

Segment F23:

Families Matter Most

Young established families in scenic suburbs leading active, family-focused lives

Resource: Mosaic 2021 by Experian.

Religious Experience in a Nutshell

Religious Perspective:

Looking for God through (or with?) the eyes of a child

Spiritual Issues:

Feeling purposeless or overwhelmed, anxieties over emptiness and fate

Common Church Presence

- Family first
- Children and youth programs

- Uncomplicated theology
- May struggle with unexplainable evil

- Credibility of leaders is crucial
- Family mission trips



Potential Influence

Lifestyle Compatibility	Family Group F <i>Promising Families</i>	Frequent Neighbors
D15 Sports Utility Families G24 Ambitious Singles G25 Urban Edge M45 Growing and Expanding	F22 Fast Track Couples F23 Families Matter Most	B08 Babies and Bliss C11 Sophisticated City Dwellers C13 Philanthropic Sophisticates E20 No Place Like Home

General Comments:

Families Matter Most are big on family values and sacrifice for their children. They are often members of a church, but family activities and amateur sports may keep them from regular church attendance. They may go church shopping to find worship experiences that are more family friendly. They tend to gravitate toward large churches with high quality programs and technologies. Adults are often too busy to take leadership on a board or committee. They may not become members and prefer to be adherents. What they value most about the church will be youth groups and fun family activities. They are attracted to churches that model high moral expectations and have prioritized programs for young children. If they leave a church, it rarely due doctrinal disagreement. More likely, they are disappointed by the moral failures of leaders or objections to social policies. They rarely quarrel with the church but prefer to simply stop coming and search elsewhere.

Parents approach the church with the simplicity and openness of children. They appreciate clear articulation of essential articles of faith, but do not want to clutter their minds with complicated theologies or ecclesiastical differences. They are usually conservative in their faith, but broad-minded toward different religions, and expect churches to be respectful of their lifestyles and aspirations. They are not usually very passionate about any social cause, but they will take the family on mission trips that offer practical assistance to others. They may be particularly anxious about their competence as parents or the quality of their marriage. Health concerns or inexplicable crises with children can raise significant questions about faith and stop church attendance.

Color Key	High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority
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High Priorities also marked with "X" for churches photocopying in black and white.

Leadership PreferencesResource: *Spiritual Leadership* by Thomas Bandy (Abingdon Press)

Traditional		Progressive		Radical	
	Caregiver	x	Discipler		Visionary
	Enabler		Guru		Mentor
x	CEO				Pilgrim

Families Matter Most value a pastor or priest who is very committed to disciple-making, but who is also a strong administrator. The minister should be able to manage a staff of paid specialists who sustain processes to greet, grow, equip, send, and coach mature Christians. Clergy and staff are strong role models for parents and youth. They are easy going with children and tolerate considerable commotion in worship. They are particularly sensitive to the stressful lives of young parents and provide strong coaching to help them live like Christians in a crazy world. The credibility of clergy depends more on their spiritual life and moral example, than on seminary degree or advanced education. Traditional church experience is not that important and may even be seen as a detriment if it sidetracks the pastor into denominational meetings and institutional quarrels. Senior pastors and priests need to be strong CEOs who can raise money, organize high quality programs, and sustain relevant family-centered ministries. If clergy are married, they expect the spouse and family to be visible and active in the congregation, and they will be seen as models for healthy family dynamics by participants.

Lifestyle Connectivity

They may gather as a “pod” (small cluster of compatible households) during community health crises, and the habit will continue afterwards. Clergy and children/youth staff should use social media regularly to coach parents as primary educators and to help them manage stress. Keep “coffee house” hours rather than “office” hours.

Hospitality PreferencesResource: *Worship Ways* by Thomas Bandy and Lucinda Holmes (Abingdon Press)

Traditional		Modern		Postmodern	
	The Basics	x	Multiple Choices	x	Take-Out
			Healthy Choices		

Families Matter Most expect opulent hospitality for all ages. Sustain a high standard of accountability for adherence to core values and spiritual practices among greeters, ushers, servers, nursery leaders, etc. Hospitality teams usually reflect the age diversity of these families. A Welcome Center provides information about all the programs for children and youth. The center should give away free gifts for children. Parking and access must be easy, and especially sensitive to the safety of expecting mothers, babies in strollers, and preschool children. Volunteers deployed in the parking lot can help families in and out of vehicles. Greeters should be effusively friendly. They should be trained to help parents with children, respectful and careful in touching or holding children. Refreshments are not necessarily healthy, but plentiful. Provide low serving stations for children with adult supervision. Adults will welcome basic coffee and tea (hot and cold), along with bottles of water. Provide goodie bags for parents to take extra food home or to the family entertainment destination for Sunday afternoon. Church shoppers may avoid the nursery and Sunday school and keep the family together in worship. Provide space at the back of the sanctuary for tables, chairs, strollers, and even a space to change diapers and warm bottles.

