

## MTC 1: Understanding Children Ministry as a Word and Prayer Ministry

It's not child minding/baby sitting  
Rather it is a word ministry (Acts 6:4)- Faithful bible teaching should be emphasized.

Define Children: people from the ages 0-14( in my church we do up to ages 12)

You have heard of the four –fourteen window.  
It is easier to win a child to Christ. Shape their

### **1. Realities of Childhood and Family life in our context.**

Discussion question: What do you remember most about your childhood?

Childhood today:

Most of the child's day time is spent in school. No play at all. And definitely no time for the bible teaching at home.  
During school holidays, there is holiday tuition and if the school is not offering this then we will organize home tuition.

Parents are super busy, looking for money that they are hardly home.  
The parents do not have the time to teach their children the word of God.

The job is left to the teacher at school and in church.  
Why? If the parents have to keep up with the rising standards of living then we must have both parents working (most of the time long hours)  
Then there is school in the evening. To at least get up at least two pay grades.

All these are genuine concerns of the parents... They need the money to sustain most probably not even an extravagant lifestyle but just an average one.

I am not saying there is absolutely no parents who teach their children the word of God. There are those who are doing a great job. They try as much hard as they can to train their children. But there are all this constrains and challenges their time and effectiveness.

**2. The realities of children work in our context- how it is normally done and viewed.**

Then there is the church. It decides to breach the gap.

Well there lots of efforts going into place to help raise up the children in the word of God:

- The one hour or two hours of Sunday school time and in some churches there is two hours of Bible Club on Saturday.
- There are holidays VBS and Children weeks happening.
- Members of the church volunteering to teach the children.
- Teachers' trainings, seminars and even specialized courses for children workers.
- Different organizations coming up to produce children materials (Scripture Union and CEF).

But .... We are not yet there just.

- There are teachers who are not born again trying teach about salvation.
- Unpreparedness among teachers. Someone just shows in the morning without a clue of what to teach. And then decides, today I will teach the story of David and goliath. We therefore end up teaching children something that is not consistent and also false. Sincerely, if you haven't prepared you will end up being a false teacher.( we glorify David and start asking the children to be the Davids of today when we should be identifying with the helpless Israelites who need saving. And painting David as a shadow of the great savior who is Jesus Christ saving us)
- There is no curriculum: every teacher teaches what they feel like teaching that morning. We are need to have some flow of learning and jumping from one place to another doesn't allow systematic teaching.
- There is the few labourers. It is recommended to have 1 teacher for 30 children. But in most churches you will end up with 70 or even 100 children verses 1 teacher. In such a class nothing

much happens. If we can have one teacher and two helpers per class then that will be great.

**In most churches, children ministry is viewed as baby sitting for two hours while parents hear the word of God.**

**We therefore end up failing as the parents and the teachers who should be teaching our children to grow up in the ways of the lord.**

**It is high time we realized that the bible doesn't view a child's saved soul as less than an adult soul saved. The bible considers everyone whether infant, child, teenager, youth or adult to be sinners who are all in need of God's mercy. The same punishment/judgment a 25 year old would receive for not having been saved is the same judgment an 8 year old would receive. Psalm 51 reminds us that we are sinners from the time we are conceived in our mothers' wombs. And therefore we all greatly need the LORDS Mercy.**

**We should therefore not neglect the ministry of prayer and word to the children. I will suggest that we labor as twice as we usually do when preparing to preach a sermon to the children. The message of the cross should//must remain the same but should be greatly simplified.**

Do a Bible Study on Deut 6:

"Now this is the commandment—the statutes and the rules—that the Lord your God commanded me to teach you, that you may do them in the land to which you are going over, to possess it, 2 that you may fear the Lord your God, you and your son and your son's son, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be long. 3 Hear therefore, O Israel, and be careful to do them, that it may go well with you, and that you may multiply greatly, as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey.

4 "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 6 And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the

way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. 8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

10 “And when the Lord your God brings you into the land that he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give you—with great and good cities that you did not build, 11 and houses full of all good things that you did not fill, and cisterns that you did not dig, and vineyards and olive trees that you did not plant—and when you eat and are full, 12 then take care lest you forget the Lord, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. 13 It is the Lord your God you shall fear. Him you shall serve and by his name you shall swear. 14 You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are around you—15 for the Lord your God in your midst is a jealous God—lest the anger of the Lord your God be kindled against you, and he destroy you from off the face of the earth.

