



# God's Person for God's Kids

by Dick Gruber

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**I** write this today for the beginning children's church leader.

Twenty-five years ago, I began to help in a children's church in Omaha, Nebraska. Less than two years later, I found myself leading a children's church in Minnesota. Over the following months and years, I made quite a few blunders, had some great services, and some interesting ones. Through trial, error, advice from friends, and patience on the kids' part, I eventually learned a few things about producing a children's church service with kid appeal and spiritual depth. I trust that the lessons I've learned will help you as you begin this awesome God-ordained ministry.

## Nobody and no children's church is perfect.

The first lesson to learn is that you will never host a perfect children's church. Even now, after all these years, I wonder sometimes about what just happened on a Sunday morning. Strive for perfection, but don't get hung up when it doesn't happen. Do your best to provide the highest quality service for the children you have been entrusted with. Don't let the little things throw you. I have planned, prepared, and presented lessons that I was certain would bless the kids as well as set an example for my staff, only to watch a crash and burn shortly after the first song. Other times, a lesson that I thought would never fly produced great results.

## Pray for the children and the children's church.

Early in the ministry I learned that prayer must be offered up for every service. Spend time with Jesus and then show the Jesus you know to the children. Pray for each child, each grade level, and God's anointing. Pray for the puppet shows and offering gimmicks, and the gospel illustration with a surprise ending. If Jesus, God in the flesh, had to spend time in prayer before ministry, you and I in our sorry human condition had better put this into practice.



## Find a theme and stick with it!

Whether you use curriculum or not, a simple understandable theme is essential to the success of any children's service. I have visited other children's churches where I sat in wonder, never understanding the theme of the day. If I didn't get it, how could the children understand? Introduce the theme in every aspect of your service. The song leader should sing about and talk about the

theme. As the Scripture and Bible story are presented, share what these have to do with the theme. The sermon should tie your daily theme up neatly so that every child will have equal opportunity to respond.

## Preach with authority.

You are God's person for your children at this time in history. God did not make a mistake when he placed you in charge of the children's church. Speak with passion, power, and principle. Expect God to work in the lives of the children every time you get together. Be confident in Christ and preach the full gospel. There are children waiting to be saved, healed, and filled with God's Holy Spirit. Just recently 39 kids were filled with the Holy Spirit during a children's church service.

## Make time for response!

Say good-bye to the days of moms and dads barging in to your service and dragging their children out before you pray. Estimate the time of departure and back up ten to fifteen minutes. Launch every part of the service in such a way as to facilitate a prayer response with the children at that time. If they don't use all of the time allowed, fill the rest of your service with Bible quizzing games or BGMC promotion.

## Involve children in ministry.

This is, after all, a "children's" church. Let the children be part of your ministry. They can usher,

greet, lead in worship, teach lessons, hold objects, and pray one for another. Do all you can to make it their church. Everybody must be active in the Body. My wife Darlene kept track of children which were called on by our workers one month. Out of the almost 300 children we have, less

than forty were made part of the ministry. Out of that forty, some had helped seven or eight times in that month. I have since then trained my workers to choose volunteers from those who have not helped up front yet.

So as you step into the children's church this week, remem-

ber that you are God's person. This is God's children's church. God loves the children more than you or I could ever love them. He cared enough to send them the very best. I guess that would be you.

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### Questions For Further Study—

1. How do you perceive your role in the children's ministry of your church?
2. What can you do to make sure all the children in your children's church are participants instead of spectators?
3. Whom does your children's church ultimately belong to?