

An evaluation of  
**The Vine Programme**,  
commissioned by  
The Douglas Trust and  
undertaken by  
**Amira Tharani**,  
on behalf of the NCVO

# Independent research confirms the transformative impact of **The Vine Programme's** two projects:

## **Parenting for Faith**

An initiative of BRF

## **Kitchen Table Project**

An initiative of Care for the Family

The Vine Programme is a five-year project set up by The Douglas Trust to develop and deliver programmes that support Christian parents to nurture faith at home. Comprises both Parenting for Faith (BRF) and The Kitchen Table Project (Care for the Family).



# A shared approach

- Access to 24/7 support – whenever it's needed, in multiple formats/platforms
  - Supportive communities, growing together
    - Faith in the home as a journey, not an occasion
      - Life-changing courses

**parenting for faith®**



Inspire a faith that lasts

# Access to 24/7 support



## On the websites:

Up to **122,500\*** unique website visits<sup>1</sup>

Vine programme ministries have become a go-to for thousands of parents, carers and church workers looking for help, inspiration and ideas.

*[Some] church workers use the materials as part of their regular communication with parents, either instead of or as well as running courses. This may include training volunteers and church leaders.*  
**NCVO**

<sup>1</sup> 86,500 + 36,000 unique visits to the Parenting for Faith and Kitchen Table Project websites



## Via podcasts:

**Tens of thousands** of podcast episodes played<sup>2</sup>

As with video content on social media, support and encouragement is available to suit the users' own schedules – anytime, anywhere.

*'All of these resources... give us confidence that we're well placed as parents to share faith.'*  
**Survey respondent**

<sup>2</sup> 1,000 plays per Parenting for Faith podcast episode, on average. (Parenting for Faith had produced over 90 episodes by 31.12.20)



## Through book resources:

**11,600** copies of the two core books sold<sup>3</sup>

Sales of the core companion books for each ministry, with additional sales of related titles, mean that thousands have been inspired with the key principles and have a ready reference when needed.

*Quick, readable and accessible resources that are very practical for a busy parent of young children.*  
**Survey respondent**

<sup>3</sup> 6,100 + 5,500 copies of the core books for the programmes have been sold

# Supportive communities, growing together



## On social media:

Up to **8,800** Facebook followers<sup>3</sup>

Parents, carers and children's and families workers gain confidence as they interact with the ministries and with each other.

<sup>3</sup> 4,800 + 4,000 people follow the two Facebook pages

*'Love their attitude of encouraging parents that 'you've got this', 'you are the expert in your kid' and in making 'parenting for faith' something accessible and natural and easy to do in everyday life rather than a daunting 'extra' that's hard to fit in.'*

***Survey respondent***

# Faith in the home: a journey, not an occasion



## Regular email contact:

*Up to 5,500 email subscribers<sup>4</sup>*

Multiple platforms, including email, signpost content on themes that affect families throughout the year, or on special occasions, and promote the courses and resources.

<sup>4</sup> 1,660 + 3,900 subscribers to the programmes' weekly/monthly emails

*'The variety of channels is important for reaching parents and church workers, particularly across email, websites and social media.'*

**NCVO**



# Life-changing courses



## Raising Faith and Parenting for Faith courses:

*Thousands engaged with the Vine ministries' courses*<sup>5</sup>

Courses provide an opportunity to explore themes, problems and solutions in depth and in community. The new insights and understanding have a tangible impact on confidence levels and behaviour that change relationships in the family and between family members and God.

<sup>5</sup> 14,393 course videos played / 3,394 course videos downloaded; 200 DVDs / 1,200 leaders' guides sold. Each interaction is likely to represent a group of people

*'This is the first parenting course I have been on that isn't all about theories that you have to try and implement at home. It is deeply practical and simple.'*

***Survey respondent***

# Key outcomes: child-centred approach, authenticity



## **New insight:**

*Each child has its own unique relationship with God*

*'Some parents were very sensitive to their children's personalities and needs, and could see how they needed to meet their children where they were, rather than expecting them to fit into a particular model of faith development.'*

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## **New behaviours:**

*Parents become more child-centred*

*'Outcomes... included taking a child-centred approach to nurturing faith.'*

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*'The idea about not being the high priest has made me encourage my children to connect directly with God themselves rather than placing myself in the role of intermediary.'*

