



part 1 of 2—

# Releasing Into Ministry

by Pete Hohmann

Children's Pastor and Missions Pastor at Mechanicsville Christian Center, Richmond, Virginia

**W**hy are some children bored with their Christianity while others are excited? Why do some children exhibit a “whatever” attitude while others possess a purpose greater than themselves? This difference especially becomes apparent when children enter their preteen years (10-12).

Of course, there are many variables that determine whether children are bored or excited about their faith. But one variable stands out above all the rest:

**Are your children being given an opportunity to minister to others?**

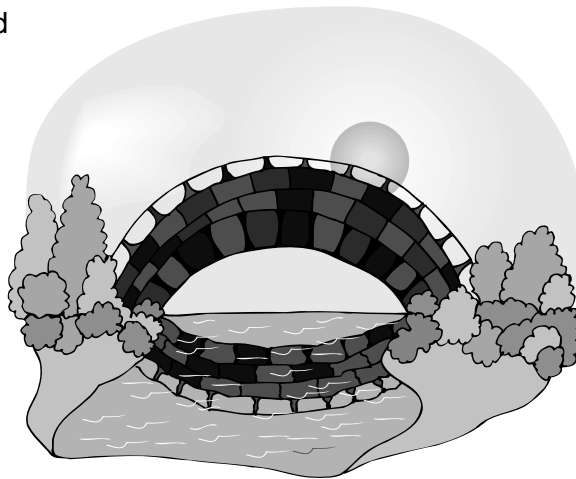
## Put to the Test

As children grow older in the church, they accumulate a lot of theoretical knowledge of God. But children need to develop a proven knowledge of God. They need to discover for themselves what is real, who has the power, and what really works. They must be given opportunities to personally prove that the promises of God are true. Their ideas and beliefs must be tested in the real “classroom of life.”

When children are given opportunities to minister to others, they are pushed out of their

comfort zones and forced to depend on God. When they call out to God, they discover that the promises of God are true and that He has the power. The **theoretical** becomes **proven**, and they are excited about their faith.

Hilary illustrates this principle. She started ministering with “Bridge Builders,” our performing arts outreach team composed of



children, when she was 11 years old. She wrote the following after an outreach in Chicago:

“Through going on an outreach, I have fallen in love with Jesus. Instead of just gaining ‘head knowledge,’ I have gained ‘heart knowledge.’ Outreach has given me a chance to live out the things I learned in Sunday School, to really experience Jesus as Provider, Protector, Savior, Father, Peace, and so

much more. When we go on an outreach, we put ourselves in a place where we are expecting and needing God to move. Instead of being complacent, we urgently seek Him—to provide finances, words to say, and directions for where we should go. When we seek God, He shows up. And each time He shows up, it causes me to love Him more. In Chicago, I remember faces—young, old, clean, dirty, sad, hateful, loving, kind. I remember the look in the eyes of someone who has never been held and loved as I tell him of God’s undying love. I remember the joy and peace all over the faces of people who have just had their lives cleansed from sin and reconciled to God.”

## Equip and Release

Although outreach in the community is the ideal place for kids to acquire a proven knowledge of God and an excitement about their faith, ministry in the church is also a means to the same end.

For example, you can equip and release your kids to minister in children’s church. A few years ago, I had the pleasure of visiting Vann Lane’s children’s church at Brownsville Assembly of God in Pensacola, Florida.

The worship team was composed of children, ages eight to fifteen. The greeters were all kids. The 16 puppeteers were all third and fourth graders. Most of the costumes only fit children.

Children ran the sound system. The prayer team consisted of 75 children on a weekly rotation. Even the hall workers who awarded the “quiet seat” prizes were children! Pastor Vann

joked, “All I do is unlock the door each week.” Of course, he does much more, but he understands that equipping and releasing his children in ministry is one of his most important responsibilities.

---

### Questions for Further Study—

1. What makes a difference between being bored with Christianity and being excited about serving God and others?
2. How can children change “theoretical” knowledge about God into “proven” knowledge?
3. What are some ways you can involve the children you serve in outreach?

This article is reprinted from the Summer 2002 issue of *Fanning the Flame*, a quarterly newsletter for children’s workers produced by the National Children’s Ministries Agency. *Fanning the Flame* is mailed free to children’s pastors and directors in the local church. For additional copies and back issues contact GPH at 1-800-641-4310.

