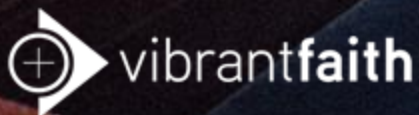
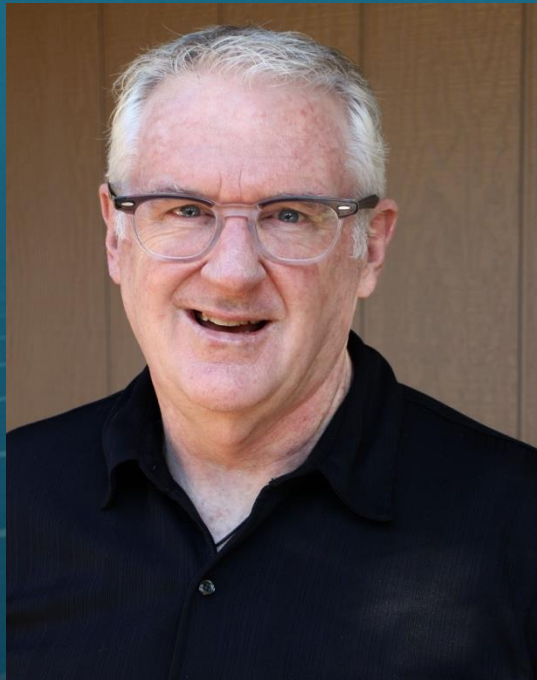


WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 17 2025

# WHO'S IN YOUR PEWS?

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**RICK  
LAWRENCE**

**Vibrant Faith Executive Director**



**DR. NANCY  
GOING**

**Director of Research and  
Resource Development**



**Denise  
Utter**

**Project Program Director –  
Raising Faithful Kids**



SPECIAL GUEST

# DR. CHRISTIAN SMITH

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Director of the Center for the Study of  
Religion at the University of Notre Dame





**AUTHOR OF**

# WHY RELIGION WENT OBSOLETE



The Demise of  
Traditional Faith in America

CHRISTIAN SMITH



DR. CHRISTIAN SMITH

# RESEARCH INSIGHTS

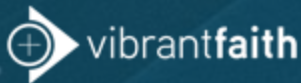
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# QUESTIONS

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# Why Does This Matter?

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What Concerns YOU?

What Surprises YOU?





# Focus Group on Children in Worship

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# RAISING Faithful Kids



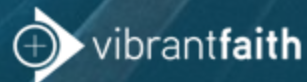
# WHO WE ASKED:

Mainline Protestant and  
Catholic Churches

Vibrant Faith's Email List —  
38 Responses

# WHO'S IN YOUR PEWS?

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Vibrant Faith Survey of *Children in Worship*

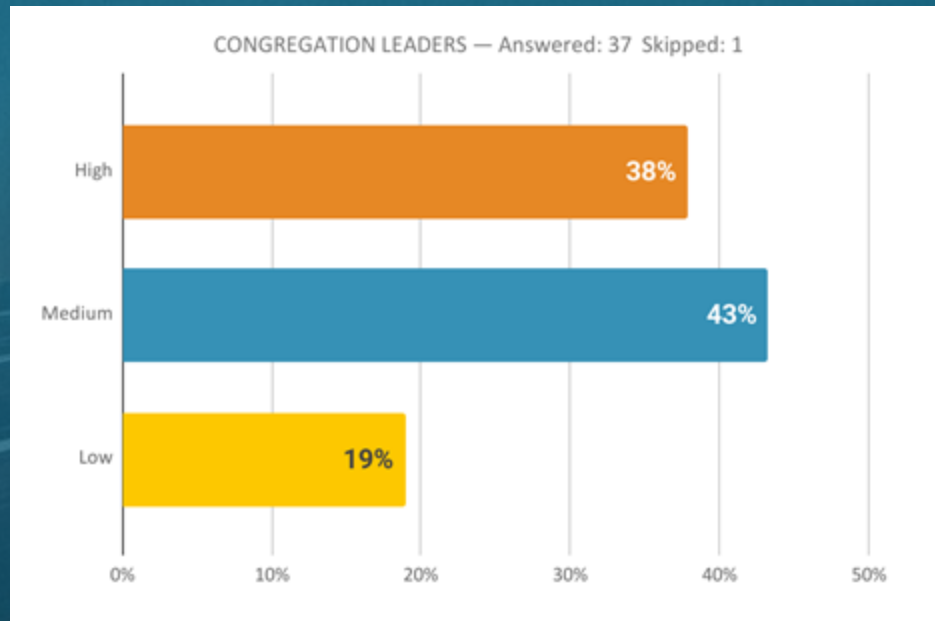
# WE ASKED



- If their surrounding community saw them as a "family-friendly" church.
- How concerned they were about the drain of families from their church?
- Whether they embrace a home-centered, church supported ministry strategy?
- How many kids are present in their worship services, and how involved they are (typically) in the service?
- Their top concerns and best hopes for families in their church.

Among the leaders in our church, our concern about the “**DRAIN**” of families from our congregation is...

## WHO'S IN YOUR PEWS?



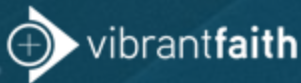
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
High	37.84%	14
Medium	43.24%	16
Low	18.92%	7
TOTAL	100%	37



**FEEDBACK**

# YOUR CONCERNS

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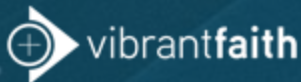
## WHAT DO YOU NOTICE?

