



Children's Ministry at the CORE of the Local Church

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With the adoption of the 2020 Vision, the Church of God of Prophecy is focusing on its core values—prayer, harvest, leadership development and church planting. Children's ministry is an essential piece of this vision. As local churches strive to align with these core values, it is important to focus on ways to enhance our ministry to children. I challenge each local church to focus on the CORE:

Child-Centered Churches: Can you say that your local church is child-centered? Does the vision of the local church reflect the importance of reaching and discipling children? Are children represented on committees and boards that are responsible to cast vision and make decisions? Are children welcomed in every area of your local church? Do they feel valued and loved? Is the children's ministry budget comparable to the budgets of every other ministry? Remember that believing children are members of Christ's body. "Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name, welcomes me;" Mark 9:37.

Optimistic: Local churches can feel optimistic about their present and their future IF they have children in their midst. Children have God-given talents that are to be used for His service. There are children and youth in our local churches who are gifted in leadership but we have dismissed them because they are too young. As we look toward the future we must begin to identify and equip these leaders while they are young. We need godly men and women to step up and begin mentoring these future leaders. I am optimistic when I see local churches focus on the spiritual and leadership development of children. "For I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plan to give you a hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11

Reaching the Young Harvest: For far too long, we have waited for the harvest to come to us. We must aggressively go out and reach the young harvest. People might say, "I will not be able to reach a 9 year old. I am not relevant to this generation. I don't speak their language." I believe a 9 year old, will be the one to reach another 9 year old. If we want to reach the young harvest we must equip and mobilize the children in our local churches to reach them. We must train them share the gospel of Jesus Christ. "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into the harvest field." Luke 10:2

Enhance the quality of your ministry: It is important to continuously raise the bar on the quality of your Children's Ministry. The number one factor a family looks at when choosing a church home is whether the church provides an effective children's ministry. It should be a priority to train and equip your children's ministry leadership. A child's spiritual formation is set by age 9. We cannot be content with the status quo. Our children deserve our very best. Your local church should have a training budget for the children's ministry team. They need to be given varied opportunities to sharpen their skills and learn new methods. "But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry" Hebrews 8:6.

As each local church strives to align with the 2020 vision, I prayerfully challenge your local church to examine its core values. Just like the core of the Earth is the center that every layer is built upon, the CORE of your church will be the center that God builds upon. Put ministry to children at your CORE and watch as God fulfills his vision for your local church.