

# Raising FAITH

Six sessions to help you inspire your children's faith



GROUP LEADER'S GUIDE



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To get these sessions in digital format go to  
[cff.org.uk/raisingfaith/media](http://cff.org.uk/raisingfaith/media)

# Introduction

Welcome to *Raising Faith*. You are about to join a movement of mums, dads and carers who want to inspire a faith that lasts in their children!

*Raising Faith* is a flexible, six-session, DVD-based resource. It is packed with practical teaching, expert interviews, real family stories and opportunities for discussion to help equip us as Christian parents and carers to nurture faith at home.

The resource is created with a logical flow of topics from session one through to session six, so where possible we recommend you go through the six sessions in the order presented. However, each session has been created so that if necessary it can stand alone. If time is an issue, you may wish to run just one or two sessions, or even select certain sections of teaching and discussion within a session, that are particularly relevant to your group.

## WHO IS IT FOR?

This resource is suitable for all Christian parents whether they are parenting alone or as a couple, in a stepfamily, with birth children or with adopted and fostered children. It is primarily aimed at parents of children under eleven but can also be successfully used with parents of older children.

Although we refer to 'parents' throughout this booklet the *Raising Faith* sessions are relevant to a much wider group. While parents have the greatest influence on their children, you may well find there are others who wish to attend your group, including grandparents, other members of the wider family, godparents and of course church children's group leaders.

Parents of children of the same age are likely to be experiencing similar issues or concerns, but they may also value learning from others who are at a different stage of parenting. If your group includes parents of older children they may feel that they have missed opportunities in the past to nurture their faith. It is important to give space for these feelings to be expressed, as it can help parents to realise that these are 'normal' feelings experienced by most parents at one time or another. Reassure parents that it is never too late to start inspiring faith in their children.

## THE AIM OF THE SESSIONS

As parents, we all want our children to grow up to be healthy and happy, but as Christian parents we have the added responsibility (and amazing opportunity!) of nurturing faith in our children.

The aim of this resource is to equip parents to feel confident in their role of nurturing faith in their children and to provide practical ideas that will be applicable in all sorts of family scenarios.

## THROUGHOUT THE SIX SESSIONS WE WILL DISCOVER THAT:

- We as parents have the greatest influence in our children's lives
- We can practically bring faith into everyday life
- Our own authentic journey of faith inspires our children's faith
- A warm, loving home creates a firm foundation for faith to grow
- We all connect with God differently and we can encourage our children to find their own way of connecting with him
- As a family we can journey together in our faith
- We *can* handle doubts and difficult questions
- Belonging to a church community can positively influence our children's faith

## YOUR ROLE

We have created this resource to be accessible and easy to run. Everything has been provided for you so that you can focus on hosting and facilitating the activities and conversations. The DVD provides the main teaching and this booklet gives the framework for a two-hour session, including suggested questions to prompt discussion.

As a group leader you will:

- Plan the set-up and logistics of running *Raising Faith*
- Guide your group through the DVD
- Introduce activities and facilitate group discussion and prayer times

# Top tips for group leaders

## SOME DOS AND DON'TS WHEN LEADING

- ✓ **DO** try to prepare well. Read this booklet and watch the DVD beforehand. Think about how the discussions might go, but be prepared for the unexpected!
- ✗ **DON'T** let one person dominate the discussion, give direct advice, or criticise another parent. Everyone can say what's worked for them, but this shouldn't deflate the confidence of another parent by implying that they've got it wrong.
- ✓ **DO** make a big effort to put everyone at ease at the beginning of the session. Consider sharing something funny that's happened to you as a parent in the last week.
- ✗ **DON'T** constantly start sessions late or over-run. People who turn up late should soon get the message that they will miss something because you will start promptly. If you always wait for them it devalues the efforts of those who are on time and runs the risk of the session ending later and later, inconveniencing everyone.
- ✓ **DO** try to summarise people's contributions to the discussion. Link them in with the main points to keep the discussion on track. If you acknowledge what they say, for example, "I found what Anne said really helpful", you'll find that each parent will feel a vital part of the group and will grow in confidence.
- ✗ **DON'T** feel as the leader that you have to give the impression of being the perfect parent - we're all in this together.

- ✓ **DO** think in advance how you might handle things if anybody becomes upset or angry. It doesn't often happen, but it may occur occasionally. We've got some advice on how to deal with this situation below.
- ✗ **DON'T** feel you have to use every word of the notes, or cover every point. Be flexible. Your group will get the best from this resource if you gear it to their needs. Many parents just appreciate the opportunity to talk and gain support from one another.
- ✓ **DO** always end on an encouraging and uplifting note. As parents we need all the encouragement we can get!

## DIFFICULT SITUATIONS

It's likely that your group will contain parents and carers in a variety of situations. Some may be parenting alone, or might be living away from their children because of work or the breakdown of a relationship. Others might be wondering how they can nurture their children's faith when their partner does not share their faith and is perhaps even hostile to their efforts, or they are struggling to know how to build faith in a child with additional needs. It's not been possible to address all of these points specifically in *Raising Faith*, but do acknowledge these issues and encourage your group to think positively about how they can best apply the general principles in their own different situations.

Whatever their situation, a parent may sometimes get distressed when certain topics are discussed. This can be due to feelings of failure, hopelessness, fear or guilt; and they may express anger as well as tears. The most important thing to remember is not to appear shocked by this, or judgmental about anything they say. The group itself can be valuable in giving them short-term security and support. A fellow parent can hold out a reassuring hand, and often this is all that is needed. It helps to have a box of tissues available!

When someone has been upset during a session, ask them gently how they are at the end. If you felt it appropriate, you could also ask if they would like further help or a referral to someone outside the group who could work through their thoughts and feelings with them.

If a distressed parent causes too big a disruption during sessions, you may need to suggest that they find help outside the group. Try to do this sensitively so they don't feel rejected. It's a good idea to have some form of counselling and back-up support available for any parents who need it. Emphasise that they are welcome to re-join the group at any time they feel able, or can join another group at a later date.

