

# Foursquare National Department of Christian Education

# DIRECTIONS

A Newsletter for Christian Educators

Fall 1996

## Is God Here?

**W**hile I was in Bible college one of my Christian Service assignments was to teach a fourth grade Sunday school class. I always planned and prepared diligently for each Sunday, yet it didn't seem to be making any difference in the lives of the students. Looking back, I realize I knew the lesson, but I didn't know how to make the lesson applicable to their lives.

One particular Sunday, I was dreading the class so much that I prayed no one would show up. I was working full-time and keeping a full schedule at college. I was just plain tired. As I began the lesson, the pastor's daughter walked into the class late and without any warning asked, "Is God here?" That genuine inquiry began a journey of spiritual discovery.

Each student was asked to share an incident in which they were aware of God's presence. Their responses were overwhelming. One young man shared how he sensed God's peace though his dad had just walked out on him and his mother. A girl, Carol, talked about God's provision when a caring person brought food to their house when it was desperately needed. That morning, the lesson focus became more than facts--it became truth.

Our calling is more than programs, musicals and lessons--it should extend to nurturing a spiritual sensitivity that reaches every level of life. **When the truth of God meets personal needs, the dynamic happens.** How do we get to the point where we can nurture spiritual sensitivity in others?

Begin by seeking the Lord. Get His perspective on the situation. He knows our strengths and weaknesses; He knows the inner

needs of each life; He knows the forces of darkness that oppose us.

Seek to do more than teach facts. Traditional education is aimed only at the mind. God our Creator made man with body, soul and spirit. Therefore, as Psalm 119 states: "Blessed are those... who seek Him with their whole heart." This same Psalm uses the words "delight," "meditate," "walk," "keep," and "love" to describe how one is to respond to God's teaching. Spiritual sensitivity is internal, it reaches to our innermost being to help us face the external forces that we confront on a daily basis.

Create an atmosphere of learning. If people come to a Bible class with a question that has spiritual implications, then they are ready for God's answer. Even if they don't sense an immediate need, we can motivate them and plant a seed. We need to ask ourselves, "How does God want to touch them?" "What matters to them at that point in their lives?"

As we begin our plans for the Fall quarter let us remember the words Moses spoke to God in Exodus 33:14-15 "If your presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here. For how will it be known that your people and I have found grace in your sight, except you go with us?"



Learning with you,  
**Rick Wulfestieg**  
National Minister of  
Christian Education  
and Director of Foursquare Publications

### IN THIS ISSUE...

Multi-cultural Ministry

The Multiplex Congregation

Kids In Glass Houses

Implementing a Reducing The Risk Program

Volunteers: Our Greatest

Natural Resource

Idea Share

How To Teach For Spiritual Growth

# Kids in Glass Houses

*Here are 10 keys for ministers who desire to raise their children successfully.*

People in ministry often feel as if raising their kids is especially tough because they must do it in glass houses. But you may be surprised to know that the problem usually isn't the environment; it's the unrealistic expectations we put on our kids.

I grew up as a preacher's kid and loved it, although many other PKs I knew hated it. I've also raised my two children in one of those same glass houses. What I've found is that pastors typically want their kids to be perfect in the eyes of the church, an expectation that is unfair and totally unreasonable.

The good news is that our expectations don't have to be set in concrete; they are choices. Here are 10 guidelines to help you make good choices as a parent



*1. Make your family your No. 1 priority.*  
Don't let anyone in your church convince you differently. Tell them straight-out that your family comes first. One key to making your family your top priority is to put family events on the calendar *first*. If you don't value and guard your family time, nobody else will.

*2. Spend a long time making a short list of what you desire from your kids.*  
My wife and I have boiled down our priorities for our children to a few basics. We want our kids to love and obey God, take responsibility for their choices, have a positive mental attitude and a thankful spirit, and make a good choice of a marriage partner.

*3. Put a prayer covering over your children.*  
Praying for your children is the most important act you perform each day as a parent. Any success I've experienced in my life and ministry I attribute to prayer--my own prayers and the prayers others have prayed for me.

