



their children to do the same - new polling shows.

Two-thirds of people (67%) say there is still value in children taking part in Christian Harvest Festivals, according to a ComRes survey of over 4,000 adults.

But only half (49%) of parents say their children participate, possibly because of limited opportunity.

The poll found that three-quarters (73%) remember celebrating harvest festival as a child, with most remembering bringing in food to give to people in need (61%) as well as attending Harvest services, singing hymns or saying prayers (64%).

Two-thirds of participants (65%) say their memories of Harvest Festival were positive, with the main perceived benefits listed as generosity to people in need (62%), giving thanks for the good things in our lives (51%) and teaching children where food comes from (48%).

Over a third (37%) also say that learning about sustainability and the impact of growing food on climate change and the environment is important.

Widespread value today

Two-thirds (67%) of respondents say that there is still value in children participating in Christian Harvest Festivals today, including approaching two-thirds (63%) of respondents from other faiths, and nearly three-fifths (57%) of those who do not associate with a religion.

Only just over a tenth of those polled (13%) see no value in participation.

Of the parents whose children currently take part in Harvest Festival, the vast majority say this is either a service held at school or nursery or a visit to a church organised by a nursery or school.

The Church of England's Chief Education Officer, The Revd Nigel Genders, said: "Harvest Festival is just one of the ways that the Christian tradition enriches the lives of children of all backgrounds as part of daily collective worship.

"It's encouraging to know that parents agree, and there is a clear call for more schools of all kinds to use the coming weeks to celebrate harvest, and I hope many will do so.

"Harvest is a wonderful opportunity for all schools and nurseries to help children and young people to think about how food reaches their plates, and to say thank you for all they have received, as well as giving to those in need."

The majority of produce donated in churches in 2019 will stock foodbanks, with a 2018 survey showing that 60% (c.8,000) of churches are involved in either running or supporting food banks through volunteers, donations and providing venues.

Figures collated by the Trussell Trust showed a 19% increase between 2018 – 19 in the distribution of three-day emergency food supplies, with 1.6 million distributed by the charity.

Harvest Festival in the Church of England - origins

Christian Scripture is full of references to the creative power and wisdom of God, and the arrival of the harvest has long been marked in Jewish and Christian worship.

The origins of the Harvest Festival in the Church of England can be traced to the work of the Revd R. S. Hawker, a parish priest in Cornwall, in the mid-nineteenth century, who chose the first Sunday in October to mark the arrival of the harvest, although there is evidence to suggest that thanksgiving services of this kind were already widespread. From this point, an annual church celebration of the harvest established itself rapidly with great popularity and was first recognised officially in the Church of England in 1862.

Visit achurchnearyou.com to find a local harvest festival service.

More information

- [Headline findings](#)
- [Full Survey Results](#)

ComRes polled 4,051 Adults in Great Britain aged 18+ between 21st and 25th August 2019. A total of 1,050 of the sample have children 18 or under.

Source URL: <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/press-releases/parents-still-value-harvest-festival-their-children-poll>