

A SURVEY OF YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S WORK IN  
2054 CHURCHES ACROSS ENGLAND, SCOTLAND AND WALES

# Losing

# Heart

How churches have  
lost confidence in their  
work with children and  
young people

December 2016

**OneHope**  
GOD'S WORD. EVERY CHILD.

THE  
YOUTHSCAPE  
CENTRE FOR  
**RESEARCH**



“Co

What is your church's **greatest** need in working with children and young people?

# Confidence.

**Our church has never had lots of families and young people in it, and although we have a desire to see them in church we have no clear vision as to how that might be achieved.”**



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# Intro.

## What does youth and children's work look like across the country?

**It's a question we've been asking for a while. What kind of youth and children's work is happening, and which churches are succeeding at reaching the next generation of children and young people?**

To find some answers, we commissioned Christian Research to survey **2054** churches across England, Scotland and Wales in Autumn 2015. The findings give us an insight into the level, content and feel of youth and children's ministry in many churches across this country, and how they are finding the task of engaging the next generation with the Christian faith. In the coming pages you will find a summary of the headline findings, along with comment, reflection and points to consider.

The most interesting and reliable findings, we believe, are internal comparisons within the sample. Our three headline findings follow this approach, exploring some of the fascinating relationships between church size and perceived effectiveness of youth and children's work, the content being covered in youth groups, and the greatest felt needs of those answering the survey on behalf of their respective ministries.

We also include the numbers of youth and children present in churches, church sizes, and numbers of paid workers, but with caution. These are not statistically representative figures, and we suspect that they paint a more optimistic picture of the numerical health of youth and children's work in this country than may be in fact the case. These are representative of the **2054** churches surveyed only, so we encourage a careful reading.

We hope that this research can offer some interesting insights, and better inform our work with children and young people. This is the start of the conversation, and in the coming weeks and months we intend to reflect further on the causes behind some of the trends identified in this report, and gather practitioners together to discuss what the practical outworkings might be.

# Summary of findings

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**The responses we received from the churches were concerning. Many are doing their best to provide youth and children's work activities, but are struggling. They lack the resources simply to 'keep the show on the road', and to provide for the existing children and young people in their care.**

The churches lacked confidence in addressing the topics young people really care about, and feel a general sense of desperation about what, if anything, will improve their youth and children's work in the years to come. There was a marked difference in responses between children's

work and youth work, with many churches feeling more equipped and confident in children's work compared to youth work.

Many simply can't seem to provide any youth work or don't have any young people left to work with, and it's hard to know what comes first: young people leaving the church, or a lack of youth provision. For many of these churches, the workers are few and they are losing heart and confidence.

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## Churches, especially smaller ones, do more children's work than youth work.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the levels of youth and children's work activity varied according to church size. Nearly all churches offered some form of children's work on a Sunday – the variation was between **80.3%** of small churches (up to 50 congregants) and **98.7%** of large churches (150+ congregants). The same was not true for youth work: **89.1%** of the large churches offered youth work on a Sunday, while only **49.7%** of the small churches did. We also found that respondents from the larger churches were more confident in the effectiveness of their work with children and young people. Bigger is not necessarily better, but the larger churches surveyed were more confident that their youth and children's work was effective.

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## Churches are failing to talk about the topics young people want to discuss.

We were interested to discover what sort of youth work was being offered by churches, when indeed it is. We were alarmed to discover that only **50.2%** of the churches surveyed 'often' discussed the basic beliefs of the Christian faith with their young people. In addition to this, the majority of the churches 'never' discussed the subjects of pornography, same-sex attraction, other world faiths and drugs and addiction with their young people.

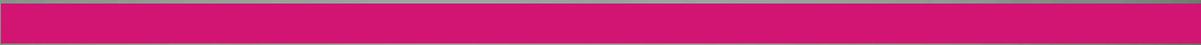
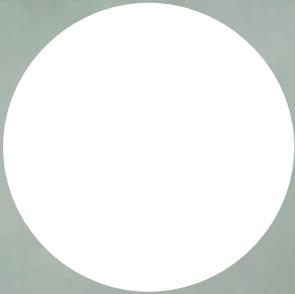
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## Churches know that they are struggling with their youth and children's work but don't know how to fix it.

The overall tone of responses from the churches was pretty desperate. Many lack the people, the funds and the time to keep their youth and children's work going, and many don't have any youth work, or any young people (and in some cases children) to start with. When asked what was good about their youth and children's work, many simply answered: 'not a lot'. There is a desire to offer something to children and young people, but many churches don't have the energy or the ideas to make it happen.



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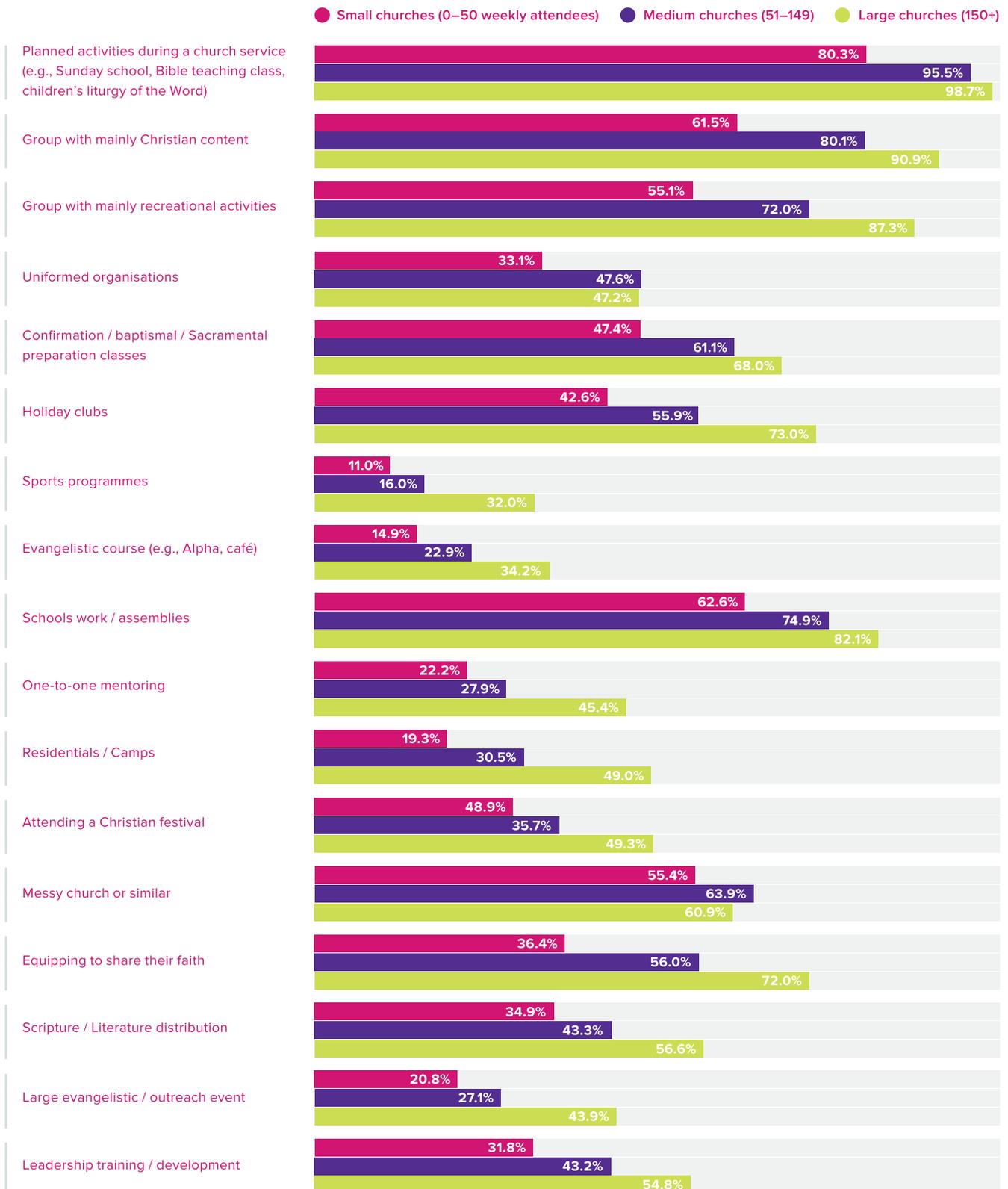
# Churches, especially **smaller ones**, do more children's work than youth work

- Significantly more youth work is offered in the larger churches surveyed than in the smaller churches.
- Children's work remains more consistent across small, medium and large churches than youth work.
- The larger churches were nearly twice as likely to say that their children's work is 'effective'; nearly half of the smaller churches said their youth work is 'ineffective'.

In the survey, churches were given tick boxes for the below activities, and were asked which they offered to children and young people. The majority of the churches offered activities for children on a Sunday: nearly all of the large churches and **80.3%** of the small churches.

