

Becoming a parent-discipling church

Empowering parents to nurture their children's faith, at home, in the pandemic



Inspire a faith that lasts

A church leader's guide

Welcome

As a church leader myself, I know how challenging it can be to serve and support the whole church community. These challenges have increased in this season, as we adjust to changes in how we can meet together and try to keep our congregations feeling connected.

But God has not changed, this pandemic has not surprised him and the mandate Jesus left remains the same. We are still called to “go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19).

The pandemic has had a huge impact on the way we host church services and how we connect with and disciple others. This is especially true when thinking about parents and children. Many parents are struggling to engage their children with online services and even if we are meeting in person, children’s work has been particularly affected. We can’t do what we did before!

But what if the answer doesn’t lie in producing more appealing children’s resources or in parents trying harder to entice their kids to engage with a digital programme or a very different type of ‘in person’ service?

In Mark’s account of the great commission, we read how Jesus instructed us to “go into the world”.

Whatever is going on in society at this time, parents’ ‘worlds’ are right there in their homes, and they have the opportunity to disciple their children where they are. But the reality is, many parents are feeling isolated and disconnected from our church communities and are probably feeling overwhelmed.

So, what if the key to connecting with families right now is in how we support and disciple parents? How we invest in our relationships with parents and journey alongside them? And how we help parents feel empowered and equipped to disciple their children and encourage their faith in everyday life?

Many of us at the Kitchen Table Project are involved in church leadership and recognise how valuable your time is. Our heart is to create resources that are flexible and easy for you to use within your church context – without it taking up a lot of your time and energy.

This booklet is designed to help you on your journey of becoming a church that disciples parents and empowers them to nurture faith at home. We've also included our 'journey map' tool to help you work out where you are on this journey as a church and the next steps you can take.

If there's anything we can do to support you, please get in touch!



Gareth Hillier
Networker – The
Kitchen Table Project



About the Kitchen Table Project

The Kitchen Table Project is a growing movement of mums, dads, carers and churches joining together to support each other, learn from each other and share ideas to help children's faith develop at home in everyday life.

Family life is busy! It's messy and is certainly not perfect. There will be good times and bad. Tears and laughter. Mistakes and successes. Here at the Kitchen Table Project, we want to champion parents and help them see that it's in the mess and chaos of everyday family life that God is at work.

As parents, we don't have to be perfect. We're certainly not experts – we're learning on the job! As we show children our real faith, lived

out in everyday life, we demonstrate that faith is a journey and we won't always get it right or have all the answers. Rather, it's about exploring and discovering faith together as a family. And as we sometimes make mistakes, show our vulnerabilities and model how to apologise to each other, we display the very essence of our faith – the heartbeat of the gospel and all that Jesus came to give us – a life of forgiveness, grace and hope. And in this season, more than ever before, parents and children need hope! Will you join us on this journey of championing families?

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Inspire a faith that lasts



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Understanding *why* this is valuable for your church



In our *Inspire* session small group resource, we start by asking parents why their faith in Jesus is important to them, and why they want their children to have a faith that will last. Understanding *why* something is important to us can help us identify our motivation and stay focused, even when things are challenging.

At the beginning of this journey, a good starting point is to ask yourself (and your team if you have one) why it is important that your church is a parent-discipling church? Your answers will hopefully help to inform the direction you need to travel in.

This is how one church leader answered the questions, which may help you as you answer them too.

Why is it important that the children in your church develop their faith into adulthood?

Our faith in God is a lifelong journey into eternity. We don't just want our children to know about God, or to come to church while their parents 'make them'. We want them to build a relationship with God themselves that continues to grow into adulthood. We want them to feel they belong in their church community – to find a place where they can build relationships and contribute to developing the work of the Kingdom.

How has this pandemic helped you to recognise the valuable role parents play in nurturing their children's faith at home?

The pandemic has brought about so many changes in the way we're operating as churches. It's helped us to take a step back and to remember that the Church has always been 'the people' and 'not the building'. It's given us the opportunity to be creative in how we connect with and disciple others, and how we build community.

Faith begins in our individual lives and homes and flows out into the spaces and places where we live and work. This is so true in family life. Throughout the pandemic, we may not have been able to engage with children, and nurture their faith like we used to. But parents have continued to be able to do this in the ups and downs of everyday family life. It's really highlighted how Christian parents are the primary influence in encouraging their children's faith to grow, right there in their homes.

