children’s and youth organisations	33
Interdisciplinary cooperation	34
Public relations	35
7. LOCAL PLANNING	37
Making a local plan for Christian education	37
Ownership, basic ideas and surveying	38
Planning and implementing	38
Evaluation and further development	39
8. SHARING RESPONSIBILITY	40
Joint responsibility	40
Cooperation and suitable units	41
Sami Christian education	42
Fees	42
9. RESOURCES	43
Resources for renewed Christian education	43
Tools for local planning	44
APPENDICES	45
Appendix 1: Tools for making a local plan for Christian education	45
Appendix 2: Key Bible passages for renewed Christian education	46
Appendix 3: Examples of basic activities in renewed Christian education	46

# Themes



## Foreword

”GOD GIVES – WE SHARE” has been chosen as the title of the Plan for Christian Education in the Church of Norway. In accordance with the great commission from Jesus to baptise in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, men and women have been incorporated in the kingdom of God from the earliest days of the Christian church. Baptising and teaching have gone hand in hand through showing faith in action and sharing knowledge within the church community. The home and the church share in the task of Christian education. The church’s role in this is authorised when parents/guardians and sponsors bring children to be baptised.

From the establishment of public schools in Norway in the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, schools have played a major part in providing Christian education for children who have been baptised, in addition to the upbringing and traditions the children experience at home and in church. Schools no longer have the same role in Christian education today. The churches are themselves responsible for educating their members, in co-operation with the home. Curricula in schools and nursery schools open for co-operation with the church. Local plans for Christian education in the parishes should take into account the curriculum for religious education in the schools and the general plan for activities in nursery schools.

In addition to religious education in schools, the Church of Norway has taught children, young people and adults through its ministry of word and sacraments and through educational projects directed at specific groups. From 1969 to the implementation of the Christian education reform in 2004, an important process has taken place in the church and in Christian children’s and youth organisations, in that systematic teaching of all the baptised has been developed. Through the *Education Programme for Church and Home* in the 1970s and 1980s and the

*Plan for Baptismal Instruction*, 1991, congregations have contributed to the development of this aspect of the church’s ministry. The *Plan for Christian Education* is a product of this process and of a period of experiment and development in the Christian education reform, 2004-2008. It replaces the *Plan for Baptismal Instruction* (1991) and the *Plan for Confirmation* (1998).

The Church of Norway is constantly seeking to develop as an evangelical Lutheran folk church. Through normative plans and strategies, the National Council tries to stimulate development in the parishes. This means that local plans for Christian education must be coordinated with plans for diaconia, church music and culture, worship and Sami church life. In parishes with Sami children and young people, the *Plan for Sami Christian Education* will be used as a supplement to the national plan for Christian education. Sami perspectives are emphasised in the national plan, since the Sami people enjoy special minority rights as an indigenous community in Norway. In parishes with hearing-impaired/deaf children and young people, the local plan should be coordinated with the *Plan for Christian Education of hearing-impaired/deaf children and young people*. Comprehensive Christian education will strengthen democracy in the Church of Norway, through increasing knowledge and encouraging participation among the members of the church. Being sure of your own religious stance is important in a complex society that demands tolerance and dialogue.

We hope that the *Plan for Christian Education* will help to renew Christian education in the Church of Norway!



Jens-Petter Johnsen  
Director, the Church of Norway National Council

## Aims and structure

The primary task of the church is to make disciples by baptising people and teaching them to obey everything that Jesus commanded. The confessional documents of the Church of Norway maintain that baptism is necessary for salvation. Baptism in the name of the Triune God is both a unique event and a lifelong programme. In Luther's Small Catechism, the question, "What does baptism with water signify?" is answered thus:

"It signifies that the old Adam in us should, by daily contrition and repentance, be drowned and die with all sins and evil lusts, and, again, a new man daily come forth and arise; who shall live before God in righteousness and purity forever."

In baptism we are born again to new life in Christ. Christian education creates conditions for the baptised to live and grow in a lifelong relationship to the Triune God.

The aim of the *Plan for Christian Education* in the Church of Norway is to contribute to a systematic and continuous Christian education that

- awakens and strengthens Christian faith
- imparts knowledge of the Triune God
- helps in interpreting life and mastering the art of living
- encourages interest and involvement in the life of the church and the community
- for all baptised persons aged 0-18 years, irrespective of their degree of functionality.

The national plan is a combination of a general plan and a resource document that can be a stimulus for the development and implementation of local plans for Christian education. The *Plan for Christian Education* is an instrument for congregations, parish councils, employees, volunteers, children's and young

people's organisations and others who are responsible for Christian education in the parishes.

Christian education in each parish should be developed on the basis of local needs and conditions. Congregations in districts where Sami language and culture are prevalent have a special responsibility to provide Christian education for Sami children and young people.

In the national plan, the term "Christian education" refers to how the Church of Norway nurtures its baptised members aged 0-18 years and prepares other children and young people in the same age group for baptism. The term "Christian education" is understood as a synonym of the term *baptismal instruction* as used in the *Plan for Baptismal Instruction* and mentioned in requirements and directives concerning appointments and ministries in the Church of Norway.

The national plan was passed by the General Synod with a mandate in the law governing the Church of Norway, § 24 b: "The General Synod determines normative plans and programmes for education, diakonia, church music and ecumenical affairs..."

Chapters 1 and 2 describe the basic philosophy behind the national plan.

Chapters 3, 4 and 5 lay down specific regulations for the content and structure of Christian education.

Chapter 6 describes basic elements that must be reflected in local plans.

Chapters 7, 8 and 9 describe how a local plan should be made, how responsibility is shared and provides resources for implementing the national plan.

Both chapter 2 and chapter 6 contain questions to give those with responsibility for the local plan in a parish necessary oversight and to help them to reflect and concretise their plans.

A checklist to help with local planning, a list of key passages in the bible and a list of basic activities are included as an appendix to the national plan.



## Lifelong learning

*'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'* (Matthew 28:18-20)

Faith in the Triune God has been passed on from generation to generation by baptism in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Through prayer, caring, teaching and demonstrating Christian faith, parents/guardians, godparents and congregations exercise a holy responsibility for those who are baptised. This can enable those who are baptised to remain near to Christ and to learn about and live out the faith that they are baptised to. Every stage of life provides new insights into baptism. The congregation is a learning community where the insights of children, young people and adults supplement each other across the generations.

Through baptism people are united with Christ, irrespective of their ability to understand or express their faith. But in the same way that a newborn child must become familiar with life, those who are baptised must become familiar with God in whose name they are baptised. In the same way that a child discovers the world through tasting, touching and finding words for things, faith can be discovered through actions, words and fellowship. We believe in the promise that Jesus will always be with us, in good and bad days to the end of the age, and we express our faith through confession and service. This is a lifelong process.

New experiences open up new insights into the abundance that Christian baptism contains. The combination of baptism and faith will be a re-

source both for interpreting and encountering life's many aspects and for developing one's own identity. Christian education must be linked to children's and young people's experience and interpretation of life. Christian education is a formative process in which upbringing, teaching, passing on Christian culture and traditions and showing faith in action all play a part. Education must be all-embracing, so that knowledge and experiences in church and at home provide learning in and about the Christian community.

In the early years of the church, the catechuminate was a period of instruction prior to baptism. As time went on and Christianity spread, whole families were baptised and instruction after baptism became more prevalent. In the Church of Norway, the catechuminate has chiefly been a matter of instruction after infant baptism, but there is a growing need for preparation for baptism for children, young people and adults who wish to be baptised at a later stage.

Christian education should equip children and young people to live in their baptism. Through helping them to become familiar with the local church, daily rituals, the celebration of Christian festivals and important phases of life, the home and the church can co-operate in this process.

The disciples who accompanied Jesus are good role models for those travelling on the path of faith. They got to know Jesus by being with him, being taught by him, experiencing things for themselves and taking part in a working community. In this way they developed a sense of belonging and an identity of their own as disciples. To be a disciple of Jesus is to live and learn in a lifelong relationship to God. Christian education is therefore lifelong learning.



## God gives – we share

Through baptism God makes us his children and members of his church. Only God can create and maintain a person's faith. Through Christ's birth and baptism, death and resurrection, God shares life here and now and the hope of eternal life with us. This happens when God discloses himself to

each of us by his word, by baptism and by holy communion. Through word and sacrament the Holy Spirit is imparted to us and creates faith where and when God wills. In the church we can share faith and fellowship because God first shares with us, day by day.

*When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming towards him, Jesus said to Philip, 'Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?' He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. Philip answered him, 'Six months' wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.' One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, 'There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?' Jesus said, 'Make the people sit down.' Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all. Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, 'Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost.' So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets.*

(John 6: 5–13)

*During a confirmation class in the early autumn, Chris was standing in the vestry. He suffered from slight brain damage and thought it was fun to explore the church. What was inside the big cupboard? There were many small silver cups and a little box with small pieces of bread. "Can I 'ave a taste?" he asked. Of course he could! He tasted the bread. He was told the story of the first holy communion. Chris had never taken part in communion. Some time later he had the opportunity. He received the bread and wine and came and sat down. Then he blurted out the question, "D'you think one day I can give people bread like the vicar does?"*

*At the lenten service one evening in February, Chris stood beside the minister and gave people bread with the words, "This is the body of Christ." He was well prepared. His face lit up! He did it with solemnity, joy and dignity. At the confirmation service, he led the procession, bearing the processional cross.*



Chris was confirmed not very long ago somewhere in Norway. The boy with the five loaves and two fish lived in the mountains near to the Sea of Galilee two thousand years ago. Chris and the boy in the Gospel story had something in common: they were *seen* and taken seriously. Both were enabled to share bread with many people.

These two stories reveal important factors for a renewed Christian education.

- Christian education happens when people meet people and when people meet God.
- One important function of Christian education is to enable faith to be put into action.
- We learn through words and conversations using different languages and forms of expression.
- We learn by experience and by participating without restrictions.
- The church is both the scene and the content of Christian education.

- The children and young people who belong to the church are very different from one another.
- Christian education should be provided for all children and young people, whatever their degree of functionality and their ability.
- Who is the “pupil” and who is the “teacher” will vary according to how those taking part in the learning process interact with one another.

The foundation of Christian education can be described from the title, WE SHARE:

**WE SHARE faith and wonder**

**WE SHARE Christian traditions and values**

**WE SHARE experiences and fellowship**

**WE SHARE hope and love**

---

## We

*For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptised into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many.*

(1 Corinthians 12:12–14)

backgrounds, cultures and ethnic origins, make every congregation a many-sided place of learning for those who belong there through their baptism. Sami church life enriches the Church of Norway community, both linguistically and culturally.

Christian education must be inclusive, indigenous and organised so that everyone can take part. In that way, the church’s *we* can emerge as just as numerous and many-sided as it in fact is.

By interpreting important events in our lives, in the year and in the church’s calendar in the light of the faith that we are baptised to, faith and life can interlock. Those who are nearest to children and young people, and whom they spend time with every day in their homes, play a vital role in their growth, development, upbringing and learning. Parents or guardians, godparents and volunteers and employees in the church cooperate in Christian education.

The church’s *we* is at its broadest a world-wide community, the body of Christ in the world – and at its most intimate, two or three gathered together. The church’s *we* in the Church of Norway consists of a large number of members who combine to form a community in different situations from place to place. The local congregation is the place where the church is visible.

People of different ages, with different abilities, degrees of functionality, genders, sexual preferences,

### **Who comprise the church’s diverse we in our congregation?**

- What makes our community and congregation special? (Geography, language, traditions, theology etc.)
- What is typical for the situation of children, young people and families here? (The environment they grow up in, social conditions, leisure activities etc.)
- What possibilities and problems can we see here for organising inclusive Christian education?

## We share

*The children's choir studied the background and meaning of different parts of the Eucharistic liturgy. This Sunday, the group who had examined the kyrie was to share what they had learned. They dramatised the story of the blind man Bartimaeus who shouted out his prayer, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me", when Jesus passed by. They summed up by saying that when we sing "Kyrie eleison, God the Father, have mercy", we are crying out to God and praying for help and forgiveness for ourselves and our whole life. One elderly worshipper thanked the children afterwards because they had filled the kyrie with meaning for her. She had sat in church for years on end without paying any special attention to the words she sang. This Sunday, the children had been her teachers!*

We share indicates that the congregation is a teaching fellowship where everyone can learn something. Some people have considerable experience and knowledge; others have little and find it difficult to put their faith into words. When we join together in exploring the sources of our faith and the ways in which it has been expressed, we are at the same time both recipients of the church's help and care and participants and co-workers in its ministry.

Jesus pointed out children as role models in the kingdom of God. Baptism provides unlimited access to the kingdom, independent of the baptised per-

son's age or ability to understand. The right of children and young people to participate in decision-making is increasingly emphasised in society and affects their development and upbringing. It will also affect the church's attitude towards them. Children and young people have unique resources for taking part in planning Christian education and putting it into practice. Adults are responsible for preparing the setting and activities for Christian education and for ensuring that children and young people participate in, and share responsibility for, both teaching and learning.

