

WHAT MATTERS **NOW** IN CHILDREN'S MINISTRY EARLY CHILDHOOD EDITION

21 Perspectives on Influencing Faith from Birth to Age 4

JILL CREW, AMY DOLAN, MATT GUEVARA, HENRY ZONIO & FRIENDS



CONTENTS

04	INTRODUCTION	
06	APPLICATION	CLAYTONHURST
08	ASSUME	SUSANHUGHES
10	ATTACHMENT	PAULINENG
12	AWE	BARBARAGRAVES
14	EPIC	MATTGUEVARA
16	FAMILY	CASSBRANNAN
18	FOUNDATION	WAYNESTOCKS
20	INCLUSIVE	NOELGUEVARA
22	INTENTIONALITY	RHONDA HASLETT
24	MISSIONAL	JESSE SMITH
26	MORE	ANDY HAYBALL
28	OPENNESS	AMYDOLAN
30	PARTNERSHIPS	LORIBETHRAN
32	PRESENCE	DAVECSINOS
34	RELATIONSHIPS	BRIANNEFRIBERG
36	RHYTHM	MELISSAWIRE
38	SPACE	HENRYZONIO
40	SPONGE	JENNY WULBECKER
42	TRUTH	JENNYFUNDERBURKE
44	VALIDATION	JILLCREW
46	WHOLEHEARTED	KATHYMORRISSEY

INTRODUCTION

Jill and I have a passion for early childhood formation in the church. Jill currently serves as an Early Childhood Director, and I first began as an Age 4/5 Teacher and Curriculum Writer at Willow Creek Church. We deeply believe in the power of young children experiencing, knowing, and worshipping God. It has been our joy to watch the littlest children learn Bible stories, pray to God, and follow Jesus with their whole hearts.

We believe that in the first four years of a child's life spiritual formation is critical and foundational. During this time children form their opinions about God, the world, and themselves. As church leaders, we have an amazing privilege to inspire, educate and influence faith in the hearts, minds and spirits of young children.

Recently, we learned that we are not alone.

We discovered many kidmin leaders were interested in answering the question, "What Matters Now in Early Childhood Ministry?" It wasn't long before we had 21 early childhood professionals to answer this important question. We've collected their answers in this book. We hope their thoughts will inspire deep faith and passion in your own spirit.

It is our desire to begin a larger conversation in the kidmin community about the potential of early childhood ministry. What if it mattered more?

There is hidden potential in early childhood that is waiting to be unleashed. And it will revolutionize your ministry.

May this short collection energize our work, and commit us to a lifetime of inspiring faith.

For the youngest of these,

AMY DOLAN & JILL CREW

October, 2011

WHAT MATTERS NOW RESOURCES

In May 2010, thirty-three children's and family ministry leaders answered the question "What Matters Now in Children's Ministry?" Their answers formed a timely resource for our field because more than three thousand people from seventeen nations downloaded the collaborative ebook, which can still be found for free at cmwhatmatters.com

Following the ebook, a Video Edition Resource was created. 15 contributors answered the question "What Matters Now in Children's Ministry" creating a video resource that's ideal for volunteer or staff training. The entire video set can be downloaded for free at cmwhatmatters.com

What Matters Now is a collaborative conversation. We encourage you to contact the contributors and continue the conversation. You can also join the online conversation at blog.cmwhatmatters.com

We are proud to present these resources to you. It was made possible by the generous contributions of leaders who care about you and who really enjoy networking, laughing, and exploring the best ways to help kids meet Jesus and become more like Him.

MATT GUEVARA & HENRY ZONIO

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APPLICATION



While on the way to church, Aubree hit her elbow causing her to scream like there was no tomorrow. When her father responded to her crying, Aubree tearfully said, “Dad, pray for my arm and make the pain go away!” Just a week earlier, Aubree’s teacher had made it really clear that when we need comfort all we need to do is pray and ask God for help. At the age of 2, Aubree knew that if she was in pain she just needed to pray.

When young children leave our classrooms on Sunday, they should leave with the ability to put into action what they have learned. They need an easy-to-understand, life-giving principle they can apply to their lives. Doing so, will make what we teach more understandable than just hearing a lesson.

Taking a Bible lesson and applying it to life is an incredible feat for a young child. It’s changed Aubree’s life. I should know because I’m her father!

