

Segment

055: Family Troopers

Families and single-parent households living near military bases

Resource: Mosaic by Experian.

Religious Experience in a Nutshell

Religious Perspective: *Looking for Heroes of Faith*

Common Spiritual Issues: *Feelings of guilt, anxieties about abuse and shame*

Potential Influence

Lifestyle Compatibility	Family Group 0 Singles and Starters	Frequent Neighbors
H26 Progressive Potpourri	O50 Full Steam Ahead	D18 Suburban Attainment
H28 Everyday Moderates	O51 Digital Dependents	L43 Homemade Happiness
I30 Stockcars and State Parks	O52 Urban Ambition	M44 Red White and Bluegrass
N48 Rural Southern Bliss	O53 Colleges and Cafes	R66 Dare to Dream
	O54 Striving Single Scene	
	O55 Family Troopers	

General Comments

Family Troopers expect the church to bring some normality to family life, and some additional authority to raising children. They often feel guilty being away from their kids, and tend to spoil them in consequence. Cell phones are constant companions. The ethnic diversity of people in this segment means that the church must look inclusive and act with extraordinary tolerance. They tend to prefer smaller or medium size churches that are more intimate and informal, but that also follow traditions and rituals that provide continuity in their mobile and occasionally dangerous world.

It is no surprise that these families and single-parent households related to military services are among the most transient in America. Whatever their former lifestyle segment affiliation might have been, this new lifestyle reshapes them in unique ways and with unique expectations of the church. They often feel trapped in an unhappy standard of living, which encourages them to be preoccupied with material things. On the other hand, they are very interested in spirituality and are open to unexpected grace.

Churches need to provide plenty of opportunities for low cost entertainment and family fun. The church is generally upbeat, positive, and optimistic. The mission and message are often about hope, unexpected blessings, and the possibility of a fresh start or new beginning. These churches are apolitical, and avoid controversial stands on public policies. They don't have to be fancy, affluent, or prestigious in the community, but they do have to be spiritual and hold members accountable to a moral code that includes honesty, equality, respect, and fairness. If they are deployed, they like to stay connected by social media, share prayer support, and welcomed warmly when they return.

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		Discipler		Visionary
x	Enabler		Guru	x	Mentor
x	CEO				Pilgrim

Family Troopers appreciate pastors who are a traditional, ordained and certified, clergy. They are supportive at all times, generous and compassionate, and do not have high expectations of membership. They are sensitive to the life cycles of the family and connect effectively with all ages. They are orthodox in their faith tradition, but quite open to ecumenical relationships. They are reliable, steady, and dependable, and not particularly eccentric, ambitious, or extreme. The pastor can be fun, but is always intentional about Christian values and beliefs. This leader often has extra training for marriage and cross-generational counseling, and for interventions in domestic violence, attempted suicide, or addictions.

However, these pastors often have a “deep end”. They have a profound personal experience with Christ, and a sense of calm purposefulness. They are very intuitive, and can sense individual doubts, worries, and fears; and very positive, and can communicate personal faith, hope, and courage. Pastors often spends a lot of time 1:1 time helping people in this segment accept acceptance, cope with depression, and rekindle hope. They have a “priestly” function to help people feel the touch of the Holy in both the mundane and extreme circumstances of life.

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		

Family Troopers often come to church with both high expectations and high anxieties. Greeters should be extroverts who are trained to be warm and utterly accepting, with no hint of judgement or condescension. Make every member of the family (infant to adult) feel special. The pastor and lay leaders must mingle with the people, and not get stuck at the door talking or sidetracked to a meeting. Train “minglers” to talk naturally about faith, share their optimism for the future, and ask open-ended questions to encourage tongue-tied visitors to share.