## SAFEGUARDING

The safety and welfare of children, or 'safeguarding', means protecting children from physical, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect. Safeguarding is everybody's business. There may be a circumstance when you are given an indication that child abuse has taken place. In this situation you can contact the NSPCC on their helpline for adults concerned about children: 0808 800 5000. Or contact Thirtyone:eight, an independent Christian safeguarding charity: 0303 003 1111.

## MONITOR HOW YOU GO

In order to get the best from this resource, it can help to keep a session diary about how you feel things went generally and what did and didn't work so well. You might like to add parents' comments about the session and what you think you might do differently next time. Try to make your notes as soon as you can after the session while it is fresh in your memory. Use them to help you plan the next sessions and also to reflect on your own experience as a group member.

## RESOURCE MATERIALS FOR RAISING FAITH

### DVD

This contains the content of the resource with teaching from featured presenters and a range of experts, family interviews and Snapshot videos. This is also available in digital format at [cff.org.uk/raisingfaith/media](http://cff.org.uk/raisingfaith/media)

### GROUP LEADER'S GUIDE

This booklet is designed to give you all the information you need to host *Raising Faith*. We recommend you have a copy to hand every time you prepare and run a session.

### SESSION NOTES

These booklets capture the key teaching and application points of all six sessions in one handy take-away for those who attend. They can also make notes in their booklet throughout the session if they wish to. We have included eight booklets in your pack as we recommend that your groups are around this size to allow everyone the opportunity to share. If you require further copies for your group, visit [cff.org.uk/shop](http://cff.org.uk/shop) or contact Care for the Family on **029 2081 0800**. We aim to dispatch all orders within two working days.

# A step-by-step guide

## VENUE

- Parents will relax and enjoy the session in an atmosphere where they feel welcomed, supported and safe. A comfortable room with chairs arranged so that everyone can see each other (and the screen) works well. Refreshments always help too!
- Meeting in a home can contribute to the informal feel, but a church or community centre may have facilities not available in your home. Check with the venue about when you will be able to set up and how to use their equipment.

## EQUIPMENT

- The *Raising Faith* resource materials: DVD, Group Leader's Guide and Session Notes.
- A DVD player or laptop for playing the DVD or digital material.
- A large TV, or projector with screen and speakers for amplification (laptop speakers are rarely adequate).
- Spare paper and pens for note taking, and Post-it notes for discussion activities.

## BEFORE EVERYONE ARRIVES

Ensure the room is set up to create a warm, inviting environment and the *Raising Faith* DVD is ready to play. Have the Session Notes ready to give out and have some spare paper and pens close by should people want to make notes throughout the session.

## AS EVERYONE ARRIVES

As people arrive welcome them with any refreshments you may have provided. In the two-hour session outline provided, we've allowed 15 minutes for people to

mingle and chat before you officially start the session. Consider whether it would help to start the sessions with an informal icebreaker, particularly if people in the group don't all know each other very well yet.

## BEFORE YOU START THE DVD

- Introduce yourself and others involved in running the session.
- Outline the plan for all the sessions.
- Emphasise that this is not about being shown the 'right' way to nurture faith in children, but an opportunity for them to share their own experiences and ideas and to learn from each other, as well as from the material on the DVD.
- Reassure the group that they don't have to share during discussion times if they're not comfortable doing so. Remind everyone about the need to listen to one another, and to be respectful of different ideas and experiences.
- Explain that the sessions involve working through the DVD and that there will be regular activity times when they can discuss what they've heard. Let them know that you will be on hand to help facilitate the discussion times.

## DISCUSSION TIMES

As a group leader you are not required to present any of the resource content, but from time to time you will need to pause the DVD and introduce a time of discussion. It will be obvious on the DVD when it is time to pause.

You may find that some of your group would benefit from some thinking time before they engage with group discussions. The suggested activities may give your group members the opportunity of doing something a little more practical, and will help them absorb the information from the DVD. This in turn may give them more confidence in sharing their viewpoint during discussion times.

# Prayer time ideas

At the end of each session we have allocated a short amount of time to pray together. Throughout our research, we have heard how encouraging and beneficial it has been to have specific time with other parents in prayer.

Katharine Hill shares briefly on the importance of prayer at the end of the DVD. If you are hosting a one-off session and wish to use this encouragement to begin your prayer time, you can find this clip at the end of session 6.

Encourage your group to pray together in a way that is appropriate for them. This may be praying out loud, it may involve a more reflective style or you may prefer to lead the group using a written prayer. We have included a few ideas below to help encourage and inspire your prayer times.

It is a good idea to encourage the group to finish their prayer time on a positive note, thanking God for the opportunity and privilege we have to invest in our children's lives.

## PRAY IN TWOS AND THREES

Divide your group into twos or threes. Ask them to share one or two things that stood out to them in the session. If they are willing, suggest that they pray for each other and the concerns and challenges they face.

## POST-IT PRAYERS

Using Post-it notes, ask the group to write down one or two areas within their family faith journey that they want prayer for. Gather these Post-its together and see if there are any similarities. You may wish to gather in groups according to these prayer needs, so you can support one another in prayer. Depending on the people in your group, they may wish to pray out loud for the issues raised, or simply quietly offer the notes up to God.

## PRAYER PARTNERS

If you are running *Raising Faith* as a six-session resource you may want to partner your parents together (remembering to add in any new people that may join part way through). You could partner them according to their children's age or situation, or you could pull names out of a bowl to allocate people together. This could be the start of a much longer prayer partnership between these parents and could be beneficial in their ordinary, everyday lives.

## KEY WORD PRAYERS

Ask everyone to take a piece of paper or a Post-it note and write their name on it. Then ask them to write down one word which describes a particular area of strain or difficulty for them. For example, it may be that 'Melissa' really wants prayer for 'patience' or 'strength', while 'David' may want prayer for 'confidence' or 'energy'. This creative prayer idea is a great way of getting parents to focus in on one thing that they would like help or support in. It would be really easy for parents to list off many things that they need prayer for, but just focusing on one area brings intentionality and clarity on a key issue that is on their mind. You may want to encourage parents to bring this to God quietly or encourage them to swap Post-it notes with another parent so they can pray for each other.