*4. Treat each child as an individual.*  
Every child is different, and we should treat them so. Proverbs 22:6 says to train a child "in the way he should go..." That does not necessarily mean in the way we want a child to go. God has designed each person with particular gifts for a specific purpose.

*5. Create bonding experiences for your family.*  
In our culture, family members are being increasingly disconnected from one another. We have to make an effort to create at least four critical types of bonding experiences for our family members: spiritual, emotional, physical (through touch), and mental.

*6. Try to see life through your children's eyes*  
It's easy to get so caught up in our own responsibilities that we forget what it was like to be a child.

*7. Admit your mistakes and ask for forgiveness.* Doing this draws our children close to us. When we neglect to admit our mistakes and to ask for forgiveness, walls go up. Our kids get the false impression that perfection is our standard for them.

*8. Give unconditional love to your children.*  
We can learn a lesson from the father of the prodigal son: He gave his son the freedom to fail. Even when he believed his son was lost, he never gave up on him. The wayward boy was taken back with open arms, even before he asked for forgiveness.

*9. Cultivate healthy self-images.*  
Next to a relationship with Christ, a positive self-image is the most important thing a child can have. It affects almost everything a person does in life. Determine to help your children see themselves as God sees them.

*10. Model love in your marriage.*  
When you love your spouse, you not only provide security for your children, but you also show them how to treat others in ways that please Christ.

Glass houses aren't such bad places to live when our own priorities and expectations are in-line with God's purposes for our families.



# MINISTRY

Marceae Trujillo & Patti Wulfestieg

**E**vangelism is something we all want to see take place in our churches. However, it can present some problems if the leaders do not stay spiritually sensitive to both the visitors and the church body.

If evangelism is successful people will come into the church. These people might be gang members, homeless people, street kids, drug addicts or it could be someone from another ethnic group or culture. When these groups become a part of the church, the natural tendency is to fulfill their immediate needs and begin programs that minister to them. Such concern is biblical; however, in your ministry to others do not neglect the needs of the youth and adults that have been faithful to the church for many years.

Many immigrant groups tend to populate areas in which people from the same culture reside. Why? Because of the cultural similarities and the ability to communicate to someone who speaks their language. In these communities, the businesses, schools and shopping centers will begin to change their employees, products and business methods to cater to that particular culture. Is your church also trying to reach these people?

When gang members begin attending youth functions, expect some difficulty in assimilating them into the youth group. Your church teens probably do not relate to these gang members at school. The parents in your church have taught their children not to associate with gangs. Even law enforcement and school officials teach that being part of a gang is wrong. So why are we so surprised when the youth in our churches put up social barriers when gang members begin to attend services?

When starting an evangelistic program, everyone in your congregation should be prepared and trained on how to minister to the unchurched and hurting people that will be coming through the church doors. Keep in mind that this training is a two-way street. As those newcomers become regular attendees, they should also be taught to be sensitive to those faithful members who have helped to bring the church growth and strength.

Here are some practical ways to integrate your church:

## *Set An Example.*

Your attitude will decide the success of your evangelism program. Are you learning about that newcomer's culture? Do you have friends from other cultures? How do you respond to other cultures in public places? There is so much you can do to express acceptance of people from other cultures.

## *Know Your Audience.*

Have a cross-cultural celebration. Ask people for party ideas. Play games that they play in their countries. Allow various types of music at these functions.

Do you know the home environment your youth come from? Is your established youth group mature enough to be leaders for visiting youth? Are your youth activities well supervised? Do you offer various activities that will interest all the participants in your youth group? Do your Bible study times allow for group interaction that is cooperative yet nonthreatening?

## *Prepare Your People.*

In your messages and devotions include studies on neighborly love. Invite people from other backgrounds to share personal experiences. Invite respected authorities from varied ethnic backgrounds to tell how their cultural training has helped them in their work. (Armstrong). Allow children to share family traditions.

Train your youth and adults about proper social etiquette. Are they polite? Do they know how to conduct themselves in a public place? Do they treat others with respect? Do they have good communication skills? Are they trained to handle conflict in a positive manner. Do newcomers (especially youth) see models of love, respect, maturity, and success, that they want to imitate? Many teenagers want to receive respect, on the other hand, they need to be taught how to show respect.

