

Segment **F23 Families Matter Most**

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

Resource: Mosaic 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*

Potential Influence

Lifestyle Compatibility	Family Group F Promising Families	Frequent Neighbors
C14 Boomers and Boomerangs	F22 Fast Track Couples	B08 Babies and Bliss
D15 Sports Utility Families	F23 Families Matter Most	C11 Aging of Aquarius
G24 Status Seeking Singles		C13 Silver Sophisticates
G25 Urban Edge		E20 No Place Like Home

General Comments

Families Matter Most are big on family values. *Experian* suggests that the adults place their own health and entertainment secondary to the opportunities and happiness of their children. 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.

Families Matter Most are often members of a church, but family activities and amateur sports may keep them from regular church attendance. Adults are often too busy to take leadership on a board or committees. 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 tend to gravitate toward large churches with high quality programs and technologies.

What highly value youth groups and fun family activities. They are attracted to churches that model high moral expectations and prioritize programs for young children. 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. They are less likely to leave church because of doctrinal disagreements, but may leave churches because they are disappointed by leadership behavior, or because they object to social policies. They may go church shopping to find worship experiences that are more family friendly. They rarely quarrel with the church, but simply stop coming and search elsewhere.

General Comments

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

How do I, as a leader, perceive the spiritual expectations of people in our community?

How can we, as a board, research and understand our community better?

How can we, as a church, build closer relationships with this lifestyle segment?

Color Key

High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority
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Leadership Preferences

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

THE CONSTANT LEADERS		THE ORGANIC LEADERS		THE EXTREME LEADERS	
	Caregiver	x	Discipler		Visionary
	Enabler		Guru		Mentor
x	CEO				Pilgrim

Families Matter Most may participate in small or medium-size churches, but their informal lifestyles, minimalist faith expectations, and strong priorities for children often drive them to micro- or mega-churches. Increasingly they connect with large churches through one of its multiple sites. This means that they value a pastor who is very committed to disciple-making, but who is also a strong administrator. The pastor should be able to manage a staff of paid specialists who sustain processes to greet, grow, equip, send, and coach mature Christians.

Pastors are strong role models for parents and youth. They are easy going with children and tolerate considerable commotion in worship. Pastors are particularly sensitive to the stressful lives of young parents, and provide strong coaching through preaching, blogs, texts, and small groups to help them live like Christians in a crazy world. The pastor's spouse and family will be expected to be visible and active in the congregation, and they will be seen as models for healthy family dynamics by participants.

The credibility of pastors 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 need to be strong CEO's who can raise money, organize high quality programs, and sustain relevant family-centered ministries.

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

How would you describe your pastor now?

How might your pastor adapt to be more empathic in the future?

How can you equip, train, and/or support your pastor in any transition?

Hospitality Preferences

Resource: 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 intentional and opulent hospitality for all ages. The accountability of greeters, ushers, servers, nursery leaders, etc. to core values, beliefs, and spiritual practices must be a high standard. Hospitality teams usually reflect the age diversity of these families. A Welcome Center provides information about all the programs for children and youth. A welcome center should give away free gifts for children.

Parking and access must easy, and especially sensitive to the safety of expecting mothers, babies in strollers, and pre-school 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, but respectful and careful in touching or holding children.

Parents want choices for little children on Sunday morning. One option is to leave their pre-schoolers in 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). A second option is to bring them into the worship center. Provide space at the back with tables and chairs, space for strollers, and even a space to change diapers and warm bottles.

Refreshments are not necessarily healthy, but plentiful. Provide low serving stations especially for children ... and strong adult supervision. Adults welcome basic coffee and tea (hot and cold), along with bottles of water. Provide goodies for parents to take extra food home or to the family entertainment destination for Sunday afternoon.

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

How would you describe your hospitality ministries now?

How should hospitality ministries change to be more relevant to this lifestyle segment?

What additional training do greeters, ushers, and servers need to be more empathic?

Worship Preferences

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

TRADITIONAL		MODERN		POSTMODERN	
	Care-giving Worship	x	Inspirational Worship		Mission-Connectional 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 Holy Communion 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 in order to receive a blessing during communion.

Worship is usually informal and supported by postmodern technologies. Worship often 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.