# Presenters



## KATHARINE HILL

Katharine is the UK Director of Care for the Family. She speaks and writes widely on family matters and is a regular contributor on local and national media. She is the author of a number of books including *Keeping Faith – Being Family When Belief is in Question* and *Left to Their Own Devices? – Confident Parenting in a World of Screens*. Katharine has practised as a family lawyer, she is married to Richard and they have four grown-up children.



## ANDY FROST

Andy is the Director of Share Jesus International, and a speaker for Care for the Family. He is an author who has written books including *Long Story Short* and *Losing Faith – Those Who Have Walked Away*. He heads up the London Mission Collective and is a Methodist local preacher and a member of the Evangelical Alliance Council. He has an MA in Applied Theology. Andy is married to Jo and they have two young daughters.



## BECKY DENHARDER

Becky is the Faith in the Family Project Manager at Care for the Family. She primarily focusses on the Kitchen Table Project, which aims to inspire a faith that lasts in children, through equipping and encouraging parents to nurture faith at home. Becky is married to Chris and they have two adventurous young boys.

## THE EXPERTS

We recognise that each one of us is uniquely created with our own experience of the Christian faith, and our children are no different. We've tried to reflect this in our panel of experts, who come from a range of church backgrounds, with many different experiences and personalities. Each one shares their own Christian perspective and may reflect different theological approaches or practices – we encourage you to think about how the principles they share can best work for you in your own situation.



### PIPPA ANKERS

Pippa has run parenting courses in her local community for over 20 years and has been a trainer with Care for the Family for 10 years. She believes in the power of parents getting together, and loves resourcing others to run parenting courses in their own locality. For eight years she was a lecturer in personal and social ethics at Mattersey Hall, the Assemblies of God training college. Pippa is married to Pete and they have three grown-up children, one with additional needs, and five grandchildren.



### MARK CHESTER

Mark is a writer and speaker, specialising in the subject of fatherhood. He is the founder of *Who Let The Dads Out?*, a Care for the Family project which helps churches support dads and their children. Mark has previously worked for Liverpool Football Club where he developed and managed the *Tactics 4 Families* community project. He is married to Su and they have two children.



### CAROLYN EDWARDS

Carolyn is the Children and Young People's Adviser for the Diocese of York, following many years of training children and youth workers at the Institute for Children, Youth and Mission in Oxford, and more recently at Cliff College. She has a wealth of experience as a practitioner, trainer and writer in this field, and is currently completing doctoral research into children's spirituality and faith development. Carolyn has three grown-up children who she still loves spending time with.



### DR KRISH KANDIAH

Krish is the Founding Director of Home for Good, a young charity seeking to make a real difference in the lives of vulnerable children. He is known as a theologian and activist for refugee resettlement. Krish is in demand as a speaker both nationally and internationally and is a regular broadcaster on radio and television. He has written a number of books including *Home for Good* (co-authored with his wife Miriam). Krish and Miriam are adopters and foster carers and live in Oxfordshire with their seven children.



### RACHEL TURNER

Rachel pioneers The Bible Reading Fellowship's Parenting for Faith programme, equipping parents and carers of all kinds to raise God-connected children and teens. Rachel is author of a number of books including *Parenting Children for a Life of Faith* and *It Takes a Church to Raise a Parent*. She also presents an engaging weekly podcast for parents. Rachel lives in North Yorkshire with her husband Mark and their young son.

# Session outlines

## Session 1

### EVERYDAY FAITH

#### WE CAN DO THIS!

SESSION NOTES PAGES 3 - 5

#### 15 MIN ARRIVE

Coffee and chat.

#### 10 MIN WELCOME

Introduce yourself and the session. It may help to start with an informal icebreaker, particularly if people in the group don't all know each other very well yet.

#### 2 MIN INTRODUCTION (DVD)

Becky Denharder introduces the main themes of the session.

#### 3 MIN OUT AND ABOUT (DVD)

Light-hearted reflections from parents and children.

#### 4 MIN KATHARINE HILL: THE INFLUENCE WE HAVE AS PARENTS (DVD)

##### Key teaching points:

- Parents have the greatest influence on their children's lives.
- They are uniquely positioned.
- There are so many things parents can do to nurture their children's faith.

#### 10 MIN AROUND THE ROOM

**Activity:** Write down your immediate response to what you have heard so far. What are your hopes, fears or concerns?

##### Discuss together:

**Q:** How does it make you feel to hear that parents are the most influential people in their children's lives?

**Q:** Why is it important to you that your child develops their own personal faith?

#### 5 MIN TELLING IT LIKE IT IS (DVD)

**Family interviews:** parents and children discuss the session's themes.

#### 4 MIN ANDY FROST: THE HURDLES WE FACE (DVD)

**Key teaching points:**

- Parents can face different 'hurdles' when nurturing their children's faith, such as:
  - The busyness of family life
  - Not feeling they are a good enough example
  - Experiencing their own mistakes or doubts
  - Not knowing where to start
- It's good to try and weave faith into the everyday moments of life.

#### 20 MIN AROUND THE ROOM

**Activity:** Use Post-it notes to note the hurdles you face. Write down one hurdle per Post-it note. Write as many as you want, then place them all in the middle of the room for others to see. It may encourage you to know you are not the only one feeling the way you do.

**Discuss together:**

**Q:** What are some of the hurdles you face? Do you identify with any that Andy shared?

**Q:** How does talking about these hurdles help you in your journey as a parent?

**Q:** What ways can we think of to start overcoming these hurdles together?

#### 3 MIN SNAPSHOT (DVD)

A short video showing the four main elements that help to build faith in children, with prayer as the fifth, and central element holding all these things together. These elements will be explored further in the other sessions.

