

T. E. A. C. H.

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KIDS TODAY

by Dan Harrison
C.E. Chairman

Kids today are pretty sharp. They pick up on things quickly and it doesn't take much exposure for them to figure out many of life's lessons. Look at these humorous examples shared by children.

- * No matter how hard you try, you can't baptize cats.
- * When your Mom is mad at your dad, don't let her brush your hair.
- * If your sister hits you, don't hit her back. They always catch the second person.
- * You can't trust dogs to watch your food.
- * Reading what people write on desks can teach you a lot.
- * Don't sneeze when someone is cutting your hair.
- * Puppies still have bad breath even after eating a tic-tac.
- * Never hold a dustbuster and a cat at the same time.
- * You can't hide a piece of broccoli in a glass of milk.

Kids today are not like the children of any previous generation. They have been exposed to and have experienced more at earlier ages than any group before them. Some of this "more" has been positive and helpful but much of it has been negative and hurtful. Often kids today are not allowed the luxury of being kids. They are forced to face adult concerns and deal with adult issues at far too young an age. Because the times have changed and the kids have changed our methods of ministering to their needs must change as well.

We forget that the kids we are trying to minister to are very, very different from most of us adults. When adults want to accomplish something they look for a quiet and clear workspace with few distractions in order to be productive. Kids on the other hand

are more likely to strap on headphones and listen to music; while they are also watching TV; while also munching on a snack and at the same time be actually working on math and geography homework. The point is that kids who are accustomed to that level of stimulation are not going to pay much attention to someone slowly reading to them about a bible story.

What type of ministry will touch and impact the hearts and lives of this latest generation of kids? Here are some practical insights from an effective K.I.D.S. Church program that I think would be helpful in any size church. This program was developed by two men who were working with several hundred inner city kids in NY each week. They quickly discovered that traditional programs didn't work well with the kids they were trying to reach. So they began to experiment with things that would connect and hold the attention of the children the Lord had called them to reach.

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The ministry they developed is built upon activity, interaction, relevance, hands on involvement, music, and video. They utilize as much variety as possible and they make things as fun as possible. An example is something as simple as changing the way the kids enter the building. Some weeks the kids have to crawl through a tunnel to get in. Other times they toss bean bags into buckets to gain entrance. They might have to walk along a balance beam, blow bubbles, roll something with noses or chins, count as they go in, tell about favorite things. They do a wide variety of things throughout their program to keep things from becoming too predictable. Each of these activities is somehow tied to the theme for the life lesson being taught. Some of the activities are basically visual in nature and may involve a video segment or something that one of the children brought to show the group. Another portion of the program may be more auditory involving music or a verbal teaching segment. Still another part of the time together will deal with something they can touch, feel, handle and create with their own hands. A key to the success of the ministry is lots of variety and a quick pace that keeps things moving throughout the time together.

Children deserve our best efforts at communicating the gospel to them by responding to their felt needs. They need cognitive material for their heads, they also need affective experiences for their heart and experiential opportunities for the development of relationships with God and others.

It takes energy, initiative and planning to have an effective children's ministry but the kids are worth it. Jesus placed a premium on the value of children. We need to do the same by working with all the love, creativity, energy and passion necessary to make an eternal difference in their young lives. Our department believes in the value of children and we want to help you and your church succeed in your ministry to them. Let us know what we can do to help you make a difference and win the war for the souls of our kids.



"Spotlight on Children's Ministry" South Central District

Churches that place a high value on quality ministries for children will attract new families. Recently Charla Holbrook, Sunday School Superintendent at Circleville First, shared about some of the things they are doing in Children's Ministries. This growing congregation has three weekly children-centered ministries.

Currently, the Sunday School classes are using teaching material from Wesleyan publishers. This allows the students to learn biblically and doctrinally sound content in a relevant, age-appropriated fashion.

Children's workshop services are separated into three groups with about eight serving in this area. Toddlers-Preschoolers are doing the "Beginners Bible" series. One year is devoted to stories from the Old Testament, with the second focusing on the New Testament. Primaries or grades 1-3, concentrate on learning the books of the Bible, the Lord's Prayer, and the disciples.

Middlers and Juniors (grades 4-6) are dealing with life issues as they apply scripture that prepare them for adolescence. Currently there are between 60 and 75 in attendance on a regular basis.

The mid-week service is designated for "Club House Ministry." Currently there are 20-30 kids divided into two groups. This Wesleyan-based teaching resource is designed for spiritual growth in a fun relaxed atmosphere that includes many activities and incentives for making progress in learning. Materials are designed for use over six months with reproducible materials. The cost is approximately \$50.00 monthly.

Along with these weekly activities the youth have

many other ministries to enjoy. One such ministry is a children's choir called "Primary Praise Raisers." These children are taught to sing songs of praise in worship. When the children's choir participates there are many families attracted and blessed through their service.

Exciting things are on the horizon for churches which recognize and invest in today's children who will become tomorrows leaders in ministry.

UPCOMING CONVENTIONS

1999 C.E. CONVENTION

Saturday, September 18, 1999

General Session Speaker: Dr. Gene Mims

Topic: Sunday School: Dead or Alive?

Location: Faith Memorial Church



26th Annual Convention
will be held at Ridgecrest Conference
Center
Old US 70, Off I40, Exit 66
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How's Your
age?

"CARE" Pack-
age?

"Ministry is what we leave in our wake as we follow Jesus." Gerald Hartis

"If I speak with human eloquence and angelic ecstasy but don't love, I'm nothing but the creaking of a rusty gate."

1 Corinthians 13.1 (The Message)

Everything rises and falls on leadership. Whether it's business or industry, school or civic organization, church or family, everything that is either accomplished or suspended is ultimately a result of leadership. Every idea that is formulated, every vision cast, every goal written or plan that is implemented is a product of either personal or professional leadership.

