



VISUAL TIMETABLES



THE WHY

Some children will struggle to relax and engage when they aren't sure what might happen next. Enabling children to know what is going to happen and when it is going to happen is an important way of helping children feel safe. For many children, verbal communication - simply telling them what we are going to do - is not enough! Which is where Visual Timetables come in!

While Visual Timetables are helpful for everyone - they are particularly important for some, including ...

- children who struggle with anxiety or who find joining in challenging
- neurodivergent children who may struggle with unpredictability
- children who may have experienced trauma who need to know what is going to happen next to reassure them that they are safe



THE HOW

The important thing to remember is that how effective a Visual Timetable is, is dependant on **How** it is used!!! So ...

Refer to it regularly

Don't just stick it up on the wall and then forget about it - use it throughout your session to be clear on what is happening and what will happen next.

Keep it updated

Many children find it challenging to scan down and work out where they are at in the session. You can help them by removing an activity once it has been completed so that they just have to look at the top.



THE WHAT

This resource includes 2 Visual Timetables ready for you to print - one to use with children and one for young people. For most spaces, I suggest you print it out on A4 paper so that it's easily visible around the room - if you can laminate it, it will last much longer!

To use it, simply choose the activities that best suit your plan and stick them up in order in a verticle column in a visible place in the room using blu-tak or velcro.

I've tried to cover the kinds of activities that might be included in a session with children or young people in a church setting - but if there is something missing, you'll also find a blank template that you can add your own graphics to.

I have not used words on these - mostly because different groups may use different words to describe their activities so I've tried to ensure they are generic. If you do decide to add words - remember to keep it simple and avoid making the page look too busy.



USING NOW AND NEXT BOARDS

While a Visual Timetable is a great way of helping most children feel safe by being able to anticipate what is going to happen, some children may benefit from more targeted support. If you have children in your groups who find unpredictability very challenging, then it might be helpful to try using a 'Now and Next' board with them.

A Now and Next board is a smaller and more personalised 1:1 support tool that can be used alongside the main Visual Timetable to break it down into smaller chunks. It displays only 2 activities at a time - what we are doing now and what we will do next.



You'll find a blank Now and Next board template along with the Visual Timetable resources. To use it, you'll need to print out a set of the activity cards in a smaller size - A6 should work well. I recommend laminating both the Now and Next board and the set of activity cards. Throughout the session as you are supporting a child, together, keep their now and next board updated - changing it after each activity. You can simply use blutak to stick the activities in the right space on the board, or you could use velcro - add the hooks to the back of each activity card and add some loops to each section of the board.

A NOTE ON SYMBOLS ...



Effective communication is about more than simply using your words well - it's a whole body, sensory experience that involves what you hear, what you see (think body language, tone, expression) what you feel ... even what you taste and smell!

The more of the senses we can engage in our communication, the more effective it will be!

In a school setting, this type of whole body communication is often referred to as total communication. Some of our children may benefit from enhanced communication methods alongside verbal communication such as makaton (signing) or using symbols.

For copyright reasons, I have used simple, free-to-use graphics to create this Visual Timetable. However, if you have children in your setting who use symbols to communicate, or if you simply want to be ready for any of those children who might attend in the future, you might like to consider using recognised, standard symbols, to create your Visual Timetable, that they may be familiar with.

Most schools use a programme called 'Widget' for this. It's a subscription programme that costs between £90 and £140 to access for a year, depending on how many licenses you might need. Once you have it you can access a bank of standard symbols to create all kinds of resources - including door signs, cupboard labels AND a visual timetable!



