

We Need a Plan

*What we have heard and known, what our fathers have told us.
We will not hide them from their children;
We will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders he has done.
He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which he commanded our forefathers to teach their children,
So the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born,
And they in turn would tell their children.
Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands.*

Psalm 78:3-7

Our mission is to reach the world with the message of Jesus. Through the years in our churches, much focused thought and prayers have gone into reaching this goal. To the credit of our leaders and their discipling efforts, the plan is working as many new souls are being won every day throughout

the world. Unfortunately, this focus is not as clear with our children. Many of our efforts are more babysitting than building, more keeping them busy than encouraging their faith, and more occupying their attention than really meeting their needs.

Our conviction is that unless we have a plan to reach our children and to build their faith, the future of our movement—and its purpose—will be severely hampered. We will find ourselves scrambling to catch up with the world that has spent many years shipwrecking their faith through humanistic classrooms and the multimedia of modern technology. One thing has become ever so certain to us in our time as parents and children’s ministry leaders—Satan has a plan for our children! We certainly better have one for ourselves. The ministry to our children is integral to laying the foundations that carry the movement of God to those yet to be born.

THE LESSON OF ISRAEL

As we measure all of our ministries by the number of generations

of faithful disciples, so we must take stock of our children’s ministry. We must understand that the children who are a part of our movement are future leaders who will carry our message—and God’s Movement—to the next generation. The daunting nature of this task is apparent when you consider that many great men of the Bible failed to build faith in their children.

The history of Israel is filled with the failure of the nation to fulfill Psalm 78. It was the rare case when one generation passed its righteousness to the next one! Noah, Samuel and David are a few great men of the Bible whose children did not walk in their ways. Children not knowing the God of their forefathers contributed greatly to the fall of the nation. It is one of the deepest convictions that unless we build dynamic, powerful children’s ministries, our movement will see Israel’s decline repeated!

THE “BIG PICTURE”

Read Deuteronomy 11:19-21.

Before any teachers will prepare a quality class that leaves a child eager for more, they

must first get the “big picture” of what the ultimate purpose of the children’s ministry is—to build a child’s faith in God! Teachers must understand that they are working with parents to develop a child’s faith and encourage him or her to love God from the heart! They must prepare and perform classes that make God “real.” Moses parting the Red Sea. David slaying Goliath. Daniel spending the night with lions. Jesus resurrected from the dead. Epoch Bible stories come alive as children hear the faith and courage of great men and women of God. The history of God must be written on the hearts and minds of our children!

Unfortunately, for too many of our children, a sobering reality is that their weekly classes are the most focused spiritual time they experience. If our classes are weak, poorly planned or uninspired, they give children the wrong impression of God. As a teacher you can never underestimate how one class can influence a child’s thinking about God. A crucial fact every teacher must appreciate is that God

has entrusted these few vulnerable souls to them to teach and train—if only for a few hours each week.

In training any teacher, before we address “nuts and bolts” issues, we first focus on the heart. A teacher who has a heart for children will figure out the logistics of preparing a great class—or be humble enough to get help in making the class excellent. A teacher whose heart is not with the children will at best do a mediocre class, regardless of how many practical suggestions are made to help them. As is always the case when training disciples, the heart is the foremost issue. You must get teachers’ hearts inspired to give their all to the children or relegate your children to a mundane and lukewarm experience.

WHAT WE LOOK FOR IN THE HEARTS OF OUR TEACHERS

Read Mark 10:13-16

In this account of children coming to Jesus, Mark depicts Jesus’ heart for children. Jesus well understood that children were members of the kingdom. As such, Jesus

knew that blessing them was a part of his ministry.

Teachers must be aware of the impact they are having in the kingdom when they teach the children. During a teacher’s rotation, these children are an integral part of their personal ministry! Children were important enough to Jesus that he stopped all of his busyness to focus his attention on these children. Great teachers like Jesus will make the time for children, and like Jesus will be striving to bless the children in their class. The children’s ministry is not babysitting or daycare!

Mark’s final note regarding Jesus’ interaction with these children reveals the heart Jesus had for children in general. Jesus could have simply made a generic statement saying, “God bless these children.” Instead, Mark details that he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them individually. Jesus’ heart for children is revealed in a closer look at these statements:

1. *He took the children in his arms.* Jesus was not about to hand out a detached, perfunctory

blessing. He wanted to get close to the children so he picked them up and held them. Most likely these children were infants or toddlers, but the principle here is that Jesus was not going to offer a blessing from afar. He received the parents and their children on a personal level.

During workshops, we sometimes encourage teachers to get on their knees and move around to get a sense of how the world looks through the eyes of small children. Picture a teacher standing in front of ten or fifteen small children wanting their attention and wondering why he cannot get it. Most adults tower over children and need to physically get down with them since they are not able to get up to the teacher. The principle here both physically and spiritually is that teachers must get on the same level as the children they teach.

Children need eye contact, not kneecaps. They need age-appropriate stories tailored to their ability to comprehend not Bible readings. They need creative, imaginative crafts and activities, not

busywork. Great teachers will figure out how to reach their children, regardless of their age, and then make every effort to get on that level.

2. He put his hands on them. Throughout Jesus' ministry he consistently touched people physically as a sign of affection or compassion. Great teachers will be affectionate with their children in giving hugs, gentle pats on the back, or holding hands. Especially with small children, teachers who are afraid to touch children will have a very difficult time connecting with them emotionally. If teachers are cold and impersonal—or just uncomfortable with a child's affection—they will find teaching very challenging. This should not be an excuse for them not to teach, but an opportunity to address a weakness in their character—and become more like Jesus!

3. He blessed them. Again, Jesus did not patronize the parents with a quick kiss on their child's forehead. Instead, he blessed the children. Jesus wanted to have an impact on

the children as well as the parents. The best teachers do the kind of classes that parents remember as much as the children. Why? Because the children have such a memory of their experience that they are eager to tell Mom and Dad all about it. Children should be proud of their craft; they should remember the story they learned. Then they will readily talk about the class, telling their parents how good it was. The best critique of a teacher is to listen to the children as Mom and Dad pick them up from class. What are they saying? Is this a "show and tell" time? How do they respond then asked what they learned? A teacher's impact will be obvious just as Jesus' blessing was!

4. The kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Any good teacher will readily verify that they receive more than they give when teaching the children. This is discipleship—that if you lay down your life, you will receive much more in return. Good teachers are humble enough to see teaching as an opportunity to learn, and will embrace

the challenges teaching presents to their lives. They will take advantage of teaching as it helps them better comprehend statements Jesus makes about becoming like a child in order to be a part of Jesus' kingdom.

BUILDING A MINISTRY

A children's ministry is only as good as the teachers staffing the classes. Each one must have a commitment to influence the children they teach, or there will be no ministry. Teachers must strive to imitate Jesus as they work with children. Children's ministry leaders need to consistently remind their teachers that they are playing a meaningful and vital role in God's kingdom. When teachers appreciate this, they will develop the skills to be great teachers.

Once teachers are aware of their role, they need to "get on top of their ministry." Some of our best teachers were not very effective in their initial efforts at teaching. Much of their weakness was a result of their not being thoroughly prepared for their class. Picture a Bible Talk leader who thought he could "wing" his class,

finishing in about twenty minutes. Shortly after his "Bible Talk" material runs out, you will see him scrambling to find ways to entertain and amuse twenty children for another hour. It is amazing how creative he will become under pressure! Most teachers quickly learn that what works with adults will not work with children.

It is an understatement to suggest that children learn very differently than adults. Bookshelves are filled with volumes of literature regarding this fact. Teachers need to realize the differences in learning and prepare classes accordingly. Unlike adults, children will not necessarily jump into a discussion or sit quietly for a discourse on grace. Children learn in very short segments. Their limited attention spans require stimulation from a variety of imaginative activities.

THE HEART AND SOUL OF A GREAT CLASS!

The first step in any dynamic class is that the teacher has a lesson plan. Great classes are the result of great planning! The curriculum has been written to ensure that classes run smoothly,

build on previous classes and truly bless the children. The only real reason for weak classes is insufficient preparation.

