



The 21st Century Church, part 2 of 4—

Growing a Church Through Children's Ministry

by David Boyd, National Coordinator, Children's Ministries Agency / BGMC

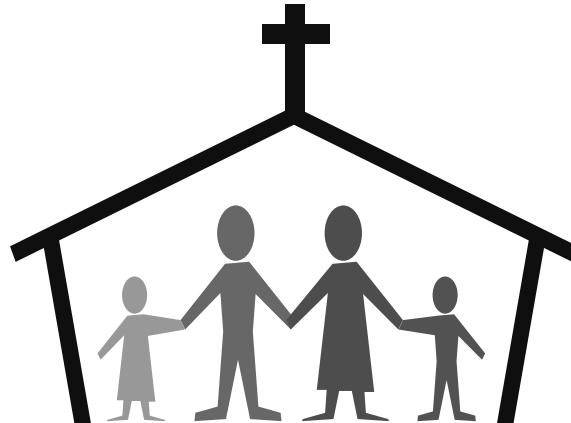
Growing a church through children's ministry seems to be a newfound discovery for churches all across America. It used to be that the top three factors families used to choose a church were location, pastor, and denomination. Not so anymore. Today the new top three is "location, pastor, and **children's ministry.**"

With the rise in danger from distraught peers and perverse adults, parents all over America are awakening to the fact that their children need to be safe, secure, and well cared for. They are looking for this both in where their kids go to school and where their kids go to church! A top-notch children's ministry will help attract young families and grow your church!

Dan Betzer, senior pastor of the thriving and growing church in Fort Myers, Florida, writes, "Our church has grown by 183 kids in the past two years!" (1998-1999). Statistics tell us that each of these 183 kids corresponds to an average of a little over one adult per child. That means that the church grew by nearly 400 children and parents during this two-year period. Obviously, these families were drawn due to a variety of reasons, but their commitment to a quality children's ministry was paying off with huge

growth in the area of new young families!

Families today are selective. If they have children, they're looking closely at the children's areas in a church. They're looking for quality facilities and quality leadership. They're looking for clean, modern, kid friendly rooms with modern equipment. In the nursery and preschool areas, they're looking for modern security measures, up-to-date equipment, and clean, sanitized toys and surroundings. They're also looking for caring



and friendly workers to receive their precious children.

Leith Anderson states: "In the past, parents picked the church and the children had to go. Increasingly today, children pick the church and the parents go where the children are happiest. Fear is also a factor; parents are concerned about safety. They appreciate churches that carefully

screen teachers and require claim checks to pick up their child. Parents are more likely to leave a church where children don't seem important."

Wow! What true statements. Today's parents look for the church that cares about the kids. Small or large, they are checking you out. Usually they only give your church one Sunday. They look at the nursery and preschool areas. They look into the children's classrooms and Children's Church room. They are looking for the great first impression which states, "This church loves kids!" And by the way, children's ministry is one of the areas where a big church isn't necessarily better. The nursery doesn't have to be huge to impress parents. They're impressed by the care, love, and cleanliness that are put into what you have.

Realtors are amazed that parents will choose a lesser house in a neighborhood where the schools are better. It's because parents are concerned about their kids. They will also drive further and cross denominational bounds just to find the church that will care for their kids!

Dan Betzer states: "Be honest: Ask yourself if your church is a place where young parents would bring their children?" This is quite

