

FORWARD

Christ's mandate to feed the lambs (John 21:5) and to let the children come to Him (Mark 10:13, 14) commissions the Church to evangelize children and to nurture their spiritual growth. Seventh-day Adventist Children's Ministries is committed to equipping, facilitating, and coordinating a broadening and deepening of the Church's spiritual nurture of children, in order to draw them into a loving, serving relationship with Jesus and commitment to the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

This booklet is a guide for pastors, elders, volunteer children's leaders, parents and others in the local church who wish to understand and learn how to organize a new children's ministry or strengthen an existing one. This small volume sets forth a philosophy and mission of Children's Ministries, followed by suggestions of programs for children that could be tried in the local church. It also attempts to apply the eight characteristics of a healthy church, as proposed by Christian Schwarz, to a healthy Children's Ministries, thus providing an integrated approach for Children's Ministries to function within the overall ministries of the church.

Pastors and elders will find this booklet practical and easy to use as they participate in nurturing the spirituality of the children within the church. In today's world where children are flooded with ideas and values that conflict with those of the Adventist Church, it is imperative that every local church and leader find ways to help our children make right decisions about their faith.

The General Conference Ministerial Association is pleased to join hands with the Children's Ministries Department of the General Conference to publish this Pastor's and Elder's Handbook for Children's Ministries. May this be a tool to assist every church leader and member who desires to nurture our children into a loving, serving relationship with Jesus, and build young disciples of Christ committed to the Church of today and tomorrow. Let's remember, building tomorrow's church begins with today's children!

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