

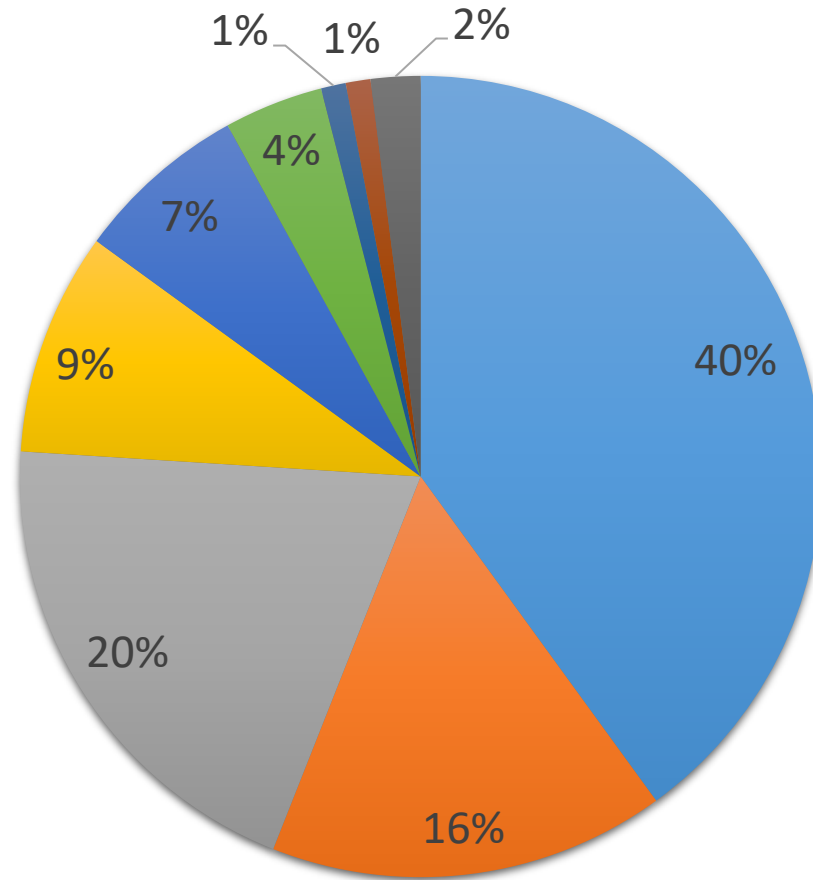
An orange speech bubble with a white outline, containing the text 'Talking Toddlers' in white, rounded, sans-serif font.

Talking Toddlers

Parents of children aged 0-4
and their engagement with
church

Practising Christians Britain - Age at coming to faith

The mean age that respondents reported becoming a Christian **varies regionally** with people in Wales reporting 17*, people in England reporting 11 and people in Scotland reporting 11.



■ 0-4 ■ 5-10 ■ 11-18 ■ 19-24 ■ 25-34 ■ 35-44 ■ 45-54 ■ 55+ ■ Don't know

'Practising' Christians (those who say they attend church on a monthly basis, pray and read/listen to the Bible weekly) are more likely than 'non-active' Christians to say that they **became a Christian at a later age** – an average of 12 years old compared to 5 years old.

Base: all respondents who are practising Christians (n=522)

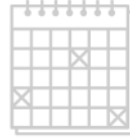
An overview of the project approach



Method

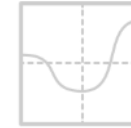
Savanta ComRes surveyed 1,182 parents with children aged 0-4 years old in Great Britain through an online survey.

Boosts were employed to increase the subsample sizes of key groups of parents to enable more detailed analysis (see the sample breakdown on the following slide).



Fieldwork dates

The survey was in field from 6th to 28th February 2020.



Interpretation

Comparisons are made between parent groups where relevant.

Findings marked with an asterisk () have low base sizes of 100 or less respondents, and therefore should be treated as indicative only.*

Sample: definitions and parent subgroups

Parents with children aged 0-4

Data from the main sample are weighted by gender, age and region to be representative of parents with children under 5, at a GB level. This is to enable the calculation of the size of opportunity in the GB population of parents with children under 5.

Main sample size (excluding boosts): **N=1,182 parents.**

Parent subsample definitions and sizes (including boosts):



Fringe parents

N=1,020

Parents who attended at least one activity for children organised by a church group or taking place in a church in the last 12 months.