Now that you've seen how influential parents can be in nurturing their children's faith – why is it important that you become a parent-discipling church?

If we invest in encouraging parents in their own faith journey and help them to stay connected to the life of the church, it's more likely their children will be positively affected. When we disciple parents, we help them to live out their faith naturally in everyday life. And as they become more confident to share their faith journey with their children, this can help their children's faith to grow and develop too.

Ultimately, we want to see the whole church thrive for future generations. By becoming a parent-discipling church, we validate this incredibly important season of life for the parents themselves, but also give them the tools to encourage and strengthen their children's faith both at home and within the church family.



Over to you ... take a moment to answer these questions for yourself below:

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Where do you think you are on the journey of becoming a parent-discipling church?

(Mark where you are on the journey - with 1 representing you're not doing anything to disciple parents and 5 representing you're doing a lot. You may want to revisit this every few months to see how you're progressing on the journey).



Now for the *what* and the *who*

Before you start thinking about how you can journey forward, it may be good to think about **what** you've already done to encourage and equip parents.

- **What** were you doing to disciple parents before the pandemic and could that be adapted in any way?
- **What** is your church doing now to connect with and disciple parents?
- **What** has worked? What hasn't?
- **What** areas do you want to develop?
- **What** do you want to stop? Life and ministry is very different now and giving ourselves permission to stop doing what isn't working is really helpful as we move forward.
- **What** would you like to see now and in the future? (Don't be afraid to dream!)



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Who are you looking to support?

Who are the parents you want to work with?

Every church is different, and there isn't a 'one size fits all' model as we develop a culture of discipling parents. The contact you have with parents and carers will vary. You may have contact with parents who are actively engaged in your church groups, schools work or other community programmes for families. It will be about meeting parents where they are, whether they've been a Christian for years or haven't even thought about what faith means to them.

If you would normally connect with groups of parents from a variety of settings, it might be less daunting to focus on one group to start with. As those parents are discipled, they may feel more confident to connect with other groups of parents and you could look at ways of bringing them together to support one another.

Who could make this happen?

What you do to engage families is probably going to look very different to the children's

provision you were running before and you may need time to rethink the roles of your staff and volunteers. It may even allow you to enlist the help of volunteers who wouldn't have necessarily wanted to work with children, but would love to support families - creating that intergenerational approach.

- Who do you know who is interested in and passionate about encouraging and equipping parents?
- Who could start something and drive it forward? Who has the skills/ideas/empathy?
- Who could you send on the Kitchen Table Project training events?

In this season, we may need to give our children's workers permission to recognise that their role may have changed. Taking time to find out how we can equip and encourage individual families will be a significant part of that - even if that's just going for a socially distanced walk with them regularly, or joining a group of parents together online. Finding out what will help individuals will not only build relationships but may help us to tailor any online children's content too.

How might the role of your children's worker have changed?

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How are you feeling right now?

In this season of uncertainty, while we are adjusting to ever-changing government guidance, we may feel that nothing is constant and we are often taking two steps forward and three back. This can be unsettling for both our congregations and us. The restrictions can feel like barriers to building our church communities and many of us will be waiting for this season to come to an end.

But what if God is doing something incredible in this season? What if he is helping us to see beyond the many **programmes** that we had in place before COVID-19 and instead to focus on **building relationships** now and in the years to come?

Restrictions versus opportunities

It's easy to focus on what we've lost, but there are lots of new opportunities for us to connect with others and build our church communities.

You don't know what the restrictions around gathering together might be next week, next month or next year.

You can find out what your individual families need right now. You know that

they will still be getting their children up each day, eating and playing together and putting their children to bed every night. We might not be able to plan big gatherings, but we can help parents to discover the many daily opportunities they have to encourage their children's faith to grow.

Your volunteers are struggling to engage with children and families online, or don't feel safe meeting. You have lost much of the practical help you had.

You do have a wider church family, and everyone can serve in their own way. This is an opportunity to identify other people who might like to help in this area, even if it is just befriending and supporting one family. This is a great time for intergenerational relationships to grow.

You can't guarantee that you will be able to get parents together in person to learn and connect – restrictions and uncertainties make planning things so difficult.