### **What ideas and possibilities for Christian education can your congregation see in the WE SHARE vision?**

- How do we conceive of the role of children, young people and adults in Christian education? (Keywords: reciprocity, responsibility, participation, sender and receiver, teacher and pupil, travelling companion, participant, leader, co-worker etc.)
- What can children and young people share in Christian education?
- What can adults and the elderly share in Christian education?

## We share faith and wonder

*Seven three-year-olds came to the advent meeting. The crib with wooden figures was ready to be shown to observant youngsters. "This is the holy family – and here is baby Jesus." Baby Jesus was carefully taken down from the shelf. The children wanted to take turns in holding the baby, before it was placed in the centre of the crib. "The baby isn't crying any more", a little girl said. "This is his mummy, Mary." Some of them patted Mary. "Mummy", whispered a little boy awestruck. "Mummy", the next in line repeated, a little louder. Then someone said "Looking after him". Several of the others repeated it: "Looking after him". Joseph was placed next to Mary. "Here's his daddy, Joseph." "Daddy" – they all savoured the word. "Looking after him" the same little girl said. The others repeated it. All the other figures were taken down, one at a time: shepherds, sheep, donkey, wise men. For each one, the children repeated, "Looking after him". This was the three-year-olds' wonder around the crib. God came, unprotected and unassuming and became one of us. That day, the children showed the way deeper into the Mystery of Christmas.*

In many places in the gospels, we can read how Jesus created faith, wonder and doubt through what he said and did. An important aim of Christian education is to make it possible for children to try out their ideas and questions and be helped to interpret life in the light of the Christian faith. Many thoughts and experiences pose questions that it is difficult to find adequate answers to. Christian education must both show that faith has contents that we can become familiar with and at the same time make it clear that no-one can understand God fully.

In the Bible, creeds and sacraments, the universal

church shares a summary of the heart of the Christian faith. This provides a foundation for thoughts and actions upon which Christian education can be built. The biblical story from the first creation to the new creation is the basic narrative in Christian culture and has an important place in the whole of our culture, in language and all forms of art. Familiarity with the biblical narrative and with the language and symbols of Christian faith, along with experience of faith as it is practised in the church community and in everyday life, are basic contents of Christian education.

- How can we organise Christian education that helps people to interpret life in the light of Christian faith?
- How can we make room for wonder in teaching and preaching in our congregation?
- What are the basic contents of Christian education?

## We share Christian traditions and values

*The lavvo is full of young people from the confirmation class. They have come in and knelt down, so as to make room for as many as possible. We are close together; there must be room for everyone. Smoke makes our eyes smart, but some more logs on the fire and an opening in the lavvo canvas clears the air. No-one sits on the other side of the fire. That is the lavvo's sanctuary – boassu. The chest with the family's food supply is standing there, with a bible and hymn book placed on it. Spiritual food for the day. Light from the fire makes it possible for us to see one another, we see God's creation. It's easy to talk when we sit in a half circle like this. "What is a human being? Who am I? What does God want me to do? What do I want to do with my life?" The smoke lifts our prayers up and away into the autumn night. We sing the kyrie and the gloria, hymns are sung and the Lord's prayer read. Rather stiff-legged and with eyes red from the smoke, we tumble out of the lavvo. A confirmation class is over.*

The church is a bearer of traditions and our cultural heritage. Stewardship of this heritage for new times and new generations is an important task for Christian education. Christian education can communicate traditions and cultural heritage as expressions of faith and an invitation to believe. Some of these traditions are universal, others local.

The observance of Sundays and festivals, the church year and rites of passage comprise a comprehensive and rich resource for Christian education, both in the home and in the local church community. These celebrations afford an excellent opportunity to practise faith and learn about its contents. In this way, Christian education can serve to build up children's and young people's religious and cultural identity and sense of belonging. Knowledge of the

Sami people's spirituality, traditions and church life is an important part of the wealth of tradition that everyone should share. Impulses from other traditions create diversity and enrich the community. In Christian education we can arrange exchanges of culture and tradition through which this diversity can be explored and children and young people can be equipped and motivated for dialogue.

Jesus' commandment to love God and our neighbour involves our basic relationship to both God and our fellow human beings. It is the source of key values such as forgiveness, caring and solidarity. A well-thought-out set of values provides a solid moral foundation. With the conviction that every human being is unique, loved and responsible for treating creation in accordance with the will and

love of God as a basis, Christian values provide guidance for our choices and actions. These principles equip us to meet life's challenges and maintain our relationships with other people. By sharing Chris-

tian traditions and values, Christian education can help to develop identity and attitudes that are beneficiary both for individuals and for the community.

- Which Christian traditions can children and young people become familiar with, and what content is connected with them?
- Do we know of people or places that we can involve in communicating traditions?
- How can children and young people be equipped to make good and independent moral choices?
- How can children and young people experience the sharing of traditions and values as part of a world-wide community?

## We share experiences and fellowship

*Pentecost has just been dramatised by two eight-year-olds, two older siblings, two fathers, a mother, a grandfather and the minister. The wind has raged around the shivering and frightened disciples, and caps of fire have been put on their heads. The inhabitants of Jerusalem have heard many of the languages of the world – though in a rather improvised German and Chinese. Pia has told us in a resounding Trondheim dialect that “death couldn’t hold on to Jesus, he was raised up”. Then five people come forward, and we hear John 3:16 in their mother tongues – German, Spanish, Swahili, Mandarin and Maori. We share bread and wine around the communion table, which has been laid by eight-year-olds. Afterwards we leave the church while we sing a Maori song. We worship with a world-wide church.*

The church provides ample opportunities for people to learn about faith by practising faith. We get to know the bible by using it. We learn about prayer and we pray to God. We learn about worship and we worship together. In this way, learning and knowledge are linked to participation and experience. Our relationship with God embraces all aspects of human life. Conversation and reflection on the good and difficult sides of life can help children and young people to master life and to interact with others.

Christian education involves total communica-

tion, in which experiences, actions, rituals, emotions, knowledge and wisdom all play a part. This means that we should try to find methods and settings that can make an experience of total learning possible. The setting for Christian education also helps to form and socialise the participants in a community where faith is put into practice. The combination of short-term activities and long-term work among children and young people in the parish and in Christian organisations makes regular participation in this kind of community possible.

- How can children, young people and adults learn how to practise their faith together?
- How can we organise Christian education that provides total communication and results in comprehensive learning?
- In what settings can Christian education take place, and with whom can we cooperate?

## We share hope and love

*Terrible pictures of war dominated the news channels once again. Television pictures of wounded children and provisional refugee camps invaded our peaceful life here at home. A group of young people discussed what they could do. "We can put up a tent in the town square", they said. "We can collect money for the refugees. We want to do something – now!" And that is just what they did. They put up a tent in the square. They collected money. They talked to people and said that everyone should be concerned. That people were suffering and that we have a responsibility to help. The church cannot just talk about love. We have to do it.*

In baptism life is renewed. Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead we are born again to a living hope. The baptismal hope of resurrection crosses the boundaries we experience in this life and challenges us to assume responsibility and show love. In baptism, death does not have the last word. Only when life is over, on the last day, will our baptism be complete. At the resurrection we will fully see what we have possessed all our lives in our baptism. This hope enables us to encounter grief, adversity and defeat in this life. Baptism gives us hope for our own life, hope for the world that we live in and a hope that extends beyond this world. This can help us to meet the challenges life brings and give each one of us hope for the future.

The love of God endures even when our own strength fails. In difficult times, love and Christian hope are a source of power that gives us courage and determination to fight against all that is evil and destructive and to strive for a better future. Love contains a commitment to society, to our fellow human beings and to the world that we have been given responsibility for. The love of God equips and encourages us to serve and to care. When people suffer because of injustice, sickness, climate change and war, our being part of a world-wide church commits us to share in their pain. This is a call to act. And all this must be reflected in both the contents and the methods of our Christian education.

### **How can Christian education give hope for our own life, hope for the world, and hope of resurrection?**

- How can Christian education equip children and young people in facing the challenges that life brings?
- Do we have resource persons and settings that can give children and young people practical help in facing these challenges?
- How can we enable children and young people to put care and solidarity into practice in specific actions locally and globally?
- How can adults learn from the special creativity and commitment that young people possess in our common concern for justice and the created world?





## Greatest of all – the contents of Christian education

*And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three;  
and the greatest of these is love.*

(1 Corinthians 13:13)

“Greatest of all” focuses on the place of children in the kingdom of God and on faith, hope and love as the heart of Christian education. Love is the key to describing both how God is and how we are called to treat one another.

### **The heart of the contents of Christian education:**

*God’s love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another.*

(1 John 4:9–11)

Jesus Christ shows us God’s grace in truth and love. God’s grace and love sustains us and liberates us to love our neighbour as ourselves. Christian education must always focus on the most important element in Christian faith: God has revealed his love by sending his son Jesus Christ to die for our sins and reconcile the human race and the whole world to himself. By daily repentance we are all called to live and grow in this faith that we receive in baptism. The most important function of Christian education is to teach

us to obey everything that Jesus has commanded, so that all who are baptised can live in faith and hope, active in love.

Systematic and comprehensive Christian education consists of a continuous process of development and learning permeated by the heart of faith. This happens when the faith and traditions of the church encounter children and young people where they are and help them to interpret their lives and live out their faith in their daily life. Through this, children and young people can also contribute to renewing the traditions of the church.

The Old Testament also describes how the people of God are influenced by faith and share it through life-long learning:

*Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.*

(Deuteronomy 6:4-9)

We must show our love for God by everyday rituals, in a way that forms our identity. Confession of faith in God must be preserved in the heart and communicated to our children. It must influence the whole of life, our relationship to those close to us and to all other people.

## Elements in the contents of Christian education

Christian education should bring together the individual's situation, the faith and tradition of the church and a focus on faith in action. Together, these elements comprise the whole of the contents of Christian education. The heart of faith, the love of God in Jesus Christ, must influence all activities, while various aspects of the contents of Christian education are expounded systematically in different activities and contexts. The various aspects complement one another and influence one another dynamically. A good course of bible study will for example provide knowledge of the bible, practice in using the bible and a language for reflecting on one's own life.

Systematic and comprehensive Christian education is a continuous process in which previous knowledge and experience is related to new and deeper knowledge and experience. This means that through Christian education, children and young people will be presented with the most important elements of faith from different angles according to the context and their age.

Interpreting life and mastering the art of living Christian education must relate to the children's and young people's situation and communicate faith in such a way that they can understand their past life and their present situation in the light of faith in God. This can give them experience and a language with which they can interpret their life story in relation to how God acts in and through history.

The Christian interpretation of life involves understanding ourselves and all that exists in the light

of our relationship to God, ourselves, other people and the rest of creation. This can equip us to live in working days and holidays, in joy and sorrow, in crises and disruption, alone and together. Mastering the art of living means being able to live through good and bad days; to have confidence in our own resources and hope for the future. Being created and loved by God makes such a hope possible.

## Faith and tradition in the church

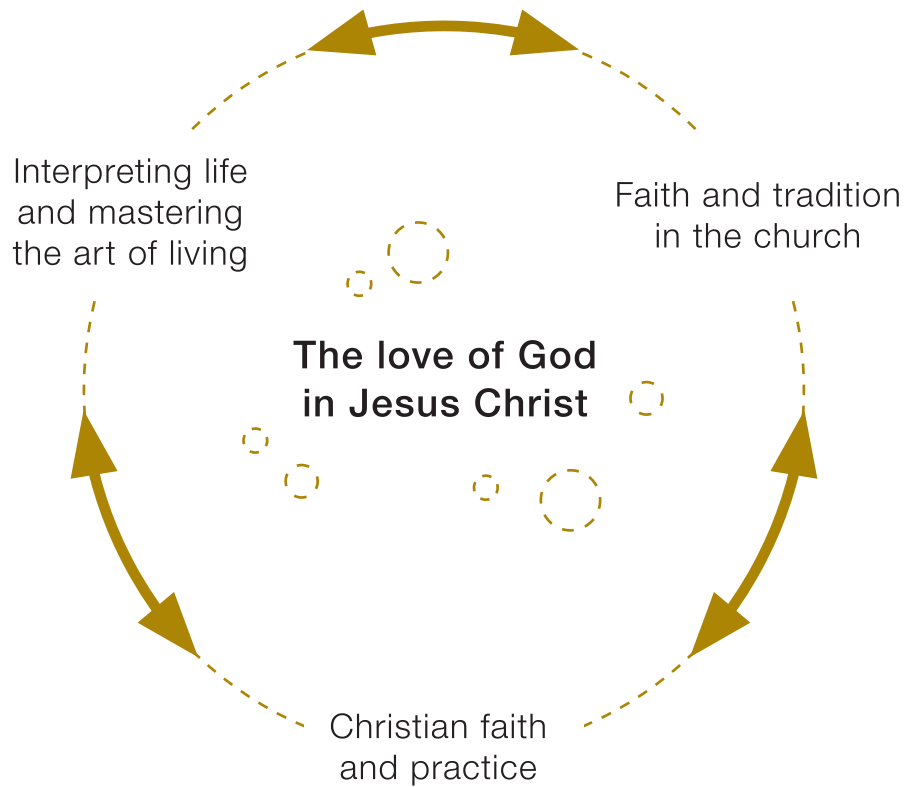
Christian education must communicate Christian faith as it is expressed in the bible, the creeds, worship and our cultural inheritance. Traditionally, education in our church has emphasised the apostles' creed, the Lord's prayer and the ten commandments as fundamental in the church's teaching. Familiarity with the sacraments and knowledge of church history and various traditions within the church, including the Sami tradition, are also important. Christianity has influenced Norwegian society in many ways and Christian education must pass on Christian culture and traditions to new generations.

