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MIDWESTERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

EDUCATING AND INVOLVING A CONGREGATION  
IN THE FAITH DEVELOPMENT AND WORSHIP CAPABILITIES  
OF CHILDREN THROUGH CORPORATE WORSHIP EXPERIENCES

A REPORT AND ANALYSIS OF A MINISTRY PROJECT  
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY  
RICK HYDE

MAY 8, 1992



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am indebted to several people for their help, inspiration, and encouragement. Therefore, I would like to dedicate this project to the following people:

To my wife Kay, for being so patient with the demands of my long educational career. I have either been in school or taught school most of my life. Assuming that the doctor of ministry is my terminal degree, I hope that I can be as patient when she begins her graduate work;

To my children Carrie and Jonathan, for helping me understand how young minds work. Carrie will soon be going into junior high school; Jonathan is now in the third grade. They won't be "children" much longer;

To my church family, the First Baptist Church of Murfreesboro, Arkansas, for their support of my seminary work. Since becoming their pastor in December of 1982, the church has funded my master's degree from Southwestern and this doctorate that I am presently working on at Midwestern.

Not only have they provided the funds, but I appreciate their prayers, encouragement, and understanding during my Mondays and summers away from the church field;

To Fred and June Caver, for their Christmas gift figurine of Jesus blessing the children. Their gift has inspired and motivated me as I worked on this project at my desk;

To the children and parents of our church for helping with this project. I hope that it has helped them;

To my good friend Jackie Edwards, Children's Consultant, Sunday School Department of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, for her encouragement and thoughts. Jackie introduced me to the joys and rewards of ministering to children in "Children's Park" at Arkansas Baptist Assembly near Siloam Springs, Arkansas. She has educated me concerning the "language of Zion" in relation to the "thinking of children." Hopefully, that "education" is evident in this project. Her evaluation and analysis of this report is deeply appreciated;

To all pastors who love and appreciate children enough to plan corporate worship to include them. Keep it up! I wish there were more of us;

To David Holder and Larry Pillow, who, through the course of our doctor of ministry studies and peer group bull sessions, have become two of my best friends, confidants, and counselors. I shall always be thankful that I have come to know "The Scholar" and "The Bishop";

Finally, with a note of sadness, to those who, like

me, never attended church while growing up and to the un-  
churched children of today and tomorrow. May we be more  
resolved to reach out to those who need the church.

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## INTRODUCTION

### Personal Motivations

If I had my way, I would have liked to have been a minister to children. When you give a man an idea, it's jest, well, it's jest an idea. It usually stays whole and intact. But when you give a child an idea, it's like plantin' a seed in the spring. It grows and grows. It's watered by curiosity and it's warmed by reflection. Young minds are rich soil. People are always talkin' about the simplicity of a child's faith. Sometimes they get that simplicity confused with gullibility. Why, bless it all, son, a young mind accepts nothin' Who is it who'' always askin''what makes the grass green, or what holds the stars up, or why is the moon shiny? It'' always a child. Full-grown people never ask those things, though most of them don'' know the answers. Yes, sir, you let me plant the right ideas in the minds of children, and I''l reap a rich harvest.<sup>1</sup>

The above reflection of a fictitious Reconstruction era Southern Methodist preacher embraces the purpose of this real-life modern-day Southern Baptist preacher. I hope that I have "planted the right ideas in the minds of our church's children."

It took me a while to fully understand and appreciate the difference between dissertations, theses, and projects. However, once I latched on to what a doctor of ministry

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<sup>1</sup>Joe David Brown, Stars in My Crown (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1947), 133.

project is and is not supposed to be, I have found the project most enjoyable and rewarding personally. Hopefully, it has been and will be rewarding professionally and congregationally.

The subject for this project was, in my mind, always clear: my project would have something to do with involving children in religious life. As Kenneth Chafin has noted:

I'm interested in so many aspects of my children's future. I want them to have a chance at schooling in order for their gifts to be developed and used. I want them to have advantages of living in a land where there is freedom and responsibility. I want their financial future to be secure. But more than all these I want them to have the full and meaningful life that can only come through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. I have that relationship. I cannot give it to them or make them choose it. But, working with God and the church, I can create the climate where it is most likely to take place. That's exactly what I intend to do.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Kenneth L. Chafin, Tell All the Little Children (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1974), 16.

"My children", personally speaking, are not only my "biological" children but my "church" children as well. Even though I, as Chafin states, cannot give them a personal relationship with Jesus Christ or make them choose it, I can create the climate where it is most likely to place - a climate of love, acceptance, and worth in the church.

I have a great love for children. Of all the books, mementos, items, and trinkets in my office, my most prized possession is a porcelain figure of the children gathered

about and sitting upon the lap of Jesus. And, my office is filled with items, mementos, and toys designed to appeal to and to teach children.

I have the privilege of serving as children's pastor at several summer camps each year. I have been entrusted by personnel of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, several Arkansas Southern Baptist Associations, and several independent encampments to be their children's camp pastor numerous times. Summer camps are one of the highlights of my year.

And, this project reflects a need from my past. I never attended church until I was thirteen years old. I have no memories of anyone inviting me or my family to church. I hope that this project clarifies my desire to involve children not only in worship, but in religious life and church in general. My involvement in the church is the exception, not the rule, for as Karl Menninger has so aptly noted: "what's done to children, they will do to society."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Lloyd Cory, editor, Quotable Quotations (Wheaton: Victor Books), 59.

## CHAPTER 1

### PLANNING

#### Goal 1: Children Will Be Given More Active Roles in Corporate Worship.

##### Pastoral Motivations

“(Since) Jesus gave little children a key place in his kingdom . . . we must work to restore children to a key place in our worship.”<sup>4</sup> Upon examining the list of Reports & Analyses at Midwestern’s library, I quickly realized that little has been done concerning the role of children in corporate worship. A need exists for research and application.

It must be noted that the term “children” for this project does not include “preschoolers” but those who, as described by Southern Baptist Convention denominational

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<sup>4</sup>William H. Willimon, Preaching and Leading Worship (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984), 24.

standards, are in grades one through six. Whereas pre-schoolers may be best served with "extended sessions" of the Sunday School hour during corporate worship time, older children may benefit from corporate worship as they begin to acquire and develop reading and reasoning skills.

Churches in recent years have become "child-conscience" when it comes to corporate worship. Many churches (ours included) at one time utilized a bus ministry and a "children's church" worship service that removed children from the "adult" worship service. And, many churches (ours included) have since abandoned bus ministries and returned the children to the corporate worship service. Some opt for both: children present for part of the corporate service and removed for their own worship time during the sermon to adults. Still other congregations never have and are not now designing any part of the corporate worship service with children in mind.

Mary LeBar, in her book Children CAN Worship, offers several insights as to why children must be in the adult service rather than in a separate, concurrent children's service: (1) the lack of needed personnel to carry on children's worship; and (2) many adults think children should be in the family pew.<sup>5</sup> I would include a third reason: the

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<sup>5</sup>Mary E. LeBar, Children CAN Worship (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1976), 42.

Bible supports inclusive corporate worship.

Goal 2: Research Will Reveal Bases and Methods  
to Better Involve Children in Corporate Worship.

Biblical Foundations

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" He called a little child and had him stand among them.

And he said: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me."

People were also bringing babies to Jesus to have him touch them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them. But Jesus called the children to him and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."

The boy Samuel ministered before the Lord under Eli.<sup>6</sup>

There are few Old and New Testament passages that speak to the issue at hand. Lawrence Richards notes that there is "no single, simple 'Old Testament nurture system' to be found."<sup>7</sup> Kenneth Chafin aptly notes that "while the picture of Jesus' attitude toward children is very clear, we

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<sup>6</sup>Matthew 18:1-5; Luke 18:15-17; I Samuel 3:1 NIV (New International Version).

<sup>7</sup>Lawrence O. Richards, A Theology of Children's Ministry (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1983), 17.

have very little guidance in the New Testament as to how the early church dealt with children."<sup>8</sup> Old and New Testament concepts will be considered along with some conclusions.

### Old Testament Concepts

Lawrence Richards observes that the Old Testament context can be simply defined: Children are intended to be brought up as participants in a loving, holy community. The Old Testament description of the ideal community is striking for its lack of separate institutions for the nurture of children. The Old Testament assumes that children will grow up as participating members of the community. The participation of children is illustrated in the Passover and Tabernacles festivals (Exodus 12:25-27 and Leviticus 23:43). As children participated with their families in the worship of Israel, they were introduced to symbols that would be with them as they matured and grew old: symbols that would take on deeper meanings along with a growing understanding of the faith affirmed in worship.<sup>9</sup>

Richards concludes that "there is no question that participation by children was a basic feature of nurture in the Mosaic system."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Chafin, 4.

<sup>9</sup>Lawrence O. Richards, A Theology of Children's Ministry (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1983), 18-22.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 45.

Roy L. Honeycutt, in his essay "The Child within the Old Testament Community," observes that only a few places in the Old Testament indicate that children, at least at times, attended public forums of worship. These, however, do not tell us how old such children were or what may have been involved in deciding when a child should be recognized as a full-fledged member of the worshiping community. There is a total absence of provisions about admitting children to full religious status. "The absence of rules in this area implies that, except for circumcision, children were accepted without going through ritual or meeting any other requirements."<sup>11</sup>

#### New Testament Concepts

Although Richards notes that "there is no question that participation by children was a basic feature of nurture in the Mosaic system, it is not so clear from the New Testament that participation had a parallel role in the early church."<sup>12</sup>

Assumptions have to be made. According to Richards, perhaps the most compelling argument is simply the setting in which the New Testament church groups met: the home. Richards observes that "the fact that there was no teaching

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<sup>11</sup>Clifford Ingle, Children and Conversion (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1976), 20.

<sup>12</sup>Richards, 45.

or other program developed for the young suggests that children were simply and naturally a part of the extended church family."

Honeycutt suggests that the application of Old Testament covenant theology to the New Testament Christian church implies the following:

1.□. A child born of Christian parents and nurtured in the training of a Christian home is included within the Christian community of faith.

(2) His personal decision concerns whether or not he will repudiate the faith into which he was born and reared, not whether he will "accept" that faith.

(3) His worship would center in the home and climax in the church.

(4) His home would recapture its central role in religious experience.

(5) The church would have so permeated his world that there would be no wall of separation between the remainder of his life and the church. "Joining the church" would lose much of its definitive nature and become simply the natural outgrowth of his own Christian heritage.

(6) The child would never face the possible frustration of knowing the nurture of a Christian home and the loving guidance of church leaders, only to find that once he reached an accepted chronological age that he was treated as

standing outside the covenant faith by home, by church, and by God.<sup>13</sup>

The transference and participation in the faith is echoed by Chafin: "This is the goal . . . not merely to pass along teachings, doctrines, and traditions but for the faith to become alive and intensely personal. It needs to become their faith."<sup>14</sup> Chafin cites the example of the young Timothy whose teaching in the faith by his mother and grandmother carried over into his adulthood.

Specifically, William Coble, in his essay "Children and Conversion: Problems Related to New Testament Teachings," notes four passages as evidence of integrated corporate worship in the New Testament: Acts 2:39 (Peter's words on the day of Pentecost are the climax to the invitation offered at the close of the apostle's message - both to adults and children); Ephesians 6:1-4 and Colossians 3:20-21 (parallel passages that offer evidence that children met with adults for worship since they are addressed together here); I Corinthians 7:12-15 (the reference to children is almost an off-handed allusion to a matter which is secondary to the main line of thought).<sup>15</sup>

### Conclusions

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 34-35.

<sup>14</sup>Chafin, 5.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 49-51.

In summarizing the New Testament references to the relationship of children to the church, Coble offers the following conclusions:

. . . In the problems which are encountered when dealing with the relation of children to the church, we will never find the needed guidance by studying the New Testament with the purely historical view or the backward look. . . . The supreme question is whether or not we are willing to allow the Spirit to lead us as a people into a fuller understanding and a more complete application of the truths which are recorded in the New Testament.<sup>16</sup>

Richards adds: "The nurture systems we can discern in Scripture surely are suggestive. The patterns we see in the two Testaments must be given most serious consideration."<sup>17</sup>

Since there is little biblical teaching on the subject, this project is then indeed an attempt to (in Coble's above words) "allow the Spirit to lead us into a fuller understanding and a more complete application" of the role of children in our corporate worship experiences. And, this project attempts to develop (in Richard's words) "a pattern given with most serious consideration."

