

## Children

**Look.** The church building and its contents may provide some useful indicators about the life of children in the parish, in particular about Sunday school. For example, does the church include rooms and ancillary buildings that appear to have been built for Sunday school? Are there any material objects (for example flags, memorials) relating to organisations or groups involving young people or concerning members of the congregation who worked with youth? You may also find useful visual evidence relating to day schools (for advice on this see the Building on History.)

**Listen.** You may well be able to find longer-standing members of the congregation or older members of the wider community who attended Sunday school or were involved in youth activities more recently, or even those who remember the experiences of their parents and grandparents. You might already know such people, or perhaps make contact with them at an older person's lunch club or local community centre. Such individuals might recall the activities of Sunday schools and have insights into the relationship between the church and Sunday school. For more information on oral history, see the Building on History website.

**Read.** For general histories of the Sunday school movement and insights into its development over time see: Thomas Laqueur, *Religion and Respectability: Sunday Schools and Working Class Culture, 1780-1850*, New Haven, 1976; S. Orchard (ed.), *The Sunday School Movement: Studies in the Growth and Decline of Sunday Schools*, Carlisle: Paternoster, 2007. For information about youth movements and wider activities for children, see J. Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society: British Youth Movements, 1883-1940*, London: Croon Helm, 1977; Troy Boone, *Youth of Darkest England: Working-Class Children at the Heart of the Victorian Empire*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2005.

There are interesting sections on the place of Sunday schools in the wider social engagement of churches in Simon Green, *Religion in an Age of Decline: Organisation and Experience in Industrial Yorkshire, 1870-1920* and Stephen Yeo, *Religion and Voluntary Organisations in Crisis*, London: Croon Helm, 1976.

**Research.** It is likely that there find a range of useful material relating to Sunday schools. A good place to start is the **clerical visitation returns** and **churchwarden's visitation returns** held at **Lambeth Palace Library**. These may offer comments on the numbers and predominant social class of children attending Sunday school and also the success of the church in retaining young people when they cease to attend day school or when they are too old for Sunday school.

You may well find information on children in the life of the church and congregation in parish magazines and annuals/year books (usually deposited in **London Metropolitan Archives**, or perhaps still in possession of the church). There may well also be a Sunday school minute book held at the **London Metropolitan Archives**.

To find out about researching day schools, see the Building on History website for further details.

This document is online at:  
<http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/building-on-history-project/resource-guide/research/children.htm>