- Seem to be overscheduled and exhaustingly busy all the time.
- The need for two incomes to provide and the strain it causes.
- May not be using the resources we provide.
- Many parents know little about Scripture or the faith.
- They do not prioritize a relationship with Jesus as part of their lives.
- Not worshipping God, they are worshipping sports etc.
- Helping them to make church a bigger priority.

FEEDBACK

# THE ANGRY WIFE

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HE (Parents) IS  
THE PROBLEM!

They aren't doing things  
the way WE want.

# Why aren't they there?

## (Perceptions from church leaders)

- Parents don't care enough about faith
- They don't think church matters
- Other priorities (sports, activities, schedules) keep them away
- Families are too busy / distracted
- Parents lack biblical knowledge or commitment

# What we've noticed.

## (Real life for parents)

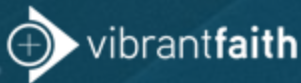
- Parents DO care about their faith and their kids' faith
- Parents are desperate for community
- Parents' other priorities aren't always warped
- Families are interested in engaging their relationship with Jesus in ways that don't fit our box
- Parents' faith grows through their children's faith AND through discipling their children



**FEEDBACK**

# HOPES & DREAMS

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Creating a community of support for and among our families.

Supporting them through the tough seasons of life.

Equipping their faith life at home.

**WHAT CAN WE  
DO ABOUT IT?**

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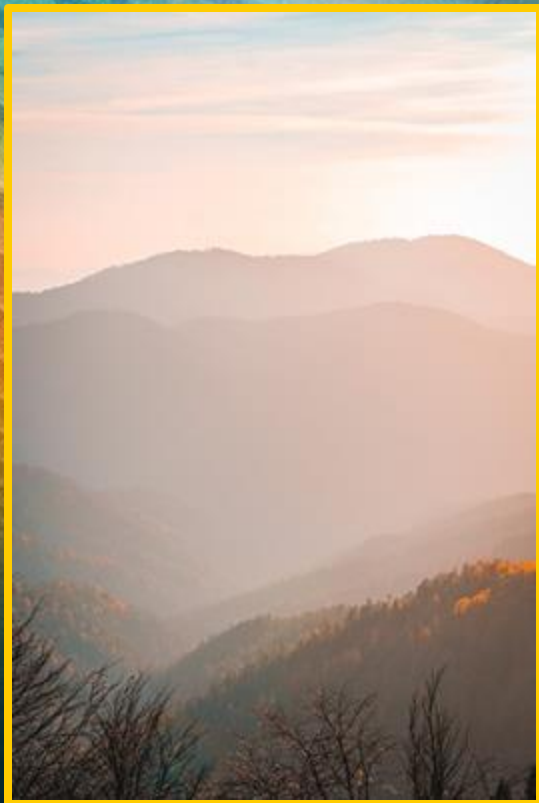
The background of the slide is a photograph of a church interior, showing rows of wooden pews with blue cushions. The image is covered with a semi-transparent blue overlay. The text is centered on the slide.

DENISE UTTER

# What does WORSHIP mean for you?

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# What Can We Do About It?

- First, listen...
- Everyday ways for parents to strengthen their impact on their kids.
- Help make worship “**NORMAL**” for families—activities of worship are foreign to most families, so normalize them, even at home.
- Help families practice worship in low-stress ways.
- Stop making church the only place that worship can happen.



# Opportunities for Partnering with Parents in New Ways

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# RAISING Faithful Kids

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# Important & Strategic Markers



- Whatever we do, it must flow into the natural rhythms, lifestyles, and relational patterns that already exist among parents...
- To model what we do after Jesus, we must focus on relational practices that are designed to live out in the normal relational ecosystem of parents.
- What's practiced at church should have an obvious and natural tie into what's practiced at home, and vice versa. What children are learning at home from their parents should have a direct connection to what they experience in the church worship service, and the worship service should help kids make connections to their home's everyday spiritual practices.
- Jesus focuses on the heart more than the head. He wants people to understand and embrace the truth, but more than that, He wants us to taste and see the goodness of God, and abide in His love. These priorities must be reflected in what we do in worship, and what we do at home.

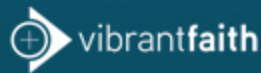
# WHAT IF's

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# What if we learned to re-engage parents and kids in our existing worship service?



- We're looking for churches that want to do more with their parents—to come alongside them in practical ways to help fuel their faith-nurturing influence in their kids' lives...
- What if we had simple tools that would help us renovate the normal things we do in worship so that parents and kids can more actively participate?
- What if our renovated worship practices were modeled and practiced at home, with parents and their kids, in simple, natural ways?
- What if we ramped-up how we intentionally listen to parents, and established a new “feedback loop” with them?
- What if we shifted our focus in our worship service just enough to affect the whole culture of the church, and the community took notice?







**RAISING**  
**Faithful**  **Kids**

**We'd LOVE  
to partner  
with you...**

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# RAISING Faithful Kids

**Sign Up at:**


VibrantFaith.org/  
whos-in-your-pews

info@vibrantfaith.org f t y Search... Login

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WED, SEPTEMBER 17 (12:19M CST)

## WHO'S IN YOUR PEWS?



### Sign up for updates!

Get news from Vibrant Faith Ministries for Raising Faithful Kids.

\* Email

\* First Name

\* Last Name

Phone

**RAISING  
Faithful Kids**

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**Sign up!**

# YOUR QUESTIONS

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# RAISING Faithful Kids