

Six things churches can do now to connect with families

Here are six things you can do now to begin or strengthen connections with families. These are accessible across generations, adaptable for a wide age range. Intergenerational relationships benefit and support the whole community; here are some ideas to bring people together.

Make contact and facilitate connections

It might feel as if connections are lost or broken but it's not too late to reach out to families and enable wider connections with the church family.

Intergenerational book share

Longer evenings invite snuggling up with a good book. We give you some tips to encourage the generations to connect over story.

The spiritual lives of under 5s

The spiritual lives of under 5s often get overlooked. We give you a couple of signposts to resource worship with pre-schoolers.

Lego club

Lego is great, whatever age you are. How might generations connect around the multicoloured bricks?

Cooking/baking

Separate kitchens don't keep bakers apart if they connect online to share their bakes, tips and stories.

Godly Play

It is possible to gather as a Godly Play community online – see our tips for giving it a go.

See next page for more detail on each idea.

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Make contact and facilitate connections

"See the connections you have and start there," says the Families Minister at St Peter's, Furze Platt.

Phone, text, message, go for a walk at school home-time, reconnect with a smile and a "How are you?" Email is less popular but WhatsApp or similar groups for peer information and support are an easy way of connecting. Set up a group for church parents and regularly post questions like *Where have you seen God at work today?* and *How can we pray for each other today?*

Send a letter or postcard (by post) to contact children or families directly. Postcards are particularly good because they are open.

Intergenerational book share

Choose an accessible book with the group. Will it be Narnia, Hogwarts or Neverland? If literacy is a difficulty, tell short stories aloud to the group.

Decide how frequently you will meet and how much you will read.

Ask wondering questions: *I wonder which part you liked best? I wonder which part you found difficult or challenging? What themes are there? (light and dark, lost and found, friends and enemies) I wonder where God is in this story? Did it remind you of a Bible story, passage, verse or psalm?*

Pray together and end with someone reading from the next chapter.

The spiritual lives of under 5s

Offer short acts of online worship that pre-schoolers and their carers can connect with (live or on demand). We recommend:

[Diddy Disciples](#)

[Biblebuds](#)

Keep talking about [baptism](#) with families so they know it is possible when permitted.

Offer opportunities for families with pre-schoolers to get together online to talk about their experiences and questions.

Lego club

Check everyone has access to Lego and deliver if needed to enable participation. Think about what you will ask people to make – a story from their week, a Bible story, an expression of lockdown – and how you will share what today's build will be.

Give time for the build. Encourage some interaction.

Enable each participant to share their build story. Use questions like *Tell the story of what you made. Which section do you like the best? Which was the hardest part to build? Tell me more about this part. Where is God in this story?*

Pray for each other and/or share the peace or a similar call and response liturgy your group create together.

Cooking/baking

Think about what you would like to bake or cook together and how you will ensure everyone has all the ingredients needed. We would suggest something relatively simple to start with so you can get used to working and interacting online together.

Remember to enable all participants to arrive, settle, introduce themselves and welcome others. It may be helpful to communicate something of the process of the session. Enjoy making and chatting together as you go through, including asking and listening about where participants have seen God at work in the last week.

Godly Play

It is possible to adapt a Godly Play session to an online setting.

Focus on relationship and community as you come together. Practise the story beforehand (as you would normally). Work out how you will wonder together. You may need to be more intentional about inviting participants to share online. You may need to deliver a bag of craft materials for the response time, but also invite participants to respond with what they have available (Lego, photography, sewing or knitting, wooden blocks, leaves, etc.). Work out how you will 'feast' together. End well – pray, sing and bless (observing lockdown regulations if relevant).