

Inside-Outside

(Ministering to Children through the Local Church)

I. The purpose of the local church

God has raised up the local church for Christians to come together regularly to worship, to learn, to serve God and others, to pray for each other and to help meet each others needs. But He has also given us the responsibility to evangelize those around us—including the children. There are many avenues through which believers can impact the lives of boys and girls.

II. Areas of ministry among children

A. In Your Home

1. Believing parents are to teach their own children (Deut. 4:9; 6:5-7; 11:18, 19; Ps. 34:11; 78:1-8; Prov. 22:6; Joel 1:3; Eph. 6:4; 2 Tim. 3:15).
2. Children within the Christian home should be led to Christ at the earliest age possible.
3. Christian parents should have family devotions with their children and should also teach them by their everyday conversation and example. This is the duty of both the father and mother (Prov. 1:8; 6:20); but the father, because of his leadership in the home, should especially fulfill this responsibility.

Illustration

“No one should become a father unless he is able to instruct his children in the Ten Commandments and in the Gospels, so that he might bring up true Christians. Children should be brought up in the fear of God. If the Kingdom of God is to come in power, we must begin with the children and teach them from the very cradle. See to it that you first of all have your children instructed in spiritual things.”

—Martin Luther

B. In Your Church

In looking at the total ministry to children in your church, there should be a balance of four vital elements—evangelism, worship, instruction and fellowship.

Evangelism is unfortunately the most neglected element. Since leading a child to Christ is foundational for spiritual growth, evangelism should precede worship, instruction and fellowship.

While worship and instruction are the main focus of most of our children's ministries, the element of fellowship is frequently strengthened through the mid-week club program.

1. Sunday school/Children's church

Illustration

"Your Sunday schools are admirable; but what is their purpose if you do not teach the Gospel in them? You get children together and keep them quiet for an hour and a half, and then send them home; but what is the good of it? . . . The most fundamental truth should be made most prominent; and what is this but the cross?"

From Come Ye Children, page 74 by Charles Spurgeon

- a. These church ministries should be a wonderful means of evangelism and an effective outreach to unreached children.
- b. Teachers are able to systematically disciple saved children, helping them to acquire and apply biblical truth.

Illustration

"The best of the church are none too good for this work. Do not think because you have other service to do that therefore you should take no interest in this form of holy work, but kindly, according to your opportunities, stand ready to help the little ones and to cheer those whose chief calling is to attend to them . . . See to it that you look after the children that are in Christ Jesus."

From Come Ye Children, page 5 by Charles Spurgeon

- c. The children's church helps boys and girls understand how to worship God. It should be a model of the adult worship service on a child's level.

2. Club programs

- a. Many churches seek to enhance Sunday school and children's church programs with a mid-week club program. These are often done in conjunction with other ministry organizations such as AWANA Clubs International, Pioneer Clubs and Christian Service Brigade. Child Evangelism Fellowship's Good News Club® ministry can also be conducted as an in-church club program.

C. Outside your church

Every community has many children who will never come to the church either because they are unable or they are not permitted to attend. Believers need to

look beyond the four walls of the church and consider how they can be used to reach these unchurched boys and girls. Statistics say that two out of three children in the United States do not attend any church or Sunday school.

You and I as the Church, the Body of Christ, have a responsibility to be God's ambassadors to children in our own mission field—our neighborhoods and communities. There are many avenues through which this can be accomplished.

1. In your neighborhood

One specific way you can be an ambassador is through your concern for the children of your neighborhood. Have you ever thought of your home as a mission station from which the light of the Gospel can shine? Child Evangelism Fellowship® offers several ministries to assist you in this outreach.

These ministries are all designed around a threefold purpose:

- to evangelize boys and girls with the Gospel of Christ
- to disciple them in the Word of God
- to establish them in a local Bible-believing church



a. Good News Clubs®

- Good News Clubs meet for one hour each week during the school year (usually from October to April). Children enjoy songs, hear a Bible lesson, memorize Scripture verses, play review games and learn about missions.
- These clubs can be held anywhere children gather in a neighborhood home, club house, recreational center, day-care center or community meeting place. By meeting in a neutral location the barriers of opposition and indifference of parents can be overcome.
- Child Evangelism Fellowship provides training for those desiring to teach, help or host a Good News Club. Quality teaching materials are available from CEF®.

b. 5-Day Clubs®

- 5-Day Clubs meet for one hour usually during the summer for five consecutive days. These clubs can be held in a backyard, on a porch, on a playground or park, on a beach or in a home.
- The format includes music, a visualized Bible lesson, learning Scripture memory verses, review games and missions time complete with a continued missionary story.