It appears that the many contemporary churches have neglected something that the Scriptures assumed --that children should be present and involved in corporate worship.

Perhaps David Ng and Virginia Thomas state the assumption most succinctly:

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 44.

<sup>17</sup>Richards, 47.

The gospel is for all persons, regardless of age. The church includes persons of all ages. Worship is a corporate action in which children are participants with adults. These simple statements . . . form our theological basis for including children in the worshiping congregation. . . . Everyone can hear the Good News. . . . Everyone can belong to the body of Christ. . . . Everyone can worship together . . . . Everyone can see the pictures of grace.<sup>18</sup>

For an embellishment and application of these and other biblical foundations, see the three sermon briefs in Chapter 2, Preparation.

### Psychological Considerations

G. Temp Sparkman observes that

Salvation is a religious reality. However, because it operates in the lives of persons, it has a psychological dimension. To view salvation developmentally means to move from the theological base of the substance of salvation to the question of how the reality is appropriated in the course of human development. Take some popular questions in religious education circles: When is a person ready to make a declaration of faith? Should children be baptized? When is a person responsible for sin? The substance of these questions has to be dealt with both by theology and psychology. While there is interplay between the two, theology primarily defines the meaning of the problem; psychology primarily answers the "when" of the problem.<sup>19</sup>

For the purpose of this project, there are three psychological areas to deal with: the capability of children to embrace faith, the capability of children to under-

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<sup>18</sup>David Ng and Virginia Thomas, Children in the Worshiping Community (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), 18.

<sup>19</sup>G. Temp Sparkman, The Salvation and Nurture of the Child of God (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1983), 36.

stand faith, and the capability of children to worship with adults.

The Capability of Children to Embrace Faith

Sparkman cites psychologists Erik Erikson and Jean Piaget as offering sensible explanations that help form his theory of the awakening to faith and the shape of nurture. Although it is not the point of this project to major on psychology, Sparkman's integration of Erikson's and Piaget's theories into a spiritual nurture system are appropriate to the present discussion of children and worship.

According to Sparkman, Erikson's psychology provides the most promising basis for making decisions about how to nurture people since society (and in our case, the church) becomes a partner in one's development, challenging and supporting the growing individual.<sup>20</sup>

In relation to Piaget, Sparkman concludes that although Piaget was not an educator,

His discovery can certainly be recommended as the ruling base for what happens cognitively . . . so that curriculum makers will not attempt to make of children what they are not yet ready to become while at the same time help them to mature at just the points where they are structurally ready. It is the way children are made; it should be the way we aid their making.<sup>21</sup>

It is important to realize that children as well as

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<sup>20</sup>Sparkman, 256.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 260.

adults are capable of worship. Willimon again writes that children at any age can worship. They may not worship in the same way or at the same cognitive level as adults worship, but they still worship. "(As) soon as possible the church needs to let parents and children know that they (the children) belong in our Sunday worship."<sup>22</sup>

Psychologists N.D. and R.S. Stehouwer, writing in the Journal of Psychology and Theology, contend that children, with their own unique interests, abilities, and manners, should be recognized by adults as "'od'" representatives on earth."<sup>23</sup> The development of rewarding adult/child corporate worship experiences cannot be solely relegated to the church. Often Christian parents think that this is something that happens outside the family, in a structured setting, or with structured material. Narramore and others have pointed out the fact that a child'" first conceptualization of God is that God is very much like parents, particularly very much like the father. "Thus, in a real sense, parents bring God to earth for the child."<sup>24</sup>

James Drescher illustrates the importance of the parental role in helping children worship God:

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<sup>22</sup>Willimon, 24.

<sup>23</sup>N.D.V. and R.S. Stehouwer, "Authority and Discipline," Journal of Psychology and Theology (Winter 1983), 342.

<sup>24</sup>Stehouwer, 346-47.

I remember a little fellow, frightened by lightning and thunder, who called out one dark night, "Daddy, come. I'm scared." "Son," the father said, "God loves you and he'll take care of you." "I know God loves me," the boy replied, "but right now I want somebody with skin on."

If I were starting my family again, that is what I would want to be above all - God's love with skin on.<sup>25</sup>

Cos Davis adds that developmental psychologists emphasize a sense of trust as the first of the developmental tasks which the child must achieve. This trust is developed as parents meet the basic needs of the child.

When one understands how the ability to trust is developed, it is not sacrilegious to say that the parent is the child's first god. Before a child ever conceives of the possibility of the idea of God, he believes only in his parents. They assume an intermediate role in his pilgrimage of faith in God.<sup>26</sup>

Even though this project has defined "children" as those in grades one through six, it is important to lay early foundations for good worship patterns. Richard Dobbins, a licensed psychologist and ordained minister, observes that it is never too early to begin linking pleasure with religious activities in the mind of a child by smiling at him and praising him for religious words and gestures he repeats. Dobbins points out that one of the most neglected areas is the presence of men in the church experiences of

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<sup>25</sup>James Drescher, If I Were to Start My Family Again (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1979), 46.

<sup>26</sup>Cos H. Davis, Children and the Christian Faith (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1979), 33.

children. "When men are part of the team, it is especially helpful to single mothers whose babies miss the touch of their fathers. Such a ministry begins to link the house of God with pleasure in a baby's mind." This writer would also note that such an early male presence would begin to develop a good image for the child's pastor (since most Southern Baptist pastors are male).

Dobbins also adds this humorous yet true anecdote to illustrate that limited, yet innocent, perception of young children: "A little girl (said), 'I don't know much about God,' she admitted. 'You see, it tells all about Him in the Bible, but I can't read yet.'"<sup>27</sup>

#### The Capability of Children to Understand Faith

Although the role of parents and the church is important, much rests upon the response of the child. Ludwig, Webber, and Iben noted older children were less concerned about the Doctrinal and Physical (external) areas, but showed much more interest in speaking to God about their personal and emotional feelings. In the same way, God became less remote and more personal to the older children and the focus of the "Image of God" shifted away from the Father-figure. Though there was not much difference in time perspective, the older children did shift away from the immediate to a greater awareness of the future and past.

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<sup>27</sup>Dobbins, 112.

There were no significant sex differences. In general as a child develops religion tends to move from an external, doctrinal belief to an integral part of the child's perception.<sup>28</sup>

William Hendricks offers a foundation that he feels is necessary for a fulfilling worship for children in his book, A Theology for Children. He incorporated several psychological principles as he urged a seminary chapel audience of ministers and church workers to

. . . learn from them (children). The text (Matthew 19:13-15) tells us, learn from them. And of course, we in our pedagogical patterns, have got it somewhat backward. . . . I want to talk about "the ABC's" and "the Four R's." It's not as simple as it sounds. It never is.

The "A" is how do get "across" religious ideas to kids. . . . You need to start with ethics and then move to some kinds of worship activities . . . (that are) fun and desirable worship customs.

(The "B" is) to teach children to "believe" by enhancing their imaginative capacity. . . . Those of you who are destruction bent on squeezing all imaginativeness out of children . . . should have your tongues cut out!

The "C" in teaching children theology (is) "continuity". . . . You need to speak a little bit about the dark side . . . and a little bit about the bright side. . . . You've got to have balance and continuity.

The first "R" is to "remind" them about creation. . . . You stress the importance of getting started.

(The second "R" is that) children need to be reminded of the "repetition" of God's concern in providence . . . by things that they like and feel familiar with and enjoy . . . a feeling of location, a feeling of having something to come to.

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<sup>28</sup>David J. Ludwig, Timothy Webber, and Douglas Iben, "Letters to God: A Study of Children's Religious Concepts," Journal of Psychology and Theology (Winter 1974), 33.

The (third and) favored "R" is the "reassurance" of God's redeeming love. One example is . . . that elemental experience of childhood, "Do you know the way home?" . . . A feeling of location, a feeling of having something to come to.

(The fourth "R" is) the "realization" of God's promises . . . When do you get the prize? When the race is won, when the game is over.<sup>29</sup>

Cos H. Davis notes some specific problems related to talking religion with a child: religious words, literal/symbolic language, abstract/concrete images, explanation.

Regarding religious words, Davis warns that religious subjects are generally more difficult to talk about because many terms we use have religious meanings. Often these terms mean something else when used in conversation which is not primarily of a religious nature. This "language of Zion" can often hinder communication. As adults, we use such words as saved, lost, salvation, faith, redemption, repent, love, heaven, and hell with some degree of understanding and their meanings. But few children understand the religious meanings of such words unless we take time to explain. Davis likens their predicament to an adult perspective:

Have you ever wished that the doctor, lawyer, or dentist would talk in terms that you could understand? Have you ever left their offices not knowing what was said or what you were to do? This is the same type of confusion a child faces when we assume that he will understand what we intend to communicate by religious words. Just because he nods approval of what we say does not mean that he under-

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<sup>29</sup>William L. Hendricks, A Theology for Children (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1980), 263-68.

stands.<sup>30</sup>

One helpful solution is to translate religious terminology into language a child can understand. Davis advises caution and clarification concerning these words: Sin, faith, repent, salvation, heart, baptize, church, church member, conviction.

Regarding literal/symbolic language, Davis warns that, while there are exceptions to the rule, children generally do not understand symbolic language. They tend to make literal interpretations of what we say. Whenever possible, symbolic language should be avoided in favor of language which is more easily understood. Whenever symbols cannot be avoided, care should be taken that children understand their meanings. Davis makes a good point with the phrase "washed in the blood": "Can you imagine what fantastic and gory images a child could conjure up by taking such a phrase at face value!"<sup>31</sup>

Regarding abstract/concrete images, Davis states that there are several concepts in Christianity which are difficult for a child to understand. Something abstract cannot be thought of or adequately described in purely physical or material terms. Children are basically concrete in understanding concepts and ideas. "For example," writes Davis,

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<sup>30</sup>Davis, 61.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 63.

"a child will normally think of the church as a physical building rather than as a body of baptized believers."<sup>32</sup>

Regarding explanation, Davis observes that one of the easiest errors to commit while talking with children about religion is to make statements or to ask questions which anticipate a simple, positive response. Part of the problem is that children are prone to want to say what they think we want to hear. Davis warns that "obviously, we can make a 'Christian' out of any child by simply asking the right questions and getting the right answer."<sup>33</sup>

Sparkman cautions that we often assume that in answering a child's question we must tell everything. He illustrates the point with his "Emma model": "Her questions should be responded to positively, but they need not be dwelt on or be the content of her direct instruction."<sup>34</sup>

#### The Capability of Children to Worship with Adults

Since, then, children are capable of worship, are children "better off" with adults in a corporate worship service? Ng and Thomas answer:

Some churches cautiously answer, "Maybe - as long as they're quiet and require no special attention." Others say, "Part of the time," so children leave after a hymn and a children's sermon. Several churches respond with a definite "o." They plan an

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 64.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 66.

<sup>34</sup>Sparkman, 64.

alternate activity, frequently a worthwhile activity, outside the sanctuary.<sup>35</sup>

1.□. Roger Gobbel and Philip C. Huber get to the heart of the matter and attitude:

. . . To a very large extent, we have been tyrannized by the improper question, "What can we do for our children during worship?"

. . . The more fruitful and exciting yet more difficult and demanding question is this: "What shall we do along with the children so that all of us together may do the proper work of the community?"<sup>36</sup>

Add to this Weisheit's perspective: "Children in a worship service are not like uninvited offspring who gate-crash a wedding reception. They are not brought along to church because the parents couldn't find a babysitter."<sup>37</sup>

### Conclusions

Perhaps the proper attitude is best expressed by Weisheit again: "If, as children, people are bonded to the worship services of the congregation, they are connected with an experience that will continue all their lives."<sup>38</sup>

Chafin adds that "if the church creates a climate in which decisions can be made, as the children are ready good

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<sup>35</sup>Ng and Thomas, 10.

<sup>36</sup>A. Roger Gobbel and Philip C. Huber, Creative Designs with Children at Worship (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), 5.

<sup>37</sup>Eldon Weisheit, God's Word in a Child's World (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1986), 12.

