

Colorado: Gateway to family ministry

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I love working with kids. I have been doing it ever since I aged over the threshold of being a kid myself. In the past, however, I've always thought of children's church and Vacation Bible School as lots of fun but not super important. That's why they let the volunteers and teenagers work it, right? Somewhere in my church life, I got the idea that children's ministry is on the back burner, and all the focus should be on adults and youth.

I have been terribly wrong.

Since I have been in Colorado, I have spent a lot of time at children's church, sports camps and block parties. While entertaining games and activities are important, it is the people called to children's ministry who are vital in sharing God's word with these kids. I know the words "called to" are intimidating, but that's actually how it is. Whether it is your full-time job or you volunteer once a month, God has called you to play a significant role in influencing his children to follow him.



One thing I have learned this year is how important it is that kids see familiar faces and have a routine ministry experience, just like the adults.

"Wait, are you teaching this week? Yay! Miss Gracie is teaching this week!" Those words made me so happy multiple times this summer. Children want

to see you today, and they want to see you again next time.

Sunday school is probably the most chaotic time of the week. Kids are not using their inside voices, we can't find the glue, and someone needs to go potty. It's easy to get lost in the busyness, but those few minutes of learning about God's word and praying together go a long way. I like asking kids after church what they learned about, and I've found that they actually listen.

Most of the time, we get told exactly what to do in children's ministry—read this story, sing this song, etc. But as a leader, you still have the responsibility to let the Holy Spirit guide that time. One of my favorite moments this summer was when the Sunday school teacher decided to do an interactive gospel presentation before doing whatever the curriculum guided us to do. Do you think the kids remember the video that they usually see, or the new fun activity? The classroom was absolutely chaotic, but they definitely learned something new about Jesus and his saving grace.

Through talking with our supervisors and pastors, my partner and I have learned about the church and the demographics of the population here. They told us families with young children are the most likely to reconnect with the church. This means the kids get to come, but their parents who have disconnected are coming back, too.

At some time or another, parents are faced with questions they do not know how to answer. This curiosity—along with their child's need to share experiences with their parents—has led many families back to church. If we make children's ministry as crucial to the church as it is to the kids, we extend that importance to the rest of the family as well.

I think that puts it into perspective. Children's ministry is an integral part of the church as well as the gateway to family ministry.

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