



# kids church

the MINISTRY PAPERS

## a kids eye view...

Mum & Dad took me & Justin to a new church today. Well actually, they got to go to church, me & Justin had to go to a special school called Sunday School.

It was OK but I didn't like it very much. Justin kept getting into trouble for not sitting still. Mrs Evelyn (she's the teacher, she says she's been a teacher for 35 years which sounds like a very long time!) well, Mrs Evelyn said Justin must have ants in his pants. She made him sit by himself.

We sang a song about Penny's droppings which I thought was funny but I got in trouble for laughing and Mrs Evelyn wanted us to give her some money. I don't know what it was for but I guess she just needed it to buy something. She must be very poor to take money from kids.

Next Mrs Evelyn read a story to us and it had good pictures. I already knew the story, it was about Noah and his ark, but I learned something new about what it was about. Mrs Evelyn told us about how God wants us to take care of our pets and to stop them from getting drowned or hit by a car. She says that her kids were always very bad at taking care of their pets and they all died.

Next we did a dot-to-dot of Noah's ark. I got in trouble for asking if I could join the dots backwards. Mrs Evelyn said it was a silly idea but really that dot-to-dot was a bit too easy for me.

A long time later Mum & Dad came and got us from our classroom. They said Justin didn't have to sit by himself anymore. I showed them my dot-to-dot and told them about how God thinks we should get a pet to take good care of just like Noah did. They didn't understand so I guess they didn't learn about Noah in church.

**LEADERS:...**before taking someone through this paper, review the two key introductory MINISTRY PAPERS: 'the ministry training church' and 'meeting one to one'.

Connect. Grow. Serve. After **connecting** to God through trusting in Christ, a vital way we can **grow** is through a growth group and a vital way we can **serve** is through a ministry team.

This MINISTRY PAPER is designed to help your kids church ministry leader introduce you to what it means to serve as part of our **kids church ministry** team.

It's much more than a training tool, it's all about relationships: who you minister *for*, who you minister *with*, and who you minister *to*...



*Ephesians 4 is a great starting point for all our ministry teams... read **Ephesians 4:1-16***

1. Who are we ultimately ministering *for*? Explain.

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2. What do we learn here about those we minister *with*?

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3. What do we learn here about those we minister *to*?

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4. We must 'speak the truth in love'. What is this? Why is it crucial?

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*5. What personal challenges are you aware of in terms of playing your part in this ministry team?*

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*6. What role will being actively involved in a growth group play in enabling you to carry out this ministry well?*

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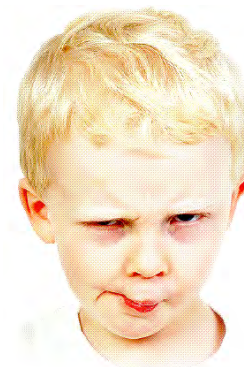
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# flexible & fixed

Many of our ministry teams are focused on a particular age group or demographic, e.g. kids club, youth group, university ministry. That makes sense because each of these groups has its own particular needs. Each group has its own special challenges and opportunities. However, it's sometimes easy to recognise only what's **unique** about each group. It's easy to forget what **all people**, whatever age or stage, have in common. This section of the paper helps us think through what's **flexible** and what's **fixed** in our ministry to children at kids church...



read **1 Corinthians 9:19-23**

1. What is *flexible* in Paul's approach to ministry?

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2. What is *fixed* in Paul's approach to ministry?

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3. Referring to the 'profile of a kids church child' opposite, in what ways will ministry to these children need to be flexible?

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4. In all of this, what needs to stay fixed in our ministry to these children?

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## challenges and opportunities

Have another look at the 'profile of a kids church child'. Think through the particular challenges and opportunities of this ministry...

