



# Youth Finding Faith in Ireland

By Colin Holmes, Ferrybank Rep. Ireland

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**In a country that appears to be rapidly moving away from its Christian heritage, a recent survey by Barna provides a fascinating insight into the faith of the Republic of Ireland's teenagers, and young adults.**

Here are some key stats:

## **Nominal Christianity.**

Although 70% of Irish youth label themselves as Christians, 63% qualify as nominal Christians ie. they are Christians in name only, and have abandoned its key tenets.

## **Crisis of faith.**

- 25% of Irish youth are currently going through a crisis of faith.
- 40% have already done so, and
- 49% of practising Christians have seriously questioned their faith in the past.

## **Conflict between progressive and Christian values.**

81% of young people at least partially agree with the statement, "I think the Church's teachings on sexuality and homosexuality are wrong."

## **Adults' influence can make or break youth's ideas about Christianity.**

One in three say a minister, pastor or priest has made Christianity more appealing to them. For 42%, Mothers give an appealing picture of religion, 30% for Fathers. Even so, 55% of Christian youth do not know an adult who regularly talks with them about faith.

## **Open to a deeper expression of faith.**

37% of Irish youth say they'd like to find a way to follow Jesus that connects to the world they live in.

Responding to these stats Ruth Garvey Williams (editor of Irish Christian Magazine- Vox) says:

"There is a significant opportunity for older Christians who will live out their faith with integrity and authenticity... Healthy discipleship will create safe spaces for younger people to ask their questions without fear of immediate condemnation or criticism. It will also focus on teaching young people the tools to think through the tough issues, by seeking God and searching the scriptures."

### OUR STORY

Over the past 9 years, sharing the gospel with the Ferrybank children and youth in an authentic and relational way, has been a key part of the story of the church plant here. For the past 5 years 'Pulse' Youth Group has provided a safe space for questions and presented the way of Jesus in a form that connects to the world they live in, but this has come to an end, for now.

We give thanks for Ross McGaughran, from Australia, who was part of the team here for 2 years and took on leadership of 'Pulse' as well as being involved in initiating an inter church Christian youth camp last summer (UNITE Youth Collective) which continues to meet.

We continue to walk alongside some of the youth and see the possibilities for another chapter in making young disciples here, yet there are more opportunities than we are able for. We are seeking God to build a team again.



**Perhaps you might consider joining our team? See the “Children and Youth Workers in South East Ireland” opportunity on our website:**

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