<sup>38</sup>Weisheit, 13.

decisions will be made."<sup>39</sup>

Dobbins reiterates: "It is extremely important for (parents) to demonstrate and explain the practicality of Christianity to your youngster. Otherwise, as he grows older, he may reject sacred ideas as being impractical in his secular world."<sup>40</sup>

### Practical Implementations

How does one wed the biblical foundations and psychological considerations for involving children in corporate worship? Several factors need to be considered - among these are concerns, methods, and elements.

#### Concerns

Mary LeBar cautions that the following practical steps should be taken if children are going to be included in the corporate worship service:

(1) Understand that an hour is a very long time for a child. See that the child is as comfortable as possible.

(2) See that the child has lively physical action before church, so sitting will be a restful change.

(3) He should be given approval for anything he gleans from the service.

(4) Parents should be noncritical about the sermon and

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<sup>39</sup>Chafin, 16.

<sup>40</sup>Dobbins, 114.

the church.<sup>41</sup>

Willimon also states that parents may need to "develop skills in keeping children occupied or diverted during the parts of the service when children get restless."<sup>42</sup>

Willimon further observes that as worship became more didactic (more verbally oriented and less action oriented), as music became more difficult to sing, and as the congregation became more passive, children did not get anything out of Sunday worship. "Many of our worship practices (our abstract sermons, long prayers, and passive worship) need to be changed to accommodate the needs of children - and of adults."<sup>43</sup>

Mark Edwards, minister of music at First Baptist Church of Nashville, Tennessee, also suggests that the worship leaders should be careful to explain unfamiliar terms, outline the progression or drama of worship, and describe the service as a whole.<sup>44</sup>

### Methods

Thomas lists six ways that congregations can express "yes" to the inclusion of children in corporate worship:

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<sup>41</sup>LeBar, 42-44.

<sup>42</sup>Willimon, 23.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

<sup>44</sup>Mark Edwards, "A Message to Pastors about Planning Worship for Children," Children's Leadership (January-March 1981), 42.

(1) State intentions clearly through officially adopted policies and publicize among members through personal letters, pastoral visits, and classes.

(2) Support parents as God's primary teachers of worship. Plan a class where parents can share concerns and then seek answers together. Include a theology of worship, the relation of home worship and corporate worship, how children perceive and participate in worship at different levels of development, and the biblical model of parents in worship with children.

(3) Educate children for worship. Have a class for early elementary children and their parents. Give each child a worship kit, containing pencil, bookmarks, some instruction about how to use the worship guide that day, and an activity that helps them listen to a least one point in the sermon.

(4) Help children contribute. Avoid discrimination when hymn books, bulletins, pledge cards, or fellowship records are distributed or when the offering plate is passed. Invite children to serve as ushers, greeters, and choir members.

(5) Plan worship for all ages. Plan with adults, youth, and children in mind.

(6) Work to create a climate of welcome for all. Have a children-in-worship committee that, among other duties, interprets the needs of children to staff and congregation.

"aying `yes''to children in worship means continuous prayer, study, education, public relations, staff cooperation, and planning - in short, hard work."<sup>45</sup>

### Elements

The two most distinctive elements of worship that are being utilized currently to involve children in an integrated corporate worship service are music and the children's sermon.

Grace McGavran, in her book Learning How Children Worship, sets forth the following reasons for using music as an effective tool to involve children in worship:

Music sets the atmosphere. Music can induce moods through which the child becomes more ready to set aside other thoughts and turn to God.

Music adds emotion to intellect. Children, deprived of music in their religious nurture, are being cheated of something that can never be replaced.

Music brings out the meaning and gives emphasis to certain words.

Music can bring individuals into a group for a sense of acceptance and contribution.

Music itself is beauty. "Inattentive or indifferent singing, `let's see whether the boys or girls can sing the loudest' singing, singing concentrated upon the singer is

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<sup>45</sup>Ng and Thomas, 14-18.

not worship partly because it is not beauty."<sup>46</sup>

The Baptist Hymnal (1991 edition, Convention Press, Nashville, Tennessee) is the first SBC hymnal and one of the few hymnals on the market to list "'children' Hymns" in the topical index of hymns. Thirty-seven children' hymns are listed for use in corporate worship.

The other main expression for children in corporate worship is the children's sermon or children's worship feature. Anne Tonks defines such as "a three to five minute special emphasis for children led by the pastor or other worship leader at some time during the congregational worship on Sunday."<sup>47</sup> Franklin Segler adds: "Why not have a ministry of the Word for them? Too often worship services are planned with adults in mind, and the children are neglected."<sup>48</sup>

Weisheit is an advocate of the children's sermon because

. . . children are special. Adults can easily see that their needs were considered in the planning of the worship service. The seats were made for adults. The Bibles, hymnals, and bulletins are all planned for the adult world. Adults are in charge of the music. . . . One can understand why children might get the idea that they really aren't welcomed

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<sup>46</sup>Grace McGavran, Learning How Children Worship (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1964), 41-48.

<sup>47</sup>Anne Tonks, "Do You Know What These Words Mean?", Children's Leadership (April-June 1988), 42-43.

<sup>48</sup>Franklin Segler, Christian Worship (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1967), 133.

at a worship service. A children's message says to every child, "We knew you were coming and we have planned for you."

Roy DeBrand, in his book Children's Sermons for Special Occasions, reinforces the uniqueness of the children's sermon by adding that

The children will love you for doing children's sermons. They may forget the texts and some of the main truths applied . . . but they'll never forget you. Children's sermons establish a rapport unattainable by any other medium. When they are ready to come talk to you about salvation or when they need to talk to you about a problem, you won't be the stranger "behind the pulpit." . . . And, when they're ready to profess Christ and join the church, they'll be more at ease. They've walked the aisle many times.<sup>49</sup>

For the children's sermon to be effective, Segler makes these suggestions. (1) Careful, advance preparation is necessary. (2) The sermon should be placed at an appropriate point in the service. (3) Participation for children ages 6-12 should be voluntary. (4) Give instructions ahead of time as to what procedure will be followed. (5) Firmly and kindly insist upon attention. (6) The entire period should take only about three or four minutes. (7) A brief prayer pertaining to the lesson should be given. (8) The children should then return to sit with their parents.<sup>50</sup>

Perhaps DeBrand says it most succinctly by urging pastors to "Be brief, be bright, be brisk, be right. This

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<sup>49</sup>Roy DeBrand, Children's Sermons for Special Occasions (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1983), 4.

<sup>50</sup>Segler, 136.

takes prayer, practice, preparation, and patience."<sup>51</sup> He also advocates the preparation and distribution of what he calls a " `memory maker' - an object inexpensive enough to give one to each child."<sup>52</sup>

However, not all are "sold" on the value of children's sermons that employ object lessons. Willimon argues that

. . . most of these efforts are misguided. Many so-called children's sermons are neither sermons nor are they for children. They are actually petty, unscriptural, moralistic object lessons which children find difficult to follow because they cannot make the connection between the object and the lesson. The children's sermon is often for the parents - the preacher telling the children what Mommy and Daddy believe the children ought to hear. Younger children cannot understand the moralisms put forth in the children's sermon, and older children refuse to come forward for the children's sermon because they feel that they are being put on display and made to look foolish --which they often are.<sup>53</sup>

Iris Cully picks up this criticism of object lessons in her book Christian Child Development:

. . . Young children think concretely and do not make abstract deductions from a concrete example. . . . The whole point of the object lesson is to make an abstraction from the concrete. . . . At best they will be confused. Usually, they will forget the explanation almost immediately and remember only the object. What a waste of time - unless entertainment was the whole point!<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>DeBrand, 6.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 7.

<sup>53</sup>Willimon, 24.

<sup>54</sup>Iris V. Cully, Christian Child Development (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979), 118.

All arguments considered, there is merit in utilizing a relevant, well-prepared, biblically-based, psychologically-sound children's sermon that avoids abstract object lessons.

Of the two major ways of involving children in corporate worship, singing is active whereas the children's sermon tends to be passive. Gobbel and Huber remind us that "much of what we have done for the children in worship has cast them into the role of passive recipients of our activities."<sup>55</sup> Periodic and appropriate utilization of children in worship prayers, Scripture readings, offertories, and other acts of worship need to be considered.

### Conclusions

The key to meaningful corporate worship for adults and children together appears to be balance. Iris Cully, in her book Christian Worship and Church Education, adds that if any one age group predominates, the whole people of God are not included. She contends that

The inclusion of children in congregational worship requires that the service be focused around elements comprehensible to the largest number of people, most of whom are not overly intellectual or aesthetic. This does not imply talking down, oversimplifying, finding a least common denominator, or being mediocre. Simplicity can be awesome in its depth - a baby in a manger, for example.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>Gobbel and Huber, 28.

<sup>56</sup>Iris V. Cully, Christian Worship and Church Education (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967), 142.

Cully's thoughts lead us back to the beginning observation of the fictitious preacher: "People are always talkin' about the simplicity of a child's faith. Sometimes they get simplicity confused with gullibility."<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>57</sup>Brown, 133.

## CHAPTER 2

### PREPARATION

#### Goal 3: Adults and Children Will Be Given More Active Roles in Planning Corporate Worship through the Creation of a Worship Committee.

Several items were prepared in anticipation for the actualization of this project: three sermons, three children's sermons, the enlistment of the Worship Committee, two worship manuals, and several evaluation forms.

#### Enlistment of Worship Committee

A cross-section of people were chosen to compose the Worship Committee: three adults and two children. The members were contacted by letter, phone, and personal visit. A brief sketch of each member follows in alphabetical order.

Jane Caldwell is the mother of two boys, ages twelve and six. She teaches social studies (grades four through six) at Murfreesboro Public Elementary School. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Henderson State University in Elementary Education. She has been a member of our church for five years and directed our Vacation Bible School last year.

Steve Conly is the father of two girls, ages thirteen and eleven. He is employed by International Paper Company.

He is a high school graduate with vo-tech training. He has been a member of our church for ten years. He is a deacon and Sunday School director. He taught our first and second grade Sunday School class for several years.

Anna Featherston is in the third grade. She has attended our church for three years. (Her father and mother are members of our church.) She has yet to make a profession of faith.

Mary Alice Gilmer retired to our community from Dallas, Texas, about six years ago. She is a wife and mother of two grown children. She has worked with children in various ways in our church. She currently teaches one of our preschool classes.

John David Terrell is in the sixth grade. He has attended our church all of his life. (His parents and older brother are members of our church as are his paternal grandparents.) I baptized him three years ago.

The letter sent to the Committee members is on the following page.

Letter to Worship Committee

**MURFREESBORO FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH  
P.O. Box 160 500 S. Washington  
Murfreesboro, AR 71958  
1-501-285-3141**

“Dedicating Ourselves to Declaring His Word and Discipling His People” (Matthew 28:19-20)  
through the Southern Baptist Convention, Arkansas Baptist State Convention, and Little River Ass’n

Pastor: Rick Hyde, 285-2689

Minister of Music: Steve Garner, 246-5257

Minister of Youth: Toby Talley, 285-3143

October 1, 1991

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I need your help! I am completing my seminary work and need you to serve on a special committee to help me with my project. Listed below are the committee members, meeting times, and responsibilities:

**WORSHIP COMMITTEE**

**Adults:**

Steve Conly; Jane Caldwell; Mary Alice Gilmer

**Children:**

Anna Featherston; John David Terrell

**Meeting times:**

Sunday afternoon, November 3, 2:00

Sunday afternoon, November 10, 2:00

Sunday afternoon, November 24, 2:00

(It's important that you attend each of these.

The meetings should last about one hour.)

**Worship services:**

Sunday morning, November 10

Sunday morning, November 17

Sunday morning, November 24

(You need to be at these if at all possible.)

**Responsibilities:**

Learn how children can be more involved in our worship services.

Share ideas on what adults and children think about worship.

Help plan a special Sunday morning worship service for November 24.

Evaluate what we have done as a group.

I hope that you can help. Even though this is over a month away, I'll be talking to you about it soon. If you have any questions before I see you, let me know.

Sincerely,

Bro. Rick

Goal 4: A Summary Reflecting the Meetings  
and Contributions of the Worship Committee  
Will Be Included in the Report and Analysis.

Initial Meeting of Worship Committee

The Committee convened on Sunday afternoon, November 3, at 2:00. All lay members were present. Also present by my invitation were our minister of music and our youth minister.