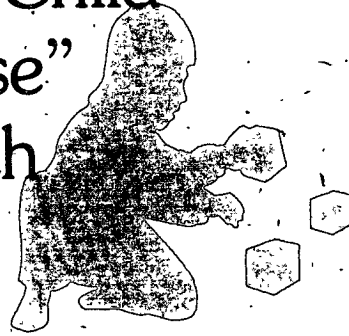
## *Step Back and Take a Look.*

What would Jesus think of your evangelism program? Is your church a safe, secure, comfortable place for someone to visit? Is your congregation hospitable? Is your church a place that someone else would want to call their home? Is there room for everybody?

A portion of this article was excerpted from Armstrong, Rick. "Developing a Multicultural Ministry." *Children's Ministry Magazine* March/April 1996, pp 27-30.



# Implementing a "Reducing the Risk of Child or Youth Sexual Abuse" Program in the Church



Patti Pitcher  
Children's Ministries Coordinator  
WellSpring Christian Fellowship  
Granada Hills, California

At WellSpring, we believe that the Lord has called us to implement a "**Risk Reduction**" Program as a part of an ongoing ministry to all of our "Church Family." In Ephesians 5:8 & 11, the Lord reminds us that we are to "**Walk as children of light...And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.**" This Program sheds "the Lord's light" on the "works of darkness" which are manifested in child and youth sexual abuse. Sin cannot be completely eliminated from the world, but we believe that by implementing this program, **we are providing ministry to our congregation in the following ways:**

■ **To Children**--By providing protection from the unchecked risk of sexual abuse.

■ **To Families**--By providing a safe and secure atmosphere for their children.

■ **To Church Workers**--By ensuring that they are not open to unfounded accusations or compromising circumstances.

■ **To Church Leaders**--By providing them the assurance that they are protected, and that they will not be held liable for damages resulting from negligence.

■ **To the Church Community**--By providing the local church with protection so that its mission, its reputation, and its effectiveness to accomplish God's purposes will not be tarnished or hindered. There are several **KEY FACTORS** which help in implementing a successful "Risk

Reduction" Program:

1. The Pastor and the Christian Education Director must walk in strong partnership in developing the program, as well as in presenting it to the congregation.

2. The entire program and its implementation process needs to be:

- Bathed in PRAYER
- "HUMANIZED" for your congregation
- "CUSTOMIZED" to fit the needs of your people.

The "tangible" methods which we have implemented include:

1. Clear, honest, and sensitive verbal and written COMMUNICATION about the vision and specifics of the program to the leaders, and then to the congregation, from the Senior Pastor--PRIOR to recruitment of Children's and Youth workers.

2. A concise, yet thorough presentation of the program at a once-a-year TRAINING which includes the spiritual as well as the practical aspects.

3. A confidential APPLICATION PROCEDURE which includes:

- Filling out a "Worker History" Application
- Checking personal references
- Conducting personal interviews
- Conducting fingerprinting, which activates a Criminal Records Check
- Providing a "higher duty of care" to sexual abuse survivors who desire to become children's or youth workers.

We rely upon the protection of the Holy Spirit to permeate our process as we seek to obediently implement this Program to minister to our people.

## VOLUNTEERS: OUR GREATEST NATURAL RESOURCE

by Mary Lou Canata

This morning a local radio station gave this statistic: One out of eight Americans is 65 years of age or older. In our culture being older means being worthless, so the older group needs to hear that they have great worth. Our senior citizens feel they have much to offer, but nobody wants it. (Leadership Magazine, Fall, 1995) Many of them have unlimited time talents, and a willingness to serve the Lord and His people.

Here are some guidelines for getting these older adults involved:

1. **KNOW** who these people are. Know their name, their background, their talents, their interests; etc. Develop a *relationship* beyond the Sunday morning church service.

2. **SHARE** your needs with them. They are more interested than we give them credit for. Let them know *in advance* about the project to be done, the date, place and time so they can mark their calendars.

3. **COMPILE** a list of their names, addresses and telephone numbers. Usually someone in your group of volunteers is willing to call the others when there is a need.

