



CELEBRATE the CHILD:

Is Your Church Kid-Friendly?

NEWSLETTER

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Editor: Kathryn H. Creasy Layout Designer: Stephanie D. Shroyer
P.O. Box 2910, Cleveland, TN 37320-2910; Phone 423-559-5209; Fax 423-559-5202;
E-mail address: cgpkids@cogop.org; Web page address: <http://www.cogop.org/specialized/children>

Ministry Direction



This issue of the Children's Ministry Newsletter is dedicated to the fourth of five declarations made in the CELEBRATE THE CHILD initiative—

◆ Children must be integrated into a nurturing community of believers.

The word "integrate" means to bring into the whole. Children are often departmentalized, segregated from the congregation through childhood and teenage years. While segregation is necessary for some aspects of Christian education and ministry, children must also sense that they are a part of the whole. This sense of belonging will enable them to become adults who are connected to and committed to the local congregation.

What attitudes must we have in order to successfully integrate the children?

Members of the congregation must realize that—

- ❖ Children are important. They have value now.
- ❖ The future of the local congregation is dependent on how well the children are integrated into the community of believers.
- ❖ The local congregation will derive many benefits from integrating the children into its relationships, ministries and celebrations.
- ❖ We as a community of believers have the power to impact the lives of our children.

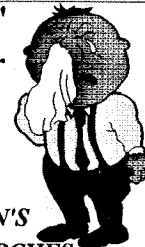
What blessings will come to the congregation that successfully integrates its children?

- ❖ Godly leaders will be raised up from childhood and youth.
- ❖ Families will be strengthened.
- ❖ There will be a renewed sense of godly purpose as believers focus upon raising up another godly generation.
- ❖ There will be loving relationships among the generations.

What can your local congregation do to integrate the children into the community of believers?

- ❖ Recognize the power of the community of believers. A 1986 study by Harvard economist, Richard Freeman, showed that among urban black youth, church attendance was a better predictor of who would escape drugs and crime than any other factor.
- ❖ Invite every child to receive Jesus Christ as Savior.
- ❖ Intentionally build relationships with children and youth.
- ❖ Allow children to be active participants in the relationships, ministries and celebrations of the congregation.

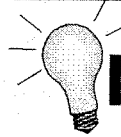
Feeling "down in the dumps" because you don't believe your small church can impact the lives of its children?



According to Rick Chromey in *CHILDREN'S MINISTRY GUIDE FOR SMALLER CHURCHES*

there are five specific advantages of small church children's ministry.

- #1 In a small church, children are given more opportunities to express their faith actively. Because there are less adults available for ministry, children naturally take a more active role.
- #2 Because small church leaders tend to know the children better, programs can be carried out on a more personal basis.
- #3 Children in smaller churches benefit from close personal contact with adults.
- #4 The smaller church can develop better leaders. The smaller the congregation, the greater the opportunity for children to be active leaders.
- #5 The smaller church can change quickly to respond to the needs of its children.



Ideas You Can Use!

Ideas for Involving Children in Worship Worship Banner Parade.

After studying praise from a Scripture passage such as Psalm 150, let each child select a praise word or a name for God that is especially meaningful to him. Help the child make a banner using felt or burlap on a dowel rod. On the banner he can write his special praise using felt pieces, fabric paint, or glue with glitter. Arrange with the pastor for the children to have a worship banner parade during congregational worship. The children will parade through the congregation singing songs of praise and waving their praise banners. Encourage the children and congregation to join in praise as the children march.



The Children's Sermon.

Decorate a shoe box or gift bag to hold the object of the children's sermon. Include with the bag instructions to the child and his parents concerning when the bag is to be brought back, what type of object should be in the bag, etc. Each week select a child to take home the box or bag. Instruct the child to select an object that he would like the pastor to use in next week's children's sermon and return the bag with the object the next Sunday morning. During the morning worship service, the children gather around the pastor to hear the children's sermon. The pastor recognizes the child who brought the object, takes the object from the bag, identifies what it is and how it is used and then shares a Scriptural truth using that object.