VISUAL TIMETABLE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

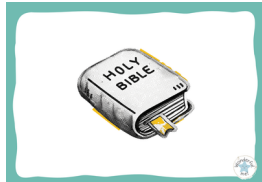
Contents



Welcome / Hello



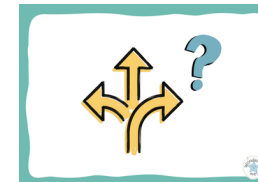
Newstime



Bible / Teaching



Game



Choice



Worship / Song



Snack



Goodbye



Prayer



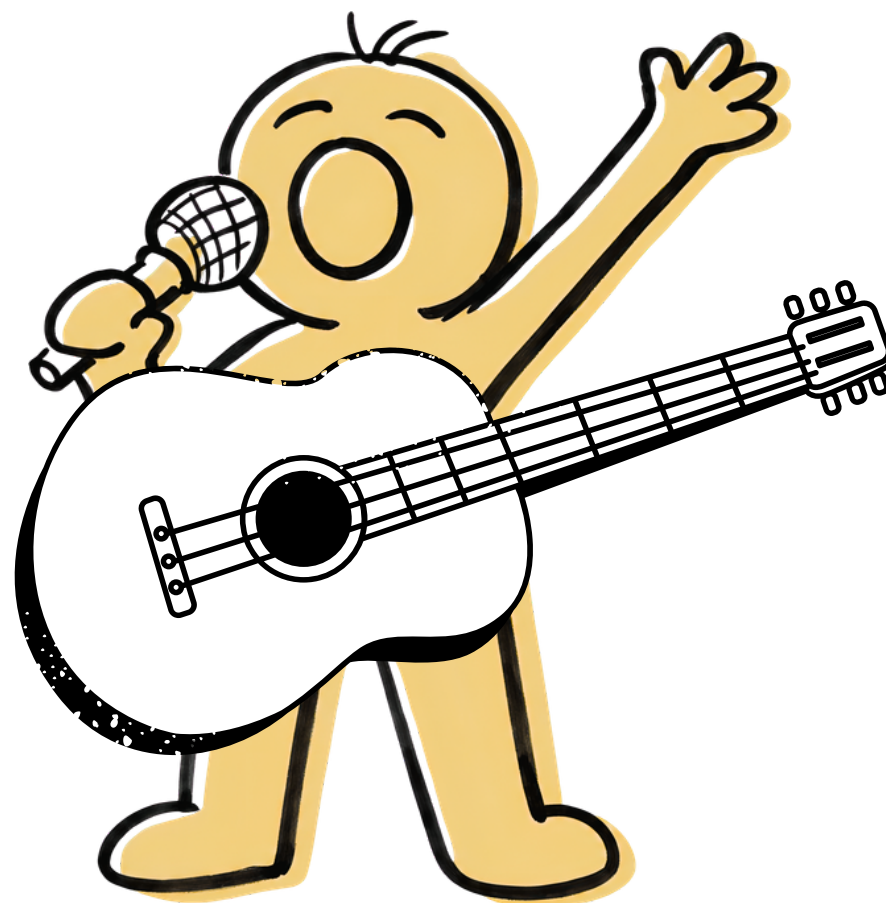
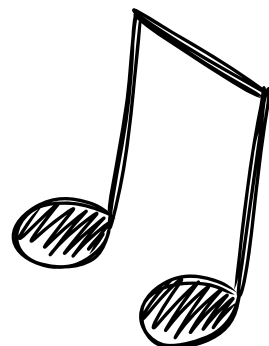
Grouptime /
Discussion

