

RESOURCE REVIEW



kitchen
table
project

Inspire a faith that lasts



INSPIRING A FAITH THAT LASTS IN OUR CHILDREN

Kitchen Table Project – from Care for the Family

Just 50% of children growing up in Christian homes keep their faith as adults. Care for the Family came across this statistic a few years ago and really wanted to do something about it. As a mum to two daughters, that 50% really hit my heart. I want my girls to grow physically, emotionally, socially and intellectually – but more than anything my heart's desire is that they will know Jesus for themselves.

But there are many obstacles to that. Lots of parents don't know where to start or feel unqualified to nurture their children's faith. And even if our churches provide amazing children's work, they only have such a small proportion of time with the children compared to the opportunity parents have with their children every day.

Moses puts it beautifully in Deuteronomy 6:5-7. He says: "These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up."

So how can churches work with parents in putting God at the heart of our homes? It's not just about what our churches do on a Sunday, but about encouraging parents as they share their faith with their children as part of everyday life.

That's where The Kitchen Table Project from Care for the Family comes in. It encourages mums, dads, carers and churches to join together to support each other and share ideas.

A great starting point is the Inspire session, an easy-to-run small group discussion to help parents and carers – and grandparents – to start talking about how to nurture faith. The materials are all free to download at kitchentable.org.uk/inspire.

There are also free fun activities that parents and churches can use to build intergenerational relationships. With The Big Scrumptious Faith-Filled Feast activity mats you can gather to eat food, play games, and share stories of what God has done in our lives.

And the Scavenger Hunts encourage families to join together to explore God in nature – there are four different ones to use throughout the spring, summer, autumn and winter.

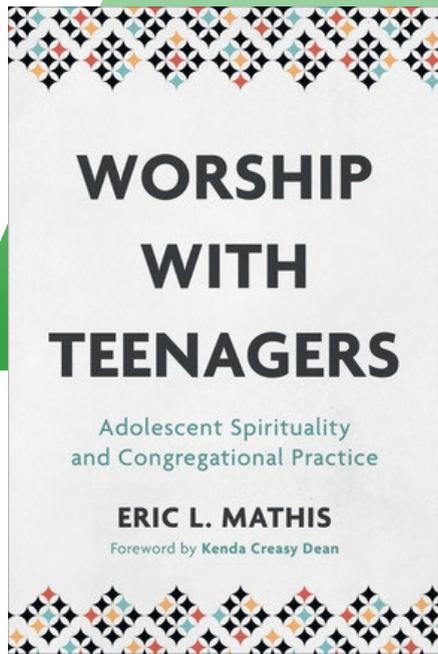
We are also excited that our brand new church leaders' training resource that will help churches develop their family ministry is coming soon. To find out more, sign up for our monthly emails, which are full of practical ideas, encouragement and resource reviews. Or follow us on social media for tips and ideas –

   @ktpcampaign

Find out more about all of these resources and sign up for emails at kitchentable.org.uk

Written by Claire Burton, Project Manager for the Kitchen Table Project. Claire and her husband Lawrence are senior leaders at their local church and have two fun-loving daughters.





WORSHIP WITH TEENAGERS: ADOLESCENT SPIRITUALITY AND CONGREGATIONAL PRACTICE

Eric L. Mathis

Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2022
ISBN: 978-1540964441 | pp: 266 | £16.99

The question of how to incorporate young people into the worship life of the church is a vital one. Worship, after all, is an essential means of grace, a way in which God shapes us to be his people. And while worship can and does happen in the youth group, inviting young and old to gather together in worship can be particularly transformative.

