



Ministry to Children

by Gary R. Allen

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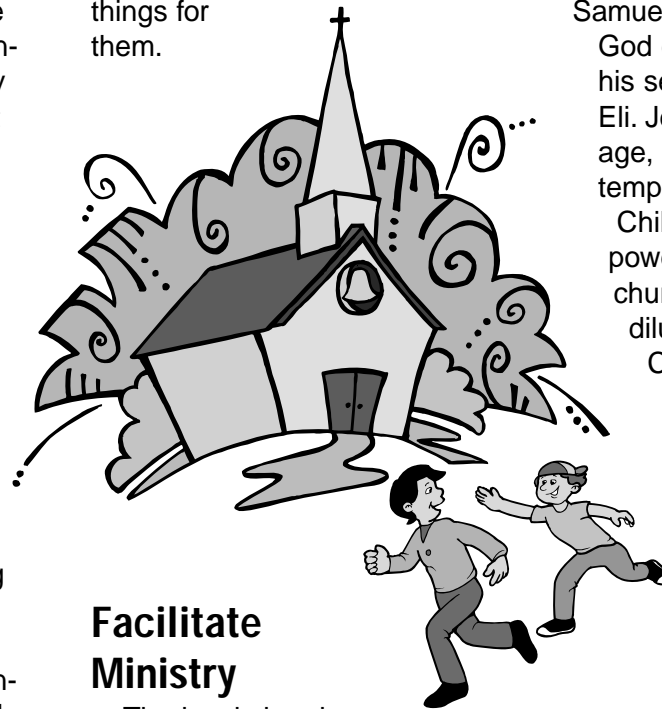
During my years of pastoral ministry, I experienced the blessing and fulfillment of effective ministry to children. Working with young couples as they nurtured their newborn children, sharing with them in dedicating their children, watching their children through the early years of learning, and seeing these children develop into young adults was an awesome responsibility but also a tremendous reward. The responsibility for raising children is a joy that is to be shared by the entire local community of faith. When we see the children of our church as *our* children, they become our spiritual responsibility.

So much of what is directed toward children outside of the church appears to be the latest and the greatest. For the church, it is not about the biggest and the best, but using the best materials and equipment feasible. Outdated resources and methods will hinder the ability to assimilate children into the church and effectively present the gospel to them.

Reaching Children = Evangelizing Families

Reaching the children of your

community is still one of the best means of evangelizing families. When and where the kids want to go is usually where the parents take them. Make your church a place to which kids love to come. It should be where their friends are and where they have some of the best social activities of life. If not, the world will provide these things for them.



Facilitate Ministry

The local church needs to facilitate ministry to children. Ministry to children needs to be appropriate to a child's spiritual and emotional maturity. Mentoring must begin in the early years, teaching them to pray and be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit and the

possible call of God on their lives. Children can learn to be accountable to adult leadership and to their peers for their actions and attitudes. They can learn to pray for and with their peers for salvation and Holy Spirit baptism.

Children can have effective ministry as God anoints and uses them in His kingdom. Samuel was just a child when God called him, and he began his service in the temple with Eli. Jesus, at twelve years of age, was interacting with the temple leaders in Jerusalem. Children's ministry must be powerful and exciting. The church, however, must never dilute the gospel or minimize Christian values. We must give children the opportunity to experience the transforming power of Jesus Christ in their lives.

Questions for Further Study—

1. Why is the spiritual growth of children in a church the responsibility of the entire congregation?
2. In ministry to children, why is it important to use the best materials and equipment available?
3. Why is ministry to children important in evangelizing families?
4. In what ways can you better facilitate ministry to children in your church?

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