

FAITH IN OUR FAMILIES

A snapshot of Baptist 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 Baptist, and gives a snapshot of what is currently happening to nurture faith in the homes and churches of Baptist 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, 119 identified as being Baptist (12%). 175 church leaders replied, 18% of whom were Baptist, as were 21% 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 Baptist 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 Baptist church leaders in our survey were the East Midlands (23%), South East (19%), and South West (16%). For children's workers most of our responses came from the South East (26%) and South West (18%).

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

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%

Of those we surveyed, 23% of Baptist church leaders (and 17% of Baptist children's workers) described their church as family focused, compared to 71% describing their church as family friendly, and 7% as not particularly family friendly.

Importance and responsibility

The quality that the Baptist parents we surveyed most wanted to pass on to their children was faith (94%), followed by tolerance (66%) and unselfishness (57%).

We asked our respondents where the responsibility for nurturing children's faith primarily lay (see overleaf).

Percentage of respondents who agreed that:	Baptist parents	Baptist church leaders	Baptist children's workers
The church should be doing more	50%	97%	83%
Parents should be doing more	93%	84%	83%
It's largely the parents' responsibility	98%	84%	62%

Motivation

When asked what their motivations were for nurturing their children's faith, the Baptist parents rated some of the options more highly than our wider group of parents.

Motivations	Baptist parents	Wider group
Be in a relationship with God	98%	92%
Know they are loved by God	91%	90%
Display Christian values to others	84%	82%
Have a place in Heaven	77%	66%

90% of the Baptist parents we surveyed

felt it was quite or very important that their child make a declaration of faith at some point, compared to 81% of the wider group. 97% of Baptist church leaders and 86% of Baptist children's workers agreed.

What are parents already doing?

When we asked what parents already do to nurture their children's faith, the Baptist parents replied that praying together and talking about God were particularly helpful. They also placed a higher value on talking about faith with their child (34%) and sharing Bible stories with their child (32%) than our wider group (27% and 25% respectively).

92% of the Baptist parents we surveyed often or sometimes talk about faith with their child, and 97% often or sometimes pray for their child. 82% go with their child to church at least once a week.

Barriers

When we asked parents what they felt were the more significant barriers to nurturing their child's faith, the Baptist parents were more concerned than our full parent sample about not having enough time to spend with their child (25%), having family time devoted to other activities (19%), not knowing what to do (14%), and worrying about doing it wrong (13%). There were some barriers that they felt less concerned about than the wider group, including having a weak personal faith, lacking resources, and the other parent not being a Christian.

The Baptist church leaders echoed the idea that the biggest issues were family time being devoted to other things (55%; 49% for Baptist children's workers), and children and parents not spending enough time together (29%), but 26% of the Baptist church leaders also flagged that they felt children not being interested was a significant factor.

What do church leaders already do

97% of Baptist church leaders and 98% of Baptist children's workers felt they do a lot or some work with primary aged children to help nurture their faith directly. However when asked if they already do a lot or some to help *parents* nurture their children's faith, these figures dropped to 68% for Baptist church leaders and 58% for Baptist children's workers.

What do you do to help parents nurture their children's faith	Baptist church leaders	All church leaders
Give them confidence in their own faith	81%	61%
Promote Christian camps/festivals	68%	54%
Help parents understand importance of nurturing faith at home	39%	37%
Suggest books about nurturing faith in the home	26%	21%
Preach about it	36%	48%

- 37% of Baptist children's workers reported that they help parents develop a support network with other parents, compared to 28% of all the children's workers who took the survey.
- When asked what they encourage parents to do, 84% of Baptist church leaders replied, "model faith well for their children", quite a bit higher than the wider group (63%), and 71% encourage them to talk about faith with their children, compared to 62% of the wider group.
- 48% of Baptist church leaders felt that parents find praying together the most helpful thing for nurturing faith at home, and were keen for more ideas and resources to support this area.
- The Baptist church leaders were less likely than other respondents to encourage families to celebrate Christian events at home together.
- 79% of Baptist children's workers were keen for more ideas on how to help parents talk about God with their children.

Opportunities

There were many encouraging responses from Baptist parents and church workers, as a significant proportion of parents already reported talking about faith with their child, and a majority of church workers had ideas in place for supporting parents. As 93% of parents and 97% of church leaders felt they could be doing more, there are still lots of opportunities going forward for churches and parents to work together in developing and encouraging this key strategic work.

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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