



kids club

the MINISTRY PAPERS

missed opportunities...

Mark's Mum was pulling her hair out in frustration. If he told her one more time that he was bored, she'd kill him! The summer holidays had seemed to drag on forever and both Mark and his Mum had had enough.

When the flier appeared in the mail about a holiday Kids Club being run at the church just down the road she only hesitated for a second - what if they try to brainwash him or something? - but the thought quickly passed when Mark said it again - Mu-um I'm bored!

Mark seemed to enjoy himself at the Kids Club and his Mum was certainly happy to have a few hours peace and quiet. So much peace and quiet in fact that she didn't know what to do with herself. By the end of the week, she'd even started thinking.

I wonder who runs this Kids Club anyway? Do they get paid? I wonder if Jesus was a real person? Did I really just wonder that?! I must be going mad!

When Mark's Mum went to pick him up from Kids Club that afternoon she thought about asking someone her questions. But who could she ask? Everyone seemed so busy cleaning up and no-one seemed too interested in talking to her.

Mark's question jolted her out of her reverie - Mum, was Jesus a real person? She didn't know what to say - well, what do you think champ? Mark looked disappointed - maybe - he shrugged. Yeah maybe - his Mum answered. - but who knows?

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 club ministry leader introduce you to what it means to serve as part of our **kids club 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.

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

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

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



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

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

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 club...



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

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

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



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

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



challenges and opportunities

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

what are some of the challenges ?	what are some ideas for facing these ?
what are some of the opportunities ?	what are some ideas for making the most of these ?

profile of a kids club 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 Club 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.

know God to no God

Kids Clubs are usually designed to reach out into the community and so attract children from a huge range of spiritual/religious backgrounds. Children from solid Christian families will be mixed in with children with no knowledge of the God of the Bible whatsoever.

more school is not cool

After 5 hours in the classroom, anything that whiffs of school will not be very appealing. The informality of a Kids Club is one of the great advantages in building quality relationships with the kids.

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

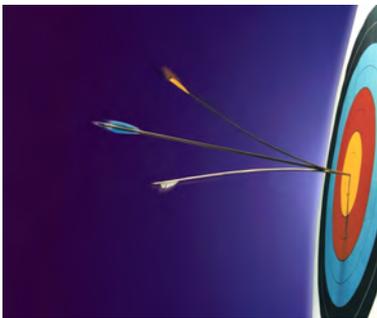
The attention span of the average child gets shorter as the day gets longer making Kids Clubs a real challenge! So mix up your program and plan opportunities to be active.

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 Club should be a place where they are safe from any kind of hurt.



staying on target

Hopefully the previous page generated lots of discussion about gospel ministry to kids club 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. In the case of Kids Club ministry, this will often mean introducing children (and their parents) to Christ in the first place. We also need to keep thinking through the steps or pathway people travel toward Christ and toward maturity in Him. In short, we need to stay on target with what the ministry is there for...

community connections

The days of most people in the community having some sort of connection to the local church are long gone. And yet it's still the local community that the church is designed to serve - to serve with the gospel of Christ.

How can we bridge the gap?

Of all the evangelistic programs that have been attempted in Australian churches, those that seem to have the greatest impact are aimed at children. There is something about people giving up time to hang out with the children of strangers that speaks powerfully to those strangers.

But even still, we live in an age that is very suspicious towards "organized religion" (if only they could see how disorganized we can be!). The only effective way of overcoming this suspicion is to get involved in people's lives, and children are a great medium for doing that.

While that might sound very sneaky (I told you we were suspicious people), the reality is that effective evangelism to children must attempt to reach their parents as well. Failure to do so seriously undermines the chance of the kids continuing on in Christ.

A Kids Club ministry should aim to reach families in the community.

With this in mind, parents of church families are invaluable frontline gospel workers when they choose to get involved in a Kids Club ministry. Church Mums & Dads who invite non-church Mums & Dads over for a coffee or a beer during Kids Club can do wonders to establish genuine connections between members of our church and the wider community.

Kids Club is front line ministry. It's down-in-the-trenches, get-your-hands-dirty sort of stuff. Not that non-Christian children or their parents are our enemies as such, but the one who wants to keep them on his side of the fence most definitely is. This means we need a **plan of attack** for how to wrest them out of his influence and win them for God's kingdom.

Giving some thought to the likely **pathway** children and parents might travel into the kingdom and then onward to Christian maturity is a great investment. Consider the sample pathway outlined below.

pathway	child	parent
raising awareness	church children invite their friends from school	church parents rave about Kids Club to non-church Mums & Dads
initial contact	leaders make a big deal about welcoming new children	leaders meet parents and collect contact details
follow-up	follow-up letter to child after first visit	leaders phone to organize drop-in visit (where appropriate) to discuss purpose of Kids Club and answer any questions
build relationships	leaders focus on children in their Growth Group	church parents arrange social occasions to develop relationships
evangelism	an ongoing feature of the teaching program	personal evangelism by church parents and planned presentations by leaders at parent events
invite to church	kids Club participates in special services like "Carols by Candlelight"	parents are invited to a non-threatening church setting where familiar faces abound!



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 Club 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 Club 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 Club. 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 Club 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**



teaching & training resources



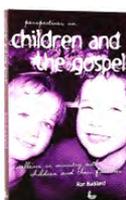
Their God is So Big (Matthias Media)

An excellent introduction to kids and Kids Church ministry. Contains helpful sections on children's 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 in between. 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.



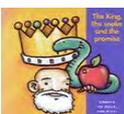
Kids Plus (CEP/Youthworks)

Excellent Australian material written specifically for after-school Kids Clubs. Theme-based programs with solid Bible content and lots of activities to pick and choose from. These units are a good option for any Kids Club team without the resources to reinvent the wheel - not that there's anything wrong with that!



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.



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 Club 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?