Growing Faith: reaching children and young people where they are

Introduction
Archdeacon Jo Kelley Moore
Growing Faith Champion

‘Growing Faith envisions children, young people and households coming to faith, growing in discipleship and contributing confidently to the Kingdom of God through the community of faith. It is about how, as members of the whole people of God, children and young people are encouraged and how the whole Church is equipped to think intergenerationally.’

“How are we seeking a renewal of minds and hearts within the diocese so that it becomes second nature to look at all daily activities and every decision through the lens of what it means for our children, young people and households?”

General Synod is asked to welcome the House of Bishops' vision and encourage all dioceses, parishes, fresh expressions, Church of England schools and college or university chaplaincies to ensure they weave it through every strand of their strategy for mission and ministry.

Children and Young People per parish

- 25% of parishes have no attendees under 16
- 15% of parishes have 20+ attendees under 16
- 15% of parishes have 10-20 attendees under 16
- 13% of parishes have 6-9 attendees under 16
- 7% of parishes only have single figures of attendees under 16
- 7% of parishes have 1-5 attendees under 16

- 70% of parishes have no attendees under 16

- 32% of parishes have 1-5 attendees under 16
Faith at Home

90% of Anglican parents think it is important to pass faith on to their children, but only 29% think of it as their responsibility.


Faith at Home

Among Christians who say that religion is very important in their lives, only 36% listed religious faith as an especially important quality that children can be encouraged to learn at home, compared to good manners (94%) or tolerance and respect (83%).

An overall ambition

Growing Faith wants to see

Churches which serve and are served by their local school communities, actively building strong relationships between church, schools and households

So...

The partnership between churches, schools and households is crucial.
Growing Faith Values

- Connected Communities
- Spiritual Encounters
- Imaginative Practices

Our primary focus for Growing Faith is the intersection between 2 or more of the elements.

Our understanding of young people's faith development is that it much more likely to happen, and be sustained if it happens in the intersection.

Themes

- Households becoming confident in sharing and nurturing faith
- Congregations recognising the part they play
- Churches serving the life of schools and all CE schools committed to working in partnership with churches, building meaningful long-lasting relationships with children and young people
- Particular challenges and opportunities to develop work with older teenagers and students in both further and higher education
Growing Faith wants to see:

a) Every parish creating expressions of church where children, young people and households are actively involved, growing spiritually and have their voices heard.

b) Anglican parents recognising the importance of sharing faith with their children and actively engaging in this responsibility.

c) Clergy and lay ministers who are confident in supporting households in sharing faith at home.

d) Congregations which nurture and support, and are nurtured and supported by the faith of children and young people.

e) Churches which serve and are served by their local school communities, actively building strong relationships between church, schools and households.

f) Children and young people who are confident to share their faith with their peers and families.

Possibilities

- Prayer spaces / spiritual gardens
- Chaplaincy
- Support in transfer between schools / further or higher education
- Church-based toddler provision that is intentionally missional
- New expressions of church for Early Years and primary age children and their families
- Help and ideas for parents, grandparents and godparents to pass on faith
- Children and young people’s active participation in decision-making
- Leadership responsibility and development for children and young people
- Broader application of the Understanding Christianity resource
- And......
A few examples…

Church and School together
Reflections by Simon Young
Bapchild and Tonge

Zeal Youth Hub
Louisa Ley
Sittingbourne
Blend
Goudhurst and Kilndown
Lesley Hardy
Stephen Hardy
Vicki Young

So what next?
Community Connections
Spiritual encounters
Imaginative Practices