

Children's Ministries, Why Not?

by Duane Swanson

Why have Children's Ministries? My question to you would be why not?!!

We've probably all heard the statistics that 85% of people who accept Christ do it before they pass age 12. After that, the percentage drops drastically. That's why I believe in children's ministry in every church. If we are able to plant seed early, and nurture it as the years go on, the crop keeps getting better and better.

I've shared in a previous issue of NTD Magazine how my journey with Christ began with salvation at age four and has been going on for nearly 47 years. I started ministry 28 years ago as a youth pastor in Wheaton, Illinois. It didn't take me too long to figure out that, if I were going to have an effective youth ministry, I needed, as I called it back then, "a good farm team".

In my first church, I began children's ministries on Sunday mornings and did youth ministry on Wednesday night. The pattern was duplicated in three other churches where I had opportunity to serve. Then, a pastor called and asked me to become his children's pastor. I wasn't a children's pastor. I was a youth pastor, but the call came and I obeyed.

As I have looked at how children's ministry has changed over the last 10 years, I realize we have a major challenge ahead. I often have pastors call asking me if I have a list of children's pastors whom they can call to serve in their churches. The list usually is short. We don't have enough workers to meet the growing needs.

I'm certainly not saying you can't have children's ministries unless you have a children's pastor. My prayer is that God will provide you with someone who has a heart for children, who is willing to step forward, and who will allow God to use them to minister to the boys and girls of your church.

As I look at the children's ministries of the North Texas District, I see that they are alive, well, and looking to expand. There is an incredible base of wonderful pastors, leaders and volunteers who give of themselves every week to minister to the children in their churches.

This all is possible because a door has been opened by senior pastors, who also have a burden for children, to allow people to operate in what God has put in their hearts.

When I worked in Illinois I saw a need, went to my pastor, shared it with him and he allowed me to run with what God had put in my heart. He didn't need to showcase me or my ministry. He just needed to release me into what God had put in my heart. You know what happened? God blessed the ministry.

In the following pages, workers will share ministries that are making an impact upon children, leaders, churches, and communities around the district. My prayer is that these articles will plant faith and ideas in your heart to help you reach not only children but entire families for Christ. The bottom line in all areas of ministry is souls. May this be a year of reaping a great harvest for the Kingdom of God.

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