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KIDS

TALK TWO

# Why Early Childhood Ministry *Is Not Babysitting*

Equipping the Saints Conference, St Bart's, March 2026

making, maturing, and  
multiplying disciples of  
Jesus Christ for God's glory

# children, youth, and families sessions

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## Teaching the Bible to Children and Youth

*Practical skills in  
teaching the Bible to  
groups of children and  
youth, primarily in the  
context of a church or  
group setting*



## Why Early Childhood Ministry is not babysitting

*Vision for early  
childhood ministry, and  
be equipped with  
practical ministry skills  
for the youngest disciples*

*Throughout the day,  
keep in mind, your:*

1. Context
2. Vision
3. Next Step



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# Why Early Childhood Ministry Is Not Babysitting



## What is Early Childhood?

The early years are a crucial season of rapid growth where children are forming the foundations of how they understand the world, relationships, and even God.



## Why it matters?

Early childhood ministry matters because these first years help shape a child's lifelong understanding of love, trust, belonging, and faith.



## Ministry beyond the crèche

Early childhood ministry doesn't stop at caring for children on a Sunday — it extends to discipling families and shaping how children experience church and God every day.

**making, maturing, and multiplying disciples of Jesus Christ for God's glory**



## *Group Activity*

**Sort into age groups the key developmental stages children typically move through in the first five years of life.**

### **Age Groups:**

**Birth to 1 Year**

**1 to 2 Years**

**2 to 3 Years**

**3 to 5 Years**

# The First *Five Years*

- ★ Learning
- ★ Relationships
- ★ Behaviour
- ★ Faith development

## 01 What is Early Childhood



*> period of rapid development*

*> Over 1 million neural connections form every second*

*> By age 5 the brain reaches about 90% of its adult size*

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**Early childhood ministry is not childcare during the “real” ministry. It is real ministry.**



*By age five, children are already forming:*

- > Their worldview*
- > Trust patterns*
- > Their sense of belonging*
- > Their understanding of love and authority*

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*Question*

**IN PAIRS:**

**What is your earliest memory of Church or Sunday School? Who influenced that memory?**

**Children's Ministry has the ability to shape child's experiences of faith. Children may not remember every lesson but they remember how they felt and who loved them.**

## We are shaping:

- ★ Future teenagers
- ★ Future adults
- ★ Future leaders
- ★ Future disciples

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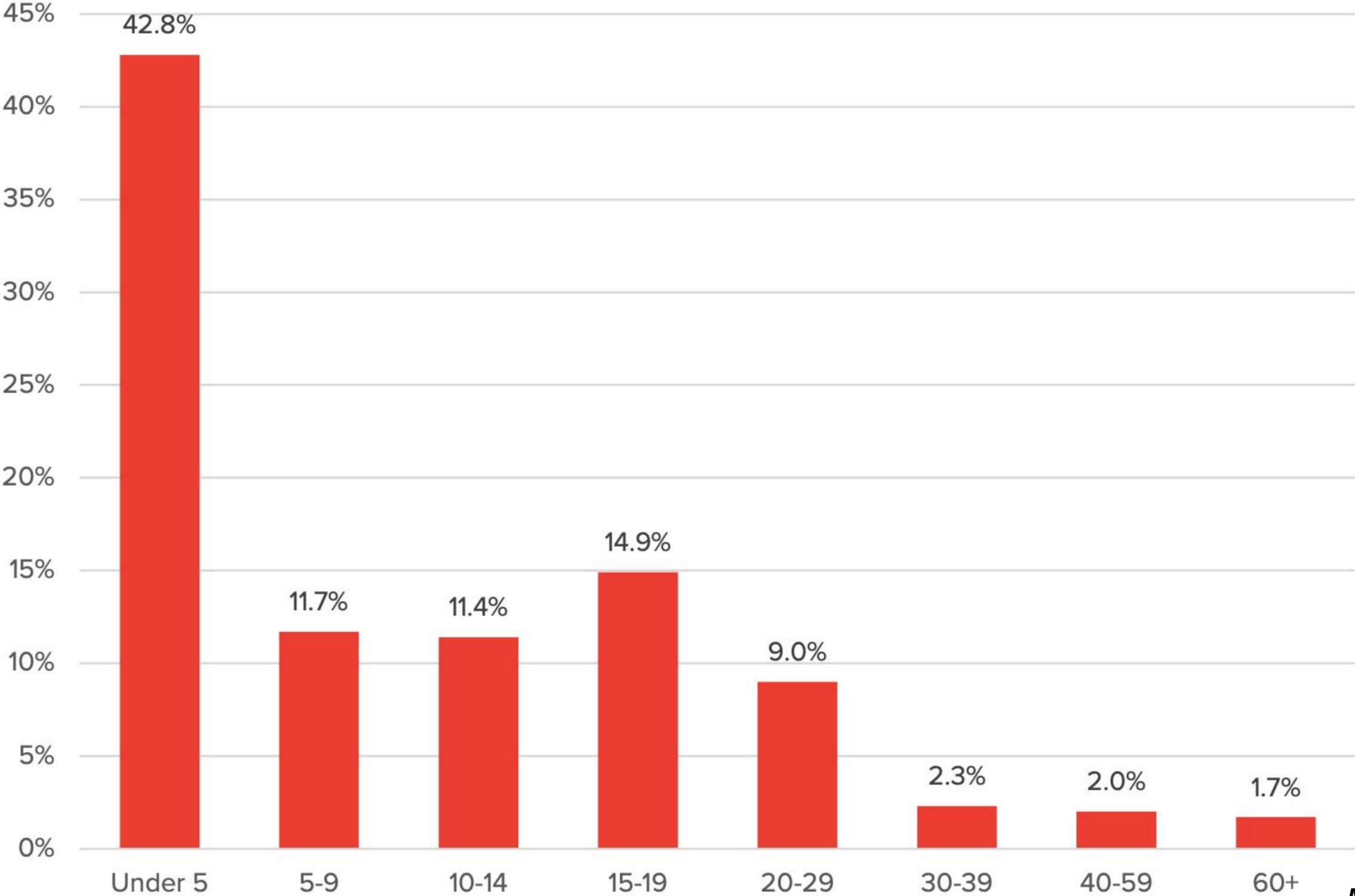
## 02 Why it matters (importance of Early Childhood Ministry)