You can meet with parents online, which provides an opportunity to make meeting with parents more accessible than it's ever been. In two-parent households, both adults can attend and single parents don't need a babysitter. This can actually be so much more inclusive than it's been before.

You don't see parents on a regular basis, and when you can have gatherings, there isn't the opportunity to chat afterwards anymore.

You can make those connections by phoning individuals or popping by their doorstep. Perhaps when dropping off craft packs or a card from the church, you can use this as a reason to check in with the family and find out how everyone is, and offer to pray.

You feel you're not getting feedback, and can't tell if families are engaging with what you're doing.

This is a brilliant opportunity to develop deeper relationships with individuals and families. By taking time to speak to them one-to-one you can get to know them better and also

gain insight into how you can best serve them as a family in this season.

You feel like the normal parts of your job are gone, and instead you're a full-time Zoomer!

You can embrace this change. God is moving in the church. Going for a walk with a parent or writing a letter to a family *is* the work. You are uniquely positioned to care for and journey with the families you know and you can use your gifts to build relationships and see your church grow in and through people's homes.



Understanding how **parents feel**

How can we best encourage parents in this ministry at home? It's not as straightforward as just telling parents, "You should do this!"

Research shows that 85% of parents believe they are primarily responsible for their child's spiritual development, but they also believe that the Church is best placed to do it^[1]. So how can we help them to feel equipped?

Hurdles

When we understand how parents are feeling, we can be better equipped to help them. Yet in this season, with limited physical contact, we may be finding it challenging to find out how families are coping. Many churches have found that parents are not necessarily responding to blanket emails or texts. But telephoning an individual parent or arranging to walk with them has been the best way to make connections and explore how they are actually feeling.

Prior to the pandemic, our research discovered that there were four main hurdles parents struggled with:

- I don't have enough time
- I don't know where to start
- I don't think I'm a good enough example
- I don't feel qualified

The pandemic has brought additional challenges for parents we've spoken to:

- Increased guilt and pressure – it's all on me
- Screen fatigue – I'm Zoomed out!
- Feeling disconnected – I've lost my community

By understanding how parents are feeling, you are in a great position to help them overcome some of these hurdles and grow in confidence as they nurture their children's faith at home.

Hurdles parents face

I don't have enough time

Family life today is busy and our days are filled with work, school and all the pressures of everyday life. In many families both parents are working and a significant proportion work unsociable hours, so time together as a family is squeezed. The number of mums or dads parenting alone also continues to rise. In this season, many parents have experienced the added pressures of adjusting to working from home, home-schooling and keeping on top of the ever-increasing uncertainty and changes in guidelines. No wonder many parents are feeling overwhelmed.

We can help by reassuring parents that sharing their faith with their children isn't about adding another thing to their already busy to-do lists. It's about looking for little opportunities to show their faith during normal, everyday life.



I don't know where to start

Sometimes, the biggest barrier is simply not knowing where to start. Nurturing faith can seem like such an overwhelming task, especially in this uncertain time. If parents haven't been doing much to nurture their children's faith they might not know how they can get their children interested.

We can encourage parents to focus on making small changes that over time will have a lasting impact. It's our great privilege to be able to journey alongside and champion parents in this faith adventure with their kids. The Kitchen Table Project has created lots of resources to equip parents to build faith in the busyness of everyday family life. Take a look at pages 22 – 23 to explore what could work for you and the parents in your community.

I don't think I'm a good enough example

Most parents are all too aware of their failings and how they don't always get it right all of the time. Family life can be challenging at the best of times, even more so right now, and it's easy for parents to feel that they're not the best example. They may have a past they're not proud of, feel that their lifestyle disqualifies them or worry that they're not handling their emotions well as they face the increased pressures of this season.

We can encourage parents that God has entrusted their children to them and they are good enough. We can help them to realise that they can use their mistakes as well as their victories to demonstrate God's grace and forgiveness. Modelling messing up and saying sorry allows parents to talk about God's grace and forgiveness and shows their children what real faith looks like in the good times and the challenges.

I don't feel qualified

For some parents, talking about God with their child feels like a daunting task because they worry they won't know the answers to all the questions their child may ask. We can all be tempted to think that nurturing faith should be left to those who have a deep understanding of the Bible – maybe even a degree in theology! Parents can also feel that our children's church work is so engaging and professional that they can't match it, or do anything as good.