## Christian faith and practice

In baptism we are born anew to life in Christ. Encouragement to live this life are an important part of the contents of Christian education. Faith is put into practice by prayer, worship, bible study, praise, service and discipleship. By being introduced to faith through practice, children and young people can be helped to live in the light of Christ's grace and love. Faith is put into practice in everyday life when we are a neighbour and co-worker in the family, the church and the local community, to the best of our ability.



The contents of Christian education can be seen in the diagram:



**The contents of 18 years of Christian education**

- How can the heart of faith and the three elements in the contents of Christian education influence Christian education for different age groups?
- How can the obligatory main themes and the various secondary themes be spread and elaborated on in activities for the different age groups?
- Appendix 2 contains a list of important Bible passages and a recommendation to adapt the use of these to the age span 0-18 years. How can this be done?

# The contents of Christian education

The diagram shows the aim of each element and obligatory main theme in a systematic plan for Christian education. The main themes are in bold type and are described briefly. For some main themes there are suggestions for secondary themes. There is a list of important Bible passages in appendix 2.

## INTERPRETING LIFE AND MASTERING THE ART OF LIVING

**Christian education should strengthen the children's and young people's sense of their own worth and make it possible for them to perceive themselves and their world as created, loved and sustained by the love of God.**

### An account of life and faith

Children and young people should try to find a language to describe their life story and their faith in the light of the faith in the Triune God that they were baptised into. This can include themes and experiences from their family, upbringing, school and church.

### Personal development

Christian education should stimulate to general good manners, personal and spiritual development and responsible living. Encourage ethical reflection and behaviour. Christian education should be an arena for children and young people to talk together.

### The big questions

Christian education should provide an opportunity to reflect and wonder about the big questions in the light of Christian faith. These questions can be.

- Where do I come from?
- Who am I?
- What is the meaning of life?
- Who do I want to be /become?
- Where am I going to?
- What is true and important?
- The problem of evil
- The relationship between science and religion.
- The relationship between Christianity and other religions and life stances.

## FAITH AND TRADITION IN THE CHURCH

**Through Christian education, children and young people must get to know God through the word of God in the bible, the creeds, the sacraments and other central expressions of the faith of the church. Children and young people must become familiar with the Christian festivals and with the church that they belong to.**

### The apostles' creed, first article

Children and young people must become aware of what it means that God created human beings, the heavens and the earth.

- God creates humankind, the earth and the universe
- The problem of evil
- God's care for creation
- Human dignity and views of humanity
- Stewardship
- Joy and gratitude over creation

### The apostles' creed, second article

Children and young people must get to know Jesus as friend, Saviour and Lord.

- Jesus is truly divine and truly human
- Jesus reveals God's good will
- Jesus meets and loves men and women
- Reconciliation and salvation
- Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension
- Jesus at the right hand of the Father and close to every human being
- Jesus returns to judge the world

### The apostles' creed, third article

Children and young people must get to know how the Holy Spirit leads us into the church and salvation, and towards resurrection and eternal life.

- Mission, the universal church and the local congregation
- The church as the body of Christ and the priesthood of all believers
- The fruit and gifts of the Holy Spirit
- Sin and conversion, confession and forgiveness
- The hope of resurrection and eternal life

### The sacraments

Children and young people must learn about baptism and the eucharist as means of grace and the foundation of life in faith.

- To die and rise with Christ
- The sign of the cross in baptism and everyday life
- Holy communion and the forgiveness of sins
- The new covenant between God and humanity

## PRACTISING CHRISTIAN FAITH

**Through Christian education, children and young people must investigate what it means to be loved by God and to love themselves, their neighbour and God. They must learn to pray, read the bible, take part in worship and show love through practical solidarity. They must be given the opportunity to express themselves, their own faith and their creativity.**

### Prayer

Children and young people must experience a variety of prayers and rituals which express Christian faith and they must learn to pray.

### Worship

Children and young people must participate in worship and in the fellowship of the church through baptism, prayer, singing, praise, confession, holy communion and the use of the word of God.

### Bible study

Children and young people must become familiar with the bible and learn how to use it for help, comfort, guidance and inspiration.

### Singing, music and culture

Children and young people must be given the opportunity to express themselves, their faith, doubt, worship, joy and sorrow through hymns, songs, music and other cultural forms. They must learn the most important hymns used at the Christian festivals.

### Diakonia

Children and young people must participate in the church's diaconal ministry involving loving one's neighbour, creating inclusive communities, caring for creation and struggling for justice. They must experience care and hospitality.

### Important aspects of life

Children and young people must study important aspects of human life in the light of Christian faith, for example:

- the body, self-image and identity
- friendship and relationships
- independence and belonging
- love, sexuality and sexual intercourse
- physical and mental health
- emotions and personal integrity
- grief and loss
- death and hope
- good and evil
- right and wrong
- sin and shame

- forgiveness and reconciliation
- faith and doubt
- education and choice of career
- resource management and consumption
- equality and justice

### The Lord's prayer and other prayers

Children and young people must learn the Lord's prayer and become familiar with other forms of prayer, praise and lamentation, such as table graces, evening prayers, extempore prayer, biblical prayers, liturgical prayers etc.

### The bible

Children and young people must become familiar with the structure and formation of the bible and its account of the history of salvation. Emphasis should be placed on the gospels and stories of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Passages relating to the three articles of the apostles' creed and to the Christian festivals are important.

- The creation, the fall and the history of salvation.
- Some persons and events in the Old Testament, e.g. Abraham, Sarah, Hagar, Joseph, Moses, Ruth, Esther, David, Jonah, Daniel, the exodus.

- A selection of the Psalms: thanksgiving and trust, lamentation and praise, prayers.
- A selection from the prophets and the wisdom literature, with an emphasis on prophecies about the Messiah and social justice.
- Job and the problem of suffering.
- Stories of Jesus, his life, death and resurrection.
- Jesus' parables and his teaching on the kingdom of God.
- The miracles of Jesus.
- Accounts of the early church and the beginnings of Christian mission in the Acts of the Apostles.
- A selection from the epistles with a focus on reconciliation, justification by faith and new life in Christ.
- The last times, judgement and the new heavens and new earth.

### Festivals and special days in the church year

Children and young people must become familiar with the Christian festivals, their background and contents.

- Sunday, advent, Christmas, lent, Easter, the ascension and Pentecost.
- Other special days.

### The church

Children and young people must learn about and become familiar with the church they belong to, including a critical perspective on the traditions and history of the church.

- The universal community and mission of the church
- Selected periods and persons from the history of the church, e.g. the Reformation, Martin Luther, Hans Nielsen Hauge, Lars Levi Læstadius and the growth of voluntary organisations
- Special features of Sami church life
- Worship and rituals in the church
- Church architecture and symbols
- Church art, culture and music
- The church's caring ministry
- The church's structure and democracy
- Church buildings, graveyards and church traditions.

### Mission and ecumenism

Children and young people must be given the opportunity to participate in the sending of the church to the world by finding out how the church that they belong to is part of a global community with a world-wide mission.

### Ethics

Children and young people must learn the great commandment, the ten commandments, the golden rule, and other expressions of Christian principles. They must try to apply these principles to their own daily life. They must consider ethical issues in the light of Christian faith and freedom. These issues can include consumerism, sharing resources, sexual intercourse, the inviolability of life.

### Forgiveness

Children and young people must investigate forgiveness: to need to be forgiven, to ask to be forgiven, to be forgiven, to forgive. Young people must be given the opportunity of confidential conversations, counselling and confession.

### Fasting and self-denial

Children and young people must be encouraged to live in a sustainable way and to see their own needs in the light of what serves the community best.

Children and young people must be given the opportunity to participate in local pilgrimages and in that way experience fellowship and wonder.

### Participation

Children and young people must practise their faith through active and responsible participation in church and society.





# 4

## The structure of Christian education

This national plan has these basic premises:

- Christian education must be systematic and comprehensive in its contents and structure.
- It must be an integrated whole and of suitable dimensions.
- It must include all who are baptised, however many and diverse they may be.

### Systematic and comprehensive

The congregations must provide Christian education activities with a duration and frequency that ensures regular and predictable contact with the children, young people and families that they are intended for. This can include one-off activities and activities that continue for shorter or longer periods of time.

The congregation's total programme includes different kinds of activities. Worship, diaconal ministry and musical and cultural activities provide favourable conditions for learning. Christian education activities must be combined with the congregation's worship and work among children and young people and with the teaching and practice of faith that occurs in the home.

### Breadth, variety and depth

Christian education must be aimed at the whole breadth of the age groups concerned and be organised for individual children and young people, whatever their degree of functionality, their gender or their personal or ethnic background. Children and young people have the right to exercise an influence. A survey of who the children and young people in the parish are and what they and their families consider important is essential for providing activities that are attractive and meaningful.

Christian education for all must make provision for children and young people with different interests, abilities and prospects. This means that the congregation must plan Christian education with a variety of themes and methods.

Christian education must be organised for both genders. This must be reflected in the choice of texts and themes, and it requires the use of inclusive language which treats the genders impartially. If both male and female leaders are engaged in Christian education, both boys and girls will find role models that they can identify with.

One of the main purposes of Christian education is to strengthen the identity of children and young people and help them to master the art of living. Through Christian education, children and young people with links to the Sami community can find support in coping with a dual cultural heritage. This means that congregations everywhere in the country must do what they can to preserve Sami culture and identity when children and young people with a Sami background participate in their Christian education programmes.

In some parishes, the population pattern is such that it will be natural for children and young people of different ethnic, cultural or denominational affiliation to be given the opportunity to take part in the Christian education programme, even though they may not be members of the Church of Norway.

Christian education for all requires that children and young people with reduced functionality or impaired development feel included and are given the opportunity to participate fully in the activities. This applies also to children and young people without visible difficulties, but with a difficult family situation or with social, psychological or learning problems. This presupposes a community characterised by mutual respect and participation, where every-

one is able to develop as a whole person, each in his or her own way. Adapting Christian education to suit all children and young people is a natural consequence of the view of humanity basic to the reform.

### The duration of Christian education

The recommended duration for a systematic and comprehensive programme of Christian education is 315 hours, spread over the person's first eighteen years. The aim is to provide 315 hours of Christian education activities to all who are baptised during the course of those years. If participation in permanent activities organised by children's and young people's organisations is included in a congregation's plan for Christian education, then the time thus spent can be counted as part of the 315 hours. In addition to Christian education offered by the church, children and young people will learn through their neighbourhood, nursery school, school and home. It is important for the church to cooperate with these bodies, but the learning they provide cannot be regarded as part of the church's Christian education programme.

On the basis of the national plan's comprehensive view of learning in the church, participation in a variety of activities can be regarded as time spent on Christian education. Teaching, learning by doing, dialogue, discussion, worship and other experiences of faith in action, passive and active participation and social contact within the church community can be regarded as Christian education.

A church outing or camp lasting a whole day includes different activities such as meals, games, open-air activities, discussion groups, creative work, devotions, silence, worship and teaching. These activities can be included in the 315 hours if they are

part of an integral pedagogical programme. At a camp or similar event, eight hours a day can be regarded as part of the Christian education programme.

Congregations differ in their capacity to provide this extent of Christian education. Some already have an extensive programme, while others have limited resources and traditions in this area. Conditions such as population figures and composition, geography, resources and staffing make it necessary for each congregation to provide Christian education that is adapted to the local situation and possibilities. The normative extent laid down in the national plan must be seen in the light of this.

### The recommended structure of systematic Christian education

What follows is a description of the special characteristics of different age groups and suggestions as to focus, extent and activities suitable for the age group. The purpose is to give congregations ideas for activities that can become part of the church's Christian education programme.

In their planning, congregations are free to specify other appropriate age groups within or overlapping the age groups mentioned here. Congregations can formulate aims, activities, subjects and scale that are suited to local conditions and the national plan's basic concepts. Congregations are encouraged to describe how different activities can be spread through the year. A calendar can be useful in planning, implementing and informing about the programme. More specific materials that can help in providing systematic Christian education will be available among the resources accompanying the national plan.

---

## Aged 0-5 years

**FOCUS FOR THIS AGE GROUP:** To make contact and cooperate with the home in order to establish rituals for daily life, festivals and rites of passage. To encourage fellowship among children and families in the parish and neighbourhood. To develop forms of worship that the children/families feel at home with. To strengthen bonds with the congregation.