*Early experiences influence whether children later believe:*

- > *Church is safe*
- > *God is loving*
- > *Faith is real*

# "If you can identify a particular age, how old were you when you first became a Christian?"



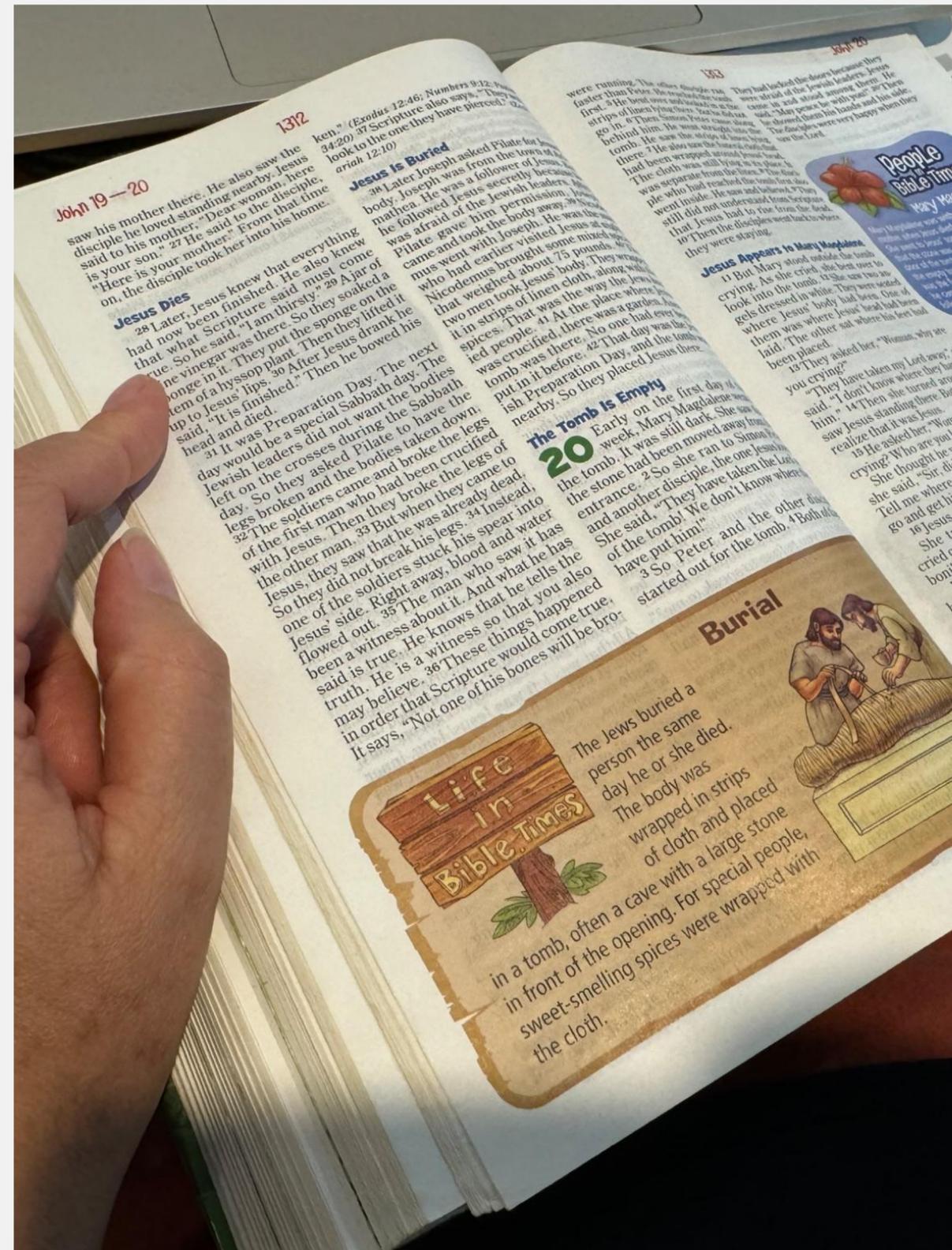
## *Group Activity*

**What is the difference  
between babysitting and  
early childhood ministry?**

**Think about purpose,  
not just tasks**

