

Chapter 1

PHILOSOPHY OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

What is Children's Ministries?

Many who have been elected to serve as Children's Ministries coordinators have often asked this question. They have wondered how this ministry is different from the children's Sabbath School. Children's Ministries aims to develop the faith of children ages birth to 14. While Sabbath School provides children with religious education once a week on Sabbath, Children's Ministries strives to provide multiple ministries at other times that will lead children to Jesus and disciple them in their daily walk with Him.



Such multiple ministries include programs and activities organized throughout the year to nurture the spirituality of the children, train them for leadership, and help them reach out in service to others in the community. For example, the Children's Ministries coordinator of the local church can organize children's prayer groups on Wednesday evening, a children's retreat once a year, or a community project on the first Sunday of each month.

Our Philosophy

The Bible makes it very clear that children are very special to God. If you examine what the Bible says about children, you will notice a great number of perspectives:¹

- *Children are a gift from God.* He gives children to parents as a special sign of love and personal fulfillment (Deut. 7:13; Ps. 127:3).
- *Children are desirable.* From Creation, God has instructed us to bear children (Gen. 9:7; Deut. 6:3).
- *Children bring joy and blessings to adults.* God provides many benefits to parents through parenting their children (Num. 5:28; Deut. 28:4, 11).
- *Children need to be taught how to develop a relationship with God.* One of our greatest challenges is to pass on our beliefs and understanding of God to our children (Exod. 12:26, 37; Deut. 6:1-7; Prov. 22:6).
- *Children are so valuable to God that He commands us to protect them.* Parents are to ensure the spiritual and physical security of their children (1 Sam. 20:42; Ezra 8:21).

- *God loves children enough to ensure that they receive discipline.* (Prov. 3:11, 12; 13:24; 19:18; Eph. 6:4).
- *God enjoys the nature and personality of children and asks adults to learn from them.* Scripture identifies attributes such as sincerity, humility, simplicity, and trusting as qualities found in children, and God treasures these characteristics (Matt. 18:3; 19:14; Phil. 2:15).

If children matter this much to God, then they should matter as much to us, too. It is vital that we take children seriously as the heritage of the Lord.

Jesus' great commission is: "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (*Matthew 28:19, 20, NIV*). Surely, this includes making disciples of children and leading them to make a personal commitment to Jesus.

¹Barna, George. *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*. Ventura, California: Regal Books, 2003.

Chapter 2

MISSION OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

The mission of the Children's Ministries Department is to nurture children into a loving, serving relationship with Jesus. We seek to fulfill this mission by developing:



Grace-oriented ministries, in which all children will experience the unconditional love of Jesus, find assurance of acceptance and forgiveness, and make a commitment to Him.

Inclusive ministries, in which the volunteers who minister and the children to whom they minister will be valued and involved regardless of race, color, language, gender, age, abilities, or socio-economic circumstances.

Leadership ministries, in which volunteers are empowered, trained, and equipped for effective ministry to children.

Service-oriented ministries, in which children are given opportunity for hands-on service to people in their neighborhood or city, thus, establish a pattern of outreach to others that may well continue through life.

Cooperative ministries, in which the department work with other ministries, such as family ministries, Sabbath School, stewardship, and others to further our shared goals.

Safe ministries, whereby our churches: a.) choose volunteers with high spiritual and moral backgrounds; and, b.) adopt safeguards to protect children from physical, emotional, and spiritual abuse and the church from liability.

Evangelistic ministries, in which children who are not enfolded in the church will be introduced to the love of Jesus through outreach programs such as: Vacation Bible Schools, children's Branch Sabbath Schools, Neighborhood Bible Clubs, and Story Hours.