

Segment D16: *Settled in Suburbia*

Upper middle-class family units living comfortably in established suburbs

Resource: Mosaic 2021 by Experian.

Religious Experience in a Nutshell

Religious Perspective: *“Generally speaking, God is often among our higher priorities”*
 Common Spiritual Issues: *Feeling lost or lonely, anxieties over emptiness and meaninglessness*

Common Church Presence

- Prefer mid-size to large churches
- Prioritize family and personal development
- Often “too busy” for meetings
- Strong Sunday school participants
- Prefer “hands-on” outreach
- Favor consensus decision-making



Potential Influence

Lifestyle Compatibility	Family Group D <i>Suburban Style</i>	Frequent Neighbors
C14 Boomers and Boomerangs F23 Families Matter Most H27 Life of Leisure	D15 Sports Utility Families D16 Settled in Suburbia D17 Cul de Sac Diversity D18 Suburban Nightlife	B07 Across the Ages C11 Sophisticated City Dwellers E20 No Place Like Home

General Comments:

Settled in Suburbia are middle-of-the-road, relatively secure and content households striving for balanced living. Church participation is mainly about attendance, fellowship, and children and youth ministries. They prefer churches with a strong sense of local tradition, blended worship that includes all generations, and harmonious fellowship. They have often been members of a local church for some time but are drifting toward larger mega-churches with more resources, multi-generational programs, and worship options. On the other hand, they often switch back to a smaller church because they miss the intimacy and caregiving. They respond quickly to any personal, family, or community need, and prioritize prayer and food and fellowship. They often volunteer for property committees and church maintenance and help in the church office.

They take special pride in being a “friendly church”, but they tend to stay close to their own friendship circles and newcomers may find it hard to be accepted. When they discuss their commitment to faith, they often segment their #1 priorities between God, marriage and family, and personal development. They seek reassurance, and hope ... but distance themselves enough from the church to escape excessive demands on time or money or extreme views. The church is important, but they are modest risk-takers in and insist on manageable debt. They avoid controversial advocacy and outreach. However, they have spontaneously generous hearts and are very concerned about the health and wellbeing of others.

Color Key	High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority
------------------	----------------------	------------------------	---------------------

High Priorities also marked with “X” for churches photocopying in black and white.

Leadership PreferencesResource: *Spiritual Leadership* by Thomas Bandy (Abingdon Press)

Traditional		Progressive		Radical	
	Caregiver	x	Discipler		Visionary
x	Enabler		Guru		Mentor
x	CEO				Pilgrim

Settled in Suburbia tend to be dependent on professional staff. They expect clergy to live up to professional standards of communication and counseling. Clergy are expected to have expertise in liturgy and history, but still be approachable and readily available. They prefer clergy who build consensus, rather than make top-down decisions. They should preach well, manage committees, counsel adults through the stages of life, and visit in times of personal or family emergency. They may seek a previous favorite pastor for lifecycle celebrations.

Clergy are expected to be seminary trained and denominationally certified. The peers of the pastor or priest tend to be social service and health care professionals, rather than business or political leaders. If a second minister is added, this person often combines Christian education and youth ministry. Clergy need to be team players and lead more by influence and relationship than by institutional authority.

Lifestyle Connectivity

Clergy are expected to connect with each generation in their preferred ways. They are good oral and print communicators, but they must manage email efficiently and contribute to social media like Facebook or Instagram. They carry smartphones but never allow technology to distract their concentration on the person in front of them.

Hospitality Preferences Resource: *Worship Ways* by Thomas Bandy and Lucinda Holmes (Abingdon Press)

Traditional		Modern		Postmodern	
x	The Basics	x	Multiple Choices		Take-Out
			Healthy Choices		

Settled in Suburbia has a high priority for family, and love to connect with a close circle of friends. They want to be greeted with warmth and sincerity at the door. Provide ample space for pre-worship conversations, but refreshments are not necessary. People are likely to linger in conversation after church ... but unconsciously ignore newcomers. Provide trained greeters *after* worship who mingle, welcome, and introduce. The pastor or priest is usually expected to shake hands at the door until everyone has left the sanctuary and is often delayed for refreshments because of lingering conversations.

Refreshments do not need to be fancy, but there should be choices for flavoured coffees, herbal teas, and fruit juices ... plus several choices of dessert food purchased in bulk from a supermarket. Make sure it is reasonably fresh. Provide enough serving stations for shorter lines. Use multi-purpose space to sit or stand in small groups. These households enjoy food and fellowship but are drifting away from laborious church dinners to potluck and take-out. Large kitchens and major appliances are being replaced by smaller serving stations and microwaves.