This written plan provides a framework of how the class should progress. It is a constant reminder of lesson objectives. It is the most important tool to ensure that all teachers are on the same page. It allows the children's ministry leaders to quickly evaluate a class in progress and to give suggestions on the class days ahead of time. Teachers are encouraged to take advantage of the planning and wisdom that is written in these lessons. They are ready to teach. If teachers invest time becoming familiar with the lessons and preparing ahead of class, they will teach memorable classes.

PLANNING THE CLASS

Lead teachers initiate the process of organizing a class. We encourage teachers to meet immediately after they have finished teaching for fifteen minutes to evaluate their class and to talk through the details of the next week's lesson. At this time each

teacher is given his or her responsibility for the next class. The lead teacher should also follow up during the week to ensure that preparations are happening.

Envision lead teachers preparing the entire class and informing their assistants of their responsibilities on the day they are to teach. The class will generally be very one-dimensional. Assistants are tentative and passive because they have not made an investment in the planning process. They have had no time to really think through how they can reach the children with their particular activity. The class depends far too much on the lead teacher and does not involve all teachers. This type of class is ineffective. This should never happen!

The after-class planning session is vital to a class going well. All teachers then will be able to pray about the class and the children throughout the week. They can talk through any questions or concerns about the class material, the story, the craft, the singing, challenging children,

etc. This communication ensures that the class is organized because the teachers understand the lesson plan and their roles. This also allows the lead teacher to communicate with the children's ministry leader to receive any further instruction needed for the class.

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When the class time comes, they will not be scrambling to identify who should do what as the children arrive, but will foster an atmosphere of unity and readiness. You can never underestimate the security this gives parents as teachers greet their child and take him or her into a calm, controlled situation where teachers are focused on giving to the children.

THE FIRST THIRTY MINUTES

Another conviction written into the curriculum is that great classes are made in the first thirty minutes—during the check-in and pre-session activities. When children arrive and sense teachers ready to “pull them into

the class,” they are much more likely to join in readily. If they sense uncertainty, tension or disorganization, many children will be insecure and tentative about the class. An efficient check-in combined with the curriculum pre-sessions will set your class up to succeed. If these go poorly, you will find yourself playing catch up the entire class!

CHECKING IN CHILDREN

This process should be done by the lead teachers or their key assistants, and never by another child. Several seemingly small details work to make this first impression the best:

- SMILE!!! Children need to know that you are happy to see them.
- Learn the child's name and greet them with it. They are individuals and feel secure when their teacher knows them.
- Do not fellowship with the parents or anyone else. Focus on the child!
- Be sensitive to feelings. Do not force children into the class. Draw them in!
- Move quickly through the sign-in and bring the child into the classroom.

- Have an attractive name tag for the child if it is early on in the quarter and not all the teachers know the children. This should not be necessary as the quarter progresses.
- ALWAYS have some kind of numbered security system to give the parent. (Let NO ONE without this number pick up a child at checkout. Should a number be lost, the children's ministry leader must verify that this person can indeed receive this child.) Someone should walk the child to the pre-session activity and introduce them to the teacher leading the pre-session activity.
- Have music playing in the background. Music is always inviting and happy to a child.
- Have a sign reminding parents to take their children to the bathroom prior to placing them in class. This will greatly diminish the need to take them to the bathroom during class time. One of the greatest disruptions we have experienced in teaching is when a succession of children

need to go to the bathroom.

- If during the class you do have children who must go to the bathroom, always have two adults of the same sex accompany them into the bathroom. The best way to handle this is to take small groups of children to the bathroom, rather than one at a time. Needless to say, it is far better to have the parents do this before class, rather than break up the continuity of your class with bathroom detail!

Children who are crying and reluctant to come into the class should be given the opportunity to join the class more slowly. One teacher should try to pull them in and get them involved. Ask the parent to return in fifteen minutes to make sure they settle in. If they continue crying, or refuse to participate, you should try to get them interested in an activity or quiet them by talking or singing with them. If they persist until the parent returns, give them the choice to come into the class or go with the parent. If they choose to leave,

assure them that they are welcome to come back next week and try again.

Obviously, with younger children, you may need to use some discretion about their ability to make a choice. The goal is to make every effort to keep children in the class. This means working with children and parents to acclimate the child. Be patient, as it may take a few weeks before a child makes it through the entire class. Again, see this through the child's eyes—a strange place, new people, Mom or Dad saying good-bye, tiredness, even hunger, can all contribute to children not wanting to separate from the security of their parents.

Have parents talk with their child about the class and pray about staying in the class. Have them set up some type of positive reinforcement if the child stays in the class and participates. For security reasons, the parents cannot stay with their child in the classroom. The goal is to get parents and child separated so that the child can share in the class. Parent in the classroom can inhibit the

child from really getting into the class (and it is a security risk!) Again, you must use a lot of wisdom and seek the advice from your children's ministry leader on how to best handle a child who repeatedly does not want to come to class.

THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR A GREAT PRE-SESSION

Besides having a check-in that draws children in, the pre-session activity is intended to be the time when teachers win over their class. It is not busywork that allows the teachers to cut out the craft, prepare the lesson, or fellowship. It is **vital** that teachers be creative with this time! Every teacher, except those signing in children, should involve themselves in the pre-session. The pre-sessions are designed to be very age-appropriate and engaging to the children.

The curriculum includes games, music, dance, working on the craft, puzzles and blocks for younger children, or anything that encourages the child to interact with other children or teachers. The important element is

that it be something that entices the child to be a part of the class. Keeping children still and quiet is not the objective of the class! Making this a lively time where the children can fellowship, work with their hands, play games or have fun really encourages the children to want to be in on the rest of the class.

ESTABLISHING ORDER IN THE CLASSROOM: ANNOUNCE YOUR PLAN

After you have done all you can do to prepare for the class, and the children have come together to begin, it is time to communicate your expectations to the children. This clear communication will help to create the order you need for the class. Just like their adult counterparts, children want to know the plan for the day and what you expect from them. Talk to the children about the lesson, the songs you want to sing, and the exciting crafts and games. Give them a preview of what is to come with great enthusiasm and joy! If you are excited, the children will be excited.

Going over the class rules before the class continues will focus

everyone on proper behavior and manners for a great fun and learning time. This can be done with games, songs, puzzles, role playing, and other innovative and exciting ideas.

If a child is misbehaving, warn him and review the rule that was broken. If improper behavior continues, an appropriate "time out" should be given with a reminder of the rule and a reminder that the parent will be called to get him or her if the behavior does not change. If the behavior does not change after one time out, the parent should be gotten and the situation sensitively explained to them with appropriate action to follow.

Going over the rules does not have to be boring. It can be lots of fun if you are creative. One example that we find especially fun for the

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younger children (age three through age seven), is to toss a "koosh" ball to a child in the class and have him recite one of the rules. Then the teacher tosses the ball to another child to see if he can recite another rule. As this continues, the children are having a blast and learning the rules. A "koosh" ball is a very soft, non-bouncing and harmless ball of elastics, and it usually is multi-colored.

SINGING

So much needs to be said about this aspect of our children's worship. A variety of songs need to be used and everyone should participate by knowing or rapidly learning the words, tune, and any motions which accompany the song. All teachers should be fully involved, enthusiastic, and engaging the children.

BIBLE STORY TELLING

Remember that children learn differently than adults and need

something a bit more arousing and animated. Generally, the story time consists of several different activities that reinforce the lesson objectives of the class.

One teacher—preferably the most gregarious, enthusiastic one—should sit on the floor with the children circling around. Using a Children's Bible, flannel boards, puppets, picture cut-outs or other visual aids, tell the story in a lively, energetic way. Children love to see a story as much as they love to hear it. They need both types of stimulation to comprehend the story.

Once the story is told, encourage the children to participate in a brief discussion, answering specific questions that help to apply the story. If teaching the creation story, pointing to things outside can be a great way to ask children who made the trees, flowers, animals, clouds, etc. When teaching about Jesus walking on water, asking children if they have ever walked on water or have known anyone who did will get children talking. Relate the story to current heroes that the children watch on television. The idea is to get the

children involved in the story. Many classes fail because the story is simply a Bible reading with little or no thought put into engaging the children.

