

PARACHURCH NETWORK

REPORTING BACK



WHY ARE WE MEETING?

Colleagues have asked for a network which provides the following:

- **Knowledge** - help to develop a secure understanding Growing Faith
- **Research** – opportunities to engage in research together and discuss it in the light of our work
- **Sharing** – opportunities to connect and share between parachurch organisations
- **Diocesan links** – access to dioceses and key stakeholders in the Church of England
- **Critical reflection and challenge** – opportunities to work together, to collaborate and to shape each other's work.



Kristin Stevenson (Bible Society) encouraged us to collaborate and learn from each other, and led us in Bible encouragement and prayer.

"NEVER FORGET THESE COMMANDS THAT I AM GIVING YOU TODAY. TEACH THEM TO YOUR CHILDREN. REPEAT THEM WHEN YOU ARE AT HOME AND WHEN YOU ARE AWAY, WHEN YOU ARE RESTING AND WHEN YOU ARE WORKING. TIE THEM ON YOUR ARMS AND WEAR THEM ON YOUR FOREHEADS AS A REMINDER. WRITE THEM ON THE DOORPOSTS OF YOUR HOUSES AND ON YOUR GATES" (DEUTERONOMY 6)

"FOR JUST AS EACH OF US HAS ONE BODY WITH MANY MEMBERS, AND THESE MEMBERS DO NOT ALL HAVE THE SAME FUNCTION, SO IN CHRIST WE, THOUGH MANY, FORM ONE BODY, AND EACH MEMBER BELONGS TO ALL THE OTHERS. WE HAVE DIFFERENT GIFTS, ACCORDING TO THE GRACE GIVEN TO EACH OF US. IF YOUR GIFT IS PROPHECYING, THEN PROPHECY IN ACCORDANCE WITH YOUR FAITH; IF IT IS SERVING, THEN SERVE; IF IT IS TEACHING, THEN TEACH; IF IT IS TO ENCOURAGE, THEN GIVE ENCOURAGEMENT; IF IT IS GIVING, THEN GIVE GENEROUSLY; IF IT IS TO LEAD, DO IT DILIGENTLY; IF IT IS TO SHOW MERCY, DO IT CHEERFULLY". (ROMANS 12)

GROWING FAITH : HURDLES & OPPORTUNITIES

WE SAID...

- We need concrete examples of what Growing Faith looks like on the ground
- We need this network to overlap with Children's & Youth Advisor and Mission Enabler Networks
- We need support communicating the work of all these organisations without it being overwhelming for churches, schools and families.
- We need the Foundation to be explicit that cross-school, cross-denomination partnership is expected in order for parachurch organisations to support the Growing Faith commitment well.

*There is huge potential to work together in **smaller groups** on **collaborative projects** - this could be very exciting.*

*We are all seeing a shift in focus from solely children and youth to **including families** - we could be **supporting one another** in this.*

*People tend to trust local contacts over large organisations - the better **relationships** we have between us, the more we can **champion each others' work for a wider reach**.*

*The Growing Faith Foundation can celebrate and promote what is already happening - this is an opportunity to have **established church at all levels really championing our work**.*

*There is potential to work together to **support young leaders**.*

*We're really happy at how **inclusive** this opportunity is.*

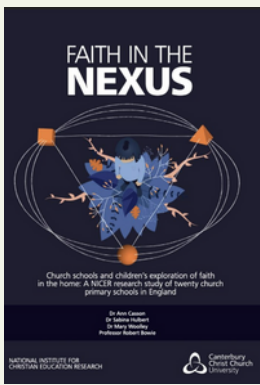
*Some of us are stronger on two areas of the home-church-school connection. **Together** we can be more aware of this and support each other by **sharing work in the intersections**.*

One of our first actions is to create a directory. This will serve two purposes:

1. It will enable members of the parachurch network to communicate and share resources with each other.
2. It helps the Growing Faith Foundation to better know and share your work through Church of England networks and through Diocesan channels.

DIRECTORY...

Please fill in your information [here](#) by Tues 8th Nov 2022 to have your details, organisation and resources included. Thank you!



FAITH IN THE NEXUS

We used this research as a first stimulus for conversations about church-school-home partnerships. We asked...

Can this network share stories of what this looks practically like in different contexts?

For those of us working with majority unchurched demographic, can we develop together examples of how to create a new space which complements this sense of organic growth springing up?

Who can help us to understand how the principles in this document translate to working with Young People?

What are the opportunities in community schools?

How do we move initial opportunities forward to actual discipleship? How do we align our perspectives on developing faith and discipleship across such a broad group, when our understanding of this may radically differ?

