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Releasing Into Ministry

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In our own church we have ministry clubs that children can join. Clubs usually meet monthly and include cooking meals for shut-ins, drama, puppets, interpretive dance, choreography, photography, running sound systems, and writing. My favorite is our "Grand Friends Club," where a child is paired with a nursing home resident for as long as that resident lives. The ministry includes a monthly, one-hour visit plus one letter per month.

In our preschool children's church, called "God's Garden," preteens staff the ten or more learning centers. They are trained how to interact with preschoolers and reinforce the Bible story of the day.

MP Squad

Trinity Presbyterian Church in Modesto, California, has a ministry called the "MP Squad" (Mission Possible). A preteen child oversees ten other children in the church. Twice a month, the preteen leader must make a significant contact with each of his or her ten children. (Just saying, "Hey" at church doesn't count.) In addition, twice a month on Tuesday nights, the preteen leaders meet for training and discipleship and a monthly report must be submitted. Can you

imagine if we had this kind of accountability in the entire church?

Great Commissionary Kids Retreat

Retreats are an ideal place to train kids for ministry. The Potomac District conducts a "Great Commissionary Kids Retreat" each winter. Every



retreat includes ministry training workshops for the kids. This year we offered 15 workshops, including drama, creative movement, puppets, leading worship, signing for the deaf, running sound systems, ministering as an altar worker, creating computer multimedias, and even preaching a sermon. The retreat concluded with a service conducted completely by the kids. We also conduct our own church kids'

retreat each year. This year our theme was "Changing the World with Our Gifts."

No matter what the size of your church, there are ways you can involve kids in ministry. But, the greatest benefit comes when we take kids on an outreach into the community. Each summer, about 100 children from our "Bridge Builders" team gather for a week of boot camp where outreach ministry skills are learned. The large team then divides into three smaller teams that travel to different cities. Seven days of outreaches, which usually focus on inner-city housing projects, are then conducted. After eight years of this type of ministry, we are enjoying tremendous fruit. Many of the original kids are now training to become full-time missionaries or ministers.

Start Small and Build

"Bridge Builders" is a large operation, but you can start by conducting outreaches at any level. Why not begin with a quarterly outreach to a local nursing home? Kids can sing with creative movement, share testimonies, and pray with the residents. *Mobilizing Kids for Outreach* (one of our Great Commissionary Kids ICU Units) gives details on how to conduct outreach with children doing the