CLAYTON HURST

Clayton Hurst is the Children’s and Family Ministry Pastor at Lakewood Church (lakewood.cc/kidslife). The Kidslife Children’s Ministry of Lakewood Church ministers to over 4000 children and empowers more than 1000 volunteers every week to be all God has called them to be.

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ASSUME



SUSAN HUGHES

Susan Hughes is PCC Kids Director at Powhatan Community Church in VA and also married to the Senior Pastor, Brian. They have three awesome children ages 21, 16, and 10. Susan loves learning from and connecting with other kidmin lovers so look her up on Facebook or Twitter.

In order to partner with parents and help foster faith in children, I believe we must assume that EVERYTHING matters:

- The way parents are greeted: Did leaders smile at the parent? Was the door opened for the parents?
- The way children are greeted: Did leaders acknowledge the children? Did they smile at her?
- The physical environment: Is it neat and clean? Are there signs telling families where to go?
- The first thing a family sees or hears: Do they hear fun music or grumpy volunteers? Are there giggling voices or crying? Do parents see an up-to-date bulletin board?
- The last thing the families see or hear: Did leaders say goodbye or thank the parent for bringing the child?
- Communication with parents beyond weekend services: Are there spelling errors on communication pieces? Was information sent in a timely manner?

I believe it all matters. I have been to hotels, restaurants, and even churches where signs are falling down, rooms are not clean, or people are unfriendly. Parents will rarely thank you for paying attention to the little details, but they will notice when something is not in line. I want parents to know we are passionate about making a good impression and are passionate about ministering to their kids. Details matter!

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ATTACHMENT



What comes to your mind when you think of attachment? Separation anxiety? A chewed-up pacifier? A favorite blankie? The word “attachment” refers to what one cannot happily live without. So, what does attachment have to do with early childhood ministry?

Our children attach emotional feelings & memories to their experiences while in our care. Additionally, they will form friendships and emotional attachments to us. How, then, do we help them develop a healthy attachment to God from a young age?

We do this through our interactions with them: engaging in playtime together, leading in praise and worship, and comforting them in their distress. It is through these experiences that children learn to recognize God’s love in action. This forms the building blocks from which little beginnings of a healthy bond with God can be.

I have personally witnessed little pre-schoolers talking to God like a trusted confidante. I look forward to seeing more of this!

PAULINE NG

Pauline Ng is currently the Early Childhood Pastor at Hillsong Church’s City Campus. She has been involved in transitioning the children’s ministry into what it is now called Hillsong kids.

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AWE



What matters now in preschool ministry is AWE. Preschoolers need an overwhelming sense of awe in regard to their God who is the Creator of their world and everything in it.

Starting at birth, long before they can even understand the words, we tell these little ones that God loves them. In the life of a 4-year-old, that just puts God on the same level with Mom, Dad, Nana, Papa and their daycare teacher. God becomes just one more person in a line of those who love that child.

We must help children grasp the concept that God is amazingly wonderful, powerful beyond any measure, rich beyond our imagination and caring beyond our comprehension. If we can help them grasp God's boundless domain and His infinite kindness, then we can inspire the AWE that our omnipotent Father is due. If we purpose to have our ministries continually point back to the awesomeness of God, that awe will grow in our preschoolers hearts and minds at an early age. With that comes the true joy and lasting wonder of being loved by their Heavenly Father.

BARBARA GRAVES

Barbara is the children's pastor of Momentum Church in Woodstock, Georgia. She loves coffee, tweeting, reading real books, and driving just a little too fast.

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EPIC



MATT GUEVARA

Matt Guevara is a pastor and kidmin thought leader who loves to tell stories for 3-5 year old large group.

John 13 is an epic story. Jesus does something his students do not expect. He rises from the Passover table, takes off his outer cloak, grabs a bucket and fills it with water so he can wash the disciples' dusty feet. In a complete role reversal, the master becomes a servant; the Lamb of God becomes a muddy slave. Even for those who have heard it already, this is an epic story!

You and I have an epic story to tell. When it comes to the youngest children we have the privilege of serving, these stories--the Story--matter most.

Story is an educational medium. Video games and television entertain; stories teach. Toys and gimmicks distract; stories focus. A puppet might keep a child's attention; God's Story captures their heart and renews their mind.

We must share powerful, visual, compelling, and authentic stories of how we have become part of the story God is telling and how kids can play their own part in that story. As we take that unscripted, bold risk we will see the lives of young children swept up in God's grand narrative. They will be changed by the Author of salvation's masterpiece.

That's epic.

