

# t<sub>he</sub> Chalkboard

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Zion Assembly Church of God



## TEAM UP

To successfully play any team sport, each member must fill his position to the best of his ability. The team as a whole must know the rules and strictly adhere to them. Every successful team requires a dedicated coach. It is the coach's job to organize the team by placing each member in the position where he shows the greatest potential. The coach also gives the players proper training and constant feedback. When the morale of the team is running low from exhaustion or defeat, it is the responsibility of the cheerleaders to rally the players on to victory.

Think of Children's Ministries as a sports team. Many of our local churches are blessed with a good team of children. These little ones approach life with loads of energy, but they are in need of dedicated adults who will coach them to reach their personal best. Achieving their full potential can only come through direct instruction from the Rule Book. Training children in God's Word is the only way to help them live a consistent life of victory. It takes patience, effort, and repetition to shape a group of rowdy young ones into a winning team.

I do realize that every adult in a local church does not feel a direct burden to train or coach children. On the other hand, I do believe that every adult can become a fantastic cheerleader. Please understand. I am not referring to girls in short skirts with shiny pompoms. On the contrary, the individuals who gave me the most support throughout my life were the seasoned saints of the church who spent time in the altar praying me through to victory. They also shared words of encouragement with me and were truly interested in my personal success. Great coaches build winning teams, but successful teams also have a group of cheerleaders who cheer them on to championships.

Every child wants to be a winner. It is important to help each one become a significant contributor to the team. Children are active learners and enjoy participating in the worship. They want to move, sing, shout, stomp, and clap their hands for Jesus. They are always observing and imitating what they see. I have

been humbled while watching little girls pat their songbooks to mimic me. We are training them by our examples, just as much as we are by what we say. As we encourage them to participate in the adult worship services, we are validating them as team mates. Children do not want to sit on the bench and wait until they are grown-ups before making a vital contribution. They want a turn at bat. They want an opportunity to run with the ball. Let's show them how and then cheer them on.

At this year's General Assembly, the children's theme was "Team Zion." I was so blessed by the statement of a young five-year-old girl. As soon as the children's program had ended, the little girl and her mother met with me in the hallway. The mother explained that as she was helping her daughter get dressed for church that morning, her daughter made a precious statement. She said, "I like today. It's the day I get to do my part." This young girl realized that the teaching she had received throughout the week of the Assembly was preparing her and the other children for their part on the Assembly program. As the children sang, recited their memory verse, and cheered for Jesus, this was their time to make a vital contribution to the church.

Most of the time, we are guilty of teaching children for the sake of who they will grow up to become. In other words, we are preparing them for the future. Many times, I have said, "One day, this child will be a pastor or the next presiding bishop." With all these lovely thoughts and intents in mind, I want to keep myself aware that these talented little ones play an important role in the church today. Not only do they breathe life into the adult services with their innocence and candor, but they also "keep it real" by reminding us that their simple faith is what it takes to come to Jesus. Indeed, our children are vital contributors to Team Zion, but they require positive, ongoing Christian leadership to help them achieve success. They need adults who will not only train them but coach them to victory. They need adults in the church who will cheer them on until they make it across the goal line for the touchdown.

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