

UPDATE

UPDATE - 2002

- Family Religious Life
- Family Worship Practices
- Parents and Faith-Talk

John Hancock Center for Youth and Family Ministry-La Sierra University and the North American Division Office of Educa-

Number 5 — Valuegenesis² information you can use

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What About SDA Families. . .

Valuegenesis research focuses on three specific areas of importance in the lives of children and youth in the church: the family setting, the church impact, and the schools' importance in growing a rich and dynamic faith experience.

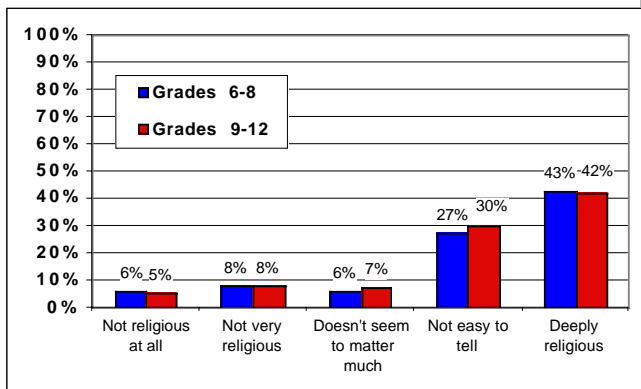
We promised in *UPDATE 4* that we would provide information about the Adventist family. In the data sets we have interesting and helpful insights into the spiritual life of the family, the types of worships, and specific information about the family itself—its interactions, for example.

There is no question that one of the most influential and perduring influences in the religious formation of children is that of early family life.¹

One of the most helpful insights of *Valuegenesis* research regarding parental religion is that of the perception of the children as to the extent of religiosity their parents project.

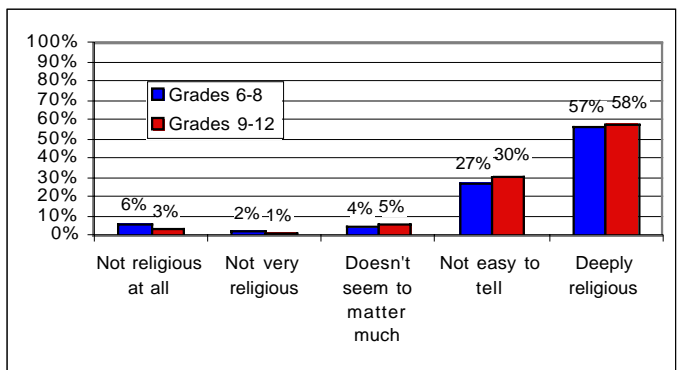
Question 189 in the survey form asks, "Which of the following best describes, in your opinion, the way your FATHER is religious?" The response format is particularly descriptive.

- He is not religious at all.
- He is not very religious.
- He does religious things, but it doesn't seem to matter much how he leads his life.
- Although he is religious, it is not easy to tell how it influences his life.
- He is deeply religious. It is evident that his faith has a big impact on how he lives his life.



(Q. 189. Father's Religiosity)

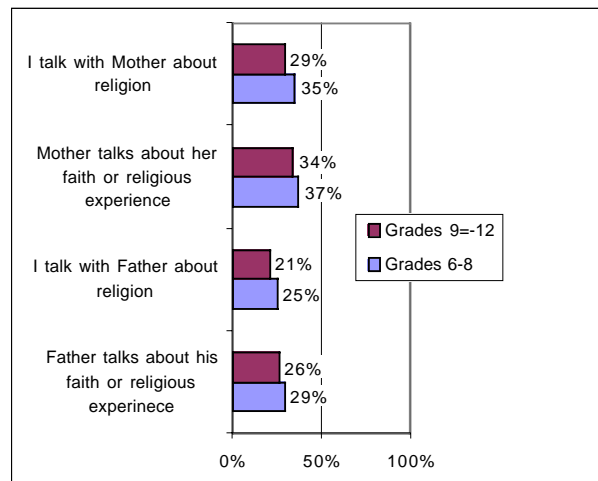
In contrast, we see the influence of the MOTHER in the religious perceptions of youth in grades 6 through 8 and in high school, grades 9-12. Again, when asked the same question, they responded accordingly.



