

Ministry to Children

Introduction

This class cannot cover an extensive amount of material, nor can we discuss various differing approaches and opinions concerning the methods and philosophies of children's ministry, but the class is designed to:

1. Explain the philosophy our church promotes in regards to our children's ministry.
 2. Help you gain some basic knowledge about the policies and procedures enforced in our children's ministry.
 3. Equip you with what is necessary to begin practicing your skills in children's ministry.
 4. Provide you with some helpful references and material to further your study on the subject.
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I. Philosophy we hold concerning children's ministry

A. Our philosophy

1. We believe that children should be made welcome and a part of the church.
 - a. Jesus, on Earth, certainly made them feel welcome.
 - 1) Mark 10:13-16
 - a) These were probably babies that couldn't walk yet.
 - 1)) Luke 18 says "infants"
 - 2)) They were "brought" to Jesus.
 - b) Jesus physically touched the children.
 - 1)) I wish we could pick children up and hug them as we wish.
 - 2)) Unfortunately, in our day and age we have to be extra careful.
 - 3)) Because of weirdos out there, I wouldn't want just anyone picking up my child or hugging them.
 - c) Jesus blessed them.
 - 2) Matthew 18:1-6
 - a) These were probably toddlers or older.
 - b) Jesus called them over.
 - b. The Father in Heaven is concerned for the widows and the fatherless.

- 1) Psalm 68:5
 - 2) James 1:27
 - c. Children today could really benefit from some godly role models in their lives.
 - 1) 1 out of 3 children live in homes without their biological father.
 - 2) It is the father's responsibility to make sure their children are raised in the admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4).
2. We believe that children are under the authority of their parents.
- a. It is not our job to take the place of a child's parents.
 - b. We should keep parents thoroughly informed.
 - c. We should earn the respect and trust of children, but we should make it clear that we are on the "parents' side."
 - d. Along with this, we are not "babysitters"
 - 1) Parents need to be involved.
 - 2) It is OK to demand their involvement.
 - a) For example, we have a policy that children who younger than 3 years old or who are not potty trained must have a parent present.
 - b) This is not due to our lack of concern for the children or the parents.
 - c) In fact, our nursery will provide the care that is needed for the children while their parents are in a service.
 - d) However, the parent is the primary care provider, our ministry is to assist.
3. We believe that children should be provided a spiritually and physically safe environment.
- a. Most parents (one would hope) wouldn't knowingly put their children in dangerous situations.
 - 1) Church should be a trusted place.
 - 2) Unfortunately, it increasingly is not!
 - b. Many are well aware of the dangers and hesitate sending or leaving their children in our care.

- c. Others are ignorant of this, but they would be devastated if something happened.
 - 1) Most in our society have become desensitized to leaving their children in the care of others.
 - 2) Yet churches are still held to a higher standard of expectations (and honestly, we should be).
 - 3) In many cases, should a major incident happen, we can count on legal action being taken.
 - 1)) This could shut down the church, or at least the children's ministry.
 - 2)) Any accusations could damage our reputation.
 - 4) Besides all this, we simply care about children and don't want to see them harmed in any way!
 - a) Physical harm
 - 1)) We should do all we can to prevent general accidents and injuries.
 - 2)) We should do all we can to prevent allergic reactions (particularly food allergies).
 - 3)) We should do all we can to prevent kidnapping or abuse (sexual, verbal, etc.) by predators.
 - a)) From other children
 - b)) From outside predators
 - c)) From (unknown) predators within
 - b) Spiritual harm
 - 1)) We should do all we can to prevent the teaching of false doctrine.
 - 2)) We should do all we can to prevent inadequate teaching.
 - a)) Ignorance/lack of training
 - b)) Apathy/laziness
- 4. We believe that children do not "need" more entertainment.
 - a. Many assume children don't have anything to do.

- b. We often hear "These kids need more activities."
 - 1) The truth is, children will find entertainment.
 - 2) Unfortunately they will often find the wrong type of entertainment on their own.
 - 3) "Kids don't need more things to do, they need better things to do."

B. Other philosophies (compared with ours)

- 1. Some feel children are an unnecessary burden in the church.
 - a. Their reasoning:
 - 1) Children don't contribute financially.
 - 2) In fact, they cost a lot of money.
 - 3) Children often break and ruin things.
 - 4) Children can be disruptive to services.
 - a) For these reasons and more, some do not encourage much investment in children's ministries.
 - b) Some have "Saturday Church" or other non-church days for children's ministries to avoid inconveniences.
 - b. Our reasoning:
 - 1) They are not just bodies, they are souls!
 - a) If nothing else, we must introduce them to the Savior.
 - b) Over 90% of Christians are said to have come to Christ before 18 years of age. Over 80%, before 14.
 - 2) They are the future leaders.
 - a) It is more of a "long-term" investment.
 - b) We not only need to "get them" we need to "keep them."
- 2. Some feel children (youth) should be the central focus of the church.
 - a. Their reasoning:
 - 1) It is very popular to have a youth-driven church.
 - 2) Children bring excitement and vitality to an otherwise boring service.

- 3) Many adults want to stay young, so they follow the trends of young people.
- b. Our reasoning:
 - 1) Children are supposed to be learning and being trained.
 - 2) We should "put away childish things."
 - 3) If children don't learn how to become adults, eventually, adults will act like children (which indeed is seen in our society today, and even in our churches)
3. Some feel that the church should be raising their children.
 - a. Their reasoning:
 - 1) Churches provide welfare-type services.
 - 2) "Church people" are supposed to help the poor and needy.
 - c. Our reasoning:
 - 1) Again, government has conditioned the majority to think this way.
 - 2) But church is not the government.
 - 3) Neither church nor government should take the place of a parent.
4. Some feel that parents should do all the training of the children.
 - a. Their reasoning:
 - 1) Parents are solely responsible for teaching and protecting their children.
 - a) For this reason, some have "Integrated services."
 - b) Many have a strong homeschooling membership.
 - 2) The Bible doesn't mention anything about "youth ministries" as we know them.
 - b. Our reasoning:
 - 1) The Bible does not speak against education outside of the home.
 - a) Galatians 4:1,2
 - b) O.T. examples of the Lord leading parents to give their children over to apprenticeship for the Lord's work.

1)) Samuel

2)) Elisha

5. Some feel that children should make their own choices regarding spirituality.

6. Some feel that the church should be competing with the world's entertainment in order to reach children.

a. Their reasoning:

1) They won't come otherwise.

2) Let's face it, adults enjoy the world's entertainment too!

b. Our reasoning:

1) The Bible clearly teaches that we should be separate from the world

a) "Come out from among them" (2 Corinthians 6:17)

b) "Be ye separate" (")

c) "Be ye holy, for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:16)

d) "Love not the world..." (1 John 2:15)

2) If we look and act like the world, we are either disobeying God or we are trying to deceive the children.

3) Making a clear distinction up front about our stand against worldliness will ensure children aren't only coming for the wrong reasons.

a) Certainly , not every motive for attending church service is completely righteous, even for adults.

b) But the underlining reason we come to church should be to give God true worship and praise, and to receive from Him his Word.

c) The Word of God is powerful and effective.

1)) It hasn't lost its power

a)) Hebrews 4:12

b)) Isaiah 55:8-11

2)) We do have a responsibility in our presentation.

4) Of course, some seem to feel children shouldn't be entertained at all, but that is not biblical.

- a) We need to be sure our entertainment honors God (Colossians 3:17).
- b) We need to be sure our entertainment does not cause others to stumble (1 Corinthians 8:7-9).
- c) We need to be sure our entertainment is shared with other believers (2 Corinthians 6:14).