



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
EDUCATION OFFICE

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National
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promoting
education
CHURCH OF ENGLAND & CHURCH IN WALES

growing faith



“Changing the culture of the Church of England so that everyone instinctively put children and young people at the heart of all we do.”

growing faith



Introduction

Welcome to the Growing Faith Foundation! Growing Faith is the movement that exists to change the culture of the Church of England so that everyone instinctively puts children and young people at the heart of all we do as a church. The Foundation began in 2022. It built on work that had been developed across the dioceses to encourage churches, schools and households to work together to nurture the spirituality of children and young people.

A Growing Faith approach might be a simple conversation between a church and a local school that says, 'We're your church, how can we help you?' or a diocesan-wide programme that touches the lives of thousands of children, young people and families through the schools in its care. It could be a group of parents who gather to pray in the church for the school community, or a church that welcomes the school's young people to help lead a service.

Growing Faith is more a lens than a project, a way of seeing the opportunities in the local community and joining in with what God is already doing there. Growing Faith prioritises under-16s because we want every person of every age, including the young, to know how much God loves them, how important they are in the family of the church and for them too to have the opportunity to shape and lead the church for today and tomorrow. Simply put, research suggests that if that age group isn't made a priority, they won't find a place or a voice in the local church.



When Jesus wanted his followers to understand what discipleship was all about, he placed a child in the middle of the conversation. The church and indeed the country needs children and young people to be at the centre of our thoughts and plans and hearts – for their sakes and for our own.

www.cofe.io/gf



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Growing Faith goes out to where those children and young people already are and meets them there. It involves making safe spaces where they can be listened to and responded to. It's about creating lasting relationships of trust across the generations, about embracing the rhythms of school, home and church, about joining people of all ages together in a community filled with purpose.

What's important to Growing Faith is that children and young people, their carers and parents, the adults surrounding them in church and in school all help shape the church, flourish within it and work together to grow what Jesus called the kingdom of heaven in every community. So here we hand over to Eden to share why faith – and the Church - is important to her.



“Our school vision is 'Living life in all its fullness' and within my church, my family and my school together, I can experience the Christain faith while still living my life as a teenage girl! School can be a stressful place with tests, homework and just getting through the day. So having my school recognise my faith, and allowing me to express it helps me to grow as a Christian even when things are difficult.

I have always lived in a household that loves and believes in God, and had them support me in this too. This stability has helped me to cherish the little things in life as well as the big things. Ever since I have been little I have attended church, but only recently have I realised the significance and impact that it has had upon my life. Church has taught me to embrace the path that God has laid out for me rather than take the easy route.

If I am not at school then I am spending my time with my family and church family. So having the stability of faith that runs through all three areas of my life allows me to grow in faith, and live my life in all of its fullness.”

growing faith Team



growing faith Strategic Leaders' Programme

Watch Video



Strategic Leaders' Programme

A year of professional development!

The Growing Faith Strategic Leaders' Programme provides a fantastic opportunity for leaders and aspiring leaders from a range of settings to learn and grow together. With a sharp focus on children and young people, participants are invited not only to explore their leadership competencies and capacities, but to explore how their leadership impacts their own communities and contexts!

Inspiring speakers, relational residentials, flexible learning, expert coaching and more...

This programme will:

Provide a space for a collaborative learning community which models the intersections of Growing Faith

Professionally develop leaders and aspiring leaders, bringing sustained change in a range of contexts.

Have a transformative impact on children's and young people's faith formation.

Register your interest here for the next cohort!
www.cofe.io/gfslp



Module 1	Counter Culture	
	CORE: Casting the Vision	
	What do we mean by culture?	Sustaining vision for everyone
Module 2	Leading me; Leading others	
	CORE: What sort of leader am I?	
	Managing Change	Conflict and reconciliation
Module 3	Making an Impact	
	CORE: What's the plan? – strategy and direction	
	Collaboration	Communication

Programme Learning Cycle



"I am profoundly encouraged by the emergence of this programme."
 Bishop Jonathan Frost



"After just one session, I was already sharing with my manager ways we can bring about a culture change in our organisation...I already feel enriched"
 Programme participant.



"This course is the first thing that has been offered to me in church, both voluntary and paid, that is not about how to deliver a new piece of material, or run an activity, but how to be me!"
 Programme participant.

"It is giving me the safe space and resources to help me reflect on my leadership style"
 Programme participant.

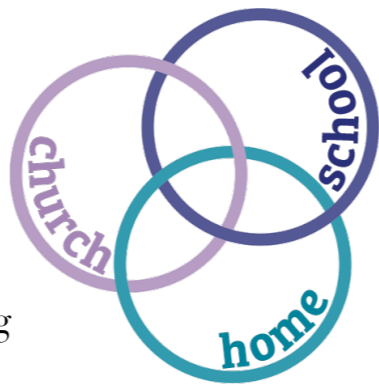
"I can see the impact this has not just on myself but on others too."
 Programme participant.