The majority of larger churches also offered youth related activities on a Sunday morning, but under half of small churches did. Youth work seems to be hit most by the size of the church. The majority of the small churches seemed able to provide some form of children's work activity

on a Sunday morning, but struggle to offer something for those children when they reach their teenage years. Only **14.3%** of the churches surveyed have no young people at all in their congregation, so this cannot be due to no young people attending.

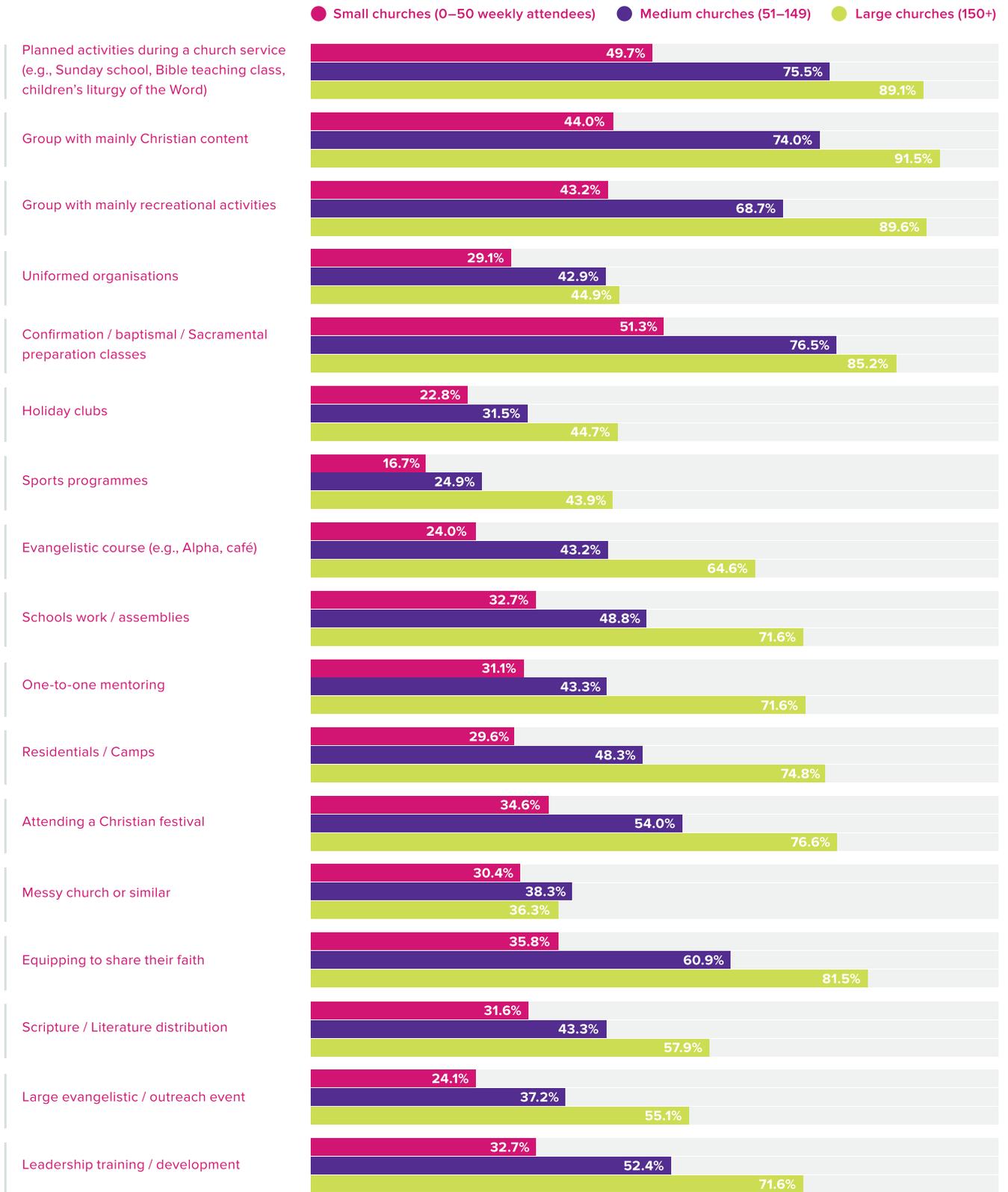


**Fig. 1.1** Children's programmes / activities by church size.

The pattern continues down the list of youth work activities, with a stark contrast between small, medium and large churches and the amount of youth work they offer. When it comes to the activities which many would consider the mainstay of youth work

- youth groups (either Christian or recreational) and residential trips / attending Christian summer festivals - smaller churches again struggle to offer anything, while activities in larger churches remain consistently high. Across both charts, it is only

Uniformed Organisations and Messy Church which see smaller and medium churches approaching and overtaking the numbers offered by large churches.



**Fig. 1.2** Young people's programmes / activities by church size.



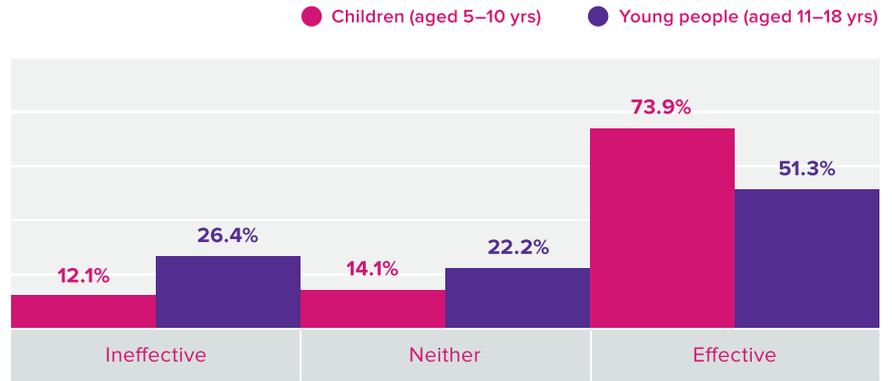
We asked a supplementary question of those answering the survey, to gain a deeper insight into the quality of the youth and children’s work offered. We asked them to rate how effective they believed their youth and children’s work to be. We offered no qualification for what ‘effective’ meant, leaving it to the person answering the survey to decide. Their answers therefore reveal how confident they are feeling about their youth and children’s work.

On average, around half of the respondents believed their youth work to be effective, and **73.9%** believed their children’s work to be effective (see **Fig. 1.3**). However, when we divide the effectiveness by church size, the contrasts are more stark (see **Figures 1.4** and **1.5**).

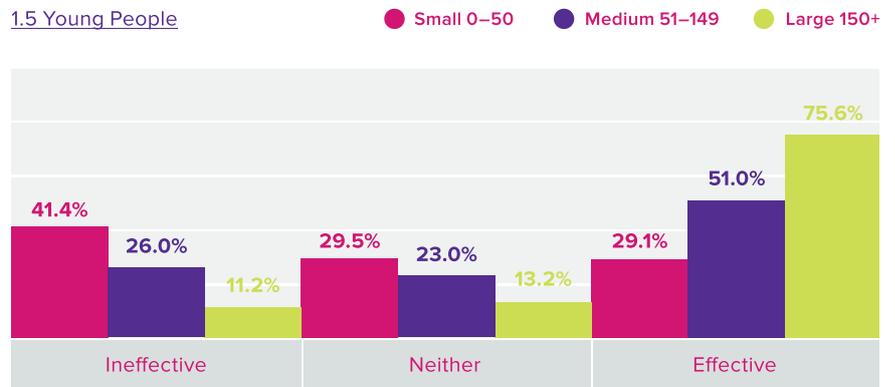
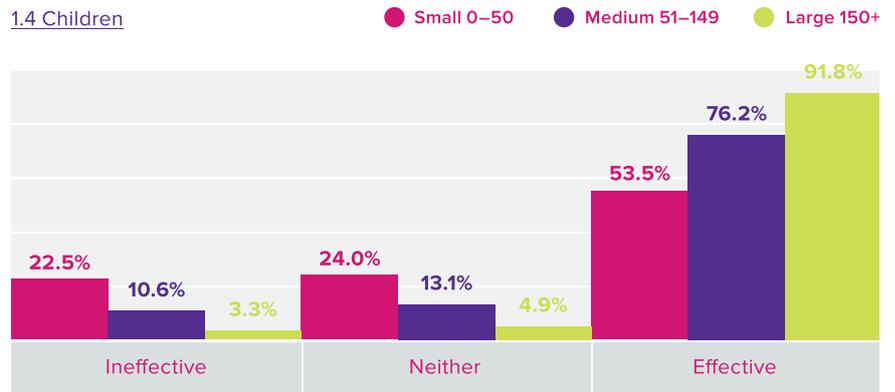
An overwhelming majority of the respondents from the large churches believed their children’s work to be effective (**91.8%**), while a good proportion – **75.6%** - believed their youth work to be effective. In contrast, just over two-fifths of the respondents from small churches (**41.4%**) believed their youth work to be ineffective, and only **29.1%** believed their youth work to be effective.

