

Inspire

Building faith in the everyday

GROUP LEADER'S GUIDE

**kitchen
table
project**



Inspire a faith that lasts

Introduction

Thank you for choosing to run an *Inspire* session. Our prayer at Care for the Family is that this session will help mums and dads to start talking about why and how they want to inspire their children's faith. We want parents to know that we don't need to be experts and that inspiring our children's faith doesn't have to be complicated.

Ultimately we know that God loves our children even more than we do and wants a relationship with them. But while they are in our care we have an opportunity to point them towards him in every aspect of life.

What is an *Inspire* session?

The *Inspire* session is a small group resource designed to be run in a relaxed and informal setting in someone's home or at church.

The aim of the session is to start a conversation between Christian parents about the influence they have in their children's lives and encourage them that they are in the best position to share their own faith with their children. It will also provide some ideas of how that can happen in their everyday lives.

Who is it for?

It is suitable for all mums and dads, whether they are parenting together, alone or as a stepfamily, with birth children or those who are adopted or fostered.

The session is primarily aimed at parents of children under 11, but can also be successfully used for parents with older children as well. You may well find that others wish to attend, too! That could include grandparents or other members of the wider family, godparents or children's leaders.

Parents with similar aged children are likely to be experiencing similar issues or concerns. However, they may also value learning from parents at a different stage of parenting.

If your session includes parents of older children, it is important to show sensitivity and honesty during the discussions. Some parents may feel that they have missed opportunities in the past. It is important to give space for such feelings to be expressed and it can help to acknowledge that these are 'normal' feelings experienced by most parents at one time or another.

Reassure them that it is never too early or too late to start inspiring faith in our children.

Who can run an *Inspire* session?

Anyone! The *Inspire* session encourages parents to share ideas and support each other. So, whether you are a parent or not, everyone is learning together. You are not expected to be an expert or have all the answers, but simply to be the person to help start this conversation.



Preparation

The *Inspire* session outline below gives you the timings for a 90 minute stand-alone session. However, some groups may prefer to allow two hours, for a more relaxed pace with extra time for discussion.

Running *Inspire* as a one-off session has the advantage that parents may be more willing to come along if they are not being asked to commit to a series of sessions. If they enjoy *Inspire*, they may well ask to meet again, and explore more material together.

If you do wish to plan *Inspire* as two sessions, however, the material is split into clear sections, with the intention that it's flexible and can be tailored to the needs of different groups. In the first session, look at parents' influence, hurdles and the five elements that can help to inspire faith. You can then look at the discussion cards and do the prayer activity together in a second session. At the end of the first session you may want to give the parents a discussion point to consider before the next session. Meeting over two sessions may allow parents to start to see how they could support each other and encourage them to continue meeting regularly.

Alternatively, if you have children present, the group may benefit from one short session where you just watch the video and use the discussion cards. If small children will be present, it is a good idea to think of ways to get them involved.

It is always useful to run the course in pairs, as this can help with the practicalities of running a session and bring different ideas to the discussions, but this is particularly useful if children are attending.

Parents may find it useful to note down ideas that have impacted them, so make sure that there are pens and paper available.

You may find it helpful to write or print out the two questions listed below, ready to display at the relevant part of the session.

Q: Why is your faith important to you?

Q: Why is it important to you that your child develops a faith that lasts?



Equipment

To lead the *Inspire* session you will need:

1. A laptop, TV or a projector with screen and speakers
2. Post-it notes
3. Pens
4. Paper
5. Bible - to read scriptures referred to in discussion cards
6. Play dough or plasticine, pipe cleaners, Lego (optional)
7. Different coloured sweets or fruit (see prayer activity)
8. Elements that help faith develop (available to download and print)
9. Discussion cards (available to download, print, and cut to size)
10. Picture of a light bulb and a question mark (available to download and print)
11. Take home sheets for parents (available to download and print)

Set time aside

Everything that you need to run this session is available for free download at www.kitchentable.org.uk. Give yourself enough time to prepare by watching the video, reading the information supplied and looking at the discussion cards. Think about how you will introduce the different sections of the session. There is a suggested script to help you, but you may be more comfortable expressing the ideas in your own words. Pray for the session and the people who will be coming!

Who presents the *Inspire* video?

Andy Frost

Andy is the Director of Share Jesus International. He has helped lead various churches, has authored a number of books and is a member of the Evangelical Alliance Council. Andy is working with Care for the Family on the Kitchen Table Project. He is married to Jo and they have two daughters.

