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Enough Is Enough: Kids Are in Pain!

Boot Camp for Serious Soldiers of the Cross

Introduction:

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We have cried, talked, and blamed for way too long. Are you tired of the talk? Have you heard it all, done it all, seen it all and you still wonder, “Am I even making a difference at all?” Today’s kids are in pain! Finally many Christian workers are saying, enough is enough. They are screaming for answers, direction and assurance that what they are doing will make a difference in kid’s lives. Does this describe you?

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Link: First, this presentation will challenge your ministry with all kids, not only kids in pain. Second, ministering to kids in pain is real and risky but it places you where God is at work Psalm 107:23-24. Third, this will be a type of 21st century ministry boot camp!

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Get Your Game On

We desperately need long-term workers who are willing to lay down their lives for the children. Many kids are confused about religion yet they hunger to know the truth. Evangelism is the first priority but discipleship is critical. The bridge that will cross the gap from kids in pain to Christ is building relationships that are biblically based upon equality, grace, trust and longevity. Our attitude must be in concert with the Spirit of God and the Word of God.

Dr. John Perkins states, “There can be no reconciliation without equality.” God’s people can never fall into the sin of partiality and be effective as God’s ministers.

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The kids must be seen as equals, seen as Jesus sees them and valued James 1:26-2:1.

What was Jesus’ ministry strategy? He intentionally went through Samaria and other cities. Jesus hung out and reached out to sinners. Jesus supplied spiritual and physical needs from the least to the greatest. Jesus had only a few disciples but His kingdom endures forever.

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Do you want to minister like that?— There is a refreshing movement that blows through many urban streets of America today. It’s called “incarnational” ministry, which is simply to live among and be enriched by the people you minister to. Whether or not you presently live or work on “the inside,” the ideas we present today should inspire your creativity and enhance your ministry to become more effective in teaching kids in pain Matthew 16:18-19.

It is in the heat of urban ministry that some of the most creative, energetic, entrepreneurial ministries and methods have emerged and now pioneer paths for the church of tomorrow.

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Needs Approach to Ministry

There are so many needs but you may have only a short time each week with your group. You have to maximize your time. How? You can adjust tried and true methods as well as incorporating new ones. There are several effective ideas currently being used in urban ministry around America. But start by asking, “Do I use a NEEDS approach?”

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Notice the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of the child, his family and community

Embrace the teaching examples of Jesus

Equip the child and family to live for Christ within their community

Develop a long-term relationship with them

Serve by meeting needs without enabling the recipients

Here are some examples of a growing number of ministries following this approach and using the ideas shared in this workshop:

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- *Child Evangelism Fellowship*[®]—block-by-block ministry, Extra Good News events (*Evangelizing Today's Child*[®] magazine July/August 2002 p.14-15)

Good News Club[®] teachers at the Hoover Rd. Apartments in Durham, NC share these results:

“God put a gift of love and compassion in me for people, especially for children. I long to share the good news of the Gospel with them wherever I go. After much prayer, the office manager at Hoover Rd. Apartments allowed my daughter and me to begin a *Good News Club*[®] on Monday afternoons after school. That decision has affected many children’s lives. Nearly 50 children have attended the club and most have now received Christ as their Savior. God has truly been faithful! We use the *Good News Club* materials from *CEF*[®] and incorporate the methods used in the Durham chapter. Our visitation and extra time with the kids has caused them to open up and talk to us. We listen! The more we work with the kids at club the more God helps me see and love everyone as He does. These kids are grasping what we teach and trying to walk with Jesus. When they do mess up, they ask for forgiveness, talk with us and then get right back up and keep going on for Jesus.

- JC’s Kitchen—praying, claiming, buying property at the city “gates” (Albany, NY)
- Community Mural Projects—mosaic art on city walls (Chicago)
- Dry Bones (Denver, CO)
- Bethel Express Enterprises—multi-level discipleship/school-job placement program (Syracuse teens)
- More Than Gold Sportsreach—street events, after-school, camps, clinics (*Evangelizing Today's Child*[®] magazine July/August 2002 p.14-15)
- Harrabee Center—John Perkins Foundation (CCDA)
- Rising Stars—tutoring after school as a partnership/adopt-a-school program

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Prove Your Love

Important things to keep in mind

1. God is good *in the hood*. Many kids are unaware of why they hurt but some are aware. Families who live in inner-city neighborhoods are aware they have extreme problems. They wish things were different. Many of these families respect God’s Word and believe in prayer. They respond to Christians who bring them help and hope. Often their response is temporary. But yours must never be.

2. If you care enough to take the love of Christ inside, you will have to prove it by loving city kids and their families. In the book *Grace Matters*, Lem Tucker says, “He who has the greatest truth must have the greatest love, which is the greatest proof.” You must prove your love over and over for others to know you really care. Many well-meaning Christians have done great harm by making promises to kids then leaving and never returning. If you love kids, you must keep your word.
3. Your primary focus will be to build personal and ministry relationships. These relationships take time to develop and must be biblically based on equality, grace, trust and endurance. This is accomplished by visiting children in their own neighborhood. Soon your consistent presence will prove to their families that you care.
4. Effective ministries to urban kids have learned that in order to impact children you must visit them.

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- Visitation connects you with the child’s world—“You’re not afraid.”
- 80% of the children attend because you visited—“You let me know.”
- Visits expand your personal ministry to each child—“You care about me.”
- Visits project an image/testimony in the community—“Thank you for helping my kids.”