### Questions for reflection and further research:

- Why are the respondents from smaller churches less confident about the effectiveness of their youth and children’s work? Is this simply a case of a lack of resources, or are there other factors at play?
- Why is it that the churches surveyed offer more children’s work than youth work? Is it that children’s work is perceived to be easier and therefore volunteers are more forthcoming?



**Fig. 1.3** The perceived effectiveness of churches’ work with children and young people.



**Fig. 1.4 and 1.5** The perceived effectiveness of churches’ work with children and young people by church size.

**92.1%** of the churches surveyed offered children's work activities on a Sunday, while **71.8%** of the churches surveyed offered youth work activities.



**41.4% of the small churches surveyed said their youth work was 'ineffective'.**





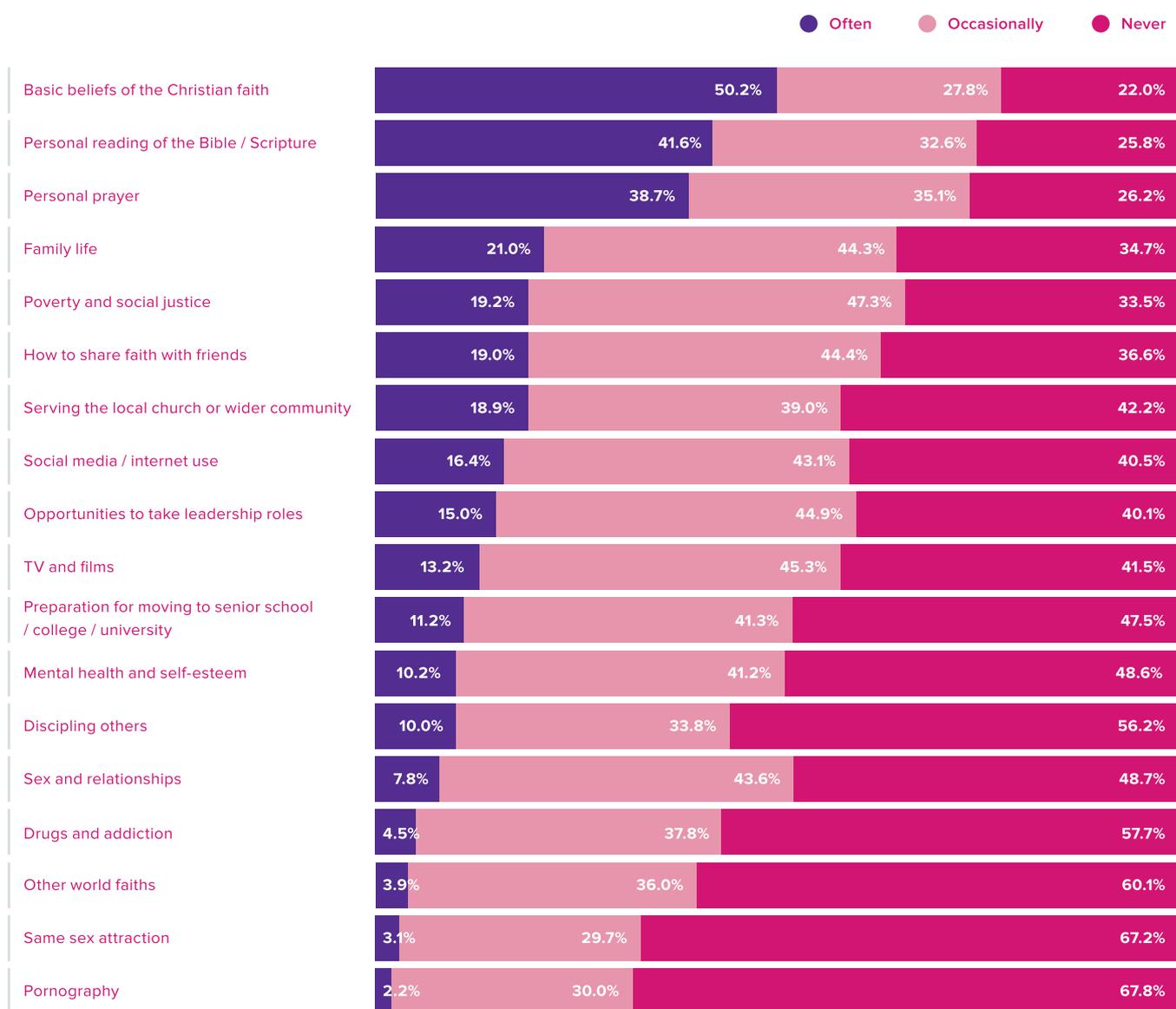
# Churches are failing to talk about the topics young people want to **discuss**.

- Only **50.2%** of the churches surveyed 'often' discuss the basic beliefs of the Christian faith with young people.
- The majority of the churches 'never' discuss the subjects of pornography, same-sex attraction, other world faiths and drugs and addiction with their young people.



We wanted to find out what churches were talking about with their young people, and the topics they prioritised in their youth work. We provided what we thought was a fairly standard list of youth work appropriate topics, which an average youth group may cover regularly. We were surprised to see the results

in the charts below, which reveal that only **50.2%** of the churches regularly talk about the basic beliefs of the Christian faith with their young people, and under **10%** of the churches surveyed regularly talk about sex and relationships, other world faiths and pornography in their youth groups.