Provide refreshments before, during, and after worship. Hot and cold coffee and tea do not need to be too fancy, but provide alternatives like hot chocolate, fruit juices, and lemonade. Provide several serving stations to reduce waiting. Food doesn't have to be particularly healthy, but create a special table with sugar-free choices and fresh fruit for children. Provide supervision for the kids so that parents are free to talk. Consider starting bread makers early in the morning so that the smell of freshly baking bread permeates the worship center, and people can stay to indulge in hot fresh bread after worship. Such strategies create an ambiance of family support and encourage building relationships.

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				

Family Troopers expect worship to be traditional in structure, but flexible to include participants from many faith traditions. It should be family friendly. Be prepared for distracting children, and participants may have to leave and return. The structure may or may not include Holy Communion, but there will be elements of confession and assurance, scripture and interpretation, prayers of intercession and supplication, and opportunity for re-commitment and dedication of one's life to God. The pastor often wears a gown or robe.

Songs or hymns are familiar to the particular tradition of the church, but tend to be relatively simple and lyrical. Allow plenty of time to greet one another and pass the peace. Encourage spontaneous prayer and invite prayer requests. There is often a time for lay witness, which is usually a personal story of renewed life, faith, and hope. In some traditions there may be expectations for sudden experiences of the Holy Spirit; and in other traditions there may be invitations to receive healing prayer or recommit one's faith. *Family Troopers* want to emphasize the *blessing* at the end of worship, rather than the *offering* during worship. Make the blessing extra special and dramatic, and give away some memorial, devotional object, or gift as people leave the sanctuary.

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	
	Curricular		Biblical		Generational
	Experiential		Topical		Peer Group

The parents of *Family Troopers* want their children to grow up Christian. The Sunday school provides a structure, content, and discipline of Christian nurture that they feel inadequate to provide at home. Sunday school is usually pretty traditional. Children gather in generational classrooms and use books or workbooks certified by the denomination. The curriculum is often enhanced by crafts and occasional videos. Teachers receive basic training each year, and generally follow a lesson plan. The content focuses on key stories and passages of the Old and New Testaments that every Christian should know. Parents value take-home resources from Sunday school that they can use nurturing children during the week in basic Christian values and beliefs.

The adults in this segment may not automatically participate in a Sunday school class. They may prefer children's Sunday school be concurrent with the worship service, so that they can be free to participate in worship. If Sunday school precedes worship, adults may prefer to gather informally around refreshments for fellowship. In that case, the church may deploy lay leaders to chat with them and informally steer the conversation to lifestyle issues or topics of current urgency. Those adults who do participate in a Sunday class often prefer a Bible study of some kind.

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

Experian suggests that *Family Troopers* have one of the highest concentrations of Generation Y (age 25-35), and over half of them are single parents. Midweek small groups can give them an important opportunity to develop and deepen friendships. They can't afford much of a night life or many entertainment options, and a small group can be an inexpensive "time out" to socialize with their peers. Many of them will need the church to subsidize or provide babysitting and child care. Groups often meet at the church in order to take advantage of child care.

Groups tend to be short term commitments because people in this segment are so mobile, and their work schedules may vary. Some will focus on a curriculum (book or workbook with video supplements). This may be a Bible study, but often the focus is some topic of special interest or urgency (e.g. parenting, stress or anger management, financial planning, etc.) Groups may simply focus on a hobby or craft (automobile or motorcycle repair, home improvements, team sports, etc.)

Participants tend to prefer a designated leader who can prepare for group gatherings, organize babysitting and refreshments, start and guide discussion, and generally help everyone feel comfortable and participate. The leader is often trained by the pastor to lead prayer, share faith, and overcome personality conflicts. Small groups can sometimes be sustained long distance using social media, and become a support group or prayer circle as participants are deployed in their military service.

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		X
Quality of Life		X
Addiction Intervention		X
Interpersonal Relationships	X	X
Human Potential	X	X
Salvation and Human Destiny		

Family Troopers can easily feel lonely or isolated, particularly since they have trouble sinking roots in any given community for very long. They can also get caught up in materialism, and long for deeper meaning in their relationships. Any outreach that provides opportunities for fellowship, friendship, and camaraderie without pressure, personal competition, or vulnerability is welcome. Dinners, picnics, family outings, small groups, hunting and fishing trips, and other activities can all be counted as significant mission.