#### 10 MIN EXPERT INTERVIEWS (DVD)

**Key teaching points:**

- Passing on faith is a biblical mandate from God – Deuteronomy 6.
- Find ways to intentionally invest in your own relationship with God.
- Be intentional and opportunistic in your approach to building faith in your children.

#### 15 MIN AROUND THE ROOM

**Discuss together:**

**Q:** What has struck you most, from what you've heard and seen so far?

**Q:** Look at the four elements shown on page 4 of the Session Notes, with prayer holding them all together. In which of these areas would you like to try something new this week?

**Q:** When it comes to practically building faith in our children, how can we intentionally create and spontaneously capture moments in everyday life?

#### 2 MIN CONCLUDING THOUGHTS (DVD)

Becky Denharder summarises the session.

#### 5 MIN AROUND THE ROOM

**Action:** Ask parents to think of one thing they want to take away from the session and write it in their Session Notes. Encourage them to sign up to the Kitchen Table Project for daily tips and ideas (see page 26 of their Session Notes).

#### 10 MIN PRAY

**See pages 9 to 10 for a few ideas.**

Thank the parents for coming and for their contribution to the discussion. Let them know the date, time and theme of the next session. Do end on a positive note and encourage them to take on any challenge that they've set themselves for the week.

# Session 2

## IT STARTS AT HOME

THE VALUE OF A WARM, AFFIRMING

FAMILY ENVIRONMENT IN BUILDING FAITH

SESSION NOTES PAGES 6 - 10

### 15 MIN ARRIVE

Coffee and chat.

### 5 MIN WELCOME

Introduce yourself and the session.

### 2 MIN INTRODUCTION (DVD)

Becky Denharder introduces the main themes of the session.

### 5 MIN TELLING IT LIKE IT IS (DVD)

**Family interviews:** parents and children discuss the session's themes.

### 4 MIN KATHARINE HILL: THE IMPORTANCE OF THE HOME (DVD)

**Key teaching points:**

- God has designed the home to be a place of nurture, trust, warmth and protection.
- Parents are the 'keeper of the atmosphere' in the home.
- Building memories through family traditions creates a sense of connectedness and belonging.

### 10 MIN AROUND THE ROOM

**Discuss together:**

**Q:** What do you think about the idea of parents being the 'keepers of the atmosphere' in the home? When is this easier, or more challenging?

**Q:** How can we create a warm, affirming home environment for our children's faith to develop?

**Q:** What are your family traditions? Share ideas on how to start one.

### 3 MIN OUT AND ABOUT (DVD)

Light-hearted reflections from parents and children.

### 5 MIN ANDY FROST: THE FIVE 'LOVE LANGUAGES' (DVD)

**Key teaching points:**

- Dr Gary Chapman describes five 'love languages':
  - Words of affirmation
  - Quality time
  - Gifts
  - Acts of service
  - Physical touch
- When you discover and use your children's 'love language' it helps them to thrive; they learn more effectively and they are more positive.

### 15 MIN AROUND THE ROOM

**Activity:** Take a few moments to read about the different 'love languages' on pages 8-9 of the Session Notes and write down what you think your main love languages are. Share that information with the people next to you. If they know you well, would they say that is obvious to them?

**Discuss together:**

**Q:** What do you think your child's 'love language(s)' could be? Make a note of this in the Session Notes. If your child's love languages are different to yours, remember that it may take more deliberate effort for you to show them love in the way they will receive and feel it best.

### 3 MIN **SNAPSHOT (DVD)**

A short video explaining the three main styles of parenting.

### 15 MIN **AROUND THE ROOM**

#### **Discuss together:**

Together, read aloud the overview of the three main parenting styles in the Session Notes on page 7, then discuss the following questions:

- Q:** After watching the Snapshot video, are you aware of your own natural style of parenting?
- Q:** What style do you think your children would say you use most?
- Q:** When can it be more challenging to use an 'assertive' parenting style? For example, when you are in a rush, on the way to school, at the shop, etc.

### 10 MIN **EXPERT INTERVIEWS (DVD)**

#### **Key teaching points:**

- Demonstrating acceptance and comfort in the home models how God loves us unconditionally, which helps create a secure environment for relationships to develop.
- Understanding your natural parenting style gives you insight into how you practically handle life at home with your children.
- Aiming for the 'assertive' parenting style and using the five 'love languages' helps create a warm and affirming home environment.

### 15 MIN **AROUND THE ROOM**

This session has introduced a number of key concepts that you may want to discuss in more detail:

- **The five 'love languages':** You will have already identified a variety of 'love languages' in the room. Take some time to talk about the ways people with different 'love languages' demonstrate and receive love. This could help to enhance understanding and application for parents to take away.
- **Parenting styles:** Discuss some of the simple things we can do in advance, which will help us to be assertive parents, especially in the

more challenging moments of daily life.

- **Our home environment:** We've heard lots of simple things that we can do to cultivate a warm, loving home and how that can help our children's faith to grow. What are some of the things you will take away and apply to your family life?

### 2 MIN **CONCLUDING THOUGHTS (DVD)**

Becky Denharder summarises the session.

### 5 MIN **AROUND THE ROOM**

**Action:** Ask parents to think of one thing they want to take away from the session and write it in their Session Notes.

### 10 MIN **PRAY**

**See pages 9 to 10 for a few ideas.**

Thank the parents for coming and for their contribution to the discussion. Let them know the date, time and theme of the next session. Do end on a positive note and encourage them to take on any challenge that they've set themselves for the week.

# Session 3

## MAKING FAITH VISIBLE

### YOUR PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD MAKES A DIFFERENCE

SESSION NOTES PAGES 11 - 13

#### 15 MIN ARRIVE

Coffee and chat.

#### 5 MIN WELCOME

Introduce yourself and the session.

#### 2 MIN INTRODUCTION (DVD)

Becky Denharder introduces the main themes of the session.

#### 3 MIN OUT AND ABOUT (DVD)

Light-hearted reflections from parents and children.

