

Pop-up small groups leaders' information

Thank you so much for joining us. Our vision for pop-up small groups is that they build community and provide a safe place for people to listen, ask, discuss and find their next step... without much prep required from you. If you can provide coffee and community, we'll provide the content to get people talking!

We are not trying to give definitive answers or 'how-tos' in these evenings but have a thought-provoking discussion which gives people ideas and helps them to find their next step. **Our approach** is to recognise that every family is unique and that parents and carers are the experts in their own children. By using the **Key Tools**, every parent and carer can help their child connect with God as a normal part of everyday life.

Church plays a really important role in this, by being the supportive community that encourages and equips parents and carers along the way. We ask people to think about the next steps for their child or family rather than searching for a 'right answer'. You can support your group by using this language and approach too. This should help people feel able to share their thoughts and ideas, without fear of getting it 'wrong'.

Exploring these big issues in community is really helpful, as it allows people to share ideas and learn from each other before considering what they think. Pop-up small groups aim to be a safe space where that can happen. You can support people by setting a culture of journeying together and guiding people to listen well, love well and encourage each other.

In advance

- Decide how you want to gather people – this could be at church, in a home or homes, or getting individuals to watch on their own but arrange a video call for the discussion time.
- Spread the word so everyone knows they are welcome and when and where you are meeting. We have a shareable image with the details available on our social media and website that you can use in your own social media, emails, WhatsApp messages or your own website.
- You might also choose to print or send copies of the handout in advance.

On the night

- **7.30/7.45 pm** – If meeting in person, gather people for coffee and to catch up.
- **8.00 pm** – We will go live on the **Parenting for Faith Facebook page**. You'll see the video appear at the top of the page. If you don't, try refreshing the page and scrolling down. You can watch on a phone, a smart TV (click on Facebook) or link a laptop to a TV or projector. People may want to have the video playing on their phones (muted) so they can do this individually. The video will be available afterwards so you are welcome to run this event at a different time.
- **8.30 pm** – We'll take questions and respond to them and then stop the live broadcast. Encourage people to chat (in person or online) about what stood out to them, what they agreed or disagreed with and what the next step for their family might be. You can use the discussion questions on the handout to guide you.
- **9.00/9.30 pm** – Wrap up and go home. You might want to follow up with an email or text.

Talking to kids about tests and exams

with Stephen Beamond and Wayne Dixon

Welcome to this Parenting for Faith pop-up! At Parenting for Faith, we believe that you, the parents and carers, are the best people to help your children and teens meet and know God. We have **five Key Tools** to help you do this as a normal part of everyday life. This evening, we'll be applying some of these tools to how we talk to our children and young people about tests and exams. Listen to the discussion on **Facebook Live** and add your comments and questions. Then explore your next steps by discussing this with the people around you.

The Facebook Live discussion

At Parenting for Faith, we often talk about how we have to 'surf the waves' of situations we find ourselves in. At the moment, many of us are 'surfing the wave' of exam season – but even if your children haven't got exams this summer, many will be facing regular tests or assessments throughout the year, whatever their age. So how can we talk to kids about this so they hear God's heart for them?

Stephen Beamond (Growing Faith Foundation) and Wayne Dixon (Exam Attack) will be sharing their wisdom as they chat with Anna:

Recognise your starting point. We all come to this with different family situations and different experiences of exams and tests ourselves. Sometimes our anxiety and identity can get muddled into us talking to our children about theirs. Reflect on where you are and also what your family's current experience of exams and tests is. As you do this, you might want to **create a window** into your feelings about exams (past or present) and how you connect with God about that.

Frame for them who God is and what he thinks of them. It can be helpful to reflect on the idea of the difference between the cycle of grace and the cycle of frustration. Help them understand that their identity and worth come from God, not their performance.

Support them each step of the way. Exams and tests can be an up-and-down experience! As your kids prepare for them, sit them and get the results, you can **surf the wave** by supporting them with a listening ear or a next step.

Discussion question ideas

- What was my experience of exams/tests? Is that influencing the way that I support my child?
- How might you share the difference between the cycle of frustration and the cycle of grace to your child/teenager?
- What practical steps might you like to try with your family?

Further links

- Exam Attack – examattack.org.uk
- Understanding the cycle of grace – lovelifegivingwater.com/identity/understanding-the-cycle-of-grace
- From Parenting for Faith:
 - **I'm not finished yet:** a bonus course session focused on building a godly core of confidence in kids
 - **Supporting kids and teens with exams and tests**
 - **A different perspective on exams**
 - **When results day doesn't go quite right**