

Ministry To Children

The Life Changing Affect Of Leading Children To Christ



The Importance of Ministry to Children

- ⁶ And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. Deut.6:7
- Prov. 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.
- Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Eph.6:4

Early Childhood discipleship is the key to lifelong Christian living



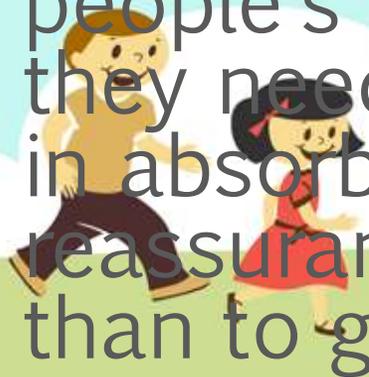
Research On Children And The Church

- A person's moral foundations are generally in place by age 9. After that age, most people simply refine their views.
- A person's response to Jesus (and the gospel concerning his life, death and resurrection) is usually determined before age 18. For most, the response is set by age 12.
- A person's spiritual beliefs are set in place when they are preteens. Those beliefs include the nature of God, the existence of Satan, the reliability of the Bible, the afterlife, Jesus Christ, the means of gaining God's favor, and the influence of spiritual forces in a person's life.



Research On Children And The Church

- Adult church leaders usually had significant involvement in the church when they were children. Thus, those who will become the church's leaders 20 years from now are probably active in children's church programs today.
- In essence, what you believe by the time you are 13 is what you will die believing. Of course, there are many individuals who go through life-changing experiences in which their beliefs are altered, or instances in which a concentrated body of religious teaching changes one or more core beliefs. However, most people's minds are made up and they believe they know what they need to know spiritually by age 13. Their focus in absorbing religious teaching after that age is to gain reassurance and confirmation of their existing beliefs rather than to glean new insights that will redefine their foundations



Research On Children And The Church

- This research should be a wake-up call for all parents of children and for the church at large. The spiritual education of our children must be a top priority—with parents and the church working in partnership.
- The most important role in this partnership is that of the parents.
- Because parents are the strongest influence in a child's life, the church must support and otherwise partner with parents in ministering to children.



Research On Children And The Church

- In situations where children became mature Christians we usually found a symbiotic partnership between their parents and their church.... The church encouraged parents to prioritize the spiritual development of their children and worked hard to equip them for that challenge. Parents, for their part, raised their children in the context of a faith-based community that provided security, belonging, spiritual and moral education, and accountability. Neither the parents nor the church could have done it alone.



How Do We Respond To The Challenge?

1. We as a church need to prioritize the DISCIPLESHIP of children. Children's ministry is not babysitting
2. As a church we need to be more purposeful in equipping Parents to model and teach Christian living – VBS is a start
3. As Parents, we need to be more purposeful in modeling and teaching our children the things of God – Deut.6:7
 - What are our walls teaching our children?
 - What is our music at home or in the car teaching our children?



How Do We Respond To The Challenge?

- What is our TV teaching our children?
- Childwise says teenage boys may spend up to 8hrs a day watching TV
- Dedicated religious parents may spend up to 2 hrs a week of religious instruction
- Hands on parents may spend 30 min a day discussing morals and values
- Hollywood gets up to 40 hrs a week
- Public school influences our children for 30 hrs a week
- The teaching of values has become a major part of the current curriculum without asking you



How Do We Respond To The Challenge?

4. The Bible also gives a role of discipleship to Grandparents
 - “Only take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. Make them known to your children and **your children's children.**” Deut.4:9
 - For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, **which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois** and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well. 2 Tim.1:5
 - Society tells us we should become self indulgent in our retirement

5. Prayer – We must pray for our Children and

Parents

6. We must begin child focused ministries and equipping ministries

Parent



Research Changed George Barna

- Since I became a Christian two decades ago, I have always accepted the dominant notion: the most important ministry is that conducted among adults. But the overwhelming evidence we have seen of the huge impact in the lives of kids and the relatively limited changes in the lives of adults has completely revolutionized my view of ministry. I have concluded that children are the single most important population group for the church to focus upon. Many churches may not go that far, but I do hope that they will at least consider the research findings and place a greater emphasis upon children. Such a shift in priorities could well bring about the spiritual renaissance that many church leaders have long been praying for.