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FAMILY



Every one of them looks different. They come in all shapes and sizes. Some are filled with love, while others are desperate for it. While each family is unique, each one is incredibly important in the life of a preschooler.

God is, and has been, using the family to do amazing things throughout history. The family sets an incredible foundation for so many things in the life of a preschooler. It is essential to make the most of every opportunity that you have to love, teach, and laugh as a family because once this time is gone, you cannot get it back. The family needs to be the place where preschoolers get their first look at the power of love, the comfort of security, the blessings of grace, and the strength of forgiveness. The role of the family is important, essential, and can be the biggest blessing in a preschooler's life.

CASS BRANNAN

Cass is a husband, daddy, and a preschool minister at Calvary Tuscaloosa. Cass is a graduate of Georgia Southern University and Southeastern Seminary and is passionate about preschoolers and families, and partnering then with the church. Cass lives in Northport, Alabama, and loves spending time with his wife and three boys!

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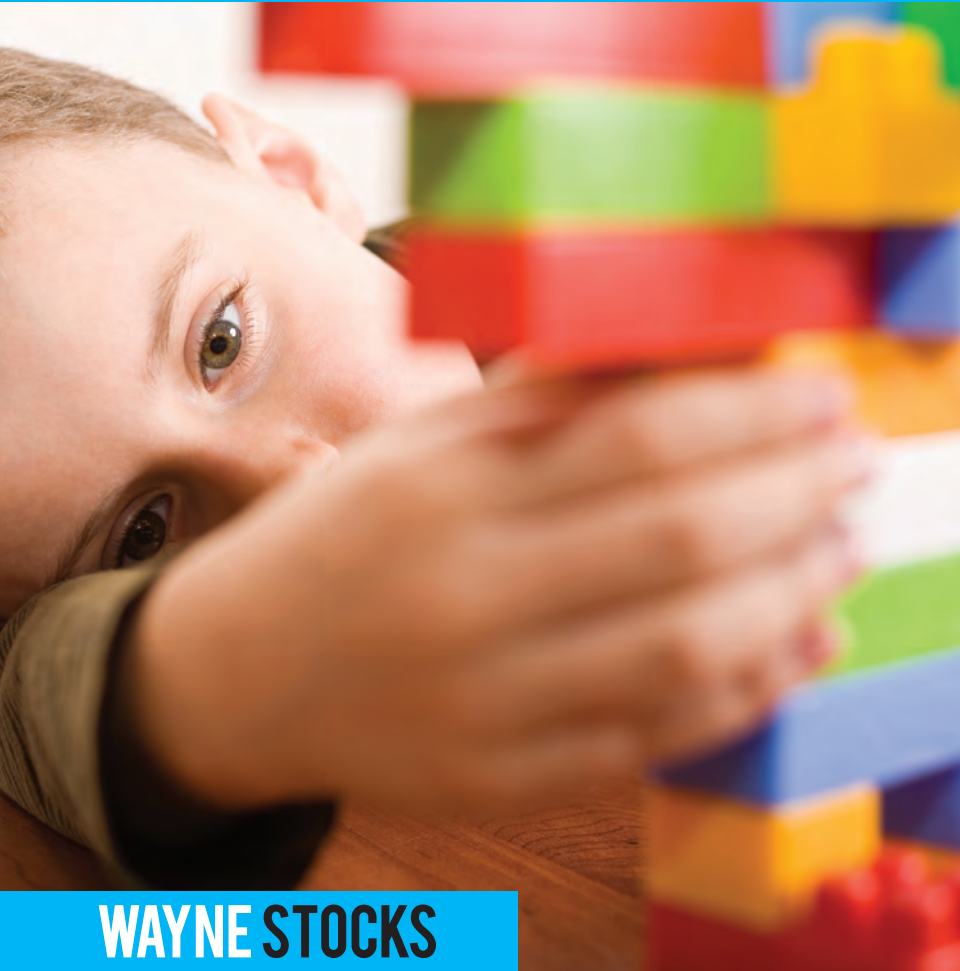
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FOUNDATION



WAYNE STOCKS

Wayne Stocks is a volunteer in the children's ministry of New Life Church in Gahanna, Ohio. He is also an active writer on issues related to children's ministry.

Learning about God is a continual process. I know more about God today than I did when I first came to Christ. I've have learned through study, through prayer and through personal experience with God. Likewise, ministering to young children is a process.

We must provide children with a foundational knowledge of God at a level that they can understand. This foundation can then be built upon as they grow in age and wisdom. So, how do we provide that foundation?

