



YOU CAN RAISE THE VALUE OF YOUR CHILDREN'S MINISTRY!

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY NEWSLETTER

Contributor: Shaun McKinley

MINISTRY DIRECTION

Why does your church have a ministry to children? Is ministry to children really all that important to the church? Why should children's ministry have such a large budget? Should it cost that much to provide childcare during worship services?

Do you have a well thought-out answer prepared when these questions come at you? Are you taking appropriate steps to combat these perceptions? Not only can you have answers to these and the many other questions that challenge children's ministers, it is also possible to raise the value of your children's ministry so that these questions will never be asked again.

Christ himself placed value on children, often times placing them in the center of His teachings and taking time to minister to their needs. When the disciples began questioning each other on who would be the greatest, it was Christ who placed a child in the middle of the group saying, "Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me." (Mark 9:37). Matthew, Mark and Luke each record the occasion when young children were brought to Christ to lay his hands on them and bless. The disciples became indignant and began rebuking those bringing the children. But Christ, again knowing the importance of children said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" (Matt. 19:14). Throughout the Bible, passage after passage expresses the importance of children to God's eternal plan.

Statistics reaffirm the benefit of ministry to children. In a number of studies, conducted by the Barna Research Group, it has been found that there is a definite benefit to ministry to children. They've found...

- Half of those who accept Jesus Christ as their Savior do so before reaching the age of 13
- 61% of adults who attended church as a children still attend regularly today
- 78% of adults who were not church-goers as children are still absent from churches today
- People who become Christian before their teen years are more likely than those who are converted when older to remain "absolutely committed" to Christianity

It is imperative that our churches have ministry in place to reach, evangelize and disciple children. If we do, then we are not only partnering with God in fulfilling the Great Commission given to us, but also preparing our church to reap the rewards of winning a generation to Christ.

So knowing that Christ himself valued children and that there are definite benefits to ministering to them, how do we raise the value of our children's ministry? We do so by committing ourselves to **raising the awareness** level of our church to the value of children's ministry, by **increasing the visibility** of what we do, and by **turning our volunteers into "raving fans"** of our ministry.

IDEAS YOU CAN USE!

Awareness. You can raise the awareness of the importance of children's ministry by educating your church on its importance. There are a number of opportunities that exist to help raise this awareness level if you will only plan ahead and stay alert for such times.

- **Children's Day** should be an annual event on your children's ministry calendar. Each June (The suggested date is the first Sunday of June) churches around the world celebrate the children of their church by creating a weekend of special emphasis on them and the plan God has for their lives. Children's Day presents a great opportunity to educate your church on the key statistics that relate to the salvation of children, as well as biblical foundation for this ministry. If you've not done so, begin now by speaking with your pastor and placing this event on your church's calendar.
- **Jesus Loves the Little Children.** Take a poll of your congregation and find out which members came to Christ as a child. Once you've identified them, find out more details about their salvation experience, and who was instrumental in their decision. Ask how being "born again" has influenced their life throughout the years. Post their photo and testimony in the church, as a testimony of the importance of leading our children to Christ at an early age. Ask your Senior Pastor for the opportunity to share this person's testimony during a worship service.
- **I Love Serving In Children's Ministry.** At least once a quarter have a zealous children's minister share a testimonial of why he or she serves in children's ministry. This brief testimonial could be given live during the Sunday morning worship session, pre-recorded and presented to the congregation, or included as an eye-catching insert in the bulletin.

Visibility. You can raise the visibility of your children's ministry, by involving your children in the mainstream life of the church, showcasing what happens in your ministry and by giving your children opportunities to serve.

- **Bulletin Board.** Place a bulletin board in a prominent location in your church. Post photos, art projects, and posters that represent what's happening in your children's ministry. Be sure that you keep it clean and attractive and update it frequently so that it will represent your ministry positively.

- **Develop a communication plan.** How often are you sharing news with your parents and congregation? Develop a newsletter or write regular letters to your parents. This extra step can go a long way in developing trust with your parents and putting your ministry front-and-center in the minds of your congregation.

Other communication ideas

- A brief promotional video/DVD of children's ministry that highlights each program within the ministry, the vision and mission, and the people involved. The video or DVD could be given to new families with children, shown to the congregation several times a year, played at the CM booth during a church ministry fair
- Create a website for your ministry. Visit the Internet and check out some of the wonderful sites local children's ministries have developed. Perhaps you've wanted a website but have no adult skilled in website development. Check with the youth in your ministry or with a local community college for free website development.
- Visualize your vision statement. Create a banner or mural of your vision statement. Hang it in the children's ministry hall or in the main children's ministry meeting room for all to see.
- **Involve children in adult worship.** Think of the many ways that your children can be integrated into the adult worship setting. There's a lot that children can do--serve as ushers, sing, greet people at the door, share a testimony, drama, and much more. Be creative and consistent in giving your children the opportunity to serve. It not only helps them develop their gifts and abilities, but also allows the church to see the value of ministry to them.

Appreciation. Raise the level of appreciation that you show to your volunteers and they will be much happier, work harder and let the church know how happy they are! Your volunteers can be walking billboards of the value of ministry to children.

- **Volunteer Appreciation Dinner.** Host a volunteer appreciation dinner in your church or home. Invite every person involved in your children's ministry and pour your appreciation on them.
- **Take Time Out of the Adult Service.** During an adult worship service call your volunteers forward for applause from the church. Present them with a certificate of thanks. Consider providing them with a small gift like a bookmark, candle or candy treat.
- **Personal "Thank You" Note.** Sometimes it's small things that can make the biggest difference. Take a few moments each week to write a couple of thank you notes to your volunteer staff. They will be surprised to receive the note. Church growth statistics say that on average an individual will keep a handwritten note from church leaders for up to 2 years after it's written.

Look at your calendar of events over the next year, as well as your communication plan and make sure that you are purposefully raising the awareness, visibility and appreciation of your ministry. There are a countless number of resources to help you do just that!