The truth is most of us will find ourselves out of our depth at some point when we are trying to answer some of our children's questions. Our role as church leaders is to disciple and equip parents so they feel confident in their own faith. We can also help them to see that they don't always have to have the answers, but that they can explore faith together with their children and learn from each other.

I'm Zoomed out!

Many of us can identify with screen fatigue, and this is particularly true for children. They are often required to be online for school, church, family and other community activities. It's a lot of time sitting still and staring at a screen. As a parent, it's exhausting trying to engage the whole family online, and many families are feeling that it's becoming too much of a burden.

We can help by letting parents know it's not just them, and that you're committed to providing offline alternatives. You could find creative ways to engage families, which don't require them to have a screen in front of them but will still encourage them to talk about and explore faith together.

It's all on me

Many parents are feeling a very real burden of extra guilt and pressure in this season. They may be worried that their children are not engaging with online church services or restricted 'in person' services. Their children might be missing their children's church teachers and friends and parents may feel it's all on them to recreate incredible children's work at home. Or children may be taking part in sports and other activities when they would usually have been in church, and parents might be worrying whether their children will ever want to go back to church.

We can remind parents that it's about the everyday moments. As they share small, simple prayers and intentional conversations with their children they are pointing them to God. Living out an authentic, everyday faith feels more achievable than recreating church at home, or having to spend an hour on a devotional.



I've lost my community

Many people are missing their church communities enormously, and parents are experiencing less opportunities to connect with other parents, as well as intense periods of having children around all the time. Time with other adults is rare and many parents are facing less opportunities to talk about faith with their church community - leaving them feeling isolated and disconnected. One parent recently said *'It takes a village to raise a child and I want my village back.'*

We can help by committing to relationships. Regularly phoning or writing a letter to parents, or meeting for a walk can make a huge difference. We can also help parents to connect with one another, and here at the Kitchen Table Project we have great resources such as our *Inspire* session to help parents start the conversation around faith at home.

"This project has really helped me to think about how to do this as part of everyday life. The focus on our role in nurturing our kids' faith has helped me to see opportunities I hadn't realised were there before, and it has reminded me of the necessity of grasping every one."



What hurdles do you think the parents in your church community are facing?

You could design a simple questionnaire, set up a WhatsApp group or call parents to find out.

What is the church's role?



Life has never been so busy for us as church leaders, and becoming a parent-discipling church doesn't necessarily mean putting on extra online events. Many people are definitely 'Zoomed out' right now. It does, however, mean creating a culture in our church communities where we champion parents and help them to grow in their confidence as they, in turn, disciple their children.

Recognise parenting as a ministry

One of the ways we can empower parents is by recognising parenting as a ministry. This may mean changing the language we use as a church leadership and talking about parenting as the ministry of discipling the next generation. As we convey this to our congregations, and invest in this area of ministry, we place value on the important role parents are playing. It empowers them because it validates what they do and gives them permission to focus on this – especially if they feel they are serving in other areas to the detriment of their family or if they feel guilty because they are unable to serve elsewhere.

As Rachel Turner from *Parenting for Faith* (BRF) explains,

It's a big leap for parents to understand that, though they may be less skilled, less sure, less theologically trained; they actually are more effective and more impactful than 'experts' in the church. It takes a lot of courage for parents to believe they are the foundation of God's plan for the spiritual lives of their children. It takes a lot of confidence for parents to believe that, in their imperfection and busyness they are still crucial in God's plan for their children's spiritual journey – it turns the culture of expertise on its head. [2]

How can you show parents you recognise that nurturing their children's faith is their ministry and you are championing them?



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How can you let the wider church community know that you recognise this as a ministry?



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How can you encourage a whole-church approach, where people realise they can play a part in championing and supporting parents?



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How can you start to invest in discipling parents, so they feel encouraged and equipped to disciple their children?



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Key elements that build **faith**

We've discovered there are significant elements that help create an environment where faith can grow.

Home

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

How can you support parents as they create a warm, affirming home where their children feel secure and loved? Practical help might not seem like our primary concern, but a mum recently told her church that without the practical help she had received in a difficult season, she wouldn't have had the time or energy to spend time with God or pray with her children. Cooking a meal, babysitting, supporting



financially or helping with shopping, DIY or gardening can have a very real impact on a family's spiritual journey. The whole church community can be involved in supporting families.

