



KidsNewsZone

TELL A CHILD, TELL THE WORLD

Ministry to Postmodern Children in the 21st Century

Children do not keep good news to themselves. They are great salesmen. Before you know it, they are telling their friends and neighbors as well as their parents. Pretty soon your room is filled to capacity with curious children who want a share of that interesting story. What a wonderful sharing mechanism!

Yes, if you tell a child, you'll tell the whole world. This calls for more urgency to strengthen and enlarge our ministry to children so that they can impact the world around them. However, for the last several years children's leaders everywhere have been talking about the need to adapt and change our ways of working with this *postmodern* generation. So who are these postmodern kids? How are they different from the previous generation? Ministering to them may require that we understand their worldview or we will not be effective in telling them the good news of salvation.

Children who are currently in our churches are called the Millennial Generation or Postmodern kids. They are children born between 1980 and 2001. Postmoderns believe that reality or truth is always subjective. It grows out of one's perspective and life experiences. What is true for one community is not necessarily true for another. Hence, there is no common standard to measure or judge other's beliefs, behavior, or values. Postmoderns also believe that reason is not the only way to discover truth. Emotions, intuition, and other modes are valid as well.

Postmodern children are cyberliterate and technology dependent and are able to multitask. They value freedom of choice and are tolerant of differing opinions, cultures and lifestyles. They are experience-oriented,

"I want to try it," and hence they want to experience God, not just learn about God. As for authority figures, they do not trust them, but they do want people to be authentic with them and are honest.



With a whole new generation of children who will not value the same things we value, how are we to pass on our faith to them and help them find God and eventually be a pillar in the faith community? Lawrence Richards, author of *Theology of Children's Ministry* said, "God surrounded children with adults both in the family and the community of faith to guide, teach, and model life for them. . . No child can truly come to know God without the influence of caring, godly adults in his/her life."

Ivy Beckwith, an experienced children's minister, suggested the following ideas:

- Develop family and intergenerational worship
- Worship effectively with preschoolers
- Create meaningful service projects for children and family
- Build positive peer communities
- Share God's story through art, music, ritual, or written and verbal narratives.
- Engage children as full participants in the faith community

Remember, the spiritual growth of children is never about how many programs a church has or even about the quality of those programs. It's about the attitudes and quality of the people the children interact with and the overall spiritual and relational quality of the community of faith. Let's learn how to care for today's children so that they can find a loving God and are excited to tell the world.



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**CHILDREN'S
MINISTRIES**

MISSION:
To nurture
children into a
loving, serving
relationship
with Jesus.