

Let's get talking



about families + faith

HOW CAN YOUR CHURCH SEE FAMILIES GROW IN FAITH?

Research shows that many families are less engaged with the local church after the pandemic. And many churches are unsure about how to best meet the needs of these families.

But it's great news that 99% of Christian parents and carers want to work in partnership with their local church to support their child's faith journey.

And the best news for weary church leaders is that these families value relationships with church more than wanting more activities and resources.

So for the month of July, we want to encourage your church to get people talking and connecting together. This leaflet will give you lots of ideas, and we hope you can join us for our online taster session:

Monday 27th June, 12.15-1pm
OR Tuesday 28th June, 8-8.45pm

PARTNERSHIP IS KEY!



99% of parents want the church to work in partnership with families to nurture children's faith together.

97% of church leaders want to work in partnership also.

We want to support your church in enhancing your partnerships with parents and carers!



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at church leadership level

Including this in your church leadership meetings will help to inspire the whole church to work together to support and equip families in the congregation and beyond. It will also enable reflection together about how your church can better meet the needs of families, rather than continuing with what you've always done. You could discuss these questions:

Which ages are/aren't coming to our church? How do families initially make contact? Which of our activities/services are families attending? Do we provide adequate provision for families to attend? Do we have any feedback or observations of their experiences? (formal or informal).

What are the needs of the families? How can we listen to them? How can we be intentional to ensure we meet their spiritual needs? How do we show this? Do we need to adjust our mission strategy/vision/approach?

How welcome and valued do children and families feel in our church? In what ways could we get more of our congregation involved in supporting children and families?

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during church services

Create time during the service for families/small groups to chat about the teaching topic, a Bible passage which is meaningful to them, prayer requests/answers. This creates easy opportunities to engage in meaningful discussion together, which will hopefully be continued later, facilitating discussion about faith at home. It's a great way to encourage everyone in their faith and model connecting faith with the everyday.

Lead the congregation in praying for families and parents/carers specifically as they disciple their children - helping everyone to recognise the value of parents/carers sharing faith at home. This will be so affirming and encouraging, whilst conveying the importance of parent/carers sharing their faith with their children!

Provide opportunities for families to share good ideas/experiences of faith at home, such as through interviews up-front, church newsletter or during the service. This is a great way to encourage all different ages and generations to get involved and learn from one another. [Click here for some examples](#)

Consider changing the format of the service or holding a special event to foster conversations and relational mixing across the church, for example the [Big Scrumptious Faith-Filled Feast](#) or adding [some other family service ideas](#).





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at home!

Try to talk about faith as you go about your daily life. Perhaps snatch some moments whilst sitting at the dinner table, travelling in the car, walking to school or when you're just relaxing together. You can talk about God and faith at any time! [Click here for some conversation starters](#). Open-ended questions help to open up a conversation, eg: I wonder what you liked best about that Bible story. If your child asks a tricky question, don't feel pressured to think of an answer at the time because the aim is simply to get conversations started about faith. You can always return to the topic later once you've had time to ponder on it, but it's great to explore difficult questions together with your child, if/when they raise them.

You could try out some fun ways to talk about faith at home from [GodVenture](#), [Parenting for faith](#) and the [Kitchen Table Project](#).

It's great to start such discussions from a young age, modelling to your child that faith is not a taboo subject in your house. [Try out some of these tips if you have children under 3 years old!](#)

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with other parents and carers

Gather parents and carers together informally/socially to encourage one another and share ideas as they nurture their children's faith, for example during a coffee time after a church service, or a dedicated 'mum's time out', or 'dad's meet up'. You could provide a few conversation starters and then leave them to chat. Facilitating WhatsApp groups amongst church families can also help to foster these informal connections and support.

If you want to provide more targeted support, examples include an Inspire session, a block of six Raising Faith sessions, or a Parenting for Faith Course. Some other helpful resources:

[Parenting for Faith Key Tools videos](#) (less than 2 mins each) for all ages

[Parenting for Faith babies and toddlers videos](#) (aimed at parents of under 3s)





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next steps

The first step is to **start conversations** - with children, parents, congregation members, and church leadership. Many churches like the idea of supporting families in their faith journey and feel that it's an implicit part of their church ethos. But then when they pause and reflect, they realise that unless they are intentional to incorporate this into church life, it is often inadvertently forgotten. So getting conversations going is a great start!

The next important step is to **truly listen**. Our research showed a HUGE disconnect between what Christian families wanted and what churches *thought* families wanted. So find ways to listen to families - parents *and* children...perhaps that through anonymous surveys, informal conversations or more formal discussion groups or round-table discussions. Try to lay aside the things which have worked well in the past and listen to what will work well in your context in this season.

Make some **strategic plans**. Agree some tangible steps about how you will try to embed partnership with families into the ethos of your church. These can be simple points but by formally agreeing them and integrating them into your churches wider ethos will encourage everyone to be involved and foster a stronger sense of families being welcomed and valued.

It's so important that **relationship-building** is a fundamental part of what you do next. Try not be to programme or activity-driven but focus on connections as the starting point, and think about how to foster relational connections amongst your church family and families.

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keep in touch

We'd love for your church to be part of our ongoing research project; exploring the impact of incorporating some of these ideas into your church's structure. This may also help to give your church a boost to make some changes. We'd love to hear from you about how some of these ideas have worked/not worked on your context.

[Please tell us using this form.](#)

Don't forget to access these organisations for continued resources and support:

Care for the Family Evangelical Alliance Hope Together
Parenting for faith Share Jesus International