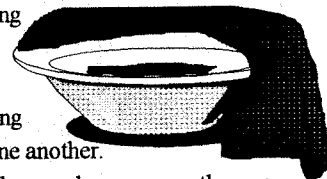
and family members. Encourage each child to prepare his testimony by answering the following questions: *When were you saved? How were you saved? How has your life changed since you were saved?* Then pray with him that God will give him opportunities to share this testimony with others.



Christian, how his life has changed since he became a Christian. Acknowledge the youngest age of conversion, the most extraordinary conversion, the person who has been converted for the longest amount of time. Seat the children among the adults and encourage them to participate too.

Love Wears A Towel.

Before participating in the washing of feet, share the importance of being willing to serve one another.



Emphasize that when we love one another we will be willing to serve. Pass the towel among children, youth and adults of the congregation. Whoever receives the towel must share a way he will serve someone else during the coming week. After passing the towel, ask adult members to partner with a youth or child and wash one another's feet.

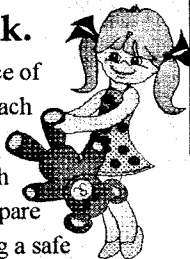
Ideas for Involving Children in Service

Birthday Cards for Everyone.

Gather the birthdates of every person in the congregation. Each week during a ministry event allow the children time to create a birthday card for each person whose birthday will be celebrated that week. Encourage the children to write a personal note or share a Scripture verse. After placing the card in an envelope, ask the children to pray for that person.

Share a Toy or Book.

With the permission and guidance of the nursery coordinator, assign each child to serve as a helper in the nursery once each quarter or each year. Encourage the child to prepare for this time of service by finding a safe toy or book that he enjoyed when he was a toddler and bringing that with him to share with the babies.



Ideas for Involving Children in Ministry

Kids As Intercessors.

Train children to "bear one another's burdens" by praying for the needs of others, then give them opportunities to intercede. Develop an email or telephone prayer line for the older children of your congregation. When there is a need in the congregation, place it on the prayer line. Encourage the children to quickly pass the message, on then take time to stop and pray for the need.

Kids As Witnesses.

Children in your congregation need to be able to share a testimony of their salvation with friends

Ideas for Involving Children in Relationships

Adopt A Child.

Ask each responsible adult member of your congregation to enter into a mentoring relationship with a child in your children's ministry. They are to pray for that child, recognize the child's birthday and other special occasions, encourage that child, and, where possible, invite the child to be involved in family outings.



I'd Like to Get to Know You.

Provide each child with a "I'd Like To Get To Know You" form that asks the following questions:

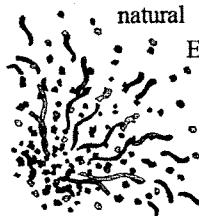
- What is your name?
- Where were you born?
- How long have you attended our church?
- What are some of the things you do at our church?
- Tell me about your family.
- What is your favorite thing to do?
- What do you most dislike doing?
- What's some good advice you could give me?

Help each child determine one member of the adult congregation that he will interview. Encourage the children to do the interviews personally before or after services. When the questionnaires have been completed, ask the children to share what they learned about the person they got to know.

Ideas for Involving Children in the Celebrations of the Church

A Second Birthday Party.

Celebrate the spiritual birth of every member of the congregation with a second birthday party. Seat everyone around tables. Briefly compare the natural and spiritual birthdays. Encourage each person at a table to share something about his conversion such as his age when converted, what caused him to want to be a



Resource Review

Hands-On Service Ideas for Children's Ministry.

Published by Group Publishing, PO Box 481, Loveland, CO 80539; 800-447-1070; www.grouppublishing.com.



You can help children understand the value of serving others with these hands-on activities designed especially for elementary-age kids.

ISBN 0-7644-2040-2 Cost \$15.99

World Tour, Kids Reaching Kids for Christ.

Published by CharismaLife Publishing, 600 Rinehart Road, Lake Mary, FL 32740; 800-451-4598.

This 13-session series leads the children through the Acts of the Apostles. It focuses upon the ministry of the believers, witnessing, prayer and healing. Cost \$149.95