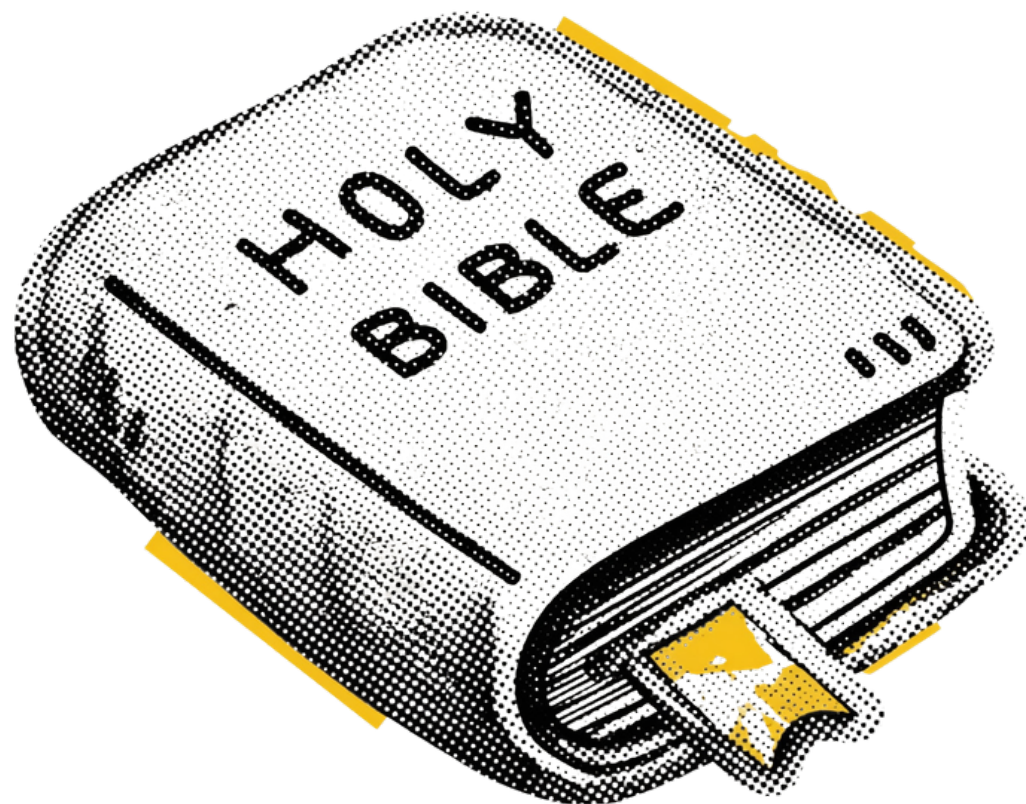


Craft



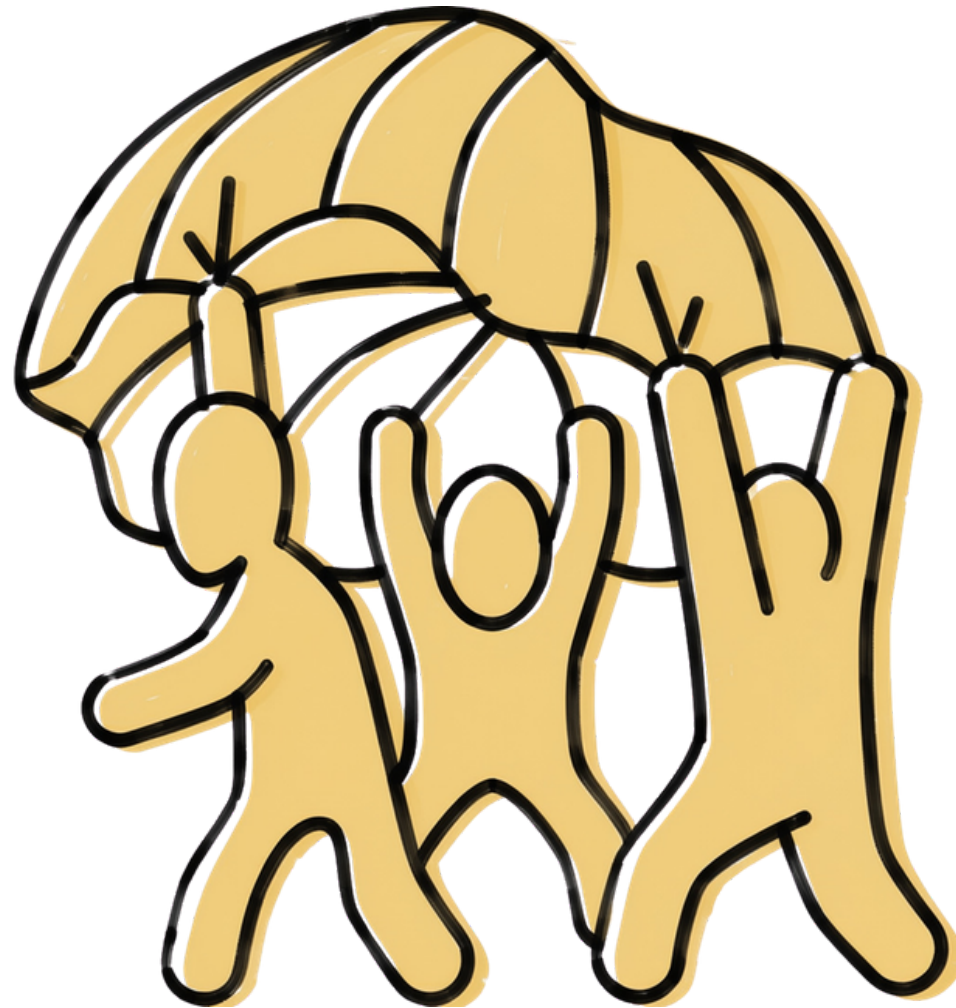