Stories from the Bible come alive with a little imagination and resourcefulness on the part of the teachers. Again, preparation is the key here. Children remember as much as anything else whether the story was boring or exciting. If they are fidgety during the story, it may mean that the storyteller needs to "turn up the volume a little." Children will sit for quite a while when they are captured by a great storyteller. What is more—they really remember the story as it comes alive in their little minds because they experienced the story as much as they listened to it.

CREATIVE CRAFTS

Again, we cannot stress enough the tremendous need for good preparation, creativity and resourcefulness. The craft in curriculum relates to the lesson and acts as a reminder to the child as to what the lesson of the day was. Have a sample craft for

the children to view , and have all materials prepared before you come to class!

You will receive an immediate critique of the craft when parents come to pick up the child. If this is “show and tell” time for the child, you connected with them and helped them make something they are very proud to show. Ask yourself, “Is this a craft I would want to keep and show to the child in thirty years?” A foolproof craft is one with color, moving parts, and is 3-D. If after all the children are gone and find a large number left their craft, it is a good sign that they were not excited about it.

You should never underestimate the value of the craft in moving your class into the memory of the child. When teaching, our goal is to make a memory that they will carry with them throughout their lives. The classes our children still talk about are those in which the teachers had a great story and etched it on their minds with a fascinating craft.

CRAFTS WITH A MESSAGE

As an integral part in teaching the children, crafts help to reinforce

the Bible lesson. The craft is a very “hand-on” or physical approach that allows the child to express what he has learned from the Bible. Not only does it reinforce the lesson, but the craft makes a great memento, especially when it is excellent! It also allows the parents to understand what their children are learning in the class.

The person who helps the children create the craft is not only teaching how to make the craft, but teaching the Bible lesson as well. Talk to the children as they work on their craft to remind them of the Bible lesson and how their craft will help them to remember what they learned about God and his word that day. Ask questions while the children are working on their craft.

Working on the craft together with other children will help the children to learn godly characteristics such as:

- Sharing
- Working as a team (unity)
- Self-control
- Finishing what they begin
- Taking good care of the supplies they are using (personal responsibility)

- Respect for other and the work the other children are doing
- A proper sense of personal satisfaction for a job well done
- How to handle disappointment when the project does not turn out as planned.

All of the above help the child to build character as well as express creativity.

When you introduce the craft, explain to the children why they are making it and how it applies to the Bible lesson. For example, if the children make a prayer calendar with beautiful pictures of creation, introduce it by saying, “Today you will make a calendar that will remind you that God made a beautiful creation, and that he wants us to pray for our friends every day.”

After the children have completed their craft, ask them how it will help them to remember their lesson. Ask the children how they could use their craft to show a friend or their parents what they have learned in the Bible lesson.

LIFE APPLICATION

Be very aware that most children will need help connecting the

Bible with their everyday lives. They will need concrete examples of the lesson that help illustrate the Biblical principle. Just as with adults, this is where we teach the children how to take home the lesson in their hearts.

SNACK TIME

If most parents send snacks for their children, get their permission before giving the child anything else to eat. Keep snacks on hand for those who do not bring a snack, but avoid extremes! Do not give the children sweets unless there is some special occasion. Also, we would not encourage vegetable sticks, as most children would be less than excited. Some of the better snacks are graham crackers, animal crackers, or vanilla wafers with apple juice or water. Avoid colored drinks because they can stain clothing or carpeting permanently.

Snack time should not be a free for all. Use this time to teach and reinforce whatever center the children are in at that time. Teach the children about sharing or about how some people in the

world never have this type of snack. For older children, allow them to serve the snack or pass out cups and napkins. Always pray before the snack, focusing on being grateful to God. Again this should be as planned as any other aspect of your class.

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

This is what many children look forward to the most. The way they play with each other puts into practice the principles of being a disciple. School systems emphasize this kind of interaction in the development of children, and the younger it begins, the better it is instilled. (This is the most fun for the teachers too!)

GREAT ENDINGS

It is good to have one extra game or activity on reserve for the children to be involved in as their parents come to pick them up. In many situations it is difficult to predict the exact time the service will end. Children still need to be kept under supervision. It is the rare child who will sit quietly while the rest of the class is being dismissed.

The post-session time should relate to the

class. It may be something as simple as playing Jesus Says (Simon Says, using Jesus rather than Simon) to reinforce the principle of obedience. You may want to do a word search puzzle or crossword reviewing the previous week's class. A class treasure hunt that encourages the children to talk to each other is great for older classes.

The lead teachers should be involved in the dismissal so that they can speak to parents. It is necessary to encourage both parent and child with positive feedback about the class. If something needs to be said in critique, it should definitely be the lead teacher doing the talking. This should be done in a very private, positive way with one or two specific suggestions that give the parent direction on how to help the child change. NEVER should there be a harshness or critical spirit toward the child or parent.

EVALUATION TIME

Once the last child is dismissed, teachers should meet together to briefly go over what went well and what they

can do to make the class better. If one child is particularly difficult, this is the time to discuss how best to handle the situation next week. Use this opportunity to really fine-tune your teaching so that each week shows improvement. Evaluate your readiness, preparation, organization, enthusiasm, etc. Ask yourself honestly: Was your class memorable? Was it a blessing to the children? If not, how will you make it a memory and blessing next time? If it was, what made it such? This time is invaluable to make the class the best it can be.

CONCLUDING ENCOURAGEMENT

Finally, as you consider your responsibility as a teacher in God's kingdom, remember that according to James 3:1, those who teach will be judged more strictly. For an allotted time each week, God—along with the leaders and parents in your rotation—have entrusted their children to your care. Your leaders feel YOU have something to give to the children. You must decide to take this seriously and understand the privilege it is to be with the kingdom's children.

In describing how a class should go, we have repeated numerous times a few characteristics that make classes great. The first is **thoughtfulness** and **preparation**. Your children's class cannot be an afterthought of your weekly priorities. It must be something you pray about and give considerable time to preparing. By this we do not mean hours and hours, but you should take enough time to really consider the needs of the children and how best to meet them. There is no substitute for this! No amount of energy and enthusiasm will make up for a poorly prepared, disorganized class.

The second theme that we have tried to convey is that teaching children—much more so than teaching adults—demands **creativity, imagination and resourcefulness**. If these are weaknesses in your character, you will have the opportunity to change in great ways. If these are talents of yours, you will be able to use them in ways you never thought possible. The best teachers make the most of these abilities; the weakest teachers never quite

develop these attributes! Editors of the Kingdom Kids Curriculum have spent countless hours developing lessons that meet these criteria. They will work for any teacher who invests in a few hours of preparation each week.

In the end, you will find that teaching children is one of the most rewarding experiences in the kingdom of God. Most disciples we know who have invested their lives in blessing children through teaching in the children's ministry come away from their experience changed. They are better disciples for having given themselves to God's kids. They certainly gain a great insight into why Jesus said, "The kingdom of God belongs to such as these!"

Children's Ministry Leader Responsibilities

1. To provide a safe atmosphere for the children.
2. To select qualified, screened disciples to teach the children of the kingdom.
3. To get these disciples approved by the adult ministry leader.
4. To conduct orientation and training workshops for new teaching rotations.
5. To interview, perform reference checks, or update screening information on upcoming teachers every four months.
6. To orchestrate and oversee the new teacher rotation, observation and switch.
7. To maintain and distribute curriculum.
8. To review new facilities for safety and adequate space.
9. To make the facility as inviting to children as possible; ie, decoration, music, signs.
10. To select and train an adequate number of qualified screened disciples for security.
11. To make sure the check-in procedure is performed efficiently and a numbering system is meticulously used.
12. To follow up with the lead teacher on any absentees.
13. To make sure substitutes are well-informed and responsible.
14. To hold lead teachers accountable for their responsibilities (see "Lead Teacher").
15. To review curriculum lesson plans and hold teachers accountable for these.
16. To evaluate classes, making necessary changes.
17. To maintain all church policies, such as the "two-adult rule," teacher to child ratios, screening, etc.