Unreached parents

N=309

Parents who did not attend any activity for children organised by a church group or taking place in a church in the last 12 months.



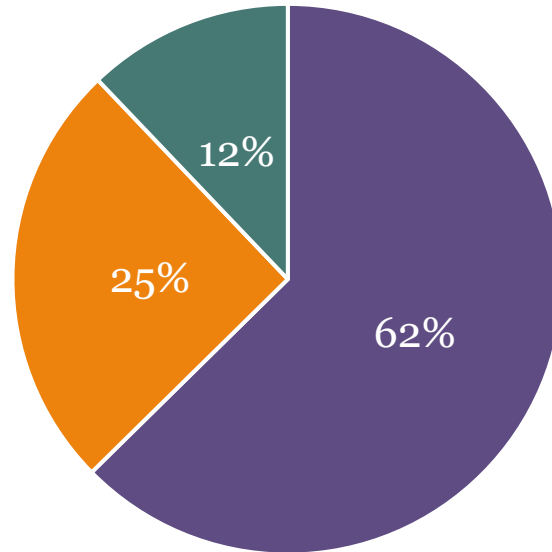
Active Christian parents

N=202

Parents who define as Christian, who engage weekly with the Bible / prayer and attend the church monthly, and who attend at least one activity for children organised by a church group or taking place in a church.

NOTE: Throughout the report, for brevity we use 'activity' and 'activities' when we refer to an activity/ activities for children organised by a church group or taking place in a church in the last 12 months.

The core opportunity exists amongst parents with children under 5s, that we call Fringe parents (62%). However, there is a sizeable group of Unreached parents who say they would be open to receiving an invitation to activities. If more is done to attract these ‘warm’ Unreached parents, the size of opportunity could increase further.



74% of all parents of 0-4's are in contact with the church

Definition of Fringe parents

Parents who attended at least one activity for children organised by a church group or taking place in a church in the last 12 months.

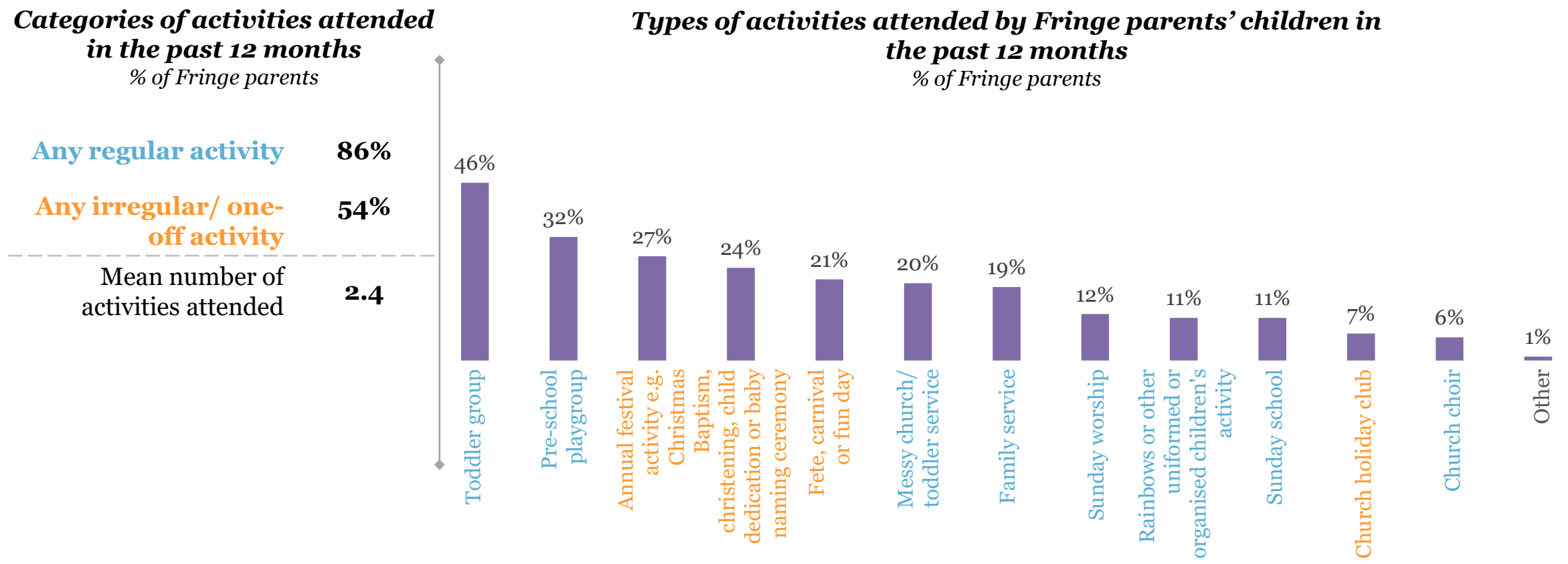
- Fringe parents
- Unreached parents
- Active Christian parents