- Training is available for adults and teenagers to help you become an effective worker. Visualized teaching kits can be purchased through CEF.

c. **Party Clubs**

- Party Clubs are designed to celebrate a holiday or special time of the year. They can be held once a month, several times a year or only once a year.
- Children hear the Gospel by means of a full-color visualized Gospel story, sing songs and play games all planned around a theme.
- Training is available and Party Kits may be purchased through Child Evangelism Fellowship.

Note: See sample agenda of a class session at the end of this section.

Note: Teachers of CEF ministries are asked to sign the CEF Statement of Faith/Doctrinal Protection Policy/Worker's Compliance Agreement.

2. **In Your Community**

Your outreach can go beyond your neighborhood and into your community as God uses you as an ambassador to children.

a. **Public Schools**

• **After-School Good News Clubs**

On June 11, 2001, the U. S. Supreme Court ruled that Child Evangelism Fellowship could have access to public school facilities to conduct Good News Clubs. The decision stated that Bible clubs such as the Good News Club must be given the same access to school facilities accorded any other non school-related outside group. As a result of this decision, many school districts have begun Good News Clubs, reporting positive changes in student behavior and parent participation. Churches all across our nation are partnering together with CEF to adopt local schools for a club ministry. These churches are having a tremendous impact in their community as they show love and concern for local children and their families.

• **Released-Time Classes**

Many states make provision for a certain amount of time in which a child can be released from class to attend religious training off the school grounds. The Good News Club format can be used for this type of ministry to evangelize and disciple children.

For further information regarding the released-time regulations in your state contact

NARTCE

(National Association for Released-Time
Christian Education)
P. O. Box K
Ellijay, GA 30540 (706) 276-7900

R.T. Network

(Released-Time Network)
P.O. Box 12812
Pittsburgh, PA 15241
(412) 941-8051

b. Open Air

Groups can be organized and trained to share the message of salvation with children in various settings such as parks, playgrounds, beaches, neighborhoods and elsewhere. Children reached through this means could then be invited to the sponsoring church.

One method found effective for this type of personal evangelism is the *Wordless Book*. Training for use of this tool is available through Child Evangelism Fellowship.

c. Fairs/Festivals

Fairs, festivals and other community events provide unique opportunities to evangelize children who may never attend a local church. Within a festive atmosphere, activities such as face painting, ballooning, puppets, clowning, miming, filmstrips, videos and other methods can be effective means for evangelizing children.

This type of ministry is often carried out by using a tent, mobile unit or rented booth space. Many Child Evangelism Fellowship chapters frequently participate in festivals and fairs. Contact your local CEF office for information, training and opportunities for involvement.

Teaching Aids to Help in Reaching Out to the Children Where They Are

1. *Children's Ministry Resource Bible* (Thomas Nelson Publishers)
 - Full-page articles
 - "Making God's Word Part of Family Life" (page 226)
 - "Reaching Children in the Neighborhood" (page 1468)
 - "Developing a Class Session" (page 1182)
2. CEF Press Catalog www.cefpress.com
 - CEF literature available for outreach events
3. Children's Ministries Institute® www.cefcmi.com
 - Training opportunities



Sample Agenda of a Class Session

1. Choose an appropriate theme.

Center the entire class hour around the main truth you are teaching in your Bible lesson.

Carry your theme through the entire teaching time, reinforcing it through each activity.

2. Prepare a schedule to follow (Time allotments given are for a 65-minute class session.)

Welcome (2-3 min.)

Introduce new children, making everyone feel important.

Songs (10 min.)

Choose a variety of songs.

Consider interspersing songs throughout the hour rather than singing them all at one place.

Prayer Time (3-5 min.)

Allow the children to share praises and prayer requests.

Teach the children one principle about prayer. Over a period of four weeks you could share the four aspects of prayer using the ACTS acrostic (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication).

Memory Verse (7-10 min.)

Use a verse that reinforces the main teaching in your Bible lesson.

Teach it in an interesting manner being sure to apply it to both the saved and unsaved child.

Bible Lesson (12-15 min.)

Be sure to focus clearly on the main teaching being taught.

Keep in mind this is the heart of the teaching hour.

Bring the Bible lesson to a close, challenging the saved children to action and inviting the unsaved to receive Christ.

Review Time (5-10 min.)

Choose questions about the Bible lesson, memory verse or songs you want to reinforce.

Use creative ways to review to make learning fun.

Missions (5-10 min.)

Over a period of weeks, use a scriptural foundation for missions, an overview of what a missionary is and what missionaries do. You will also want to introduce your class to specific missionaries and mission fields.

Exciting visualized missionary stories are available through Child Evangelism Fellowship Inc.

Closing and Announcements (2-3 min.)

Remind children to review their memory verse during the week and hand out any take-home papers. Make any necessary announcements and close in prayer.

Wonder Time (5 min.)

Encourage the children to have a daily "quiet time" with God using the 60-Day Wonder Devotional Book. Recognize those who have completed devotionals. Allow the children to share testimonies about what they have learned in their time with God.