

NEW RESEARCH FINDINGS FOR CHURCHES*

FAMILIES, FAITH & COVID-19

Research collaboration: Liverpool Hope University, Evangelical Alliance, NICER (Canterbury Christchurch University), Parenting for Faith, Care for the Family, Hope Together and Share Jesus International.

*UK survey participants: 175 church leaders and 209 parents of children aged 0-16.

CONSIDERING NEXT STEPS

As churches emerge from Covid restrictions, our survey shows that many are seeing reduced engagement from families, decreased volunteers, uncertainty and lack of energy for ministry amongst families.

There are also some positives...some new groups starting, some have found new ways of communicating with families and many have relished the opportunity to support family faith at home.



HOW CAN WE BETTER SUPPORT FAMILIES?

46% of parents said that church relationships were the most beneficial aspect of church during the pandemic, versus only 2% who said that worksheets and activities provided by the church had been beneficial.



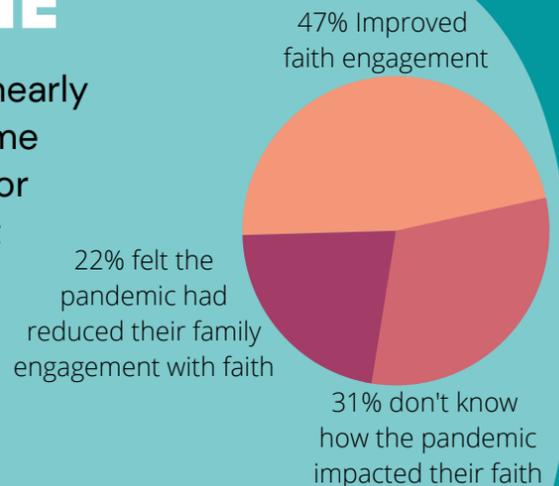
This indicates that in these recovery times, it would be strategic to reflect on using your time to invest in relational opportunities, rather than devoting time to provide lots of events, services or resources. Fostering relational connections amongst the congregation will enable families to feel more engaged, included and cared for as part of the community of believers.

SUPPORTING FAITH AT HOME

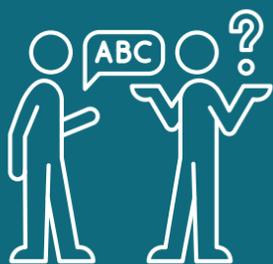
Even though families appear less engaged with church, nearly half of the participant parents said that their faith at home has been strengthened due to the pandemic, although for 22% it has reduced. Interestingly, 31% of families did not know how their faith had been impacted.

Sadly, 37% of the parents did not feel supported by the local church in their family's faith at home.

In the season ahead it will be beneficial for local churches to embed into their ethos and activities an intentionality to support family's faith in the home context. This will be affirming and supportive for those who have engaged more at home, and it will help those who are not sure or who have struggled.



DIALOGUE WITH PARENTS



43% of church leaders did not know how the pandemic had impacted the engagement of their church families with faith.

24% of church leaders did not know if families in their church felt supported in faith nurturing at home.

Some churches had responded by providing training for parents and some had provided or signposted resources but many parents explained that they felt overwhelmed by this approach and would prefer more targeted and specific support from their local church.

In these times of re-shaping ministry amongst families it is key to actively dialogue with parents and children alike to establish their current situation, their specific spiritual needs and discuss together the way ahead for more effectively partnering with parents to nurture children's faith.

HELPFUL WEBSITES FOR CHURCH LEADERS

[Care for the Family - The Kitchen Table Project](#)

[Parenting for Faith](#)