Base: All parents (1182; weighted data)



More than eight in ten Fringe parents say that their children attended a regular activity in the past 12 months (86%). More than half of Fringe parents' children attended any one-off activity (54%).

The two most attended activities are of regular nature: toddler group (46%) and pre-school playgroup (32%). Furthermore, each child took part in 2.4 activities on average.



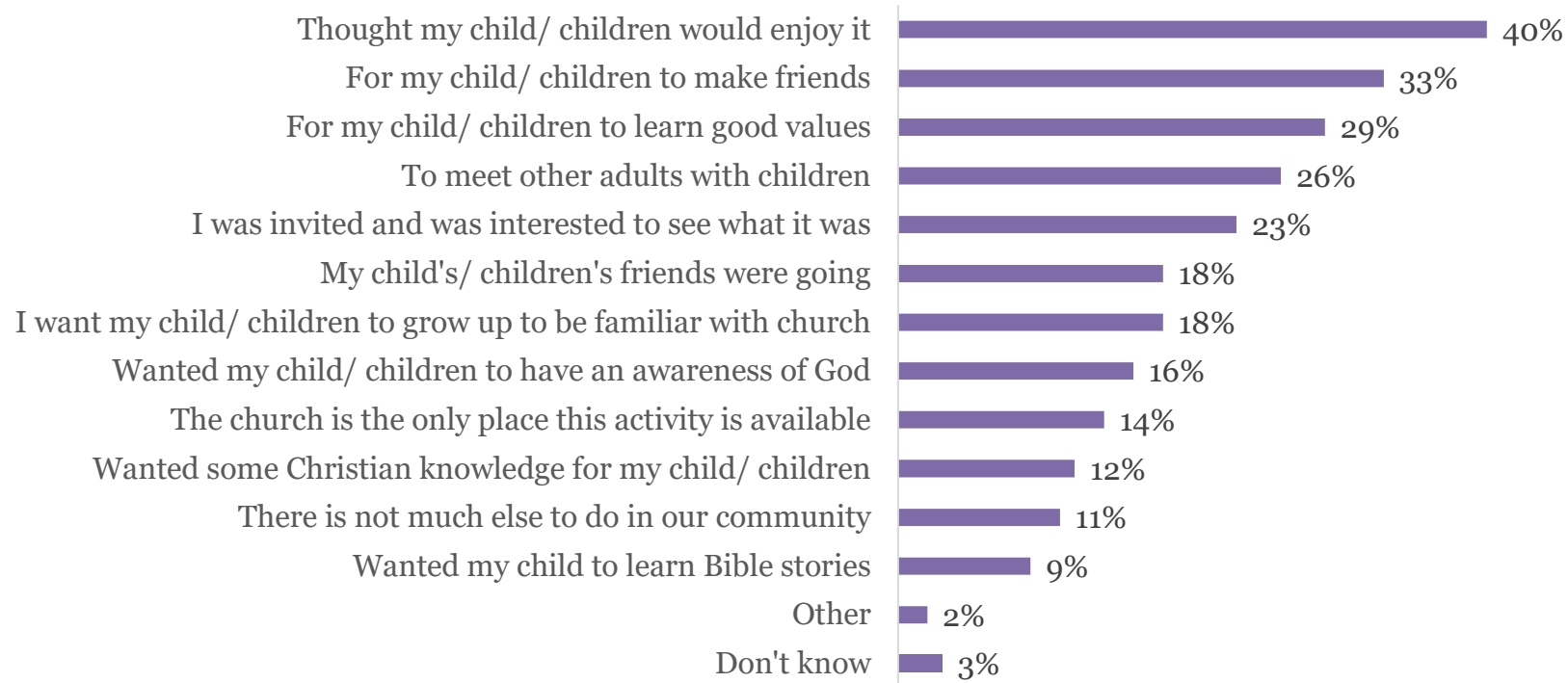
Base: All Fringe parents (1020; unweighted data)
 Q1. Has your child/ Have your children under 5 years old been to any of the following activities organised by a church group or that have taken place in a church in the past 12 months?