18. To purchase, monitor and replace needed supplies.
19. To maintain a library of resource books, tapes, toys and unusual supplies.
20. To turn in teachers' receipts for reimbursement.
21. To deal with sensitive situations concerning a child, a parent, a teacher, or an emergency.
22. To set an example in personal walk with God, marriage, childrearing, outreach to the community, and discipling.
23. To store and distribute all curriculum lessons.

LEAD TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES

1. To maintain a safe atmosphere for the children in their class; i.e. no hot drinks, thumb tacks, pins or scissors within a child's reach, and no uncovered electrical outlets or unsecured exits for preschoolers.
2. To know emergency procedures in case of an accident.
3. To organize and lead the other teachers and children in evacuating the facility in emergency situations.
4. To be aware of any medical needs of their students.
5. To meticulously hold to the policies: i.e. two-adult rule, ratios, and children being checked in and out of class by an adult. To create a happy memory.
6. To communicate needs to the children's ministry leader.
7. To delegate responsibilities to all assistant teachers, training them to be lead teachers.
8. To focus on and connect with the children—building great relationships with children should be a key goal of teaching.

9. To have music playing at every opportunity during the class.
10. To be totally prepared before class starts, and to be on time.
11. To hold assistants accountable to being totally prepared and on time.
12. To consistently enforce the rules, and gently but firmly deal with any discipline problems.
13. To have a variety of pre-selected songs.
14. To always use an open Bible when teaching the lesson.
15. To encourage the children to bring their Bibles.
16. To encourage the children to be sharing what they learned in their class with others.
17. To instill the life application.
18. To hold to the objectives put forth in the curriculum.
19. To help the children with memory work.
20. To manage snack time.
21. To evaluate the class and make appropriate adjustments to take it higher.
22. To dress appropriately- no dirty sneakers, no T-shirts except Kids Kingdom T-shirts, etc and to hold assistants to the same standard.
23. To not allow the children to misuse supplies.
24. To communicate with substitutes what their specific role or responsibility will be. To communicate with parents with a positive, encouraging attitude. If there is a discipline problem, ONLY the lead teacher should handle the communication with the parent.
25. To divide the class so that every teacher is praying for a specific group every day.

Practicals for Great Children's Ministry

The following has been excerpted from the *Heroes* workbook published by Discipleship Publications International:

Wake up and face the facts: The world is waging a war against our children! Now that you've been chosen to teach our children, what role will you take in the battle? Are you ready to be the hero that so many children need?

A hero is defined as "one who is admired for his achievements and noble qualities" and "one who shows great courage." It does take great conviction and courage to be a real hero. You must be willing to take potshots from anyone when you have the conviction to do what is right. Even David's brothers tried to cut him

down to size for going after Goliath. But who turned out to be the hero? God is calling you to be a real hero for our children!

Working with children is not easy. It required training, study, discipline and practice. But there is no higher calling. It is not a task for the weak-willed, the lazy, the selfish or the faint-of-heart. You must be a man or woman of God who is determined to do whatever it will take to inspire the children to have faith in God, his Son and his word. You will be Jesus to the children. They will see him in your eyes, hear him in your speech, witness him by your life and ultimately, make the greatest decision in their lives to follow Jesus because you helped to draw them closer to the Father. Do you believe it?

Whose hero are you? Do you have what it takes? Do you long to hear those words, "I thank God for (your name), because he/she helped me to believe in Jesus"? Oh, what a day it will be when we see our children becoming disciples of Jesus and taking the message to others. We will be their heroes, and they will become heroes for the next generation. Praise God for heroes!

As you ponder what you have just read, ask

yourself this question: "Do I really believe that Satan is in a battle for the children?" If you don't believe

In the end, you will find that teaching children is one of the most rewarding experiences in the kingdom of God.

it, you are blind and deceived. Every day our children are disciplined by the world! Whether it comes in the form of television, radio or thirty to thirty-five hours a week at school, they are being disciplined. Every child who comes into our Bible classes comes to us having been influenced in some way by the world, and Satan is battling to pull them in all the way.

THE MIND AND HEART OF JESUS

Don't be naïve and think that having our children hang around a discipling ministry will save their souls. We have already seen casualties among the children in our movement. We must crucify the "baby-sitting

mentality" once and for all in the church! Children are as much a part of the body as are adult disciples. They need our hearts, our attention, our convictions, our love, our care and our concern. We must be in the battle for their souls! Satan hates our children, and will stop at nothing to destroy whatever godliness we try to instill in their hearts! The battle is raging, and we must be equipped with the heart to love, teach and disciple our children to Jesus. This is not only the responsibility of the parents but the responsibility of every disciple in the kingdom.

Yes, the battle begins with the heart. Having been asked to serve in the children's ministry, how do you really feel about it? Are you thankful, excited, honored, and humbled, or are you apathetic, put-out or just plain angry? Have you found yourself saying, "I can't believe I have to work with the children," or "I'm a Bible Talk Leader. Why don't they ask that brother to serve in the 4-year-old class? After all, he doesn't have any responsibilities and never brings visitors." If you've felt this way, you can still repent. You can still change and do a great job. But God help us if we don't thank him for the

privilege of serving the little ones that Jesus obviously loves so much. The heart is the key to winning or losing the battle. To win the battle for souls, whether young or old, we must have the mind and heart of Jesus.

NO HIRED HANDS NEED APPLY

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep." (John 10:11-13)

Every time you walk into a class, you will walk in either as a shepherd or as a hired hand. The shepherd cares for his flock all the time. He takes ownership. He invests himself in the well-being of his sheep. The hired hand doesn't really care for the sheep. Just trying to get his job done, he runs if the flock is attacked. We must say "no: to being hired hands when it comes to the children. They need us, and we need them. They should be on your heart during the week, and not just in class. You should pray for the children by name. Know their needs, strengths and

weaknesses. Understand that you have been entrusted with these children. Help them to believe that in Jesus they will be able to do great things!

SAFETY FIRST! (IS YOUR PROGRAM REALLY SAFE FOR THE CHILDREN?)

Sometimes we can take for granted the needs of children when securing a facility for the worship services. Hotels are great, as are many convention centers, but some of the spaces we use are not always equipped for the children's ministry. (It is important, though, that we make the best of every situation no matter how difficult it may be.)

Safety is a key issue when establishing a children's ministry. The word "safety" is defined as follows: "freedom from danger or risk" or "freedom from injury." Regardless of how incredible a class it is, if it is unsafe, parents and God will not be pleased.

Watch stairs, sharp objects, exposed heaters, barriers, electrical outlets, "climbable" desks and chairs, etc. etc. etc.! Use gates in preschool classes if you cannot close the door. Gates are actually

the best choice, even if you can close the door. Children are quick and curious. They will find a way to have fun, and that is not always safe.

Make sure the space is adequate for the number of children. Fire codes must be observed, and an emergency evacuation drill should be rehearsed every quarter or when a new building is used. Names of disciples in the congregation with medical training should be kept on file, and these people should know the church's emergency procedure. This includes any disciple with a medical or nursing degree, with CPR certification or an EMT (emergency medical technician). If no one is available with these qualifications, volunteers should be called upon to get a CPR certification. Keep a first aid kit with the children's ministry security persons. Never administer any medication!

Any adult escorting a child to the bathroom needs to be accompanied by a disciple of the same sex. Children should not be allowed to go alone or be accompanied by only another child. Children should not be left alone in the bathroom. (This is for the safety of the children

as well as for protection from accusation for the teachers.)

CHILD-PROOFING YOUR FACILITIES

As we decide on the class space to be used for the children, it is essential that we establish safety standards. Please pay attention to the following guidelines:

All doors to the classroom space must be secured. This is a simple security measure for the children and for you. If the space you are using has doorways or throughways without doors, use child-safe gates to block these openings.

If the room has no carpeting for preschoolers or no chairs for school-age children, it is suggested that you bring rugs to place on the floors. Be sure that the undersides of the rugs have a nonslip surface in order to prevent slipping and sliding. It is important that you use rugs and not blankets, sheets or comforters. The latter slip too easily and can promote injury.