Be real

It's not about expertise. We're not perfect, but living out our faith in a genuine way can encourage children to want this for themselves.

How can you encourage parents that they don't need to have all of the answers? Going for a walk or having a chat on the phone about the honest ups and downs of spiritual life could be really helpful. Members of your church community

are perfectly positioned to be role models and a rich and diverse source of encouragement and wisdom. Is there space for parents to explore things that are tricky, as well as the wins? Connecting parents with one another and encouraging intentional conversations about parenting and sharing faith with children can be a great way to help parents feel confident about being real.

Be intentional

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

Taking those everyday opportunities to point their children to God is one of the most important ways that parents can share faith. How could you teach, model, equip and resource parents to find simple ways to involve God in their natural daily routine? Is faith in the everyday moments something

that's understood within the church community or do you need to regularly share simple examples and ideas? Maybe you could ask families to share what they have been doing at home during your Sunday services. This might be a great way of connecting what families are doing at home with what's happening in your services, as well as encouraging other families and individuals as they hear from others.

Belong

Involving children at church and building relationships with others helps our children to feel they belong in God's family. This is challenging in this season but being creative in developing relationships will be a blessing to all involved.

The church community is one of the biggest assets that you have to disciple parents and encourage faith in the home. How could you encourage connections across the whole church family? Maybe some families could link up with older members of your church community and regularly connect with each other. Building relationships with



other church members can have a lasting impact on children's lives. Are there creative ways that you can involve children in church activities and parts of your Sunday services, even when they are online?

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 even more than we want it for them.

Can you find different ways to pray with and for parents and families in your church?

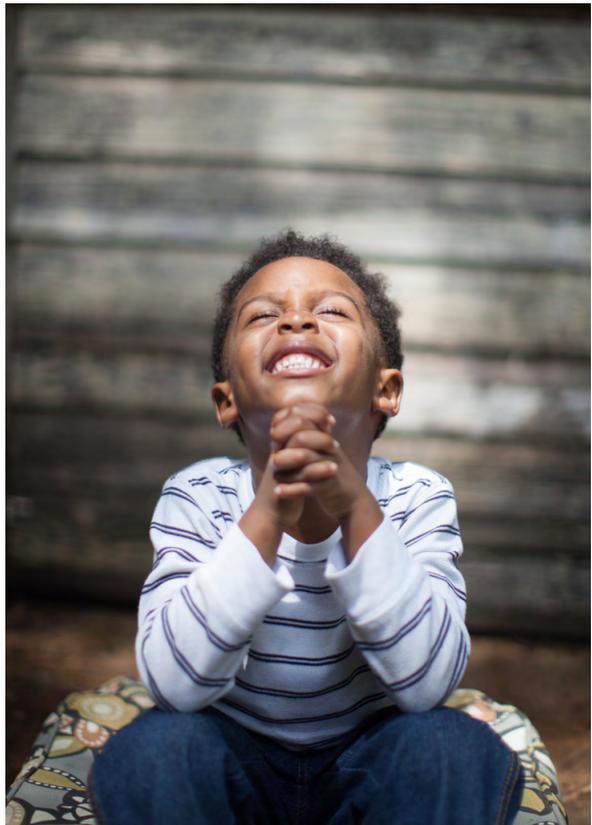
"I (Paul) planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow" (1 Corinthians 3:6).

We can do as much planting and watering as we like – and there are so many things we can do – but at the end of the day the thing that will make the most difference in the lives of our children is the power of prayer.

Our social media channels and *Family Faith Calendar* offer parents daily inspiration to help them explore faith around these different elements.



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How have churches been creative in encouraging and equipping parents in the pandemic?

Hearing about what others are doing is helpful and encouraging for us all. Here at the Kitchen Table Project we're working with different churches all across the country, and we love to share stories!

We also provide online events for leaders, which enable people to share what's working and what's not, and our networkers are connecting regionally and journeying with leaders as they empower parents to share faith at home. Here are some of the brilliant ideas we've come across so far.