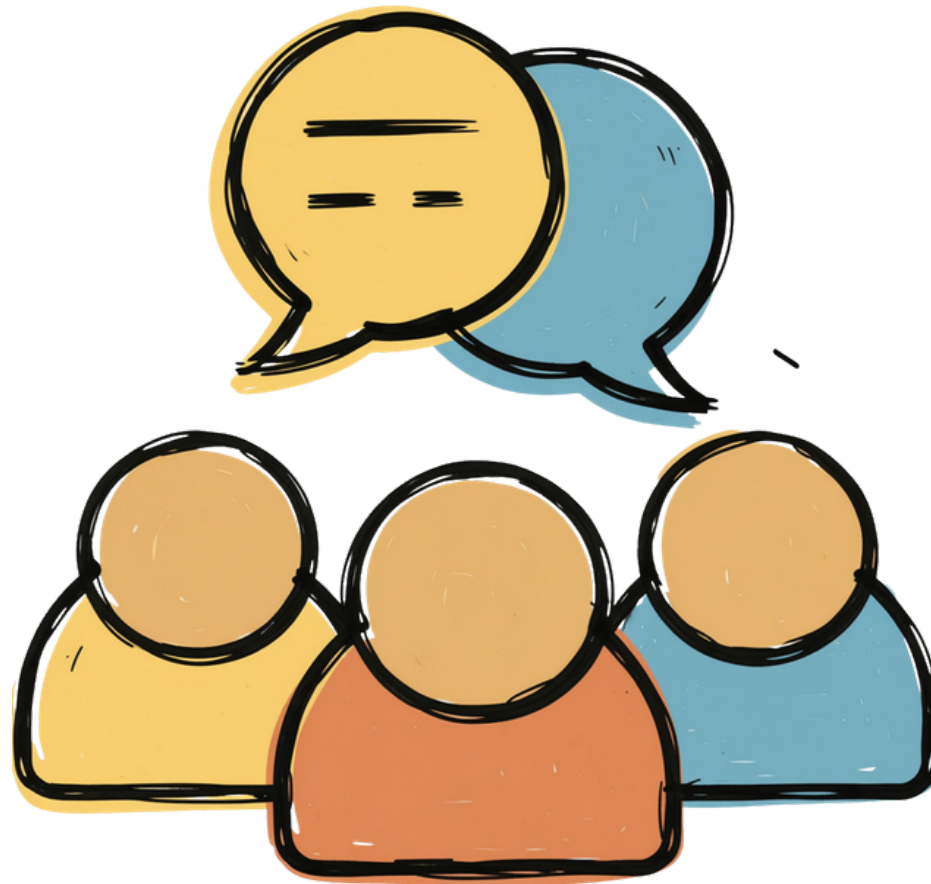




