

Children: Tomorrow's Church in Your Midst Today

Realizing that childhood is an especially responsive time of learning, and even conversion and spiritual growth, Church-shaped Children's Ministry seeks to make the most of these years. In conversations, in classes, in resources, in worship services, church members seek to clearly proclaim the gospel to the children, as well as live out the gospel before them. As they gather together each week to worship God and love one another, the church members seek to paint a picture of the beautiful love of Christ for His Church that not only glorifies God, but that also will remain in these young minds as a winsome testimony. They work to create a legacy of truth in their minds, that the Holy Spirit can ripen in their hearts, and prepare them one day to be well-equipped to commit themselves as followers of Christ and lovers of His Church, as well.

Your Ministry IS Children's Ministry!

- Everyone who attends your church was or is a child. Your current members and leaders WERE children. Your future members and leaders ARE children now.
- The highest concentration of non-Christians attending your church is usually the children in your children's programs.
- The "4-14" age window is the most common age of conversion. It is also when kids are most prone to "make decisions" to please their parents or teachers, without being truly converted.

What Churches Can Do:

- Provide children with a faithful testimony of life with God as they see God's work of grace in the lives of their parents, teachers and others.
- Share the gospel with children that the lost might be saved. Make disciples of those who trust in Christ.
- Make disciples, not baptismal statistics. "Pleasing" can mimic true conversion in the short run. Look for sustained fruit before you baptize. If in doubt, wait, for the sake of the child's true conversion and the purer witness of the Church.
- Pray for families. Include a section in your membership directory listing parents and the names/ages of children. This helps the congregation to easily and regularly pray for them.
- Offer Bible classes for children. These can reinforce what Christian parents teach at home, as well as introduce God's truths to children from non-Christian homes. These can leave a legacy of Bible truth in young hearts that echoes throughout their lives.
- Prepare children to gather together with the members of your local
- Mentor non-Christian kids who attend your church, frequently without their parents. Wrap both them and their parents into your families as a display of the goodness and love of God.
- Children are impressionable. They remember how they are treated. They notice how others live, and emulate (or try not to) them. Create a winsome memory of Christ and His church by treating children with love, respect and kindness.