

City Kids

Teach Kids article....

J/F 2006

“Real Questions...Real Answers”

Who can forget the horrific scene in St. Petersburg, Florida last year, which was broadcast over every media outlet for weeks? Police handcuffed a 5-year-old girl for unruly behavior in her kindergarten classroom. --- How could this happen?

Actually, a video camera, which was rolling March 14 as part of a classroom self-improvement exercise, captured images of the girl tearing papers off a bulletin board, climbing on a table and punching an assistant principal before police were called to the school. Then it shows the child appearing to calm down before three officers approach, pin her arms behind her back and handcuff her as she screams, "No!"

Tell me, this is really a teen with a bad attitude and cops who patrol the hallways of a high school, right? Not this time. Unfortunately and increasingly this is a trend in younger kids, especially city kids. --- Why?

My friend Michael calls it *shame, blame and game*. Uncontrolled behavior, which is fueled by many negative influences upon a child, originates in anger. Shame has developed within the child because of poverty, abuse, and lack of parents in their lives. Many of these city kids have one or both parents in prison. The kids begin to blame others and play games to divert their attention from the pain. At times the game becomes violent. --- What can be done?

I live and minister in one of the top ten USA cities for gang activity. Prison Fellowship® has identified over 8% of our city kids to be children of prisoners. The numbers are increasing. The probability is that children of prisoners will also go to prison at a seven times greater rate than their peers. Proper conclusions and successful strategies are coming up short. --- Here is a biblical strategy that has been working!

- Connect with city kids weekly for several years through Good News Clubs®, sports-related ministry, after-school events, tutoring, etc.
- Connect with Prison Fellowship and conduct *One Day with God* events to reunited prisoners with their kids, then visit and stay connected weekly.
- Commit to these and other ideas of weekly---yearly investing into these lives for 5, 10, or even 15 years.