Fringe parents mention reasons that suggest prioritisation of their children’s needs and feelings for attending activities, such as ‘thought my child would enjoy it’ (40%), ‘for my child to make friends’ (33%) or ‘for my child to learn good values’ (29%).

Other reasons relate to extending one’s social network (‘meet other adults with children’ 26%) or general curiosity (‘interested to see what it was’ 23%).

Drivers of attendance

% of Fringe parents who attended activities with their children



*Base: Fringe parents who attended any activity with their children (982; unweighted data)
Q6a+Q6b. Why did you go along to this activity/ any of these activities originally?*

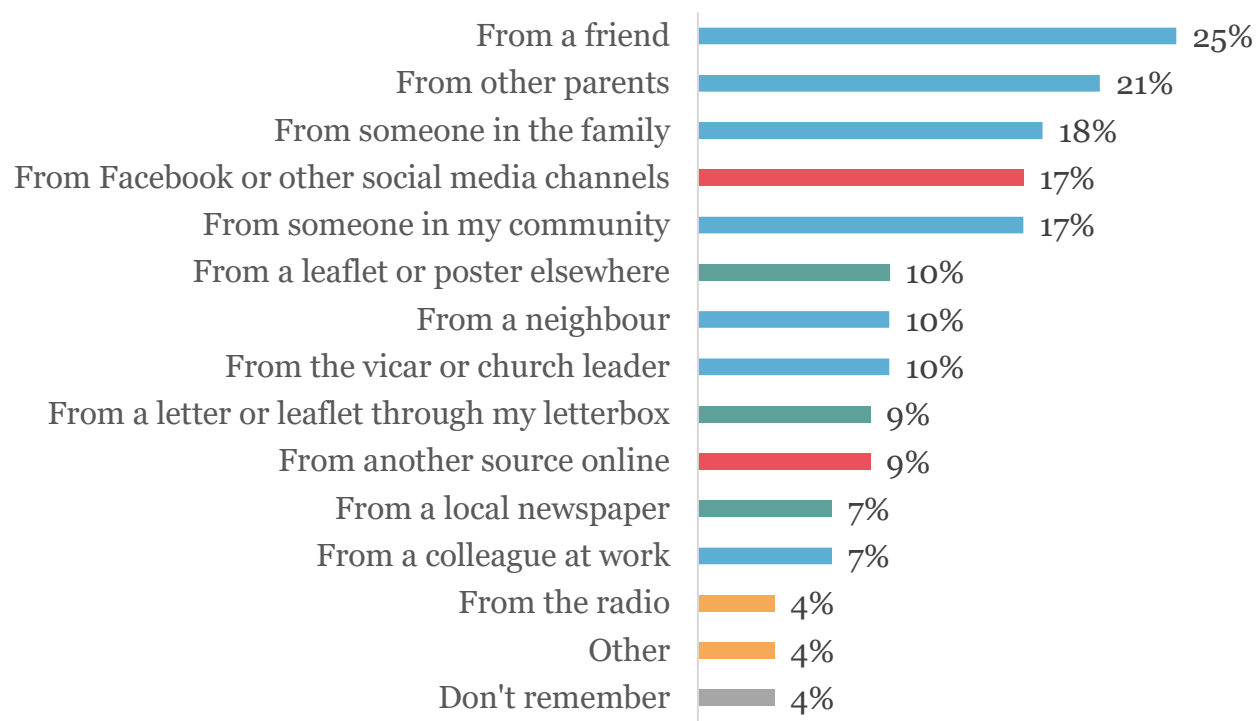


Fringe parents

Personal relationships appear to be key in disseminating information about activities. Nearly 3 in 4 Fringe parents heard about activities through to word of mouth (73%); for example from a friend (25%) or from other parents (21%).

However, Fringe parents also mention social media channels (17%) and other online sources (9%). Vicars or church leaders account for 10% of all recalled information about these activities.