- Start a pattern of scripture memorization.
- Begin to familiarize them with the stories of the Bible.
- Teach them how to pray.

Kids as young as two or three can memorize verses like Genesis 1:1, Philippians 4:13, Romans 3:23 and even John 3:16. These verses will stick with them throughout their entire lives. We must also begin to tell them the stories of the Bible and explain how they all fit together in the bigger story of God's interaction with His creation. Finally, we must model prayer for them in words that they can comprehend. Rather than rote repetition of memorized prayers, we must teach them how to have a conversation with God.

Building a rock solid foundation in Christ needs to start early. In doing so, children will be able to withstand the storms that life will bring.

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INCLUSIVE



NOEL GUEVARA

Noel and her husband Matt have 2 amazing daughters, ages 5 and 6. Noel is also a preschool teacher, serves in kidmin and with Safe Families, and is looking forward to volunteering as a Literacy Tutor at Gigi's Playhouse (a Down Syndrome awareness center) this fall.

During Jesus' time on earth, He shocked the religious community by loving the lost with abandon. God wrapped Himself in humanity and reached out to touch the unclean, the unloved, and the unwanted. His love was completely inclusive--a concept that was foreign to a group of people who only knew God's promises as being exclusive to His chosen people.

Why should the church be more inclusive? Why should we be the hands of Christ extended to those the world would turn away from and work to make a place for those with special needs?

It could be because...

- 10-20% of children have special needs and the humiliation they feel when people stare at them, tease them, exclude them
- the isolation the parents of those children feel
- their siblings get tired of hearing "what's wrong with your brother?"

That is my family's story.

However, a more compelling reason is that your church, your ministry, your children, and even you will be better for throwing your arms open and loving these children like Jesus does. Who better to teach you about childlike faith than someone who will always be like a child? If you love inclusively like Jesus did, you will be amazed at what His love will do in and through you.

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INTENTIONALITY



RHONDA HASLETT

Rhonda, a veteran in ministry to children and teens, equips and empowers ministers of both teens and children through consultation, apprenticeships, written curriculum, articles, blogs and national workshops. She is the founder of a ministry network resource, WeGrowMinistries.com, Cultivate Conference as well as "Pasta Roni & Friends," an evangelistic ministry to children and families.

When children move on from preschool ministry wouldn't it be fantastic if they know how to pray, know they are safe while being disciplined, and have learned theological songs that reinforce the foundation for their Christianity?

One of the easiest ways to connect children to Christ at their developmental stage is to help them experience Him at their level of understanding.

- Songs and prayers go from being experienced through others to self-initiated expressions of worship.
- Prayer by a teacher over a baby's snack gradually becomes the prayer of the child.
- Intentional songs like "Jesus Loves Me" and "This Little Light of Mine" become the foundation on which future faith is built.

Environment (furniture layout, decorations, & toys) is something else that reinforces connecting a child to Christ.

- Set up specific toys and posters by the month to reinforce the lesson.
- Post written comments or questions at each learning area so even "walk in" help can use talk points to teach your children about Jesus.

Ask yourselves these questions:

- Considering the developmental stage of the children I minister with, how can I use where they are (physically, emotionally, intellectually, spiritually) to help them understand their relationship with Christ?
- Are the decorations, furniture and toys in the nursery and preschool rooms set up to help volunteers play with structure and intentional learning in mind?

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MISSIONAL



JESSE SMITH

As the Children and Family Pastor at EFCW, Jesse helps just over 100 volunteers partner with parents to raise spiritual champions in a northwest suburb of Chicago. Jesse holds a Master's in Children and Family Ministry from Bethel Seminary and loves spending time with his wife of 19 years and his two sons.

A proper view of mission should include both inward and outward aspects of the church's mission. The mission is about becoming a certain community, not just gaining converts. When it comes to early childhood, the Church has typically had two responses: either simple childcare or discipling children that are brought into the church. These two responses aren't bad as they do help one aspect of the mission (loving God) but they do little to show others what type of community we are trying to be.

A missional ecclesiology would look at both the inward life of the church as much as it does the outward life. So what would this mean for a preschool ministry?

INSIDE THE CHURCH

- Volunteers who pray regularly for children and their families
- Appropriate worship experiences that put children and parents together
- Teaching parents how to bless their children
- Keeping families in mind during event planning

OUTSIDE THE CHURCH

- Connecting parents outside the church to each other as a means of resource & support (mentors, additional adult voices)
- Meeting tangible family needs (coupons, trusted baby sitters, meals, parent training)

These are just a few examples of how to change the question from "How do we grow this church?" to "How do we transform our community?" Keep in mind that the gospel is still central; we're more than mere activists.