Carefully check the floors for tacks, pins, staples, paper clips, broken glass and any small objects that a child could either step on or put in his mouth.

Cover any unused electrical outlets in rooms for the nursery and for smaller children. Use plastic safety covers or electrical tape to cover the unused outlets.

Block off any open heaters or radiators so that children will not be able to touch them and get burned. When fans are used in the warmer months, make sure the fans and cords are out of reach of the children.

Windows must be closed and locked in winter months. Be sure that access to the windows is blocked so that the children will not be able to get to them. If windows need to be opened, block access to them. It is also important not to use windows that are prone to slam shut and cause injury.

SAFETY TIPS FOR TEACHING PERSONNEL

Do not allow the children to run in the classroom or in any other part of the facility that you are using.

Do not allow the children to wrestle in class, nor should any teaching personnel wrestle with the children for fun.

Do not swing the children by their arms. (This is a personal favorite of most children, but a great

safety hazard nonetheless.)

Do not throw the children up in the air. (This is not a personal favorite for most children and is very dangerous.) You and/or the church may be held liable for any injuries sustained by the child.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

It is recommended that a medical professional (doctor, nurse, EMT, etc.) be on call at all times in the event of an emergency. The children's ministry leader or assistant leader should have a rotational schedule to ensure that someone is always "on call" in case of any emergency.

Although each class should be equipped with a first aid kit, the teacher and assisting personnel are limited in what they can do. Here are a few basics:

Minor cuts or scrapes: You may wash the wound or apply hydrogen peroxide to clean it; then you can cover it with a bandage.

Do not administer any medication (Tylenol, aspirin, cough and cold medicine, etc.). Wait until qualified medical personnel arrive and assess the situation. Even

at this point, it is necessary to contact the parents and have them consult with the nurse or the doctor first.

If a child has fallen, and you are concerned that he has sprained something or broken a bone, do not move him. Contact the doctor, nurse or EMT immediately.

If you are in doubt about any situation, find the qualified medical personnel immediately.

IN CASE OF FIRE!

When was the last time you considered an evacuation plan for the children in your classroom? If you are like most of the teachers in the children's ministry, you probably haven't. Well, now is the time to start. With many ministries moving from facility to facility because of availability or growth, there must be a plan provided for the safe evacuation of the children in an emergency situation in every facility. Please pay close attention to the following guidelines for evacuation in an emergency:

The children's ministry leader is responsible for formulating a plan for the protection and evacuation of all children and teaching personnel in

the event of fire, and will include alternate means of egress (exiting) for all persons involved. Each classroom that is used should be provided with a diagram that clearly designates where the nearest exits are located. This diagram should be posted either on the inside of the door exiting the room or on the wall adjacent to the door.

The children's ministry leader will make sure that all teaching personnel receive proper instructions on the evacuation procedure specified for the room or area in which they are teaching. This instruction should take place before new teaching personnel begin their teaching responsibilities.

When an alarm sounds or the teacher has been notified of an emergency situation, have the children line up in a double line at the door. The assistant teacher and the helpers will escort the children in a quiet and orderly fashion to the nearest designated exit.

The teacher is the last person to leave the room. Before leaving the room, close all windows and doors.

The teacher is responsible for escorting any physically impaired child to the nearest exit

and staying with him. If any children are in the restrooms during an emergency situation, an adult should bring them out and escort them quickly to the nearest exit.

Caution! When exiting the building, walk as far as you can away from the building, but not in the streets. This is a precautionary measure in case fire engines must pass through to get to the building.

Important note regarding infants through age two years: In case of an emergency situation, it is important that all nursery personnel understand that getting the children out of the building is the first priority! Do not grab diaper bags, toys, etc. If it is cold outside, make sure the children are bundled up in a blanket or coat. Again, do not try to grab all of the children's belongings in an emergency. Because there is usually a larger baby-to-adult ratio in the nursery, we recommend that you have an on-call nursery staff specifically for emergencies. You need to select no less than ten adults who would be on call for at least three months (they would be selected when you select your teaching personnel). In the event of an emergency, these people

would know to go directly to the nursery to help evacuate the children.

If the emergency was a false alarm and clearance to enter the building has been given, the teachers will follow the children to the appropriate doors for reentry. When entering the building, the teachers will escort the children back to the classroom. Remember: This must be done in a quiet and orderly fashion.

PRACTICE DISCIPLINE

Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. (Hebrews 12:10-11)

As we read the above passage, we realize that discipline is for our good, and that it can be painful. In a classroom setting for children, even the most organized and prepared teacher will face some discipline problems. For that reason, we will discuss discipline procedures that will seem painful at the moment, but will encourage the children as well.

The children must understand from the very beginning that they need to cooperate with you and with the other children in the class. Here is the scenario: You have already explained your

plan for the day and discussed the rules. Now, you also need to spell out the plan for discipline if the children are not willing to accept your terms in class. We will discuss step by step what we believe is effective.

If a child is blatantly disruptive, disrespectful or unwilling to participate in class, first he should be encouraged and helped to settle down. If this gentle instruction has no effect, the teacher should give him a warning to change his attitude. If he will not comply, then he can be separated from the rest of the class in a "time out" corner. A "time out" is not a threat, but simply does its work by letting the child feel separated, thus helping him to understand that his behavior is not acceptable. The purpose of a "time out" is not to punish, but to encourage repentance. Guidelines on the amount of time are as follows:

- 2-year-olds; 30 seconds to 1 minute
- 3 and 4-year-olds; 2-3 minutes
- 5-year-olds and older: 3-5 minutes

Look for the first sign of a changed attitude, and warmly encourage the child to rejoin the group. If

the child wishes to rejoin the group, he needs to say, "I'm sorry." After he has apologized, the class needs to say, "We forgive you." There should be no stigma attached to "time out." Once a child has repented and been forgiven, do not keep a record of wrongs. You may want to talk to the parents after class. But let them know that the child had a change of heart.

If a child is shy, chooses not to participate and is not disruptive, or is merely doing the right thing at the wrong time, encouragement is needed to refocus the child. This is not cause for a "time out."

"Time out" should be reserved for rebelliousness, defiance or purposeful disruption of the class. If the behavior continues and there is no sign of a change, the child should be taken out of the class and sent to the children's ministry leader. If the coordinator cannot convince the child to cooperate with the teacher, then the child must be taken to his or her parents.

COMMUNICATION

The Art of Talking to Children and Parents

Here is the scenario: You've come to the classroom, you are prepared for the day's lesson, and the children are not arriving. The first impression you make on the children, and even the parents, can determine the success of your class.

It is so important that you greet the children and parents warmly. For many children there is an insecurity in those first moments after arriving to class. It is up to you to help the children feel secure. You cannot underestimate the value of a big smile and a sincere "It's so good to see you today."

It is very hard to fake sincerity, so we suggest that you don't try it. What we do recommend, though, is that you come to class that day ready to give. We believe that the only way you can give to the children is to be close to God. It is essential that you spend quality time with God before you can come to class. Pray that you will encourage and inspire the children.

TALKING TO CHILDREN

When talking to the children, especially

younger children, it is best that you stoop down and try to talk to them at their eye level. Always introduce yourself to the new children, and then introduce them to the rest of the class. It is appropriate to have a new child sit with someone who is going to reach out to him/her. Foster friendships in the class.

Because children can come to class a little unsure and even intimidated, they may decide not to hug you when they see you. Don't be hurt if this happens. Be patient and let the child decide if he wants to be affectionate or not. Let him get used to the surroundings and warm up to the children and the adults in the class.

Respect children as you would have them respect you. Don't ruffle their hair or pinch their cheeks. How would you like someone coming up to you in church and messing up your hair or pinching your cheeks? Out of respect, don't use nicknames unless a child has specifically given you permission. In an attempt to relate to children, we try to get too familiar with the children and sometimes insult them. Be sensitive. Put yourself in the child's place.

When addressing a child in class, always call him by name. Try not to say "Hey, you" or "You in the back there" or "Yeah, you in the sweatshirt." You appreciate it when someone calls you by your name, and the children feel the same way. If you find it difficult to remember names, pray for the children by name during the week; it is amazing how this will help you to remember.