Channels of information about activities % of Fringe parents



Categories of channels % of Fringe parents

Net: Word of mouth	73%
Net: Online	24%
Net: Print	22%
Net: Other	8%
Mean number of media	1.7

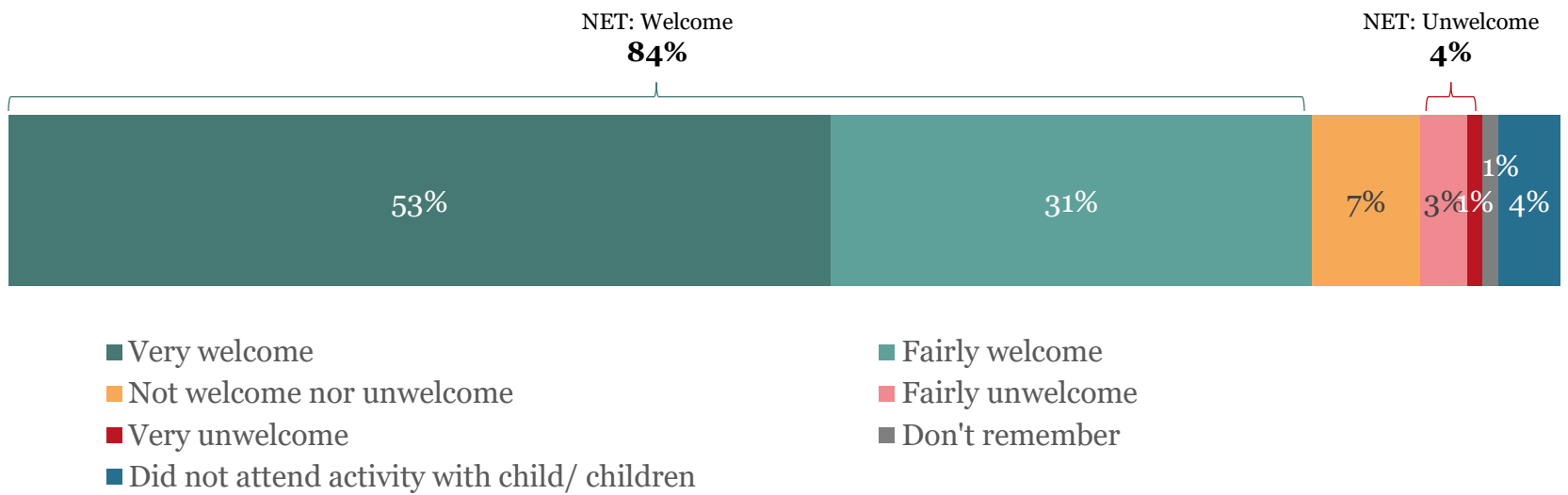
Base: All Fringe parents (1020; unweighted data)
Q8a-Q8d. How did you hear about this activity/ these activities?



Looking at Fringe parents' experience attending activities, we see that more than 8 in 10 Fringe parents felt welcome (84%). 1 in 2 Fringe parents felt very welcome (53%).

This is a very positive result compared to 4% of Fringe parents who felt unwelcome.

How did they feel at the activity?
% of Fringe parents



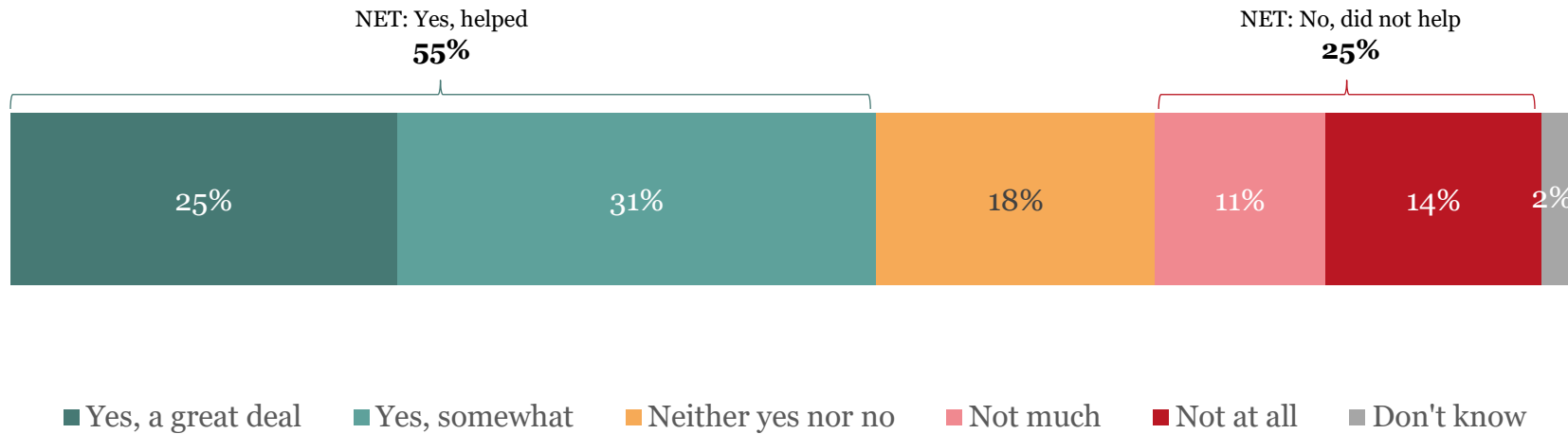
Base: All Fringe parents (1020; unweighted data)
Q9a+Q9b. How welcome or unwelcome have you felt at the activity/ felt overall when attending these activities?



