**Creating ‘Space’ in your Church**

**Based on Rebecca Nye 2009**

**Emotional Space**

A place where we can be ourselves and experience the feeling of being closely held and safe (Nye 2009). Language is important in this, encouraging speaking respectfully to each other and valuing each other’s opinions even though it might not be the same opinion to ours.

**Auditory space**

This is a place where we talk less, listen more and taking silence seriously(Nye 2009). Creating a quiet space within our curriculum. Auditory space can easily be created by allowing a 7 second space at the end of a story or after a question or when a child shows you a piece of their artwork(Nye 2009).

Time within a curriculum where there isn’t an agenda or learning outcomes. Time where children can bring what is important to them and be heard. Some of our churches are creating space where children can ask the ‘Big Questions’ and think through how we feel about the big things that are taking place in our world and begin to think through how God might want us to respond to them as Christian. Space can also be created by allowing time to ask ‘wondering’ questions at the end of the story ‘I wonder which part of the story you liked best?’, ‘I wonder which part of the story you could take away and still have everything you need?’. One important element of wondering is to not require ‘a hands up’ answer – children can wonder in their heads and not share their thoughts – that’s acceptable.

As adults we don’t need to know every detail of what a child is thinking, the importance here is that they have space to think through the story and get into the habit of wondering as they develop their personal faith.