

CHILDREN CAN EXPERIENCE GOD TOO

Kemi Searcy

A children's director was modeling a new kind of children's church for the adult children's leaders. The children and adults were gathered in a large room for worship. After they had sung a few songs, the children's director said, "Everyone, we have been singing to God. Now He wants to talk to us. Open your spiritual ears and listen for Him to say something to you in your heart."

One little girl in the front raised her hand and came to the microphone. "I just heard God say that I don't have to obey my Mom and Dad anymore." The children's director heard a gasp from the adult leaders as they wondered how the director could get out of this sticky situation. The director calmly said, "Hmm...that is really interesting. I never heard Him say anything like that before. Did anybody hear anything else?" Another child raised his hand and came to the microphone, "That's not what God would say, because His Word is the Bible and the Bible says we are to listen and obey our parents." Some of the kids nodded their heads.

The children's director heard a sniffle from another child and asked the child what was wrong. The child spoke to the rest of the kids, "That's right...we are supposed to obey our Mom and Dad. And I didn't this morning. I went into my Mom's purse when she wasn't looking and took out her lipstick and it got all over the living room rug. I have to tell her I'm so very sorry." There were more sniffles as more kids began sharing wrongs they had done. A spirit of confession came over the room and after a time of repentance, the Holy Spirit moved among the children with forgiveness. This was no longer the same old children's church!

Many people believe that children are not ready to participate in intense worship, repentance, or great acts of service for God.ⁱ

Creating an Environment for Christianity

1. Let your children experience God. When God answers your prayer, let your children in on the celebration. When you have prayer requests, involve them in the prayer. I have found children are especially able to pray for healing.
2. Let your children understand God. Our kids can learn much more for what we give them credit. Do a study on "grace" with your children, so they can see how awesome God's grace is. Work through the 23rd Psalm, relating the picture of the shepherd to how God cares for us. Instead of you teaching them, have the children teach you what they think it means.
3. Let your children explore who God is. Children are going to find it exciting to discover who God is rather than being told who He is. Mistakes like the kid in the children's worship service made are to be expected. It is how you help the

children make their own corrections to their inaccurate theology that either quenches their spirits or fosters further exploration.

4. Let your children serve God. Don't let them wait to be an adult. Children's Evangelist Dian Layton, says, "Children are soldiers with little feet." Help at a community center, visit a retirement home, make cards for nurses in the pediatric unit of the hospital, or host a honor party for the children's workers.
5. Let your children attend the adult service sometimes. Coach them during the service so they can understand what is happening. Have them participate in the offering. Help them understand words the pastor is preaching.

The age of your children is important in determining what you say. Younger children need more concrete pictures of God than older ones. Yet, all have souls that need to be reached to become solid believers. The seeds you plant during the first eighteen years of your children's lives will reap bountifully. Your goal is to see your kids become brothers and sisters in Christ.

Your child's idea of God will be most often tied to what they have seen of your relationship to the Lord. Do you have fun with God? Are your devotional times exciting, full of love, satisfying and energizing? Don't model a boring, religious, stagnant, or impractical relationship with God. Be zealous, be excited, and enjoy Him!
