**Solidarity**

Demonstrating solidarity with those who have experienced injustice requires us to recognise the impact that exclusion and discrimination have on one another. Those who have been excluded are aware of unspoken cues that people like them don’t belong and aren’t welcome, or are welcome as guests, not as equals. We are called to more than just criticising injustice; we are called to provide sanctuary to those who have experienced it. This means being intentional in ensuring all are included in every aspect of church life.

“God shows no partiality, but in every people anyone who fears him and practices righteousness is acceptable to him”

Acts 10:34-35

*Example:*

*At a connexional event, a group of people who didn’t know one another were introducing themselves, and saying which circuits and districts they were members of. A white man asked a Black woman “Where are you from?” She asked “What do you mean by that?” He replied that he was asking which part of the country she was from. She explained that the phrase “Where are you from?” is often asked of Black people, as a way of denying their Britishness by implying they must be ‘from’ somewhere else, so when he used it she immediately became sensitive as to whether that was happening to her again. Rather than being defensive or asking her to apologise for making a false assumption about him, the man thanked her for helping him to learn something he had not known before.*

*Example:*

*A ten-year-old boy asked to join the Church Council. The minister said that, unfortunately, since Church Council members were trustees, he could not legally be a trustee. However, the Church Council invite him to every meeting and ensure his views have been heard before making all decisions. When the Church Council consulted members of the congregation on an important decision, his name was given in the notices as one of the people to whom everyone could give their views. He is not just asked to represent the views of the other children but plays a full role in leading the conversations within the church.*

**Self-assessment checklist**

* **Is your church congregation representative of your community? Are your Church Council, leadership team or stewards representative of your church community? Are you aware which groups are under-represented?9**
* **Do you state which groups are under-represented when advertising roles?**
* **Do you share agendas of church meetings with the whole congregation in advance, and encourage people who may not be able to attend the meetings to share their viewpoints?**
* **Have you completed an Equality Impact Assessment on how a range of voices are represented in your church decision-making process?10**
* **Have all leaders in your church completed Unconscious Bias and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training?11**

Want to know more?

* 9The Methodist Church has published guidance on a process for discerning and meeting accessibility support needs: [Accessibility support needs for volunteers and employees (methodist.org.uk)](https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/the-methodist-church/the-inclusive-methodist-church/accessibility/accessibility-support-needs-for-volunteers-and-employees/)
* 10The Methodist Church has published an Equality Impact Assessment to be used at all levels of the church: [Equality Impact Assessment (methodist.org.uk)](https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/the-methodist-church/the-inclusive-methodist-church/resources-events-and-support/resources/equality-impact-assessment/)
* 11The Methodist Church has published free training on Unconscious Bias and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion on its online learning platform MCBX: [MCBX (theologyx.com)](https://mcb.theologyx.com/)