

Engaging with teenagers (‘The listening ear principle’)

This video training session is primarily for volunteer youth leaders to use at a time which is convenient to them, ideally as a group, though it could be used by individuals. The structure of the session allows for a flexible length depending on time and situation. The following notes are to guide the person leading the session, but do not assume any previous training experience.

If your time is limited, try to ensure you cover the parts **in bold**. However, feel completely free to alter the session, add your own questions and make it work best for your situation.

This session considers the important skill of being able to value and connect with young people by listening well to them. **You should allow at least 20 minutes for this session but if you have 30-40 minutes, it could be helpful.**

The speaker is world-renowned youth ministry trainer, Dr Duffy Robbins, Professor of Christian Ministries at Grove City College, Pennsylvania.

OPENING DISCUSSION (5-10 mins)

You might want to read out the information above and ask someone to pray. Then discuss one or both of the following questions:

- *Do you ever find yourself complaining that young people do not listen very well?*
- **Have you ever stopped to think that maybe we as adults do not listen well to young people?**

VIDEO

Duffy discusses the importance of intentionally listening to young people.

- Play video *Engaging with teenagers (‘The listening ear principle’)* (5 mins)

DISCUSSION (10-20 mins)

- *‘The listening ear principle’ reminds us that sometimes we speak more clearly with our ears than we do with our mouths. How challenging did you find this idea?*
- *The first idea of Duffy’s ‘Listening F.A.D.’ is **Focus**. How much can you identify in your young people this need to have adults who give time and attention to them and help counteract isolation?*
- *The second idea is **Accept**. **Can you think of ways that you can show acceptance of your young people and their feelings, without necessarily accepting their behaviour.***
- *The last idea in the ‘Listening F.A.D.’ is **Draw out**. **How can you show that you want to talk to young people in a way that demonstrates that you really want to listen to them, (using open-ended questions etc.)?***
- ***Can you identify specific aspects of the way you do ministry that may work against practicing this ‘Listening F.A.D.’? What could you do to encourage time and space to make it more common?***

Take some time to pray together and, if appropriate, make a commitment to take 2-3 practical steps together to put this into action.