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MORE



It's wonderful that we can care for young children in a way that shows God's love for them, but we need more than just good childcare.

In Luke 18, when Jesus welcomes the children and says, "The kingdom of God belongs to such as these," he implies that children already have full access to every part of the Christian life. Nothing is to be held back until they are older. The word Jesus uses for children is best translated as "newborn infants." Jesus was not just opening the door of the Kingdom to children who are able to grasp some of it intellectually. He was opening the Kingdom to those who have little or no knowledge-based understanding of who God might be. Jesus seems to be completely okay with the idea that even newborns would experience the fullness of God.

Imagine how much more God has for children, even from day one? What would it look like to pray for our youngest children as we hold them in the nursery, asking God to meet with them by His Spirit, to speak to them, to heal them and to equip them?

ANDY HAYBALL

Originally from the UK, Andy Hayball now leads the Children and Family Ministries at Trinity Church in Greenwich, Connecticut. His passion is to see children valued and discipled as full and complete followers of Jesus, even in their earliest years. Andy has a particular focus on developing children's ministry in the context of missional communities.

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OPENNESS



AMY DOLAN

Amy Dolan is a children's ministry consultant, blogger, and curriculum writer committed to the spiritual development of children.

My 2 year-old niece is learning to talk. She's saying words, forming sentences, making connections, and chatting away, which makes listening to her really fun! However, she's still learning. Her language skills aren't yet perfect. Sometimes I want to jump in and help her. I'll ask her a question, and if she's slow to answer, I'll answer for her. At other times I'll talk over her if I don't understand what she's saying. I desperately wish I didn't do this, but I'm still learning, too.

To me, what matters most in the spiritual formation of our youngest children is openness. Our ability to be open to a child's individual learning and exploration process is key in his spiritual growth. Each day in our churches, homes, and schools, we help our youngest children form their world-views, their belief systems, and their spiritual lenses. When we demonstrate an openness towards exploration, we encourage children to form a foundation that includes openness towards God and His movement. When we let children learn at their own pace, whether fast or slow, we promote learning for a lifetime.

I want to be more open towards my niece as she learns to speak as well as towards the youngest children in my church as they learn about God and His stories. I believe our openness will inspire strong faith foundations, and encourage children to love God in His fullness.

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PARTNERSHIPS



LORIBETHRAN

Lori serves as the part-time children's pastor at Lakeview church, a medium size, multi-site, multi-ethnic church in the Chicago suburbs and is best known as an innovator in training, conference experiences, and developing resources. Lori led the children's ministry creative & conference teams at Willow Creek and is currently the Director of Curriculum Content and Writer for Phil Visher's What's in the Bible? Church Edition.

For a multitude of reasons, parents with young children can be at a loss for how to foster spiritual formation in their children. For some it is because parents often parent as they were parented. (How's that for a tongue twister?) For example, if in a parent's home of origin the family didn't pray together, read the Bible, or discuss scriptures then the chances of them doing that with their children are lower. We as church leaders are very aware that the primary influencer in a child's spiritual development is his mom and dad. So it makes sense that the best time to partner with parents is in the early childhood years.

As a church we need to continually look for ways to equip & empower parents in spiritually forming their kids beginning with a foundation during those early childhood years. One effective tool we use at Lakeview is our weekly parent small group devotional called the Dew. We create early childhood family pages that provide weekly family activities and questions associated with the parents' Bible study. We have found that kids and families love this intentional family time of growing together.

While the Dew may not work in your church culture, there will be other things that will. I encourage you to build the family connection between Sunday mornings and the rest of the week.

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PRESENCE



DAVID CSINOS

David M. Csinos is author of Children's Ministry that Fits and a doctoral student in practical theology at Emmanuel College of Victoria University in the University of Toronto. He is also the co-founder and chair of the planning committee of Children, Youth and a New Kind of Christianity.

Think back to the people who made a difference in your childhood. Chances are they weren't sports heroes, movie stars, or humanitarians. They were probably the people who were closest to you, those who played with you and took the time to get to know you.

Presence matters to young children. Being consistently present with children gives them stability, helps them build trust, and offers them a place of safety from which they can explore the world around them.