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

How would you describe your worship service(s) now?

How should you customize one or more worship services to be relevant to this segment?

What additional training do preachers, musicians, readers need to meet expectations?

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 usually prefer the Sunday school to be concurrent with worship, although they may elect to bring their children to worship for special events, holidays, and when relatives are visiting. Don't count on a good attendance during school holidays! Some will 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.

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 pre-school 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.

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

How would you describe children, youth, and adult education in your church now?

How would education strategies need to change to be relevant to this lifestyle segment?

What changes in leadership selection and training would make education more effective?

Small Group Preferences

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

LEADERSHIP		CONTENT	
x	Trained Leaders		Curriculum Study
	Rotated Leaders	x	Shared Affinity

Families Matter Most struggle with time management, 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 (e.g. various 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 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 through videos, internet links, and occasional printed resources.

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

How would you describe the Small Group strategy in your church now?

How would Small Group strategies need to change to be relevant to this lifestyle segment?

What changes in leadership and content would make Small Groups more effective?

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 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.

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

What outreach categories does your church emphasize now?

What outreach categories would be more relevant to this lifestyle segment?

What outreach priorities and tactics should change for the church to bless this segment?

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.

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. 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, and parents are often give "beepers" with which staff can summon parents in an emergency. (Parents are well aware that churches are common targets for 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.

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

What renovations and/or upgrades need to be made in our church facility?

What symbols of faith would be most relevant to this lifestyle segment?

If we started another site of ministry for this segment, how should we design it?

Financial Preferences

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

GIVING TARGET		GIVING METHOD	
	Unified Budgets and 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. Special seminars in debt relief and generosity from a Christian perspective are popular.

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

What options in giving methods and giving targets do we offer now?

How do we design our annual stewardship campaign(s) now?

How should we revise our financial strategy to be more relevant to this segment?

Communication

Resource: Mosaic E–Handbook by Experian

CONTEMPORARY PUBLIC COMMUNICATION				TRADITIONAL CHURCH COMMUNICATION							
	Direct Mail Receptive	x	Mobile Telephone		Online Computer		Newspaper		Corded Telephone		Verbal Announcements
x	Email Receptive	x	Broadcast Cable TV	x	Internet Radio		Print		AM/FM Radio		Personal Visits

Experian suggests that *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 are television addicts, 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.

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 pastor's blogs, post comments, and contribute photos. They routinely use social media, and will use both email (primarily with parents and relatives) and text messages (primarily with peers and work associates). They use Smart Phones, and download free Apps. It is more efficient to text than to telephone. Avoid verbal announcements in worship and printed newsletters. Send reminders by text and update the calendar of events on the website daily.

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

How do we communicate among church participants now?

How do we communicate beyond our church to the community now?

How should we adapt communication strategies to be more effective for this segment?

IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS

POTENTIAL INFLUENCE

Lifestyle Compatibility	Daily behavioral habits overlap with common activities and similar priorities
Family Group	Grouping by key demographic factors like age, income, culture, family status, etc.
Frequent Neighbors	Often live near each other with shared recreational, health, or emergency services

LEADERSHIP

Constant Leaders	Traditional clergy focused on sustaining ministries & increasing members
Organic Leaders	Innovative leaders focused on church growth, new starts & multiplying followers
Extreme Leaders	Non-Institutional leaders focused on spiritual disciplines, high accountability, and pursuing perfection
Caregiver	Focus on visitation, counseling, pastoral prayer
Enabler	Focus on facilitating meetings, lay empowerment, mediation, liturgy
CEO	Focus on staff development, administration, fund raising, expository preaching
Discipler	Focus on seeker sensitivity, adult faith formation, guidance for Christian living
Guru	Focus on religious insight, holistic personal growth, spirituality, enlightenment
Visionary	Focus on big picture, major social change, motivational speaking
Mentor	Focus on self-awareness, individual meaning and purpose, vocational clarity
Pilgrim	Focus on cross-cultural sensitivity, inter-religious dialogue, strict spiritual discipline

