

FAITH IN THE NEXUS UPDATES

Following the successful launch of the Faith in the Nexus report on 18th November 2020, we have been busy planning the next phase. From November 2020 – February 2021, the report has been viewed 183 times and downloaded 142 times. We would love to hear from you if you have viewed or downloaded the report: how has it informed or supported your work? *Please see contact details at the end of this newsletter.*

The full report and accompanying animation can be found by following this link:

[Faith In The Nexus \(nicer.org.uk\)](https://nicer.org.uk)

WHAT HAVE WE BEEN DOING?



A Focus on Parents

The findings from the report indicated that some parents struggle with the faith- conversations that their children initiate in the home. Sometimes they feel unable to engage because they lack spiritual/religious literacy; they feel they need to offer ‘answers’ and are unsure how to respond. In consultation with Ministry and the Kitchen Table project we intend to re-edit the Faith in the Nexus animation for a parental audience, using inclusive language and stressing the importance of sharing and exploring with your child rather than feeling compelled to provide answers. It is planned that the animation for parents will be endorsed with a guidebook and act as a signpost to a wide range practical resources.

Podcasts

Growing Faith Podcast

On 12th February, the Church of England launched a new podcast series called, ‘Growing Faith Adventure,’ This podcast series seeks to open up discussions of faith around home, school, and church. Dr Ann Casson, in conversation with Revd. Mary Hawes, was invited to speak about some of the key findings from the Faith in the Nexus project. Here is the link to the podcast:

<https://anchor.fm/growing-faith>

Faith in the Nexus Podcasts

Dr Ann Casson and Nick Taunt (a consultant on the Faith in the Nexus project) are planning a podcast entitled, ‘Exploring Children’s Spirituality’ to encourage audiences to think and reflect on the findings of the report. The animation will be used to structure this conversation considering the academic thinking behind the narration and exploring some of the key findings from the research. The podcast will be aimed at Religious Leaders, as well as a wider audience who may be interested in the topic.

Faith in the Nexus: A Catholic Context. The Faith in the Nexus investigation involved 20 church primary schools; a cross-section of Church of England and Catholic primary schools. Recently, we held our first consultation meeting to consider how the findings of the report could be applied in a Catholic context. The meeting proved to be extremely enriching in terms of discussions around parent-led catechesis; how sacramental programmes provide opportunities for key connections with parents on the fringes of parish life, and nurturing faith through evangelisation, catechesis, and adult formation. We look forward to further consultations focusing on different aspects of the nexus: home, school, and parish.



Engagement with Bible

Recently, Ann Casson had an interesting conversation with Dr Rhiannon McAleer, Head of Research & Impact from the Bible Society. They explored how Faith in the Nexus findings resonate with the Lumino research undertaken by the Bible Society. This drew on an online YouGov survey of 19,101 adults in England and Wales in October and November 2018. The survey covered attitudes to religion, Christianity, and the Bible; behaviour in relation to the Bible and churchgoing; engagement; motivations and barriers to engaging with the Bible, among other areas.

The Faith in the Nexus report revealed that children rarely read the Bible at home and, when they do, they are more likely to do so in private. We are confident that there is potential scope here for increasing opportunities for children to explore Scripture in the home by providing essential support for parents. The Lumino survey showed that with support and the right tools, many more people are open to finding out more about the Bible.

The major challenge we are seeking to overcome is a lack of resources in the home environment, whether that be copies of the Bible or a lack in family knowledge and understanding of Bible texts. A surprising finding, from the Nexus report, was that several children spoke of the gift of a Bible from grandparents, school, or church.

The Bibles for Children charity, established by Mr Ted Hudson, aims to provide Bibles for year 2 through to year 6 children in schools. Two Bibles are offered that are age appropriate with the bulk of the cost for each Bible being covered by the charity. Younger children are gifted a children's Bible, and the older children, a Rainbow Good News Bible.

After a conversation with Alison Clark, Head of Open the Book, we are looking at the critical role of people, like the Open the Book teams, who act as bridges between church, school, and home.

We look forward to connecting with key organisations and charities to find out how our work can help support the exploration of the Scripture in the home, so please do contact us if you are interested in our research in this area.

Resources

Throughout February, we have consulted with various Church of England dioceses, including David Morton, the DDE for the Diocese of St Albans; Quentin Roper, the DDE for Diocese of Canterbury; Revd Jo Wetherall, the Children and Families Officer from the Diocese of Gloucester and Carolyn Edwards, the Children and Youth Adviser for the Diocese of York.

It was inspiring to hear of their plans for their respective dioceses and exciting that much of their work with schools, church communities and families resonate with many of the Faith in the Nexus findings and we look forward to exploring this in more depth.

If you would be interested in finding out how a Nexus resource could support your diocese or have suggestions of your own, please do contact us.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Catholic Consultation Event: The Nexus and Sacramental Preparation.

Date: Thursday 11th March 2021, 12:30pm- 1:30pm:

Please contact: ann.pittaway@canterbury.ac.uk

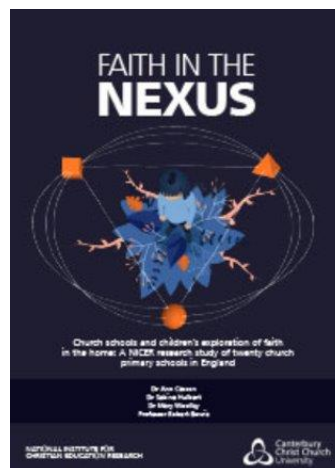
Seminar: Who are the Occasional Belongers?

Date: Wednesday 21st April 2021, 3pm-4pm

Maximum 25 people

Please contact: gill.harrison@canterbury.ac.uk

For general enquiries, please contact: nexus@canterbury.ac.uk



NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION RESEARCH

Canterbury Christ Church University
nicer@canterbury.ac.uk
www.nicer.org.uk