In Jesus' radical encounter with young children (Mark 9:33-37), he doesn't teach them a memory verse, offer an object lesson, or usher them to the basement. He welcomes them, hoists them onto his lap, and offers them the priceless, countercultural gift of his presence.

When we play a game of hopscotch with children, when we listen to a child tell us about her fear of the dark, or when we quietly sit next to the hospital bed of a child with severe disabilities, we offer them the gift of our presence. And, if we have eyes to see, we can receive the gift that is the presence of a young friend. After all, Jesus reminds us that when we are present with a little child, we are present with him.

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RELATIONSHIPS



BRIANNE FRIBERG

Brianne Friberg (Ph.D) has a doctorate in Human Development and Family Studies from the University of Wisconsin. She is a passionate Christ-follower, wife, mother, and assistant professor at Liberty University.

Relationships could be considered a core component of any ministry, but they are especially significant in early childhood programming. In fact, Zero-to-Three and other professionals in the field of early intervention promote this concept under the label of “relationship-based practice.”

I propose that early childhood ministries fill a unique niche within the church, in that they are poised to serve both children and their families through relationships. By offering continuous, supportive care, children’s ministries are able to promote healthy development of the whole child (i.e., cognitive, language, motor, socioemotional, and spiritual). Moreover, leaders in these programs can serve as additional sensitive and responsive caregivers who can foster trust, healthy attachments, and positive child outcomes.

In addition, these ministries are poised to serve parents in a unique way. Many parents enter parenthood with a limited toolbox, especially tools used for intentionally promoting spiritual growth in their children. By partnering with these families through various events, programming, and informal networks, early childhood ministries have the ability to mentor and join forces with parents in the journey of raising the next generation (Deuteronomy 11:19).

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RHYTHM



Early Childhood ministries must partner with parents by helping them establish a rhythm in their home that invites their kids to pray, read their Bible and talk about God on a regular basis. This will set kids up to find their own rhythm of walking the way of Jesus as they grow.

In our Early Childhood ministry, we provide parents with a monthly take-home sheet that provides practical ways to talk about God and pray with their kids during specific rhythms of the day. While riding in the car with their kids, parents can point out things they see that they can be thankful for. During mealtime, parents can read a Bible story with their kids or talk about their favorite parts of a Bible story. Before bed, parents can start a rhythm of slowing down and talking to God together with their kids.

What better way to teach Preschool kids the way of Jesus than to model a daily rhythm of seeing God at work throughout the day: in the car, at the playground, at the dinner table, in the bath, or cuddling up at bedtime.

MELISSA WIRE

Melissa Wire is the Preschool Director at Mars Hill Bible Church and has a growing passion to see parents getting involved in the spiritual formation of their kids. She enjoys living with her husband in Holland, Michigan.

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SPACE



HENRY ZONIO

Henry Zonio is currently the Assistant Children's Ministry Director for 4th and 5th Grade at Menlo Park Presbyterian Church.

I was leading the 4's and 5's class. We all sat down, put our hands in our laps, and closed our eyes to focus on God and pray. As I was naming some things we were thankful to God for, one of the children piped up, "And God, thank you for my mom and dad. Thank you for our house. And thank you for my friends..."

"The people brought children to Jesus, hoping he might touch them. The disciples shooed them off. But Jesus was irate and let them know it: 'Don't push these children away. Don't ever get between them and me. These children are at the very center of life in the kingdom. Mark this: Unless you accept God's kingdom in the simplicity of a child, you'll never get in.' Then gathering the children up in his arms, he laid his hands of blessing upon them" (Mark 10:13-16, MSG).

The morning my prayer was interrupted, I became one of Jesus's disciples in the above passage. I wanted to correct the child for interrupting me; it was rude after all. I was caught up in the schedule and flow of the class. I had crafted each minute to maximize teaching and minimize triggers for misbehavior. That morning the agenda almost won.

Before I could open my mouth to bring order back to my prayer, the account from Mark popped into my head. In my desire to do children's ministry "right," I was getting between Jesus and the children. I had to get out of the way and allow space for even young children to spontaneously interact with their creator.

In the weeks that followed, even the shiest children began expressing their gratitude to God during our prayer times. I have learned so much about humility and thankfulness from those children. Most importantly, I've learned to simply get out of the way.

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SPONGE



Children are like sponges and soak up everything in their environment. NOW is the perfect time to introduce simple Biblical truths. Truths about how to love God, love others and love who God created them to be.