More than half of Fringe parents say that attending activities helped them to explore their own beliefs (55%).

1 in 4 Fringe parents report that joining these activities has helped them explore their beliefs ‘a great deal’ (25%).

Did this activity help you explore your beliefs?
% of Fringe parents



Base: All Fringe parents (1020; unweighted data)

Q11a-Q11d. Has attending this activity/ these activities with your child/ children under 5 years old helped you explore your own beliefs? / Has this activity/ Have these activities helped you explore your own beliefs?

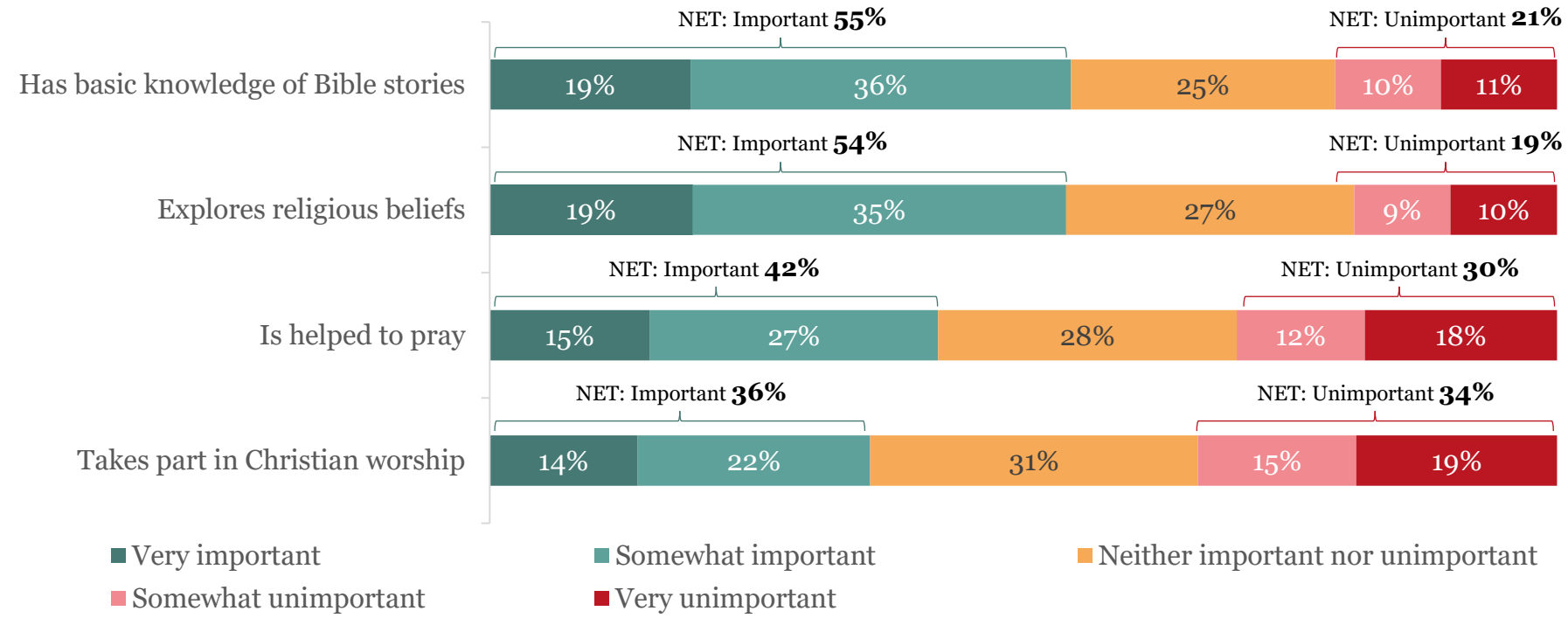


Fringe parents

More than half of Fringe parents find it important that their child has basic knowledge of Bible stories (55%) and explores religious beliefs (54%).

