



Spark Faith at Home

Session One

Host

07/09/24

Catherine Breed + Mel Luna

“ You can discover more about a person in an hour of play than in a year of conversation.”

Your Brain on Art

What the research shows:

- There has been a steep decline in church attendance among families with children and teens (even before the pandemic)
- *Moralistic Therapeutic Deism* (“Do Good, Feel Good” religion) is still the overarching belief system among young people and their grownups
- Parents have the the most important influence on shaping the religious beliefs, values and practices of their children
- When asked what keeps them from connecting with a faith community or practicing faith at home, parents and caregivers often indicate that they feel overwhelmed with busyness and exhaustion, and they do not feel equipped (this is where church leaders come in)
- Despite all of this, most parents still place a high value on faith and they desire for their children to have deep spiritual lives

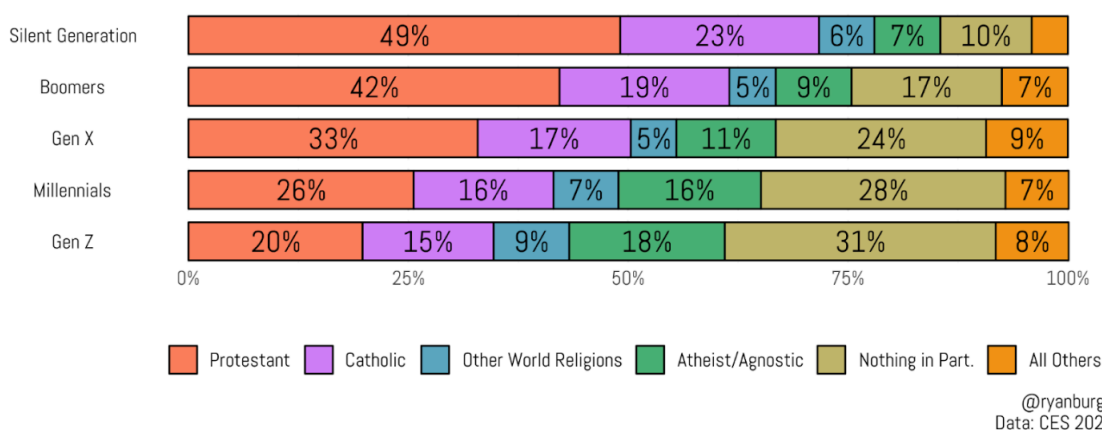
What makes a difference?

- Modeling sincere faith and talking about it together (including your own questions and doubts)
- Being connected to a community of faith that tells God’s story and enacts it, which can lead to others surrounding your children and teens and giving them a sense of purpose, belonging, and hope
- The Holy Spirit - we can have all of the correct tools and strategies, but we know that “human effort cannot generate mature faith” (Kenda Creasy Dean, *Almost Christian*)
- Research notes – **NEGATIVE**- experiences contribute to faith drop out – our intention to to spark **POSITIVE** faith experiences that meet the WHOLE person through play, art, fun-facts, and connection.

- Churches must prioritize supporting and equipping parents and families in ways to cultivate faith at home, while also exploring ways to adapt to new technological and cultural modes of Gen Z and Alpha

The Facts

Religious Breakdown by Generation



“The good news is that, among all possible influences, parents exert far and away the greatest influence on their children’s religious outcomes. Stated differently, the bad news is that nearly all human responsibility for the religious trajectories of children’s lives falls on their parents’ shoulders. The empirical evidence is clear. In almost every case, no other institution or program comes close to shaping youth religiously as their parents do—not religious congregations, youth groups, faith-based schools, missions and service trips, summer camps, Sunday school, youth ministers, or anything else. Those influences can reinforce the influence of parents, but almost never do they surpass or override it. What makes every other influence pale into virtual insignificance is the importance (or not) of the religious beliefs and practices of American parents *in their ordinary lives*—not only on holy days but every day, throughout weeks and years.” (Christian Smith)

Resources

Digging Deeper

The most comprehensive research regarding families and faith development comes from Christian Smith’s work with [The National Study for Youth and Religion](#) and the Barna research. [Almost Christian](#) is the theological response to this research, written by Professor Kenda Creasy Dean of Princeton Theological Seminary.

[Handing Down the Faith](#) and *Soul Searching* by Christian Smith

[Begin Again](#) by Oliver Jeffers

[Woven: Nurturing a Faith Your Kid Doesn't Have to Heal From](#) by Meredith Miller

[Your Brain on Art](#) by Susan Magsamen and Ivy Ross

[Walking on Water](#) by Madeline L’Engle

[The Spiritual Child](#) by Lisa Miller

What is next?

Begin with a **SMALL** goal - between now and the next session engage three times at home with your kids or teens. Chart the outcome and attempts at engagement. Building habits begin small with incremental growth.

GET STARTED	DATE	TIME OF DAY	CHART IT OUT	
			<input type="checkbox"/>	Started
			<input type="checkbox"/>	Ongoing
			<input type="checkbox"/>	Finished
			<input type="checkbox"/>	Started
			<input type="checkbox"/>	Ongoing
			<input type="checkbox"/>	Finished
			<input type="checkbox"/>	Started
			<input type="checkbox"/>	Ongoing
			<input type="checkbox"/>	Finished

Thanks for participating!