Our minister of music, Dr. Steve Garner, serves our church on a part-time basis. His full-time position is chairman of the Church Music Department at Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, Arkansas. He has been on our church staff for one year.

Our youth minister, Toby Talley, is a senior at Ouachita Baptist University. He has been on our church staff for two years. During his freshman year, he served as youth and children's summer intern at the First Baptist Church of Warren, Arkansas.

The meeting began with an explanation of the criteria for choosing the Committee members followed by an overview of the project and activities. The timetable was presented.

The personal, pastoral, biblical, and psychological rationales found in the Introduction and Chapter 1 of this Report and Analysis (pages 1-21) were the basis for discussion.

The meeting lasted for about an hour.

## Second Meeting of the Worship Committee

The second meeting of the Committee was on Sunday afternoon, November 10, at 2:00.

The practical implementations discussed in Chapter 1 (pages 13-19) were the basis for discussion.

The Committee helped compose the following initial surveys printed on pages 35, 36, and 39.

The Initial Adult Survey was printed on fluorescent pink heavy stock paper. It was circulated among and collected from parents during the Sunday School hour and was distributed to all other adults prior to the worship service on November 17.

The Initial Children's Survey was printed on fluorescent green heavy stock paper. It was circulated among and collected from the children's Sunday School classes (grades one through three and grades four through six) on November 17.

Initial Survey for Adults, Front Page

**GROWN-UPS, WHAT DO YOU THINK?**

**\*I need your opinion whether you have young children or not.**

**\*How do you think a child perceives each element of worship?**

**\*How can a child participate in each part of the service?**

**PLEASE JOT DOWN YOUR THOUGHTS  
AND PLACE THIS SHEET IN THE BOX IN THE FOYER.**

**WELCOME**

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**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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**PRAYERS**

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**HYMNS**

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**SCRIPTURE READINGS**

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**RECEPTION OF OFFERING**

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**(More on the back ...)**

Initial Survey for Adults, Back Page

**CHILDREN'S TIME**

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**MUSIC**

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**SERMON**

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**INVITATION**

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**ANY OTHER THOUGHTS ON HOW WE MIGHT BETTER INVOLVE CHILDREN IN OUR WORSHIP SERVICES?**

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**OVERALL, HOW INVOLVED ARE THE CHILDREN IN OUR WORSHIP SERVICES? (Check your response.)**

- Uninvolved
- Somewhat Involved
- Involved
- Very Involved
- Too Involved

**THANKS!** Please place this sheet in the box in the foyer.

### Summary of Initial Adults Survey Responses

One hundred initial adult surveys were distributed. Eighteen were distributed and collected from parents during the Sunday School hour on November 17. Twenty-one were returned by other adults who received them prior to the beginning of the worship service on that day.

The most frequent item commented upon was "Children's Time." Everyone responding to the survey included positive remarks. (I have been doing children's sermons at every service for over seven years now.)

"Music" was the second most popular response. Thirty-five indicated that they always enjoyed hearing the children sing and thought that it helped children feel involved.

"Reception of Offering" came in third with thirty-four responses. Most indicated that this would be the ideal place to involve children in worship.

"Scripture Readings" was fourth with twenty-one responses. Several commented that selected children should be good readers and prepared ahead of time.

Fourteen expressed their concern in the "Invitation" space that children should clearly understand its nature.

The free-will response space drew comments of a general nature. However, only seventeen of the respondents commented.

Concerning the last question regarding the involvement

of children in our worship services, ten checked "somewhat involved" twenty-one "involved" eight "very involved."

## Initial Survey for Children

**KIDS, WHAT DO YOU THINK?**

What can we grown-ups do to make worship time more interesting to you kids? (Write a few words or tell Bro. Rick.)  
Mark "X" in front of those things that you would like to do.

**Welcome** \_\_\_\_\_  
(When Bro. Rick tells us to say "hi" to each other.)

**Announcements** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Things going on during Sunday and the week.)

**Prayers** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Invocation: the first prayer. Benediction: the last prayer.  
Prayer Requests: when anyone can tell about those who are sick.)

**Hymns** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Worship songs that everyone sings.)

**Readings** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Scripture passages we read out loud.)

**Offerings** \_\_\_\_\_  
(When we give money to the church.)

**Children's Time** \_\_\_\_\_  
(When Bro. Rick talks to us kids.)

**Music** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Prelude, Postlude: Organ & piano music at the beginning and end.  
Anthem: When the Choir sings by themselves.)

**Message** \_\_\_\_\_  
(When Bro. Rick preaches to everyone.)

**Invitation** \_\_\_\_\_  
(When people can tell Bro. Rick about promises they want to make to God and to our church.)

**CHECK ONE**

- There's nothing for kids to do during our worship time.  
 There's a few things for kids to do during worship time.  
 There's a lot for kids to do during our worship time.

**THANKS** for filling this out. – Bro. Rick

## Summary of Children's Survey Responses

Nineteen children were surveyed - eight in Grades 1-3 Sunday School Class and eleven in Grades 4-6 Sunday School Class. The survey was presented, explained, and collected by me. Three of the children entered no responses.

As with the adults, the most popular item was "Children's Time." Most of the children responding indicated that they look forward to it and enjoy it.

One volunteered for "Welcome", one for "Announcements", three for "Prayers", and eight for "Offerings."

Thirteen checked "There's a lot for kids ... "; three checked "There's a few things for kids ... ".

Goal 5: Sermons and Worship Aids Will Be Designed to Educate Children and Adults on the Worship Capabilities of Children.

Children's Sermon #1

"The Best Thing that I Can Give to You"

Rick Hyde, First Baptist Church, Murfreesboro, Arkansas  
November 10, 1991

Boys and girls, I hope that you will find this month a little bit different and exciting for you. For the next three Sundays, our worship time together will show everyone that Jesus wants all of us to worship Him - grown-ups and kids.

There's a verse in the Bible where Jesus said, "Let the children come to me." That's what we'll be talking about the next three Sundays. I appreciate you all helping me make our banners. (Two 3' x 8' banners displaying the project theme, artwork, and handprints of the children were hung in the front of the auditorium. See page 44.)

Just as Jesus told the grown-ups that day that he wanted all children to love Him, I want to tell you that I love you. And because I love you, I try to give you good things every Sunday. What are some of the good things that I give you on Sundays? (Responses: stickers, puzzles, coloring sheets, candy, etc.) What do you think is the best thing that I have ever given you? (Overwhelming response: candy!)

Well, the best thing that I can give you is the teaching of Jesus. Jesus loves you and I hope that you will love

Him back - while you're young and when you grow up.

When you are all grown up and think back on when you were a kid and on all of the good things that Bro. Rick gave you, I hope you remember that the most important thing that I gave you is the teaching that Jesus loves you and wants you to love Him back. That's all! You can go back to your seats now.

Wait a minute! I do have something else for you - a coloring sheet (next page) and some candy.

COLORING SHEET, CHILDREN'S SERMON #1  
(REPRODUCED AT  $\frac{3}{4}$  SCALE)

## **BE A PASTOR'S PAL**

**Trace and color one of your handprints  
inside of my handprint as a sign of our friendship.  
Write your name by mine.**

**(In the bound copy, my handprint appears here.)**

**THANKS for being my pal! - Bro. Rick**

Worship Banners

**“Let the Children Come”**

**(In the bound copy,  
the theme artwork of the boy  
and girl entering the church  
appeared here.)**

**(The handprints and names  
of the children appeared here  
on each banner.)**

**(The banners were white  
with blue artwork,  
blue handprints, and  
red names.)**

**“Let the Children Come”**

**(The theme artwork of the boy  
and girl entering the church  
appeared here.)**

**(The handprints and names  
of the children appeared here  
on each banner.)**

**(The banners were white  
with blue artwork,  
blue handprints, and  
red names.)**

## Sermon Brief #1

"For the Kingdom of God Belongs to Such as These:  
the Nature of Childlike Faith"

Rick Hyde, First Baptist Church, Murfreesboro, Arkansas  
November 10, 1991

To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.

The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men -- robbers, evildoers, adulterers -- or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.' But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." People were also bringing babies to Jesus to have him touch them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them. But Jesus called the children to him and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." (Luke 18:9-17, NIV)

Warren W. Wiersbe has observed that "we tell the children to behave like adults, but Jesus tells the adults to model themselves after the children!"<sup>58</sup>

There are three models from the text found in Luke 18 to form a basis for involving children in corporate worship:

(1) The Childlike Spirit (Sermon Brief #1); (2) The Parental Role (Sermon Brief #2); (3) The Child Worshipper (Sermon Brief #3). Today, let's consider the nature of childlike

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<sup>58</sup>Warren W. Wiersbe, Be Diligent (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1987), 99.

faith as found in the childlike spirit.

Although it was the custom of the rabbis to bless the children, Jesus used the occasion to reinforce the truth He wanted the disciples to grasp in the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector: that God desires the childlike spirit and rejects the childish spirit. Just as the Pharisees were guilty of looking down on the tax collectors ("To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else . . ." Luke 18:9), the disciples were guilty of looking down on the eager parents and children ("When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them." Luke 18:15).

It is interesting to note that the one raised and trained in the law -- the Pharisee -- is the one readily exposed as a childish follower. Childish can be defined as "immature; silly." Notice verse 11: "The Pharisee stood up and prayed about (or to) himself." Although the Pharisee had been trained in the Jewish religion from early childhood, he failed to understand one of the most fundamental practices -- that of prayer. A child may perceive prayers or Bible verses as jumbled words and phrases, but one sign of maturity is the understanding of words and phrases. The Pharisee left childhood behind, but retained childishness. He never grew past the rote prayers. He was a perplexing person.

The Pharisee employed the personal pronoun "I" four times in two sentences: "God, I thank you that I am not like all other men -- robbers, evil-doers, adulterers -- or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get" (verses 11 and 12). The Pharisee never outgrew the childish need to prove the superiority of self. Immature children are always concerned with being better, faster, stronger, and smarter than others. Pride has often been described as the most dangerous sin, certainly the earliest -- Eve's pride brought about the Fall in Genesis 3.

The Pharisee's pride blinded himself to the true measure of righteousness. His assertions were most probably correct. He was not like other men. He did exceed the requirements of the law -- fasting was required only once a year (Leviticus 16:29) and tithes were required only on one's increase (Deuteronomy 14:22). However, God's desire is not for the material but for the spiritual. In an earlier encounter with the Pharisees, Jesus told them: "I desire mercy, not sacrifice. For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners" (Matthew 9:13). The inability to see the value of spiritual matters over material is childish. Not only was the Pharisee a perplexing person, he was a prideful person.

The Pharisee, who expected much, received nothing. Jesus said that he went home unjustified. He was precluded

from reward and will, in fact, be humbled: "For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled . . ." (verse 14). The childish cannot understand when they do not receive a desired but undeserved reward. And, nobody wants to associate with the selfish or the boastful. The Pharisee's childishness revealed him as a perplexing, prideful, precluded person.

Childishness is found not only in those who are clearly out of God's favor, but it is found also in those whom God chooses to favor. On an earlier occasion involving the blessing of children, Luke recorded that:

An argument started among the disciples as to which of them would be the greatest. Jesus, knowing their thoughts, took a little child and had him stand beside him. Then he said to them, "Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. For he who is least among you all -- he is the greatest." (Luke 9:46-48, NIV)

One might expect such childish behavior from the Pharisees, but from the disciples? The Pharisees and the disciples (at times) acted like spoiled children. They were taught to think and do better, but forgot or chose to act selfishly. All too often, they were revealed as petty people.

Whereas the one raised and trained in the law (the Pharisee) and the ones chosen by Jesus and trained in the faith (the disciples) are exposed as childish, the one excluded and isolated from the law and the temple (the tax

collector), is revealed as one who exemplifies the childlike spirit. "But the tax collector stood at a distance" (verse 13). Whereas the Pharisee "stood up and prayed", the tax collector "would not even look up to heaven." His prayer did not contain the nominative "I" but the subjective "me."

His contrite spirit reflected the childlike quality of experiencing guilt. Whereas the Pharisee was a prideful person, the publican was a penitent person.