Children have always been drawn to Jesus and Jesus has always said, "Let the children come to me." They are drawn to his kindness, safety, mystery and love. He is the ultimate Father, the ultimate adventure, and the ultimate Story.

Just like a sponge soaks up water until it is full, children will soak up Jesus until they are saturated. Filling their minds and hearts with Biblical truths will serve as the foundation of their child-like faith. Children will absorb it all.

Immerse them in the truth. Surround them with the message of Christ. Soak them with the love of God.

JENNY WULBECKER

Jenny is the Curriculum Administrator for Promiseland, the children's ministry at Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, Illinois. She loves kids, makes her husband join her in triathlons, and can't get enough of her daughter Emerson.

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TRUTH



Preschoolers live in a world of fantasy and imagination. They wake up thinking of princesses or pirates and go to sleep asking unending “what if” questions.

In early childhood ministry we have the incredible opportunity to combine their fascination of the mystical with the truth of God’s Word. We get to capture their imaginations with the very best stories ever told. We get to teach them that God’s stories are not just amazing, but they are absolutely true.

In early childhood ministry we lay the foundations of truth that children will grow into for the rest of their lives. We begin in the nursery by singing “Jesus loves me” and praying truth over each baby. As they learn to talk we teach simple verses such as “God is love.” As they get older we explore with wonder the stories of the Bible and begin to understand the basics of the truth of the gospel.

Let us help our churches see that early childhood ministry is much more than diapers and crying and crayons. It is the first place these little ones hear the truth of Jesus.

JENNY FUNDERBURKE

Jenny Funderburke is the wife of a computer geek and mama to the cutest and craziest little girls on the planet. She has served as Minister of Children at Westwood Baptist Church in Alabaster, Alabama for almost ten years and enjoys blogging, ice cream, and the beach.

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VALIDATION



JILL CREW

Jill Crew has been in full time Children's Ministry since 2001. She is the Early Childhood Coordinator at Parkview Christian Church in Orland Park, Illinois. She loves a great cup of coffee, blogging about ministry and parenting, and reality television.

I have a confession. I have been a Children's Pastor who did not value Early Childhood ministry as highly as Elementary ministry. The majority of my time, resources, and budget went towards all things Elementary. I was wrong.

For two years I have been blessed to work in a church where my entire focus is Early Childhood. I have had several revelations.

1. Early Childhood ministry does not have to be that different than Elementary ministry. So many of the things we do for Elementary kids transfers to Early Childhood. It will transform the entire ministry! *Does your E.C. ministry resemble your Elementary ministry in any ways?*
2. Resources matter. Early Childhood ministries need current resources and not the leftovers. If your class uses a DVD curriculum, don't give them the TV cart with a 27" TV while the Elementary kids have a projector. *Does your E.C. ministry have a sufficient budget?*
3. Technology matters. I have been repeatedly surprised how effective it is to use media with Early Childhood. I turn our worship songs into videos with words for volunteers and pictures to cue the kids, memory verse slides, and life application picture situations. Any time I bring technology into large group, the kids respond in huge ways. Just because they can't read doesn't mean they can't benefit from media. *Does your E.C. ministry utilize technology?*

We have to step it up. There is too much potential for life change within our Early Childhood kids. We can no longer allow it to be the hidden ministry within Children's Ministry. Let's start now!

CONNECT WITH JILL

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WHOLEHEARTED



KATHY MORRISSEY

Kathy Morrissey adores her family time & appreciates the support of her husband and two grown children. As the Early Childhood Director at Rolling Hills Community Church in Oregon she loves what she gets to do for the youngest members of the congregation as well as who she gets to team with in order to accomplish this passion!

A Call for Wholehearted Commitment

Wholehearted, that is what comes to mind as it relates to early childhood ministry. If you are uncertain as to what it looks like, spend time with a child under five! They will wholeheartedly accept the truth and love of the gospel and reflect it back to you. As older generations look to regain childlike faith, they will be reminded of it by investing in the youngest generation.

I remember examples of this wholehearted commitment:

A toddler mom asking me what her son learned on Sunday because every time he passed her Bible, he slapped the top of it and exclaimed, "True, this is true!"

The dad who asked us to give him our two's lesson because he felt his daughter knew more about Jesus than he did.

The four year old who made crosses with sticks from his yard. He ended up sharing the meaning of the cross to neighborhood children.

