

FAITH IN OUR FAMILIES

A snapshot of Anglican churches

Introduction

The *Faith in our Families* booklet reports on research commissioned by Care for the Family and HOPE, and conducted by 9dot-research, to find out what parents in the UK are currently doing to nurture their children's faith, and how churches are supporting them in that. This supplement to that report provides further details related to those parents, church leaders and children's workers in our research who identified as Anglican, and gives a snapshot of what is currently happening to nurture faith in the homes and churches of Anglican parents in the UK.

Who responded

We asked respondents to our Faith in our Families survey which church denomination they belonged to and how they would describe their church.

Of the 983 parents we surveyed, 249 identified as being Anglican (25%). 175 church leaders replied, 29% of whom were Anglican, as were 23% of the 479 surveyed children's workers. This is a small sample and therefore it's important to be aware that some of the differences noted in this report may not be statistically significant. However, it still provides a helpful insight from those leading and attending Anglican churches into how effectively they feel their denomination is supporting parents to nurture the faith of their children.

The main regions in the UK represented by Anglican clergy in our survey were the South East (31%), North West (20%), and London (11%). For children's workers most of our responses came from the South East (28%), South West (19%), and North West (14%).

We asked Anglican clergy and children's workers to describe what their church was like, and the results are shown in the table to the right.

Of those we surveyed, 9% of Anglican clergy described their church as family focused, compared to 78% describing their church as family friendly, and 13% as not particularly family friendly.

Church style	Clergy	Children's workers
Anglo-Catholic	6%	8%
Broad	31%	22%
Charismatic	24%	18%
Evangelical	62%	49%
Fresh Expression	4%	8%
Liberal	7%	7%
Low church	35%	24%
Mainly ethnic minority	2%	2%
Reformed	4%	5%
Rural	7%	6%
Traditional	18%	25%
Other	9%	8%

Importance and responsibility

We asked parents what qualities were most important to teach their children, with the 'top' answers shown in the table to the right.

When asked if it was largely the parent's responsibility to nurture their child's faith, 29% of Anglican parents strongly agreed compared to 40% of all parents. When we asked church leaders the same question, 67% of Anglican church leaders agreed or strongly agreed, compared to 78% of all church leaders. Does this perhaps

Quality	Anglican parents	All parents
Faith	90%	93%
Tolerance	74%	69%
Manners	70%	60%

indicate a higher importance given to the church's input among Anglicans, and possibly a lower sense of individual responsibility?

What are parents already doing?

When we asked parents what they found particularly helpful for nurturing their children's faith, the Anglican parents tended to rate practical activities together more highly than our wider group of parents.

What is particularly helpful	Anglican parents	All parents
Pray together	43%	51%
Talk about God	39%	42%
Do good deeds together	13%	8%
Celebrate Christian events at home	28%	21%
Prepare for christening/baptism/confirmation	2%	1%

It is notable that 48% of Anglican church leaders (and 42% of Anglican children's workers) responded that they thought involving parents in preparing for christening/baptism/confirmation was what parents found most helpful in nurturing their children's faith (compared to 27% of all church leaders).

- When asked how often parents prayed with their child, 2% of all parents said never, but this increased to 5% among Anglican parents.
- Anglican parents were less likely to worry whether their child had a place in Heaven, with 70% responding that they rarely or never worried about this, compared to 58% of all respondents.
- It is less important to Anglican parents that their children make a public declaration of faith (28% responded that it was not very or not at all important compared to 19% of all respondents).
- 64% of Anglican parents reported that they go to church with their child weekly, compared to 76% of all respondents.

Barriers

The Anglican parents agreed with the larger group that family time being devoted to other things was a significant barrier to nurturing faith at home. However when asked what the more significant barriers were, the most frequent response by Anglican parents was that 17% felt they needed help with knowing what to do, compared to 13% of the wider group of parents where this was the third most chosen response.

More Anglican church leaders felt that a significant barrier was that one parent was not a Christian (71%) than the wider group (57%). 46% of all children's workers felt that parents did not understand the need to nurture their children's faith, but this figure rose to 59% from Anglican children's workers.

What do church leaders already do

When we asked how much churches already do to directly help nurture children's faith, the Anglican leaders responses were representative of the whole group. However while 61% of church leaders felt their church did a lot or some activity to help parents to nurture their

What leaders say they already do:	Anglican leaders	All church leaders
Give them confidence in their own faith	42%	60%
Involve parents in christening/baptism/confirmation preparation	76%	57%
Help parents understand the importance of nurturing faith	20%	36%
Suggest books about nurturing faith in the home	9%	21%

children's faith, only 49% of Anglican clergy felt that was the case in their churches. For children's workers, 57% of all those surveyed felt their church did a lot or some, compared to 45% of children's workers in Anglican churches.

There were some differences of emphasis between what the larger group of church leaders reported they already do to support families in nurturing faith compared to those from Anglican churches, as seen in the table above.

Opportunities

93% of the Anglican parents we surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that nurturing their child's faith was primarily their responsibility, and 92% also reported that they felt they should be doing more to nurture their faith. The majority of the parents we heard from were aware both of their responsibility and of the need to grow in this area, and the church could provide significant support to do this going forward. 46% of Anglican church leaders strongly agreed that their church should be doing more to help parents nurture their children's faith. Every small step that churches take towards better supporting parents to nurture their children's faith could have a lasting impact on the families they serve.

What next?

For more information, visit www.careforthefamily.org.uk/children-and-faith. Here you can view the full research booklet, find out about forthcoming activities, and sign up to receive future updates.



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