

Children Director's Annual Report for 2009

Writing an annual report always helps my mind review the year we just finished up in Children's Ministry. Serving in Children's Ministry is in many ways unpredictable. Some years are exciting. Some years are full of change. Some years are wrought with difficulties and challenges. Some years are simply rewarding. This year was a rewarding year for me personally as the Children's Director. Not that I think all programming was perfect and there is no room for improvement. There always is, but here are some reasons why this year was a rewarding one for me. Over 100 children received Jesus as their Savior and started a new life in Christ! Many adult volunteers stepped up and found their place in ministry. I was able to witness first hand as they discovered their God-given potential and watched as they used it to serve God in a mighty way. Although we didn't experience explosive growth as we have in the past, we continued to see growth in almost every area of Children's Ministry. As God continues to pour out His vision over us for Children's Ministry and the other ministries at GCAC, may we continue to seek Him for His wisdom and guidance.

The Children's Ministry exists for the purpose of enabling children to MEET Jesus and to KNOW Jesus in a tangible way. We are beginning the process of making disciples at a very early age. The following is a summary of the many effective programs that are responsible for enabling children to MEET Jesus and to KNOW Jesus.

1. CHILDREN'S WORSHIP MINISTRIES

There are currently three Children's Church programs serving ages 2 years through 6th grade. These classes run during the 10:45 a.m. service and focus on teaching children Biblical lessons and application through many Bible stories, videos, puppets, crafts, drama, music, and guest speakers. The average total attendance for the pre-school (Ages 4-K) classes in 2009 was 14 kids and 44 kids for grades 1-6.

TINY TOTS (2-3 year olds) - This class continues to be under the Nursery umbrella. College students and nursery volunteers work with our Nursery Attendant to combine age-appropriate Biblical lessons with play and snack time, making it a place that little ones feel safe and cared for. My sincere thanks to the many people who make this program a great place for little ones to hear about Jesus in a safe, loving environment.

JR. CHURCH (Age 4-Kindergarten) - Using the "Hands On" Bible curriculum, these older pre-school children enjoy Bible stories, worship time, games and crafts each week. Through these activities they are able to grasp many of the Biblical themes presented. My thanks go to Dan & Jenn Thumm for their hard work coordinating and leading this program, along with other volunteers who serve as leaders and helpers.

KID'S CHURCH (Grades 1-6) - This large group worship service format continues for children in grades 1-6. Combining fun with learning, this ministry provides a place for grade school children to learn about having a relationship with Jesus. With a powerful worship time, thought provoking lessons, games and "Toybox Tales", kids learn life changing concepts in a fun environment. This ministry also continues to incorporate a powerful lesson focused on missions once every six weeks, teaching concepts for reaching the lost and also incorporating prayer for our church missionaries. The Kid's Church program has been a success due to the hard work, energy and faithfulness of the many leaders who volunteer their time.

KC KREW - This leadership training program continues to be a big part of our Kid's Church service. Consisting of 12 Jr. High & 6th Grade youth, KC Krew is a leadership training program geared toward developing leaders in the Kid's Church setting. These young people are thriving in the program. Every six weeks these youth put together and run the entire Kid's Church hour. We even have a talented Kid's Church band that provides the music on KC Krew Sundays! It is rewarding to see them using their gifts and talents for the Lord. In an effort to enhance their own walk, each participant is encouraged to attend Jr. High Ministry events and Jr. High Sunday school each week.

2. NURSERY

Our wonderful nursery provides a clean and safe environment for our GCAC families. With separate rooms for the infants, crawlers and walkers as well as a huge classroom for children ages 2-3, our facility is a wonderful space for the little ones of our church. The average number of babies and toddlers in our nursery on a Sunday morning is 27. The nursery plays a vital part in enabling parents to participate in worship services and in serving God in ministry. Our nursery has been used for many different programs. They include the two Sunday AM services, Sunday evening student ministries and Wednesday night Awana. It has also been used for Vacation Bible School, choir practice, women's Bible studies and various Alliance Women events. We are staffed with wonderful volunteers who provide loving care to the many infants and toddlers. I would like to thank our nursery committee for their hard work scheduling volunteers and filling in when necessary. I would also like to thank Kim Barclay for the great job she is doing as our head Nursery Attendant.

3. CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL

With the expansion of the children's wing, we are no longer experiencing overcrowding on Sunday mornings. Although many of our classes are near capacity, we still have the potential for some growth. With separate classrooms for each grade level, our teachers are better equipped to teach the children in their care. Our Sunday school program plays an important part in transforming the hearts of children. During Sunday school, children grow in their knowledge of God's Word. Our average number of attendees on a Sunday morning in 2009 was 93 children. We continue to have two groups for the music and worship ministry during the Sunday school hour. These include Tiny Tots and Age 4-Grade 4. I would like to express my thanks to Cindy Stewart who tirelessly leads this worship ministry week after week and to Leigh Shields for assisting Cindy and for working with the Tiny Tots. Our teachers, assistants and substitutes are among the most passionate people I have ever worked with. I am awed by their dedication and for the amazing ways that they show Christ's love to the children of our church week after week.

4. SUMMER EXPLOSION (VBS)

This year our VBS format was very similar to years past. This format has proven very successful and attendance was again higher than ever. Our goal was to reach children and families with the Gospel of Christ and to reach out to the lost in our community. Our 2009 Summer Explosion was held June 28-July 2. Our theme this year was "Got Fruit" and focused on the Fruits of the Spirit. We had our traditional family carnival on Sunday evening followed by four nights of praise, worship, skits and teaching. We also had games and fun for every age group involved. Our special guest this year was Stew Jamesson, brother of our own Lance Stewart. Stew is a street performer at Disney World and joined us on our final evening. The average attendance of children at this event was 261 with a high attendance of 276 on Monday night. The total number registered for the week was 351 kids. Praise the Lord for the 91 children who came forward to receive Christ. 31 of those were first time salvations!

I am overwhelmed with gratitude for those who volunteered their time and talents to our VBS program. We had over 180 adults and youth who volunteered to help during the Summer Explosion. I would especially like to thank the planning team and our guest speakers, Dixie Peth and Cindy Stewart. They did an awesome job of presenting the Gospel in a kid friendly way.

5. AWANA

The Awana program has continued to be blessed by God in amazing ways. With an emphasis on Bible memorization, games and theme nights, this ministry continues to be the largest evangelistic outreach of the Children's Ministry department. Our attendance numbers have hit record highs. We have averaged 190 kids, which is a 23% increase over 2008. During the fall of

this year, we were breaking attendance records almost every night. In 2009, God called 55 children into a relationship with Jesus Christ through Awana! What an amazing testimony to the effectiveness of this wonderful program. I am constantly amazed by the dedication of our wonderful directors and leaders who serve week after week reaching children with the Gospel of Christ. We have over 100 directors, leaders and support staff who show up weekly to make this ministry a success. Their dedication is unmatched!

6. CLUB "56"

This ministry grew steadily throughout 2009. Our monthly events continued to be well attended over the past year and we have developed a strong core group of kids who attend almost every event. Our average attendance in 2009 was 28 kids. This program enables kids to enjoy fellowship while providing an environment for developing relationships with one another. While most of our events have been strictly for fellowship, we also incorporated prayer days and service projects. This program continues to impact the Jr. High ministry in a positive way. The partnership we are sharing between the Children and Youth departments has strengthened both programs. We pray that God will continue to draw these "tweeners" to Himself and help them to be disciplined by the godly leaders who have a heart for this fun age group.

Thank You

I never cease to be amazed by what God is doing here at GCAC. Our family loves being used by God here. This has truly become our home and the people here have truly become our extended family. We are honored to serve alongside such a loving, passionate group of people who have a vision for children's ministry. I am truly grateful for the many people who sacrifice their time and energy for these little ones to get a glimpse of Jesus. I feel privileged to work among such a godly group of people and I thank God daily for allowing me to live out my call. Let's continue to serve sacrificially so that all the kids at GCAC will be reached with the Gospel of Christ and be trained to serve Him.

Respectfully Submitted,
Miss Kelly Haux