The church can also bless people in this segment by emphasizing programs for marriage enrichment, parenting, home improvement, and anything that will improve the quality of life of families. This includes advice or training for basic physical and mental health or more advanced Christian counseling services. Churches may provide supplementary support for addiction recovery to help people maintain healthy, responsible lifestyles.

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	x	Modern	x	Classic Christendom
x	Utilitarian		Postmodern		Contemporary Post–Christendom

Family Troopers gravitate to churches with buildings that are identifiably Christian, but not too old or fancy. These buildings tend to be low-maintenance structures that don't require much effort or expense. The exterior usually has a steeple or tower and cross, and perhaps pillars or doorways that distinguish the building as a church, but may not have stained glass windows. Outdoor signs often have a denominational symbol or bold image that declares the identity of the church.

Christian symbols are important. The interior walls often have murals and pictures of Bible scenes, quotations of scripture, and images that are meaningful to the historic tradition of that church. Christian and national flags will be clearly visible in the sanctuary, and there may be memorials or other recognitions of church members who have made sacrifices in military service.

The church may provide a computer room for members to use doing research and continuing education, along with a variety of software packages related to family health, quality of life, and the development of basic life skills. This also provides high speed internet access that many families can't afford, but which allows children and adults to download music, surf the web, or communicate through social media.

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
	Designated Programs & Mission Projects	x	Lifestyle Coaching & Family Financial Planning

Family Troopers have low incomes, no investments, few assets (not even home ownership), and often have no or low credit. They use cash and debit cards, and have little experience with banks (which they generally distrust). Perhaps the most telling quote from *Experian* about this frugal lifestyle segment is that *their most important business relationship is with the self-storage facility*.

Family Troopers are less likely to participate in church stewardship campaigns that involve long term commitments. They tend to make weekly cash donations, with a little extra for missions or on special occasions like Christmas, but are less likely to pledge in advance. They may not really understand what it costs to manage a church, and don't want to waste money on perceived overhead. They don't want to invest much in property maintenance, although they may upgrade technology. They will respond generously if there is an emergency, but prefer not to build large reserve funds. They are reluctant to participate in a capital campaign.

Family Troopers often feel financially insecure, and do not have much experience in managing money or planning a financial future. They will respond to a church that offers solid financial advice to develop an overall personal or family financial plan that shaped around Christian values and gives to charity, but which also helps them get out of debt, develop some investments, and establish good credit.

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	x	Online Computer	Newspaper		Corded Telephone		Verbal Announcements
x	Email Receptive		Broadcast Cable TV	x	Internet Radio	Print		AM/FM Radio		Personal Visits

Experian suggests that *Family Troopers* rely on the internet as their main source of news, entertainment, and long distance communication. They participate in blogs and forums, and in various forms of social media. They'll use free internet services for audio and video conversations. They use Smartphones and mobile devices all the time for work, family, and friends. They make up for lack of personal presence by frequent and intentional phone and internet communication.

Churches need to have a simple but effective website. It should provide practical resources and devotional material that can be easily downloaded, along with newsletters, mission updates, etc. Allow church members to upload personal and family photos. Pastors should regularly update their blog. Some small groups may want to create special forums. Email and instant messaging are the best ways to update or communicate with people.

The church should encourage participants to participate in the social media platform set up by the church. Make sure the website and social media page are regularly monitored. These people do not tend to subscribe to newspapers, but they buy occasional magazines. Brochures and printed information from the church should rely on brief data bites and images. Consider investing in a high quality, large screen television, and create space at the church for a home theater where children and families can watch cartoons and feature films, and adults can gather to watch sports events.

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.