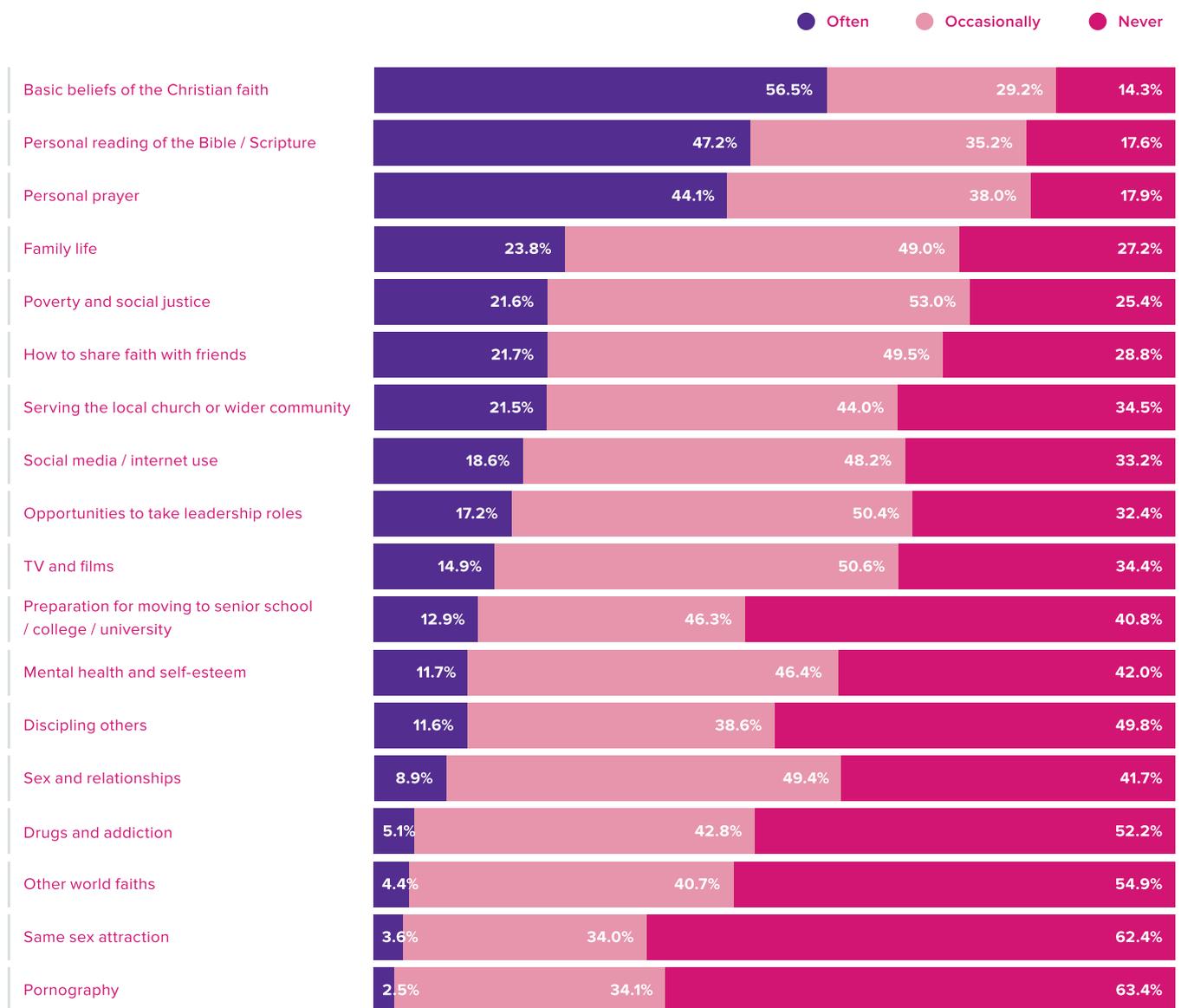


**Fig. 2.1** Topics covered with young people. All churches included.

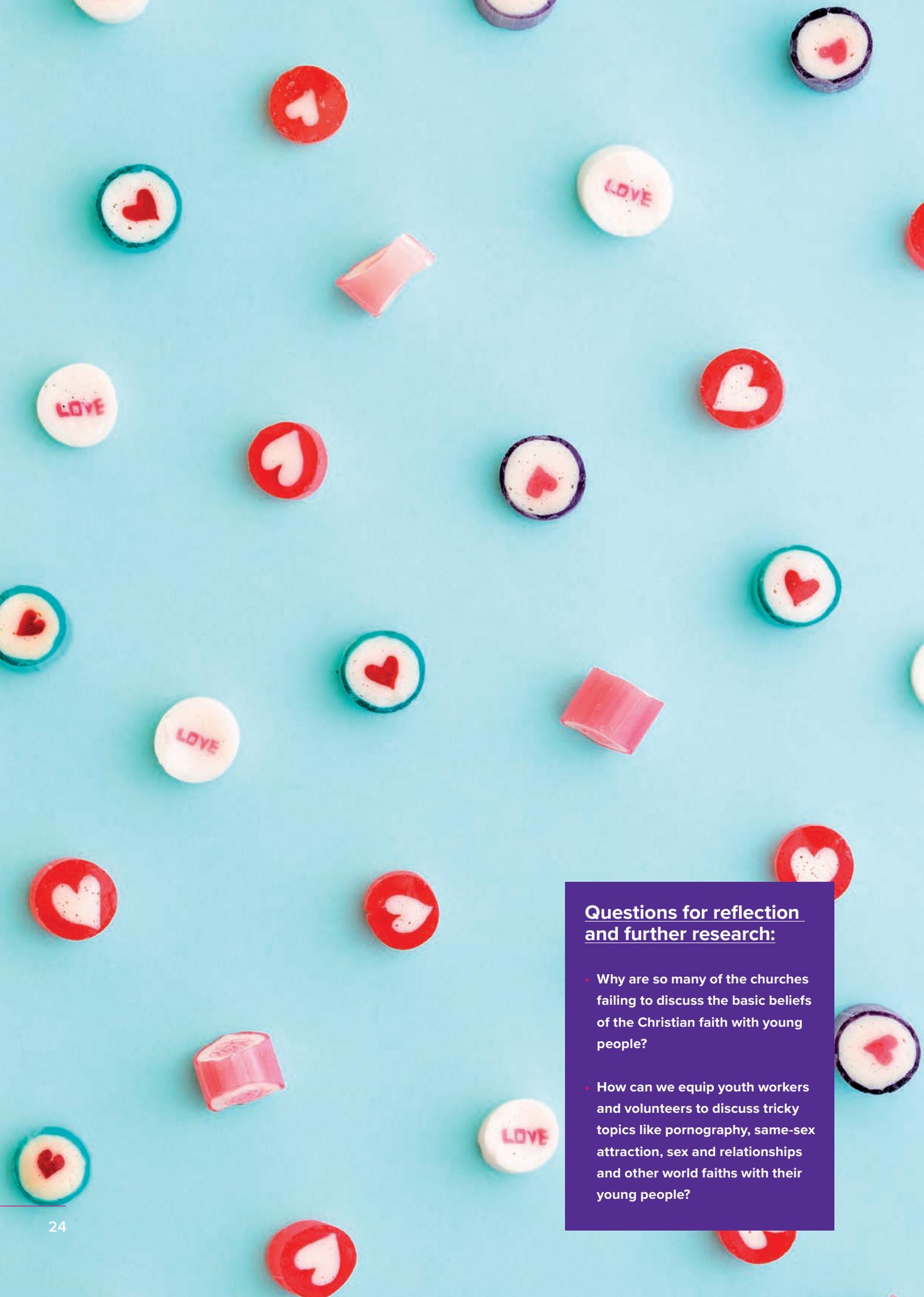


We wondered if the results might have been skewed by churches who have no young people attending (who may have ticked 'never' on all topics), as we found it surprising that such a large proportion of the churches never talked about the basic beliefs of the Christian faith with their young people.

**Fig. 2.2** shows the results excluding churches with zero young people attending, and the results are not much improved: only **56.5%** of the churches often discuss basic beliefs of the Christian faith with their young people, while **43.5%** occasionally or never do.



**Fig. 2.2** Topics covered with young people minus churches with no young people attending.



### Questions for reflection and further research:

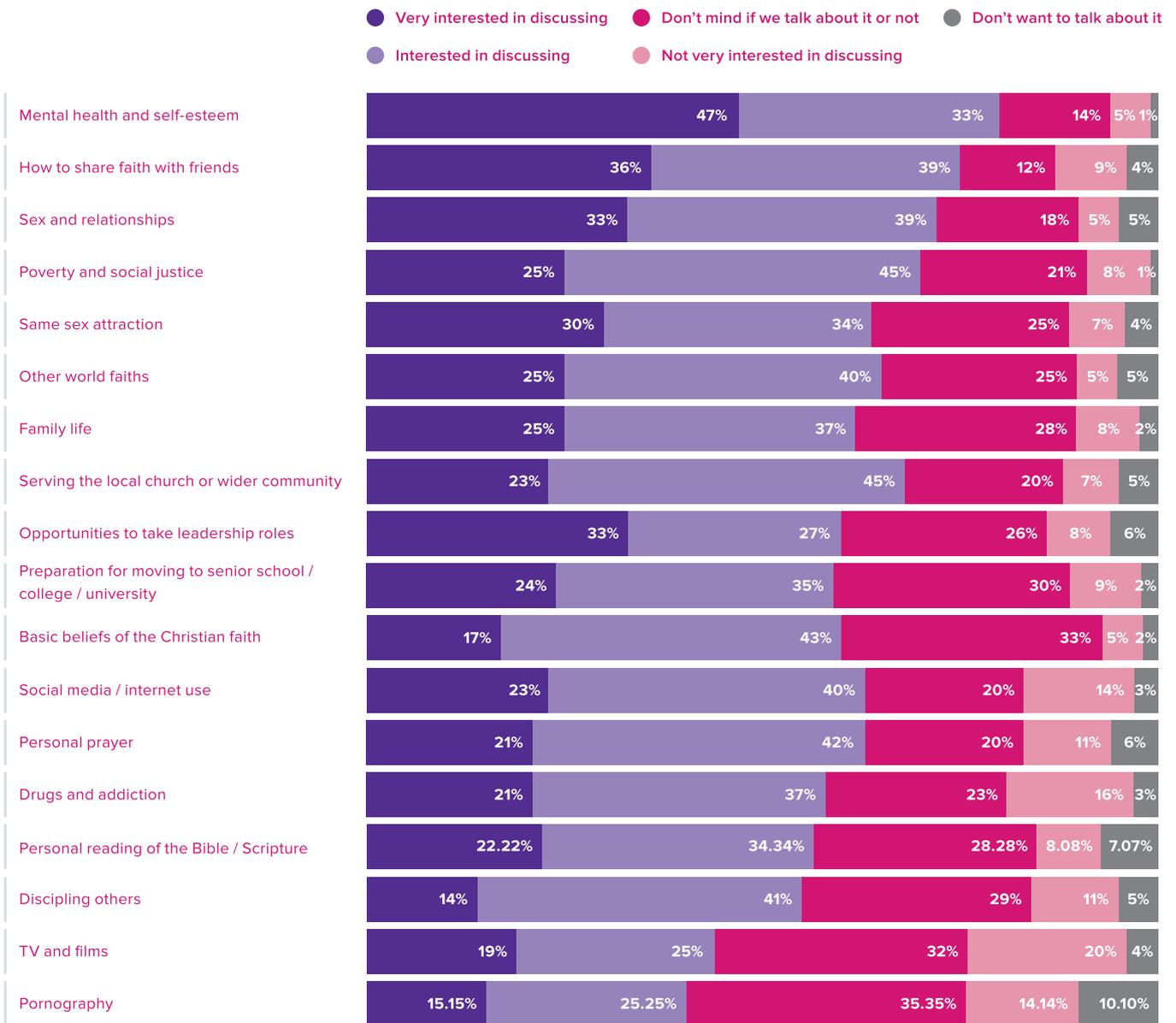
- Why are so many of the churches failing to discuss the basic beliefs of the Christian faith with young people?
- How can we equip youth workers and volunteers to discuss tricky topics like pornography, same-sex attraction, sex and relationships and other world faiths with their young people?

To complement our findings, we polled **100** 11-19 year-olds through an online survey to gauge which topics they would be most interested in discussing in their youth group.