**The difference isn't  
always in what we do  
— it's in why we do it.**

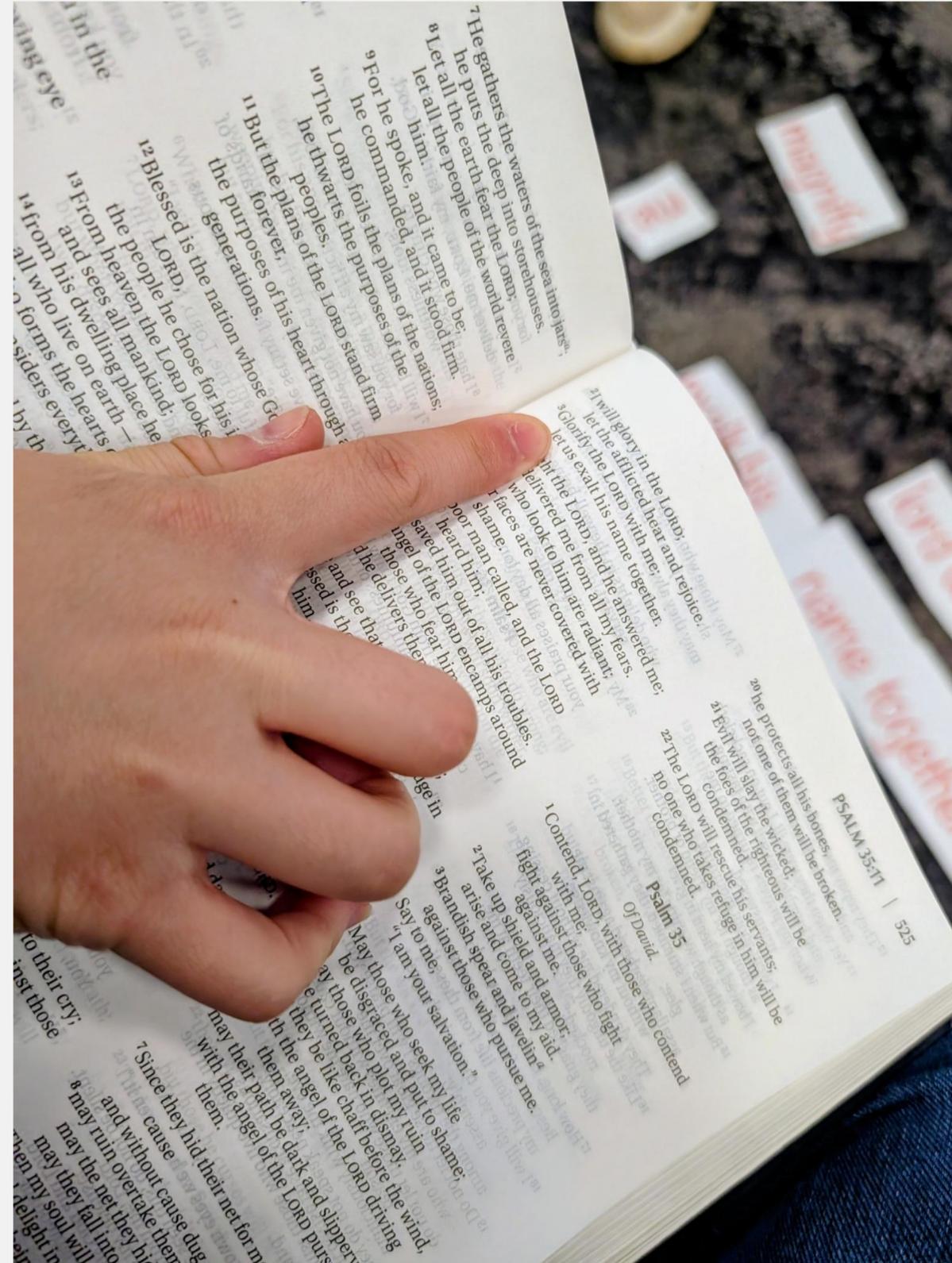
# What does the Bible say



*Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."*

*Matthew 19:14*

## What does the Bible say



*These commandments that I give you today are to be on your heart. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.*

