

Church Toolkit

USER GUIDE

**kitchen
table
project**



Inspire a faith that lasts

Introduction

Welcome to the *Church Toolkit* from the Kitchen Table Project!

We are thrilled that you have taken the time to look at this toolkit. It's designed to help churches encourage and equip parents and carers in the amazing opportunity they have to impact their children's own journey of faith – a crucial area of ministry within church life.

The background

Recent research shows:

- Just 50% of children growing up in Christian homes keep their faith as adults
- Most people come to faith before the age of 19 years old
- Parents have the biggest influence on their children and their attitude towards faith
- 85% of parents believe that they are primarily responsible for their child's spiritual development

BUT

- They also genuinely believe that the church is better placed than they are to actually do it. Many parents do not feel confident in this role and are looking to the church for help and guidance.

We want to see children inspired to develop a faith that lasts and we all have a part to play in this, whether we are parents, carers, grandparents, godparents, friends, leading church or in children's ministry – the list goes on!

Developing a culture

Deuteronomy 6:7 encourages parents to talk to their children about God at home, on the road, at bedtime and in the morning. It's about sharing our faith stories and including God in general conversation – joining in a journey with our children, on an exciting daily adventure to develop their own relationship with God.

But mums and dads often feel they don't know where to start, simply aren't qualified, or are just too busy. The church can make a huge difference in giving parents confidence to make a start with their children.

What works?

Fundamentally of course we want to acknowledge God's sovereignty and the importance of prayer, and encourage parents in praying for their children. Research has also identified some foundational elements that are important for inspiring faith at home. Introducing these aspects within family life will help create an environment where families can flourish and faith can grow.



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're 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.

These are messages which can be incorporated into church life more generally in ways that are relevant to all of our congregation, not just those who are directly caring for children. We can talk about these principles as they apply to our personal Christian life and also to all our relationships, and then draw out the application for parents as one example of how they work in real life.

What's in the Church Toolkit?

The toolkit has been designed so you can select elements to use in a way that suits your church context, whether during services, gatherings, discipleship or church life in general. The aim is to develop a culture amongst parents and the church as a whole that helps us to all be involved in nurturing our children's faith in a real and natural way. Our vision is that as a result, many more of our young people grow up with a lasting faith in God.

The toolkit includes the following items:

- Booklet for leaders – *Inspiring a faith that lasts – How churches can support parents in nurturing their children's faith*
- Graphics and content that can be used on your church website, in social media or your church newsletter, to prompt parents to think about inspiring faith at home
- Short videos that can be shown in church to introduce this topic
- A stand-alone sermon
- A four-part sermon series
- Discussion questions related to the sermons, which could be used by small groups or housegroups
- The *Inspire* session – an easy-to-run 90 minute session that can be run by anyone in the church, to help parents and others to start thinking about this topic. The session includes video content, activities and discussion cards that can all be downloaded free of charge



You can also request printed items to share with the church:

- Posters that you can display in church
- Postcards for parents telling them about different aspects of the Kitchen Table Project
- *Welcome to the Kitchen Table Project* – a leaflet letting parents and church leaders know how they can join the movement
- *Things we can easily do* – a leaflet for parents helping them with ideas for inspiring faith in everyday life
- *Top Tips for Parents – Faith and Values* – a leaflet giving parents an introduction to inspiring faith in the family
- *Faith in our Families* – a booklet for all leaders in the church, that gives the research background to the initiative
- *Did you know?* – an overview of the key research for parents

Go to kitchentable.org.uk/resources for links to all of these items.

How to use the Church Toolkit

A great first step would be to read the booklet *Inspiring a faith that lasts – How churches can support parents in nurturing their children’s faith*.

You could make a start by using the graphics and messaging in your church communications, putting up posters and/or giving leaflets to parents and carers in your church. This will help to raise awareness of how important this topic is.

You could also identify a few people who you think would be keen to get involved. This may include parents who are already proactive about inspiring their children’s faith, or perhaps some of those who help with the children’s work in church.

Maybe one of them (or more!) would run an *Inspire* session for a few friends, or a wider group from the church. You could arrange for the sermons to be used in the run-up to this, to build interest.

Not all parents will engage right away, and that’s OK. Work with those who do, and gradually more will join the journey.

Another approach may be to start by running a general parenting course such as *Parentalk* which could provide a great springboard to then address issues of faith. To find out more about this and other parenting resources please visit www.careforthefamily.org.uk.



What else is out there to help me?

There's lots more coming down the track, so make sure you sign up at the Kitchen Table Project website to receive a monthly email full of encouragement, tips, resources and future updates. This will include course material, events for parents around the UK and our brand new, full colour, magazine-style book for parents called 'Raising Faith'.

Take a look too at the *Parenting for Faith* course by the Bible Reading Fellowship at www.parentingforfaith.org.

Thank you

Thank you for encouraging and equipping parents to share their faith. We'd love to hear your feedback about whether this was helpful and what else we could provide to support churches on this journey. If you need any more information or would like to speak to someone about developing this in your church or area, please do get in touch with us!



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Care for the Family – a Christian response to a world of need.
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