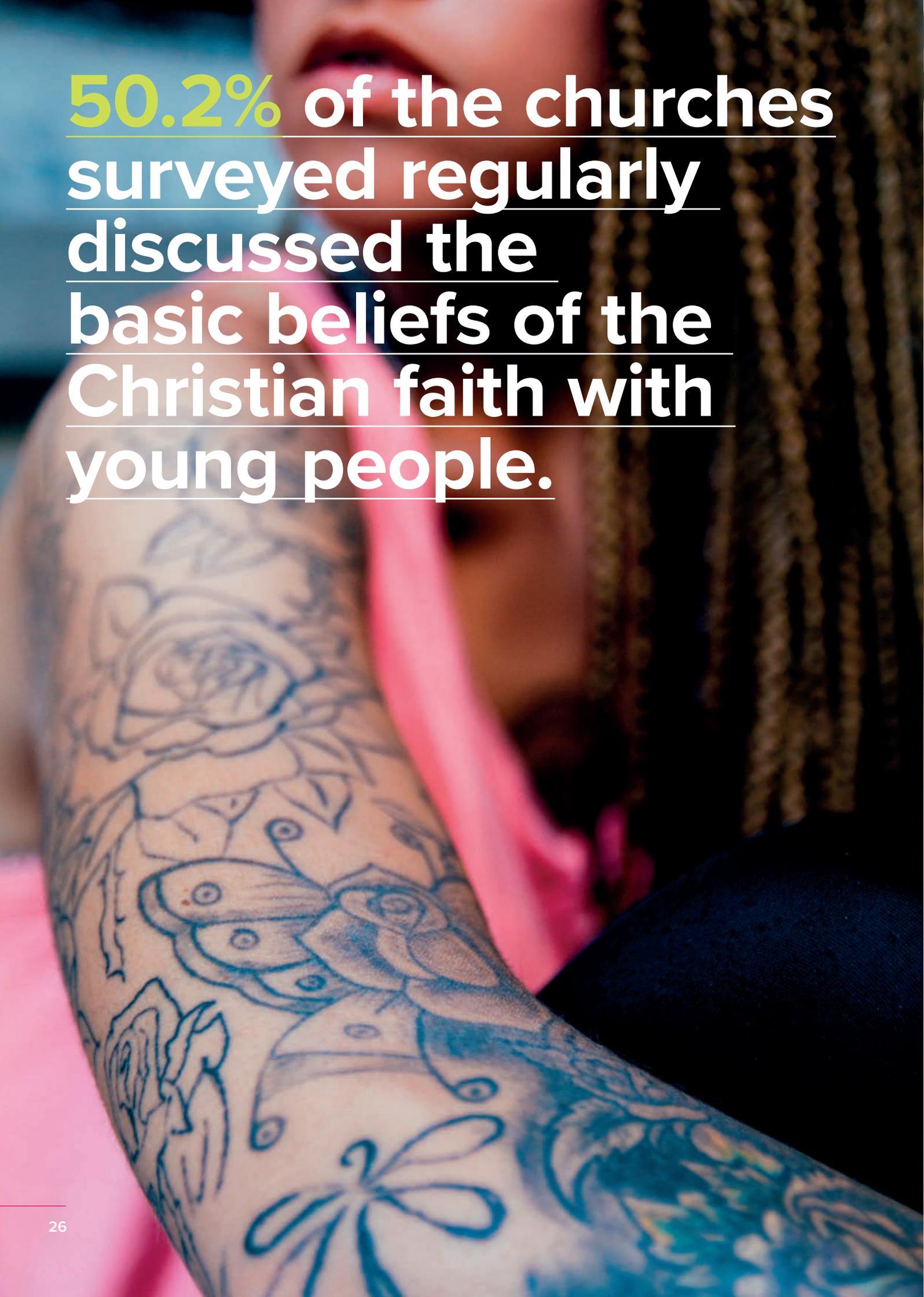
On average, young people were interested in talking about every topic on the list below. The most popular topic, which **47%** of the young people said they would be 'very interested' in discussing, was mental health and self-esteem. This was one of the least

regularly discussed topics from our survey of churches, as just above **10.2%** often talked to their young people about mental health, and **48.6%** never did. Another topic high on the list for young people was sex and relationships, a subject which only **7.8%** of the churches regularly talked to young people about, and **48.7%** of the churches never did. The least popular topic to discuss for the young people, perhaps unsurprisingly, was pornography;

**10.10%** of the young people surveyed said they didn't want to talk about it, and a further **14.14%** said that they weren't very interested in talking about it. This is unsurprising given the sensitive nature of this topic, but nonetheless a topic youth leaders need to be talking to their young people about, and one that **76%** of the young people surveyed said they would be interested in or at least open to talking about.



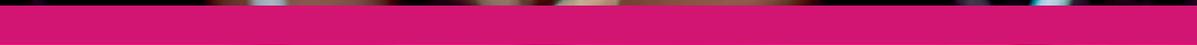
**Fig. 2.3** Youth poll results on topics of interest to discuss in youth groups.



**50.2%** of the churches surveyed regularly discussed the basic beliefs of the Christian faith with young people.

A high-angle, close-up photograph of a person's torso and hands. The person is wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt and blue denim jeans with a brown belt. They are holding a white coffee cup in their left hand and a black smartphone in their right hand. The smartphone screen displays a document with a green horizontal line. The background is blurred, showing a white wall and a white cabinet.

**67.8%** of the churches surveyed never talked to their young people about pornography.



Churches know that they are **struggling** with their youth and children's work but don't know how to **fix it.**

- The majority of the churches mentioned children's work activities when asked what they were doing well.
- The churches appeared desperate when asked about their needs; many referenced the need to simply start a youth or children's work, or to attract some children or young people in the first place.



# What is going well?

We asked those answering the survey a series of open questions, inviting them to share what they felt was going well with their youth and children's work, and what wasn't.

We asked: *"What does your church do well in it's work with children and young people?"*

*"Preschool"*

*"Primary age"*

*"Mums and toddler groups"*

*"Holiday clubs"*

*"Messy church"*

Other common answers included uniformed organisations, all-age activities, Christmas and Easter services and Sunday school programmes.

Sadly, many of the churches didn't have anything positive to say about their youth or children's work, giving answers such as:

*"Not a lot"*

*"Not much"*

*"Nothing, we do not have any young people, only one child of 6 years old"*

*"We do not work with young people, as we do not attract families"*

*"It does not do as well as it should mainly due to an elderly congregation"*

*"Nothing sadly we are an older congregation"*

# What churches need

We then asked the churches what they felt their greatest need was. The tone of their responses was desperate. Here are some of their answers to give a flavour:



This is just a small selection, but many of the answers we received included similar comments. Many of the answers suggest that simply having any children or young people attending on a regular basis would be a start. They also indicate a **lack of ideas or energy** for how things could change, and how churches could **improve** what they are offering to children and young people.



# What churches need (continued)

## Need for more leaders and volunteers.

The highest recurring theme across all of the answers was the need for more helpers or leaders (around **30%** of answers highlighted this as their greatest need). Churches are struggling to provide what they currently do with the people available, and desperately need more people to offer their time. A further **15%** suggested that an employed or paid worker (as opposed to a voluntary leader) was their greatest need. Many of the answers offered supplementary words for the kind of youth or children's workers or volunteers they were looking for:

- **Committed**
- **Trained**
- **Experienced**
- **Energetic**
- **Enthusiastic**
- **Skilled**
- **Vision**
- **Willing**

Committed came out top of the adjectives used to describe the sort of worker or volunteers these churches needed, perhaps suggesting they have not experienced commitment from their leaders in the past. The emphasis on trained and experienced suggests that churches are rightly seeking those with the required skills for the posts they are appointing, or for the volunteers they are recruiting.

## More... volunteers, children, young people, time, resources, money.

A word frequency search revealed that one of the most frequently used words across all of the answers was 'More'. **25%** of the answers included this word, whether in relation to

resources, volunteers, money, time, children or young people. Churches seem to be limited in their capacity to simply run a youth or children's work, and therefore the focus of many of the responses was on the quantity and perhaps even sheer existence of the ministry, over the quality. There were only 29 references to discipleship over the whole sample, and several of these related to the discipleship of the leaders as opposed to the children and young people.

## Ageing congregations seeking younger leaders.

Another prominent theme, particularly in the responses from small and medium churches, was the ageing nature of their congregations. Many of these churches desire to provide youth and children's work but feel that the current helpers are too elderly, and are struggling:

- *"We are all over seventy and find it hard. We need younger volunteers (most are 70+)"*
- *"Commitment from younger adults of which we have few. Average age of congregation 70+"*
- *"People young enough to have the energy to engage with them"*
- *"Young helpers, the helpers are tired and lost their motivation"*
- *"A younger person to start taking over Sunday School from me (I am 74, still well up for it, but I think the time will come)"*

## Whole church involvement

Involving the whole church in the youth and children's work was another theme which emerged from the answers we received. Many

referred to engaging children and young people in the whole life of the church, and receiving support for the ministry from the whole church body. There were also references to making the children and young people feel welcomed in church, not shushed or ignored, and the church being open to change in order to accommodate them.

## Few references to God's involvement, prayer or work of the Holy Spirit.

Only **7%** of the answers referred to God, Jesus or the Holy Spirit in some way, and a further **2.6%** mentioned a need for prayer.