#### 4 MIN KATHARINE HILL: GIVING CHILDREN GLIMPSES INTO OUR OWN FAITH JOURNEY (DVD)

##### Key teaching points:

- Invest in your own relationship with God as a good starting point to nurture your children's faith.
- Find a rhythm of time with God that works in your particular season of life.
- Take time to explain to your children why you do what you do, for example, when praying or reading the Bible.

#### 5 MIN EXPERT INTERVIEWS (DVD)

##### Key teaching points:

- Show: much of our faith journey is hidden in our minds and in our hearts, and creating 'windows' helps your children to see how you

connect with God.

- Tell: actions speak louder than words – 'framing' your actions with explanations will benefit your children's understanding of faith.

#### 20 MIN AROUND THE ROOM

##### Discuss together:

- Q:** In what ways could our faith be invisible to our children?
- Q:** How can we make our connection to God more visible to our children?
- Q:** What do we do in everyday life, or in church, that our children might not understand? How can we help them to better understand?
- Q:** How will understanding why we do what we do strengthen our children's faith?

#### 5 MIN TELLING IT LIKE IT IS (DVD)

**Family interviews:** parents and children discuss the session's themes.

#### 5 MIN ANDY FROST: TURNING MISTAKES AND DISAPPOINTMENTS INTO OPPORTUNITIES (DVD)

##### Key teaching points:

- Be real and authentic.
- Your mistakes can be opportunities to show what sincere faith looks like.
- Help your children to grow in their faith when they experience disappointments with others, with themselves, and even with God.

#### 15 MIN AROUND THE ROOM

##### Discuss together:

- Q:** What are the benefits of being real and authentic with our children?
- Activity:** In twos or threes, share some mistakes you have made recently – don't feel you have to go too deep!
- Q:** Can you think of a time when you made a mistake that turned out to be an opportunity to talk to your children about God?

**3 MIN** **SNAPSHOT (DVD)**

A short video showing how we can make our faith visible to our children.

**5 MIN** **EXPERT INTERVIEWS (DVD)**

**Key teaching points:**

- Be open with your children and apologise when you get something wrong. This strengthens your relationships and models how God forgives you when you get things wrong.
- Help your children manage expectations throughout their faith journey, rather than waiting for the 'surprise' of the disappointment.

**15 MIN** **AROUND THE ROOM**

**Discuss together:**

**Q:** Rachel Turner talks about helping our children to 'manage their expectations' of God. What would this look like for you in your family?

**Activity:** In twos and threes, talk about how we can help our children to express all their feelings and disappointments to God.

**2 MIN** **CONCLUDING THOUGHTS (DVD)**

Becky Denharder summarises what was covered in the session.

**5 MIN** **AROUND THE ROOM**

**Action:** Ask parents to think of one thing they want to take away from the session and write it in their Session Notes.

**10 MIN** **PRAY**

**See pages 9 to 10 for a few ideas.**

Thank the parents for coming and for their contribution to the discussion. Let them know the date, time and theme of the next session. Do end on a positive note and encourage them to take on any challenge that they've set themselves for the week.

# Session 4

## CONNECTING WITH GOD

### IDENTIFYING HOW OUR CHILDREN BEST RELATE TO GOD

SESSION NOTES PAGES 14 - 16

**15 MIN** **ARRIVE**

Coffee and chat.

**5 MIN** **WELCOME**

Introduce yourself and the session.

**2 MIN** **INTRODUCTION (DVD)**

Becky Denharder introduces the main themes of the session.

**3 MIN** **OUT AND ABOUT (DVD)**

Light-hearted reflections from parents and children.

**4 MIN** **KATHARINE HILL: THE DIFFERENT WAYS WE CONNECT WITH GOD (DVD)**

**Key teaching points:**

- The goal is not to simply teach your children about Jesus, but to encourage them to know him for themselves.
- Children will have their own way of connecting with God. Remember that their way of connecting with God may be different from yours.
- Don't confuse your children's personality with their spirituality. For example, if your child doesn't want to join in with singing it doesn't necessarily mean that they don't want to worship God.

**10 MIN** **AROUND THE ROOM**

**Discuss together:**

**Q:** What can we do as parents to help our children get to know God for

themselves, rather than just learning facts about God?

**Q:** In what ways do you think we sometimes confuse our children's personality and spirituality?

#### 5 MIN TELLING IT LIKE IT IS (DVD)

**Family interviews:** parents and children discuss the session's themes.

#### 4 MIN ANDY FROST: CONNECTING WITH GOD AS A FAMILY (DVD)

**Key teaching points:**

- When it comes to inspiring faith there are no set formulas.
- Find ways of connecting with God that work best for you and your family.
- The way your children connect with God may change as they grow and develop – and you may need to change your approach.

#### 3 MIN SNAPSHOT (DVD)

A short video illustrating various ways that we connect with God. (Parents will find a longer list in their Session Notes.)

#### 15 MIN AROUND THE ROOM

**Activity:** Look at the different ways of connecting with God suggested on page 15 of the Session Notes.

As a group, take some large sheets of paper and write down each of the ways of connecting with God, together with any other ways you can think of. Ask parents to write their names under the one they most identify with and then discuss the variety of ways we connect with God. It's good to remember that our children may not connect in the same way as us.

**Discuss together:**

**Q:** How do you think your child might best connect with God? What characteristics do you see in them that has made you think this way?

**Activity:** Write down your reflections in your Session Notes so you can look back on them at a later date.

#### 10 MIN EXPERT INTERVIEWS (DVD)

**Key teaching points:**

- 'Chat and catch': help your children to understand they can talk to God about anything, and that he wants to communicate with us too.
- You are the expert on your own children – take time to watch how they interact in church and at home.
- Introduce your children to the ways they may best connect with God – join them on the journey.

#### 25 MIN AROUND THE ROOM

**Activity:** Take the sheets of paper showing the different ways of connecting with God. Using Post-it notes, come up with ideas for how we can help children connect with God in each of these ways.

**Discuss together:**

**Q:** Hopefully we now have a good idea of how our children might best connect with God. Which ideas do you think will work best for you in your family context? Make a note of these ideas in your Session Notes.

