

# Pastors Take the Lead in Shaping Children's Ministry for the Good of the Whole Congregation

## Your Ministry IS Children's Ministry

Church-shaped Children's Ministry starts with the pastors. How pastors lead their church in ministering to children has a far more significant impact on both their present and future members than they might first imagine. Pastors are accountable before God for sound teaching in their local church, even for sound teaching in Children's Ministry.

Pastors teach and encourage parents in their role as primary, spiritual care-givers of their children. They pray for families, and equip them through the preaching of God's Word. They think about how to care well for the children who come to church without parents.

They provide pastoral oversight of families, programs and Children's Ministry volunteers. They are known as the church's leaders of Children's Ministry, and take responsibility for it. They lead by providing teaching priorities; approving program and curriculum choices; and, setting healthy limits on volunteering. They encourage, advise, and support the Children's Ministry team through regular meetings. They protect children and volunteers through a child protection policy.

## How Pastors Can Lead

- Feed parents and children from the regular preaching of God's Word.
- Teach and encourage parents in their calling to raise their children in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord.
- Set wise guidelines for the baptism of children and their partaking of the Lord's Supper.
- Realize that many of the church's future members and leaders are in their midst now as children. Setting teaching priorities to train today's children well can help prepare a stronger church of the future.
- Decide on a healthy, sustainable number of classes/programs to offer, balancing needs with available budget and volunteers.
- Establish volunteer serving limits to ensure that all volunteers are also being well-fed themselves.
- Create an effective child protection policy to keep children and volunteers safe. Abuse scars children and destroys a church's ministry.
- Appoint a like-minded administrator/team who to implement the pastors' vision.
- Choose one elder/pastor as liaison, overseer and encourager of Children's Ministry and its leadership. He receives regular updates on families, volunteers, programs, curriculum changes, and arising issues. He takes charge of difficult situations and bears the burden of enforcing unpopular but needful actions. He reports back to the other pastors, so they can pray, advise, and care well for those involved, too.

**Note:** Pastoral leadership does not mean that no guidance will be needed to make good decisions. The best leaders are humble learners. Pastors will need the wise insights of the Children's Ministry team, parents, teachers, and others to make the best decisions for the whole church. With many advisers, come the best decisions!