(Q. 190. Mother's Religiosity)

Faith-Talk and Faith Growth

Early on in our discussions about the factors that build a rich and growing faith life we discovered that the quality of "faith-talk" with family members seemed crucial. It was not the quantity that was helpful in growing faith; rather, the type of discussion. What was seen as the most helpful was talking about one's own personal faith journey, rather than just talking "religious" content or concerns. In *Valuegenesis²* we examined this contribution to faith growth. Notice the percentages of interaction.



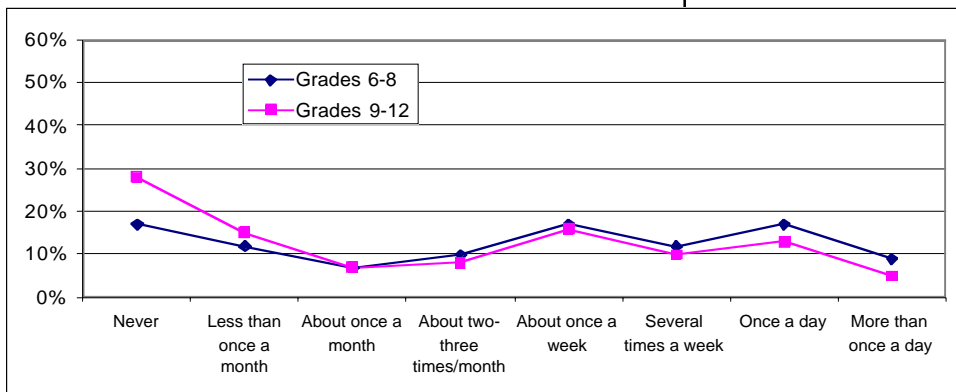
Family Worship and Faith Growth

Another important aspect of family faith life is that of family worship. This family activity was seen as important when done in a shared manner, focused on the needs of the children in the family, and creatively practiced.

We have discovered that frequency is not as important as meaningfulness and relevancy when it comes to family worship practice. And it is discouraging to find out that over the past ten years since the first research was completed, family worship frequency has only increased slightly.

regular worship with their children should understand that if they are consistent and creative, the family will benefit from any genuine effort attempted. And as important as this activity is, we hope more families will see its importance.

There are many resources for family worship. We would like to recommend the newest book for families that the Hancock Center and the North American Division have developed. It is called *Keeping the Faith: A Guidebook for Spiritual Parenting*. This book comes with over 50 guidesheets, age-graded, and creative that can be used for family worship exploring the varied ways people learn as well as appropriate ideas to build a strong spiritual family. (See endnotes for publication information).²



Are you comfortable talking about religion?

Your comfort level is important when you want to share with each other about faith. The research indicates a high level of comfort here. Both mother (86%) and father (78%) are comfortable or very comfortable sharing their faith experience. Pre-teens in 6th to 8th grade indicate a comfort level of 84%, and high school

students in Adventist schools suggest they are comfortable or very comfortable at the 78% level.

What does it mean?

Reviewing the chart above and using the totals of both grade groups, there are 49% of the families that have family worship about once a week or more. That is exactly the same as ten years ago in the *Valuegenesis*¹ research. And since family worship is so crucial to building a rich and growing family faith, this lack of increase is discouraging. In addition, of the 49% that are having a regular family worship, these families' children say that worship is both interesting and meaningful. Only 15% of the study group claim it is a waste of time. Therefore, if you are having worship with your families, it is probably perceived as significant! Those families that are not experimenting with

What should we do?

1. Let's begin by recommitting ourselves and our families to a more regular family worship experience. (Make sure it is shared, creative, and relevant to their age).
2. Let's talk to our teens and young adults about our own faith experience. After all, we are authorities of our own personal faith, not someone else's experience.
3. Try to find time to talk *together* about religious life. Parents that model comfortable sharing of their faith will provide significant help to children and youth who feel unsure about talking about faith talk.
4. You will remember in *Valuegenesis*¹ we discovered that family helping projects were another activity where the home could make a major contribution to the faith maturity of their children. Add some sharing projects to your family agenda.

For more information

¹ See James Michael Lee, *The Flow of Religious Instruction* (Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press).

² See V. Bailey Gillespie and Judith Gillespie, with Tim Gillespie and Cheryl Webster, *Keeping the Faith: A Guidebook for Spiritual Parenting* (Lincoln, NE: AdventSource, 2001). CD-ROM with worship ideas you can print on your own computer is also available from AdventSource.

NOTE: Go to www.lasierra.edu/centers/hcyfm for downloads of previous *Valuegenesis* UPDATES.