**Q:** Prayer is such an important element of our relationship with God. How can we encourage our children in prayer, maybe using 'chat and catch' or in some way that particularly suits their personality?

#### 2 MIN CONCLUDING THOUGHTS (DVD)

Becky Denharder summarises what was covered in the session.

#### 5 MIN AROUND THE ROOM

**Action:** Ask parents to think of one thing they want to take away from the session and write it in their Session Notes.

#### 10 MIN PRAY

**See pages 9 to 10 for a few ideas.**

Thank the parents for coming and for their contribution to the discussion. Let them know the date, time and theme of the next session. Do end on a positive note and encourage them to take on any challenge that they've set themselves for the week.

# Session 5

## JOURNEYING TOGETHER

### NAVIGATING DOUBTS AND DIFFICULT QUESTIONS

SESSION NOTES PAGES 17 - 20

#### 15 MIN ARRIVE

Coffee and chat.

#### 5 MIN WELCOME

Introduce yourself and the session.

#### 2 MIN INTRODUCTION (DVD)

Becky Denharder introduces the main themes of the session.

#### 3 MIN OUT AND ABOUT (DVD)

Light-hearted reflections from parents and children.

#### 5 MIN KATHARINE HILL: THE FOUR STAGES OF FAITH (DVD)

##### Key teaching points:

- Parents have the amazing opportunity to influence their children's faith as it grows and develops.
- The four stages of faith are:
  - Experienced faith
  - Affiliative faith
  - Searching faith
  - Owned faith
- Your children may not go through these stages in order; there may be overlap and there are no guarantees, but understanding these stages will help you journey with them.

#### 20 MIN AROUND THE ROOM

##### Discuss together:

**Q:** Look at the descriptions of the four stages of faith on page 18 of the Session Notes. Which stage do you think your child is currently at?

**Activity:** In your Session Notes, or on pieces of paper, write down some ideas of things we can do as parents to help our children in each of these stages of faith.

**Q:** If your child has already navigated through a particular stage of faith, what was your experience as their parent during that time?

**Q:** How can we encourage one another as parents, as our children navigate these stages of faith?

#### 5 MIN TELLING IT LIKE IT IS (DVD)

**Family interviews:** parents and children discuss the session's themes.

#### 4 MIN ANDY FROST: DOUBTS AND QUESTIONS (DVD)

##### Key teaching points:

- While your natural response may be to dismiss your children's awkward questions, over time you run the risk that they will stop telling you how they feel, or stop sharing their thoughts and questions with you.
- Put yourself in your children's shoes to try to understand where their feelings or questions are coming from.

#### 3 MIN SNAPSHOT (DVD)

A short video sharing how to deal with doubts and questions.

#### 10 MIN AROUND THE ROOM

**Activity:** Talk to the people nearest you and share some of the questions about faith that your children have asked you.

**Q:** What are the strangest questions your children have asked?

**Q:** How do you tend to answer your children's questions?

## 10 MIN EXPERT INTERVIEWS (DVD)

### Key teaching points:

- Children wrestle with different things at different stages of faith. Help them to feel confident enough to ask questions, and then journey with them to find the answers.
- A helpful way of responding to our children's questions:
  1. Ask them, "What do you think?" Find out what and why they are asking.
  2. Ask together, "What do we know?" Explore possible answers from the Bible and wise friends.
  3. Ask together, "What do we not know?" It's OK not to know everything.
  4. Chat about how we personally handle this and how it works out in our own lives.
- It sends a powerful message to your children when you show an interest in what they talk about, and get involved in their discovery.
- Create an atmosphere where you enjoy 'wondering' together and where you and your children are comfortable with not having all the answers.

## 20 MIN AROUND THE ROOM

### Discuss together:

**Q:** Sometimes we shy away from encouraging our children to ask questions because we are afraid we won't have a good enough answer. Can you relate to this?

**Q:** What did the experts share that has given you the confidence to develop a culture of asking questions in your home?

**Q:** What practical things can we do as parents to help equip our children to wrestle with their questions? For example: Can we study the Bible together? Can we use Bible apps, software or commentaries to point us in the right direction? Can we ask our church leader the question together on a Sunday?

## 2 MIN CONCLUDING THOUGHTS (DVD)

Becky Denharder summarises what was covered in the session.

## 5 MIN AROUND THE ROOM

**Action:** Ask parents to think of one thing they want to take away from the session and write it in their Session Notes.

## 10 MIN PRAY

**See pages 9 to 10 for a few ideas.**

Thank the parents for coming and for their contribution to the discussion. Let them know the date, time and theme of the next session. Do end on a positive note and encourage them to take on any challenge that they've set themselves for the week.

# Session 6

## BELONGING IS KEY

### CONNECTING OUR CHILDREN INTO THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

SESSION NOTES PAGES 21 - 23

**In this session we will talk about involving other adults and young people in our children's lives. Please be aware of safeguarding issues and emphasise the importance of finding people that we know and trust.**

#### 15 MIN ARRIVE

Coffee and chat.

#### 5 MIN WELCOME

Introduce yourself and the session.

#### 2 MIN INTRODUCTION (DVD)

Becky Denharder introduces the main themes of the session.

#### 3 MIN OUT AND ABOUT (DVD)

Light-hearted reflections from parents and children.

#### 5 MIN KATHARINE HILL: THE WIDER FAMILY AND THE CHURCH (DVD)

##### Key teaching points:

- Research shows that intergenerational relationships are an important factor in a child's faith journey.
- The local church is a place where God brings people together from different generations, races and cultures to be part of his family.
- Look for people you know and trust who can invest in and encourage your children.

#### 10 MIN AROUND THE ROOM

##### Discuss together:

- Q:** Does your child currently relate to any Christians other than yourself? Who are they?
- Q:** What are some of the benefits of having other Christians involved in your child's faith journey?

