

A very warm welcome back to the new academic year. The Nexus team have been busy planning for the next stage of research, and we are delighted to share with you, in this newsletter, our plans going forward.

Our Nexus resources continue to be popular, as indicated by our download figures below, but we would really love to hear how they are being used to inform and support your work. Please do let us know by contacting us via nexus@canterbury.ac.uk

The Nexus resources can be found via the following link:

<https://nicer.org.uk/faith-in-the-nexus>

Should you wish to have hardcopies of any of the PDFs, please contact us at nexus@canterbury.ac.uk

For your information, here are the download figures:

RESOURCE	TIME SPAN	NUMBER OF DOWNLOADS
The Faith in the Nexus Report	Nov 2020 – Sept 2022	552
The Animation	Nov 2020 – Sept 2022	1 731
The PDFs	June 2021 – Sept 2022	1 385
The Parents' Animation	June 2021 – Sept 2022	1 400
The Childrens' Animation	Jan 2022 – Sept 2022	450

WHAT HAVE WE BEEN DOING?

We are very excited to tell you about our next steps for Faith in the Nexus.

1. Toddlers in the Nexus

This month we engage in the foundation stage of our Toddlers in the Nexus research. The research team from NICER will be visiting a number of church toddler groups in the SE of England to investigate the spiritual flourishing of the youngest children (2–4-year-olds).

There are three key reasons why research is needed into the spiritual flourishing of the youngest children.

- A. There is a paucity of academic research into childrens' spiritual flourishing and few studies involving the youngest children (Mahoney, 2021; Hay and Nye, 2006). However, an existing body of literature illuminates the importance of paying attention to the spiritual flourishing of young children for future well-being.
- B. The spiritual flourishing of the youngest children is a neglected area in policy and practice in the UK, despite being widely regarded as essential for their holistic



development. There is a general lack of recognition of the importance of providing for the spiritual flourishing of the very youngest children.

- C. There is a particular need to address this neglect as we navigate the lasting impact of the pandemic on all ages, but mainly on the well-being of young children (Barnardo's, 2020, Freud, 2020). Emerging research has revealed that the pandemic has impacted individuals differently, exacerbating existing inequalities (Hirsch, 2007; Leaton, 2021). Recent international research (Holmes et al., 2021) revealed that the pandemic had an adverse effect on how many churches engaged with young children.

2. Nexus Revisited

We are keen to revisit the Nexus research to explore more deeply faith in the home, especially since the pandemic. By all reports, home life has been through an extraordinary period during COVID. The All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Faith and Society has found that belonging and connectedness has taken on a much greater importance for people, and that faith communities are a key part of this in local communities. Given that many families interpret what it means to belong to faith in a variety of ways, we think it is more important than ever to find out about their domestic spiritual life, so that the home context can be better understood. There is an opportunity through the networks we have forged, to reach into the spiritual home life of children and find out much more about what that is like in 21st century Britain.



We will be keen to update you on both the above projects throughout this year.

Faith in the Nexus Resources

Just a reminder that we have built up a substantial library of Nexus resources that can be downloaded from our website <https://nicer.org.uk/faith-in-the-nexus/the-nexus-toolkit>



These are some of our most popular pdfs useful for a home, church, school context

Also available is our Teachers' Action Pack



This includes a fully resourced assembly with teacher notes for primary school children.

We have three animations



The first animation focuses on the main findings of the Nexus report, the second has a focus for parents and the third has been created for primary school children.

Resources for Staff INSET

If you are leading an INSET session for staff at your school focusing on the spiritual flourishing of the child, we have CPD packages for the Church of England and Roman Catholic primary school contexts. Should you wish to receive this resource, please email nexus@canterbury.ac.uk. This tool kit offers an explanation of the Nexus research and practical ideas that will help nurture the spiritual flourishing of children in your school in collaboration with the home and the local church or parish.

With much support from our network of consultants, we are continuing to create new resources, that offer practical ideas of what the Nexus looks like in practice so please visit our website regularly.

NEXUS SEMINARS

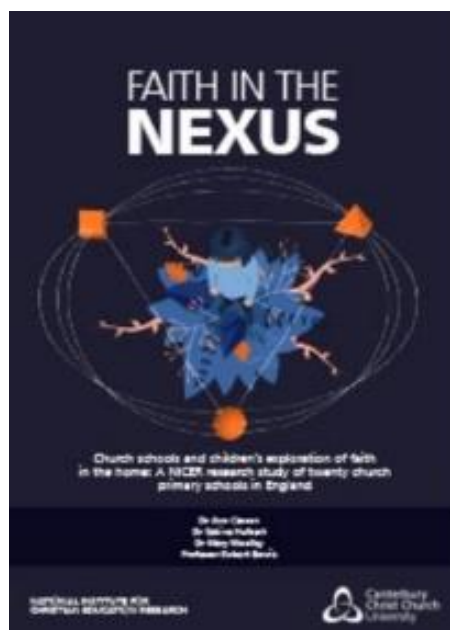
This year we will continue to deliver our online Nexus seminars and a new schedule will be issued as we progress with our research projects.

Our first online seminar this academic year will be held on Wednesday 28th September 2022 between 2pm – 3pm. This seminar will focus on practical ideas taken from the Nexus findings that can be used in school, home, and church to encourage the spiritual flourishing of young children. It will be a time of listening and sharing ideas and resources that may support your work.

Should you wish to attend, please email gill.harrison@canterbury.org.uk

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

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



NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION RESEARCH
Canterbury Christ Church University