We'd love to hear your stories too. Contact us via email at: mail@cff.org.uk

- **Gift packages for parents:** lots of churches have created craft packs for children, but what about the parents? Maybe you could include some simple treats for the grown ups too – a bar of chocolate, a card from the church leader, and maybe a book or resource to encourage them. Lots of churches are giving our *Raising Faith* books and the Kitchen Table Project calendars in parent gift packs. A lovely way for parents to know they're being thought about, even from afar.
- **Family activity/movie night hampers:** anything, which encourages an activity for the whole family to do together. Maybe you could give an idea or gift, which would enable families to play, learn or spend time together?

- **Walking with parents:** this is becoming such an important aspect of ministry to families, when government guidelines allow this. It really helps parents to feel connected and heard.
- **Involving the wider church:** this is not all on you! One of the wonderful things about church is the feeling that you belong to a wider family. And the connection works both ways. Do you have people who are shielding due to age or vulnerability who could write to or phone a parent in the church, or strike up a pen-friend arrangement with a child or family? Are there people in the church who could cook a meal or help with homework online? The possibilities are endless, and it's a wonderful opportunity to connect the church intergenerationally and allow everyone to use their gifts for one another.
- **Connecting parents:** online meetings are handy ways for parents to connect, and mean that people don't need to get childcare. Could you invite parents to come together for an *Inspire* session or a *Raising Faith* course, and allow some time before and after the session for social time?
- **Ready-made resources:** there are some fantastic resources for families, but parents often feel overwhelmed with where to start. Could you choose one or two things to recommend to families? Andy Frost has created some brilliant videos called *Encounters with Jesus*, which might be a helpful place to start. You can find them here: www.sharejesusinternational.com/encounters-with-jesus. Perhaps discussion or feedback around something like this could be incorporated into your Sunday service, so that families feel included.
- **Corporate worship:** everything about Sunday services and other times when we usually gather can feel so challenging at the moment. Are there simple ways to include families that don't require hours of preparation, but do make them feel involved and valued? If you're meeting on Zoom, could you take a few moments to ask one or two families to share what they have been doing? Or, if you're meeting in person, are there ways that families can share about their week?

Joining you on the journey

Our heart is to join you in this journey of becoming a parent-discipling church. We want to resource you as you think about how parents are feeling right now and what you can do to build their confidence.

We hope that the ideas, stories from other churches and questions we've asked have inspired you as you start this journey. And we want to help you as you take the next steps. Why not check out our resources on the next two pages and use the journey map tool to discover what will work best for your church.

Our networker team

If you would like to discuss how you and your church can strengthen the work you're doing with parents – our regional networkers would love to journey with you. They can provide individual support, offer topical teaching sessions and share ideas that have been working in other church communities.

We would love you to be part of a network of leaders who gather to discuss and pray about this regularly throughout the year. Please do get in touch by using the details on the back page.

We pray God's blessing on you and your church.



Gareth Hillier
Networker – The Kitchen Table Project

Resources

If you are looking to connect parents together then check out our small group resources below. You may want to run a single *Inspire* session or use the six-week *Raising Faith* resource. Or you could simply invite parents to chat together and then use a couple of the *Inspire* discussion cards to start a conversation about sharing faith with our children.



***Inspire* – a small group resource (free download)**

A stand-alone small group resource that starts the conversation between parents and gets them thinking about why inspiring their children's faith is important to them. It tackles some of the hurdles they face, allows them to share ideas with other parents and helps them to see they already are doing lots of things to develop their children's faith.

Find out more: kitchentable.org.uk/inspire



***Raising Faith* – A six-session small group resource (free download)**

The content for each session is shared through a variety of short, engaging videos and thought-provoking discussion questions. Each session is two hours but the content is flexible and can be adapted to a shorter length if required. Parents can engage with this alone, as a couple or with a group of other parents.

We are currently in the process of creating a more online friendly version of the resource, as well as finding out how other churches have adapted the content for online use. If you have used it online or would like to find out how this has been done please get in touch.

Find out more: cff.org.uk/raisingfaith

Resources in our church toolkit

You can find these materials on our website kitchentable.org.uk/church

Helping children to connect with church in the pandemic

Practical ideas for parents

Making our online children's work more effective

This research summary gives insights into the key factors and 22 great ways we can increase the impact of our online children's work.

Running an online course

A very helpful booklet with top tips for engaging with people on screens.

Sermon outlines, videos and media content

Elements to help you develop a culture that encourages parents and equips the whole church to be involved in nurturing our children's faith in a real and natural way.