Fringe parents are more ambivalent when it comes to ‘active’ forms of engagement with religion. A similar share of Fringe parents find it important and unimportant that their child is helped to pray (42% vs. 30% respectively) and that it takes part in Christian worship and (36% vs. 34% respectively).

Importance of knowledge of religious practices % Fringe parents



Base: All Fringe parents (1020; unweighted data)
Q33. How important or unimportant do you think it is that your child ...

Is there an opportunity among Unreached parents?

- 18% of Unreached parents say they have been invited to such activities. The main reason provided for not attending these activities when invited was inconvenient times.
- 4 in 5 Unreached parents say they have not been invited to any activities (79%). However, a third of Unreached parents say they would have welcomed an invitation (35%).
 - They would welcome the invitation to come from someone close, such as a friend or a family member.

Base: Prospect parents (309; unweighted data)



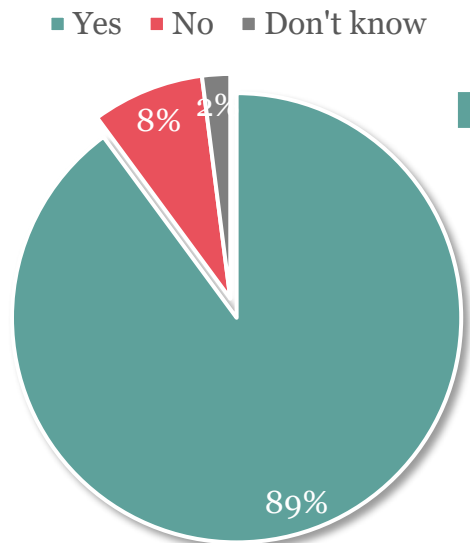


Active Christian parents

9 in 10 Active Christian parents say they have regular contact with Unreached parents (89%) and the majority also act on the opportunity this represents: 84% of Active Christian parents with such contacts have invited Unreached parents and their children 0-4 years old to any activities.

