

Foundations for Preschoolers Ministry

Preschool Ministry Part One

Game: Divide participants into groups of four or five. Give each group a puzzle to complete with one piece missing. Ask them to put the puzzle together. As they finish, each group will see that a piece is missing. Discuss the fact that even though children ages zero through four are very young, they are an important part of our congregations. Without them, the church would be incomplete.

I.) My Story

In my classroom...

- Ages: 4 and 5
- Attendance: 20-25 children
- Sex: 2/3 are girl
- Languages: English, Spanish, Ukrainian
- Race: Caucasian, Latino, Ukrainian, Asian
- Issues: Disabilities, ADHD, Asperger Syndrome, Medications
- Families: Traditional, Single Parent (Divorced), Single Parent (Never Married) Grandparents, Adopted, Foster Parents, Same-Sex

II.) Can Children Be Saved?

Jesus' Teaching in Matthew 18

Jesus uses children as the example of faith

- **Matthew 18:1-2** - The word for "little child" in the Greek is **paidi6n** which means a little or young child under **seven** years of age.
- **Matthew 18:3** - Requirement for salvation

The word for converted in the Greek is *strepho*, which means to **turn, active** or **voluntary**.

A young child is capable of having saving faith. Why would Jesus tell us to become like them if they could not, it would have been a wasted object lesson.

An adult who has childlike faith can be converted and enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

"The door to Heaven is three feet tall." - Unknown

- **Matthew 18:4** - Jesus answers the disciples' initial question, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

- **Matthew 18:5** - How do you get in the Kingdom of Heaven?

The Greek word for receives means to **accept deliberately** and **readily**

Adults who demonstrate childlike faith and are converted can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven

Little children already have childlike faith and they, too, can be converted and enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

To minister to a **child** is to **serve Christ**. This is a **holy calling**.

Jesus affirms young children as believers.

- **Matthew 18:6**

This passage is talking about little ones who believe in Him.

The word for believe in the Greek is *pisteuo* which means to have faith in or upon and is the same word used in John 3:16 and Acts 16:31

Jesus asserts that little children can savingly believe.

- **Matthew 18:10**

Jesus tells His disciples to not look down on one of these little ones.

Little ones must be treated with respect.

- **Matthew 18:11-13**

Jesus tells parable of lost sheep.

Jesus teaches the urgency of reaching one lost child.

The implication is that even a child is **lost** and **worthy of seeking**.

Children are of great value to the good Shepherd.

- **Matthew 18: 14**

The word for perish in the Greek is *apollomi* which means to destroy fully and is the same Greek word translated as lost and destroyed

God's **will** must be the **will** of God's people.

Summary of Jesus' Teaching

- Affirmed young children as believers and taught the seriousness of causing children who believe in Him to sin or stumble.
- Told the disciples to not look down on little children.
- Taught the urgency of reaching the lost child, using himself as a model.
- Declared God’s will that not one of these little ones be lost.
- “If you doubt the child’s ability to communicate with God, don’t doubt God’s ability to communicate with the child.” – Unknown

Personal Testimonies from Christians Saved as Children

- Corrie Ten Boom, Holocaust survivor—age 5
- Dr. Isaac Watts, the great hymn writer—age 9
- Henrietta Mears, Founder of Gospel Light—age 5
- Charles Spurgeon, well-known preacher—age 12
- Dr. James Dobson, Founder of Focus on the Family—age 3
- Matthew Henry, writer of commentaries—age 11
- Polycarp, the Bishop of Smyrna in the 2nd century—age 9 and martyred at age 86
- Jonathan Edwards, the well-known preacher of the 18th century—age 7
- Steve Green, Christian Music artist in the late 20th century—age 8
- John Haggai, Haggai Institute—age 4½, called to preach at age 6 and as a missionary at age 10
- Dr. Martha Wright, vice-president of education for Child Evangelism Fellowship®—age 7

Perspectives from Theologians and Christian Leaders

“A child of five, if properly instructed, can savingly believe as well as an adult. My conviction is that our converts from among children are among the best we have. I should judge them to have been more numerously genuine than in any other class, more constant, and in the long run, more solid.” – Charles Spurgeon

“You do not know how much infidelity there is in the church today with regard to child conversion. There are but a few who believe that children can become Christians; but thank God there is a bright day coming.” - D. L. Moody

“ The greatest reason for my belief that young children can really understand the vital truth of the Gospel is that I believe in the Holy Spirit’s ministry to communicate the message of salvation and sanctification to them. There is no adult, however intelligent, who can understand the Gospel without the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.” - Francis Schaeffer

Research Studies

- 85% of Christians received Christ as Savior between the ages of 4-14
- More than 2/3 of all adult Christians claim to have accepted Christ before turning 18
- There is a 32% probability that a person will be saved between the ages of 5-12; a 4% probability for those 13-18; and a 6% probability for those 19 and older, the 4/14 window

- Barna confirms that if people do not receive the Lord Jesus as their Savior before they reach their teenage years, the chance of their ever doing so is slim.

Children are the most fruitful mission field in the world today.

Our conclusion: The Gospel should be presented to children so that as the Holy Spirit works they will come to know Jesus as their personal Savior.