**SUGGESTED EXTENT:** 50 hours.

Contact in connection with baptism provides a good basis for cooperation between the congregation and the home during the whole of childhood and youth.

During the first five years, the focus should be on information and cooperation in connection with the baptism ceremony itself and discussion of how the home, sponsors and congregation can cooperate

in following up the baptism. An important aim is to support the parents/guardians and motivate them to introduce ways of practising Christian faith in the home, through evening prayer, table grace and the celebration of festivals and anniversaries of the child's baptism. It is important for the child to learn bible stories and Christian songs.

Continued contact after baptism can provide a meeting place between home and church. This can be done through letters, information on the church web site and providing material to be used at home. Invitations to sessions for different age groups in the congregation can help to develop fellowship between families with children of the same age.

Babysong and toddlersong are activities that provide a sense of fellowship in the church, while at the same time enabling children and adults to learn songs, prayers, games and stories that can be used at home. Presentation of a "church book" to four-year olds has become a popular tradition in many parishes in the Church of Norway. This is an example of how an encounter with the church and its worship can be a stimulus for practising faith at home through reading, singing and praying. In many places this is followed up by a new session for four-year olds and their families, often together with the Sunday school or other activities for the age group, so

that children who want to, can become involved in an activity that continues also when they are older.

**MAIN ACTIVITIES:** Invitation to baptism, preparatory talks before baptism, meeting for families before or after baptism, contact with sponsors in the form of a letter or meeting before the baptism, babysong, toddlersong, family or children's services, four-year phase with presentation of a book.

**EXAMPLES OF OTHER ACTIVITIES:** Folder with material about baptism, Sunday school, (extended) family gatherings, family choir, Christmas and Easter workshops, meetings for children and their parents/guardians, out-door activities, "church school" in the spring before the child begins at school, celebration of the first day at school..

**COOPERATION WITH THE HOME:** Material to be used at home, study evenings for parents/guardians and sponsors, web-based communication.

---

## Aged 6-12 years

**FOCUS FOR THIS AGE GROUP:** To investigate and learn about the most important aspects of Christian faith by active participation. To make ways of practising Christian faith a habit. Concern and responsibility for other people.

**SUGGESTED EXTENT:** 145 hours.

Becoming older involves more independence, but interaction with parents/guardians and the family is still important at this age. Faith practised in the family is the basic element in the child's Christian education. Fellowship at church and becoming more familiar with the church will become increasingly important in interplay with the family. New spheres will open up for the child through school and increased out-of-school activities.

It is important to create space for spiritual life and learning through stories, songs, games and ex-

ploration. At the same time, children must be given the opportunity to be still and experience holiness in their daily life. Wonder at mysteries and symbols can be an important resource for children's spiritual development. During these years, many children enjoy learning and mastering new abilities. Learning to read opens new sources of experience, and it can be exciting to encounter other traditions and cultures. This is a good time for children to become familiar with Bible stories and other stories. A good way to learn is by repeating the stories in their own words.

At this age, children have good prospects for be-



coming familiar with the factual aspect of Christian education. Many of them are motivated to learn texts such as the Lord's prayer, hymns, bible verses and the apostles' creed by heart. By being given responsibility for tasks in the church and at home, children can develop their independence and learn.

Systematic teaching in the form of courses after school, in the school holidays, at weekends or when schools are closed for teachers' planning can be valuable for this age group. This will both provide a continuous learning process and develop contact with the children and their families.

Towards the end of this period, children will begin to orientate themselves towards teenage. They are neither children nor young people. Congregations are encouraged to start special activities for these older children. Puberty involves physical and mental changes. The process of breaking out and finding their own identity, as well as increased independence of the family's values is intensified during this period. A person at this age is often curious and vulnerable and needs acknowledgement and reassurance. Friends are important, and values and choices are explored together with them. This involves increased reflection on religious and existential questions. External influence from music, films, fashion, the web and other media is important for many of them in developing self-awareness. Greater demands are made of them and more emphasis is placed on performance and achievement. To contribute to confidence in their own worth and their own resources is a great help for those in this age group.

**MAIN ACTIVITIES:** Baptism club for six-year olds, celebration of first day at school, bible study and church school, sleeping over in church, tenth anniversary of baptism, camps, responsibility for tasks, celebration of Pentecost as the birthday of the church, children's and family services.

**EXAMPLES OF OTHER ACTIVITIES:** Sessions for children combined with a common meal for the families and a liturgical closing ceremony. Celebration of church festivals and special days. Alternative celebrations of halloween. Activities on days when schools are closed for holidays or teachers' planning, meetings for storytelling, exploration walks, live-at-home camps, clubs, special interest groups for music, singing, dance, drama, outdoor activities, sport, digital media. Continuous participation in the work of children's and youth organisations. Tasks serving the church or the local community, worship linked to diakonia, mission, solidarity, caring for creation.

**COOPERATION WITH THE HOME:** Meetings for parents/guardians with "Christian education for adults" which also provide insight into what the children encounter in Christian education. Courses for parents on relevant themes. Information on literature and films for the age group.

---

## Aged 13-18 years

**FOCUS FOR THIS AGE GROUP:** To establish a reflective and comprehensive view of the Christian faith related to their own life story and future prospects. Christian faith in action with an emphasis on worship and including familiarity with permanent activities for young people. Confidence in themselves and their identity, discipleship, choice, cooperativeness and solidarity.

**SUGGESTED EXTENT:** 120 hours, including 60 hours preparation for confirmation .

The teen years contain many changes and challenges. They are years of development and experiment, self-expression, independence and decision-making. Your religion is regarded as something that you can choose from a huge assortment of faiths and life

stances. Questions about education, sexual intercourse, social issues and values, faith and life are important. The church provides a fellowship where young people can gain knowledge and be encouraged to reflect, be given the opportunity to discuss

important decisions that they must make and to express their faith. Their peers are important as discussion partners and role models in these processes. But at the same time, it is important that young people meet adults who have time to talk and listen.

To reach out to all in this age group can be a challenge. Many young people live an active life. Christian education must compete with other activities. This makes demands on both the quality of the church's programme and the effectiveness of its efforts to motivate and inform. The church must be where young people are. The congregation needs to think creatively about cooperation, especially with Christian youth organisations and other local clubs and societies. In most parishes it will be natural to arrange regular meetings and more deep-ploughing studies of faith in addition to the programme of Christian education. This can be done in cooperation with a variety of partners. All activities intended for young people should involve young people in planning.

That young people should participate in decision-making is important for the Church of Norway. The church believes that young people should be enabled and encouraged to share in responsibility for their local church through participating in the church's democratic processes. This can involve accepting leadership positions or other forms of active participation.

In the years before confirmation the church must try to maintain and expand the contact made during childhood. It is important to motivate young people to choose confirmation in church. The Church of Norway concentrates its main Christian education efforts on teenagers in confirmation time. During this period, young people encounter the whole contents of Christian education through group learning in a church setting over a considerable length of time. Confirmation time is described in the next chapter.

After confirmation, Christian education activities can strengthen the contact established in confirmation time. The first year after confirmation is critical for further involvement in the church. Many may be willing to take part in a reunion or something similar in order to follow up their confirmation. Some want to contribute to the work of the church as voluntary workers or leaders. In these cases, it should be possible to arrange for the young people to be coached by others. The form of Christian education will differ from that in the time before confirmation: the young people will be helped to consider general human themes that they are concerned with in the light of faith. Services for young people, which they themselves help to plan and con-

duct, can be the main occasions for Christian education in this phase. Study groups afford opportunities for personal participation and reflection. It is important to regard young people as a resource for the church, but at the same time young people must be allowed to be involved in the church without being burdened with too much responsibility.

In many parts of the country, young people must leave home in order to go to sixth form college/high school. It will be an advantage for the congregation at home to cooperate in Christian education with the congregation and Christian organisations in the parish where the school is situated. Activities can also be arranged at weekends or in the holidays, when the young people are at home. It is an important aim of Christian education to make children and young people feel a sense of belonging to the church and to help them to develop an integrated faith that can bear them through the various phases of life.

**MAIN ACTIVITIES:** Measures that pave the way for confirmation time, such as information, motivation and the establishment of relationships. Confirmation time: see chapter 5. Follow-up of confirmation time: activities with wide appeal, camps, leader training, voluntary work, services for young people, discussion groups.

**EXAMPLES OF OTHER ACTIVITIES:** Seminars, courses for those living in bedsits, camps, reunions, arrangements in connection with the celebration of the completion of secondary education, celebration of coming of age, school societies, clubs, choirs, open air activities, sport, fund-raising, solidarity and ecumenism, the web, films and the media. Arrangements for the eve of 1st May and 17th May (Norway's national day), New Year's Eve, Midsummer Eve, etc. Voluntary work in connection with one-off events, permanent activities and positions of trust.

**COOPERATION WITH THE HOME:** Meetings for parents/guardians in the church can prepare for discussions and joint activities. This can be especially appropriate in confirmation time. Themes can be the church, faith and identity, living together, sexuality, ethics, young people's problems, the role of parents.





## Confirmation time (14-15 years old)

The aim for confirmation time is to revive and strengthen the life of faith given in baptism, so that young people can live their lives in renunciation of

the devil and faith in Christ, in worship and service, as disciples of Jesus Christ at home, in church and in society.

**FOCUS:** Christian education in confirmation time must provide a comprehensive summary and experience of the doctrines, practice and fellowship inherent in faith, in dialogue with the young people's own questions about life.

**SUGGESTED EXTENT:** 60 hours.

Confirmation plays a central role in Christian education in the Church of Norway and, like baptism, reaches out to many and is well established in all parishes. Renewal and expansion of Christian education involves developing and strengthening the contents and scope of activities in confirmation time. Preparation for confirmation must be included in the local plan for Christian education.

### Confirmation and baptism

The word *confirmation* comes from the Latin word *confirmare*, which means to strengthen, affirm or ratify.

In the early church, confirmation was part of the baptism that the bishop administered, including anointing and blessing the person baptised. For practical reasons, confirmation was separated from baptism in time. It was therefore regarded as a separate action, and eventually as a sacrament in its own right in addition to baptism.

The reformers retained confirmation as a rite, but regarded it as preparation of young people for

their first communion. This preparation included teaching the catechism and publicly testing the young people's knowledge. It was this interpretation that was the background for the introduction of confirmation in Norway in 1736. Confirmation itself was a public affirmation, where those being confirmed were both the object of God's affirmation and the subject in their own personal affirmation that they would live in the baptismal covenant.

### From confession to affirmation

According to Lutheran tradition, the act of confirmation includes affirmation of the baptismal promise, confession of faith and blessing with the laying on of hands. In 1981 a new ritual was introduced in the Church of Norway, in which confirmation consists only of prayer and blessing. Even so, confirmation time includes opportunities and encouragement for the young person to confess his or her faith.

The emphasis has changed from confirmation *day* with prayer to confirmation *time* as a time of learning with many possible methods involving ac-

tive participation, such as discussion groups, camps, volunteer service and hobby groups, as well as more traditional teaching.

According to contemporary theology, the most important element in confirmation is that God affirms the confirmand in his/her faith and life. Through participation in confirmation preparations, the young person can reflect on and be strengthened in his/her faith and membership of the church. In the final confirmation service, the young person is prayed for, and the church affirms that he/she is baptised to life in Christ.

The basis of confirmation time – as of all Christian education – is baptism. Baptism is a prerequisite for participation in the confirmation service. In this way, the significance of baptism for faith and for belonging to Christ and the church is emphasised.

When the congregation invites young people to confirmation preparation, it must be clear that the invitation is to both baptised and non-baptised young people. In the case of those who are not baptised, the church wants to use confirmation time to guide them in a process that can lead to an independent decision about faith and baptism.

### Rite of passage

Confirmation has traditionally been understood as a rite marking the transition from child to adult. It still functions as a rite of passage, even though much has changed and confirmation is no longer the occasion where young people cross the line from child to adult. Today, confirmation affords a golden opportunity for young people to discuss important questions within the church community at an age when they need to reflect on faith and values and when important decisions must be made. The religious age of majority in Norway is 15 years. Confirmation time can therefore be regarded as the time for helping church members to maturity in their religious stance.

### Contents and structure of confirmation time

In the course of confirmation time, the confirmands must have covered all the main themes of Christian education as described in chapter 3 above. The selection of contents must be seen in relation to the whole of the congregation's plan for Christian education, and will depend on what the confirmands have covered in earlier years. It must be stressed that confirmation time should give new knowledge, not just repetition and summaries of former lessons.

During confirmation time, all confirmands must study the apostles' creed, the Lord's prayer and the

commandments. They must be familiar with worship, the sacraments and central stories from the bible, seen in the light of their own and the community's life story. Confirmation time must strengthen their experience of their own worth and help them to regard themselves as created, loved, saved and sustained by the love of God. The confirmands must work on their own faith and sense of wonder through discussion and reflection. They must learn about and be given the opportunity to participate in various forms of faith in action, which can provide them with knowledge and experience. They must learn about and participate in different aspects of the work of the congregation.