## Questions for reflection and further research:

- **Why are so few of the churches confident in how their children's work, and particularly their youth work, is going?**
- **How can churches inspire and recruit new volunteers to help with the youth and children's work?**
- **How can churches develop their work with children and young people in a difficult economic climate when budgets are tight?**

# Comment:

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## Chris Curtis

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**This report is more a sober warning from a doctor than an autopsy of a dead body. Youth and children's work in churches isn't dead, but we're badly out of shape and a change of lifestyle is urgently required.**

It's hard to hear the difficult findings contained in this report. At this early stage, more work needs to be done to understand why this has happened and, more importantly, what action we need to take. Of course, this research is a generalised view, so it's important to remember that there are bright spots where youth work is thriving, and children's work is clearly doing better. It would be easy to point to them

as an assurance that nothing too drastic is really required. But that would be a mistake. The bigger picture is clear: it tells us what many of us know from our day-to-day work. The doctor's warning must be heeded and this report is a good moment to galvanise ourselves into action.

I can only speak for the small part of the church I lead – a youth ministry organisation called Youthscape who, with our friends at OneHope, commissioned this research. Like everyone else, we read the findings and have to reflect on what God is asking of us, with a particular focus on young people.

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# 1.

## Stop

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Before I rush to defend my own denomination, organisation or church, and before I problem-solve and try to figure out what to do, it's good to stop and sit with these findings for a while. They reflect how others are finding youth and children's ministry right now. I would do well to listen to them and reflect on them. We also need to understand more about what has created this situation.

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# 2.

## New

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The Church has been a force for good in the lives of children and young people for decades – even centuries. Now, at the very point when the need is greater than ever, it finds itself disconnected and unsure of how to respond. Old ideas and methods have run their course. Something new needs to emerge in the way the Church thinks about, resources and does youth and children's ministry. Denominations and old barriers between us must become less important. Innovation and risk must be allowed to thrive, because the opposite reaction breeds caution and small-mindedness.

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# 3.

## Hope

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A man who walks out of the doctor's surgery clutching his test results has a choice. He can file it away and go on as before, or he can seize the opportunity to make big changes. This is one of those moments. We're holding the report right now. What will we do? What will you do? So often it's these moments that spur us on to change and to grow. I am full of hope that, over the next decade, we can reimagine youth and children's work in this country and renew it in ways that we have yet to discover. Surely that is what God is asking of us?

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# 4.

## Confidence

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Behind the different sections of the report is a common thread of a lack of confidence. This begs the question: how can we restore the confidence not just of the Church as an institution, but of the youth and children's workers and volunteers themselves? That's deeper than new programmes, extra money or a shiny new initiative.

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Youthscape will be responding to this research through our priorities and work over the next two years. We want to find ways to help churches renew their confidence in working with young people, and in starting new work from scratch. We are especially keen to help churches tackle the issues young people want to talk about, which the research shows are rarely, if ever, covered. Our plans for publishing and new

projects in 2017 have been adapted to meet this need.

I hope you will also use this research as a guide in developing your priorities and focus in your work with children and young people.

**Change is urgent.**



Chris Curtis is the CEO of Youthscape.



# Restoring Confidence

Our aim in writing this report is to highlight the reality of youth and children's work in many churches across the country. We've discovered that many churches are **struggling** to offer activities for children and young people, and aren't sure how to begin.

We **believe** that there are options for every church when it comes to youth and children's work, and that every church has **something** to offer the children and young people in their area.

In the coming pages we've included **four case studies** highlighting different ways of doing youth and children's work, to provide some models and ideas which may spark new things in your congregation. Even if you can't run a typical youth group each week, you may be able to develop a mentoring scheme in your church (see **p.44**), or start an old and young people's club in your area. These are just a few ideas – there are many more out there for those who are keen to find them, and there is more thinking needed to continue developing new ways of doing and being church with children and young people. If you don't have the energy or resources to run something as it has traditionally been, maybe it's time to reimagine what youth and children's work could look like in your church.



**Jill Rowe** is the ethos and vision formation director for Oasis UK.

This case study was originally printed in Premier Youthwork – [www.premieryouthwork.com](http://www.premieryouthwork.com)

# Case Study. Old and young people's club — Bristol.

## What is it?

This weekly group in Bristol is for old and young people. There's nothing flashy about it – it is simply a space for older and younger people to meet together, chat and have a cup of tea. The existence of this project is evidence that young people love to be around older people, to learn from them, and to find in them grandparent figures they may have never had. We think this model might be replicable by congregations everywhere, to bring together old and young as family in the church.

## Who is it for?

This model might work for **ageing congregations** (see p.35) who aren't sure what they can offer to young people.

## The Story

*The young people at Oasis Academy: John Williams in South Bristol decided to hold a community forum in the run up to the 2012 Olympics, inviting people to come and share their views with them, and together work out how to be peacemakers in their community.*

*The biggest thing that came out of the forum was that older people in the local community were a bit scared of the young people. They knew it was because they didn't know them, but also felt that there was never a chance to get to know them. The older people said that they sometimes felt 'shut in' with nowhere to go and no community space that was fun to be in. The young people realised that this was something they could help with. The decision was made to stop their Wednesday night youth club and turn it into*

*'Open House', where young and old were invited.*

*Today, Open House happens every Wednesday night. The academy space is alive with young and old playing games, doing craft activities, quizzes, playing table tennis, and most importantly of all, talking to one another; telling stories of lives lived and lives still lying ahead. The young people find themselves connected to a generation that many of them hadn't really noticed before. The older people have discovered they can still make a massive difference in young people's lives. As a result of the great relationships built at Open House, volunteering in other Oasis Hub South Bristol activities has increased.*

*It isn't a flashy project. It costs in tea, coffee and biscuits. But the impact is deep and long and sustainable.*



**Karen Turner** is a youth worker in the York and Hull district.

# Case Study. Parent and teenager retreats

## — York.

### What is it?

This is an example of a different way of doing youth residentials. Instead of trying to organise action-packed weekends for young people which may be a big ask of youth work volunteers and resources, Karen Turner in York decided to invite young people and parents to go on retreat together, to share faith and learn alongside each other.

### Who is it for?

This model might work for churches who run regular youth work sessions but **struggle to take young people away on residentials** (see p.13).

### The Story

*Including parents was initially partly about practicalities. If parents were coming along, there was no need to arrange transport. Some parents who wanted to come would encourage*

*their young people to come along. At the start, we kept things separate. So I organised retreat days that had different streams for young people and parents, only really being together at the beginning and end of the day. Although I felt cautious about putting young people off by doing things with their parents, I've realised more and more that in our context, it doesn't seem to.*

*The first parent and teenager retreat weekend we held was led by Sam and Sara Hargreaves from engageworship. We spent time praying on our own with a passage from scripture, but also shared some of our reflections in mixed groups. We used traditional ways of praying, like the 'examen', but also had times of worship using contemporary music. The Saturday evening was set aside with space to respond to God in a song-writing worship, through visual creativity or in drama. Our concluding*

*worship on Sunday included contributions from everyone – with a newly composed song, a beautiful interpretive reading of part of Romans 12, and space for testimony. In this space a 13 year-old girl shared, in a room full of her peers and adults, that at the start of the weekend she hadn't known Jesus. Now she did.*

*Every person who came on the retreat said that they would want to do it again. Perhaps, unsurprisingly, the parents expressed more gratitude, noticing what it may have given them as a family. My perception was that it was helpful for people to have time set aside for the purpose of engaging in faith together as a family. We may all want this kind of thing to be more a part of our normal lives, but sometimes it takes someone else giving us some loose guidance and creating a welcoming space to allow it to happen.*

**Phoebe Hill** is head of research at Youthscape, and a volunteer youth worker in East London.



# Case Study. Inter-denominational youth work. — East London.

## What is it?

An inter-denominational youth group is an example of small churches working together to provide something for their young people. It breaks down denominational barriers, maximises resources, and brings enough young people together to give a sense of group and critical mass.

## Who is it for?

This model might work for **small churches who do not have enough volunteers to run a youth group** (see p.13, 35).

## The Story

*About six years ago, I joined a small community church in East London. At the time, there were six young people on the brink of teenager-dom in the church, and we decided to set up a weekly youth group. From the outset, we had a few young people from other churches coming along who didn't have youth groups to be part of. This has been the pattern ever since: we've collected young people from other churches along the way, and more recently we have formally joined with another church (one Anglican, one Baptist) in order to provide a youth group for both churches. We now have volunteers from the two different churches, and we work together to provide something for the young people on a weekly basis. We also attend summer festivals with another youth group from a different part of the*

*country, who have lovingly served us by organising all of the logistics and catering for going away together, and made it possible for us (who are mostly volunteers) to take our young people away each year.*

*There are challenges to this model, such as keeping good lines of communication with the churches, and ensuring that they feel part of the youth work. It is also complicated engaging young people in church when the youth group is not specifically located in one church. But the group continues to grow and, although small, we have a critical mass of young people attending who feel part of this group.*



# Case Study.

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# Whole-church mentoring.

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# — Guildford.

