

Group F: *Promising Families*

Young couples with children in starter homes, living child-centered lives

Resource: Mosaic 2021 by Experian.

Religious Experience in a Nutshell

Religious Perspective: *Looking for God through (or with?) the eyes of a child*
 Common Spiritual Issues: *Feeling purposeless or overwhelmed, anxieties over emptiness and fate*

Common Church Presence

- Child-friendly churches
- Weak or inconsistent church backgrounds
- Search for spiritual certainties and moral absolutes
- Creative and experimental in faith communities
- Torn between debt and generosity
- Hands-on outreach



Potential Influence

1 st Tier Group Compatibility	Family Group F <i>Promising Families</i>	2 nd Tier Group Compatibilities
B Flourishing Families M Families in Motion D Suburban Style	F22 Fast Track Couples F23 Families Matter Most	G Young City Solos H Bourgeois Melting Pot I Family Union

Communication

Resource: *Mosaic E-Handbook* by Experian

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

General Comments:

Perhaps no Gospel story is more powerful for *Promising Families* than Matthew 18:1-6. The disciples ask who is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven, and Jesus responds by putting a child in their midst. *Whoever becomes humble like a little child shall be the greatest!* Whoever welcomes such a child in my name welcomes me! People in this lifestyle group can be remarkably tolerant of mistakes, but they will be irate if anyone abuses a child.

Experian suggests that the church and the school Parent-Teachers Association are the two most important groups for these Generation Y, under 35, singles, couples, or newly married adults starting families. They gravitate to churches that emphasize traditional family values, but which are open to family structures. These churches are somewhat conservative in faith, but they are not extreme and respectful of all major religions. These churches may be established churches or new church developments. They celebrate worship that is comfortable with crying infants and fussy toddlers. The nurseries may only be equipped with the basics, but they are clean and safe. Small groups provide babysitting, forge deep friendships, and focus on affinities like parenting and marriage enrichment.

This generation has a keen appreciation for spirituality and a desire for God, but they often have very little background in scripture and doctrine. When you think about it, Generation Y has had a mixed religious inheritance. Their Silent great-grandparents were doubtful; their Boomer grandparents were skeptical; and their Buster parents were largely indifferent to religion. If they attended church at all as children, they were usually accompanied by grandparents (rather than parents), and much of their Christian education was communicated in children's stories during the worship service.

Promising Families look for a church that is not too abstract or advanced. They want to *experience* incarnation, rather than *understand* it. They seek the presence of Christ as a teacher and vindicator. Their quest for God is often motivated by a sense of shame rather than guilt because many in this generation have been abused, ignored, rejected, or abandoned at some point in their personal histories. Behind the outward show of self-confidence there is often an abiding sense of low-self-esteem. God's grace cleanses their lives, gives them a fresh start and a reason to hope, and raises their self-respect. This generation often struggles to trust themselves, their relationships, authority figures, institutions, and society in general. The church not only reinforces trust in God and social institutions, but it helps these people feel innately trustworthy themselves.

They want to learn the basics of faith and are only just now grasping the fundamentals of church membership and leadership. They may still have a hard time discerning the difference between the hope of divine grace and the promise of material success. The problem of meaningless evil can really throw them off balance, and they rely on a strong spiritual leader to explain mysteries or provide strength in times of trouble. When you think about it, these parents seek God as children themselves; and they hope to raise their children with a strong faith that endures the trials of life. Clergy leaders sometimes feel like parents.

Church plants that have been seeded with mature Christian disciples as part of the core leadership are especially attractive to people in this lifestyle group. They look for mentors and models who can accept people as they are, but guide them toward maturity as adults, parents, and Christians. These are churches that are extraordinarily clear about the core values and bedrock beliefs that shape the "DNA" of the congregation. These are displayed on the homepage of the interactive church website, taught in membership classes, and used regularly to evaluate church leaders.

Most of the public service buildings in the new subdivisions where these people live are utilitarian and technologically advanced. The church buildings are no exception. They provide multi-purpose space for all kinds of worship, educational, and outreach activities; but they also provide the latest audio, video, and computerized technologies that are now a natural part of their everyday experience.

Their churches are paradoxical in the same way that their busy, dual-career, child-centered lifestyles are paradoxical. Both can be noisy, messy, and chaotic, and some remarkably odd (and even bad) behavior can be tolerated. Yet there is rigorous alignment to the mission of the church, and high expectations for leadership in the church. They want a church to be spontaneous and open, but at the same time they expect serious accountabilities for all volunteers in the church.

The church is part "nursery" and part "boot camp" to help these young families birth their faith and launch successful careers in the service of Christ. They look for strong, practical coaching in day-to-day Christian living. Many will be moving on to another city, or moving up to a more affluent suburb, within five years. A church doesn't have much time to connect, bond, mature, and bless these young families. Discipling is really a matter of imprinting upon their lives spiritual habits that will continue in their future homes, playgrounds, and workplaces.