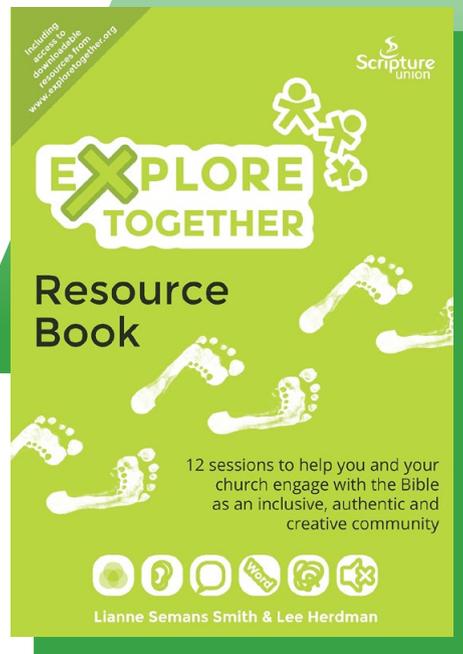
In *Worship with Teenagers*, Mathis brings together the areas of youth ministry and worship ministry to explore the theology and practice of including adolescents in worship. The book is divided into three parts. In part one, Mathis explores 'cultural perspectives' on youth ministry and worship, exploring studies of teenage faith in America, a historical survey of young people and worship, and a discussion of the theological purpose or 'telos' for worship. In part two, Mathis offers a series of 'liturgical perspectives', exploring the role of Christian worship in the life of teenagers, the importance of 'adoptive worship' which embraces teens in the life of the church, and a discussion of how worship is expressed in different cultural and ecclesial contexts. The final part of the book turns to 'pastoral perspectives', seeking wisdom on

worship from philosophy, sociology and anthropology, as well as offering a 'guide to change' for congregations and a 'guide for formation' for youth group worship with teens. Two useful appendices include a 'letter to teenage worship leaders' and a 'worship planning toolbox'.

This is a great book for anyone thinking about helping teenagers to engage more deeply in worship. Mathis does a brilliant job in bridging academic discussion of worship among teens with practical suggestions of how churches can do better in this area, although some readers may prefer to skip to the later chapters which focus on the practice! While the discussion tends to be quite US-focused, Mathis' work can be easily adapted for a British context and contains some great insights, including his suggested 'ecology of worship for youth ministry' (chapter 9) which shows the many ways in which churches might help teens connect with God.

Reviewed by Dr Ed Mackenzie, Lecturer in Biblical Theology and Mission at Cliff College.

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EXPLORE TOGETHER *Scripture Union*

Bletchley: Scripture Union, 2015 | ISBN: 978-1-78506-027-4 | pp: 32 | £4.99

Explore Together is a resource from Scripture Union that helps churches to plan and deliver all age worship gatherings.

Each session follows the same pattern of presenting a Bible passage, a theme and some questions which are then explored together in six zones before people are invited back to share responses to the questions.

People explore the passage, theme and questions together by selecting one or more of the following zones of activity:

1. the Colour Zone - which allows people to explore through colouring pens and materials;
2. the Listening Zone - where people hear songs, poems and testimonies;
3. the Chat Zone - for those that want an open discussion;
4. the Word Zone - for those that want to go deeper with the text;
5. the Busy Zone - that helps engage those that prefer building type activities; and,
6. the Quiet Zone - where people find a more contemplative space.

All the resources needed are provided, or at least identified. Sessions are free to download from their website - see for example: <https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk/resource/explore-together-god-our-provider>.

