

Instructions for the Child Survey for 8 to 15 year olds

Dear church survey coordinator,

Thank you for ordering Child Surveys as part of the 2026 National Church Life Survey. We want to hear from all voices including children and young people. This survey asks **church attenders aged 8 to 15** about their spirituality and experience of the church.

Participation in the survey is on a voluntary basis. Please make it clear to both parents and children that there is no obligation for children to complete it. There is an information and consent sheet to circulate to parents and carers before the survey. Parents will need to provide written consent before their children can participate in this survey.

We hope that this survey assists your church in ministering to children. Soon after completing your surveys, your church will receive a summary of your Child Survey results.



The NCLS Research team

The Child Survey:

- is for children aged 8 to 15, who attend your church activities
- is optional and confidential
- takes around 15 to 20 minutes to complete
- can be conducted alongside the adult A+ Survey during a church service; or in any children's activity of spiritual nurture e.g. Sunday school, kids club, youth group; or at home
- can be completed on a paper survey or an online survey using a device such as a phone, tablet or computer, accessed via your NCLS Church Code.

childsurvey.ncls.au

CONSENT: Written consent from parents/carers needs to be gained before a child gets a survey.

1. Provide Parents & Carers Information & Consent sheets to all parents and carers to sign before the survey is distributed.
2. Add your initials to the top corner of each survey before you give it to a child.
3. Collect all signed Consent sheets and send to NCLS Research to archive for 5+ years.
4. Return signed Consent sheets by
 - Post with other surveys or
 - Email to consent@ncls.org.au

YOUR CHURCH CODE(S)

Your CHURCH CODE(s) should be given to participants to complete paper or online surveys.
Write or enter your Church Code on each survey completed at each site.

[Your Church Code(s) will appear here]

CHILD SURVEY INSTRUCTIONS

Resources to help you run the survey e.g. Parents & Carers Information & Consent Sheet, Letter or Email Templates, Young Children's Activity Sheets and PowerPoint slides are available at 2026ncls.org.au/child-survey

childsurvey.ncls.au

Before the Child Survey

1. **Select the best time** for your church to complete the survey - either alongside the adults, or in a dedicated children's or youth activity.
2. **Plan** to allow enough time (approx 20 mins) for the survey at each church service or children's activity.
3. **Supply** those leading the services/activities with Child Survey forms and a copy of these Instructions.
4. **Write the NCLS Church Code** on the top right hand corner of each survey form.
5. **Bring** sufficient blue or black pens for all children. Please do not use pencils as the surveys will be scanned.

Consent: Parents need to give written consent before a child is given a survey to complete.

Assent: Children need to be told "You don't have to do this survey if you don't want to".

For Parents and Carers

1. **Notify** children, parents and carers in advance and distribute Parents & Carers Information & Consent Sheets.
2. **Collect** signed Consent Sheets and store securely. They will need to be returned to NCLS Research for archiving.

During the Child Survey

1. **Distribute paper or online surveys.** Children can complete a paper survey or use a device, such as a phone, to complete it online.
 - Only provide surveys to those children whose parents/carers have given their written consent for their child to participate.
 - For paper surveys, initial the top of the form to verify that consent has been given.
2. **Read out the following Instructions.** If children are completing the survey in the Worship Service or Mass alongside adults, read these instructions to children, after the instructions to adults.

"Today we'd like to ask you some questions about your faith and about church. This is a special survey for people aged 8 to 15. There are no right or wrong answers. We want to hear what you think. Don't write your name on this survey. All of your answers are private. Nobody else should read them. You don't have to do this survey if you don't want to. To answer a question please cross the box next to the answer that is closest to what you think. If you don't understand a question you can ask for help from an adult. Thank you."

- ☐ Child Survey Instructions
- ☐ Child Surveys — paper or online
- ☐ Parents Information & Consent Sheet
- ☐ Activities for non-participating children
- ☐ Young Children's Activity Sheets (under 8)

Alternate activity: Please provide an alternate activity for any children not taking part in the survey.

A 'Young Children's Activity Sheet' for those under 8 is available at 2026ncls.org.au/child-survey

3. **Explain** the meanings of any words that are unclear to a child. Leaders can explain a question if needed, particularly applying it to their own context e.g. "Answer that question about Kids Zone. We don't call it Sunday School here."
4. **Assist** children with specific needs (e.g. disabilities, literacy or translation needs). An adult can read questions aloud and record their answers. Ethically, answers need to come from children.
5. **Check** the Church Code is written on the top right of each survey.

After the Child Survey

1. Collect all completed paper survey forms in the Confidential Collection Envelopes and seal to safeguard confidentiality. Child Surveys can go in the same envelopes as the adult Attender Surveys.
2. Seal all signed Consent sheets in a separate envelope.
OR Scan and email to consent@ncls.org.au
3. Return the Envelopes containing Child Surveys and Consent sheets to your Survey Coordinator, to post back with the rest of your church's surveys.

Note: For NCLS Research to provide confidential and credible results for your local church we require a minimum of 10 Child Survey forms returned. If less than 10 children complete surveys at your church, assure the children that their answers will be added to the answers from all children in churches across the country.