*Deuteronomy 6:6–7*

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# Young children learn through:

- ★ Relationships
- ★ Repetition
- ★ Experience
- ★ Routine



## *Early Childhood Leaders Are:*

- > *First Bible teachers*
- > *First prayer models*
- > *First church experience*
- > *First picture of Christian community*

## *Practical tips for volunteers:*

- > *Learn every child's name*
- > *Use songs, movement, actions, play and Bible stories*
- > *Model prayer*

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## Simple Habits:

- ★ Grace
- ★ Bible stories
- ★ Prayer

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## 03 Ministry beyond the crèche

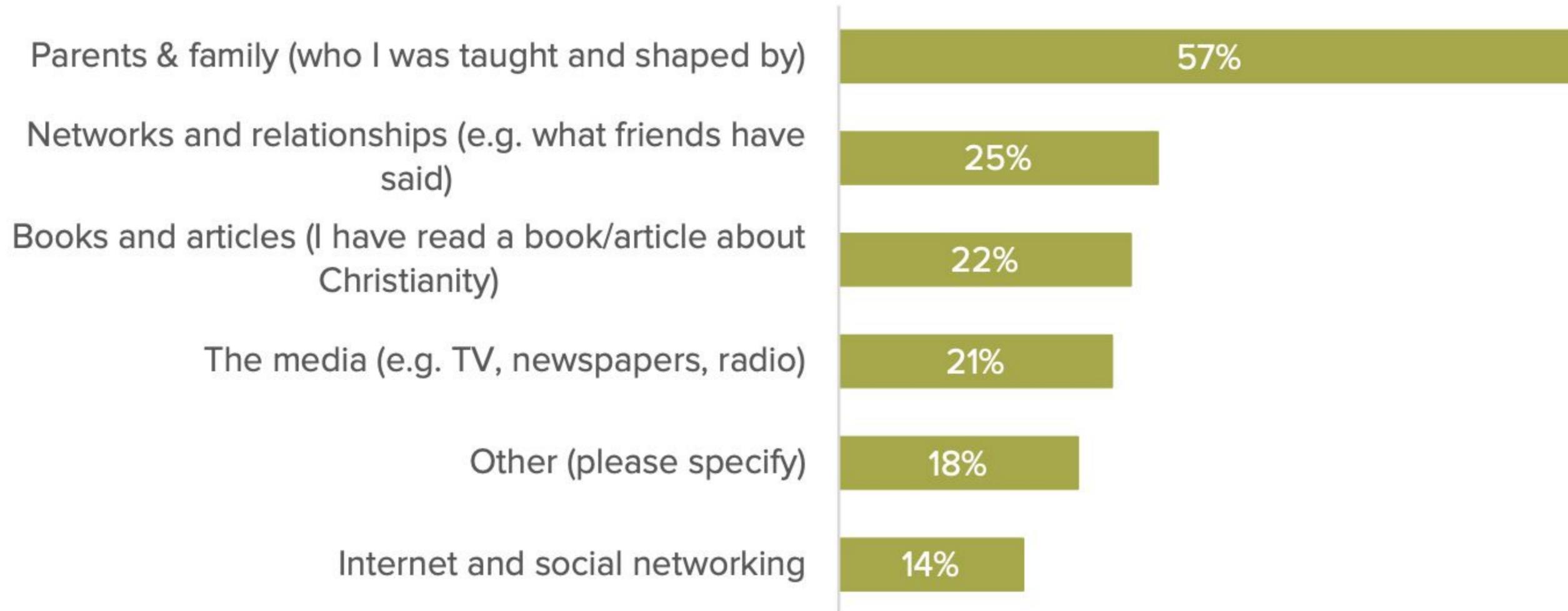


*Early childhood ministry also disciplines parents by:*

- > *Reinforcing faith at home*
- > *Modelling how to talk about God*
- > *Supporting parents as primary disciplers*

# Q. Who or what has most influenced your perceptions and opinions of Christians and Christianity?

*(Please select all that apply) n= 1,024 (all respondents)*





*Remember...*

*We are not babysitting*

*We are making disciples*

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1

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