Lifestyle Connectivity

A personal visit, text message, or “shout out” in social media welcoming them to the church makes them feel at home. Celebrate lifecycle events on the church website, as well as the achievements of children or youth in school or sports.

Worship Preferences Resource: *Worship Ways* by Thomas Bandy and Lucinda Holmes (Abingdon Press)

Traditional		Modern		Postmodern	
	Caregiving Worship	x	Inspirational Worship		Mission-Connection Worship
	Educational Worship		Transformational Worship	x	Coaching Worship
	Healing Worship				

Families Matter Most are "church shoppers", and they will examine the "Sunday experience" of hospitality, worship, and education carefully. They are looking for family friendly churches that are not status conscious and accept people as they are. They seek reinforcement for bedrock beliefs regarding the real presence of Christ, Biblical values, and the power and strength of God's love in the struggles of life. Worship is usually a blend of inspiration and coaching. Sermons help people address practical challenges in life with a Biblically informed faith. Drama and video clips supplement the spoken message. The sacraments of baptism and Eucharist can be very meaningful to people in this segment, regardless of whether they have a high liturgical upbringing. Keep Holy Communion simple and as intimate as possible. Encourage children to accompany parents to receive a blessing during communion. Worship is usually informal and focuses on a theme for one to three Sundays. It may be not lectionary based, but it does recognize the seasons of Christmas and Easter. Sing traditional Christmas carols during Advent and contemporary praise choruses well before Easter. Other holy days like Halloween and Mother's Day have increasing significance. Music is usually led by a band, and musicians should be able to incorporate a wide range of musical genres. Musicians can be even more important as Christian role models and evangelists.

Lifestyle Connectivity

Support worship with high quality technologies (video, audio). Parents and children may be surfing websites or texting friends during worship and hospitality times. Livestream and digitally record worship weekly. Highlight Christian music websites and encourage church musicians to chat online.

Education Preferences Resource: *See, Know, and Serve* by Thomas Bandy (Abingdon Press)

Form		Content		Grouping	
x	Curricular	x	Biblical	x	Generational
x	Experiential		Topical		Peer Group

Families Matter Most want choices for children on Sunday morning. Sunday school is usually concurrent with worship, or in between services. Some prefer Sunday school at an earlier hour, especially if the parents grew up in traditional church families. Most, however, want to dedicate more time on Sunday to family outings. If Sunday school is at a different time than worship, many parents will prefer to relax in the refreshment center than attend an adult class. A lay leader can intentionally encourage significant conversations about faith and life. Sustain a high quality and high security nursery. It should be close to the sanctuary and refreshment area (not on a different level or at the end of a hallway or near an unsecured exit). Don't count on a good attendance during school holidays!

The children's Sunday school may well use a thematic curriculum with strong Bible references, but this is supplemented by crafts, videos, puppetry, and other experiences. Sounds, images, and data bytes shape the learning methods of this lifestyle segment. They want their children to learn basic Bible stories, moral principles, and especially the life, teaching, and significance of Jesus. The Sunday school is usually strongest for preschool through grade 6 who gather in age groups parallel to public schools. Once in junior and senior high school, groups tend to be smaller and more generic.

Lifestyle Connectivity

Provide a full range of digital resources on the church website. Recommended links to resources from other agencies. Education and youth leaders should maintain a predictable, regular schedule of coaching parents. Deploy teachers as itinerant tutors circulating among "pods" (clusters of families worshipping together virtually).

Small Group Preferences

Resource: *See, Know, and Serve* by Thomas Bandy (Abingdon Press)

Leadership		Focus	
x	Trained Leader		Curriculum Study
	Rotate Leaders	x	Shared Affinity

Families Matter Most struggle with time management and are caught between long commutes to and from work and family time. They will make time, however, for small groups that matter. Groups may be very flexible about time and place. For example, they may meet very early on a weekday before work, and group participants may gather dressed for work at breakfast or an early coffee. Groups should be disciplined about time and are relatively short-term commitments sandwiched between school holidays (September through November or January to mid-March). Groups may be formed specifically for men, women, couples, or multiple generations.

Bible Study or intentional spiritual growth may be the focus, but many groups will be based on affinities or common concerns (parenting or marriage enrichment issues, career advancement, etc.). Leaders are not necessarily perceived as "experts" and certainly not "saints", but they are respected as being more advanced in spiritual discipline. The group leaders are trained and accountable to the pastor or priest (or other paid staff), and therefore take responsibility to organize the group and support group members. Small groups become a main source for care giving and mutual support. Bible-based devotions and intercessory prayers may be brief but are key components to begin or end each session. The content of group meetings may be arranged by the leader using videos, internet links, and occasional printed resources.

Lifestyle Connectivity

Video and audio blogs enhance small group participation. Participants are more likely to text frequently with short messages than email occasionally with long messages. Stress management and mental health are key life concerns, and internet chat should be very sensitive and supportive.