The children must understand from the very beginning that they need to cooperate with you and the other children in the class.

While correcting a child, it is important to be firm and loving, but not harsh. You need to show patience and not get frustrated. Children know when someone is frustrated with them. Frustration will bring out the worst in anybody.

The way in which you tell the children what to do is also very important. They remember what you

say and how you say it.

For example:

Rather than "Take your feet off the chair," try saying, "Feet belong on the floor, please."

Rather than "Stop talking," or "Don't talk," try saying, "Only one person talking; let's all listen."

Rather than "Jim! Will you pay attention?!" try saying, "Let's all listen together."

Try not to draw attention to any one student in class. If you need to correct a child, take him aside and discuss it privately.

In an effort to communicate successfully with the children, do not tease them or use sarcasm. Either approach is confusing and demeaning. Here are some examples: "Oh, you don't want these cookies do you" (saying this while you dangle a box of cookies over their heads); or "High five, low five, too late!" (a real favorite with the brothers, especially when they see the child getting frustrated); or "This is my snack" (said to tease the child).

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen (Ephesians 4:29)

TALKING TO THE PARENTS

If we are going to have an excellent children's ministry, we believe that having a great relationship with the parents is key. Most parents will appreciate feedback about their children's progress in class. It is our conviction that the lead teacher be the person designated to talk to the parents about the children's progress or behavior. (That is not to say that the assistant or helpers cannot encourage the parents, but for more sensitive issues, we have found it best for the teachers to talk to the parents.) The following are important points regarding communication with the parents:

Assume that all parents want to hear about their children's progress. Most parents will ask you how their children are doing, but if not, let them know anyway.

Be specific with encouragement. For example: "Elizabeth was a great helper today. She helped me to pass out the refreshments to the class." "Steven really improved this week. He raised his hand before he spoke." "Katie was a very good

listener today." "Morgan set a good example by helping another classmate with his craft."

Never use extreme words like "never," "always," "best" and "worst"! For example, you may have a child in your class whom you think is brilliant. That may be true, but keep it low profile, and do not say to the parent, "Jenna is the smartest and best child I have ever had in my class!" Imagine how that must sound to the other parents who are standing in line to pick up their children. They probably wonder what you think about their children. How do you think the other children feel when they hear you make such an incredible comment? Let's not forget that this can also make Jenna feel that she is superior to the other children.

Suppose one of the children has had a tough time in class, and you need to tell the parent. Do not say, "Robert was the worst child in class! His behavior was horrible!" First, you should not say anything like that at all. Second, you should not talk to a parent about a behavior problem within earshot of other parents or children. This would embarrass not only the parent, but the child. It is

best to pull the parents aside and explain the situation without using extremes. For example: "Robert had a difficult time obeying in class. Maybe you could help him this week to understand that he needs to follow my directions and show respect to me and the other children."

Always try to think of one encouraging thing to share with each of the parents about their children. (You can find something encouraging about each child. It may see harder with some, but you can do it.)

Talk to the parents about the day's lesson. Encourage the parents to follow up with their children that week. If you are encouraging scripture memory in the class, tell the parents what the scripture for that week will be. (Have it written down, and hand it to them.)

The most important point in communication is: Show respect to the children and to the parents. Be a good listener and learner. You will make mistakes, but be humble enough to learn from them so that you won't make them again.

GENERAL TEACHER TIPS

In all the Kingdom Kids lessons you will find a section entitled Teacher Tips. These tips are useful suggestions that help the teacher to have the best class possible. Teacher tips range from alternate ideas about how best to deliver a lesson to where to find a certain material for a craft, or suggestions on having effective communication with a child.

In writing these lessons it became apparent that there are many tips that apply not to just one specific lesson, but to every lesson. What follows are General Teacher Tips. These are ideas and suggestions that we feel will contribute to the overall success of your teaching.

Be Spiritually Focused

- Read the Lesson Text, the Biblical basis for the lesson, preferably several days before class. You may find that this will be a great quiet time idea for you.
- Make sure you have your heart and mind spiritually focused before you teach the children.
- Pray for the children in your class by name, and pray to be exactly what the children need you to be.
- Pray for the visitor's children to love the class and to want to come back with their parents, of course!

Care and Handling of the Lessons

- Unlike other curriculum, the Kingdom Kids two-year- cycle of lessons are reusable. Be careful not to misplace, or accidentally throw away any of the lesson cards.
- Be careful how you handle and store the cards; misuse may cause damage and replacement is costly.
- Do not write on the cards.

Be Prepared

- Always bring your Bible to class and a few extra Bibles for visiting children who might not have one.
- Read the entire lesson prior to class. The lesson specifies all the materials you will need and exactly what you need to prepare ahead of time.

- When teaching a Bible Story or a Scripture Study, make sure to read and practice the story ahead of time so your dialogue sounds genuine. Scripted dialogue always appears in *italic* type.
- Many activities come with step-by-step instructions. Please read these instructions ahead of time and be familiar with the steps. In some cases, as with pre-class activities, crafts and Scripture study activities, you may need to help the children with some step or answer some question they have during class. This is not the time to be reading the material for the first time.

Cautionary Statements, Notes and Emphasis Within Lessons

- In some lessons, you will find the word "IMPORTANT" followed by a cautionary statement. These statements are designed to help you think carefully about any possible safety issues related to an activity. If you have a safety concern, seek advice from your children's ministry leader before proceeding with the activity.
- In some lessons you will find the word "NOTE" followed by a statement. These notes are designed to help you quickly see information that might be significant to the lesson or activity.
- Other text within a lesson that requires special emphasis will appear in all caps.

Managing Class Time

- Lessons are designed for ninety-minute sessions. In most lessons, the activities can last up to two hours. Work with your children's ministry leader to learn how to best adapt these lessons to your class.
- Allow sufficient time for clean-up after an activity.
- Allow sufficient time for snack during class.
- Allow time to pray at the end of the class.
- Allow time to review rules and always plan for singing.

Follow All Instructions

- During an activity, follow all the instructions in the order specified. Skipping steps or failing to follow instructions completely may cause an activity to fall short or not work at all, which could set the children up for failure.

Make a Model of the Craft

- (Mostly for 2 years through 4th grade) in the case of craft activities, it is often necessary to make an example of the craft ahead of time, so the children have a model to imitate.
- Reproducible Pages are reusable and must be copied prior to use. Never cut, color, write on, or in any other way misuse an original Reproducible Page.
- When an activity calls for a number of copies for each child, we suggest making a few extra copies for the teacher, visiting children and as a back-up supply in case of mistakes.
- We also suggest making copies of all Reproducible Pages needed for the entire unit at one time. Making advance copies and storing them with the materials will help minimize costs and effort.

Materials

- We suggest a plastic tub to store the same crafts and visuals in. They are often needed at the ends of the units for review and can also be used in the future to enhance a lesson.
- The item “large writing surface” denotes any large writing surface, such as: a chalkboard in a school, a dry-erase board or chart paper. Always bring the writing utensils appropriate for the writing surface you will use.
- “White glue” refers to the kind of glue commonly used in schools and often referred to as school glue. In most activities where glue is needed, glue sticks are suitable; if not, white glue should be used.

UNDERSTANDING THE CENTER APPROACH

Adapted from Heroes, DPI

Variety is said to be the “spice of life.” This applies no less to children than to adults. Activity centers are an exciting way to teach children while giving them variety and change of activity in order to prevent boredom.

The activity center approach is excellent for less experienced teachers because it sets them up for success and makes the number of children manageable. Thus, the children are able to learn in an exciting way with far less behavior problems. Sounds almost too good to be true, doesn't it? Well, believe it; it's true!

BEFORE GOING TO THE CENTERS

Before the centers begin, the children will arrive at the designated area for registration by age group. After they have been registered, they will be escorted by an adult to a pre-class activity area. Children should have several activities to choose from, including at least one provided in the lesson. Children will do their pre-class activities until the class is ready to begin.