Lifestyle Connectivity

Greeters may be trained to gather email addresses as well as postal addresses, and the church should respond online to visitors within a few days. Clergy often send a "Thought for the Day" via social media. Coming events and prayer concerns are often shared online.

Worship Preferences Resource: *Worship Ways* by Thomas Bandy and Lucinda Holmes (Abingdon Press)

Traditional		Modern		Postmodern	
	Caregiving Worship	x	Inspirational Worship		Mission-Connection Worship
x	Educational Worship		Transformational Worship	x	Coaching Worship
	Healing Worship				

Among *Settled in Suburbia*, church membership is automatic, but worship attendance is often a weekly decision that weighs multiple options for family commitments and personal enjoyment. They prefer worship to be predictable, with few surprises; and traditional, with a strong continuity with their *personal* church history. That history may be denominational, but it is interpreted through their personal or local experience. People within the same denomination may have strong disagreements about what "tradition" looks like. They attend special occasions like Christmas Eve and Thanksgiving but leave early to be with family.

Preaching may be formal or informal, teaching or coaching, but should make very simple and clear points that are delivered in 20 minutes or less. A children's story is often more memorable than the sermon. They like to sing and have high expectations of music. On the other hand, they value amateur musicians and encourage beginners. They usually prefer a blend of the not-too-old and the not-too-contemporary music. There is often controversy about worship times and styles.

Sacraments can be very important. For long time members, this provides continuity with past and present faith communities. For newcomers (especially those who are leaving bitter experiences of church controversy or extreme behavior from other churches), Eucharist provides a calming center of faith that is not driven by personalities and social policy debates.

Lifestyle Connectivity

Physical worship is far more meaningful than virtual worship. Live streaming Sunday worship is becoming more common, but technology must not be too obtrusive in the worship service. No editing is required but accessing video links should be very easy. Video of special worship celebrations is usually posted on the website. Sermons are usually available online and updated weekly.

Education Preferences Resource: *See, Know, and Serve* by Thomas Bandy (Abingdon Press)

Form		Content		Grouping	
x	Curricular	x	Biblical	x	Generational
	Experiential	x	Topical		Peer Group

Settled in Suburbia prefer structured, written curricula for Christian education (even though they are only selective readers and increasingly comfortable with the internet). These people tend to be "late adopters" when it comes to educational methodologies. Curriculum based education provides discussion guides and time to think. Sunday school attendance may be sporadic. Plan to develop lessons in short term or seasonal themes. These themes are often Biblical and may be tied to the lectionary and Christian Year. They may occasionally be topical, and usually related to Christian history, or issues of health and the environment. They tend to avoid controversial topics. Laughter is an important component to Christian education. Even when studying serious topics, inject a certain amount of humour, irony, or "just plain fun" to keep stress low and life on an even keel.

Lifestyle Connectivity

Parents and grandparents are taking more responsibility for homebased education, and churches will need to provide a larger library of digital resources to coach them. Recommendations and links for curricula will be appreciated, and there will be more coordination in education between Sunday school and home.

Small Group Preferences

Resource: *See, Know, and Serve* by Thomas Bandy (Abingdon Press)

Leadership		Focus	
x	Trained Leader	x	Curriculum Study
x	Rotate Leaders		Shared Affinity

Groups tend to be more highly structured around a curriculum, which often has a strong Biblical reference. A workbook often provides a lesson, and then a structured exercise to repeat the points of the lesson. Groups can be organized for men, women, or couples, with a single or multiple generations. Affinity groups often form around sports, outdoor activities, DIY projects, and hobbies ... all of which include prayer, scripture, and faith.

They prefer short term or seasonal groups, although they may return to the same group repeatedly. They like to build close circles of friends, and groups may stay together for a long period of time. Group leaders don't like to stand out or claim to have special expertise about faith or Christian living and expect special training and ongoing coaching to do it well. Leaders should recap past discussions at each session.

Lifestyle Connectivity

Small group participation will extend into social media, but the platforms may be different for each generation. Grandparents may prefer Facebook, parents may use Instagram, and younger family members may use something else. Group leaders will use social media to extend personal and prayer support.