Spencer got a home visit every week. Soon he and his sister started attending Extra Good News. The faithfulness of his bus commander to visit, encourage and pray with Spencer’s family led him to becoming a teen helper, an active church member and later a summer missionary.

5. Try these proven guidelines for successful visitation.
 - Set a time every week to visit—your program should revolve around weekly visitation.
 - Use a block-by-block approach to reach more kids.
 - Keep a record of information on each child and his family.
 - Visit every kid but spend extended time with selected individuals—weekly rotation or kids with special needs.
 - Be prepared to share the Gospel, listen or lend a helping hand.
 - Pray for children, parents and family needs.

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Because a children’s worker followed this plan for weekly visitation, ten-year-old Jade received help when she said, “My mom is always angry, I don’t know what to do . . . We were watching the video *Left Behind*. . . I don’t want my mom to be left behind. Will you come tell her what you told me about Jesus?” Floodgates for ministry burst wide open when you visit. Will you add regular home contacts to your children’s ministry? If so, you’ll take your effectiveness to another level.

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6. Use the visitation packet available.

The cost is \$5.00 and can be ordered from:

CEF Durham Area Chapter
P.O. Box 1288
Durham, NC 27702
919-682-7317
cefcenteroflight@aol.com

Challenge Kids to Pray

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Can the prayers of a child sustain a home? Change a neighborhood? Move a nation?

God could act alone to rescue this needy world but instead He chooses to involve intercessors, including Christian children.

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Esther Inisky of Esther Network International states that not nurturing praying children is “spiritual abortion.”

She means that many prayers are going unsprayed; therefore many individuals and situations are left unchanged because children aren’t praying for them.

If children can become prayer warriors when they are young, the habit will stay with them all their lives. Most of the time in our classes we do the praying.

When we invite kids to pray:

- They experience God’s power.
- They hear God’s voice.
- They become an important part of the body of Christ.

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Teach them four important aspects of prayer.

Praise—Set up the names of God along with their meanings around the room in learning stations. The children move from station to station. They praise the Lord for who He is according to the names at that location. Praise is “paying God a compliment.”

Confession—Hang up pictures on the wall of things we do that are wrong. Have the children walk around and talk to the Lord about the sins that pertain to themselves.

Thanksgiving—Collect a number of rocks and write on them things to be thankful for. Have kids come and get a rock and thank the Lord for what is on the rock. Place the rocks in a pile as Samuel did for the children of Israel as a reminder of God’s goodness. Encourage the children to make their own rock pile at home.

Intercession—Use an object lesson to illustrate the meaning of intercession. Place a map of the world on the floor. Place pictures and prayer requests of various people groups or individuals on the map where they are located. Have a child hold a sign that says “God.” Have another child hold the picture of a certain people group or individual and walk over to the one holding the “God” sign and pray for the requests. Intercession is going before God with the particular needs of someone.

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Share samples and resources for helping children pray seriously.

- Praykids.com—Excellent magazine, prayer cards
- cherifuller.com—Prayer walks, prayer rallies, weekly prayer meetings, National Day of Prayer Kids’ Event

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How Do I Teach Kids in Pain?

• Enhance Your Teaching Style

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Use volunteers and helpers to run high-energy games, watch for kids seated perfectly, review the rules, teach and review each time the “6 Most Important Things in the World.” Prizes and incentives are used to encourage appropriate participation from the children. Setting the standards of conduct and your expectation for their participation will enhance all the learning activities throughout your teaching.

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• Adjust Your Teaching Methods

☞ “Word up”—Verses and Bible lessons

“Word Up” is a focus statement that ties all the teaching activities together. It is the main teaching throughout the class that day. The memory verse is directly connected to the “word up.” Each week kids repeat in unison a different phrase like, “I will wear God’s clothes today!,” “Come close, stay Close!” and “Trust God no matter what happens!”

Alecia and Serena took these words and their commitment beyond the Bible club. Their moms often remarked, “These girls say they have come close, they’re gonna stay close and God will change their neighborhood.”

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☞ Shorten or compress your Bible lesson.

Build a series of mini-lessons that reinforce a truth over a period of weeks, directing kids to live for Christ. Short but memorable lessons each week challenge kids to seek God on behalf of their neighborhoods plagued with drugs, violence and hatred. Kids respond every week by joining hands and kneeling in prayer, crying out to God for His help.

☞ Present the doctrines of God, man and Christ in all teaching segments.

Teach an attribute of God each week. Give special emphasis to the main teaching and salvation throughout the class hour—lesson, songs, games—rather than in one segment. You’ll find the kids will retain more of what you teach.

Alecia and Serena responded to such a series by praying with conviction and confidence because they were also being taught that God is holy and faithful.

☞ Give an invitation and challenge

Be real, relevant and honest when closing the teaching for the day. Speak openly about circumstances in kid’s lives and within the community. Passionately challenge them with an action step that week.

Conclusion:

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Will you get your game on, prove your love, meet needs, pray, enhance and adjust your teaching for the kids’ sake? Enough is enough of doing things any old way—kids are in pain! You can make a difference!

Resources

Web sites

www.praykids.com—Produced by NavPress and provides a variety of materials to give to the children to help them pray seriously

www.cherifuller.com—Provides a variety of helpful, creative ideas for getting children involved in praying

www.cefpres.com—Provides a wealth of materials produced by *Child Evangelism Fellowship* for teaching children

www.etczine.com—*Evangelizing Today's Child* is a magazine produced by *Child Evangelism Fellowship*

Materials

Visitation Packet \$5.00

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