#### 5 MIN TELLING IT LIKE IT IS (DVD)

**Family interviews:** parents and children discuss the session's themes.

#### 5 MIN EXPERT INTERVIEWS (DVD)

##### Key teaching points:

- Children can learn about faith in a variety of ways from people of different ages, cultures and backgrounds.
- Peers, mentors and role models within the church community are beneficial to your children's faith development – having a 'Barnabas', 'Paul' or 'Timothy' in their lives can help their faith to grow.
- Embrace what you have within your church and supplement what you feel your children need.

#### 20 MIN AROUND THE ROOM

**Activity:** As a group, answer the following questions. Why not record your ideas on large sheets of paper using the headings: 'peers' and 'role models'.

- Q:** How can we embrace opportunities to invest in our children's peer relationships?
- Q:** How can we embrace opportunities to help our children find role models in people we know and trust?
- Q:** If peers or role models are missing from your existing network, how can you supplement this with things like Christian festivals, camps or visiting other children's groups?

Take time to feed back to the rest of the group.

**4 MIN ANDY FROST: HELPING OUR CHILDREN BELONG IN THE CHURCH (DVD)**

**Key teaching points:**

- As we gather as the church it is helpful to talk to your children about what is happening in the service.
- Create opportunities for your children to participate in the life of the church, which will help them feel they have a role to play.
- If your children are struggling with church services, think about packing a bag of craft items to help them creatively engage with the themes of the service.
- Speak positively about church to your children. Negative words can leave a lasting impression and we want children to see the Church as God's great idea!

**3 MIN SNAPSHOT (DVD)**

A short video exploring some different ways we can help children engage in church life.

**5 MIN EXPERT INTERVIEWS (DVD)**

**Key teaching points:**

- Active involvement in church life increases children's understanding of what church is about and encourages a sense of belonging.
- Create a culture where members of your family serve together.
- Encourage your children's passions and give them opportunities to serve God with the gifts he has given them.

**20 MIN AROUND THE ROOM**

**Activity:** Talk with the people nearest you. Can you think of areas of ministry where children can get involved in the life of the church (whether that is joining you as a parent, or serving on their own)? Take a few minutes to feed back to the wider group.

**Discuss together:**

**Q:** How can we as parents help our children to engage with activities in the church or the local community? For example, are there any outreach programmes that they can get involved with? Can they join you as you

serve the community around you?

**Q:** As our children grow up, how can we encourage them to engage with what they are passionate about within the life of the church?

**2 MIN CONCLUDING THOUGHTS (DVD)**

Becky Denharder summarises what was covered in the session.

**1 MIN KATHARINE HILL: BUILDING A FOUNDATION OF PRAYER (DVD)**

Final words of encouragement.

**5 MIN AROUND THE ROOM**

**Action:** Ask parents to think of one thing they want to take away from the session and write it in their Session Notes.

**10 MIN PRAY**

**See pages 9 to 10 for a few ideas.**

Thank the parents for coming and for their contribution to the discussion. Do end on a positive note and encourage them to take on any challenge that they've set themselves for the week.

**FEEDBACK**

We would really value feedback from your group. In the back of each of the Session Note booklets there is a double-sided tear-off feedback form. Please do encourage them to fill these in and give them to you. The form is also available to complete online at: **[surveymonkey.co.uk/r/RFsessions](https://surveymonkey.co.uk/r/RFsessions)** if that is easier for you and your group.

As a group leader, your feedback matters too! We would love to know what you thought of *Raising Faith*. Please complete the tear-off form in the back of this guide and send it with your group's feedback to the address shown. Alternatively you can also complete this form online at: **[surveymonkey.co.uk/r/RFleader](https://surveymonkey.co.uk/r/RFleader)**

## AFTER RAISING FAITH

- Thank the parents for making the effort to come to *Raising Faith* and ask if they have enjoyed themselves and found it helpful.
- Encourage the parents to continue to invest in and nurture their children's faith in the everyday moments of life. In the Session Notes they will find details of the Kitchen Table Project from Care for the Family, which has been specifically designed to support parents in inspiring faith in children. The regular emails and daily Facebook posts are a great way to find ongoing encouragement and ideas. Find out more at [kitchentable.org.uk](http://kitchentable.org.uk)
- You could also create a WhatsApp or Facebook group where parents can share ideas, encourage and pray for one another.
- Some parents may want to continue to meet and support each other. You might consider meeting to pray together, or for more discussion.

### For example, you could:

- Go through a general parenting course such as Care for the Family's *Parentalk*.
- Agree to all sign up for the monthly emails from the Kitchen Table Project, and discuss the contents together when you meet.
- Use the discussion cards in the *Inspire* pack from the Kitchen Table Project to prompt further ideas as a group.
- Look at the Parenting for Faith course together or use the Parenting for Faith podcasts as a discussion starter for future meetings.

# Further resources

Journeying through faith with our children can be such an adventure, full of highs and lows. Care for the Family provides helpful resources for every step of the way, including books, DVD courses and events. You may wish to highlight these resources to your group.

## CARE FOR THE FAMILY RESOURCES



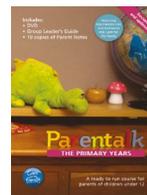
The ***Raising Faith*** book is packed with bite-sized articles and helpful ideas to try out even in the middle of the busyness of family life. It will be a helpful reminder of the elements discussed throughout *Raising Faith*, as well as providing parents with even more ideas to think about. Katharine and Andy's honest and practical advice will dispel the guilt, show us how much we're already doing, and inspire us with simple new ways to help our children love God while they are young.

[cff.org.uk/shop](http://cff.org.uk/shop)



The ***Inspire*** session is a great way to encourage mums, dads and carers, who may not be ready to come along to a six-session course like this one, to start thinking about raising faith in their children. It is an easy-to-run small group session to start the conversation about nurturing faith in our children. Everything you need to run a session is in the pack and is free to download.

[kitchentable.org.uk/inspire](http://kitchentable.org.uk/inspire)



***Parentalk - The Primary Years*** is a ready-to-run, DVD-based course for all parents of children aged up to the early teenage years. In six sessions, Rob Parsons and Katharine Hill look at the topics that affect just about every family, including the busyness of family life, speaking and listening, how to set healthy boundaries, preparing children for the outside world, and the importance of family time.