"Probably the most effective experience I have had in over 20 years in ministry"
 Programme participant.



growing faith Networks



There are AMAZING people all over the country working for the culture change we long to see. We're passionate about connecting people and about facilitating peer support and collaborative learning. We offer networks for different people working within and between the **school-church-home** spheres and we'd love you to join us!

Check out the current opportunities and sign up if you'd like to get involved. If you'd like to be part of a network that doesn't currently exist, then let us know your idea, as we're continually expanding our offer: growingfaith@churchofengland.org



I so needed this today! Thank you thank you thank you!

Seeing the numbers of participants going up and up and up made me feel really emotional – something amazing is happening!

A rare moment of reflection and worship in my week and I feel so excited to be part of this network which must be a move of God!

Growing Faith Network for Ordinands

Are you an ordinand? We meet at lunchtime once a month to explore our ministry and studies through the lens of Growing Faith.



Growing Faith Network for Toddler Leaders and Champions

This network is for people who run toddler groups, as well as leaders in their churches. Come and be encouraged, equipped and inspired to see Growing Faith in this precious ministry.

Serving the Local School

A network run in collaboration with dioceses. How can our churches best contribute to the life of the local school(s)? Join a group of people from your diocese who are passionate about church-school connection.

Growing Faith Network for Parachurch Organisations

A big and vibrant network of parachurch colleagues from all over the country, from some of the most well-known national charities through to our amazing small and mighty local organisations. Collaborating to effect culture change together.



For information on these and our additional networks, please visit our website [new website link] and get in touch at growingfaith@churchofengland.org

Trauma and mental health awareness

A network which platforms the significant expertise and resourcing of colleagues in parachurch organisations and dioceses, combined with the opportunity to consider it all in the light of your own context. A brilliant opportunity to improve the way we value and work with others.



Loved the wise and moving input, especially from the young people. I have lots to think about and take to the next meeting.

SO encouraging! Such engagement! I feel part of something already, and this is huge in a role that can feel so isolating.

Chaplains in Education

Focussing on the most pressing concerns of our chaplains, and the unique role they play in Growing Faith, this network seeks to support and empower colleagues through both national gatherings and small group peer support groups.

growing faith Hubs

Growing Faith Learning Hubs are centres of innovation, where schools/churches are resourced to further embed creative practices that build the strategic partnership between school, church and home. Hubs are creative spaces where people are encouraged to try imaginative approaches as we seek to double the number of children and young active disciples in the Church of England by 2030. The Learning Hubs are funded with an annual grant.

The Foundation has funded 18 Hubs across the country, some supported by external funders. The Hubs launched throughout 2023 and early 2024.



- Phase 1 (Jan 2023)
- Phase 2 (Apr 2023)
- Phase 3 (Sept 2023)
- Phase 4 (Oct 2023)
- Phase 5 (Jan 2024)

The Salisbury Hub are seeking to hear the voices of young people and break down some of the walls between church and school, particularly in their relationship with Sherbourne Abbey.

The Rector of the Abbey wants the children and young people of the town to be able to call it 'OUR Abbey, not The Abbey'. Through the work done so far, year 6 pupils have said this about the Abbey:

'It's amazing, as there are lots of patterns on the ceiling and when you look up, it's like you are looking up at God.'
Year 6 pupil, Sherbourne

'I sit there in awe.'
Year 6 pupil, Sherbourne



Diocese of Carlisle Diocesan Board of Education - From isolated to flourishing communities: growing disciples in a rural area.

Allerton, Diocese of Leeds - Plan, build & grow together in an estate context to create welcoming spaces for the formation of faith & discipleship.

Holy Trinity Shaw, St Mary High Crompton & St James Thornham, Diocese of Manchester - Developing faith in children and young people through liturgical participation.

Walton, Diocese of Liverpool - A partnership between Walton Team Ministry & Alsop High School - 'Together We Can' focusing on growing faith through social action.

The Archway Learning Trust, Diocese of Southwell & Nottingham - Young & Christian: supporting young people to live out their faith more boldly at school, home & church.

The Glossopdale Mission Community, Diocese of Derby - Transition to secondary school & engaging with young people.

Forest South Deanery, Diocese of Gloucester - to alleviate poverty through supporting children in schools to improve their mental health.

Backwell, Diocese of Bath & Wells - Pupil chaplaincy in schools.

Whipton, Diocese of Exeter - Growing youth provision across church, household & school.

