

# Ministry Planning Tool

## Introduction

The children have arrived! What do we do now? This has been a question asked by more than a few churches who have struggled with either being understaffed, under prepared, uncertain as to what children's ministry is, or haven't thought about children in the context of ministry at all. One church even forgot to plan for a nursery within their new building plan. The reasons for these outcomes are varied but the bottom line is that, even if there are some very committed people who advocate for children, the rest of church leadership and the church as a whole must view children as part of the body if ministry with children is to flourish and children are to grow spiritually.

**Question #1:** Why do we need children as part of the church?

**Question #2:** Why do we need children's ministry? Is it because we need a place for them to be so we can minister to their parents, or is there a broader answer?

**Question # 3:** What does Jesus think about children and their place in the kingdom?

*People were bringing little children to Jesus in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come to me and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall not enter it." And Jesus took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them and blessed them. **Mark 10:13-16***

Clearly Christ is inviting children into the kingdom of God, not as an after thought, not as second class citizens, but as full participants in the kingdom. He was also affirming the parents who were bringing their children to Him and points to children as the way we are all to enter the kingdom of God. This Scripture has significant implications for children and our ministry with children. It emphasizes the importance of a children's ministry based on several sound Biblical principles:

1. Children's ministry is a partnership between church and home, where children are most significantly influenced.
2. Faith development includes more than head knowledge.
3. Children must be integrated into the whole ministry of the church.
4. The purpose of children's ministry is a spiritually transformed life in Christ.

The Evangelical Covenant Church is committed to the task of assisting you as a ministry leader in this mission of making authentic disciples of adults, youth and children. We affirm that the Christian formation journey is a continuous and lifelong process of being transformed by the Holy Spirit into the likeness of Christ, experiencing and expressing love for God and others. However, this journey requires intentionality on the part of the disciple *and* an active partnership with the Holy Spirit to allow his transforming work to emerge.

This resource has been designed with the hope that it will help you assist children in their own spiritual pilgrimage.

For further consultation, email [mdd@covchurch.org](mailto:mdd@covchurch.org).