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|---|---|
| what are some of the <b>challenges</b> ?    | what are some ideas for <b>facing these</b> ?             |
| what are some of the <b>opportunities</b> ? | what are some ideas for <b>making the most of these</b> ? |

### profile of a kids church child

*It goes without saying that kids are great. But it also goes without saying that kids are kids! So to be a good Kids Church leader you need to get your head around who these little ones (and not so little ones) are so that you're armed with the right expectations.*

#### open

Scepticism and suspicion are often the product of disappointment from life. Children have usually experienced less of this than adults and are therefore quite willing to accept what they are taught as being true.

#### high energy

Most children, even by themselves, are blessed with boundless energy. Put a bunch of them together in a fun environment and self-control can become a rare commodity!

#### short attention span

The rule of thumb for how long the average child can remain focused on one thing is 5 minutes plus their age - and that's when they're interested! So mix it up and build in opportunities to be active.

#### concrete to abstract

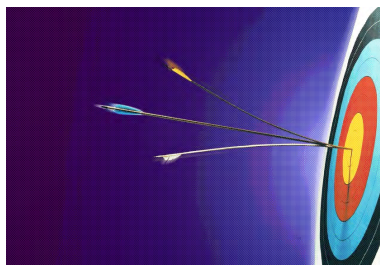
One of the biggest changes that occurs during primary school (often around the ages of 8-10) is that kids develop the ability to think in "abstract" ways and about "abstract" concepts.

#### sensitive

Children, even the rough ones, are very tender creatures. They are easily damaged and words can be even more hurtful than "sticks and stones". Kids Church should be a place where they are safe from any kind of hurt.

#### kids priorities

It's been said that play is the work of a child. And so understandably, kids often don't share our priorities. If we approach teaching kids about God as work, it probably won't work!



# staying on target

Hopefully the previous page generated lots of discussion about gospel ministry to kids church children. On the *'flexible'* aspects of this ministry, there are certainly many **good** approaches possible. But it's when we come back to the all-important *'fixed'* aspect—the gospel of Christ—that we can get clearer about the **best** approach. We need to remember our key goals in seeing every person grow to maturity in Christ. We also need to keep thinking through the steps or pathway people travel toward maturity. In short, we need to stay on target with what the ministry is there for...

## 7UP

Long before it was the name of a soft drink, *7UP* was the title of a film. It was the first of a whole series of documentaries which followed the lives of 7 British 7-year-olds, a new film being made every 7 years (now reaching *42UP* and still going!). The series is a sociological experiment aimed at exploring the factors that make us who we are, particularly from our early years.

Someone said "give me a child till the age of seven and I will give you the man", and the series has revealed that this is largely true. What children learn shapes their lives in a powerful way. And it's what they learn about relationships that has the biggest impact of all.

Kids Church is therefore a great opportunity to share a partnership with Christian parents in raising their children in "the training and instruction of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). What we teach them in Kids Church - through the power of the gospel and the power of relationships - *will* have a huge impact on whether or not they grow up to be followers of Jesus.

What a privilege! What a responsibility! This page emphasizes the difference YOU can make in the lives of the children in your Kids Church Growth Group.

It's all about relationships - making the most of your relationship with the kids so that they can make the most of their relationships with God, with other believers, with their parents & siblings and last but not least with unbelievers.

These ministry papers have been developed with a certain 'shape' of Christian maturity in mind. The mature Christian in our church will live out and grow in their Christlikeness through...

- 1. being actively involved in a growth group**
- 2. being actively involved in a ministry team**

Kids Church is primarily concerned with the first of these two goals and aims to build a firm foundation for addressing the second goal during the teenage years.

A Kids Church "class" is really a Growth Group, sharing the same goals and purpose as an adult Growth Group. The only difference is the size of its members! Growth in the 4 key relationships outlined in the table below remains the goal of a Growth Group regardless of the age of its members.