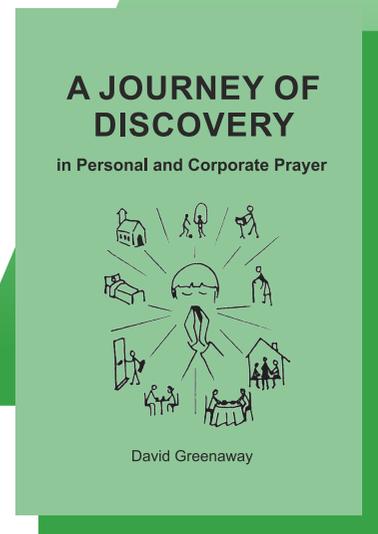
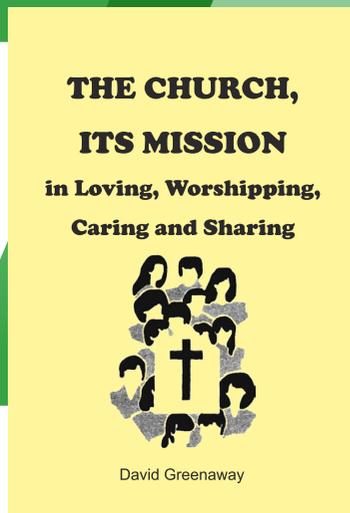
Explore Together provides a familiar structure which works well for an all-age context because younger children often benefit from familiarity. Because the zones vary by learning style, the impact is not merely that different ages are brought together but also people of the same age are able to interact with the passage, theme and questions differently.

Depending on your outlook on theology and church life you may be more or less concerned at the absence of any formal 'teaching element' in the sessions. It would be helpful to read the article on page 14 about Intergenerational Church for more on that, but for now, there are a number of things to remember here. Firstly, it is of course possible to introduce other elements and make the resource your own (most resources are improved by adjusting them to suit you and your context). Secondly, *Explore Together* is not meant to be the only thing that churches do - it assumes that sessions form part of a wider programme of church services and discipleship and, thirdly, teaching doesn't have to be in a formal talking slot, it can be woven into other activities.

Explore Together is likely to be a bit of a culture shift for some churches and so the ground may need some prep work before embarking on this, but it has proven to be a valuable resource for many churches in the last few years and would be worth others giving it a go.

Reviewed by Dr Gareth Crispin, Lecturer in Practical Theology and Programme Lead for BA Mission & Ministry at Cliff College.

RESOURCE REVIEWS



THE CHURCH, ITS MISSION IN LOVING, WORSHIPPING, CARING AND SHARING

David Greenaway

Ilkeston: Moorleys Print, Design and Publishing, 2022
ISBN: 978-0-86071-900-7 | pp. 127 | £9

This book is a thoroughly Bible-based exploration of the Church's mission. The author considers each aspect in turn, and if only Christians were able to follow all the teaching in this book, then the church today would look very different. There was nothing new that I had not read, been taught, or experienced in the many churches where I have worshipped during my lifetime, but sadly I have never been a member of a congregation where all the points in this book were in operation. Perhaps there are such churches, and the rest of us would do well to begin to work together to achieve more of the teaching, but I think that the church as David Greenaway longs for us all to be is, for most of us, still far from reality. I was left with a feeling of sadness that we are so far from being what we are called to be.

This is certainly a challenging book, though easy to read and with good, clear print. There are simple line drawings to illustrate the points made, and I found these helpful to ponder on. There are also very useful lists of questions, charts and agencies that can assist in various ways.

A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY IN PERSONAL AND CORPORATE PRAYER

David Greenaway

Ilkeston: Moorleys Print, Design and Publishing, 2022
ISBN: 978-0-86071-901-4 | pp. 28 | £3

CHALLENGING QUESTIONS FOR THE CHURCH

David Greenaway

Ilkeston: Moorleys Print, Design and Publishing, 2022
ISBN: 978-0-86071-902-1 | pp. 12 | £3

These two booklets are well presented and easy to read. The booklet on prayer is a beginning for those setting out on the journey of faith, and a gentle reminder to those of us who have been longer on The Way. Whilst it obviously cannot go into detail or depth, it sets out the different types of prayer we need to use, and gives Bible references for the reader to explore. A brief look at praying in the Celtic tradition is included. There is a helpful list to make sure everyone is included when praying for the church's ministry - every task is important!

The booklet of challenging questions is exactly that, and very good they are! 'Lessons from a church for Adults with a Learning Disability' is an interesting and inspiring account of alternative, accessible worship.

Reviewed by Sue Wiggins, Local Preacher in the Isle of Wight Circuit.