4. **APPRECIATE** them with more than words. Take them to lunch at a place of their choice. Present them with a small gift or card to let them know they are sincerely appreciated. Express your appreciation verbally in front of others.

5. **FORM** a team. Very few people like to work alone. It is more effective (and more fun) to have at least two volunteers work together on a project.

6. **PROVIDE** transportation for your volunteers if needed. Those who drive are usually willing to accommodate those who do not.

The principles mentioned above can be used for any teen or adult volunteer. People receive fulfillment and gratification through volunteering.

# Current Thoughts and Obsessions

What people are *really* thinking.

Last year *Utne Reader*, an alternative magazine, asked its subscribers, "What are you thinking about?" The answers reveal what's going on in the minds of many people in today's world--and in the minds of people who listen to sermons.

"My company is about to be bought out. What will the new structure be like? What if I get laid off?"

"Do I risk enough in my life?"

"The one thing I can't get away from is feeling lonely all the time."

"I'm worried that if I keep my standards too high I may never find an acceptable life partner. But I'm more worried about lowering my standards and being in another failed relationship."

"Why does my son have schizophrenia? What can I do to cure him? How do I care for him without going into the abyss? Why don't meditation, imagery, prayer, and love cure him?"

"How can I eliminate my ex-husband from my life without committing a felony?"

"How will I handle my parents' death?"

"I'm 44 years old. No mate; no kids; I sleep with my dog. What happened?"

"Do I have the courage to die by inches with cancer, or does it take more courage to end the suffering with my .38?"

"Is it possible to participate in the American economy (driven by consumption, expansion, and a myth of corporate progress) and still live up to the ideals we teach our children and claim as our own (honesty, fairness, responsibility, accountability)?"

"Why is life, in essence, suffering?"

Excerpted from "Current Thoughts and Obsessions." *Leadership Magazine* Fall 1995. Original article appeared in *Utne Reader*, May/June 1995.

# The Multiplex Congregation

Understanding the four audiences you face.

The marketing world has learned that behavior *precedes* attitudes.

The most effective way to sell a product is to affect the behavior at the point of sale, when the buyer is making decisions.

When you look across the congregation, there are at least four adult audiences. Each has a different way of seeing the world.

People who are 55-plus are looking to be redefined and for a sense of importance that Christ can give. In our culture being older means being worthless, so the over-50 group needs to hear they have great worth. They may live to 80 or 90, so they've got almost half their lives in front of them. Pastors can challenge the cultural notion that those over 55 are half-dead. They don't feel they're half-dead; they feel they have much to offer, but nobody wants it.

Boomers greatly desire a stabilizing influence, which can come only through faith in Christ.

Busters, those 25 to 35, are stable and work well together. They have a firm foundation and could be a strong leadership pool for the body of Christ in the future.

Finally, Generation X. I've never seen a group of people anywhere in the world, including people in absolute poverty, who have a greater urgency to hear the good news than the under-25 generation in this country. They long to hear that there is hope. Also, the younger the audience, the more important it is to tell people in concrete terms what to do. They need examples.

The American mindset isn't healthy, yet because of our problems, this is an

incredibly opportune time for the body of Christ to expand and move forward. There is a vacuum to be filled. Christians should step up and fill it before something else does.

## GENERATION X

### WHO THEY ARE

- 16 to 25 years old
- "Feed me" generation
- Low self-esteem
- Retreat from world into small groups

### WHAT THEY NEED

- Unconditional acceptance
- Very short list of what's really important
- Written reinforcement of key concepts (e.g., a spiritual notebook)

## BUSTERS

### WHO THEY ARE

- 25 to 35 years old
- "Why me?" generation
- Don't like crowds or mingling with other generations
- Skeptical of guarantees

### WHAT THEY NEED

- Relationships
- To create a better world
- To talk things over with peers

## BOOMERS

### WHO THEY ARE

- 35 to 50 years old
- "Entertain me and earn me" generation
- Faddish, instant information
- Looking for spiritual definition

### WHAT THEY NEED

- Talk about meaning, self-definition, and worth
- New church models
- Media

## OLDER ADULTS

### WHO THEY ARE

- 50 and up
- "Need me and show me" generation
- Possess skills and money
- Want to do something worthwhile