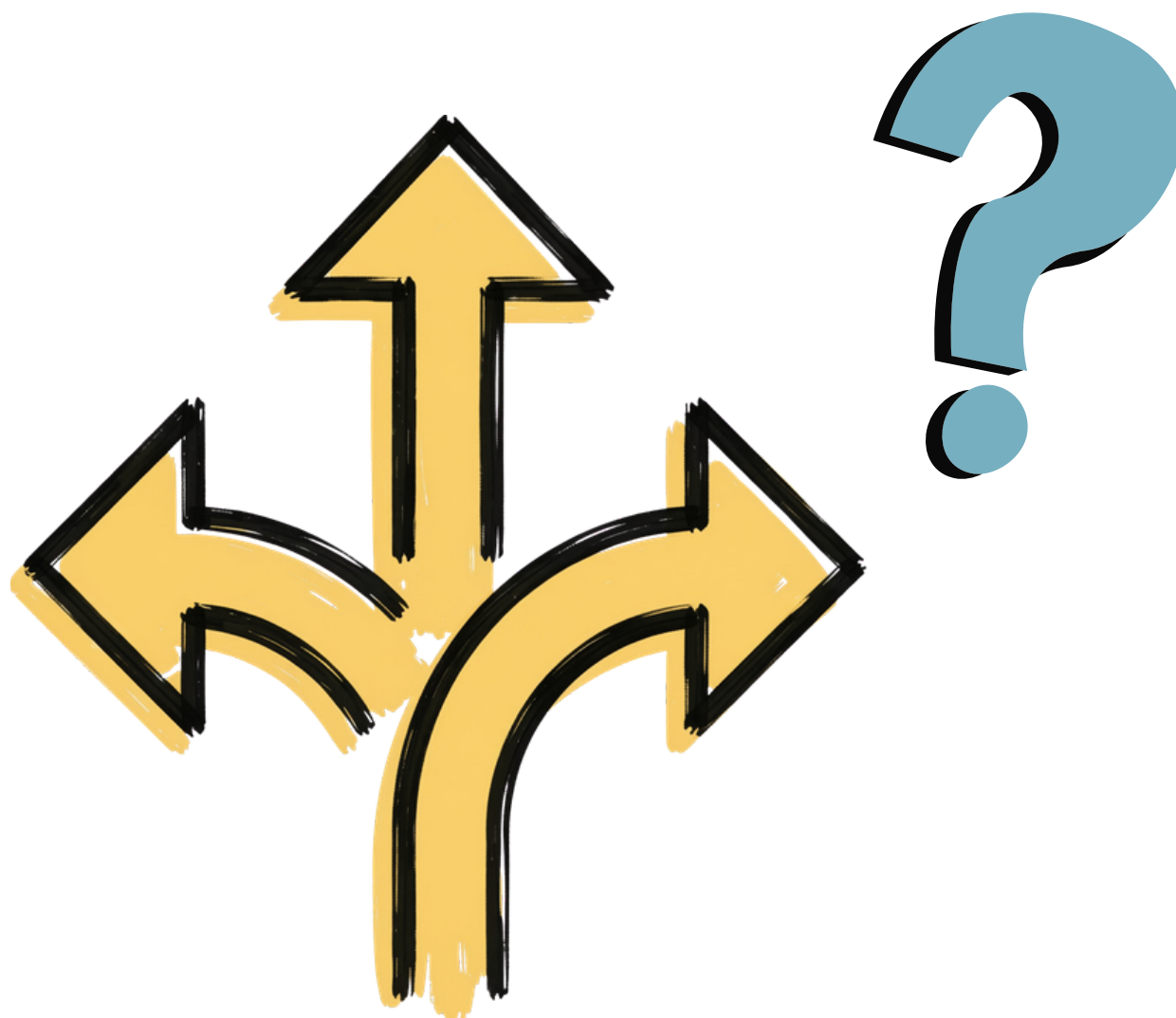












GOODBYE





now



next