**Parent, survey response**



## **New insight:**

*Parents and carers don't need to model perfection*

*'We did it very, very informally. We got up and we fluffed it and we made mistakes. And we told them when we'd had a bad day. And we created a sense of belonging then because we were just like them. We weren't getting up there as church people saying this is how you do it. We were sharing stories of when we've royally messed up with our own kids.'*

**Church worker interview response**



## **New behaviours:**

*More frequent and relaxed conversations about God*

*'Outcomes included... letting go of expectations about "getting it right", and modelling their own faith in a more authentic way.'*

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*'My parenting has changed for the better. My relationship with my children has changed. My children have engaged with God because of the suggestions... I can open a window into my life and just show them what it looks like for me to relate to God etc.'*

**Parent survey response**



# Other outcomes



*Parents encouraged to engage more creatively with faith in the home*

*‘Many parents felt they had a greater understanding of opportunities to nurture children’s faith, or more ideas’*

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*More parents engaging deeply with their own relationship with God*

*‘Key ideas... were just as useful for adults as for children – they were core ideas, simply expressed, that could support adults of all ages in their faith journey’*

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# Three key elements for successful 'faith in the home'

## 1 Supportive, involved church leadership



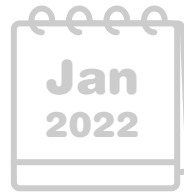
- ▶ Church leaders need to understand and be aligned to the principles so that the approach becomes embedded in church culture.

*'A key entry point to transforming church culture is using the materials in training for church leaders and volunteers within children's and family work. This enabled church workers to align the language that they used with children and parents as well as, in some cases, the wider church.'*

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*'The key is not really the kids' worker thinking it's the right thing. It's the church leader, and... there's very minimal to no training at all on children and spiritual development in a child.'*  
Church worker interview response

## 2 Allowing time



- ▶ Plan for a long lead-in, where principles are adopted and practised by the children's and families staff or volunteers prior to 'drip-feeding' the ideas to parents/carers
- ▶ Recognise that culture change requires long-term commitment and investment. It takes years rather than weeks or months.

*Those churches where the ethos had been most deeply embedded had done so over a period of years, with the support of a committed children's and family worker and the church leadership. They had often sought support either from peers or from the teams at BRF and CFF throughout their journey.*

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## 3 Building a sustaining community



- ▶ Whether on- or off-line, provide opportunities for parents to give and receive peer support within a safe space.

*'Individual parents may need to be supported to model that authentic, imperfect walk with God, ... creating supportive spaces where they can share their challenges and doubts might be particularly important in sustaining the outcomes of the Vine Programme.'*

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- ▶ As part of this, hosting a course – whether online or in person – is the most effective way to grow parents' understanding, skills and confidence as they discover and practice the principles.

*'Almost twice as many parents who attended courses strongly agreed that the main outcomes had been achieved than those who had not.'*

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# Recommendations: Vine Project programmes will be taking forward these next steps

## Short-term

- Provide further guidance for running the Raising Faith and Parenting for Faith courses online and with very small groups.
- Adapt courses for online delivery including reducing the course length.
- Explore ways of marketing the courses to churches and supporting them with course delivery.

### Sources of data:

- Ministries' own monitoring data since funding from Vine Programme (a five-year project to develop and deliver projects that support faith in the home) began, in April 2016, to 31.12.2020
- 308 responses to a survey carried out in summer 2020
- 38 interviews

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## Medium-term

- Explore user journeys and how best to encourage users to engage with more in-depth material such as courses and books.
- Intentionally develop content featuring input from men, BAME participants and participants from lower socio-economic groups.
- Deepen relationships with advocates (CFF only)
- Further explore running courses for clusters of churches or churches within a region.
- Further explore how churches can be better networked with each other to build community.

## Longer-term

- Continue to commit resource to this work, acknowledging that culture change takes time.
- Develop content for parents of older teenagers and children with additional needs.
- Continue to evaluate the work and build a bank of evidence of success – both numbers and stories.

Read the **full report**  
and **recommendations** at  
[parentingforfaith.org.uk](http://parentingforfaith.org.uk)  
[kitchentable.org.uk](http://kitchentable.org.uk)