

**GCCHM Leadership Certification  
Level IV, Course #2**

**INVOLVING CHILDREN IN MINISTRY & SERVICE  
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(Presenter's Notes)**

**Command from Jesus:**

One of the messages that Jesus gives us in the New Testament is to love our neighbor as ourselves (Mark 12:31). Another familiar passage is, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." (Luke 6:31). Many people accept these statements as guidelines for everyday living, but they are much more than that. Loving your neighbors and treating them as you would treat yourself are not just nice suggestions - they are direct commands from our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus was the ultimate example of loving and serving others. He comforted the sad. He befriended the friendless. He dined with sinners. He cared for the sick. He washed his disciples' feet. And he welcomed children into his arms. If we love Jesus then we must follow his examples.

The philosophy behind Children's Ministry is that children have the ability and the heart to serve God at a young age, and we should aim to provide them with opportunities to do that.

**One body with many parts!**

- Membership in the body of Christ has no age requirement (Rom 12:4-5)
- Each member has important gifts to be used in ministry in the church and community (Rom 12:6).
- Each member, young or old, can contribute to the life and health of your church (Ephesians 4:11-12).

"Each of us has one body with many parts. And the parts do not all have the same purpose. So also we are many persons. But in Christ we are one body. And each part of the body belongs to all the other parts. We all have gifts. They differ in keeping with the grace that God has given each of us. Do you have the gift of prophecy? Then use it in keeping with the faith you have. Is it your gift to serve? Then serve. Is it teaching? Then teach." Romans 12:4-6.

**Why Get Kids Involved in Service?**

"Getting young people involved in mission and service is not an option for Christian growth and maturity – it is a necessity."

*Jim Burns, [The Youthbuilder: Today's Resource for Relational Youth Ministry](#)*

**George Barna on Involvement in Ministry**

“We believe it is imperative to instill the value that a Christian is blessed to pass that blessing on to others, and that can only be accomplished if the person is actively serving other people. The act of serving other people is cultivated from the earliest years the children engage in the church’s program. Whether those forms of service are simple—visiting people in nursing homes, making birthday cards to send to sick people, earnestly praying for specific individuals...the hope is to build a habit.” *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions, p. 112.*

**Ellen White, *Ministry of Healing, p. 401***

“Very early the lesson of helpfulness should be taught the child. . . He should be encouraged in trying to help father and mother, encouraged to deny and to control himself, to put other's happiness and convenience before his own, to watch for opportunities to cheer and assist brothers and sisters and playmates, and to show kindness to the aged, the sick, and the unfortunate. The more fully the spirit of true ministry pervades the home, the more fully it will be developed in the lives of the children. They will learn to find joy in service and sacrifice for the good of others.”

#### **Why Get Kids Involved in Ministry and Service?**

- Great opportunity to put their growing faith into action.
- Develop empathy for others.
- Great opportunity to introduce children & teens to the wonderful world of giving—their time, their talents, their treasures

#### **Why Get Kids Involved in Ministry and Service?**

- Build positive relationships with adults and peers.
- Become empowered to make a difference in their world,
- Feel valued within the church family and realize that they can be used by God for His purposes.

#### **Why Get Kids Involved in Ministry and Service?**

- Discover the plan and purpose God has for their lives.
- Understand that Christ calls us to a lifestyle of servanthood and a heart for mission.
- Learn valuable life lessons

#### **How to Get Started?**

- The best way to introduce children to community service is to start at home.

Dr. Kalman Heller, a psychologist in private practice in Massachusetts says, "Young children have a natural tendency to care about others. The process of putting that care into action really starts within one's own family, as children become conscious of the needs of their parents and siblings.”

- Teach children to develop sensitivity towards family members. When Dad or Mom has had a tough day at work, each needs a little tender loving care.
- Encourage sharing and turn-taking, and stress importance of respect for siblings. Praising & rewarding these actions will establish a foundation for future, broader efforts.

### **How to Get Started?**

- Community involvement needs to evolve as a natural process of family growth and values.

Dr. Heller suggests. "Create experiences together. Before sitting down to a big Thanksgiving meal at home, serve food to the homeless at a downtown shelter. It's a dramatic, effective way to foster the development of an attitude of concern and caring. "

- Parents must decide if they want to support their children's independent efforts or work alongside them to meet the needs of others.
- Families can co-operate together in such worthwhile activities as a town or beach clean-up, a school beautification program or a charity fund-raiser.

### **Ideas That Involve Kids in Ministry**

#### **1. A mission to the elderly**

- Rest homes and convalescent hospitals always need volunteers.
- "Adopt-a-grandparent" programs are always popular, also.

#### **2. A Prayer Ministry**

- This is a ministry that should involve every believer young and old.
- Children can be encouraged to join in prayer groups, prayer meetings and take an active role in praying for others.

#### **3. A Mission To The Sick**

- Encourage your kids to send cards or flowers to members of your church who are sick.
- Juniors can run an errand or babysit for those who need help while recovering from surgery? The possibilities are endless!

#### **4. A Teaching Ministry**

- Provide opportunities for children who are gifted in teaching to teach lessons for the younger children.
- Juniors and earliteens can serve as assistant teachers in Beginner Sabbath school.
- Children and teens can run a puppet ministry, and conduct Bible studies.

#### **5. A Mission To The Hungry**

- True, America is the richest and most affluent society in the world. But 20% of the population still receive some state and/or federal assistance each month . . . usually in the form of “food stamps.”
- Children and youth can start or help in food banks, soup kitchens, rescue missions, etc.

**6. A Mission To Families Of Prisoners**

- Encourage children to take the words of Jesus to heart (“I was sick and imprisoned and you came to visit Me”).
- Children can write cards of encouragement to children of prisoners.
- Children can donate their books, clothes, and toys to these families.
- Hold an event for these children to meet.

**7. A Mission To The Neighborhood**

- Raking leaves for your neighbors.
- Picking up trash at the park.
- Helping with a Vacation Bible School.
- Older kids can help babysit neighbor’s children.

**8. A Mission To Families**

- Set up a video/DVD lending library for neighborhood families.
- Encourage children to donate their unused movies that portray positive Christian values. Or, ask them to donate new ones too.
- Make them available for loan to church or neighborhood families with children.

**Family Involvement in Service Projects**

“In addition to the personal service expectations, many of the effective churches try to reinforce the importance of outreach efforts by setting up opportunities for families to work together in serving needy people. Many of these churches have discovered that once parents recognize their obligation to direct the spiritual development of their children and then recognize how integral serving others is in that journey, they are open to serving alongside their youngsters in meaningful projects.”

George Barna

*Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*, p. 113

**Ellen White, *That I May Know Him*, p. 42**

*“Whole armies of children may come under Christ's banner as missionaries, even in their childhood years. Never repulse the desire of children to do something for Jesus. Never quench their ardor for working in some way for the Master.”*

**Hebrews 13:16 reminds us of the call to serve:**

“And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.”

It is time to let children stand and take their God-given place in ministry in the body of Christ. Seek God’s wisdom in placing children in ministry. The church of today needs their ministries and the church of tomorrow cannot survive without them.