

Supporting families in faith



In a recent research report 'Taking the Pulse'¹, Dr Sarah Holmes interviewed young people, parents, church leaders and volunteers to find out how to encourage faith in children and youth. Roots' Managing Director Melanie Cave spoke to Sarah about the findings and suggests how churches can better support families.

Church leaders and parents want the same thing

According to the report, 80 per cent of churches deemed their role to be providing faith role models, and 77 per cent said that their role was to equip parents for faith at home.

Parents wanted the church to provide faith role models for children and young people, and to equip parents to support faith in the family home. They desired the church to be a proactive partner, communicating and collaborating with families.²

Sarah explains, 'Churches and families both want the same thing – to work together to support the faith of children and youth – but it's often not happening. Maybe it's because our church structures are not really set up that way, or maybe they don't know how to do this. Perhaps they don't want to step on each other's toes. But it's so much more effective when we work together as a team on this!'

Don't make assumptions

According to the research, church leaders think that families want more resources, social gatherings and intergenerational activities to help develop faith at home. In fact, the parents interviewed asked for a more personal, targeted, and relational approach from their local church. Over half of them felt unsupported and under-resourced in faith formation.

Parents asked for time and space to talk about the parenting/faith questions they're facing. They wanted signposting to or sharing resources (like books or podcasts) that fit their theology and life-stage. But don't let these statistics speak for your parents. Hear directly from them, even if it confirms these findings. Relational support is a big piece of what parents felt was missing.

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Families want to explore faith together

'71 per cent of the church leaders said that their church values children, youth and families as part of the church. Our research shows that while provision of a good repertoire of age-specific activities is often the route churches take to demonstrate that they value families, this may not be the primary need or hope for families. Indeed, the young people clearly expressed that they feel most valued when they are involved, and their church accommodates them.'³

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In Sarah's words, 'Both the young people and their parents said that they felt most valued when they were visible, rather than hidden away in separate age groups. When churches sought to include them, making necessary adaptations and adjustments along the way – this helped them to feel part of the church community. What they appreciated most was this sense of being included and having role models of faith in the church community. Age-segregated groups were of less importance to them.'

An intergenerational approach to worship and discipleship can equip families to be together and can kick-start faith conversations in the week. Using Roots' resources to lead intergenerational services may be a way your church can support faith conversations in families.

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Families want a variety of quick devotional ideas

Of the parents surveyed, 30 per cent requested a broader variety of resources to support family discipleship (podcasts, online quizzes, novels, biographies, conversation cards, blogs); 26 per cent asked for enhanced support for Bible study and devotional materials for their family. Parents wanted shorter, flexible devotional activities, and ones that might also cater for children with special educational needs.

Roots' Thrive can help

Every week, Roots produces **Thrive**, a PDF of varied devotional ideas to help households explore the Bible reading. The weekly Thrive sheet comprises links to the passage, images, questions, a short devotional, a prayer and five ideas to actively explore the theme, from songs, to videos, or things to make, do, create, social action campaigns, or ways to head outside.

Thrive
with Roots

Download Thrive

You can find Thrive already included with both your *Children & Youth* and *Worship Together* subscriptions. Download it from our website at www.rootsforchurches.com/Thrive-SeptOct25

Then print and give out **Thrive** or share it online via your website, social media or WhatsApp.

For other resources for growing faith at home, see [WEB](#).



¹ <https://bit.ly/4m26tsb> ² *Taking the pulse*, p.14 ³ *TTP*, pp.17-19