The following graph contains some suggestions for making the most of the opportunities you have with the children in your Kids Church Growth Group.

| growth group goals achieved through...  |   |
|---|---|
| a growing relationship with God, especially through personal Bible reading and prayer | ensuring each child has an age-appropriate Bible at home and encouraging parents of younger children to read & pray with them |
| growing relationships with other believers, especially through the growth group       | building "group life" by making group time special and organizing occasional activities outside of Kids Church time           |
| growing relationships with those in their family/household, as servants               | developing relationships with whole families so that you know the home circumstances of each child in your Growth Group       |
| growing relationships with unbelievers, especially through personal evangelism        | encouraging an attitude of gratefulness towards God and fostering a genuine desire to share His love with friends             |



### read **Ephesians 5:11-16**

1. Love is the **context** for truth-speaking. How can you practically express your love for the children in your Kids Church Growth Group so that they will listen when you speak the truth?
  
2. Truth-speaking is the **content** of love. How can you ensure that the children in your Kids Church Growth Group know the truth? (see also John 14:6)

# getting equipped

There's nothing worse than being given a job to do but nothing to do it with. Failure becomes inevitable. We all need to be equipped and we all need to keep being equipped if we're to minister effectively to the children at Kids Church. Whether its knowledge, skills, or even having the right attitude towards our ministry, we all need to work at staying sharp so that nothing hinders children coming to know Jesus. Below are some examples of Australian resources that everyone in Kids Church Ministry should have access to and become familiar with.

Jesus called the children to him and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." **Luke 18:16**



training re-  
sources

## resources for training & teaching



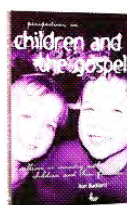
### **Their God is So Big (Matthias Media)**

An excellent introduction to kids and Kids Church ministry. Contains helpful sections on childrens' abilities, writing teaching material from scratch, and lots of great hints on how to run an effective Kids Church. Focuses on 3-7 year-olds.



### **The A-Z of Ministry with Children (Scripture Union)**

A great collection of kids ministry ideas and helpful practical tips from two of Australia's veteran kids workers. A is for abstract ideas, Z is for zest and there's so much helpful stuff inbetween. The dozen or so pages on illustrating a story are invaluable for those of us with little talent in the art department!



### **Perspectives on Children & the Gospel (Scripture Union)**

A helpful investigation of the issues surrounding ministry to children. Part 1 includes a good exploration of the issue of "conversion" in children. Part 2 is made up of 20 principles to guide kids ministry. You might not agree with all the author's conclusions but it will certainly make you think.



### **Remember the Lord (& many others)**

CDs & DVDs from Australia's most loved Christian children's performer - Colin Buchanan. Invaluable for their Bible-based lyrics and fun music. Songs for every situation whether you're teaching from the Old Testament or the New.



### **The King, the Snake and the Promise**

is a great overview of the whole Bible story in song & narration.



### **www.kidswise.com.au**

An annual subscription of \$75 gets you access to an ever-increasing number of resources including Kids Talks, Kids Church lessons/programs, training material, books, CDs and more. A great resource for those without many resources! All the material has been road-tested at Rooty Hill Anglican Church (MBM).



## child protection

### **safety first**

While the focus of this paper has understandably been on meeting the spiritual needs of the children in our care, we must remember that we minister to the whole child and as such are concerned for their total wellbeing.

A significant part of this concern is ensuring that the Kid's Church environment is one of **uncompromised safety** for every child. This is our "duty of care". Sadly this duty has not always been taken seriously in churches and some terrible stories of abuse have resulted.

Our Child Protection policy - "Breaking the Silence" - aims to protect both children (first and foremost) and leaders from the terrible effects of abuse.

### checklist

- do you know who to talk to at your church if you want to report an incident or ask a question about child protection?
- have you completed the Breaking the Silence training so that you are aware of your responsibilities for notification of abuse and the signs of abuse?
- do you have a copy of the Breaking the Silence brochures "Our Policy" and "Our Code of Conduct"?
- do you have a position description?
- have you filled out the Working with Children Check?