Becky Denharder

Becky is running the Kitchen Table Project at Care for the Family. She is married to Chris and they have two boys.



Running the session

It will help the group to know that the *Inspire* session is not intended to leave them feeling that they now have more things to add to their already busy to-do list!

The session is not designed to provide parents with a list of ideas and activities, but for them to think about what might work for their own family. There are some prompts to help on the discussion cards, but if parents in the group would like more specific ideas then please suggest they visit the website.

As you share ideas, parents will be encouraged that there are practical things that they can do that fit their particular family and which build faith as a part of normal everyday life. It will help them seize simple opportunities to point their children to God and help them realise he is part of everything they do.

Key learning points for parents

- Realise the influence they have on their children to inspire a faith that lasts
- Think about what motivates them to want to share their faith with their children
- Recognise that they are already doing things to nurture their children's faith
- Identify any hurdles they face on a day to day basis
- Share ideas of how to help their children meet with God

Make sure you are set up and ready to begin before people start arriving.



5 min Welcome

As people arrive welcome them with any refreshments you may have provided. Allow a little bit of time for people to mingle and chat before you officially start the session. As you begin, introduce yourself and anyone else you may have helping you. Set them at ease by explaining a bit about what the *Inspire* session is and how it will run. Emphasise that it's not about being shown the 'right' way to do things, but an opportunity for them to share their own experiences and ideas and learn from each other, as well as from the material on the video. Reassure the group that they don't have to say anything if they don't want to. It will also help to remind everyone about the need to listen to one another and to be respectful of different ideas and experiences.

Welcome to the Inspire session where we will be sharing ideas about how we inspire our children's faith by bringing God into the everyday.

We believe that as parents we have an amazing opportunity to nurture our children's faith, but we also know it's not always easy. It's important that we do not feel guilty about what we have or haven't done because we're not always going to get it right. Each day is a new opportunity. God loves our children even more than we do, and we need his help, guidance and grace to go on this journey together. Let's start by praying.

Open in prayer.

5 min Introduction

In pairs, ask parents to share their own name, names and ages of their children and something they do to relax. Make it clear that each person will introduce their partner. This encourages good listening and it is often easier to speak about someone else.

Hand out materials such as play dough, pipe cleaners or Lego to each person.

Ask parents to make a small model of their family or something that they would associate with their family. Explain that they can keep it out as a reminder of why they are here, or play with it throughout the session for fun or distraction!

3 min Focus question

Q: What do you hope to get out of today?



Ask parents to write their answers on a Post-it note and keep it until the end of the session when we will look at whether the session achieved this.



7 min Video – Part 1



Show the first part of the video. Andy Frost and Becky Denharder look at what the Bible says about how we can help our children develop their own faith in God and talk about how we as parents have the greatest influence over our children.

The video will prompt you to pause on the image of the 'pie chart'.

5 min Discussion

As the group look at the pie chart on the screen explain that although attending a good church is beneficial to developing our children's faith, this is a small part of how our children can experience faith. The amount of time we spend with them shows that we have the greatest influence and an amazing opportunity to inspire faith in our everyday lives.



Encourage parents to discuss the questions below in twos or threes and then ask for feedback from the group.

Q: Do you feel you have the biggest influence on your children?

Q: Where do you feel that your children get most of their spiritual input from?

5 min Activity: Why does it matter to us?



Ask the group to discuss their answers to the following questions with a partner.

Then invite parents to share in the whole group if they would like to.

Q: Why is your faith important to you?

Q: Why is it important to you that your child develops a faith that lasts?



Invite parents to write down the answers to these two questions on a Post-it note. You can display these questions as a reminder.

Bring it to a close by acknowledging that our faith is personal and important to all of us, and we are here today because we are eager for our children to experience a relationship with God for themselves.



5 min Activity: Hurdles

But let's be real. Even though we have identified how important our faith is to us and why we want our children to develop their own faith, this is not always easy to achieve in the midst of everyday life!



Ask parents to write down any hurdles they face when trying to inspire their children's faith. Encourage them to write one hurdle per Post-it note but use as many Post-it notes as they want and then stick them in the middle of the table/room or on a wall.

Give a short time for people to look at the Post-it notes and identify common themes. In itself this will help parents realise they are not the only one to experience a particular hurdle.

The following themes are likely to come up.