Ignite, Alnwick, Diocese of Newcastle - Creating innovative spaces to connect church, family and school.

Cranmer Hall, Diocese of Durham - Developing a dedicated research & training centre.

Diocese of Sheffield - Church in Schools.

Pathfinder Church, Northstowe, Diocese of Ely - 'The roots to grow, the path to follow, the wings to fly': focusing on setting up an outdoor worshipping community in partnership with the local school.

St Benet's MAT, Diocese of Norwich - Development of a MAT-wide holistic chaplaincy team that equips ordained and lay leaders.

Sharnbrook Deanery, St Albans - Collaborative working between rural churches.

The Parish of St Michael's, Aldershot, Diocese of Guildford - Intergenerational connections with hard-to-reach groups.

Diocese of Winchester & Diocese of Portsmouth DBE Chatting Faith Project, using well loved books to encourage faith-based conversations in the home.

Sherbourne Area Schools Trust (SASP), Diocese of Salisbury - Young people as leaders in rural areas.

The young people at The Salisbury Hub have also been setting up a youth council that is representative of the town and the schools across the town.

'It's good to hear people say what they think' and 'When you listen to someone, you can add your ideas and build on it'
Year 6 pupil, Sherbourne



growing faith Research

Growing Faith: Connections - This research team came up four simple principles when working across home, church and school: relationships, voices, rhythms and purpose.

Growing Faith in Minster Communities - What happens to children's faith if you invest in their spiritual leaders? A fascinating project from Leicester Diocese, where teachers' spirituality is given the chance to grow.

Happiness Clubs - A fun-filled intergenerational cross-church/school experiment in Peterborough Diocese, giving older people the chance to work alongside younger ones, with everyone gaining skills in wellbeing.

Children and holiness - In York and Durham Dioceses, very young children were asked about their concept of holiness, with some fascinating findings.

Exploring how to grow intergenerational worship at all-age services - At St Mary in Charnwood a small-scale study drew out the joys and difficulties of trying to be an intergenerational worshipping community in an ordinary parish setting.

Change agents: listening to children's stories of spiritual leadership in their school
A fun-filled intergenerational cross-church/school experiment in Peterborough Diocese, giving older people the chance to work alongside younger ones, with everyone gaining skills in wellbeing.

A shared community: using theological reflection between priests & headteachers
In York and Durham Dioceses, very young children were asked about their concept of holiness, with some fascinating findings.

Empowering parents - In a project spanning the country, researchers from Liverpool Hope University look into the joys and difficulties of practising faith at home in Christian families.

Faith & Belonging among Children in Hybrid Intergenerational Church - a fun-filled intergenerational cross-church/school experiment in Haslingfield, Peterborough Diocese, giving older people the chance to work alongside younger ones, with everyone gaining skills in wellbeing.

Let us pray...anywhere? The quiet bubble of children's prayer lives at school, home and in the great outdoors was respectfully observed in this project from Hereford Diocese. Possibly the only existing evidence of prayer happening on horseback...

Are we listening? - Are children's voices being heard, & if so, what difference does that make to the worshipping community? A project from Manchester Diocese looks at practice in school & church.

Church/school partnership and the spiritual development of children - In Guildford Diocese, the team gathered fascinating insights into what helps children grow spiritually, listening to children, teachers and parents.

Faith in Transition - This study from Blackburn Diocese listened to hundreds of children at that crossover point between primary and secondary school to hear how their faith develops during that time.

School Chaplains - School chaplains are key players in the relationship between home, school & church: how effective are they & what makes them even more effective in their ministry?

www.cofe.io/gfnewsletter



What next?

Check the website for further details of each research project. You can also explore the research findings from each project through webinars, networks and publications.

Join us at one of the one-day face-to-face **Growing Faith Research Conferences** at theological colleges with stimulating speakers and researchers. Everybody with any interest in Growing Faith is very welcome, whatever your role.



Over 2023 the Foundation has been supporting researchers from across the country to discover more about what is happening in the intersections between church, home and school. Here are headlines about the different 2023 projects. You can find links to the full reports and associated resources on the Growing Faith webpage.

A research conference was held at Cranmer Hall in July 2023 to share the early findings of some of these projects and to dig deeper into the practical theology in this field.

We'll be looking for new research projects in 2024 to explore the world of church, school and home: perhaps your class or school could lead a project? Your church? Your diocese or MAT?

Check the website for updates or get in touch with us at growingfaith@churchofengland.org

growing faith

Churches, schools and homes working together in
a nexus with the spiritual flourishing of children
and young people at the centre.

Pray

www.cofe.com/gfpray



Podcast

www.cofe.com/gfpodcast



Join us in prayer week by week
www.cofe.com/gfpray



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