But all too often we equate leadership with position, title or office in reality leadership is a relationship: a relationship between those who decide to lead and those who choose to follow. But this association goes beyond just respect. Few leaders can survive on respect alone. What we are talking about is a relationship based on caring. Caring not just for the vision or the mission or even the ministry, but genu-

ine, authentic concern for people. Caring is not just an extroverted personality, but is real heartfelt concern.

Now while caring alone won't make you a leader, leaders who lack regard for others will eventually be seen as manipulators, more concerned with their image than with their followers. How do you show your concern? Let me suggest four words to provide a yardstick for your caring quotient:

1. **Association** - You cannot lead without associating with and liking people. Otherwise, you're like the teacher who stated, "I love teaching, it's the kids I can't stand!" You can't lead by proxy. There must be "life to life" contact.

2. **Availability** - To lead and impact others you need to involve yourself in their lives. You have to get your hands dirty if you want to touch the lives of others. You must be available to them and their needs. This takes T-I-M-E.

3. **Impartation** - You can't have wishful thoughts and suddenly that person is ministered to. You must act out of loving concern. You must be willing to give of your time and resources.

4. **Devotion** - Despite the difficulties, you must refuse to give up in your commitment to those you have lead. People must sense you're devoted to them and their development over the long haul.

As leaders we want to impact others but we can't influence lives without first touching them. If we fail to show love and genuine concern for others, we negate the power and testimony of God in our lives. That is why the undeniable mark of a Christian leader should be their love for others (John 13:35) Thomas Carlisle makes this point in his poem "You Jonah:"

*And Jonah stalked
to his shaded seat
and waited for God
to come around
to his way of thinking.
And God is still waiting
for a host of Jonahs
in their comfortable houses
to come around
to his way of loving.*

You can impress people from a distance but you can only impact them up close. Perhaps that's why Peter reminds us, "Above all, love each other deeply!" (1 Peter 4.8).

Greg Morris
Leadership Dynamics



AFTER 1999, WHAT THEN? Rev. Janette E. Post

High tech, high pace and high pressures seem to face each and every one of our children. It's no different in the Christian Education area. As we get ready to step into the new millennium, the challenge to reach our children with the gospel message takes great effort and team work. It is only through the power of the Holy Spirit that this can be accomplished effectively.

Long gone are the "Lone Rangers" who could handle 50 children in children's church all alone. Here are a few people who can help make your TEAM effective:

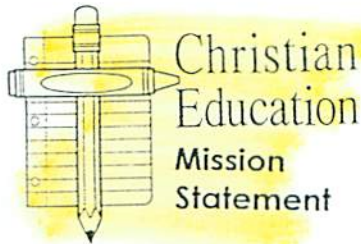
Teachers: Key helpers
Music
Memory verse
Bible Story
Snack, etc.

Elders: Saints who know how to cover the children's ministry in prayer.

Adults: Mom, Dad or guardians who sit in the Jr. Church and take turns being a vital part of the children's learning system.

Material: Quarterly change your topics. Many different resources are available. Use all the high tech tools available to your advantage.

The pace is fast, the pressure gauge is steaming, we are out to explode into the new millennium. Let's harness the energy and say "full steam ahead" as we endeavor to teach our children for Jesus.



The Christian Education department exists alongside the local church in practical ways that assist them in producing the outcomes expressed or implied in the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. This will focus our work in the following five areas: Communication, Curriculum, Community, Discipleship and Training.

The Sunday School is the best piece of machinery we have for the communication of values, the building of beliefs, the development of character, and the formation of spiritual life.

We are called to impact and penetrate the world around us. We are to be agents of transformation who are reaching out to meet the needs of the wounded and confused in our sphere of influence. The form of outreach that works best is relational in nature. The Sunday School again is the best vehicle most churches have to help individuals build relationships.

Few churches can properly assimilate people into the life of the congregation without the aid of a small group of some description. Unless your church has come up with a better method of incorporating new people attending worship, you cannot afford to disregard the importance of the Sunday School.

God's Love

My Sunday school class of youngsters had some problems repeating the Lord's Prayer. One child prayed, "Our Father, who art in heaven, how'd you know my name."

Clara Null
(Children, Prayer)



Nothing Doing!

Dr. Robert Coles, noted child psychiatrist, recalls this incident during his training at Children's Hospital in Boston. He was assigned to a ten-year-old boy, described to him as having a "learning problem." The boy's behavior was rude, impatient, demanding, and without self-control during their sessions together. Dr. Coles tried reasoning with him, hoping to discover why he was behaving as he was, but each session only increased his own feelings of helplessness. Weeks passed in the same fashion—the boy having his way in the doctor's office and the doctor without a clue about how to help.

One snowy day when the boy arrived, he casually took off his galoshes and threw them, dripping slush onto the doctor's chair. Dr. Coles recalls that he instinctively felt rage welling up inside of him but at the same time heard an inner voice telling him that he must discover why the boy had acted as he had. Fighting to control himself, he walked to the chair, picked up the wet galoshes, put them in the hall outside his office, and slammed the door hard. When the boy responded that he wanted them inside the office, the doctor shouted, "Nothing doing!"

They were words the doctor had often heard his parents use during his own childhood when their patience had worn thin with his behavior. An astonishing thing happened: The boy sat down, looking as close to repentant as the doctor had ever seen him, and asked if there was something he could use to clean up the mess he had made. It was at that point that the doctor began to help the boy.

Dr. Robert Coles had discovered something the Bible taught long ago: We do no favor to children when we let them get away with bad behavior.

Robert Coles,
"Discipline," Family Weekly, 27 March 1983.

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