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## What is it?

Youth work can and should be the responsibility of the whole church. Even if organising separate youth group activities is not possible, it may be possible to link each of the young people up with a mentor from the congregation.

## Who is it for?

This model might work for **churches with few young people** (see p.48) or for churches who have **people willing to offer time** but who wouldn't call themselves 'youth workers'.

## The Story

We started developing the mentoring programme at Emmanuel in September 2012. The scheme sought to enable young people to develop a relationship with a trained volunteer mentor from the congregation which would add a deeper and more reflective level to the discipleship programme.

The youth ministry had grown quickly after many years of a lack of investment, resulting in a youth group full of young people who had

*not been disciplined for a number of years alongside some young people who were not from a faith background, some with very difficult lives. We wanted to create a place that could provide a deeper level of support and at the same time offer the opportunity for them to reflect on their own faith in a deeper and more reflective way. The mentoring programme sought to create a space for both of these needs to be met.*

*The 'Sticky Faith' initiative taught me that good youth groups were not enough; young people needed to have several significant relationships if their faith was to last into their twenties.*

*Mentoring can mean many things; some perceive it as instructive and directive, while others understand it as more of an accompanying exercise, asking questions that lead to deeper reflection.*

*Under the influence of Mark Yaconelli's work, we decided on the latter, and that this was to shape the kinds of volunteers we were looking for. We needed people with high levels of empathy and understanding, comfortable with the chaos and changeability of young people and*

*able to model a deep spirituality of their own to model for the young person. We then asked people from the congregation to get involved, and the resulting group was very different to the usual makeup of youth work volunteers (which I loved).*

*The core team developed a training programme which was largely based around active listening, building relationships and the mechanics of the programme. Once trained, we offered this to the young people and had about 10 sign up. The core team matched them up with a mentor for an initial chat, after which the mentor and mentee reported to us how they got on and if they would like to continue. If so, they set a goal or two for their sessions. Some young people simply wanted a safe space, others wanted to learn to pray, one wanted to read through the Bible with their mentor. Some relationships still continue to this day, whilst others were good for a time, and some still faded very quickly. I have found that it is important for the project leader to keep in touch with the mentor and mentee independently in order to make sure both are happy to continue, and when required it is crucial to enable these mentoring relationships to end well.*

“It was a **relief** to have someone to talk to, who would never **judge me** no matter what I said to her. It was good to get advice from an adult rather than just my friends, especially as she could give me advice that would **help my faith**”.

# Appendix.

## Churches: size, type and number of children and/or young people attending.

### Methodology

The research was commissioned by OneHope and Youthscape and conducted by Christian Research. The survey was sent via email to Christian Research's Resonate panel, and by further targeted emails to churches of particular denominations. The aim of the research was to survey a broad sample of churches, spanning England, Scotland and Wales, which would map proportionately onto the denominational breakdowns from UK Christian Statistics 2 (Peter

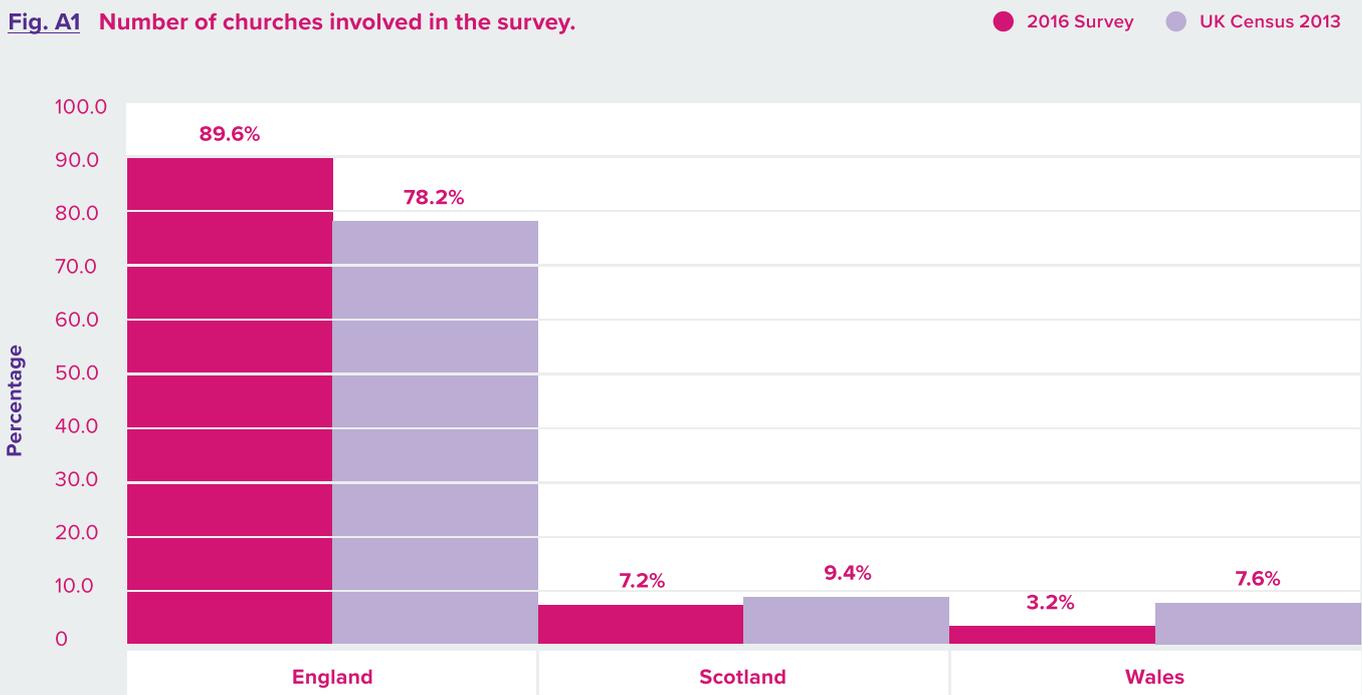
Brierley, 2013). In the early stages of research the organisers found that a similar survey was being carried out in Northern Ireland, and Northern Ireland was therefore excluded from the sample. The email survey was conducted between September and December 2015. (A detailed methodology is available on request.)

### The sample

As **Fig. A1** and **Fig. A2** demonstrate, proportional representation was not achieved across England, Scotland

and Wales. When analysing the types of churches involved (denominations) in **Fig. A3** there is a clear over-representation of Anglican, Baptist and Independent churches and an under-representation of Catholic, Presbyterian, Orthodox and Pentecostal churches. Rather than weighting the survey to the UK 2013 census, we have decided to use all of the data as examples of the work that is currently being undertaken and make internal comparisons within the sample.

**Fig. A1** Number of churches involved in the survey.



**Fig. A2** Number of churches involved in the survey.

	Frequency	Percent	2013 membership (UK Christian Statistics 2)
England	1842	89.6	78.2 Over-represented
Scotland	147	7.2	9.4 Under-represented
Wales	65	3.2	7.6 Under-represented
Northern Ireland			4.8 Not represented
<b>Total</b>	<b>2054</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Fig. A3** Churches involved.

Denomination	Frequency	Percent	2013 membership (UK Christian Statistics 2)
Anglican / Episcopal	961	46.8	25.1 With Church in Wales and Church of Scotland included, over twice as many in sample as in population.
Baptist	198	9.6	3.5 Over-represented
Catholic	91	4.4	25.8 Very under-represented (however, in most other asset mapping studies, Catholics not seen as evangelical and excluded)
Church in Wales	18	0.9	Count in Anglican
Church of Scotland	57	2.8	Count in Anglican
Independent	131	6.4	4.4 Over-represented
Methodist	188	9.1	4.3 Over twice as many in sample as in population
New / Fresh Expression	33	1.6	3.1 Very close
Presbyterian	19	0.9	11.9 Under-represented
Orthodox	6	0.3	8.5 Under-represented
Black / Multi-ethnic	4	0.2	
Pentecostal	80	3.9	8 Under-represented
Ecumenical / Joint	33	1.6	
URC / Congregational	74	3.6	
Small denomination	16	0.8	3.4 Under-represented
Other	107	5.2	3.9 New churches
No particular	30	1.5	
Don't know	8	0.4	
<b>Total</b>	<b>2054</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.1</b> (total percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding)

**Fig. A4 Church size**

The churches involved were categorised into small, medium and large churches, in order to provide an even spread for analysis. These are classifications based solely on the sample, and not on the average size of churches in England, Scotland and Wales.

Church Size		Frequency	Percent
0 – 50	(small)	587	28.6
51 – 149	(medium)	921	44.8
150+	(large)	546	26.6
<b>Total</b>		<b>2054</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Fig. A5 Numbers of children and young people attending weekly**

We asked the churches how many children and young people they had attending weekly. There was a significant difference between attendance of children and young people, with twice as many churches having no young people

and the majority having between 1 and 10 attending each week. The numbers of children attending were more evenly spread with around half of the churches having ten or less children and half having 10+.

