

CHAPTER 8: PULPIT TO PRESCHOOL (AND PUBERTY TOO)

SUMMARY

Sadly, even in churches where the gospel is heralded as the essential message of the Christian faith from the pulpit, children and students are often pummeled with curriculum designed for behavioral modification rather than gospel transformation. It is foolish to feast on the life-giving gospel in one area of the church while using a placebo in another. Quite frankly, children and student ministries are often a wasteland for well-intentioned morality training.

If gospel transformation is the banner of our ministry to adults, then it should be for our children as well. Regardless of age, what people need is Jesus. Our goal for children and student ministry is not conformity to a moral law, but gospel invasion.

AUDIT

Individual

- 1. Do you believe that the Lord can and does save children at a young age? Do you believe that the children and students in your ministry can begin to understand God?**
- 2. Do you believe adult ministry is more important than ministry to children and students? If so, why? If not, why not? How do the Scriptures inform this belief?**
- 3. How does your belief about the nature of man and sin inform the way you view the children and students in your church? How does it shape the way you handle the Scriptures? How does it impact the way you lead volunteers?**

4. Do you believe your children and student ministries teach the gospel or behavior modification?

Group

1. How does your theology inform your philosophy and practice when it comes to children's ministries?
2. How have you treated children's ministries like child care?
3. Do your children's ministries emphasize behavior modification over the gospel? How does this affect your curriculum?
4. Do you seek to shelter children from the world or prepare them to deal with the world?
5. What standards, roles and expectations have you set for those who teach children and students?
6. Do your children and students feel that they are a part of the larger family of believers or just members of children's church or a youth group?

RENEWAL

Group

1. Evaluate the curriculum you are using in your children's ministries. Is it centered on the gospel?

2. Do you need to reevaluate your curriculum? How can you begin this process?
3. What do you hope your children and students walk away with each week? How can you make that a reality?
4. What training do your volunteers need in order to embody and articulate the gospel?
5. How can you alter the event calendar for children and students to center more on the gospel?
6. How can you cultivate true gospel-centered community among students?
7. How can you better put the gospel at the center of your ministries for children and students?

PRAYER

Father, help us to keep the gospel at the center of all that we do, especially when it comes to our ministries for children and students. Help us to not neglect the hearts of our children but to shepherd them well. Grant us grace. Find us obedient. Amen.