

Branch Meeting – Information and Activity

Bye Buy Childhood *[followed this with Labelled for Life]*

Mothers' Union believes that children should be valued as children, not consumers. Yet marketers target children's natural inexperience in order to reach the household purse. Giving children the message that they are what they own, rather than valuing them for who they are, can negatively affect their wellbeing.

Mothers' Union launched the Bye Buy Childhood campaign in August 2010 to challenge the commercialisation and sexualisation of childhood.

Our objectives are to:

- Challenge children and their families to think about their consumer habits and to empower families to manage the commercial world
- Engage with the commercial world to encourage responsible advertising and retail practices
- Influence government to take action on the issue.

So far, Mothers' Union has:

- Gained support from Parliamentarians, across the parties
- Presented a 19,000 signature petition to the Prime Minister
- Participated in Parliamentary enquiries and discussions
- Launched postcard campaigns in Ireland and Wales to enable people to send any complaints to Ofcom and the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland
- Published *Labelled for Life*, an advice booklet for families
- Highlighted the issue on television and radio, and through newspapers and the internet
- Engaged local communities and faith groups through local Mothers' Union members' activities
- Engaged with regulatory bodies, advertising and media organisations and other charities concerned about the issue.

Huge sums of money – £350 million in the UK- are spent on advertising to children each year. Product placement, pester power and peer to peer sales all encourage children to spend, spend, spend. Our report shows that the materialism this promotes in children can harm their wellbeing. As individuals, we can feel small against the power of commercialisation. But together we can, and will, make a difference. A difference that will transform the lives of children.

Allow members time to discuss their feelings and experiences of commercialisation

Show members the three survey pages included in this pack – are they interested enough to take part in one or more of them – if so have copies ready to give out.