

FAITH IN THE NEXUS



Let's talk about death
(School and Church)

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The Faith in the Nexus research project.

In the Faith in the Nexus research project the term nexus refers to the connections between home, church school and the local church community.

The Faith in the Nexus project investigated the ways church primary schools, working in collaboration with churches and interested key groups, facilitated opportunities for children's exploration of faith and spiritual life in the home.

The project involved 20 church primary schools, a cross-section of Church of England and Catholic primary schools. Focus group interviews were held with 187 pupils and 267 adults (parents, staff, local clergy, and other interested key groups) and an online survey was completed by 1002 people; 730 pupils and 272 adults.

Key questions raised by the research:

How do we find space and time for children to voice their concerns about death?

How can we support adults in their responses to children's questions about death?

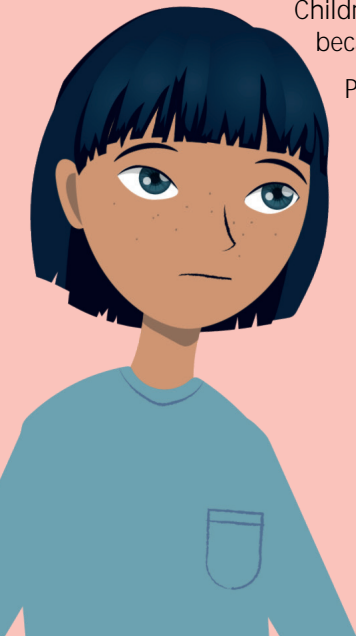
Key findings from the research:

Children often ask questions about death. They value opportunities to ask questions, and for others to listen to their opinions.

Questions about death were challenging for parents.

Children claimed they ask more questions about death because nobody fully answers these questions.

Parents noted that it was always the children raising questions about death.



We underestimate children's understanding of death. Reluctance to engage with children's questions is problematic. Looking to others to answer these questions is not best for the children.

When adults fail to answer, children were likely to persist with their questions.

How can we respond?

- A proactive approach to death conversations would be more beneficial.
- Support and encouragement is needed to empower adults at home and in school to engage in talking about death with children.
- The research suggests we need to develop ways and resources that help adults and children talk about death.



Watch

View our animation explainer at nicer.org.uk

Conversation Starters.

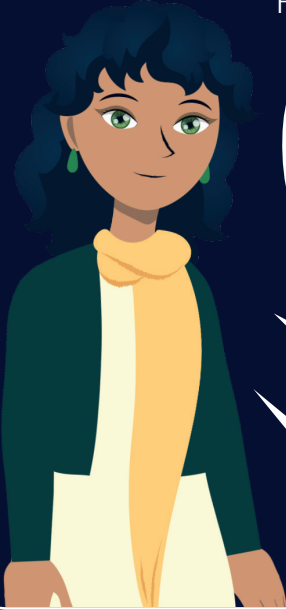
The questions children ask:

Are Gran and Grandad, going to come to ours soon, or are they going to die because they're quite old?

If I was a mighty God and people were starving when they were a baby, I would do something about it. I wouldn't watch them die.

He asks, "what if I want to go to heaven?"

How did some parents respond?



I had a mum ask me the other day, how do you answer the question when they say why does everybody have to die? ... Actually, when she said that I thought maybe I mean I can answer that question through my belief with God. (Teacher)

I get them to ask their grandfather, the difficult questions you know things about death. (Parent)

We had a lot of discussion about heaven and how you get to heaven. (Parent)