HOSPITALITY

The Basics	Friendly untrained greeters, basic coffee and creamer, packaged food or sugary snacks
Multiple Choices	Trained greeters, multiple serving stations, great coffee, varieties of food
Healthy Choices	Trained greeters mirroring lifestyle diversity, healthy food options, allergen alerts
Take-Out	Coffee-to-go, bagged food, exit door hospitality, text message and social media

EDUCATION

Curricular	Printed books or study guides. Passive, intellectual, classroom. Maturity measured by acquired knowledge
Experiential	Activities. More music, images, movement, interaction. Maturity measured by behavior patterns, attitudes.
Biblical	Focuses on the Old and New Testaments. Maturity means Biblical literacy
Topical	Focuses on contemporary issues. Maturity means ethical integrity and enlightened behavior
Generational	Gathers people by age or grade in separate classrooms with age-appropriate resources.
Peer Group	Gathers people sharing affinities or common interests regardless of age.

SMALL GROUPS

Rotated Leaders	Participants take turns hosting and leading the group. Requires limited expertise and training.
Designated Leaders	Single leader guides the group from start to finish. Requires significant maturity and training.
Curriculum	Focus on a book, workbook, or structured program to guide structured discussion
Affinity	Focus on shared interest, enthusiasm, or activity to inspire informal discussion.

IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS (cont.)

WORSHIP

Educational	Consistent liturgy, expository preaching, focus on doctrine, ethics, and history
Inspirational	Uplifting music, motivational speaking, focus on joy, optimism, and encouragement
Transformational	Spontaneous, expectant, personal transformations, Higher Power interventions
Coaching	Informal, dialogical, topical, practical coaching on how to live better & faithfully
Caregiving	Slow, meditative, family–feel with pastoral prayer, children’s time, senior celebrations
Healing	Quiet, prayerful, expectant of physical, mental, relational healing and hope
Mission–Connectional	Unity of action/reflection, all about outreach, volunteer empowerment

OUTREACH

Survival	Basic needs for food, shelter, clothing, jobs, basic health care
Recovery	Addiction intervention, 12 step support, and counseling services
Health	Mental and physical fitness, disease prevention, rehabilitation, therapy
Quality of Life	Social wellbeing, neighborhood safety, environment, immigration, peacemaking
Human Potential	Personal/vocational fulfillment, education, career help, human rights advocacy
Interpersonal	Intimacy, sexuality, family & marriage counseling, healthy friendships
Human Destiny	Repentance, conversion, witnessing, alignment with God’s purposes

FACILITIES

Ecclesiastical	Facility must “look like a church” with traditional architecture and furnishings
Utilitarian	Facility must be “user–friendly” and multi–purpose for public use
Christendom	Indoor/outdoor symbols associated with church history or denominational identity
Contemporary	Indoor/outdoor symbols from nature, indigenous cultures, alternative spiritualities
Modern	Technology primarily enhances print and oral communication
Postmodern	Technology primarily enhances multi–sensory interaction, internet, social media

FINANCES

Unified Budgets	Stability first. Give to a single general fund to pay staff and manage overhead costs
Designated Giving	Effectiveness first. Give to specific funds or causes by personal preference
Informed Philanthropy	Informed, independent, confidential financial commitments for a tax benefit
Lifestyle Coaching	Individual & household coaching for Christian family financial management

COMMUNICATION

Direct Mail Receptive	Pay attention to mass mailings to postal addresses.
Email Receptive	Pay attention to information delivered digitally to personal email addresses.
Mobile Telephone	Regularly rely on cell phones and smart phones for calling, texting, surfing, banking etc.
Broadcast Cable TV	Regularly rely on cable television for news, advertising, and entertainment.
Online Computer	Regularly go online by personal computer to surf websites, shop, bank, and use other services.
Internet Radio	Regularly subscribe to internet services for music, sports, and topical discussions.
Newspaper	Pay attention to printed newspapers for updates about church news or local, national, global events.
Print	Pay attention to printed church newsletters, bulletin inserts, brochures, and other handouts.
Corded Telephone	Regularly use ordinary telephones to communicate from home.
AM/FM Radio	Regularly use traditional radio to listen to music, commercials, and talk.
Verbal Announcements	Always rely on verbal announcements from the pulpit about church events or items of interest.
Personal Visits	Always expect personal visits at home by a representative of the church to share information.