[cff.org.uk/parentalk](http://cff.org.uk/parentalk)



***If You Forget Everything Else, Remember This - Parenting In The Primary Years*** is full of wisdom, stories and bite-sized chapters to help navigate the challenges of parenting and family life. This book gives down-to-earth advice and lets us know that we're not alone. It offers memorable sayings that will bring direction and clarity to us in our important role as parents.

[cff.org.uk/shop](http://cff.org.uk/shop)

# Continue your journey with the Kitchen Table Project

Join a movement of mums, dads and carers supporting each other as we inspire a faith that lasts in our children. Follow us on Facebook for daily ideas, inspiration and encouragement and sign up for the monthly email to keep you motivated to share your faith at home in the everyday.

[kitchentable.org.uk](http://kitchentable.org.uk)

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kitchen  
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project



Inspire a faith that lasts

## THANK YOU

We hope you've enjoyed running *Raising Faith* and helping to build stronger, happier families. The practical and positive ways of parenting that have been highlighted in the six sessions will make a real difference to both parents and their children – an investment in their relationships that has a lasting value. Thank you on behalf of the families for running this course.

Some mums and dads may want to explore parenting further and Care for the Family has a wide range of resources and events to support them. There are articles and personal stories on our website for parents and also help for couples to keep their relationships strong. You can find out more at [cff.org.uk](http://cff.org.uk) including details of further support for single parents, parents of children with additional needs, and links to other specialist organisations.

## BIBLE REFERENCES

Throughout this resource, our presenters refer to a number of Bible passages. For further study we have listed these below:

### SESSION ONE

**Proverbs 22:6** – training a child in the way they should go.

**Deuteronomy 6:4-9** – encouraging us to teach our children about God as we go about our everyday lives.

### SESSION TWO

**2 Timothy 1:5** – the sincere faith of Timothy’s grandmother Lois and mother Eunice.

**Romans 12:1-2** – offering our bodies as living sacrifices.

### SESSION THREE

**John 15:1-17** – making our home in Jesus.

### SESSION FOUR

**John 14:8-21** – seeing Jesus, seeing the Father.

### SESSION FIVE

**Acts 5:1-11** – Ananias and Sapphira.

### SESSION SIX

**Acts 13:1-3** – Paul and Barnabas as peers.

**1 Timothy 1:2** – Paul as Timothy’s mentor.

### PRAYER

**1 Corinthians 3:6-8** – planting, watering and growing seeds.

## RESEARCH

During the sessions, the presenters occasionally refer to the research underpinning the information which is shared. For example, they talk about how research shows that warm family life is a significant factor in our children being receptive to faith, and that intergenerational relationships are an important element in developing our children’s faith.

For those interested to explore this further, the key resources are as follows.

Powell, K.E. and Clark, C., 2011, *Sticky Faith: Everyday Ideas to Build Lasting Faith in your Kids*, Zondervan.

Bengtson, V.L., 2013, *Families and Faith: How Religion is Passed Down Across Generations*, OUP USA.

Mark, O., 2016, *Passing on Faith*, Theos and Canterbury Christ Church University.

You can also read more in the *Faith in our Families* free research report from Care for the Family, available from the Care for the Family website or the Kitchen Table Project website.

## FEEDBACK

It would really help us to know what you thought of *Raising Faith*. Please complete the tear-off form opposite and send it with your group's feedback to:

**Care for the Family, Tovey House, Cleppa Park, Newport, NP10 8BA.**

Alternatively you can complete this form online at [surveymonkey.co.uk/r/RFleader](https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/RFleader)

As a small thank you for your feedback, we'd love to give you a free copy of the *Raising Faith* book. Just be sure to include your name and postal address with your feedback and we'll send that to you.

## RAISING FAITH: LEADER'S FEEDBACK

**Q1. How many people attended your *Raising Faith* sessions?**

**Q2. Who attended your group?** (Tick all that apply)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parents/carers of young children (up to 11) | <input type="checkbox"/> Grandparents               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parents/carers of older children            | <input type="checkbox"/> Church leaders             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Extended family, godparents and friends     | <input type="checkbox"/> Other - please state ..... |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children, family and youth workers          |   |

**Q3. Where did you obtain this resource?**

- Care for the Family event
- Care for the Family exhibition stand at a national conference/event
- Bought the DVD pack from the Care for the Family website
- Used the digital version
- Other: please state .....

**Q4. Are you yourself a ...** (Tick all that apply)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parent/carer of young children (up to 11) | <input type="checkbox"/> Children/family/youth worker |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parent of older children                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: please state .....    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grandparent                               |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Church leader                             |   |

**Q5. How helpful was each element, in encouraging and equipping the group?**

	Not at all helpful				Very helpful
	1	2	3	4	5
Presenter introductions and conclusions	<input type="checkbox"/>				
'Out and about' vox-pops	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Teaching from Katharine and Andy	<input type="checkbox"/>				
'Telling it like it is' family interviews	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Snapshot videos	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Expert interviews	<input type="checkbox"/>				

**Q6: How far do you agree with each of the following statements?**

Those who attended:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Feel more confident than they were before that they can nurture their child(ren)'s faith	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Feel more able to create warm, close relationships with their child(ren) so they feel loved and secure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have more ideas about how to make their faith visible to their children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have more understanding of how to create opportunities for their child(ren) to encounter God for themselves	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Feel more confident to help their child(ren) explore their doubts and questions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have a greater understanding of how to help their child(ren) to serve and build good relationships among the Christian community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q7: What happens next?**

Did the group want to take things further or continue to meet?

**Q8. Would you recommend *Raising Faith* to others?**

Not at all likely to recommend Certain to recommend

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

**Q9. Do you have any comments on the Group Leader's Guide and the suggested discussion questions, or anything else you would like to feed back to us?**

**cff.org.uk**

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