Monthly emails

Sign up to receive ideas and resources, including a short teaching video and discussion questions to use with parents.

Sign up: kitchentable.org.uk/join

Resources to share with parents in your church

You can find these resources on our website cff.org.uk/shop



366-day family faith calendar

Full of daily inspiration, encouragement and ideas to help families find new ways to weave faith into the everyday moments of family life.



Raising Faith book

Written in short, easy-to-read magazine-style articles, this is a great resource for busy parents who only have a few minutes to grab a coffee and be encouraged. Just £2.50 each when you buy 20 copies.



[@ktpccampaign](https://www.facebook.com/ktpccampaign)

Facebook and Instagram

Encourage parents to follow us on social media to receive daily tips, ideas and encouragement.

Journey map

kitchen
table
project



Inspire a faith that lasts

We want to provide you with a tool to help you visualise where you are on your journey of becoming a parent-discipling church. This may be something you find helpful to complete on your own or with your team if you have one.

Take some time to think through each section below to determine your next steps. You may like to work through the 'map' in order, or you might find it easier to think about what you do and how you do it, which will help you work through your why? It's here to use in whatever way is most helpful for you!

Why?

How?

Now?

What?

Who?

How?

Understanding your why

Understanding the why behind what you do is foundational. It helps you to stay focused on what you want to achieve and informs how you will journey forwards.



Why?

Why is it important that the children in your church develop their faith into adulthood?



How?

How has this pandemic helped you to recognise the valuable role parents play in nurturing their children's faith at home?



Now?

Now that you've seen how influential parents can be in nurturing their children's faith – **why** is it important that you become a parent-discipling church?



Start a conversation



What?

What were you doing before the pandemic to disciple parents and could that be adapted in any way?

What is your church doing now to connect with and disciple parents?

What has worked? **What** hasn't?

What areas do you want to develop?

What do you want to stop? Life and ministry is very different now and giving ourselves permission to stop

doing what isn't working is really helpful as we move forward.

What would you like to see now and in the future? (Don't be afraid to dream!)

What hurdles are the parents facing? (You may want to design a questionnaire to find this information out or talk to the parents you connect with about their hurdles.)



Who?

Who are the parents you'd like to connect with?

Think about where the parents are on their own faith journey.

Who can be involved in this to get it started?

- **Who** do you know who is interested in and passionate

about encouraging and equipping parents?

- **Who** could start something and drive it forward? Who has skills/ideas/empathy?
- **Who** could you send on the Kitchen Table Project training events?



How?

How might the role of your children's worker changed?

How can you show parents you recognise that nurturing their children's faith is their ministry and you are championing them?

How can you let the wider church community know you recognise this as a ministry?

How can you encourage a whole-church approach, where people realise they can play a part in championing and supporting parents?

How can you start to invest in discipling parents, so they feel encouraged and equipped to disciple their children?

How can you model, support and equip parents in the different elements that build faith?

- Home
- Be real
- Be intentional
- Belong
- Prayer



Next steps

Next steps

What could your next steps be?

1 Think about who could take this forward

Your children's worker, a keen parent, a small group leader? It will help if you identify this as a specific area of the church's ministry, which someone is overseeing.

2 Connect to the Kitchen Table Project

We'll send you a short monthly email with some encouragement and ideas to help you support parents in your church. kitchentable.org.uk/join

3 Chat to us

We'd love to help you think through what the next steps could be for your church. Contact our networker team.

📞 029 2081 0800

✉ mail@cff.org.uk

🌐 kitchentable.org.uk

🐦 [f](#) [i](#) [@](#) [@ktpcampaign](#)



The Kitchen Table Project is a faith-based initiative for Christian parents, carers, church leaders and children's workers from Care for the Family.

About Care for the Family

Care for the Family has been working to strengthen family life since 1988. Our aim is to promote strong family relationships and to help those who face family difficulties.

Working throughout the UK and the Isle of Man, we provide parenting, relationship and bereavement support through our events, resources, courses, training and volunteer networks. Our work is motivated by Christian compassion, and our resources and support are available to everyone, of any faith and none.

For more information

☎ 029 2081 0800

🌐 cff.org.uk

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Care for the Family is a Christian initiative to strengthen family life.
A registered charity (England and Wales: 1066905; Scotland: SC038497).
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