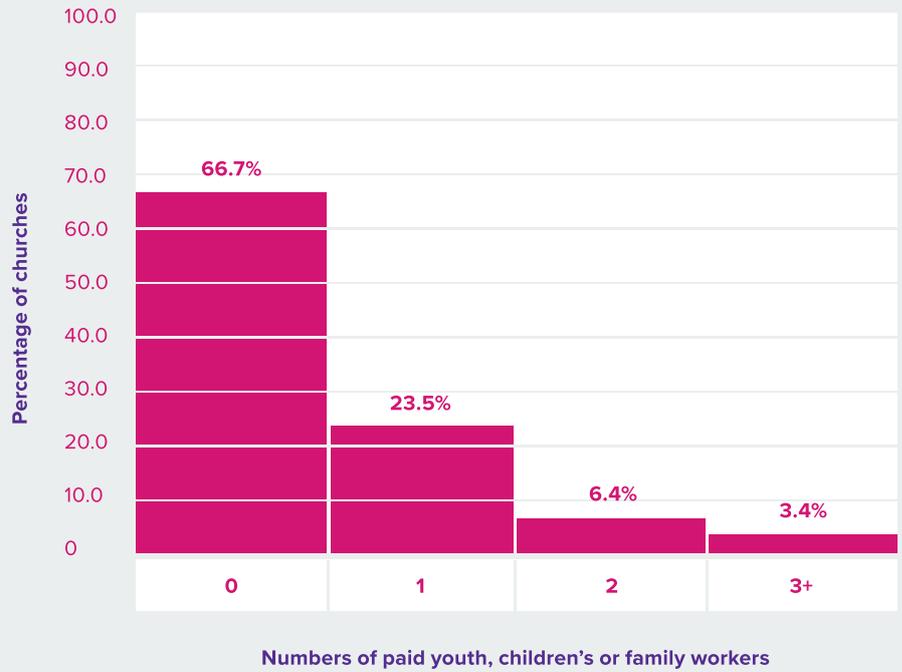
In terms of the changes in attendance when comparing with twelve months ago, 1 in 8 churches had seen a

decline in the number of children, 2 in 8 had seen an increase, with the remainder seeing no change. The figures are roughly the same for young people (11-18) although there was less increase among the 16-18 age groups.



**Fig. A6 Numbers of paid youth, children’s and family workers**

Only one third of the churches surveyed had a paid children’s, youth or family worker.

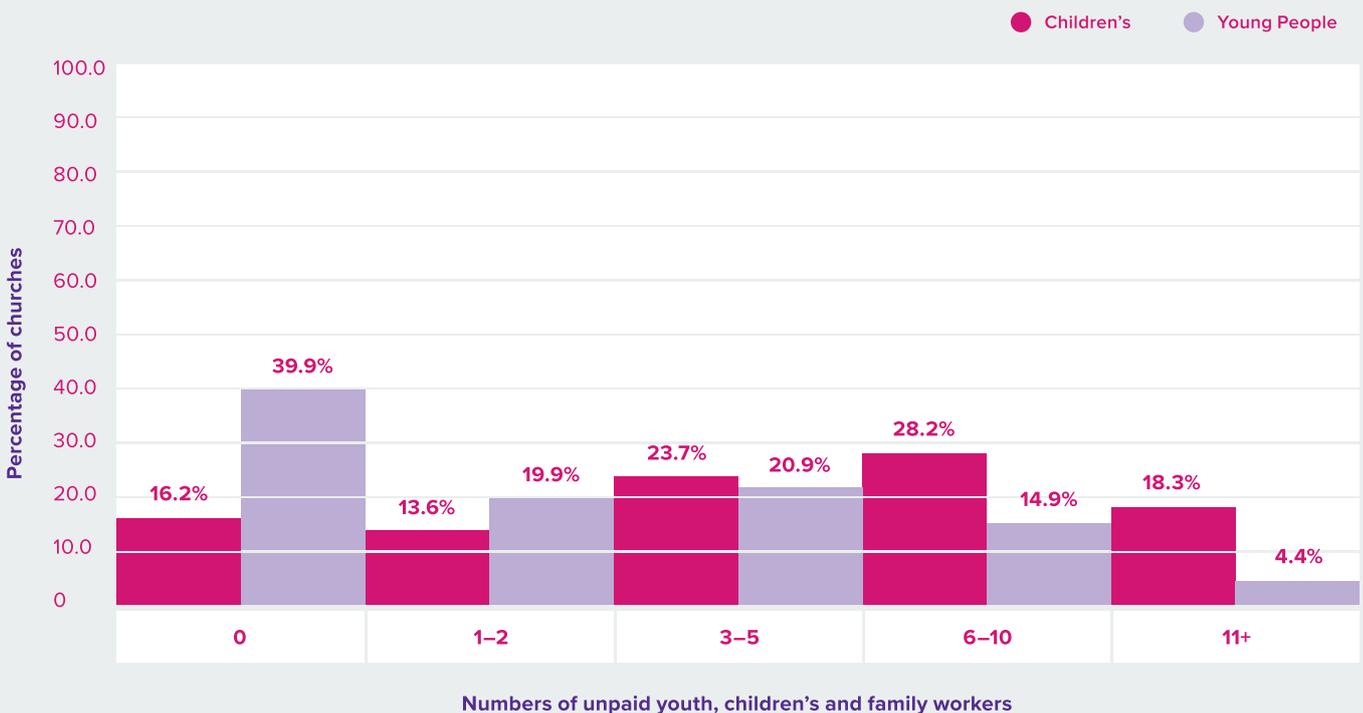


**Fig. A7 Numbers of unpaid youth and children’s workers**

From the figures below we can see that **16.2%** of the churches surveyed had no children’s work volunteers. Given that only **7.6%** of the churches had no children (see. **Fig. A5**), this means that **8.6%** (177 churches) had children but no one to work

with them. Two out of five of the churches surveyed (**39.9%**) had no workers with young people while **14.3%** reported having no young people. This means that **25.6%** (526 churches), roughly a quarter of the churches surveyed, have young people but no one to work with them. (These churches may have a paid worker, but it is unlikely that youth

or children’s work would be possible without any additional volunteers, assuming that a minimum of two adults must be present.) From the **2000+** churches there are almost a thousand paid workers with around **10,000+** volunteer workers with children and **5,000+** volunteer workers with young people.



**Fig. A8 Most popular resources for youth and children's work**

We asked the churches which organisations, ministries and resources they found useful in supporting their youth and children's work. Below are the top 20 most frequently mentioned resources, and the numbers of churches who referenced them:

Scripture Union	355	Resources / materials for Sunday school, Holiday Clubs, teaching.
Urban Saints	125	Resources / materials including Energise.
Messy Church	92	Resources / materials including magazine and newsletter.
New Wine / Soul Survivor	68	Annual festival / conference and other events.
Diocesan Resources	67	Consultation, training, support, materials, membership.
Alpha / Youth Alpha	61	Resources / materials including film series and literature.
Roots (Methodist Church)	56	Magazine subscription and web-based materials.
Youth For Christ	54	Resources / materials, website, assemblies.
Boys' / Girls' Brigades	52	Resources / materials, weekly meetings, affiliation.
CPAS	37	Camps, teaching materials.
Youthwork	26	Magazine, summit / conference, website, Bible studies.
Open The Book	23	Weekly school assemblies, newsletter, handbook, website.
Barnabas (BRF)	23	Materials / resources for Messy Church and Sunday school, website.
Methodist Church	19	Publications, trainings, conferences, network, website.
BRF	18	Magazine, website, resources / materials for Messy Church and holiday clubs.
Salvation Army	16	ALOVE, weekly magazine, books, resources, support.
Bible Society	14	Bibles, courses, materials, fundraising.
Go Teach	13	Resources / materials, publications, workbooks.
Christian Aid	12	Published and web resources / materials.
Good Book Company	11	CLICK Sunday school materials, Youth Christianity Explored and other resources.

## With thanks

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Above all we'd like to thank the churches who took part in the survey, contributing to our continued learning in the area of youth and children's work in churches.

### Youthscape

Youthscape has been supporting young people with their emotional, social and spiritual development in Luton since 1993, concentrating efforts where there is most need and little or no other support available. Youthscape is committed to supporting churches both locally and nationally to reach the young people in their area, and engage in the contemporary issues they are facing. The Youthscape Centre for Research was founded to better equip youth workers, churches and parents to reach the needs of their young people. To find out more about our research, or to get involved in future projects, visit [youthscape.co.uk/research](https://youthscape.co.uk/research)

### OneHope

More than a billion children and youth have received a relevant presentation of God's Word from local churches around the world through OneHope. This year OneHope plans to reach more than one hundred million additional young people with Scripture programmes that are age - and culturally - specific based on research it conducts among children and youth, leaders and educators in the countries it works. Since 1987, OneHope has helped kids experience God's Story by collaborating with churches and ministries—and working with local governments, schools and non-governmental organisations—to bring a life-changing message to children and youth in every country of the world. [www.OneHope.net](https://www.OneHope.net)



[youthscape.co.uk/research](https://youthscape.co.uk/research)

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