"I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God." The tax collector received exactly what he asked for: mercy (verse 13). In childlike honesty, he admitted his need and his problem: "God, have mercy on me, a sinner." How many times has a parent said to a child, "Just be honest with me and always tell me the truth"? Because of his childlike honesty, the publican became a pardoned person.

"I tell you that this man . . . went home justified before God." God justifies those who seek His forgiveness.

"He who humbles himself will be exalted" (verse 14). Unlike the spoiled behavior of the Pharisee and the disciples, the tax collector parallels an unspoiled child -- still young enough (in his faith) to come to God on His terms. The publican was the preferred person. This is the type of person that God prefers -- the one with childlike faith.

That brings us to the children. "But Jesus called the

children to Him and said, `Let the little children come to me . . . '" (Luke 18:16). Just as Jesus called adults to Him, he also called children. To exclude children from the experience of worship violates the mandate of Christ. This is the petition of Christ to those adults who follow Him.

"For the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these" (verse 17). The need to embrace childlike faith is illustrated in Jesus' acceptance and exemplifying of the children present. The very fact that the Scripture calls believers the "children of God" validates this: "Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God . . . ." (John 1:12). This is the pattern established in the Gospel.

Mark, in his account of the scene recorded in Luke 18, includes this observation: "And He took the children in His arms, put His hands on them and blessed them" (Mark 10:16).

Jesus secures those who come to Him. The safest place is "in the arms of God." All of His children, regardless of age, are preserved in the arms of God.

We can learn a valuable lesson. God wants us to embrace their kind of faith no matter what our ages. Too many of us offer God childish faith instead of childlike faith. Perhaps there's a child here that wants to promise God that kind of faith today. Perhaps there's an adult here who has realized that your childish faith does not honor God. Perhaps you know of a child who needs to be brought to

Jesus. Heed the invitation of Christ: "For the kingdom of God belongs to such as these" -- those of childlike faith.

Children's Sermon #2

"The Best Thing that Your Parents Can Give You"  
Rick Hyde, First Baptist Church, Murfreesboro, Arkansas  
November 17, 1991

Last Sunday we talked about the best thing that I can give you -- the teaching of Jesus. Today, let's talk about the best thing that your parents can give you.

What are some good things that your parents give you?  
(Some of the responses offered were: clothes, toys, food, a home, etc.)

There are many important things that your parents do give you. The most important thing that they can give you is a home where they teach you about worshiping God. Remember the story of when Jesus blessed the children? He did it when their parents brought them to Him. It's important that your parents teach you about God at home and bring you to worship Him here at our church.

This morning I have something for you to give to your parents. This is a little paper that some of us prepared to help your parents help you learn more about worshiping Jesus. (See pages 71-74, "Worship Preparation Manual for Parents.") Be sure and give it to them right now.

## Sermon Brief #2

"They Also Brought Children to Him:  
Nurturing Children in the Faith"  
Rick Hyde, First Baptist Murfreesboro, Arkansas  
November 17, 1991

Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it. (Proverbs 22:6, NIV)

But Jesus called the children to him and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." (Luke 18:16, NIV)

Impress them (these teachings about worship) on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. (Deuteronomy 6:7, NIV)

Someone once said, "Every child has a right to be both well fed and well led."<sup>59</sup> Most of us who are parents do everything possible to insure that our children receive the best -- the best medical care, the best schooling, the best clothes, the best homes. However, too few parents take the time to insure that their children receive the best "best" that there is -- the best worship.

As we continue our quest to involve children in our worship time together, we need to turn our attention to what we adults -- parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, neighbors, and friends -- can do to help the children learn and practice enriching worship experiences.

This sermon is not so much a theological exposition but a practical explanation to help prepare your children, grandchildren, nephews, nieces, and other little friends for

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<sup>59</sup>Cory, 58.

worship time as we nurture them in the faith -- both here at church and at home.

If I may, allow me to borrow a principle from the "best schooling" to illustrate the principles of "best worship": the three "R's." You'll find them on the pamphlet that I gave the children to give you. There are extra copies in the foyer.

The three "R's" of best worship are worship readiness, worship responses, and worship reflections.

Some things must be done before you and the children ever "darken the door" of the church house. We must take time to prepare for worship readiness. Proverbs 22:6 reminds us that when we "train a child in the way he should go . . . when he is old he will not turn from it." Let me share some practical ways to train children in worship readiness.

Remember to pray for the services Sunday during your family prayer times. Worship is not just for Sunday!

Make sure your child gets a good night's sleep and breakfast before church on Sunday. It's hard to be spiritually alert when you're physically tired.

Visit the restroom and water fountain just before the worship service begins. Discourage these trips during the service. (When necessary, it's best to use the facilities in the foyer. This avoids noticeable trips in front of everyone!)

Don't give a child unrelated "things" to do (such as toys, games, etc.). Don't convey "play-time" instead of "worship-time." Bible games, drawings, and notes are always appropriate, especially during the sermon. We teach children the importance of worship by reminding them to respect the sanctuary and its contents.

Don't tolerate bad behavior! Don't threaten repeatedly. If necessary, take the child to the foyer immediately and deal with the situation . . . not only for the sake of others but for the child's sake, too. Return quickly . . . don't "reward" inappropriate behavior with prolonged absence or going home.

Be consistent in your attendance. When worship attendance is part of a child's regular Sunday schedule, readiness is easier.

Remember, worship readiness is as important as what goes on once you enter the auditorium.

Once you do enter the auditorium for worship, I think that both you and the children will find the experience more rewarding if you'll follow a few simple suggestions to enrich your worship responses.

Sit together as a family. This will not only allow you to monitor your child's behavior, but will allow you to encourage participation. Young children may need to sit close to the center aisle to see.

Have the child sit, stand, and bow at the appropriate

times. Not only is this right, but it helps expend energy.

Help children use the hymnal, pew Bible, bulletin, bulletin sermon outline, and children's worship feature.

Briefly explain (when necessary) certain aspects of the service, especially when questions are asked. (It's important that children understand why they should or should not be involved in the invitation, baptism, and Lord's Supper.)

Always give the child something to place in the offering plate. Giving is an act of worship. Someone once observed that "giving him a nickel for the collection and a dollar for the movies not only shows a parent's sense of value but is also likely to produce a proportionate giver."<sup>60</sup>

Remember, a child is still a child. Some fidgeting, restlessness, and napping is part of early childhood. Expect what school expects. (Kindergartners take naps, third graders don't!)

Practice what you preach. How can we expect children to attend, sing, pray, give, and be attentive if we don't set the example? Jesus' invitation to "let the children come" was prompted by the fact that their parents already had them there.

Worship responses not only help children understand

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<sup>60</sup>Cory, 60.

the nature of worship but help them put that understanding into practice. Perhaps you have some ideas on how our children can better respond and participate in our worship services. Many of you shared some ideas on the survey that was given to you in Sunday School this morning. If you didn't get one in Sunday School or before the service began this morning, please pick up one from the foyer and fill it out. (See page 35-36, "Initial Adult Survey.")

The process of worship begins with the importance of worship readiness before you and the children enter the auditorium and culminates after you leave the auditorium. It is vitally important that you take time on the way home and at home for worship reflections. Deuteronomy 6:7 tells us to "impress them (the teachings concerning worship) on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up."

What are some good ways to reinforce the worship experience to our children? Let me suggest the following.

Exit by the front doors. This allows me to greet the children and say a closing word to them. I want them to know that I'm glad that they came to worship today. (And, I always look forward to the "gimme fives!")

Sunday lunch or Sunday night bedtime is a good time to reflect positively on the worship service.

Adult criticisms should be shared among adults.

Accentuate the positive with your children.

Try to discover the theme of the service as reflected in the hymns and sermon. Ask your child what the service was about and what I preached. Share it with me when you can.

Discuss the public decisions. Help your child understand what commitments were made. Most of the commitments will be related to those who are making public professions of faith, those coming for baptism, or those moving letters to join the church. It is important that children understand the nature of Christian commitment. Let me close with some suggestions for helping you with your child's commitment.

When can a child believe? When should your child believe? Parents need to understand some sobering news: children are capable of understanding the Gospel.

Look for the following signs of sincerity: A child can believe when the Holy Spirit moves in his heart and mind just as the Holy Spirit moves in the hearts and minds of all whom he brings to repentance and faith; his motives for professing faith in Christ are free from external pressures such as the desires of his parents or the adventures of his friends; he is able to relate his actions to God; he can for himself accept the basic truths of the Gospel; his attitude toward the claims of Christ peaks in a desire to live in a

way to please God from this day forward.<sup>61</sup>

Remember, children can believe. Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3). A way of measuring a child's sincerity is their earnestness and persistence in bringing up the subject.

What should a child believe? Your child needs to understand the bad news about sin: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Help your child understand that sin means disobedience.

Your child needs to learn the good news about the Savior: "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). Help your child understand that Savior means He who became our substitute.

Who should help your child believe? You can help your child experience the best news of personal salvation: "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Romans 10:13). Help the child formulate his own prayer in his own words. The point is not your prayer, but the child's. The prayer might sound like this: "Lord, I know that I have sinned and need to be forgiven. I believe that you died for me so that I can be forgiven. I am sorry and want to live like you want me to live. Thank you for for-

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<sup>61</sup>Eugene Chamberlain, When Can a Child Believe? (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1973), 80.

giving me. Help me keep this promise to you every day. I promise to let you be the boss of my life." Help the child to understand that salvation means saved from sin and saved to service.

What should the child do afterward? You can help your child with the public news of his promised service: "Give your bodies in service to God . . . to prove what is good" (Romans 12:1, paraphrase). Help your child understand that service includes conduct.

I like to use the symbolism of the law of the stop-light. A person proves his love for Jesus by obeying God's law. First, a person needs to "stop" (the red light) and ask Jesus to become his "boss" (Savior and Lord). Next, a person needs to "be sure" (the yellow light) to tell everyone through baptism. Then, a person needs to "go" (the green light) and live as the Bible teaches. Care should be taken to distinguish between salvation, baptism, and discipleship.

You will experience no greater joy than that of leading your child to his or her Christian commitment. Too many parents forfeit that joy to me or some other pastor. Of course, I'm ready to help. So, at the appropriate time, I do want you to make an appointment with me to talk with you and your child about salvation, baptism, and Christian service.

Are you doing all that you can to prepare your child

for that moment? Our worship times together are an important part of that preparation. Commit yourself anew to the worship readiness, worship responses, and worship reflections of your child and yourself. "Bring the children" so that we may help you nurture them in the faith.

Children's Sermon #3  
"The Best Thing that You Can Give God"  
Rick Hyde, First Baptist Church, Murfreesboro, Arkansas  
November 24, 1991

This has been a special month for us. I hope that we have helped you better understand how to worship God with us when we are here in the auditorium. Last Sunday we talked about the best thing that your parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles can give you -- a home where you are taught about worshipping God. I hope that your folks think that worshipping God is important enough to do it at home and to do it with you here at our church.

Today I want you to think about the most important thing that you can give God -- worship.

What is worship? (Answers offered were: to praise God, to love God, to learn about God, etc.)

In Sunday School this morning, you and I talked about how we worship God. We talked about three important ways to worship God together -- the "A-B-C's" of worship. Do you remember them? (See pages 76-79, "Worship Manual for Children.") "A" is for "ATTEND every Sunday." "B" is for "BE PART of what's going on." "C" is for "CONTINUE to think about worship every day of the week."

Do you know what an "opinion" is? Do many grown-ups ever ask you what you think about anything? Well, I want to know how you think we can make our worship time better by helping you feel like it's not just for the grown-ups.

I have some something for you to do while I'm preaching later this morning. Listen carefully and tell me what you hear and think. When you get through with it, please put it in the Children's Box by the front door. Thanks!

(See pages 90-91, "Closing Survey for Children.")

Sermon Brief #3  
 "Receiving the Kingdom Like A Child:  
 the Necessity of Embracing Childlike Faith"  
 Rick Hyde, First Baptist Church, Murfreesboro, Arkansas  
 November 24, 1991

Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it" (Luke 18:17, NIV).

Now that we have seen the importance of understanding the nature of childlike faith and the need for parents and the church to nurture children in the faith, I want to close this series of sermons with the necessity of embracing childlike faith.

How does one "receive the kingdom of God like a little child?"