16 “You shall not put the Lord your God to the test, as you tested him at Massah. 17 You shall diligently keep the commandments of the Lord your God, and his testimonies and his statutes, which he has commanded you. 18 And you shall do what is right and good in the sight of the Lord, that it may go well with you, and that you may go in and take possession of the good land that the Lord swore to give to your fathers 19 by thrusting out all your enemies from before you, as the Lord has promised.

20 “When your son asks you in time to come, ‘What is the meaning of the testimonies and the statutes and the rules that the Lord our God has commanded you?’ 21 then you shall say to your son, ‘We were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt. And the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. 22 And the Lord showed signs and wonders, great and grievous, against Egypt and against Pharaoh and all his household, before our eyes. 23 And he brought us out from there, that he might bring us in and give us the land that he swore to give to our fathers. 24 And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as we are this day. 25 And it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to do all this commandment before the Lord our God, as he has commanded us.’

1. What is the big thing that Moses is saying on the Israelites?
2. What are the Israelites commanded to do?
3. why do you think Moses repeatedly employs the Israelites to listen to God's message?
4. Why was it important for the Israelites to teach their children about God and the commandments?

The apprentices should be able to notice that the message here is:

- a. worshipping/adoring/loving God in response to what he had done to the house of Israel (Saving them/ showing them mercy and grace and giving them an inheritance)
- b. they are to keep the commandments as their show of love to the GOD.

c. the purpose of teaching the law/commands/word of God to their children or next generation was so that that generation may know about God and his saving grace.

That should always be the focus whenever we are teaching: be it the old testament story or the new testament ones.

Examples: whole class discussion on how to teach the following stories

The David and Goliath story. We identifying with the helpless Israelites.

Or the Israelites needing Gods help as they cross the red sea.

Or the transformation of Zacheaus. All these stories are about God and his saving power.

### **3. The reality of Children's sinfulness.(Psalm 51:5)**

The children are born sinners by the fact that they are descendants of |Adam. He all are born with a sinful nature. And that is why we sin. We are not sinners because we sin, rather we sin because we are sinners

David in his Psalm 51 after committing adultery with Uriahs wife and committing murder acknowledges his sinfulness- verse 1-5.

He doesn't claim to have lived a life full of righteousness and this was his first time to sin... he knows his state as a sinner before God has always been present. Not just Prophet Nathan had confronted him, but because he has always been sinful.

Verse 5: surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

Indeed even the tiniest fetus is sinful

### **4. Lesson Preparation and Delivery**

#### **a. Preparation(Read Exodus 14 and come up with a possible big idea and lesson outline)**

- Laboring in Prayer and Word (reading the story severally till you have it memorized)
- Coming up with the big idea(what is the passage about)
- A teaching point(s)( what do you want the children to learn)
- Application

#### **b. Presentation**

These are children: so how are you going to present the lesson to them engagingly without watering down the message?

- Dramatization(Act out if you can)
- Retell the story( simplified of course but emphasizing your big idea and teaching point)
- Have the children watch the story on a video.
- You could use object lessons/ visual aid to teach( you need to be careful that the children are actually able to relate the object lesson to the teaching points and big idea)
- Have the children do an activity that will reinforce the lesson: draw, color, do a game, or a crossword.

It is crucial that you seriously prepare and pray as you go to teach children. Why is this important?

- a. You are able to teach and handle the scripture faithfully.
- b. You will be confident and able to manage your class
- c. A prepared sermon is far much effective in bringing understanding and salvation to the minds of the young children.
- d. YO

**5. The Value, privilege, responsibility of Children Ministry( Matt 28:16-20, Acts 6:4)**

- It carries out the important commission; making Disciples of Christ. Teaching them to obey the commands of the Lord of Jesus.
- It is an opportunity to teach the word of God systematically following a specific curriculum ( sad that we have very Kenyan curriculum developers for Christian Education).This gives children an opportunity to have a better understanding of the Bible and the foundational Christian doctrines.
- Children are taught and brought to the saving knowledge of Christ.
- The value of Children Ministry is immeasurable. All the other ministries in a church are needed and all important: but churches without good children ministries will find themselves struggling in future.