DIVIDING INTO CENTERS

The way this works is quite simple: Three activities centers are established. Depending on the age of your class and whether it is the core or supplement lesson, these centers may be: Bible Story, Life Application, Craft, Game, Scripture Memory or bible Skills. A large room works very well since each corner of the room can be designated for a particular center. Each center should be clearly indicated with a large colorful sign.

A teacher is assigned to each center and is responsible to prepare that center's activity. During each class session, he or she will repeat the center's activity for each group of children.

GROUPING THE CHILDREN

After pre-class, the Lead Teacher gathers the children together for a welcome, singing and review of the rules. The teacher then counts the number of children and divides by the number of centers. For example, in a class with twenty-four children and three activity centers, there will be three groups of eight children. The Lead Teacher will send a group of children to each of the

three activity centers where they will spend twenty to twenty-five minutes and then move to a different center.

In classes where children are in a combined age group, try to divide the small groups by ages. For example, in a combined 1st and 2nd Grades and 3rd and 4th Grades class try to group children of the same age together. This helps the teacher to address their different needs.

ADAPTING THE CENTER APPROACH

Although the curriculum is written for use in centers, it is easily used in a non-center approach. The whole class simply stays together and progresses through the different parts of the lesson as a group, with teacher facilitating and even taking responsibility for different parts.

Certainly, a combination of a traditional classroom approach and a center approach could be used. For example, the Bible story could be taught to the whole group and then students could have centers for the remaining part of the lesson.

There may be some situation in which the center approach as described earlier is difficult to implement. Some example of such situation and possible solutions are as follows:

Too few children to divide into groups for centers:

Solution: Plan a short transition time for the students between activities. For example, after the Bible story, remove the rug or blanket, have the students stand and stretch, and then reorganize them around the workspace where they will do their craft. You can define this area with a table and chairs or with a plastic tablecloth on the floor. At the close of that activity, let the students once again move or, for younger children, march around briefly. Then regroup for the third and final center activity. If done right, children will focus more on "what's next" and less on where they are.

Teachers who speak only one language in a class situation with children who speak two or more languages:

Solution: At least a couple of teachers can plan to trade centers in order to teach a group who speak their language. You would need to group the children by language with this approach. Also, the whole group could be kept together with teachers translating for the students who do not speak the

particular teacher's language. Instead of moving from center to center in small groups, they will all stay together. They will simply transition from activity to activity in the same order presented in the curriculum. They can also do stretching or marching to indicate they are switching to another part of the class program.

Snack: The Fourth Center?

In churches where classes number over thirty children, you may want to create a "fourth" center for snack. In this case, the Lead Teacher divides the entire group into four smaller groups and rotates them through four different centers: three lesson activity centers and a snack center. If this necessary for your class, you will have to manage your timetable to allow adequate time for all four centers.

Advantages of Centers

Behavior problems are significantly reduced in centers due to the small group setting and the adult-to-child ratio. In large classes, centers help increase children's safety by ensuring that teachers are focused on one particular group of children at all times. The twenty minute activity periods help children achieve great focus—avoiding boredom and trouble! Changing groups, seeing different teachers and having new activities at each center is exciting to the children! The result—behavior is much better. Children do not get bored in the activity centers because every minute is filled with something fun to do!

Teachers, regardless of their experience with children, can do an awesome job teaching an activity center. With the help of these lessons, any disciple who can follow directions can lead fun, age-appropriate and engaging activities for any age group.

Children's Ministry Policies

Symptoms of Molestation

Church workers and staff should be alert to the physical signs of abuse and molestation, as well as to behavioral and verbal signs that a victim may exhibit. Some of the more common signs are summarized below (Sloan, 1983).

1. Physical signs may include:
 - Lacerations and bruises
 - Nightmares
 - Irritation, pain, or injury to the genital area
 - Difficulty with urination
 - Discomfort when sitting
 - Torn or bloody underclothing
 - Venereal disease

2. Behavioral signs may include
 - Anxiety when approaching church or nursery area
 - Nervous or hostile behavior toward adults
 - Sexual self-consciousness
 - “acting out” sexual behavior
 - Withdrawal from church activities and friends

3. Verbal signs may include the following statements:

- I don't like (a particular church worker).
- (A church worker) does things to me when we're alone.
- I don't like to be alone with (a church worker).
- (A church worker) fooled around with me.

Duty to Report

Any person or institution who has cause to suspect child abuse or neglect or that a child has died as a result of either, must report the case to the Director of the Department of Social Services in the county where the child resides. This can be done by telephone or in writing.*

**If the report is made by telephone, the reporting individual must give his name, address, and telephone number.*

Information that should be included in the report:

1. Name and address of child
2. Name and address of parents, guardians, custodian or caretaker
3. Age of child
4. Names and ages of any other children in the home
5. Whereabouts of the child
6. Extent of abuses or neglect
7. Any other information the reporting individual believes is important.

Child Abuse

North Carolina defines child abuse very broadly. Child abuse occurs when a parent, guardian, custodian or caretaker* allows any of the following conditions to exist with a child under the age of 18 years:

1. Physical abuse-serious physical injury by any means other than accidental.
2. Risk of serious physical injury by any means other than accidental.
3. The use of grossly inappropriate behavior to discipline a child.
4. Sexual abuse-any of the following activities regardless of the age of the party committing the act:
 - Rape
 - Statutory rape
 - Molestation
 - Indecent liberties
 - Incest

- Oral sex
 - Pornography
 - Sexual exploitation
 - Sexual harassment
 - Obscenity
 - Prostitution
5. Severe emotional damage resulting in severe anxiety, depression, withdrawal or aggressive behavior in the child.
 6. Encourage the child to commit delinquent acts involving moral turpitude (vileness).

**All of our teachers in our children's ministry and teen ministry qualify as caretakers in North Carolina.*

Child Neglect

North Carolina also defines child neglect* very broadly. Child neglect occurs when a parent, guardian, custodian or caretaker allows the following conditions to exist with a child under the age of 18 years:

1. Not receiving the proper care, supervision, or discipline.
2. Abandonment
3. Not receiving proper remedial care
4. Not receiving necessary medical care.
5. Keeping a child in an injurious environment.

**In determining whether a child is neglected, the state will consider whether the child lives in a home where another child has died as a result of abuse or neglect, or where another child is subjected to sexual or severe physical abuse by an adult who regularly lives in the home.*

Policy for Reporting

If child abuse or neglect occurs or is suspected:

Steps 1 through 4 should occur within 24 hours of the incident:

1. Report incident to Lead Teacher
2. Lead Teacher should report to Regional Coordinator.
3. Regional Coordinator should report to the Director of the Children's Ministry or Teen Ministry.
4. Director of Children's Ministry or Teen Ministry prepares a written report of the abuse or neglect or suspected acts.
5. All documented incidents should be brought to the attention of the Lead Evangelist or designated staff member within 48 hours of the incident.
6. The Lead Evangelist or designated staff member shall investigate the incident. The investigation should include an interview with the victim and worker and review of the worker's file.
7. The Lead Evangelist should notify the alleged victim's family.
8. The Lead Evangelist or Director of Children's Ministry or Teen Ministry should report all incidences of abuse or neglect to the Director of the Department of Social Services.
9. Any Children's Ministry or Teen Ministry worker who has been accused of child abuse or neglect shall be temporarily suspended until further investigation has been completed and the worker has been exonerated.

Kingdom Guidelines

1. During the course of the children's worship service, children are to be continually under the supervision of a **minimum of two adults**.
2. Selection of adult teachers for the children's ministry is to be made from volunteers only. Members selected **MUST** be at least 18 years old and a member in good standing of the Fayetteville Church. Additionally, any member desiring to serve as a teacher or assistant must have been a member (move-in and/or new convert) of the church for at least six months prior to service in the program. All children ministry workers will be screened and must give consent for a potential background check.
3. Teachers volunteering to serve in the children's ministry are expected to serve for a minimum of four month commitment to the program.
4. No improper or offensive physical contact with the children is permitted.
5. The children's ministry is to be conducted with doors to the classrooms open. When two or more separate classrooms are used for the children's worship program, in addition to the teachers, a supervisor will oversee and monitor the children's service.