**MAIN ACTIVITIES:** Sunday worship, teaching, diakonia and devotions are the basis of the whole syllabus in confirmation time.

**EXAMPLES OF OTHER ACTIVITIES:** Participation in youth work in the congregation, camps, discussion and hobby groups, thematic meetings, charity campaigns, projects, music, dance and drama.

Confirmation time gives the confirmand the opportunity to undergo processes and build relationships. Reflection and deeper study through shared experience; teaching and individual studies: all these require being together over a long period of time. This can be achieved by activities lasting a half or whole day, weekend tours and camps. Through conversations with individual confirmands and in smaller groups, leaders can get to know the confirmands and make provisions for a confirmation time suited to each individual.

### Worship in confirmation time

To encounter word and sacrament in the worshiping community is a basic way of experiencing faith in action. The important role of worship in Christian education is also reflected in the services held in confirmation time and in the confirmands' place in the congregation.

That the confirmands are involved in planning and holding services is beneficial for the confirmands themselves and for the whole congregation as a learning community. Through being present and participating, both passively and actively, the confirmands can contribute to diversity in worship. Mentioning the confirmands by name in the intercessions ensures that they are included in the con-

gregation's prayers throughout confirmation time.

The confirmands must attend at least eight services during confirmation time. These will include a service where they are presented to the congregation, one of more services where they take part in conversations to show what they have learned, and the confirmation service itself, with prayer and laying on of hands for each individual confirmand. During confirmation time, the confirmands should experience different kinds of services, as is laid down in the *Book of Worship for the Church of Norway*. Preparation of worship must make allowance for variation and diversity, while at the same time preserving familiarity and local characteristics.

### Involving the family

It is an advantage to involve the confirmands and their parents/guardians in planning and conducting Christian education in confirmation time, in order to ensure that they have a say in what is done and that it is rooted in the needs and wishes of the confirmands and their families.

Cooperating and meeting with the parents/guardians is important in confirmation time. They can be involved in planning and implementing different parts of the programme. In addition to meetings with the parents/guardians, meetings where they and the confirmands work together on issues concerning faith and life can be arranged. Confirmation also provides an opportunity to involve sponsors through prayers and invitations to some of the sessions in confirmation time.

Confirmation time is an important time for the family, both the immediate family and other relations. Young people today live in various family constellations. The church must tackle the challenges that this involves in a constructive and inclusive manner.

**COOPERATION WITH THE HOME:** Meetings and courses for parents with themes such as confirmation, youth issues and the role of parents, sexual relations, faith and identity, ethical themes. Voluntary involvement in planning and carrying out activities in confirmation time.

### The framework for confirmation time

Confirmation normally takes place in the year in which the confirmand has his/her 15<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Confirmation time lasts at least eight months, with a duration of 60 hours. For a day at a camp or other event, up to eight hours of Christian education can be noted. To ensure continuous contact between the confirmand and the congregation, camps etc cannot constitute more than fifty percent of Christian education in confirmation time.

Confirmation time activities should take place within the local church community, in interplay between employees and voluntary workers. The comprehensive nature of confirmation time makes it natural that the church staff work together in an interdisciplinary way in planning and conducting activities, so that teaching, worship, diakonia, church music and cooperation with other aspects of the congregation's ministry are integrated in a comprehensive programme for Christian education within the church community.

The law governing the Church of Norway § 36 states that "Preparation for confirmation shall not take place during school hours, unless special circumstances make this necessary and the local authorities give their permission. By special circumstances is to be inferred teaching adapted to the needs of the disabled, distance between school and home that requires transport, or other circumstances that make it difficult to provide a satisfactory educational programme outside school hours."

Resource material for confirmation time is being prepared, with a more detailed description of the curriculum for confirmation time, guidance in organising activities and teaching methods. This is intended to help congregations in forming their plan for Christian education. It develops further the themes in this chapter.





## Important factors in comprehensive Christian education

Comprehensive Christian education involves several factors that are important in the work of the church. This chapter contains suggestions and help concerning these.

- Every local plan must contain descriptions of how these factors can be included in Christian education in the parish.

### Cooperation with home and family

The family and home play the most important role in children's and young people's upbringing and development. The values, life stance and traditions of the parents/guardians are the context in which children and young people learn and grow up, and they leave their mark on them. The congregation, parents/guardians and sponsors share the task of following up the child's baptism. Maintaining contact with the home and equipping and motivating the family to let Christian faith, values and traditions influence their life is therefore important for the congregation. Christian education in the parish must help to develop good relations and cooperation with the family.

Contact in connection with baptism is a good starting point for cooperation between church and home. Through the various activities in Christian

education, parents/guardians, sponsors and others in the family can be involved in planning and carrying out activities and can be inspired to take the initiative to do more for the participants afterwards. The activities that are planned can involve the family's own expressions of faith, which will be familiar and will thereby also be shown appreciation.

Christian education provides ample opportunities to gather the family and strengthen the network around the children and young people. Children grow up in different kinds of families. Communication with the homes and planning of activities must make room for variety so that everyone feels included. To support the family is to improve the conditions the children and young people grow up under. It can be a special challenge to communicate with groups in the parish that the staff and voluntary workers do not normally have contact with.

Cooperation between home and church in Christian education can be ensured by involving parents/guardians in planning, conducting and evaluating the activities. This can be done by letting parents be represented in the committee responsible for Christian education in the parish or in consultant groups, or by giving them specific tasks in the activities and by asking them to evaluate them.

- How can the congregation and the families be a reciprocal resource for each other in Christian education?
- How can the congregation establish good routines in its communication with the homes and sponsors in connection with baptism and in following up those who are baptised as they grow up?
- How can Christian education activities be organised so that parents/guardians, sponsors and other members of the family can be involved in planning, conducting and evaluating the activities?
- In what way can parents/guardians and sponsors be informed about materials that can encourage them to practise and share faith at home?

## The influence of children and young people

The national plan emphasises that children and young people participate on an equal footing with adults in the church community. With the motto “We share”, the focus is on the alternation in the church between giving and receiving the services that the church provides.

Participation in the work of the church can be based on the Christian view of humanity, the theology of baptism and the priesthood of all believers. The rights of children and young people to active participation are on the agenda of society as a whole. To participate means to influence decisions and processes in such a way that the individual’s views have consequences for the decisions that are taken and influence what happens. This includes the right of children to be met with acknowledgement and respect and to be given the opportunity to express themselves.

The congregation must make a relevant plan for Christian education that participants feel that they own and are motivated to take part in. All children and young people have the resources to contribute with ideas and dreams, knowledge and commitment. In making its local plan for Christian education, the congregation must therefore give children and young people genuine influence in leading, planning, implementing and evaluating the programme. Influence can be ensured by pedagogical

methods and administrative measures. Specifically, influence can be ensured by including children and young people in the bodies that lead and make decisions, by consulting young people in reference groups or consumer evaluation surveys and by making provision for young people to take part in implementing the programme in such a way that they feel that it belongs to them.

Through participation in the form of leadership tasks and positions of trust in the local church and volunteer organisations, children and young people can exercise real influence and deepen their understanding of democracy. Christian education also has an important function in training and motivating young people to take part in the democratic process in the church by voting in elections to church and diocesan councils when they attain voting rights in the church at the age of 15.

That children and young people have the right to exercise influence requires that areas of responsibility within the community are clarified. Adults are still responsible – as parents/guardians or voluntary workers or employees with tasks in Christian education. For the younger age groups it is essential that adults are responsible for bringing them up and teaching them. The form and degree of influence that children and young people are given depends on their capacity at the time concerned.

In what way can children and young people influence decisions concerning the leadership and development of Christian education in the parish?

How can we ensure that individuals’ participation has an effect on the implementation and evaluation of the activities?

What possibilities can we see for improving democracy in the church and in Christian organisations in connection with Christian education?

## Inclusiveness and adaptation

In 1 Corinthians 12, the church is described as a body where we are one another’s limbs and are dependent on one another. The Christian doctrine of humanity emphasises that all are created in the image of God and are of equal worth. The Declaration of Human Rights emphasises that all people have the right to express and exercise their faith.

Adapted Christian education must be ingrained in the congregation’s consciousness, so that all children and young people really can receive Christian education. The phrase “adapted Christian educa-

tion” means a programme which is *universally accessible* (adapted to the physical conditions) and *individually adapted* (adapted to suit the individual). There are special considerations involved if Christian education is to fulfil these criteria.

Universal access has been placed on the Norwegian agenda by the *Law on Discrimination and Accessibility*. The aim of the law (§ 1) is “... to further equal rank and equal value, ensure equal opportunities and rights to participate in society for all, independent of degree of functionality, and to hinder discrimination on the basis of functionality.” This

means that activities must be carefully and creatively planned using a variety of methods and settings in order to fulfil their aims. Universal access is a general responsibility for the church. The joint parish councils are responsible for adapting churches and other premises so that they can be used by as many people as possible. Universally accessible surroundings will contribute to reducing the need for special adaptation for persons with reduced functionality.

While universal accessibility is a general provision, some children and young people will require individual adaptation and increased resources in order to be able to participate in activities on an equal footing with others. This applies especially to children with impaired development and reduced functionality. According to the *Education Act* and the *Law on Discrimination and Accessibility*, teaching must be adapted to the ability and capacity of the individual and be arranged so that pupils with reduced functionality are given equal opportunities for learning. These regulations provide important directives for Christian education. Congregations

may be required to make individual plans with specially adapted social and pedagogical arrangements, and provide extra follow-up for those involved.

In order to ensure that all children and young people have the same opportunity to participate in Christian education, the congregation will need to be aware of and gather information about children and young people in the parish who need individually adapted education. Individual children/young people and their parents/guardians have special competence in the question of how Christian education can be organised. Good routines should be established for following this up and for giving information to the staff member or volunteer in the congregation who is responsible. Economic and human resources must be set aside for this work. In order for staff and volunteers to gain more knowledge and competence, and in order to be able to make satisfactory provisions, it will be important to cooperate with the parents/guardians and possibly obtain permission to cooperate with professional carers and with the support network in question.

- Who needs adapted teaching and special arrangements in the church's Christian education?
- What must we do to enable children and young people with reduced functionality or impaired development to share their faith?
- How can we include children and young people with reduced functionality or impaired development in the fellowship and ministry of the congregation?
- How can we establish a satisfactory cooperation with individual children/young people, their parents/guardians and public services (health visitor, school psychology service, special schools, other support networks, etc)?

## Worship

The Sunday service is the main occasion where the congregation is gathered, not only as a community of faith but also as a learning community. We learn through various forms of expression such as readings, liturgy, prayers, hymns, art and symbolic actions. The church itself is a special room where we can learn through a combination of knowledge, practice and fellowship. Worship plays an important role in Christian education.

The national plan recommends that every activity in Christian education should be connected to

the congregation's worship, either in the form of participation in worship or that elements of worship are included in the activities. In this way, Christian education will influence the congregation's worship by making the role of children and young people in the church community clearer. In some places, special services will be held for occasions such as presenting children with the "four-year book" or introducing confirmands to the congregation; in others, Christian education will be incorporated in the congregation's regular worship from Sunday to Sunday. In both cases, the children, young people and families who are involved in Christian education must



feel that they belong to the church community, that they are included and are equally important in the “we” that gathers before the face of God.

Worship is for everyone – irrespective of functionality. The many-faceted language of worship in the form of words, images, music and movement provides excellent opportunities for enabling people with reduced functionality to participate in various degrees.

A sense of belonging and of ownership is created when children and young people are included and

participate actively in worship. They can participate by leading parts of the liturgy and reading lessons and prayers. They can participate with songs, dance, drama, preaching, assisting at holy communion etc. It is important that they participate both in planning, conducting and evaluating worship. In central elements in the liturgy such as the Lord’s prayer, the apostles’ creed and the benediction, children and young people encounter basic expressions of faith that belong not only in Sunday worship but also in everyday life.

- How can we base the church’s Christian education on worship?
- How will this affect the “we” of the worshipping community?
- Worship is for everyone – irrespective of degree of functionality! How does this work in our church?
- How can we change the way in which we plan services and share responsibility and tasks, so that children and young people can take part in worship?

## Diakonia

”Diakonia is the caring ministry of the Church. It is the Gospel in action and is expressed through loving one’s neighbour, creating inclusive communities, caring for creation and struggling for justice”.

The *Plan for Diakonia in the Church of Norway* makes it clear by this definition that diakonia is at the heart of Christian faith and is a dimension of the nature of the church. Help in living and active love will be integrated in diaconal Christian education. The church cannot just teach about love; its faith and confession must be experienced and practised. Diakonia is to serve our neighbours, the creation and God – and this has consequences for worship and Christian education.

Diakonia is bound up with the aim of Christian education, to contribute to interpreting life and mastering the art of living. Christian education must create conditions in which children and young people can strengthen their self-confidence, establish relationships and be encouraged to serve and to develop as whole beings, using different senses, abilities and means of expression. Everyone needs to be met with love and care in joy and sorrow. All children and young people must be met and cared for just as they are. It should be a matter of course that we share our vulnerability and talk about the big

questions and the challenges and crises that life brings. In expressing sorrow and pain, language, symbolic actions and counselling can be ways to give help and support.