How do we ensure that church-school partnerships support parents and aren't giving them more things to do? How do we work with schools and churches to understand the real needs of their families and young people? We need to support physical and spiritual needs together.

What about when the local church is not ready to welcome children and young people? How do we work together in communities to scaffold alternative pathways to faith? Can the Foundation support churches to learn from schools, and share good practice and resources?

What is the Church of England doing to make children, youth and families a key focus of clergy training?

When we are working in school-church partnerships, who are the colleagues in this network who can support parents' faith journeys?

Do people have examples of joint roles where a chaplain/youth worker works in both the school and the parish?

NEXT STEPS

The **Faith in the Nexus Toolkit** is a selection of resources which have been created to support those who are involved with children's spiritual development and wellbeing within a Christian context. You can find them at www.nicer.org.uk/fait-h-in-the-nexus/the-nexus-toolkit

OPPORTUNITIES

We had several conversations about schools:

It was felt that it's really important, before talking to schools about what we can offer, to ask, "what do you need?" How can our organisations be part of the church's ability to ask with confidence, "what do you need?"

How can churches be supported to be more confident in the world of education?

How can churches be encouraged to develop their own vision for 'the nexus'?

We need a culture shift on how 'church' is defined, in the light of schools.

For those of us in national roles, it's really important to be linking in locally with those who can have a long-lasting impact in their school.

RECOMMENDED!

Lucy Rycroft
(thehopefilledfamily.com)
recommended
www.startostir.com for help having conversations which open up space to talk about God.

Claire Burton
(www.kitchentable.org.uk)
recommended
www.contentscriptureunion.org.uk/revealingjesusfor journeying in faith with the 95% of children who are not part of a church.

Anna Shaw
(www.cpas.org.uk)
recommended
www.youthscape.co.uk/research/influencers - methods and perceived effectiveness of peer-to-peer evangelism and outreach amongst teenagers.

Matt Orr
(www.werearemovement.net)
recommended
www.talkingjesus.org/2022-research/ - about how people come to faith in the UK and how to talk about Jesus more effectively in the community.

News from the Growing Faith Foundation

Stephen Beamond (Programmes Lead) shared with us about the upcoming **Strategic Leaders Programme**. Please email Stephen.Beamond@churchofengland.org for more info or register your interest [here](#).



Cheryl Govier (Partnerships Lead) has opened applications for **Growing Faith hubs** - centres of learning where schools and churches are resourced to further embed creative practices that build the partnership between school, church and home. Might your organisation collaborate with a local community to form a hub? Find out more [here](#) or email Cheryl.Govier@churchofengland.org for info.



You are warmly invited to the Church of England Foundation for Education Leadership National Conference on January 23rd - check out the webpage for details of the fantastic range of keynote speakers, practical workshops, networking and collaboration opportunities! www.cfel.org.uk/NC23



ANNA SHAW FROM CPAS SHARED SOME HELPFUL QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN PLANNING PROJECTS AND RESOURCES:



SOME HELPFUL QUESTIONS...

1. Does it enhance the partnership between school and church?
2. Is it Head/Vicar or School/Church?
3. Does it open other opportunities for spiritual development or is it a 'one hit wonder'?
4. Does it support a pathway to faith?
5. Does it empower/disempower the church community?
6. Is the church ready to welcome and nurture - is it accessible?
7. Is there a way to engage the wider family?



GET IN TOUCH! Hannah is the Networks Lead at the Growing Faith Foundation. She would love to hear from you! Hannah.Persaud@churchofengland.org

CLOSING THOUGHTS AND NEXT STEPS

Themes which came out strongly from throughout the meeting were:

- parachurch organisations are very keen to work together - "**collaboration**" was repeated often!
- we need **stories to share** and **concrete examples** of what Growing Faith looks like in action.
- we need **clarity** around **channels of communication** in the Church of England.

Some members of the network would like to create a **menu or toolkit of ideas to support churches in how to approach and serve their local school**. Are you or your organisation interested in getting involved in this?

Some members of the network would like to read "*We need to talk about Race: Understanding the Black Experience in White Majority Churches*" by Ben Lindsey. Are you interested in a cross-organisation **book group**?



QUICK ANSWER TO A BURNING QUESTION!

Colleagues wanted to know if the Growing Faith Foundation is working with the Youth and Children's Advisors network. The answer is yes! We are grateful for these wonderful colleagues, and many of them have been co-creating and feeding into the work on programmes, hubs and networks already.

We will share these queries with them, work out the best way of connecting parachurch organisations with this network, and get back to you.

Thank you for bringing this up!

Is there something you'd like to collaborate on? Did someone or something resonate with you in the breakout room? **Please email hannah.persaud@churchofengland.org to be connected with colleagues** who share an interest in these, or other ideas.