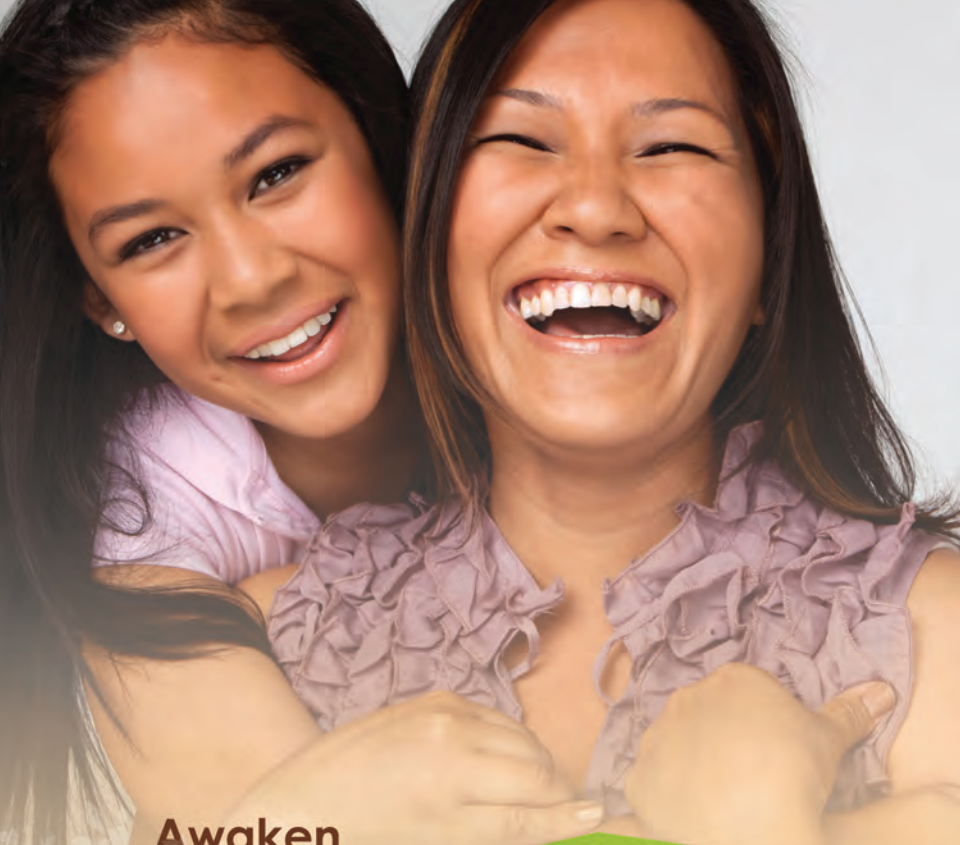
The dad who ran out of time to do his son's bedtime devotion only to find his son later, asleep with his devotion in hand.

Let these children be our compass to live and think like Jesus with wholehearted delight.

CONNECT WITH KATHY

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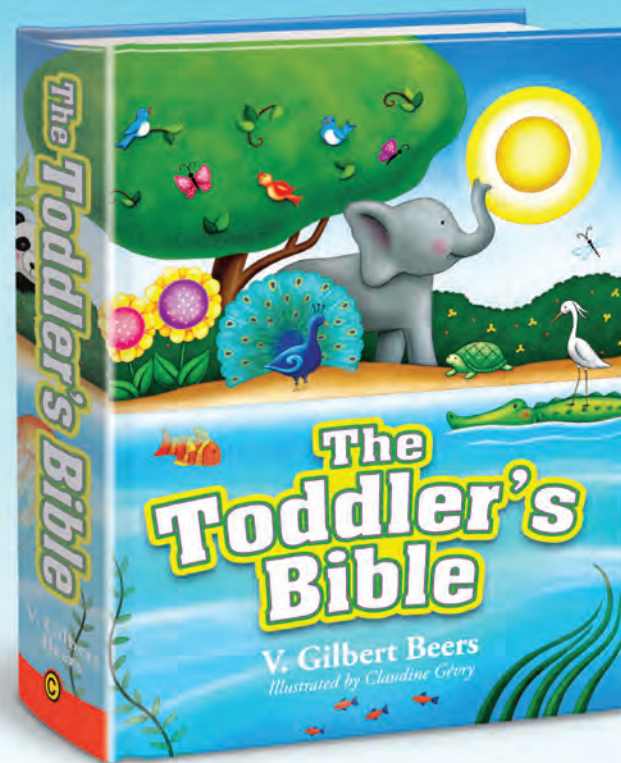
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—V. Gilbert Beers

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