1. Not enough time to spend with my child
2. Family time devoted to other activities
3. Needing help with knowing what to do
4. Being worried about doing it wrong
5. Not a good enough example as a Christian

5 min Video – Part 2: Hurdles



Play the second part of the video.

Q: How do you feel after hearing about some ways we can overcome our hurdles?



Take some feedback.

It can be encouraging to understand that inspiring faith in the everyday is not about carving out large quantities of time, or having all the answers to difficult questions, but finding ways to show faith in everyday life!



5 min Recap the four elements that build faith

Go through the four elements with the group and emphasise how we need the fifth element of prayer to underpin all we do. Use the five downloadable A4 cards and place each one in the centre of the group as you explain the concepts. These elements are also on the downloadable take home sheet that you can print to give to parents.

Home – A warm, affirming family where children feel safe, loved and accepted gives a secure foundation for their faith to grow.

Be real – It's not about expertise. We are not perfect, but living out our faith in a genuine way inspires children to want this for themselves.

Be intentional – Finding simple ways to involve God naturally in everyday life encourages our children to know and love him.

Belong – Involving children at church and building relationships with others helps our children to feel they belong in God's family.

Prayer – Praying for our children and asking God to guide us as we parent is so important. We can look for opportunities to help them connect with God, but ultimately they are his children and he wants that relationship with them.

30 min Activity: Inspire cards



Explore these elements in more detail using the discussion cards.

Place the cards on the table. They are designed so that anyone can choose one and ask the question to the group, which you can then all discuss. You may find the group wants to focus on just one or two questions or they may be keen to explore lots! If there are specific questions that you would like the group to focus on, you can choose these beforehand.

There is an idea on each card to help conversation if it is proving difficult to answer, but in most cases the discussion will flow naturally.

They can be used to think about different ways that we can inspire our children's faith and to also think about which element from the five above they impact upon. Many will relate to more than one element, and it will be good to explore how they overlap.



10 min Prayer activity

Using sweets that come in different colours (Starburst, Smarties etc.) or four different types of fruit, introduce a prayer activity that you could try at home with your children.



Assign a colour to a category to pray for, for example:

- Green or grapes – pray for school
- Red or strawberry – pray for friends
- Purple or blueberry – pray for character
- Yellow or banana – pray for their future

Take turns to choose a sweet or piece of fruit, and then pray for your child in line with the topic related to that item. This is a fun, simple way to pray with your children at home. For example, parents could invite their children to thank God for one thing about hobbies and games; people they love; creation; or Jesus, depending on which colour is picked.

5 min Conclusion

Ask parents to look back at their original Post-it note where they wrote down what they wanted to get out of the session.



Encourage parents to share if they got out what they expected or something different.



Display the light bulb and question mark. Ask parents to write the following down on Post-it notes and stick them to the relevant symbol:

1. **Light bulb** – one thing that you have learnt from the session or one thing that you are going to start doing at home
2. **Question mark** – any questions you have or anything you would like to explore further

Please take photographs of your 'light bulb' and 'question mark' Post-it notes and send to us at mail@cff.org.uk or post on our Facebook page. This will help us with evaluating and improving the session.

Use this opportunity to pray to bring the session to a close. Pray that our children might grow up to know and love God. Pray for each other as parents, that God would help us to model our faith and give us practical ways in which we can signpost our children to him.



What comes next?

Thank everyone for coming. You can ask the group what, if anything, they would like to do next.

Some parents may like to continue to support one another by setting up a Facebook or WhatsApp group where they can share ideas and encourage one another. Or they may like to continue to meet together to explore the discussion cards further, pray for their children or to do a more in-depth course, like the Bible Reading Fellowship *Parenting for Faith* course available at www.parentingforfaith.org.

It would also be good to encourage mums and dads to follow the Kitchen Table Project on social media for regular ideas and encouragement and to keep up to date with all our new resources.



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www.kitchentable.org.uk

Finally, we would love to hear your feedback. This really helps us to know how many parents are being reached, and to learn how we can improve the *Inspire* session for the future. We would be so grateful if you could complete a quick survey at www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/inspiresession

And don't forget to send us pictures of parents' feedback from the light bulb and question mark! You can email those to mail@cff.org.uk or post them on the Facebook page – thank you.



Care for the Family – a Christian response to a world of need.
A registered charity (England and Wales: 1066905; Scotland: SC038497).
Email: mail@cff.org.uk
Website: www.careforthefamily.org.uk