The Fayetteville Church's Substitute Policy

Purpose: Our goal and mission in the Children's ministry before our Lord as commanded is to train our children excellently in the instruction of the Lord. (Deut 6:1-9)

Teachers who are unable to teach because of special circumstances should fulfill their duties to God by having a substitute assigned so that their responsibilities remain intact.

Procedure:

- a. **PLEASE** make every attempt not to accept other responsibilities that would conflict with your teaching responsibilities.
 1. Any teacher who must miss any Sunday(s) during the rotation **MUST** notify the Rotation Leaders/Supervisors **AS SOON AS POSSIBLE**.
 2. The Rotation Leader will arrange with someone to substitute for you on that particular day.

3. Once the Rotation Leader arranges a substitute for your class you will be specifically notified of the name of your replacement.
4. It is **THEN YOUR RESPONSIBILITY** to coordinate with the substitute for specific class preparation. (Please prepare them thoroughly)
5. Please handle leave/vacation time in the above fashion and plan accordingly and as early as possible to facilitate our mission.
6. The Rotation Leaders will keep a rotating list of the substitute teacher's rotation and rotate them accordingly. An attempt will be made to distribute the workload as evenly as possible. The Rotation Leader will make every effort to inform the Substitutes on the rotation as to when they are on call for any sudden morning changes. Please be understanding if you are called as a Substitute at the last minute.

b. **Preparation is very important**

1. Substitutes should feel very prepared and comfortable when filling in for a teacher.
2. Tasks should be completed and explained in full to the substitute teacher.
3. Craft and Story Lead teachers should have every detail completed and covered. (The Craft is thought out and prepared; props/costumes are ready...etc)
4. Last minute preparation **for the class is not the standard.**

SUPPLY PROCEDURES

INTRODUCTION

A tremendous effort has gone into the planning and preparation of the Kid's Kingdom Curriculum. To support this effort The Fayetteville Church is providing you with all the supplies you will need to be successful. In this endeavor, as with any other undertaken by the Church, the only way we can be successful is if each member of the body does its part. It is our goal to provide you with a system and methodology that will allow you to keep well supplied with minimal effort.

LEAD TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES

Your focus with regard to supplies must be preparation and responsibility. You must take personal responsibility for the care, safe keeping and ordering of all Children's Ministry supplies. Gone are the days of blindly handing your supply bin to someone and just going on your way. As your leaders, we take full responsibility for not focusing our attention on this issue, but we are prayerfully and faithfully addressing it now.

Lead Teacher Responsibilities:

1. To protect and safeguard your supply bin and all materials contained within.
2. Know the location of your bin at all times.
3. Keep the bin supplied and re-supply as needed.
4. Inventory the bin before acceptance from the Children's Ministry Leaders.
5. Inventory the bin before and after it leaves your possession for special events, in other words if you give the bin to someone, make sure you get it back with all your supplies.
6. In the event of your absence, coordinate the exchange and return of the bin with your replacement.

As the lead teacher you may want to delegate supply ordering to your assistant to help off-load some of your work. Please remember you are still responsible for the bin and making sure you have the supplies you need.

Children's Ministry Dress Code- An expectation of a neat appearing, well groomed Children's Ministry Worker is the standard.

(general recommendations)

Men:

1. Collar Shirts
2. No Tee Shirts, except Kid's Kingdom
3. Pants – no shorts
4. No jacket required
5. Please wear name tags

Women:

1. No Tee Shirts, except Kid's Kingdom
2. No shorts

3. "Skorts" (part shorts and part skirt) are OK
4. Please wear name tags

Child Retrieval Policy

To ensure the safety of our children you must remember to pick up your child with the tag given you. One thing to remember:

1. The parent or an adult who signs a child into class must also sign their child out of class.

Our children will be safe and happy if we all cooperate with these guidelines.

Infection Control

During the year, children may have a cold or other illness that makes them infectious. Listed below are guidelines for identifying these children. If a child has any of these symptoms 24 hours before church they should not attend Sunday school class.

- Fever
- Nausea and vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Green or yellow runny nose
- Continuous cough
- Unexplained rash (except diaper rash)
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye) unless treatment has begun 24 hours before church

As a teacher you inform parents of these guidelines and remind them when necessary

Discipline, Biting and More

Biting, hitting, and/or scratching will not be tolerated. Should one of these occur in the classes from 10 months through 2 years old, the following steps should be taken:

1. If no injury, parents may be summoned at the lead teacher's and supervisor's discretion.
2. If an injury occurs, parents will be summoned and an incident report filed.

For 3 years and older, the child will be removed from class by the supervisor and parents will be summoned. If the behavior continues repeatedly, the coordinator, teacher and parent will work out a solution.

If a child is blatantly disruptive, disrespectful, or unwilling to participate in class, the following steps should be taken:

1. He or she should be encouraged and helped to settle down.

2. If the child's attitude does not change, he or she will be placed in a classroom chair separate from the others for Time Out; 1 minute per year of age.
3. If the child changes his/her attitude, they return to the group;
4. If the behavior continues, the child should be removed from class and taken to one of the supervisors.

MEDICATION POLICY

Any medication scheduled to be taken during service **MUST** be given by the parent/guardian. **NO CHILD** can bring medicine of any kind into the classroom to take on their own.

BOTTLE WARMING POLICY

Baby bottles are not to be warmed by the nursery teachers. This needs to be done by the parent/guardian at the time the child is signed into class.

CLEAN UP POLICY

Teachers are responsible for cleaning up their classrooms after classes have ended. For those who use the building, this includes vacuuming the room, wiping out all snack trays and pitchers and placing them where they belong in the kitchen, as well as putting away and unused food items. Likewise, all toys and supplies must be returned to their proper storage area. This must be done even if another region is using the building immediately after your service. Also, all trash must be bagged and taken to the kitchen after class, especially soiled baby diapers.

To ensure the safety of our children, please follow these guidelines.

For a Future Generation

by Gordon Ferguson

"We will not hide them from our children, but must tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders he has done." Psalm 78:4

In the spring of 1995 at the World Sector Leaders meeting in San Diego, God put it on Steve Johnson's heart to make a plea for the Kingdom to develop its own curriculum for children. Through the years we have used materials from other sources, supplementing and adjusting as we saw fit. While most of these materials have offered a sound base for our ministries, they have clearly lacked the emphasis on discipleship, world evangelism and the news of God's modern-day workings among his people. The driving force behind this curriculum would be the desire to speak to these issues and to prepare our growing number of children to become true disciples.

The WSLs made the decision that we should take on the mission of producing our own curriculum, and Kip asked me to be the overseer of the effort. Since DPI already had in place the needed elements to edit and publish the material, we have worked through them to pull together the efforts of thirteen churches (more than 400 individuals) throughout the Kingdom to bring about this project.

Thousands of hours went into the preliminary meetings to establish the "scope and sequence" of curriculum for two-year-olds through preteens, Sunday and midweek, for eight quarters. Children's ministry leaders from many churches have spent countless hours to make sure that these lessons help our children develop a fundamental, vivid and practical knowledge of the Scriptures and a personal faith in God. A biblical advisory committee has reviewed each lesson to assure that the material is biblically sound. Many others have added their educational experience and expertise to make these lessons age-appropriate, fun and life-changing—not only for the children, but also for the teachers! The Kingdom Kids Curriculum will help any disciple teach any lesson—regardless of previous experience with children.

The task has been daunting (we had our Sanballats in the curriculum-publishing circles of the world who said it could not be done), but through God it has been "doable." This fall, Quarter1 of the Kingdom Kid Curriculum will be delivered to all English-speaking churches. To God be the glory!!

The Fayetteville Church

Kid's Kingdom Train-Up and Policy Manuel Verification:

I certify that I have been formally trained at the Kid's Kingdom Workshop on _____(date). I have received, read and understand the policies and procedures outlined in the Kid's Kingdom Children's Ministry Train -Up Manuel used by the Fayetteville Church.

Printed Name

Signature

Date

(please turn this in to the Children's ministry leader for record. THANK YOU FOR SERVING!)