A fictitious Reconstruction era Southern Methodist preacher once observed that

When you give a man an idea, it's jest, well, it's jest an idea. It usually stays whole and intact. But when you give a child an idea, it's like plant-in' a seed in the spring. It grows and grows. It's watered by curiosity and it's warmed by reflection. Young minds are rich soil. People are always talk-in' about the simplicity of a child's faith. Sometimes they get that simplicity confused with gullibility. Why, bless it all, son, a young mind accepts nothin'. Who is it who's always askin' what makes the grass green, or what holds the stars up, or why is the moon shiny? It's always a child. Full-grown people never ask those things, though most of them don't know the answers. Yes, sir, you let me plant the right ideas in the minds of children, and I'll reap a rich harvest.<sup>62</sup>

Although the Bible is known as "The Good Book", there

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<sup>62</sup>Brown, 133.

are some other "good books" that help us understand the nature of God and worship. My wife Kay read such a "good book" lately entitled Stars in My Crown. (In fact, it was so good that my daughter Carrie read it, too, and I plan to when I get some free time.) Although this fictitious Southern Methodist preacher did not have the benefit of formal theological training, he discerned the importance of acknowledging that children are capable of faith and worshipping God and that we adults can learn from their example.

Let's turn from this "good book" back to "The Good Book" to see the simplicity of faith in action as described in the lives of four children in the Bible. The Bible pictures righteousness through these children: Josiah, Timothy, Samuel, and Naaman's wife's maiden. Let's look at Josiah first.

Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem thirty-one years. He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord and walked in the ways of his father David, not turning aside to the right or to the left. In the eighth year of his reign, while he was still young, he began to seek the God of his father David. In his twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of high places, Asherah poles, carved idols and cast images.  
(II Chronicles 34:1-3, NIV)

Young Josiah is the biblical picture of the child discoverer. Herbert Lockyer writes that "before us is Josiah, a royal miracle of grace, who in spite of his evil ancestry and surroundings, at the age of eight sought to do

that which was right in the sight of the Lord."<sup>63</sup>

We expect a child raised in the church to make a profession of faith at an early age, yet Josiah illustrates that even a child raised outside the faith can embrace the faith. Sometimes it happens quickly, sometimes it takes a while. Josiah's interest began at age eight and at sixteen ("in the eighth year of his reign, while he was still young") his faith was manifested.

Not only should we encourage children to discover faith, we must be diligent not to discourage their questions, attempts, and actions to do so. Children can discover God -- young Josiah did.

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. (II Timothy 2:15, 3:14-15, NIV)

Timothy is the biblical picture of the child disciple. His study of the Word of God as a youngster profited him in later life. Lockyer writes: "Would that much of the youth of today . . . could be found following in the footsteps of this godly child . . ." <sup>64</sup>

Timothy's mother and grandmother, Eunice and Lois, were

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<sup>63</sup>Herbert Lockyer, All the Children of the Bible (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1970), 173.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., 212.

pivotal in his discipleship. We need to come with our children to Sunday School and Worship, not simply send them.

We must spend time at home worshiping with them, not simply time at the church house worshiping with them. Children can become disciples -- young Timothy did.

And she (Hannah) said to him (Eli), "As surely as you live, my lord, I am the woman who stood here beside you praying to the Lord. I prayed for this child, and the Lord has granted me what I asked of him. So now I give him to the Lord. For his whole life he will be given over to the Lord." And he worshiped the Lord there. . . . And the boy Samuel continued to grow in stature and in favor with the Lord and with men. (I Samuel 1:26-28, 2:26, NIV)

Samuel is the biblical picture of the child worshiper.

Lockyer writes that "there are children like Samuel who cannot remember a time when they did not trust God. Their love to Him was not an after love, but a first love."<sup>65</sup>

Perhaps Samuel best illustrates that capabilities of children to be involved in the acts of worship. He served faithfully in the temple. (Lockyer describes him as a "child of the sanctuary."<sup>66</sup>) We must remember that children can worship when we allow them and teach them -- young Samuel did.

Now Naaman was commander of the army of the king of Aram. He was a great man in the sight of his master and highly regarded, because through him the Lord had given victory to Aram. He was a valiant soldier, but he had leprosy. Now bands from Aram had gone out and had taken captive a young girl from

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<sup>65</sup>Ibid., 214.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., 159.

Israel, and she served Naaman's wife. She said to her mistress, "If only my master would see the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy." Naaman went to his master and told him what the girl from Israel had said. (II Kings 5:1-4, NIV)

The young maiden who served the wife of Naaman is the biblical picture of the child witness. Very little is known about her. Although she had a good reason to be bitter (kidnapped from her family and forced to serve a heathen family), she instead became benevolent -- she shared the good news of hope in her God. We need to be careful not to dismiss the words of children. Even children can be a witness -- Naaman's young maiden was.

These biblical pictures of righteousness (the children Josiah, Timothy, Samuel, and Naaman's maiden) lead us to some biblical promises of righteousness to God's children, no matter what age.

First is the promise of solace:

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" He called a little child and had him stand among them.

And he said: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me." (Matthew 18:1-5, NIV)

Next is the promise of security:

Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God -- children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. (John 1:12-13, NIV)

And, there is the promise of spirituality:

Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind.

Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good. (I Peter 2:1-3, NIV)

All children born to us grow up -- that is the scheme of things. One day our physical children will no longer make the trip down front for the children's sermon time.

That day is always a bittersweet one for me as your pastor.

Sometimes I want to keep them young forever -- but that is not the scheme of things.

All children born of God should grow up -- that is His scheme of things. Some of us have been Christians for many years, yet we have exchanged childlike faith for childish faith. Remember the words of the apostle Paul to the childish Corinthians?

Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly--mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men? (I Corinthians 3:1-3, NIV)

It's time to "grow up." Let's help our children grow up in the faith by recognizing that they are capable of worshiping with us. Let's help ourselves by learning from their capabilities. Let's understand the necessity to "receive the kingdom like a child" -- the necessity to embrace childlike faith. Perhaps there's a young person, a child,

who wants to make a promise to become a follower of God.  
Perhaps there's a grown-up who needs to do so. Now is the  
time.

Goal 6: Three Worship Involvement Classes  
(One Session Each) Will Be Taught during Sunday School.  
One Class Will Be Comprised of Adults who Wish to Attend;  
One Class of Children in Grades One through Three;  
and One Class of Children in Grades Four through Six.  
Pamphlets designed by the Committee  
will be the source material.

The Adult Class was taught on November 17 and the Children's classes were taught on November 24.

The source material for the Adult Class was the Worship Preparation Manual which follows on the next four pages. The Manual was prepared with the help of the Worship Committee on Sunday afternoon, November 10. The Manual was a folded letter-size sheet of fluorescent yellow heavy stock paper.

#### Summary of Adult Class

There were thirteen in attendance. I presented a lesson based on the following worship manual. Since the morning's sermon would deal with what we do during corporate worship, I spent most of the time concentrating on what parents should do before and after a worship service.

Questions and comments from the adults focused more upon determining when a child is ready to make a profession of faith and ready for baptism.

## A GUIDE FOR INVOLVING CHILDREN IN OUR WORSHIP SERVICES

First Baptist Church

Murfreesboro, Arkansas

Rick Hyde, Pastor  
PARENTS' EDITION

**THE**

**3**

(In the bound copy, the theme artwork

**R's**

of the boy and girl entering the church

**FOR**

appears here.)

**WORSHIP**

### 1. Worship READINESS

**"Train up a child in the way he should go ... "**

Proverbs 22:6

\*Remember to pray for the services Sunday during your family prayer times. Worship is not just for Sunday!

\*Make sure your child gets a good night's sleep and breakfast.

\*Visit the restroom and water fountain just before the worship service begins. Discourage these trips during the worship service. (When necessary, it's best to use the facilities in the foyer. This avoids noticeable trips in front of everyone!)

\*Don't give your child unrelated "things" to do (such as toys, games, etc.). Don't convey "play-time" instead of "worship-time." Bible games, drawings, and notes are always appropriate, especially during the sermon.

\*Teach your child the importance of worship by reminding them to respect the sanctuary and its contents.

\*Don't tolerate bad behavior! Don't threaten repeatedly.

If necessary, take your child to the foyer immediately and deal with >>>>

the situation ... not only for the sake of others but for your child's sake, too. Return quickly ... don't "reward" inappropriate behavior with prolonged absence or going home.

\*Be consistent in your attendance. When worship attendance is part of a child's regular Sunday schedule, readiness is easier.

## 2. Worship RESPONSES

### "Let the children come ..."

Luke 18:16

\*Sit together as a family. This will not only allow you to monitor your child's behavior, but allow you to encourage participation. Young children may need to sit close to the center aisle to see.

\*Have your child sit, stand, and bow at the appropriate times. Not only is this correct, but it helps expend energy.

\*Help your child use the hymnal, pew Bible, bulletin, bulletin sermon outline, and children's worship feature.

\*Briefly explain to your child (when necessary) certain aspects of the service, especially when questions are asked. (It's important that children understand why they should or should not be involved in the invitation, baptism, and Lord's Supper.)

\*Always give the child something to place in the offering plate. Giving is an act of worship.

\*Remember, your child is still a child. Some fidgeting, restlessness, and napping is part of early childhood. Expect what school expects. (Kindergartners take naps, third graders don't!)

\*Practice what you preach. Don't expect your child to attend, sing, pray, give, and be attentive if you don't set the example.

## 3. Worship REFLECTIONS

### " ... Teach (these things) to your children ... in your house ... "

Deuteronomy 6:7

\*Exit by the front doors. This allows me to greet your child and say a closing word to them.

\*Sunday lunch or Sunday night bedtime is a good time to reflect positively on the worship service. (Adult criticisms should be shared later. Accentuate the positive with your children.)

\*Try to discover the theme of the service as reflected in the hymns and sermon. Ask your child what the service was about and what I preached. Share it with me when you can.

\*Discuss the public decisions. Help your child understand what commitments were made.

## A PARENTS GUIDE FOR A CHILD'S CONVERSION

### 1. WHEN SHOULD A CHILD BELIEVE?

You need to understand some SOBERING NEWS:

Children are capable of understanding the Gospel.

Look for the following signs of

SINCERITY:

"A child can really believe when ...

... the Holy Spirit moves in his heart and mind just as the Holy Spirit moves in the hearts and minds of all whom he brings to repentance and faith.

... his motives for professing faith in Christ are free from external pressures such as the desires of his parents or the adventures of his friends.

... he is able to relate his own actions to God.

... he can for himself accept the basic truths of the Gospel.

... his attitude toward the claims of Christ peaks in a genuine desire to live in a way to please God from this day forward."

(From When Can a Child Believe?, Eugene Chamberlain, Broadman Press, Nashville, TN, 1973.)

"Assuredly ... unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 18:3 (NKJV)

SINCERITY means EARNESTNESS.

### 2. WHAT SHOULD A CHILD BELIEVE?

Your child needs to understand the BAD NEWS about

SIN:

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

Romans 3:23 (NKJV)

SIN means DISOBEDIENCE.

Your child needs to learn the GOOD NEWS about the

SAVIOR:

"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8 (NKJV)

SAVIOR means SACRIFICE.

### 3. WHO SHOULD HELP A CHILD BELIEVE?

You can help your child experience the BEST NEWS of personal

SALVATION:

"For whoever calls upon the name of the Lord >>>>>

shall be saved." Romans 10:13 (NKJV)

The prayer might sound like this:

"Lord, I know that I have sinned and need to be forgiven. I believe that you died for me so that I can be forgiven. I am sorry and want to live like you want me to live. Thank you for forgiving me. Help me keep this promise to you every day. I promise to let you be the boss of my life."

SALVATION means saved FROM sin and saved TO service.

#### 4. WHAT SHOULD A CHILD DO AFTERWARD?

You can help your child with the PUBLIC NEWS of his promised SERVICE:

"Give your bodies in service to God ... to prove what is good."

Romans 12:1 (Paraphrase)

SERVICE means CONDUCT.

I like to use the symbolism of a stop-light.

A person proves his love for Jesus by:

In the bound copy,  
original artwork  
of a traffic light  
appears here with  
these words:

**OBEYING GOD'S LAW**

**STOP!** Ask Jesus to be your Savior. (RED light)

**WHEN** you're sure, be baptized. (YELLOW light)

**GO!** Then live like the Bible teaches. (GREEN light)

At the  
appropriate  
time,  
please  
make an  
appointment  
with me  
to talk  
with you and  
your child  
about  
salvation,  
baptism,  
and Christian  
service.