Outreach Preferences

Resource: *Strategic Thinking* by Thomas Bandy (Abingdon Press)

	Personal Need	Readiness to Volunteer
Basic Survival		
Health and Wellness		
Quality of Life		x
Addiction Intervention		
Interpersonal Relationships	x	
Human Potential	x	x
Salvation and Human Destiny		

Families Matter Most are focused on their children, marriages, and careers. They have conservative views about most social issues, but they are not activists. They are unlikely to sign petitions, join protest marches, or lobby politicians. However, they will support church policies that support traditional family values and oppose "progressive" thinking. They are more interested in conforming to traditional expectations than participating in prophetic witness. However, they may be strong advocates of a healthy lifestyle and a clean environment.

They will be very interested in any outreach ministry that helps them explore spiritual gifts or develop hidden talents. They will gravitate to outreach ministries designed to help children express themselves, especially if the mission involves amateur team sports. Any outreach that ensures the safety or promotes the well-being of children will be received well. They are very passionate about confronting child abuse, and very compassionate toward disadvantaged children or broken families. These young parents like to participate as a family in day trips or Saturday afternoon projects that improve the neighborhood. Parents like to involve their children in activities that are fun, bring the family together, and provide some simple blessing or benefit to others.

Lifestyle Connectivity

Parents like to see images of youth in mission posted regularly on the church website. Use instant messaging and social media to coordinate volunteer outreach activities. Keep an online journal of mission trips for extended family to track families in action.

Facility Preferences

Resource: *See, Know, and Serve* by Thomas Bandy (Abingdon Press)

Property		Technology		Symbolism	
	Ecclesiastical		Modern	x	Classic Christendom
x	Utilitarian	x	Postmodern		Contemporary Post-Christendom

Families Matter Most gravitate toward church facilities that are newer and child friendly (without stairs, basements, dark hallways, old fashioned washrooms, or musty surroundings often associated with established church buildings). They look for safe parking lots and passenger drop-offs, wide entrances and exits to accommodate strollers, large vestibules with room for children to run, and multi-purpose worship centers. Nurseries must be on the same floor as the worship center and refreshment areas. They must be large enough to separate toddlers from infants, and well supplied with fresh air, natural light, and running water. Security needs to be tight to avoid child theft. Although the facility is utilitarian, the symbols (murals, pictures, worship center symbols) should be clearly Christian and quite traditional. Broadly spiritual images may be confusing and troubling, because people in this lifestyle segment are uncomfortable with ambiguity.

Lifestyle Connectivity

Video, audio, and internet technologies are expected. Computer LCD screens are common in the worship center, vestibule, refreshment center, and all other rooms. Never leave a video screen blank. Words, static images, videos, and animations are all used on screen. Total and easy access to the internet is vital.

Financial Preferences

Resource: *See, Know, and Serve* by Thomas Bandy (Abingdon Press)

Giving Target		Giving Method	
	Unified Budgets & General Funds		Informed Philanthropy & Pledging
x	Designated Programs & Mission Projects	x	Lifestyle Coaching & Family Financial Planning

Families Matter Most take pride in their homes, and their dual incomes have made the first steps to upward mobility possible. However, they are often seriously in debt with mortgage and car loans, and they rarely pay off monthly credit card bills. Tithing is difficult for them to imagine, and many do not have a very profound sense of financial stewardship. They think of church giving in the context of family budgeting, and welcome coaching for Christian family financial planning. Seminars in debt relief and generosity from a Christian perspective are popular.

Lifestyle Connectivity

Parents are likely to manage money digitally. They pre-authorize withdrawals and e-transfer funds to make special contributions to outreach or capital campaigns. Always update financial information and the progress of stewardship campaigns on the website. These families may not always be present ... but they want to be informed.

Communication

Resource: *Mosaic E-Handbook* by Experian

Communication in Daily Living				Communication in Church Participation			
	Broadcast/Streaming TV	Direct Mail	x Radio		Live/Recorded Video	Print and Paper	Announcements or Visits
x	Mobile SMS	Email	Social Media	x	Text Message	Email	x Social Media

Families Matter Most are receptive to a wide range of advertising. They will respond to direct mail and may pick up a brochure at a Welcome Center. They watch television, and while TV ads are beyond the means of many local congregations, denominational bodies can successfully advertise in their behalf. Be sure to emphasize family ministries, family friendly churches, and missions related to marriage, children, and healthy homes. Avoid controversial subjects, social policies, and heritage protection.

Lifestyle Connectivity

They surf the internet on a daily and momentary basis. They will explore church websites, download, or link to resources, and watch amateur video. They will read the clergy's blogs, post comments, and contribute photos. They routinely use social media but prefer instant messaging. They use smartphones and download free Apps. Send reminders by text and update the calendar of events on the website daily.