

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 we want to start 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 with 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 websites.
- 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 comment 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 tough times

with Rachel Turner

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 about tough times. 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

There are very few times in life when things are all straightforward. The journey of life is filled with bumps, mountains, swamps, walls and storms. When we as parents or families hit one of these tough seasons, how do we help our children through them in a way that continues to help their connection with God?

- Build a foundation of **who God is in difficulty**. When hard times come, our foundations get exposed and challenged. Children and teens (and sometimes us too) are still building what truths about God they know and believe. As people in children's lives, we can build a solid broad foundation of who God is in times of fear, worry and grief that will help hold them when their lives get shaken. There are some stories from scripture and key verses that can be helpful here.
- Be strategic about **creating windows** into your faith journey in times of trouble. Sometimes life is hard for our children at school or within friendships, and we are on the outside trying to help. Other times, we hit rough patches as a family, or we personally are struggling with things our children know nothing about. In all of these circumstances, creating windows is a powerful tool to help our children see how to walk with God through rough times. Choosing to create a window into little moments of our learning journey enables our children to see how to grab onto God in the midst of a journey. There are a few helpful guidelines on how to do it in a way that empowers our children and brings them peace rather than putting any burden on them.
- Facilitate the creation of **tools that help your children (and your family) process and connect with God** and biblical truths as you experience the tough times. This might be a new season for you, and we can facilitate our children and our family learning how to invent their own tools and opportunities to connect with God and hold on to him in this season. There are some questions we can ask and techniques we can try to help empower our children in their relationship with God amidst difficulty.

Further links

- [Supporting families through separation and divorce](#)
- [Death and grief](#)
- [Supporting families who have experienced trauma](#)

Discussion question ideas

- Think of a tough time in the past. Who was God in this time? Where was he? How did your faith in him help you through?
- What is your faith posture in tough times? Do you tend to draw closer to God, or further away? Are there things you do that you could create windows into for your children?
- What kinds of tools could you create to help your whole family connect with God and biblical truths in a tough season? Is there a new rhythm or routine that might be helpful, or a new way of connecting altogether?