### WHAT THEY NEED

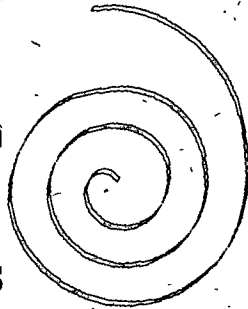
- In preaching, positive examples of older adults
- Appreciation

Michael Sack, "The Multiplex Congregation." *Leadership*, Fall 1995

# Idea Share

Ideas for teaching children

## What to do with Take-Home Papers



- 1 Send them to absentees - children love mail, and it makes them feel that they are still part of the class.
- 2 Send them to children who come from non-Christian homes, great evangelism tool.
- 3 Make booklets for the children to take home after unit or quarter study is completed or for classroom use.
- 4 Make game cards out of pictures from the take-home papers for review.
  - A. **Who's Missing** - Children look at several cards. Have them turn around or close their eyes, remove one of the cards, then ask them which one is missing.
  - B. **I Spy** - Lay several cards out on a table. Say, "I spy someone..." and then describe one of the picture cards. Let children point to the card you are describing.
  - C. **Matching Cards** - Just like concentration. Have two of each picture, place them face down. Let the children turn the cards over one at a time, trying to match pictures. Then take a moment and review one thought about that lesson.
  - D. **Puzzles** - Place picture on cardboard and cut it into pieces.

Ideas taken from Radiant Life Preschool Curriculum. Originally submitted by Noreen Ottalagano, Palatine, IL

## Blind Guidance

**(Based on Psalm 23) To demonstrate the need for a competent "shepherd" or guide.**

Form two teams. Set up a simple obstacle course using empty plastic two-liter bottles or other light-weight items to mark a path. One person from each team is blindfolded. The other team members must guide the blindfolded member through the course in the shortest time possible—using only spoken instructions. Fastest time through the course without knocking anything over wins.

Taken from Snap Sessions *Popular Passages & Spiritual Challenges*. David C. Cook Publishing, 1990.

## How To Teach For Spiritual Growth

Wouldn't it be wonderful if Christian teaching resulted in automatic behavioral change just because we had gone through the classroom exercise? But research uncovered long ago the fact that application is not automatic and students do not "learn" merely because they're exposed to teaching for a period of time.

What modern educational study has confirmed was written centuries ago in God's Word, especially with regard to the spiritual perception of truth. In I Corinthians 2:10-12, Paul explains how a Christian teacher, with the aid of the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit, can bring about spiritual growth in students through the teaching process.

### Spiritual Growth Requires Communication.

These verses imply that God has communicated through revelation and now illuminates the heart and mind of a Christian teacher so he may communicate God's truth to others. So a Christian teacher has before him people who are desperately in need of the truth he has to communicate on the basis of God's revelation. It is his goal through the teaching process to bring them to spiritual maturity.

### Spiritual Growth Requires Confirmation.

I Corinthians 2:11-12 indicates how God confirms the communication of a Christian teacher. The Holy Spirit understands spiritual truth because He is a Member of the Trinity. He confirms the relationship of both Christian student and teacher to the God who communicates of Himself. Surely our constant prayer is that God will confirm our communication so that spiritual growth can be demonstrated in the lives of our students.

### Spiritual Growth Requires Comprehension.

A good synonym for comprehension would be our English word "understanding." What is really crucial is whether they *comprehend* what we are trying to teach them. Our task is to communicate with the expectation that the Holy Spirit will confirm God's truth and that comprehension will result. A Christian teacher tests the comprehension level of the students by evaluating spiritually both the process and the results of his teaching.

The process of bringing about spiritual growth in the lives of our students is something we do cooperatively with God because the Holy Spirit communicates, confirms and produces comprehension in this wonderful experience we call Christian teaching.

This article excerpted from Gangel, Kenneth O. *Church Education Handbook*. Scripture Press 1985 pp 167-172.

**DIRECTIONS FOR FOURSQUARE CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS** is a resource published quarterly by the National Department of Christian Education, P.O. Box 26902, 1910 W. Sunset Blvd., #200, Los Angeles, CA 90026-0176. If you have any news or events to share, please contact us.