



CONNECT KIDS PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY

Our theology of Children's ministry is derived from and directly tied to Scripture. Our philosophy of Children's ministry is an attempt to enumerate conclusions drawn from our theology, that will in turn inform our methodology of Children's ministry.

Our theological commitment that all ministry in the church has a specific purpose: discipleship and equipping, means that our philosophy will be in those directions. Basically, this means that no ministry exists in and of itself, nor does it exist for its own sake – there is a reason and purpose for each ministry. Children's Ministry does not exist because of a cultural demand, it does not exist because parents have need of a children's ministry, it does not exist because kids need something fun to do during Sunday service. Children's ministry exists to disciple our children, and to equip parents to disciple them as well, this for God's glory and our joy.

Based on our theological commitments, Children's Ministry exists to prepare and train children to be lifelong followers of Christ, trusting in his atoning sacrifice, serving in the church faithfully, and eagerly evangelizing the people the Lord has put around them. Our faithful work in Children's Ministry is preparing and laying a foundation for work that is yet to come. We are building children into Christ, into their parents and into the church. Therefore, our Children's Ministry should be Christ-centered, parent involved, and church based.

Build them into Christ (Connect them to Christ)

Since ministry is not divorced from the church, but a part of the church, the emphases and goals of a ministry should be derived from the church and applied to the particular context. There is no higher or pressing matter than to preach the Gospel to our children and build them into Christ. The Gospel is our central message of salvation (Romans 1:16) and the motive for all we do (2 Corinthians 5).

The preaching of God's word should hold a central place in any ministry of our church. The understanding of who God is and what he has done has been preserved through the Scriptures, therefore the teaching of Scripture is necessary for understanding life in the Kingdom. The Word should take center stage in all that we use to form our children's world view. Building children into Christ, must include building them into his Word. That is the first commitment to our philosophy of children's ministry.

Build them into their parents (Connect them to their parents)

While our children are young, and under the authority of their parents, we need not waste that authority or abdicate it to something that will teach them (iPads, computers, televisions, etc.). Our culture is driving kids at a younger age than ever before to independence, this includes in the area of instruction, where You Tube and the like can be a stand in for a parent that should be teaching. The habits we develop early in life are likely to be lifelong patterns. Therefore, parents should be the primary teachers, both at home and in the church.

The building of children into their parents is vital to the growth and health of the child later in life. When the authority of a parent is seen as teaching something that is important, the influence of the parent is built up. Later in life, as the child matures, the authority will naturally diminish, while the influence will commensurately increase.

During different phases of the child's life, depending on the mix of the authority/influence, as a ministry we seek to build them into their parents. This means equipping parents to be involved in the ministry (either by teaching or by helping). This not only shows the child how important this is to mom and dad, but it gives the parent a good gauge of where their child is spiritually. We would further seek to create or find and equip parents with as many resources as possible to evangelize and disciple their children at home, thereby creating Gospel overlap with the church and home. This would give one the greatest exposure to the truth of who Jesus is and what he has done for us.

Build them into the church (Connect them to the church)

Once again, parents bear the primary privilege of parenting their children; however, there is a day coming when they will grow up and become adults. When that happens, we want them to be ready to be fully productive members of a Gospel centered/preaching church. While the parents' authority and influence diminishes, we want them to be ready to submit to their elders and church leaders as is appropriate in Scripture. All efforts poured out in children's ministry will be aiming at this eventual goal.

While pastoral responsibility for these children will not be as simple as a switch being flipped when the parental responsibility is turned off, it should be clear from our theology above that pastors do bear some burden for the young ones in the church. Ideally, there would be some sort of overlap in pastoral authority/influence with the parental authority/influence.

Pastors bear a primary responsibility for the parents in the church, while parents have a primary responsibility for the children. Pastors are indirectly responsibility for the children in the church. As the child ages, that responsibility and influence deepen and broaden. At some time in the future, with the right mix of age and godly maturity, the child will come under the full responsibility of the pastor, while still being under the influence of a godly parent. This is ultimately our goal, even in children's ministry.¹

¹ Full document which contains the theological underpinnings of this philosophy of ministry is available on request. Please contact Vince at vince@crossofgrace.net for the document.