Diaconal Christian education will see, interpret and act in relation to the situation that the children, young people and their families are in. When a congregation is in touch with many children and young people, some of them will have suffered from strain, violation and abuse. The congregation must have means of detecting and preventing this, and be prepared to take care of and include the children and young people concerned. We recommend the use of courses and resource materials that deal with problems such as inappropriate behaviour and the abuse of power.

Diakonia is an aspect of all Christian education and must be concretised in action. Diaconal action occurs in our relationships with one another and in our use of natural resources. Relationships are good when we show mutual care, respect and responsibility for one another. Children and young people should experience and contribute to open, trusting and inclusive relationships between people with different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, ages, sexual preferences, functionality, social and economic status and family situations.



The unjust distribution of resources, climate change and exaggerated consumption have dire consequences for the whole of creation. The natural world and human living conditions are threatened by destruction of the environment and injustice. Solidarity consists of interdependence, responsibility and local and global action. Christian education must find ways of stimulating children and young people and their families to service and social commitment. Through taking part in the church's international projects and solidarity with people who suffer, chil-

dren and young people will be made aware that they belong to a world-wide community where people show responsibility for one another. Christian education must contribute to focusing on problems and possibilities for change concerning consumption, the environment and social justice. The church must align itself with groups in society that are working to further human dignity and a more just world order and that establish alternatives which can give a more sustainable use of natural resources.

- How can a diaconal attitude become a natural response for the various age groups in the church's Christian education?
- What can we do to help children and young people and their families to feel included in the community?
- How can children and young people participate in service and commitment locally and globally for care, solidarity, global justice and the integrity of creation?
- How can the church's Christian education help children and young people and their families to be seen and helped when life is difficult?

## Mission

*Mission* means sending. Both Christ and his church try all the time to reach further out, so more and more people can experience being loved by God and made able to love others. Mission is part of the identity of the church, what the church is and why it exists. The church must reach out. It must share faith and life across religious, cultural, social and generational borders. The church must also invite. It must befriend individuals, groups and cultures beyond its borders. By its presence, its words and its actions it must spread the good news, both locally and globally. Children and young people must be given the opportunity to take part in the church's mission to the world by seeing and experiencing how the church and they themselves are part of a global community with a world-wide commission. This community is present in the family and neighbourhood, at school and in society. This aspect belongs therefore to all phases of Christian education.

Mission, baptism and Christian education belong together. The great commission in Matthew 28:18-20 is a command both to baptise and to go out. These verses encourage and compel the church and

its members to share the good news with those who have not heard it – both to those nearby and to those far away, to all neighbourhoods and nations.

To share is not just to give, it is also to receive. Mission is not just one-way communication, but to share respectfully what we have received. We can pass on and share our resources and we can receive impulses and inspiration from our Christian sisters and brothers in other countries. Contact with people in other parts of the world can create understanding and respect. Our knowledge of other people's way of life increases, and children and young people can be helped to look critically at their own culture. In Christian education, the missionary aspect can be broadened by showing the connection between spreading the gospel and struggling for justice.

The call to mission is shared by the whole world-wide church. The Church of Norway cooperates with missionary societies both in Norway and other countries. Ecumenical contact and cooperation with missionary and aid organisations, locally and globally, can help to concretise the missionary dimension in Christian education.

- How can children and young people be involved in the church's engagement in mission and international solidarity?
- Does the congregation have a missionary contract or friendship agreement and if so, how can children and young people be involved in this work?
- How can we establish ecumenical contacts between children and young people in our congregation and children and young people from other denominations, locally and globally?
- Are there members of our congregation or others in the neighbourhood with a background from sister churches abroad, who can contribute to our local activities?
- How can Christian education be affected by the fact that sharing is not just giving, but also receiving?

## Music and culture

Musical and cultural events in church are broadly speaking Christian education and are a significant part of its contents, context and methods. Different forms of art and other kinds of culture portray faith and life in contemporary and enduring images, words and experiences. Music and other cultural activities provide excellent opportunities for children and young people to be both audience, participants and performers in the church's learning community.

The *Plan for Church Music* in the Church of Norway states that it is a hallmark of the church as a place of learning that it has at its disposal a multitude of forms of expression and fellowship through which learning can take place. By working with bible passages, liturgies and hymns, faith can be absorbed, experienced and shared with others. It is therefore natural to consider the congregation's plans for church music and Christian education together.

The church's cultural, musical and liturgical traditions are a rich inheritance that is constantly being expanded. The choice of hymns and songs and other forms of expression to be used in Christian educa-

tion must reflect the diversity of this inheritance and ensure both renewal and respect for tradition. Sami culture, music and liturgy are part of this diversity. In the universal church, the different art forms provide a language for sharing faith among different nationalities and cultures. The cultural expressions that bind us together as Christians can provide roots and a sense of belonging. Various forms of children's and youth culture can be employed in Christian education.

Choirs are an important setting for learning, where the singers feel that they own the songs that are sung, while they at the same time spread faith. Faith can also be expressed through drama, dance and the visual arts. Central bible passages are a frame of reference for much of the art and literature of the western world.

Working with music and culture in Christian education provides excellent opportunities for interdisciplinary cooperation among the church employees. Cooperation between the church and local artists and cultural institutions can also be promising.

- How can children and young people encounter different forms of culture as audience, participants and performers?
- What individuals and circles in the local community are potential partners in making music and culture a part of Christian education?
- What specific ideas and possibilities do we have for using songs, music, dance, story-telling, drama, visual arts and other aesthetic expressions in Christian education?

## Voluntary workers

In a Lutheran church, all who are baptised share in the priesthood of all believers. One becomes part of the church, like a limb on a body. The church has a sacred responsibility for all who are baptised. The limbs – members – of the body exercise this responsibility in different ways. Voluntary workers are not the employees' assistants, nor are they people who come in from the outside: they are part of the church itself.

Members of the congregation can contribute in different ways, according to their ability, spiritual gifts and interests. This is a natural part of what it means to belong to the church and grow as a Christian. Different forms of voluntary work are necessary in Christian education. Volunteers can support the work by prayer or regular giving, they can be elected as leaders in parish councils and committees. They can plan, lead and carry out activities, or they can contribute on a more limited scale together with other volunteers and employees.

Children, young people and adults can all participate in and share responsibility for Christian education. Voluntary work is an important part of the contents of Christian education. Children and young people can be leaders for younger children or take part in the congregation's diaconal ministry.

This is a natural part of living out their faith. It strengthens their sense of belonging to the congregation and can lead to further service in the church.

Developing top-quality activities for all 0-18 year olds who are baptised requires broad involvement in planning and implementing the Christian education programme. It requires deliberate efforts to mobilise voluntary workers. This is crucial, if the congregation is to succeed in providing activities for all who are baptised. The staff share in the responsibility for recruiting and organising voluntary work as part of their conditions of service and job description. This is also an important task for the parish council. Cooperation with voluntary organisations can also be a resource. They have experience, networks and competence in this sphere.

That Christian education reaches out to so many is a good reason for the congregation to think of Christian education when seeking to recruit members for voluntary work. These can be parents/guardians, sponsors and grandparents, active and not so active church members. It is important to find an effective way of getting as many people as possible to contribute to voluntary work. This is necessary in order to revitalise the "folk church" in its broadest sense, and to strengthen democracy in the church.

- Has the congregation a plan for recruiting and following up voluntary workers?
- How can voluntary workers be involved in planning and implementing the congregation's plan for Christian education?
- How can children and young people, irrespective of functionality, be involved as voluntary workers?
- Who is responsible for recruiting and mobilising voluntary workers?
- What voluntary organisations can the congregation cooperate with?

## Cooperation with children's and youth organisations

Many churches provide cultural activities, clubs and societies for children and young people. This can include choirs, scout and guide troops and youth clubs run by Christian children's and youth organisations, either alone or in collaboration with the congrega-

tion. These are a valuable setting for social contact and learning.

Voluntary organisations are an important resource in many parishes with their work for children and young people and their programmes for leadership training. They have the competence, organisational apparatus and motivation that make them

suitable to play a part in the church's Christian education. In many places cooperation with them will be decisive in providing systematic Christian education for all who are baptised. Cooperation on activities that reach out to many and on leadership training can be especially relevant. In this way, Christian education in the parish can receive competence and leadership resources, and participants in open activities can become familiar with a milieu that they can continue to be a part of even after the Christian education activity is over. Sami organisations, societies and language centres can contribute to furthering Sami language, culture and social life.

Many Christian organisations already have a well developed programme for Christian education, and congregations will be able to enhance their own programme by cooperating with them at a local, regional and national level. It is important to try to establish such cooperation at a local level, so that the Christian education programme can contribute to recruitment to the organisations. When clubs or societies with an indefinite lifespan are established in the parish, it is natural to enrol them in a national

organisation. This will provide a network with access to materials, events, leadership coaching and other resources.

The church is one of many agents in the daily life of children and young people. Its Christian education provides excellent opportunities for cooperation with different societies and institutions that cater for children and young people, for example after-school classes in music, dance, art etc, sports clubs, bands, local history societies and other bodies in the local community that help to keep children and young people off the streets. This helps to make the church visible in the community and can also help to enhance the quality of the church's own activities.

Children's and young people's total learning experience can be strengthened if the congregation contacts nursery schools and schools when making its local plan, in order to find out what knowledge and experience of Christianity and the church they have on their curriculum. In this way, Christian education can be coordinated with the total education that children and young people receive.

- What children's and youth organisations do we cooperate with?
- What open activities is it natural for the congregation and organisations to cooperate on?
- How can the organisations be a resource for the congregation, and how can the congregation be a resource for the organisations?
- What other milieus, organisations or specialists in the local community can we cooperate with?

### **Interdisciplinary cooperation**

Interdisciplinary cooperation is required if the aims of Christian education are to be fulfilled. The scope of Christian education and its comprehensive view of learning make it natural for church employees to cooperate across disciplines in planning and implementing the local programme, each with his or her job description, competence, experience and spiritual gifts. Leaders are responsible for ensuring that all employees can contribute together in order to renew Christian education. Other plans that the congregation may have must be seen in the light of the plan for Christian education, and employees must use their resources and working time to carry out the plans that have been adopted in the parish.

Children's and youth workers, Christian education workers, catechists, ministers, deacons, church musicians and employees with other occupations are all necessary to carry out Christian education in the parish.

Diakonia introduces important issues into Christian education, such as the emphasis on help in coping with life, working in fellowship and making provision for people in special situations.

Church music activities for children and young people are an excellent arena for learning bible stories, liturgy and hymns. The Sunday service is the congregation's most important meeting-place and an important setting for Christian education. Church musicians have therefore an important role

in Christian education. The verger and the administrative staff also play an important part because they often meet children and young people and their parents/guardians in the course of different activities. The way in which they do their work influences the impression people have of the church.

Interdisciplinary cooperation in working with children and young people is crucial if Christian

education is to be renewed successfully. This also applies to voluntary workers. It is important to ensure a good combination of the competence of employees and voluntary workers and to find routines for developing interdisciplinary cooperation. This applies also to the professional competence of the voluntary workers.

- How can interdisciplinary cooperation be utilised in Christian education?
- How well does the staff cooperate in planning and conducting Christian education?
- How can individuals contribute to the church's Christian education with their professional skills?
- How can we ensure that the competence of employees and voluntary workers can be combined?

## Public relations

The aim of having regular contact with all who are baptised and are 0 to 18 years old makes considerable demands on the congregation. It is important to increase both the general awareness of local Christian education and to inform about and promote the various activities that take place in the church. To establish a favourable image and make new activities attractive requires well-planned long-time public relations efforts. Communication and marketing directed at people who do not themselves seek out information about church activities should be given priority.

Public relations and marketing should be considered when activities are planned. This should include suggestions as to how the congregation can make use of both free and chargeable channels of communication. Both human and economic resources should be set aside for this.

The church web site must inform about Christian education, but it is also necessary to use public

relations and marketing channels that reach participants directly. New forms of interactive web-based communication should be used in Christian education. Printed matter such as posters, brochures and press releases should wherever possible be followed up by personal contact. Experience shows that it is easy to get events mentioned in local newspapers or on local radio stations, but press releases must often be followed up on the telephone or in an e-mail. It can be practical to give one or more persons in the congregation special responsibility for information.

A graphic profile and a set of templates and illustrations have been made for use in printed matter and websites and are available at [www.kirken.no](http://www.kirken.no).

Congregations must inform the public that Christian education activities will be organised in such a way that everyone will be able to participate fully, whatever their life situation or functionality. This should be made clear in invitations, and participants should be asked to give relevant information when they enrol.

- What experience do we have with public relations and marketing?
- How can we present the church's Christian education programme so that it seems relevant for children and young people, parents and guardians?
- How can the congregation provide information that is easily recognisable?
- What are our best channels of communication and how can we make a plan for public relations?





## Local planning

According to the basic tenets and guidelines of the national plan the congregation must make its own plan for Christian education, which must be passed by the parish council. Being professionals and specialists in different fields, the staff play an important role in planning, together with elected representatives and voluntary workers.