III.) Spiritual Experiences

1. Salvation

Guiding children to take those first steps toward faith can be the most rewarding opportunity of life. As a child grows and matures, his knowledge of Jesus will grow. By laying foundations for spiritual conversion, we partner with the Holy Spirit as He prepares and calls a child to accept Jesus as Savior.

Jesus as "Friend"

Jesus as "Savior"

There is no separate gospel for children. The child must understand and be convicted of his broken relationship with God. We must be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's work. Where there is no conviction, there can be no real change and spiritual conversion.

2. Baptism

Before being baptized, a child should be old enough to understand the gospel of Christ. A candidate for baptism should have repented of his sin and placed his faith and trust in Jesus Christ as his Savior and Lord.

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" (Matthew 19:14)

3. Prayer Requests

IV. Understanding Preschoolers

General Characteristics of Preschoolers

- Preschoolers are eager learners
- Preschoolers like to ask questions
- Preschoolers watch and observe
- Preschoolers enjoy repetition
- Preschoolers have fears
- Preschoolers want the approval of adults
- Preschoolers confuse real and make-believe
- Preschoolers love silliness

- Preschoolers understand right from wrong
- Preschoolers seek forgiveness

V.) Basis for Preschool Ministry

Successful Foundations for Preschool Ministry

- Be Consistent
- Modeling God’s Love
- Connect with Their Interests
- Teach Obedience
- Keep Learning Exciting
- Make Church Attractive

Constantly review your lesson or sermon plans to make sure that you are building on these foundations.

VI.) Biblical Truths

Ages 0-4 Biblical Truths

KNOWING		LOVING	LIVING	
<i>Who God Is</i>	<i>What God Has Done</i>	<i>Relationship with God</i>	<i>What God Wants</i>	<i>What You Can Do</i>
God exists.	God created everything.	Prayer is talking to God in Jesus' name.	God wants you to be good, kind, and loving, just like Him and Jesus.	God wants you to go to church.
God loves you.	God created you.	You need to talk to God regularly.	God wants you to see and think good things.	God wants you to obey your parents.
Jesus loves you.	God gave us the Bible.	You need to regularly listen to stories about God and Jesus from the Bible.		God wants you to learn to share your things with others.
God wants to take care of you.	God's Son, Jesus, dies for your sins so you can be with God.			

Source: *Spiritual Growth of Children*, Focus on the Family

Building Your Preschoolers Ministry Preschool Ministry Part Two

I.) Schedule

Notes:

- Make your plan
- Review it the week prior
- Arrive early
- Be prepared
- Have an “Order of Service”
- Greet each child and call by name
- Greet each parent and ask about bathroom break
- Review expectations
- Remember attention span

Sample Sunday School Schedule:

9:30 Staff Ready
9:45 Playtime
9:55 Clean-up Time
10:00 Welcome, Lesson Intro, and Review Expectations
10:05 Prayer
10:10 Bible Story/Truth
10:20 Scripture Introduction Activity
10:25 Craft/Coloring
10:30 Snack
10:40 Transition Time

Sample Worship Schedule:

10:45 Transition Time Continues
10:55 Bathroom Break
11:00 Welcome, Lesson Intro, Expectations Review
11:05 Opening Game
11:10 Worship
11:20 Prayer
11:25 Scripture Verse Intro
11:30 Bible Lesson
11:40 Centers
Snack
Craft
Lesson/Scripture Review
12:15 Closing Prayer

II.) Presenting Your Lesson

Needs of Preschoolers: Physical, Mental, Emotional, Spiritual (Group Activity Charts)

Sample Lesson

Evaluation

- Where the children attentive and eager to participate?
- Did the children understand the basics of the story?
- Could the children name basic elements of the story?

III.) Discipline

Set Reasonable Expectations:

- Be a Good Friend.
- Be Safe.
- Be A Good Listener.

Procedures

- **LOOK.** Make eye contact with the child, put your finger over your mouth to signal quiet, smile and look away.
- **TOUCH.** Put your hand on the child’s shoulder. Touch the hand of the child. Put your arm around the child. Many times a touch can be reassuring and can return the child to the proper behavior.
- **MOVE.** First, move yourself to the most disruptive child. Second, move the child to another seat close to you or simply separate the children that are bothering each other.
- **FINALLY,** if the bad behavior continues, the child should be escorted to the back of the room and further discipline will be administered at the close of the service by the Children’s Pastor.

Establish Consequences:

- 1st Warning - Move their pin
- 2nd Warning - Time out with a helper
- 3rd Warning - Call their parent/guardian

Don’t forget to have good help, make eye contact, touch, and then speak.

V.) Classroom Set-up

Furniture

Learning Centers

Colors and Decor

V.) Volunteers

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Preschool or Nursery Duty” • Recruitment • Teenagers • Invite Parents and Family • Maternity Leave • New People | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Recommendations • Post Job Openings • Build a Rotation Where Possible • Be Aware • Show Appreciation Genuinely and Frequently |
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- Meet Regularly

VI.) Safety

- Prayer
- Application and Screening
- Job Descriptions
- Discipline
- Two-Adult Rule and Potty Policy
- Classroom Presence
- Registration
- Secured Hallways
- Snacks
- Toy Checks
- CPR and First Aid Training

VII.) Connecting With Parents

Social Media

Direct Contact

Special Events

Family Fusion

Conclusion

11 Lies of the Enemy