Outreach Preferences

Resource: *Strategic Thinking* by Thomas Bandy (Abingdon Press)

	Personal Need	Readiness to Volunteer
Basic Survival		x
Health and Wellness		x
Quality of Life	x	x
Addiction Intervention		
Interpersonal Relationships	x	x
Human Potential	x	x
Salvation and Human Destiny		

Settled in Suburbia want to live a balanced life. They may not make radical sacrifices for the sake of mission, although they will readily donate to, or participate in, mission as part of a holistically healthy lifestyle. They respond well to any outreach ministry that helps them improve quality of life and build interpersonal relationships. They strongly support youth or young adult ministries. Outreach might include fitness and diet classes, racial reconciliation, bridging generation gaps, comparative religions, and environmental causes.

Meanwhile, these people often have a big heart for anyone, anywhere, who is struggling to survive. They are strong supporters of "depot" ministries that collect food, clothing, and used furniture and kitchen utensils for distribution. They contribute money and time to support health clinics, vaccination programs, blood donations, and any supplemental care-giving program for people who are elderly or disabled.

Lifestyle Connectivity

Trust in outside agencies and non-profits may be low, and they will appreciate recommendations from churches about networks that share similar values and goals. They may be anxious about making charitable donations online. Social media will be used to coordinate volunteer activities.

Facility Preferences

Resource: *See, Know, and Serve* by Thomas Bandy (Abingdon Press)

Property		Technology		Symbolism	
x	Ecclesiastical	x	Modern	x	Classic Christendom
x	Utilitarian	x	Postmodern		Contemporary Post-Christendom

Settled in Suburbia usually prefer church buildings with traditional ecclesiastical architecture. The basic elements of "church" often include a steeple, stained or colored glass, pews, pulpits and altars, candles, etc. They value quality sound systems and are increasingly including video systems. The education wings, however, are very utilitarian, with dated technologies. They preserve the church growth strategies of the 1950s and 60s that built simple structures on low budgets. *Settled in Suburbia* is more concerned that technology is "good enough" rather than "top of the line" for the church, while the opposite is true in their homes.

Christendom symbols dominate the interior and exterior of the building. Most of these symbols are easily recognized as clearly Christian, but some are ancient symbols for which the meaning may be obscure or mysterious. Architecture is itself a symbol, and symbols are often permanently fixed. Even banners remain in place for a considerable time, and seasonal banners are carefully stored for reuse.

Lifestyle Connectivity

Technology expectations in Sunday school rooms and church offices are changing quickly. Churches may struggle to use wireless internet in older buildings and will need to use multiple routers and boosters throughout the building. They will also need to upgrade security to protect expensive equipment.

Financial Preferences

Resource: *See, Know, and Serve* by Thomas Bandy (Abingdon Press)

Giving Target		Giving Method	
x	Unified Budgets & General Funds	x	Informed Philanthropy & Pledging
	Designated Programs & Mission Projects		Lifestyle Coaching & Family Financial Planning

Settled in Suburbia usually trust the institution to invest and spend money wisely but resist high debts. They like to maintain large capital reserves. They may scrutinize budgets, and resist salary and maintenance increases. They need a clear vision or purpose with which to evaluate the alignment of expenses to mission. Keep their financial giving very confidential. Provide an average giving standard for leaders that can guide membership giving. Their commitment to the future of the church may be reflected in their bequests. Many denominations offer specific tools to help them make wills and pass on some of their wealth to their church.

They are average philanthropic givers and divide their financial contributions between church and other community groups (especially related to veterans, education, and health). Consider guest speakers related to mission, seminars on Christian financial management, and for family budgeting. Note that these households may only fulfill their pledges at the end of the year, which may mean cash flow problems during the summer.

Lifestyle Connectivity

The results of annual stewardship campaigns and capital fund raising initiatives should be updated regularly online. Use social media to promote special financial needs and remind members of their commitments.

Communication

Resource: *Mosaic E-Handbook* by Experian

Communication in Daily Living				Communication in Church Participation			
Broadcast/Streaming TV	x	Direct Mail		Radio		Print and Paper	Announcements or Visits
Mobile SMS	x	Email	x	Social Media		Email	x Social Media
				Live/Recorded Video			
				Text Message	x		

Settled in Suburbia read newsletters, but they should be available in both print and digital versions. Include appreciation for volunteers in every newsletter. Concentrate on mission stories, a calendar of upcoming events, fund raising progress, and strategic planning. Verbal announcements are important because adults gain respect, and youth and children have visibility, in the life of the church. However, worship bulletin inserts communicate memorable information more effectively. Direct mail still works.

Lifestyle Connectivity

Websites are less important, and focus mainly on calendar, inspiring images, and “About Us” information. Classes and small groups might maintain their own pages to recap conversations and provide exercises for those people who missed a session. Social media is important to sustain relationships. The unspoken agreement is that social media should build harmony and not promote disharmony.