Bro. Rick

### Children's Worship Preparation Manual

The two Children's Classes were taught on November 24. The source material was the Worship Preparation Manual which follows on the next four pages. The Manual was printed on fluorescent orange heavy paper stock.

### Summary of Children's Classes

The children's classes were thirty minutes each. There were eleven in the younger class (grades 1-3) and nine in the older class (grades 4-6).

We began by defining worship. The definitions offered by the children included "honoring God", "respecting God", "praising God", etc.

The "A", "B", and "C" parts of the manual were covered by asking for volunteer responses with the exception of page three. It was completed by the children during the worship service.

The free response space included several comments about how nice it would be if I would make my sermons short! (Even children have a sense of humor?)



**"A" is for ATTEND - every Sunday!**  
**"I am glad when it's time to go to church!"**

Psalm 122:1

What time is it when it's time to go to:

Sunday School? \_\_\_\_ a.m.

Morning Worship? \_\_\_\_ a.m.

Children's Choir? \_\_\_\_ p.m.

Evening Worship? \_\_\_\_ p.m.

My Sunday School Teachers are \_\_\_\_\_

My Choir Leaders are \_\_\_\_\_

**"B" is for BE PART - of what's going on!**  
**"I will sing with others in church!"**

Hebrews 2:12

Draw a line to connect the worship word to its meaning:

- |                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| 1. Prelude          | a. The first prayer.  |
| 2. Hymn             | b. When Bro. Rick tells us to say "hi" to each other.   |
| 3. Benediction      | c. When just the Choir sings.   |
| 4. Offering         | d. When everyone can tell about those who are sick or in the hospital.  |
| 5. Invitation       | e. The last prayer before we go home.   |
| 6. Invocation       | f. When people can tell Bro. Rick about promises they want to make to God and to our church.                          |
| 7. Prayer Requests  | g. Piano & organ music at the end.  |
| 8. Message, Sermon  | h. When we give money to the church.  |
| 9. Welcome          | i. A worship song everyone sings.   |
| 10. Anthem          | j. The paper that tells us about the worship service.   |
| 11. Bulletin        | k. Eating tiny pieces of bread and drinking small cups of grape juice to remember the story of how Jesus died for us. |
| 12. Children's Time | l. When Bro. Rick preaches to all.  |
| 13. Baptism         | m. When Bro. Rick talks to us kids.   |
| 14. Lord's Supper   | n. Dunking a person under water who has promised to live as Jesus taught.   |
| 15. Postlude        | o. Piano & organ music at the start.  |

The answers are on the back page.

**"C" is for CONTINUE - to think about worship  
every day of the week!**

**"I will pray and worship God every day!"**

Psalm 72:15

**Name one song that we will sing today:**

# \_\_\_\_\_ " \_\_\_\_\_ "

**Remember to sing it a few times during the week.**

**Draw a picture about part of Bro. Rick's sermon or about one of the songs  
that we sang:**

**It's important that you remember to pray every day for the people who lead us in worship. Write their names in:**

**Our pastor** \_\_\_\_\_

**Our minister of music** \_\_\_\_\_

**Our pianist** \_\_\_\_\_

**Our organist** \_\_\_\_\_

**And, it's important to remember to pray for those who need to come to church to worship but don't. Write in the name of one friend who doesn't go church and remember to pray for them:**

**A friend** \_\_\_\_\_

**Can you make this promise?**

**"I promise to try and come every week to worship Jesus."**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Put a check mark here IF you promise.**

**ANYTHING ELSE YOU WANT TO TELL ME?**

**Write it here.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**THANKS!**

**Bro. Rick**

**Answers to "Be a Part": 1-o; 2-i; 3-e; 4-h; 5-f; 6-a; 7-d; 8-l; 9-b; 10-c; 11-j; 12-m; 13-n; 14-k; 15-g.**

CHAPTER THREE

PARTICIPATION

Goal 7: Bulletins for the Worship Services Will Reflect  
How the Children Have Participated.

The next six pages contain the Orders of Worship and Sermon Outline Inserts for November 10, 17, and 24. The November 24 service is the one planned by the Worship Committee.

Order of Worship

Service #1

**MURFREESBORO  
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH**

**"Dedicating Ourselves to Declaring His Word  
and Discipling His People." Matthew 28:18-20**

**MORNING WORSHIP  
November 10, 1991**

**"For of such is the kingdom of God ... "  
Luke 18:16**

<b>CALL TO WORSHIP</b>	<b>Prelude</b>
<b>WELCOME &amp; ANNOUNCEMENTS</b>	<b>Pastor</b>
<b>PRAYER REQUESTS</b>	<b>Morning Meditation</b>
<b>HYMN OF PRAISE, #13</b> "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing"	<b>Congregation</b>
<b>INVOCATION</b>	<b>Pastor</b>
<b>HYMN OF PROMISE, #335</b> "Standing on the Promises"	<b>Congregation</b>
<b>RECEPTION OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS</b>	
<b>CHILDREN'S TIME</b>	<b>Pastor and Children</b>
<b>HYMN FOR THE MESSAGE, #336</b> "Jesus Loves Me"	<b>Congregation</b>
<b>MESSAGE FROM THE WORD</b> "For of Such Is the Kingdom of God" Luke 18:9-17	<b>Pastor</b>
<b>HYMN OF COMMITMENT, #191</b> "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus"	<b>Congregation</b>
<b>BENEDICTION</b>	<b>Postlude</b>

Sermon Outline Insert #1

**MORNING MESSAGE**

**November 10, 1991**

**"LET THE CHILDREN COME"**

**#1 - "FOR OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD:  
THE NATURE OF CHILDLIKE FAITH"**

**Luke 18:9-17**

**(1 of 3)**

**IS YOUR FAITH CHILDISH OR CHILDLIKE?**

**1. THE \_\_\_\_\_ PHARISEE**

**Luke 16:11-12**

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
"... (he) prayed thus with himself ..."
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
"I ... I ... I ..."
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
"... everyone who exalts himself shall be abased ..."

**2. THE \_\_\_\_\_ PUBLICAN**

**Luke 16:13-14**

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
"... God be merciful to me a sinner!"
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
"... this man when down to his house justified ..."
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
"... he who humbles himself will be exalted."

**3. THE \_\_\_\_\_ CHILDREN**

**Luke 18:15-17, Mark 10:16**

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
"... `Let the little children come to Me' ..."
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
"... for of such is the kingdom of God ...", John 1:12
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
Mark 10:16 "And He took them up in His arms, put his hands on them, and blessed them."

**"LET THE CHILDREN COME"**

**NOV. 17: #2 - "THEY ALSO BROUGHT CHILDREN TO HIM"**

**NOV. 24: #3 - "RECEIVING THE KINGDOM AS A CHILD"**

Order of Worship  
Service #2

**MURFREESBORO  
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH**

"Dedicating Ourselves to Declaring His Word  
and Discipling His People." Matthew 28:18-20

**MORNING WORSHIP - November 17, 1991**

**"Let the children come ..."** Luke 18:16

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS	Pastor
PRAYER REQUESTS	Morning Meditation
HYMN OF PRAISE, #155 "This Is My Father's World"	Congregation
INVOCATION	Pastor
HYMN OF CHILDREN "Tell Me the Stories of Jesus" (See the new <u>Baptist Hymnal</u> insert.)	Congregation
RECEPTION OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS	
ANTHEM, "A Vessel in Your Hands"	Church Choir
CHILDREN'S TIME	Pastor and Children
HYMN FOR THE MESSAGE "Jesus Loves the Little Children" (From the new <u>Baptist Hymnal</u> , #592) Jesus loves the little children, All the children of the world. Ev'ry color, ev'ry race, all are covered by His grace; Jesus loves the little children of the world. Woolston, Root (c) 1991 Broadman Press CCLI #365380	Congregation
MESSAGE FROM THE WORD "They Also Brought Children to Him" Luke 18:16	Pastor
HYMN OF COMMITMENT, #182 "The Savior Is Waiting"	Congregation
BENEDICTION	Postlude

**MORNING MESSAGE**  
**November 17, 1991**

**"LET THE CHILDREN COME"**

#2 - "THEY ALSO BROUGHT CHILDREN TO HIM:  
NURTURING CHILDREN IN THE FAITH"

Luke 18:16  
(2 of 3)

**WHEN WE COME TO WORSHIP OUR LORD,  
WE SHOULD HELP OUR CHILDREN WITH THEIR:**

**1. WORSHIP \_\_\_\_\_ Proverbs**  
**22:6**

"Train up a child in the way he should go ... "  
Ways to help prepare our children for worship:

**2. WORSHIP \_\_\_\_\_ Luke 18:16**

"Let the children come ... "  
Ways to help our children respond during worship:

**3. WORSHIP \_\_\_\_\_**  
**Deuteronomy 6:7**

" ...Teach (these things) to your children in your  
house... "  
Ways to help our children understand worship:

**"LET THE CHILDREN COME"**  
**NEXT WEEK: #3 "RECEIVING THE KINGDOM AS A CHILD"**

## MURFREESBORO FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

"Dedicating Ourselves to Declaring His Word  
and Discipling His People." Matthew 28:18-20

### MORNING WORSHIP - November 24, 1991 "... Receive the kingdom of God as a child ..."

Luke 18:16-17

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS	*John David Terrell
HYMN OF PRAISE, #54 "For the Beauty of the Earth"	Congregation
INVOCATION	Pastor
SONGS OF CHILDREN	Children's Choirs
HYMN FOR CHILDREN "Praise Him, All Ye Little Children"	Congregation
Praise Him, praise Him, all ye little children, God is love, God is love. (Repeat.) 2. Love Him ... 3. Thank Him ... 4. Serve Him ... From the new <u>Baptist Hymnal</u> , #31; Bonner CCLI #365380	
OFFERTORY PRAYER	*Jonathan Hyde
RECEPTION OF OFFERINGS	*Megan Chaney, *Jenny Conly, *Noelle Horn, *Kristy Jackson
CHILDREN'S TIME	Pastor and Children
HYMN FOR THE MESSAGE "I'm Just a Child"	Congregation
I'm just a child and I haven't got much, But whatever I have I give it to You. Lord, I'm just a child and I haven't got much, But whatever I have I give it all to You. (Repeat.) From the new <u>Baptist Hymnal</u> , #488 Seabough, Kirkland (c) 1977 Broadman Press CCLI #365380	
SCRIPTURE READING, Luke 18:16-17	*Josh Hoover
MESSAGE, "Receiving the Kingdom as a Child"	Pastor
HYMN OF COMMITMENT, #191 "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus"	Congregation
BENEDICTION	*Aaron Horn
*denotes children Sermon Outline Insert #3	

**MORNING MESSAGE**  
**November 24, 1991**

**"LET THE CHILDREN COME"**

**#3 - "RECEIVING THE KINGDOM AS A CHILD  
THE NECESSITY OF CHILDLIKE FAITH"**

**Luke 18:16-17**

**(3 of 3)**

**1. BIBLICAL \_\_\_\_\_ OF RIGHTEOUSNESS  
THROUGH THESE CHILDREN:**

**YOUNG JOSIAH - THE CHILD \_\_\_\_\_  
II Chronicles 34:1-3**

**YOUNG TIMOTHY - THE CHILD \_\_\_\_\_  
II Timothy 2:15, 3:14-15**

**YOUNG SAMUEL - THE CHILD \_\_\_\_\_  
I Samuel 1:26-28, 2:26**

**THE YOUNG MAIDEN - THE CHILD \_\_\_\_\_  
II Kings 5:1-4**

**2. BIBLICAL \_\_\_\_\_ OF RIGHTEOUSNESS  
TO THESE "CHILDREN":**

\_\_\_\_\_ **CHRISTIANS**

**WHO ARE \_\_\_\_\_ FOLLOWERS**  
**Matthew 18:1-5, John 1:12, I Peter 2:1-3**

CHAPTER 4  
PERSPECTIVES

Goal 8: The Worship Committee Will Evaluate  
a Sunday Morning Worship Service.  
The Congregation Will Also Be Asked to Respond  
to a Closing Survey.