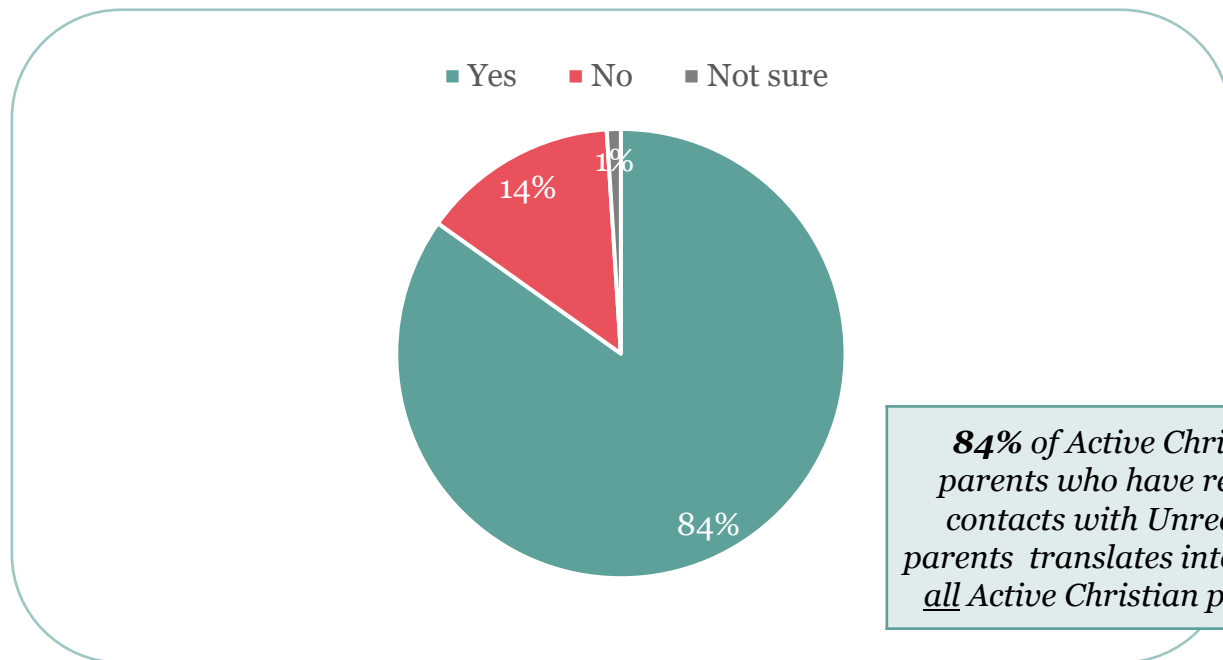
Regular contacts with Unreached parents

% Active Christian parents



Have they invited Unreached parents to activities

*% Active Christian parents who **have** regular contacts with Prospect parents*



84% of Active Christian parents who have regular contacts with Unreached parents translates into **75%** of all Active Christian parents.

Base: All Active Christian parents (202; unweighted data)
Q22. Do you have regular contact with non-Christian parents of children under 5 years old who as far as you are aware do not attend any activities organised by a church group or taking place in a church?

Base: Active Christian parents who have regular contacts with non-Christian parents (180); unweighted data
Q23. Have you ever invited any of these non-Christian parents and their child/ children under 5 years old along to activities organised by a church group or taking place in a church?

Key findings

The core opportunity among parents of under 5s is the **Fringe parents group.**

- This group is 62% of total parents. More specifically, amongst the Fringe parents group, those who are Christian (36%), and those with no religion (45%) would be considered to be a more focused target for outreach.

However, this opportunity could be increased further if outreach additionally focuses on **Unreached parents.**

- There is a sizeable group (35%) of Prospect parents open to receiving an invitation to activities for children in church. This group could be activated by addressing the key barriers Prospect parents face, and by delivering an invitation via their preferred channels.

Value is seen amongst **Fringe parents in particular, but also some **Unreached parents** in the importance of their children exploring their religious beliefs and learning Bible stories, which suggests the good opportunity of an open-minded audience.** Furthermore, most Fringe parents attending these activities felt welcome and more than half said they explored their beliefs as a result of attending.

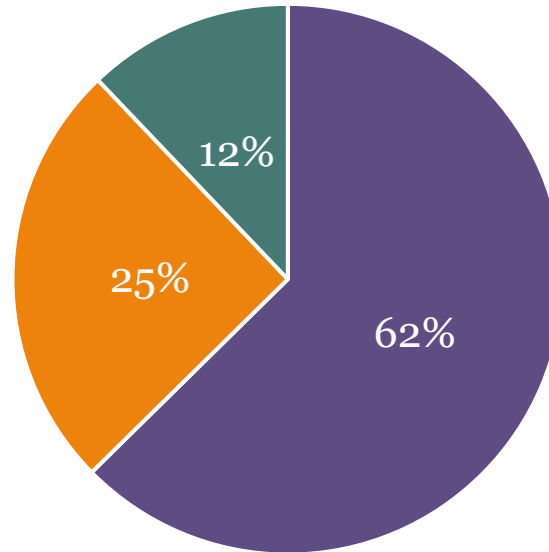
Active Christian parents are proactive in inviting Fringe and Prospect parents to activities. Active Christian parents might welcome further support from the church in outreach in terms of:

- Types of activities to invite Fringe and Prospect parents to: mainly toddler groups and pre-school playgroups.
- Key points to highlight as part of an invitation: Emphasize benefits of such activities for the child (child will enjoy it, child will make friends, child will learn good values). It can be added that these activities are free, food/ drinks are provided, and that the atmosphere is welcoming and inclusive.

Personal relationships are key in persuading parents to join such activities. But not all parents have close ties to practicing

~~Christian parents – this particularly appears to be the case for Unreached parents.~~

The core opportunity exists amongst parents with children under 5s, that we call Fringe parents (62%). However, there is a sizeable group of Unreached parents who say they would be open to receiving an invitation to activities. If more is done to attract these ‘warm’ Unreached parents, the size of opportunity could increase further.



74% of all parents of 0-4's are in contact with the church

A further 8.75% are open to an invite

Definition of Fringe parents

Parents who attended at least one activity for children organised by a church group or taking place in a church in the last 12 months.

- Fringe parents
- Unreached parents
- Active Christian parents

Base: All parents (1182; weighted data)

H O P E

Together

evangelical alliance
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THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

www.hopetogether.org.uk/talkingtoddlers