### Making a local plan for Christian education

The congregation's local plan for systematic Christian education for all aged 0-18 years who have been baptised should be based on the special characteristics, resources and needs of the parish. Parishes are very different from one another, and their potential for making a plan for Christian education that corresponds to the intentions of the national plan varies accordingly.

Over the years, the Church of Norway has adopted activities that reach out to many and are established in many congregations. Examples are presenting four-year-olds with a "church book" and preparations for confirmation. Such activities and the parish's local traditions and potential will be a natural starting point for making a systematic and comprehensive plan.

The congregation's systematic Christian education will often be built up around activities open for all children born in a specific year. In parishes with few children, it can be more practical to gather children of different ages. The open activities can be one-off events, be spread over a few sessions or continue for a longer period. One-off activities should have a narrow focus, whereas those that continue for a longer period can provide a more comprehensive introduction to the faith – as in confirmation time, for example. As the scope of the congregation's

Christian education widens, it will be natural to include more long-term activities.

It can be an advantage to try to coordinate methods and contents of the periodic activities with the permanent children's and youth work in the parish. Confirmands can for example choose between various topics and take part a number of times in different sections of the congregation's youth work. In parishes that do not have youth work, such short-term activities can be a starting point for developing permanent youth work. In this way, short-term open activities can be strengthened by resources from the permanent work, while the permanent work can reach out to more young people and possibly increase its membership.

It can be an advantage to find out if there is some "spare time" that Christian education can fill – for example, when schools are closed for planning or holidays, or time after school before parents come home from work. The church year and school year can provide many possible themes and occasions for Christian education activities. Christian festivals and personal red-letter days can provide relevant themes for activities. Times chosen for activities must fit in with daily routines in the families' and the children's and young people's lives.

When planning, one can begin with existing activities, then the "holes" can be plugged until there are activities for the whole age-span 0-18 years. An alternative can be to expand the scope of existing activities. Another is to make the plan around a theme – for example pilgrimage. Local conditions can also be a starting point. On the coast, maritime images and themes can be used. However, the fascination of a theme must not lead to a lopsided Christian education that lacks the breadth that faith, the church and life itself contain.



The appendices contain a form to help with local planning, a list of key bible passages and a list of important activities.

## **Ownership, basic ideas and surveying**

### **Ownership**

Planning and carrying out Christian education at a local level is a joint project for parish councils, joint parish councils, committees within the congregation, employees and voluntary workers and, where appropriate, voluntary organisations and other bodies. This makes room for dynamism, creativity, a sense of ownership and cooperation among employees with different professional qualifications and cooperation between voluntary workers and employees. Children, young people and parents/guardians have the leading roles in Christian education and have the right to be heard. It will therefore be an advantage to involve them in planning, evaluating and developing Christian education in the parish. A planning process that involves many of the congregation's members will help to make them feel that the plan belongs to them and will establish the place of Christian education in the congregation's self-awareness and ministry.

### **Basic ideas**

Planning must be based on the theological and pedagogical principles behind the national plan. The stories and questions in chapters two and six are intended for use in discussions in various settings, for example staff meetings, the parish council, committee meetings, brainstorming sessions, etc.

### **Surveys**

A survey of the parish can be useful both for Christian education and for other aspects of the church's ministry. In Sami districts it will be necessary to gather information about Sami church life, but in other areas it can also be useful to find out about children with a Sami background.

A survey can provide an overview of Christian education activities for those who are baptised and of how many take part in them. It is essential that each activity has the potential to reach out to everyone in the target group. A thorough survey will also show what activities children's and youth organisations have in the parish and will include dialogue with them about possible cooperation and coordination. The same applies to other denominations in the parish.

It will be useful to gather information about themes and activities in schools and nursery schools on Christianity and the church. What is taught in schools and nursery schools is not a part of the church's Christian education, but the church programme should take into account plans in the schools and nursery schools. In this way, Christian education can be coordinated with and harmonise with the other teaching that children and young people receive. Considering principles and making surveys is a first step in working out the aims and methods for Christian education in the parish.

## **Planning and implementing**

### **Local plan for Christian education**

The congregation's local plan for Christian education must begin by explaining the basis and characteristics, main aims, organisation, framework, distribution of responsibility and chief aspects of the foundation of the congregation's Christian education. It must then give an overview of the activities on which the congregation bases its systematic and coordinated Christian education for the age group 0-18 years, with a description of aims, contents, methods and duration. The national plan will provide an overview and must be used to steer the further development of Christian education in the parish. The Local plan for Christian education must be coordinated with strategy and plans for diakonia, church music and culture, worship and Sami church life.

A digital programme has been developed for the congregation's planning of Christian education. This programme must be used in local planning and in guidance and approval of the plan. It is also useful when the congregation shares and reports on its experiences. The programme is available at [www.kirken.no](http://www.kirken.no) and the form that must be used is in an appendix to the national plan.

In addition to the digital programme, many congregations will want to produce a summary of their plan for Christian education. This can be used in communicating with partners, homes and target groups for Christian education.

### **Plans for activities**

Plans should be made for the various Christian education activities, describing more specifically and in more detail the aims, contents, methods, materials, distribution of responsibility and information strategy concerned. Some activities will be limited in



scope and duration. Other activity plans will be extensive, for example plans for confirmation time.

#### Plans for each session

For each session, a plan should be made describing the theme, aims, contents, methods, timetable, distribution of responsibility, materials to be used, list of tasks etc. A well thought out but flexible plan is a great help in conducting the individual Christian education sessions.

Christian education is often a result of interdisciplinary cooperation with several people involved. Plans for individual sessions can be a useful way of ensuring that everyone has the necessary insight and understanding. They can be a good starting point when corresponding sessions are held later. They also make it possible to share ideas and experiences with other congregations.

### **Evaluation and further development**

#### **Evaluation**

Evaluation is a means of judging whether Christian education fulfils the aims in the plan and can be used in the ongoing work. Evaluation can be appropriate both after individual sessions and at the end of a project. Evaluation programmes have been de-

veloped to ensure constant improvement in Christian education.

It will be natural for children, young people and parents/guardians to participate in evaluation. The result of learning is the knowledge, skills and experience that the participants have absorbed. Christian education must therefore be conducted in dialogue and with respect, sensitivity and creativity, so that the congregation can establish a setting for learning in which the intentions of the plan are fulfilled in a satisfactory manner.

All those involved should take part in an annual review of the local plan, so that it can be revised and developed in order to fulfil its aims in a better way.

#### **Further development**

The congregation's local plan for Christian education is an instrument providing an overview of the congregation's systematic Christian education. A good plan makes it possible to continually lead, conduct and develop the work.

Through local planning, guidance, evaluation and the use of tools for learning and sharing, constant renewal and development of the congregation's Christian education can be stimulated. In addition to the annual review, the local plan should be reviewed and revised once during the parish council's period of office.



## Sharing responsibility

This chapter gives a short explanation of the present regulations for sharing responsibility in the light of terms of employment and church law. Changes in these will have consequences for how responsibility for Christian education is shared.

### Joint responsibility

Parents/guardians have the main responsibility for their children's upbringing and education. This applies also to Christian education. At baptism, parents/guardians and sponsors, together with the congregation and the whole church, share in a holy responsibility to follow up the baptism. The various persons and bodies are responsible for cooperating so that all baptisms can be followed up in the best possible way.

### The general synod's responsibility

The general synod has laid down normative plans and programmes for the church's teaching ministry, diakonia, church music and ecumenical contacts (the law governing the Church of Norway § 24). The *Plan for Christian Education* provides the framework and regulations for the congregations' local plans.

### The parish

The basic unit of the Church of Norway is the parish. The parish's elected bodies are the parish council and the joint parish council.

### The parish council's responsibility

The parish council is responsible for the church's ministry in the parish; for children's and youth work, diakonia, education and church music (the

law governing the Church of Norway § 24). The parish council is responsible for making a local plan for Christian education. This plan must be approved by the bishop and be revised once during the parish council's period of office in order to ensure renewal and development. Newly-elected parish councils must be familiar with the congregation's local plan for Christian education.

### The joint parish council's responsibility

The responsibility and functions of the joint parish council are described in the law governing the Church of Norway § 14.

Christian education in the parish requires resources in the form of premises, appointments and finance. These expenses must figure in the budgets for the parish and the joint parish council. The joint parish council is responsible for providing premises, equipment and materials for Christian education. It must also attend to administrative and financial affairs on behalf of the parishes, work out aims and plans for the church's ministry in the local government area and safeguard the parishes' interests in relation to the local authorities. In this way, the joint parish council's function is to secure cooperation, both between the individual parishes and between the church and the local authorities. The joint parish council receives the Christian education grants that the government makes to the parishes and is responsible as employer when appointments are financed by these grants.

### The diocesan council

The diocesan council must have its attention directed towards all that can be done to arouse and advance church life in the parishes. It must further

cooperation between the parish councils and other local working bodies within the diocese. The diocesan council distributes government grants for special appointments in church education and diakonia in accordance with directions given by the department of church affairs (the law governing the Church of Norway § 23).

#### **The staff's responsibility**

Comprehensive Christian education in the parishes requires interdisciplinary efforts. Conditions should be such that each employee's competence, area of responsibility and resources can benefit Christian education. To work together for the common good requires good cooperation between the church's two employment structures.

**THE CATECHIST** is responsible for education in the parish (terms of employment for catechists § 2). The catechist leads the congregation's teaching ministry and is responsible for recruiting, training and instructing voluntary workers. The catechist is bound by the plans and priorities which the parish council determines in cooperation with the joint parish council, within the bounds of plans and programmes determined by the teaching ministry in the Church of Norway. In parishes without a catechist but with a Christian education worker or similar employee, the question of which employee has the overall responsibility for the congregation's teaching ministry must be clarified.

Both catechist and clergy have responsibility and tasks connected to Christian education through their terms of employment.

**ORDAINED MINISTERS** must preach God's word and administer the sacraments in such a way that Christian faith and life is advanced, officiate at religious ceremonies and carry out instruction in connection with baptism and confirmation (terms of employment for the ordained ministry § 2b). On the basis of their terms of employment, ordained ministers have an important role in Christian education. The chief minister has a special responsibility when the parish council draws up the local plan for Christian education.

**CHURCH EDUCATIONALISTS, CHRISTIAN EDUCATION WORKERS and CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH WORKERS** plan and conduct Christian education in the parish in accord with the congregation's plan for Christian education.

**THE DEACON** is responsible for the congregation's diaconal ministry, through which caring, fellowship

and solidarity come alive. The deacon shares responsibility for recruiting, training and instructing voluntary workers (terms of employment for deacons § 2). The deacon is a resource for social counselling in Christian education.

**THE CANTOR or CHURCH MUSICIAN** is responsible for leading church music activities in the parish (terms of employment for church musicians § 2). The cantor also shares responsibility for recruiting, training and instructing voluntary workers. Through his or her work, the cantor or church musician is a resource for Christian education.

**THE CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR** in the parish and/or the **CHURCHWARDEN** are responsible for the daily running of the parish and have employer responsibility for joint parish council employees, as laid down in the duties of the joint parish councils in the law governing the Church of Norway

**THE RURAL DEAN** leads the ordained ministers in the rural deanery and assists the bishop in carrying out his/her duties. The rural dean must coordinate the work of the clergy and of the parish and joint parish councils (terms of employment for rural deans § 6). The rural dean is bound by plans and strategies for the Church of Norway and the diocese (§ 2 in the law governing the Church of Norway and the terms of employment for rural deans § 5).

#### **The bishop's responsibility**

The bishop ensures that the parish councils in the diocese carry out their duties in accordance with evangelical Lutheran doctrines (terms of employment for bishops § 1). The bishop is responsible for supervising the consecrated ministries. The bishop is bound by the aims and strategies that are laid down for the work of the Church of Norway, and must support efforts to further these (§ 2). The congregations' local plan for Christian education must be approved by the bishop.

#### **Approval of the plan**

The parish council is responsible for passing a local plan in accordance with the normative national *Plan for Christian Education*. The local plan must follow a set pattern and be submitted to the bishop for approval. The bishop examines the contents and aims of the plan, and how realistic and systematic it is, in the light of the norms in the national plan and of local conditions. If the congregation revises its local plan and makes significant changes from the original approved plan, then the revised plan must be submitted to the bishop for renewed consideration and approval.

The joint parish council and the parish council must cooperate in sharing experiences and making reports, according to more detailed norms. The congregation's plan must be revised once during the parish council's period of office in order to ensure renewal and development.

### **Cooperation and suitable units**

Finding suitable units for cooperation is necessary in Christian education. Geography, numbers in the age groups, the possibility of employing workers and the desirability of having activities near to where the children live should be taken into account when finding suitable units. Finding units that serve the interests of the congregation and lead to a good use of resources requires flexibility and the ability to cooperate, both within the joint parish council area and even between two or more joint parish councils.

### **Sami Christian education**

Parishes where Sami people live have a special responsibility for renewal also of Sami Christian education. The *Plan for Sami Christian Education* has

been made on the basis of Sami culture, tradition and language.

