

# World Vision's Celebrating Families model

INDEPENDENT STUDY BY FULLER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

## NEW RESEARCH SHOWS CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP PROGRAM STRENGTHENS FAMILIES' FAITH

World Vision's Christian discipleship programs contribute to fullness of life for every child by supporting families, churches, and communities to create environments where children can grow in their faith.

In partnership with Fuller Theological Seminary, we are studying how Celebrating Families equips parents, pastors, and community leaders around the world with biblically based parenting training that fosters safe family environments rooted in Christian values.

The initial results are encouraging. World Vision's biblically based Celebrating Families model makes home environments safer and helps children increase their awareness of God and their sense of hope for the future.

## CHILDREN EXPERIENCE SAFER, MORE LOVING HOMES

- **After participating in Celebrating Families, parents hitting children as a form of discipline decreased by 47%.**
- **Children's awareness of God's love and sense of hope for their future increased across all countries by 6%. In Christian-majority countries like Rwanda, children's awareness of God's love improved by 29%.**



*"[Celebrating Families] harnesses the power of faith to cultivate strong, positive parent-child relationships, decrease child maltreatment, and enhance the spiritual and relational well-being of children and adolescents."*

— Dr. Lisseth Rojas-Flores,  
Professor of Clinical  
Psychology,  
Fuller Theological Seminary



## MORE KEY FINDINGS

- » **IMPACT ON PASTORS:** The study examined both the impact on parents/caregivers and their children, as well as on pastors and community leaders who partnered to implement the program. When it came to implementation, 92% of pastors and community leaders reported their training was “good” or “excellent.” They also reported an improvement in their own understanding of the key messages of the Celebrating Families parenting program. This included positive parenting, child-safeguarding strategies, and overall spiritual nurture of children.
- » **SIGNIFICANT GAINS IN FRAGILE CONTEXTS:** Finally, the lowest income families showed the greatest gains in their positive parenting practices. This insight validates World Vision’s mission to work in the toughest places, with the most vulnerable people.

## CONCLUSIONS

Our findings underscore the transformative potential of Celebrating Families. By equipping parents, caregivers, pastors, and community leaders with biblically based parenting training, Celebrating Families empowers participants to create Christ-like loving, violence-free environments that foster the faith of children.

## METHODOLOGY

The study combined quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to gather data from participants across 12 countries. Surveys were conducted at three points in time: before the program workshops, immediately after completion, and six months post-program. Qualitative interviews provided deeper insights into participants’ experiences and perceptions of the program’s impact.

## WHAT’S NEXT

Based on our findings, World Vision and the Fuller research team, led by Dr. Rojas-Flores, are addressing recommendations to strengthen and further evaluate the Celebrating Families program through 2026.