The next seven pages display the sample closing surveys, the results, and a report of the final Worship Committee meeting.

Sample of Adults' Closing Survey

**THANKS ...**

**... for filling out the first survey form.  
I need your opinion one more time.  
Please tell me if you think that our worship services this month  
during our "Let the Children Come" emphasis  
have helped you and our children  
better understand the nature of worship.**

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**HOWEVER ...**

**... you might have some thoughts about some things  
that we did that should have been done differently  
or not at all. Please share them with me.**

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**Please place this form in the box in the foyer.  
ONCE AGAIN, let me express my deepest appreciation  
for your help with this project.  
Bro. Rick**

## Responses of Adults' Closing Survey

The form was hand-delivered by me to the eighteen parents who filled out the initial survey in Sunday School.

It was also made available to any other adults who wished to reply before and after the November 24 worship service. Six others responded.

All offered comments to the first free response question under the "Thanks" item. Four stated that they found the discussion of "A Parent's Guide to a Child's Conversion" helpful. Seven clearly stated that they thought the increased role of children in the worship services was a good idea. Three commented that they enjoyed seeing children in "non-traditional" worship roles such as receiving the offering, leading public prayers, and welcoming the visitors. The remaining ten comments were very general in nature, such as "yes", "enjoyed it", "thank you", etc.

Under the "However" item, only one response was recorded. One person expressed concern about allowing children to participate who have not made a profession of faith.

Sample of Children's Closing Survey

**KIDS,  
CAN YOU TELL ME ...**

**... THE FOUR KIDS THAT I PREACHED  
ABOUT THIS MORNING?**

**He was the boy king in the Old Testament who taught grown-ups how to follow God:**

---

**He was the boy disciple in the New Testament who loved to study the Bible:**

---

**He was the boy in the Old Testament who helped with the worship services in the temple:**

---

**She was the slave girl in the Old Testament who told her master about God who could help him with his problem:**

---

**... SOMETHING THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO DO  
TO HELP WITH OUR WORSHIP SERVICES?**

---

---

**WRITE YOUR NAME HERE** \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE PUT THIS IN THE CHILDREN'S BOX by the front door.**

**THANKS!**

## Responses of Children's Closing Survey

The survey was distributed to the children during the "Children's Time" portion of the November 24 worship service. Twenty-one were handed out, sixteen were returned.

All that were returned correctly named the biblical characters. Seven volunteered to assist with the Scripture readings, twelve with the offering, and two with the prayers.

## Closing Worship Committee Meeting

The closing meeting was held on Sunday afternoon, November 24. All members were present. I thanked the Committee for their time and help and asked for their closing comments.

We concluded the meeting with the closing survey. (See the sample on the next page.)

Sample of Worship Committee Survey

**WELL ... WHAT DID YOU THINK ABOUT IT?**

PLEASE WRITE "YES", "NO", OR "MAYBE" IN THE BLANKS.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. These meetings were interesting.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Bro. Rick was prepared to lead these meetings.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. These meetings were worth the time they took.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. I understood what Bro. Rick was trying to do.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. I learned some things that I did not know before.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. This group should meet every so often to help plan worship.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Others should be invited to be part of this group.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Our worship services were different while this project was in progress.

**WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE DONE DIFFERENTLY  
IF YOU WERE BRO. RICK?**

---

---

---

**IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WANT TO SHARE?**

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**THANKS** for your help. I couldn't have done without you! - Bro. Rick

All answers on the first eight items were "yes" with the exception of #6 and #7. These two items received "maybe" by all the members of the Committee.

I gleaned from talking to the Committee members that most of them were hesitant about item #6. ("This group should meet every so often to help plan worship.") We did not have a Worship Committee before this project.

Concerning item #7, several of the members commented that if the Committee were going to continue meeting, others should be invited to serve.

The free response spaces included comments of encouragement and appreciation.

Goal 9: Research Will Be Submitted to the Children's Consultant of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Sunday School Department for Comments and Evaluation.

Goal 10: Sermons, Worship Manuals, Bulletins, and Other Aids Prepared for this Project Will Be Submitted to the Children's Consultant.

Goal 11: A Video Tape Will Be Submitted to the Children's Consultant for Written Evaluation.

Jackie Edwards is Children's Consultant for the Sunday School Department of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. In this capacity she also serves as Director of Children's Park at Arkansas Baptist Assembly near Siloam Springs, Arkansas. She has been employed by the Convention for twelve years. She has been involved in children's ministries and classes for over thirty years.

The first draft of this Report and Analysis and an audio tape of the third worship service were hand-delivered to her on Friday, January 3, 1991. (The video tape was accidentally destroyed.) Her evaluation is reproduced on the following three pages.

## EVALUATION FORM, DENOMINATIONAL CONSULTANT

**INVOLVING CHILDREN IN CORPORATE WORSHIP**

Rick Hyde, First Baptist Church, Murfreesboro, Arkansas

Please indicate your responses by circling the appropriate number:  
(Consultant's response is marked with an asterisk.)

- 1 = I strongly disagree;  
2 = I disagree;  
3 = I am undecided;  
4 = I agree;  
5 = I strongly agree.

Please feel free to comment on your response or any facet of the project on the following page.  
(Attach extra sheets if necessary.)

- |   |   |   |   |    |    |
|---|---|---|---|----|----|
| (1) Adequate research was done to prepare for this project.                                     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4  | 5* |
| (2) The biblical rationale for this project is valid.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4  | 5* |
| (3) The psychological rationale for the project is valid.                                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4  | 5* |
| (4) The biological make-up of the Worship Committee was valid.                                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4* | 5  |
| (5) The chronological make-up of Worship Committee was valid.                                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4* | 5  |
| (6) The video tape of the Committee planned worship service reflects the goals of this project. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4  | 5* |
| (7) The Initial Adult Survey form (pages 25-26) is an adequate tool.                            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4* | 5  |
| (8) The Beginning Children's Survey form (page 28) is an adequate tool.                         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4  | 5* |
| (9) The Worship Manual for Children (pages 62-65) is an adequate tool.                          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4* | 5  |
| (10) The Worship Manual for Parents (pages 57-60) is an adequate tool.                          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4* | 5  |



EVALUATION LETTER FROM DENOMINATIONAL CONSULTANT

(REPRODUCED AT 3/4 SCALE)

(A letter from Jackie Edwards,

Children's Consultant

For the Arkansas Baptist State Convention

Sunday School Department, appears here.)

January 20, 1992

To Whom It May Concern:

I have read and evaluated the report and analysis project submitted by Rick Hyde on the subject, "Let the Children Come," involving children in corporate worship.

Jackie Edwards

Children's Consultant

## CONCLUSION

### Reactions to Congregational Responses

The adults of the congregation were given two written opportunities to respond: the Initial Survey for Adults (see pages 35-36) and the Closing Survey for Adults (see page 88-89). Parents also offered oral responses during the Parents' Worship Involvement Class (see page 70).

The children were given two written opportunities also: the Initial Survey for Children (pages 39-40) and the Closing Survey for Children (pages 90-91). The children also offered oral responses during the Children's Worship Preparation Classes (see page 75).

As I expected, the responses of the congregation at-large, the parents, and the children were limited both in number and expression. The most encouraging responses that validated the goals of this project were those on the Adult's Closing Survey (see pages 88-89) and those on the Children's Closing Survey (see page 90-91). The adults responding affirmed the role of children in worship. The children responding not only offered proof of knowledge but offered proof of worship by volunteering to assist.

The Worship Committee was given one written opportunity to respond: the Worship Committee Survey (see pages 93-94). The Committee members also offered oral responses during the three Committee meetings (see pages 33-34 and 92-94).

The Worship Committee was a pleasant surprise. They seemed to truly enjoy being a part of planning our worship services and helping me in my seminary work. The Worship Committee will continue as an on-going committee with the beginning of our new church year in July. Our Nominating Committee has already agreed to recommend its creation and design as executed in this project.

#### Reactions to Consultant's Responses

The denominational consultant was given one written opportunity to respond (see pages 96-98) and several oral opportunities both in person and by telephone.

I highly value the opinions of the consultant. Her strong affirmations of my goals, rationales, methods, and procedures as one trained and practicing in this area confirm this project.

#### Reactions to Goals

I feel that the goals of this project were satisfied. The goals are listed again below with specific evaluations.

Goal: Children will be given more active roles in

corporate worship. Comments: The bulletins for the Sunday morning worship services reflect increased involvement of children. (See pages 81-86.)

Goal: Research will reveal bases and methods to better involve children in corporate worship. Evaluation: An adequate bibliography was developed for the project area. Biblical, psychological, and practical aspects of the project were carefully considered and validated. Biblical and psychological factors were expanded with subsequent research as requested after the first draft was submitted. (See pages 5-21.)

Goal: Adults and children will be given more active roles in planning corporate worship through the creation of a Worship Committee. Evaluation: A balanced Committee was enlisted and participated in the project. (See pages 30-32.)

Goal: A summary reflecting the meetings and contributions of the Worship Committee will be included in the Report and Analysis. Evaluation: The Committee helped compose the Initial Surveys, the Worship Preparation Manuals, and the Closing Surveys.

Goal: Sermons and worship aids will be designed to educate children and adults on the worship capabilities of children. Evaluation: Two worship banners, three children's sermons, three hand-outs for children, three sermon briefs, and two worship banners were developed. (See pages

41-69.)

Goal: Three Worship Involvement Classes (one session each) will be taught during the Sunday School hour. Pamphlets designed by the Committee will be the source material. Evaluation: Manuals were prepared for the adult class (see pages 71-75) and the children's classes (see pages 76-79). Both the adults and children found the classes and manuals understandable.

Goal: The Worship Committee will plan, implement, and evaluate a Sunday morning worship service. The Congregation will also be asked to respond to a closing survey. Evaluation: This service was actualized on November 24, 1991. The service allowed for both the participation of children and the education of children and adults.

The goals pertaining to the Denominational Consultant are discussed in the section above.

#### Closing Thoughts

This project originally began as a quest to involve children in the corporate worship services of our church. As it unfolded, I found it advantageous and necessary to give some attention to the faith development of children as well as the worship capabilities of children. I found it impossible to separate the two -- a child's worship capabilities grow as his/her perceptions of God and faith grow. Indeed, volumes have been written on faith development of

children alone whereas published works on worship capabilities are not as numerous. To an extent, this project has "plowed some new ground" -- no other project concerning the involvement of children in corporate worship has been done or is being done at Midwestern.

The greatest satisfaction that I have experienced from the planning and actualization of this project has come from the children themselves. Many of them expressed their joy and excitement that "Bro. Rick" was planning something especially for them -- not just a children's sermon each Sunday, but a whole month of "stuff" for and about them.

Close to this affirmation was the appreciation expressed by parents for the concern and help in preparing their children for worship. And, the parents enjoyed seeing their children participate in new ways in our services.

We discovered several new ways to involve children in our worship services. Perhaps the extent of our efforts is reflected in the comments of one of our young ladies who suggested that the girls serve as the ushers to receive the offering: "Why do the guys always get to take the offering?" Indeed, why do guys (and most usually adults) always lead in most of the acts of worship? This project demonstrated that girls (and children) can do those things, too.

The most important on-going "by-product" of this project was the creation of and continuing role of the Worship Committee. Since the completion of this project,

the Committee has been incorporated into the committee structure of our church and will be revised to include representatives from other age groups (such as senior adults, teens, etc.) who, in the words of one of the children serving on the Worship Committee, "ought to be included, too!"

One future result of the project (if I have my way about it when the appropriate time comes) will be the reflection of a building plan that says to children, "We planned this with you in mind, too." Every auditorium or sanctuary that I have seen is built solely for the tastes and comfort of adults. If I am ever involved in a building program, I would like to see some evidence of an auditorium planned with children in mind -- perhaps a specially child-sized seating area to the side of the altar for children's sermon time and some stained glass depicting children in the Bible and/or the scene of Jesus' blessing the children.

Hopefully, the benefits of this project will transcend our local church and my personal satisfaction. This project has set forth some principles that will encourage pastors and churches to give their children fulfilling corporate worship experiences by educating and involving both the children and the adults. That, in turn, should encourage children to learn, implement, and experience fulfilling worship practices.

This project has changed the way that we plan and do

worship at our church. May it do so for others.

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