The Norwegian state is built on the territory of two peoples, Samis and Norwegians. The Norwegian constitution § 110a affirms that the state authorities are committed to making it possible for the Sami people to preserve and develop their culture, their languages and their community life. Sami children and young people have the right to education and materials in their own language, irrespective of where in the country they live.

### **Fees**

Christian education in the parish requires resources in the form of premises, appointments and running costs. These requirements must be taken into account in the congregation's budget and in the joint parish council's disposition of appointments and other resources. The parish council can charge fees for participation in Christian education activities in order to cover the cost of transport, food, materials etc. Fees should be as low as possible, so that no one is prevented from taking part. It should also be possible to apply for exemption from fees.



## Resources

Resources and tools are constantly being developed to inspire and help the congregations in conducting and developing Christian education. A number of supportive measures ensure professional guidance and the provision of arenas for sharing experiences in the form of mentoring and courses lasting a day or more. Digital resources and information are available at [www.kirken.no](http://www.kirken.no) in the form of electronic tools for planning, reporting and sharing experiences, links to relevant web sites and material published by publishing houses and organisations.

Christian education is part of the total ministry of the congregation. Church life consists also of worship, diakonia, church music and activities meant for special age groups or across the boundaries of generations and circles that make up the congregation. These spheres of ministry constitute a whole, and interaction between them presents excellent opportunities for using resources to the benefit of the whole community. Voluntary work is essential for the whole of the church's ministry. A comprehensive plan for the congregation is a means of seeing the totality of the church's ministry and ensuring good interaction between the various spheres.

### Resources for renewed Christian education

#### Mentor programme

The mentor programme is a vocational guidance scheme for Christian education. The task of the mentor is to inspire and support the congregation to work systematically to establish and conduct a renewed and integrated local plan for Christian education for all those aged 0-18 years who have been baptised. The programme will contribute to the cre-

ation of meeting places for reflection and learning, and to ensuring that work on developing the plan progresses, is rooted in local conditions and is in line with national guidelines and plans.

#### Professional development

Professional development and the exchange of experiences is being arranged and encouraged through national, regional and local gatherings for Christian education workers, by providing resources for local courses, professional guidance from the diocese and national fora for professional updating and inspiration. Experiences and new knowledge can be shared through conferences, courses, study tours and the development of materials and methods.

#### Sharing experiences

Experiences from the many congregations that ran projects are available in a data base at [www.kirken.no](http://www.kirken.no) and in print, for example in the form of booklets on themes from developments in the field of Christian education. The Christian education data base contains contributions from congregations, organisations and institutions in the form of plans, resources for considering the theoretical background, pedagogical developments, specific activities, public relations material etc. There are also links to relevant web sites.

#### Materials for Christian education

Publishing houses, organisations and congregations develop materials for Christian education in the home and in church. The data base gives guidance on searching in lists of materials and refers to relevant web sites.

### **Resources for Sami Christian education**

Material and resources such as a hymn book, the New Testament, "Four-year book" and a brochure for sponsors are being prepared in the North Sami, Lule and South Sami languages. Websites for Sami Christian education are also available: [www.osko.no](http://www.osko.no), [www.jaahkoe.no](http://www.jaahkoe.no), [www.jahkko.no](http://www.jahkko.no), [www.osku.no](http://www.osku.no).

### **Resources for adapted Christian education**

Resources are being prepared for children who need special adaptation, for example in the form of materials and pedagogical technical aids in different languages and forms of expression adapted to special needs (sign language, brail, audiobooks etc). The Lutheran Congregations of the Deaf in Norway have made their own plan for Christian education for the deaf and hard of hearing. This is available at [www.dovekirken.no](http://www.dovekirken.no). The Christian Association for the Visually Impaired in Norway (CAVIN) are preparing resources for the blind, the visually impaired and persons with reading difficulties. See [www.kabb.no](http://www.kabb.no).

### **Resources for communication**

Congregations must relate actively to all who are baptised and inform them about the church and its activities in a consumer-orientated manner. Patterns, logos and resource materials have been made for the congregations to use in their public relations efforts. Renewed Christian education is conducted in many arenas and in many channels. Digital forms of communication are a natural aspect of renewed Christian education for children, young people and their parents/guardians.

### **Tools for local planning**

All congregations can make their own web page on [www.kirken.no](http://www.kirken.no), where there are many tools in the form of digital forms for planning, reporting and sharing experiences. These include resources and ideas for making local plans for Christian education and resources for planning activities for different age groups.

The local plan must be coordinated with plans for diakonia, church music, culture and worship.

Renewed Christian education requires reflection that can enable those concerned to learn from what has been achieved and provides impulses for renewed efforts. Feedback from participants must be taken into consideration in this evaluation.

Among the tools available are:

- A blueprint for a general plan for the congregation in which a plan for Christian education is included
- Tools for making a local plan for Christian education
- Tools for surveying and analysing
- Tools for working with the theoretical basis of the plan
- Tools for reflection and sharing experiences
- A list of the various elements in the contents of Christian education
- Examples of local plans
- Blueprints for budgets and accounts
- PR material: blueprints and other resources
- Plans for other aspects of the church's ministry
- Tools for evaluation, for example "Always improving"

## Tools for making a local plan for Christian education

(A digital version of the form in Norwegian is available at [www.kirken.no](http://www.kirken.no))

<p><b>The main aim of Christian education</b>  <i>What is the congregation's main aim for its Christian education programme?</i></p>	
<p><b>Basis and special characteristics</b>  <i>Here you can describe the special characteristics of your parish and your basic philosophy for renewed Christian education for all those aged 0-18 years who are baptised. (See the national plan, chapter 2)</i></p>	
<p><b>Organising, structure and responsibility</b>  <i>Who is responsible for what? What conditions and limits do you need to take into consideration? Mention possible working partners.</i></p>	

### Important aspects of systematic Christian education

*Several aspects of comprehensive Christian education are important in the congregation's ministry. Here you can describe how you will incorporate these aspects in renewed Christian education.*

Important aspect	Description	Possible attachment
Cooperation with the home and family		
Children's and young people's influence		
Inclusiveness and adaptation		
Worship		
Diakoni		
Mission		
Music and culture		
Voluntary work		
Cooperation with children's and youth organisations		
Interdisciplinary cooperation		
Public relations		

### Activities in systematic and comprehensive Christian education for 0-18 year olds

*Here you can describe how you will provide systematic and comprehensive Christian education for all who are baptised in the parish. See examples of activities and completed plans in the appendix.*

Age group	Name of activity	Aim of activity	Theme / contents			Methods	Extent	Commentary	Attachments
			Interpreting life and mastering the art of living	The faith and traditions of the church	Christian faith in action				



## Key Bible passages for renewed Christian education

An important element in Christian education is to introduce children and young people to key passages in the Bible. Below is a list of such passages. They are in line with the description in the national plan chapter 3. They are chosen after the following criteria: passages about the main Christian festivals and the liturgy, stories of the life and teaching of Jesus, selected passages from the epistles, traditional texts from the catechism, selected psalms, an outline of the overall biblical narrative.

It is crucial to adapt these passages to the age group concerned. For younger children, stories

of the creation and from the Gospels should be emphasised, while the selection can be extended for those in the older age groups. This can lead to a broader understanding of the biblical message combined with a deepened understanding of its central elements.

Many of these passages are included in the Church of Norway's lectionary. The book containing the lectionary is a useful resource for working with the Bible in Christian education, and narrative passages are especially suitable. In the following list, some longer passages are included as suggestions for more extensive reading.

The Christmas Story	Luke 2:1-20
The Passion and Resurrection of Christ	Matthew 26:1-28:10
Wounded for our transgressions	Isaiah 52:13-53:5
The Great Commission and the Ascension	Matthew 28:16-20 and Acts 1:1-14
The Advocate	John 14:16-18
Pentecost	Acts 2:1-13
Jesus in the Temple	Luke 2:41-52
The feeding of the 5000, Jesus walks on water	John 6:1-35
Jesus receives the little children	Mark 10:13-16
Children of God	John 1:9-12
Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life	John 14:6
The widow of Nain's son	Luke 7:11-17
Jesus visits Martha and Mary	Luke 10:38-42
The pharisee and the tax-collector	Luke 18:9-14
Jesus and the rich young man	Luke 18:18-30
Jesus and Thomas	John 20:24-29
The Kingdom of God as a mustard seed	Mark 4:30-34
The good Samaritan	Luke 10:25-37
The lost sheep	Luke 15:1-7
The father who waited	Luke 15:11-32
The Sermon on the Mount	Luke 6:20-49
The Lord's Prayer	Matthew 6:6-13
The command to love	Matthew 22:37-40
The Golden Rule	Matthew 7:12
The Little Bible	John 3:16

The more excellent way of love	1 Corinthians 13
The love of God	1 John 4:7-11
Peace with God, justified by faith	Romans 5:1-11
By grace you have been saved	Ephesians 2:1-10
The Fruit of the Spirit	Galatians 5:16-26
Rejoice!	Philippians 4:4-8
The Lord is our God	Deuteronomy 6:4-9
The Benediction	Numbers 6:22-27
What are human beings?	Psalms 8
The Lord is my Shepherd	Psalms 23
Have mercy on me, O God	Psalms 51
Prayer, complaint and trust	Psalms 71
I am fearfully and wonderfully made	Psalms 139
Praise the Lord!	Psalms 150
Creation and Fall	Genesis 1:1-3:24
God's promise to Abraham	Genesis 12:1-3
Miriam saves Moses	Exodus 2:1-10
God calls Moses	Exodus 2:23-3:15; 4:10-16
The Ten Commandments	Exodus 19:20; 20:1-20
The Day of Atonement	Leviticus 16
Samuel in the Temple	1 Samuel 3
God's promise to David and his house	2 Samuel 7:1-17
Holy, holy, holy	Isaiah 6:1-8
Social justice	Amos 5:7-15
A new heaven and a new earth	Revelation 1:1-2; 21:1-5

**Examples of longer passages:**

The Gospel of Mark

Paul's letter to the Philippians

Paul's letter to the Ephesians

The Exodus

Ruth

Jonah

## Examples of basic activities in renewed Christian education

The congregations must provide Christian education activities with a duration and frequency that assures regular and predictable contact with the children, young people and families that they are intended for. Systematic Christian education in a parish is often built up around a series of open activities intended for a specific age group over a limited period of time. These can be one-off activities or activities that continue for shorter or longer periods of time. Several of the suggestions here consist of a series of sessions in connection with a festival, a presentation, a special service etc. A natural procedure will be to develop a systematic

and comprehensive plan on the basis of established open activities and of local traditions and conditions. It can be an advantage to link the activities to Christian festivals.

The names of the activities should be easily recognised and connect the different activities to one another. The times chosen should be convenient for the families.

Open Christian education activities should be coordinated with worship, children's and youth organisations' activities and with religious practice in the homes.

### 0–5 years

Age	Activity	Themes	Duration
0 years	Invitation to baptism Preparatory meeting before baptism Baptismal service Contact with sponsors in the form of a letter or a meeting before or after the baptism	Baptism, life, the family	5 hours
1–5 years	Greetings on the first, second and third anniversary of baptism Children's or family services	Baptism, prayer, festivals	5 hours
0–2 years	Courses during maternity/paternity leave Babysong, "pram meetings"	Festivals, Christian songs, prayer	10 hours
4 years	Special service with presentation of a "church book" to four-year olds	The church building, the church year, worship	10 hours
5 years	School for five-year olds	Bible stories	10 hours

## 6–12 years

Age	Activity	Themes	Duration
6 year	Celebration of first day at school	Prayer, blessings, worries and joys	3 hours
6/7 year	Baptism school	Worship, the Eucharist	10 hours
7 years	Celebrating Christmas	The Christmas story	5 hours
8 years	Living-at-home camp, the church's birthday	The universal church, Pentecost	12 hours
9 years	Creation day and Harvest Festival	First article in the Creed Responsibility for creation, thankfulness	5 hours
10 years	Tenth anniversary of baptism	Jesus' meetings with people, friendship	10 hours
11 years	Sleeping over in church	Advent, the church building	12 hours
11 years	Course of Bible study	The Bible	10 hours
12 years	Living-at-home camp	Prayer	10 hours

## 13–18 years

Age	Activity	Themes	Duration
13 years	My world, your world!	Mission and diakonia	5 hours
13/14 years	Activities leading up to confirmation time	Information, motivation, establishing relationships	5 hours
15 years	Confirmation time with participation in ministry and camps	Comprehensive review of the whole contents of Christian education	60 hours
15/16 years	Follow-up of confirmation time	Good habits for putting faith into action Friendship	8 hours
16 years	Living your life	The big questions, vocation and discipleship Decisions	10 hours
13–18 years	Youth services	Faith, hope and love	10 hours

### Going deeper

13–18 years	Practical course in voluntary work	Thinking everything through, understanding the Christian faith Voluntary work	
13–18 years	Discussion group	Discussions of faith and life	
13–18 years	Permanent youth work	Living as a Christian	

